

[DOI: 10.20472/AHC.2019.005.011](https://doi.org/10.20472/AHC.2019.005.011)

KYLO-PATRICK HART

Texas Christian University, United States

‘WE WANT THE WORLD AND WE WANT IT NOW’: JIM MORRISON AS ‘GUIDING SPIRIT’ OF THE YOUTH COUNTERCULTURE

Abstract:

As he achieved growing recognition and fame as a singer-songwriter and lead vocalist of the rock band The Doors, Jim Morrison came to embody, in the assessment of his bandmate Ray Manzarek, the spirit of “hippie counterculture rebellion” during the second half of the decade of the 1960s. In part that is because, with his revolutionary spirit and personal views pertaining to radical potentialities, Morrison began to serve as an impressive icon of the generation gap that existed between young people who hoped to change the world and older individuals, including conventional authority figures, who seemed set in their ways. Accordingly, this presentation examines Morrison’s status as a desirable leader of the youth counterculture in the United States during the 1960s. It demonstrates how Morrison’s outspoken views, bohemian lifestyle, rebellious personality, unpredictable performing style, experiences with psychedelic drugs and alcohol, extensive literary knowledge (which ranged from the works of Beat poets and writers to French existentialist philosophers), and intentional attempts to spark riots effectively combined to position him as an appealing ‘guiding spirit’ and source of solidarity to countless members of the youth counterculture of his day. It further demonstrates the substantial personal toll this cultural status took on Morrison as his career progressed toward the early 1970s, when he endeavored to take his métier in new directions yet found himself trapped in a celebrity persona he no longer wished to call his own, even though it was very much of his own making.

Keywords:

celebrity persona
counterculture
The Doors
generation gap
Jim Morrison
radical potentialities
The Sixties
solidarity

JEL Classification: L82, A31, D74