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Abstract

The slogan “Make Love Not War”, so identified with the hippie experience and philosophy of the 1960s, has almost seemed quaint and corny for decades. Yet it should never have lost its charmingly simple appeal: the ties that bind, that hold us together, are stronger than those that tear us apart and love must transcend the hatred of the military machine.

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We Can Be Together: Hippie Culture as Radical Community*

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The slogan “Make Love Not War”, so identified with the hippie experience and philosophy of the 1960s, has almost seemed quaint and corny for decades. Yet it should never have lost its charmingly simple appeal: the ties that bind, that hold us together, are stronger than those that tear us apart and love must transcend the hatred of the military machine.

Ira Chernus has reminded us in two perceptive *Tomgram* articles that this hippie conception of love had much in common with the *agape* love promoted by Martin Luther King.¹ There is a continuity

¹ “Tomgram: Ira Chernus, Love Trumps Domination (Without the Combover)”; 16 April 2017.

Available URL: http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/176267/tomgram%3A_ira_chernus%2C_lov.

“Tomgram: Ira Chernus, “The Summer of Love and the Winter of National Insecurity”, 18 June 2017.

Available URL: <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/176297/>.

The similarities between my arguments and those of Chernus are clear and this is precisely because the spirit of the Sixties is reasserting itself in powerful ways.

between the civil rights movement and the hippies that is easily overlooked because appearances and overt politics can obscure inner realities. The contrast between the straight dress of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) worker and the colourful costume of the hippie is stark. Equally, their politics seem poles apart. Yet, they both confronted a violent system with love, compassion and solidarity. The word “solidarity” seems peculiarly out of place when dealing with hippies. It reeks, surely, of old left ideology and we did not see hippies in the parks chanting “solidarity forever”. They used different words instead, as reflected in Jefferson Airplane’s song ‘We Can Be Together’ from their 1969 album *Volunteers*. The other driving chorus of this song was “tear down the walls” and in this there was a strong echo of civil rights politics, a plea for genuine community and even a clarion call for international solidarity. I have been using that song for many years in my writings on Sixties radicalism in the San Francisco Bay Area and Chernus also employs it to stress political aspects of the counterculture.² When surveying the 1967 exhibition dealing with the Summer of Love at the de Young museum in Golden Gate Park, Chernus notes at first that there appear to be only two rooms touching on the politics of the time. Then he rethinks:

The hippies of that era, so it’s often claimed, paid scant attention to political matters. Take another moment in the presence of all the artefacts of that psychedelic summer, though, and a powerful (if implicit) political message actually comes through, one that couldn’t be more unexpected. The counterculture of that era, it turns out, offered a radical challenge to a basic premise of the Washington worldview, then and now, a premise accepted -- and spoken almost

² My doctoral dissertation was entitled *Tear Down the Walls: Sixties Radicalism and the Politics of Space in the San Francisco Bay Area*, Australian National University, 1989.

ritualistically -- by every president since Franklin Delano Roosevelt: nothing is more important than our "national security."³

Underpinning the cultural display on the streets, in the parks, in the concert halls, in the communes was a passion for a world that could be together and an America that was not obsessed with defending the homeland (to put it in current parlance). It was, in other words, a cultural politics in active opposition to a national security state that crushed rebellion abroad and at home.

In focussing upon the political elements of the slogan "Make Love Not War", I am not seeking to elide the sexual dimension. The words, of course, partly captured the spirit of the sexual revolution (Jefferson Airplane's earlier 'Triad' from *Crown of Creation* - "Why Can't We Go On as Three" - being a hauntingly beautiful, albeit perhaps banal, reflection of this). Yet the slogan and sentiment of making love rather than war was not reducible to sex and thus not saleable in quite the way that certain critics, even those on the left, imagine. Moreover, as Chernus argues:

Though few people at the time made the connection, King's Christian understanding of love was strikingly similar to Marcuse's secular view of erotic love. Marcuse saw *eros* as the fulfillment of desire. He also saw it as anything but selfish, since it flows from what Freud called the id, which always wants to abolish ego boundaries and recover that sense of oneness with everything we all had as infants.⁴

"Make Love Not War" was a badge many of us wore to express our revulsion at the American War in Vietnam (and Australia was very much a part of that imperial intervention). As a badge it became a

³ "Tomgram: Ira Chernus, The Summer of Love and the Winter of Discontent"

⁴ "Tomgram: Ira Chernus, Love Trumps Domination..."

commodity but as a sensibility it was not saleable. Moreover, there are commodities that do not necessarily succumb to the fetishism that Marx described so expertly in the first volume of *Capital* and Georg Lukàcs built upon in *History and Class Consciousness*.⁵ Small marketplaces are very different from financial powerhouses and, so too, arts and craft enterprises are not (or need not be) giant workhouses. Thus it is that the small shops in the Haight-Ashbury in 1965 and 1966 were not, to use Debord's superb evocation of the modern supermarket, "frenzied temples of consumption".⁶ They were, in contrast, small-scale cultural workshops in which an artisanal pride took precedence over, even if it accompanied, profit.

