

An Analysis of the Hipster (Sub)Culture and Its Reflection in HBO's TV Series *Girls*

Abstract [paper]:

Seeking—Hipster Types: male and female, 18-30s, all ethnicities, all types, specifically seeking people with tattoos, piercings, colored hair, and unique looks. Young Adult (ages 18-29), Thirties (ages 30-39). Caucasian/White, African-American/Black, Latin/Hispanic/South American, Asian, Native American, European, Middle Eastern, Indian/South Asian, Other. (*Huffington Post*)

According to this casting call posted by Lena Dunham and her crew at *Backstage.com*, one feels tempted to classify the TV series *Girls* as a hipster show automatically. In fact, this is what its creators and producers have been trying to do since its premiere on April 15, 2012, until its conclusion on April 16, 2017. This association with this alternative subculture (or counter-culture, post-subculture, scene... depending on the theorist, as Bjørn Schiermer explains) was also emphasized by the differences that the new program presented with respect to what many critics consider its profitable predecessor, HBO's *Sex in the City* (1998-2004). In contrast to the four overtly snob protagonists of this outstandingly famous show, the female major characters in *Girls* are designed to give the impression of sharing most of the characteristics that are normally considered essential in hipsters, both according to popular media communicators and specialized scholars, as I will demonstrate in my paper. Thus, Hannah Horvath, the protagonist, proclaims herself as "the voice of her generation" in the pilot; and its creators, especially Lena Dunham, try hard to give that voice hipster-like tones.

However, as Michael Scott clearly asserts (in line with the opinion of other salient scholars such as Wes Hill, Janna Michael, Mark Greif, or Bjørn Schiermer), "hipster' and 'hipsterism' are notoriously difficult to define". Notwithstanding this complexity and, in connection with the methodology that I follow in this work, it is my aim to use a solid theoretical background to analyze, first, the features present in *Girls* that might be connected to its hipster nature; then, I will study their authenticity (or lack of it), with the objective of reflecting also on the reasons why those elements might have been used by its creators, to see if they are connected -paradoxically, in this hipster context- to capitalist economic interests, which is one of my hypotheses. In this research process, I will apply core concepts present in relevant academic works of scholars specialized in the study of hipsterism, such as "authenticity," "individualization," "nostalgia," "reconversion strategies," "(anti-)trendiness," and "irony," among others.

The conclusions of this paper will show the results of the above mentioned analysis. As there are not many academic studies on the hipster and the hipster culture as relevant specialists recognise (e.g.: Schiermer 168), the analysis that I propose here is quite original and necessary. Even more so, if we take into account the fact that most definitions of hipsters are centered on male ones, but little attention is given to female hipsters. Lena Dunham helps to eliminate this stereotype as well as others connected to this type of alternative people (not without controversy), such as their lack of political implications (because of her supposed support of feminism or particular political parties), or hipsters' tendency to focus on white citizens.

(Number of words excluding title, references and keywords: 509)

References (maximum 150 words) (Chicago style)

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