This is not to gloss over what I have written about elsewhere at length – the contradictions of cultural radicalism.⁷ There was the theatre of radical dissent in the streets and yet there was also a mirror of the society of the spectacle. There was a communal celebration of life and yet also an individualist, or "do your own thing", tendency. And at the centre of it all, of course, were the drugs and music that were simultaneously collective experiences and saleable commodities. Just because a commodity is saleable does not make it *ipso facto* part of the culture of commodity fetishism. That requires, as Marx and Lukacs understood, a systemic mode of capital accumulation. Hippie style,

⁵ Karl Marx, *Capital* vol. 1, New York, The Modern Library, 1906, pp. 81-96; Georg Lukàcs, *History and Class Consciousness*, London, Merlin Press, 1971, pp. 83-109.

⁶ Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, Detroit, Red & Black, 1977 (1967), thesis 174.

⁷ Anthony Ashbolt, *A Cultural History of the Radical Sixties in the San Francisco Bay Area*, London, Pickering & Chatto, 2013, pp. 101-114; see also Anthony Ashbolt, "'Go Ask Alice': Remembering the Summer of Love Forty Years On", *Australasian Journal of American Studies*, vol. 26 no. 2, 2007, pp. 35-47.

fashion and music were to become incorporated into that mode through the music industry particularly. By then, however, the Death of the Hippie had already been announced in the streets of Haight-Ashbury. This “march/spectacle” (and here I draw deliberately upon Allen Ginsberg’s term⁸) declaring that the authentic hippie had disappeared occurred at the end of the Summer of Love. The distance between birth and death was thus around two years (less if we were to be historically precise), a remarkably short life span for a phenomenon that still generates such interest. Yet the march/spectacle was also a plea for rebirth or at least a continuation of the ideals that had inspired the Haight-Ashbury. And that was already happening in communes in northern California and across America. Lew Welch, after all, had urged hippies to leave the Haight before the Summer of Love, recognizing that the spirit of community would be crushed by not only by crowds of young descending but by the weight of profiteers benefiting from such an explosion.⁹ And the Death of the Hippie did not mean at all the death of certain ideals or aspirations or lifestyle experiments associated with the Haight-Ashbury moment and that is why they are still relevant.

Danny Goldberg has pointed to the “direct line from many of the leaders of 1967 to contemporary figures such as Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg, Bernie Sanders, Judd Apatow, and Oprah Winfrey, all of whom acknowledge important influences” from that period.¹⁰ Some may question the list of names

⁸ Allen Ginsberg, “Demonstration or Spectacle as Example, As Communication or How to Make a March/Spectacle”, *Berkeley Barb*, vol. 1 no. 15, November 19, 1965, pp. 1 & 4.

⁹ Lew Welch, “A Moving Target is Hard to Hit”, March 27, 1967, a leaflet from the communication Co.. Available URL: <https://arthurmag.com/2009/08/21/the-diggers-papers-no-21-a-moving-target-is-hard-to-hit-by-lew-welch/>.

¹⁰ Goldberg, 21-22.

but in terms of recent politics, Sanders did and does stand as someone who transmits directly ideas that had at least some origins in or connections with the hippies. Even more tellingly, at the Glastonbury Festival in England in June this year, Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn gave an inspirational speech to thousands of mostly young people. His dramatic and eloquent address to the huge crowd at this music festival, resonated with the sentiments of Sixties radicalism, including its hippie component.¹¹ He referred directly to “the spirit of love” the audience had brought to Glastonbury and stressed the fact that the festival was about peace. Addressing Donald Trump directly, he urged him to “build bridges not walls”. He spoke passionately about peace and war, refugees, the environment, inequality, sexism, homophobia in ways that reminded his generation that there was a Summer of Love back in 1967. This is not to suggest, simplistically, that hippies had actively embraced all that Corbyn was speaking about or that Corbyn was inspired directly by Jefferson Airplane’s “We Can be Together”. Yet, at the base of Corbyn’s philosophy there was not only the politics and history of E.P. Thompson and the poetry of Shelley but also the passions and longings of all those from the Sixties who pleaded for peace and love, compassion, equality and international solidarity. The hippies were not marginal to that struggle but helped shape it in particular ways that have often been misunderstood or misinterpreted.

The lasting resonance of hippies is captured through organic gardening and environmentalism, through fashion, food, music and architectural design in ways that are not reducible to (but may

¹¹ Jeremy Corbyn’s speech at Glastonbury. Available URL:

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/watch-jeremy-corbyns-glastonbury-speech-10682448>.

reflect elements of) commodity fetishism.¹² And, yes, peace and love rather than war and hate do speak to our time in a fashion more urgent than many of us could have thought possible after the victory of the Vietnamese in 1975, or many others thought possible as a consequence of the collapse of Communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s. If this was not the end of history quite as Fukayama had imagined, then surely it was the end of a certain type of imperial aggression and cold war mentality that gave us Dr. Strangelove. And we should never forget that Strangelove was a composite of certain authoritative, mainly academic, figures one of whom was Herman Kahn whose book *Thinking About the Unthinkable* is preposterously pertinent in a positively bizarre way.¹³

The mainstream media are blinded to the historical realities of cold war politics and tend to perpetuate an Orientalist fear-mongering.¹⁴ Given this, it is important to remember, as Corbyn did at Glastonbury in praising E.P. Thompson, the politics of the nuclear disarmament movement as much as it is to wax lyrical about hippie culture. A clear-headed politics is needed, something not always captured best by the counterculture. Indeed, I have written at length about the way cultural radicalism helped corrupt the politics of dissent in the 1960s by directing it towards a revolutionary position based upon lifestyle alternatives alone. This was not “bourgeois individualism” as some

¹² On design and architecture see Andrew Blauvelt, Greg Castillo et. al., *Hippie Modernism: The Struggle for Utopia*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 2015.

¹³ Herman Kahn, *Thinking About the Unthinkable*, Horizon Press, New York, 1962.

¹⁴ Patrick Lawrence, “The Unacknowledged Logic of North Korea’s Missile Tests”, *The Nation*, July 6 2017. Available URL: <https://www.thenation.com/article/the-unacknowledged-logic-of-north-koreas-missile-tests/>.

fundamentalist Marxists suggested but it spoke increasingly to a narrower tribe, as it were, than the many tribes the original hippies embraced. Cultural politics turned ever inwards in the late Sixties and forgot the original ideals of hippie community.

Nonetheless, there is a political amnesia concerning the anti-war movement in general, the nuclear disarmament movement specifically (here Britain's CND deserves special mention) and the hippie commitment to love, peace and community. The "Vietnam Syndrome" has fuelled this politics of forgetting. Unhinged by defeat in war, America supposedly turned inwards, withdrawing from the world stage and ceding international authority to Communist insurgents and more recently anti-American Muslim radicals. It was and is mythology but it worked, propelling the Reagan reassertion of American power that continues to this day. This "Vietnam Syndrome" imperial politics was accompanied by the rise of a neoliberalism in economics that celebrated individual greed, consumerism and a supposed independent entrepreneurial spirit. The origins of this neo-liberal economics are diverse but Milton Friedman and the Austrian School are crucial contributors along with Ayn Rand and other philosophical or methodological individualists. They had, shall we say, little to do with hippies.

Danny Goldberg makes a scathing reference to the "numerous left-wing historians who view the 'hippie' phenomenon as a secondary sideshow revolving around escapism that did more harm than good".¹⁵ An early breed of new left historian, who cut their teeth as activists in the early 1960s, did tend to erect a fundamentally false dichotomy between the Good Sixties and the Bad Sixties, in which

¹⁵ Goldberg, *In Search of the Lost Chord*, p. 11.

the counterculture was ultimately perceived in negative terms.¹⁶ The problem is that this dichotomy fitted neatly into the logic of an ideological position that, for example, incorporates and domesticates Martin Luther King Jr. as emblematic of the Good Sixties. Someone forgot to tell J. Edgar Hoover this at the time, precisely because King was a genuinely radical figure who presented a threat to the established order. Similarly, connecting the counterculture to the Bad Sixties overlooks the way in which it developed an effective challenge to stifling conformity and the permanent arms economy. The Good Sixties/Bad Sixties dichotomy simply does not work.

There is, however, a newer version of negative leftist portrayals of the counterculture developed by Thomas Frank, Jenni Diski, Chris Hedges and Clive Hamilton amongst others¹⁷. According to their leftist historical revisionism, the entire edifice of contemporary “free” market ideology is almost

¹⁶ See, for example, Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*, Bantam Books, New York, 1987.

¹⁷ Ashbolt, *A Cultural History*, 13-15. See Jenni Diski, *The Sixties*, Picador, New York, 2009, p. 110; Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture and the Rise of Hip Consumerism*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1997; Clive Hamilton, *Growth Fetish*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2003, pp. 109-110. Also see Chris Hedges, *Death of the Liberal Class*, New York, Nation Books, 2010, p. 109; Nadya Zimmerman, *Counterculture Kaleidoscope: Musical and Cultural Perspectives on Late Sixties San Francisco*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2008, pp. 50-1; John Sanbonmatsu, *The Postmodern Prince: Critical Theory, Left Strategy and the Making of a Political Subject*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 2004, pp. 21-50. See also the critique of Hamilton developed by Michelle Boulos Walker in this issue of *Counterculture Studies*: “1968 and the Paradox of Freedom”.

unimaginable without the earlier politics of play and personal fulfillment sponsored by the hippie experiment. A recent manifestation of this is provided by Angela Nagle in the leftist magazine *Jacobin*:

Work flexibility and freedom from ties to family duty and hierarchical institutions promised by the corporate-counterculture that reached its zenith in the 1990s has turned out to mean increased precarity and a race to the bottom in living standards. The promise of this vision has become, for those who can't enter adulthood but are edging closer to natural infertility, a permanent CV-building career ladder leading to nowhere.¹⁸

So there is a direct connection between flexible corporate work programmes that dissolve family ties and ultimately promote infertility and countercultural perspectives on freedom from hierarchy. This would be news to the hippies who actually had a romantic conception of family and/or tribal life that actively included children. It would also be news to corporate strategists whose master plans were not devised within the communes of Haight-Ashbury.

Take also the critique offered by Bruce Kapferer and Marina Gold in *Arena Magazine*: "Overall the disturbances and revolts of the sixties and seventies enabled capitalism, and the society promised, shaped largely in terms of business and corporate interest, to be presented as the solution to the evident ills of the nation state."¹⁹ Overall, I would argue, it is unwise for Marxist critics to establish a theoretical edifice upon shaky empirical foundations. There **was** a backlash against the radicalism of the sixties and seventies but this is not the perspective being advanced at all because a "Blame the

¹⁸ Angela Nagle, "The Market Theocracy", *Jacobin*, May 10, 2017. Available URL:

<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/05/handmaids-tale-margaret-atwood-trump-abortion-theocracy>.

¹⁹ Bruce Kapferer & Marina Gold, "The Cuckoo in the Nest", *Arena Magazine*, no. 151, 12 2017- 01 2018, p. 33.

Sixties” or, to use Cohn-Bendit’s term, “Bashing the Sixties” discourse has taken hold and distorted the thinking of some on the left as much as the right.²⁰ The logic is clear: every product of radical culture in the Sixties is really a commodity, every occupation of a university produced future administrators of universities, every protest against the war involved a capitulation to the culture of spectacle fostered by the capitalist cash nexus. This attempt at Marxist common sense is not good sense at all because it buries the real histories of rebellion, disruption and provocation, assuming their automatic absorption by the capitalist order of things. “A common criticism of the sixties resistance to the nation state (and the corporate interests within it)”, suggest Kapferer and Gold, “is that many of those in the generation involved became central in processes (e.g. innovations in digital technology) integral to the emergence of the corporate state”.²¹ There follows a critical reflection upon the contributions of Bill Gates as if he personified Sixties resistance. Yet Kapferer and Gold do recognize that Gates actually sprang from and represented “the educated bourgeoisie”. Somehow, nonetheless, this class comes to stand for the radical Sixties: “The new spirit of freedom championed by the bourgeois youth and the postwar relaxation of state control facilitated corporate expansion.”²² This sort of analysis points to an essential truth – that the new capitalist dynamic depended upon freedoms unleashed in the 1960s – but obliterates the complexities and contradictions along the way. A neat linear path is mapped from the radical Sixties to neoliberalism with Bill Gates as a guide. In more sophisticated (or at least sensible) versions, the guide is Stewart Brand. Brand did have a

²⁰ ‘Today the big political game is ‘bashing the 1960s’ ‘, Interview with Daniel Cohn-Bendit, in Nora Farik (ed.), *1968 Revisited: 40 years of protest movements*, Heinrich Böll Foundation, Brussels, 2008, pp. 63-67.

²¹ Kapferer & Gold, “The Cuckoo in the Nest”, p. 34.

²² *Ibid.*

critical role in the counterculture but was always somewhat compromised by his celebration of technology and his actual work for the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) whose contributions to US imperialism were being pursued by activists at Stanford University and exposed in the underground newspaper *The Mid-Peninsula Observer*.

These sorts of “Bashing the Sixties” perspectives, emanating from erstwhile leftists, are apparently different from those whose ideological system is devoted to the preservation of a neoliberal world order. For the latter, as for conservative historians, hippies and the young radicals in general promoted chaos, disintegration, abandonment of the work ethic, defiance of moral order and triumph of a pleasure principle divorced from the stock market. Yet there is also a new and different twist in this pro-capitalist portrait of the counterculture. And it sees the movement as a friend of the system, much in the way that leftist critics do. Or to take the subtitle of one book: “why counterculture became consumer culture”.²³ The authors, Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter are cheerleaders for a benign global capitalism rather than unapologetic neo-liberals but they provide standard contemporary caricatures of the counterculture. So “hippies did not sell out. Hippie ideology and Yuppy ideology are one and the same. There simply never was any tension between the countercultural ideas that informed the ‘60s rebellion and the ideological requirements of the capitalist system.”²⁴ The clash that existed was simply between the Protestant establishment and its countercultural opponents. Here there is a much less sophisticated version of Daniel Bell’s thesis regarding the cultural contradictions of capitalism, whereby capitalism was culturally turning against

²³ Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter, *Nation of Rebels: Why Counterculture Became Consumer Culture*, HarperBusiness, New York, 2004.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

itself, partly propelled by the bohemian consumerism of radical youth.²⁵ The problem for this sort of analysis is that capitalism actually has its own engine drivers and they are systemic rather than individual figures in the marketplace. Thus we have the unremarkable observation from Heath and Potter that “The counterculture was, from its inception, intensely entrepreneurial”. This is followed by the remarkable observation rendered somewhat obsolete by historical developments: “It reflected, as does *Adbusters*, the most authentic spirit of capitalism”.²⁶ They were not to know that a particularly powerful ad in that magazine would launch the Occupy movement many years later but it is a stunning failure of interpretation, managing to conflate satirical hijacking (or détournement to use the more precise Situationist term) with commercial advertising itself. Moreover, given Heath and Potter’s essential support for the capitalist system (capitalism with a human face?), why their book was not in praise of the counterculture as a force for capitalist growth remains somewhat puzzling.

Michael Klassen’s book *Hippie Inc.* does applaud the capitalist futures market of the early Haight-Ashbury but his argument also reflects a distinct political amnesia; a forgetting of the arts and craft style origin of much hippie cultural experimentation and its collectivist or communal basis, and a forgetting of the antiwar sentiments that were also and not incidentally anti-imperialist.²⁷ Klassen’s celebratory take on a capitalist counterculture appears very different from the critical perspectives advanced by commentators on the left and the right. Paradoxically, however, all these critical

²⁵ Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, Heinemann, London, 1976.

²⁶ Heath and Potter, *Nation of Rebels*, p. 3.

²⁷ Michael Klassen, *Hippie Inc.: The Misunderstood Subculture That Changed the Way We Live and Generated Billions of Dollars in the Process*, SixOneSeven Books, Boston, 2015.

outlooks, while having different origins and trajectories, have blended in peculiar and even contradictory ways. Radical critics have, however unwittingly, aligned with neoliberal apologists and produced a mythology about hippie culture and lifestyle. As with all mythologies there are elements of truth but they obscure the motivating factors and the central dynamic of the hippie experience. In particular, they bury the dreams, imagination and creative spirit of the radical cultural workers involved in countercultural projects. More importantly, they are blind to the quest for community that propelled hippies. Underpinning that desire for community and embrace of the principle of love were the horrors of the American War in Vietnam. One task of neoliberalism and its militarist wing was and is to foster amnesia about Vietnam. Forgetting the real importance of the hippie search for community and love is part of that project. The slogan “Make Love Not War” has a real resonance and depth, connecting civil rights and the counterculture, which bypasses those who see a badge as just a commodity. So leftist analysts who suggest that the counterculture paved the way for neoliberal consumerism also forget the contribution of the hippie search (grope, as the Fugs would have put it) for love even if they themselves do not forget Vietnam. Their political amnesia is not too different, after all, from the right culture warriors who blame everything on the Sixties. The impetus behind organic and even free food is not supermarket culture but the idea of a collective responsibility and a collective project like a People’s Market. The Digger concept of “free”, while very different from and at times antagonistic to the Haight Independent Proprietor’s (HIP) philosophy, was also for a period quite deliberately ancillary to the marketplace, establishing a different sense of community. There are the paradoxes and contradictions I have already pointed to but the counterculture did not lay the foundations of neo-liberalism. On the contrary, it had a classical democratic concept of the public good. It could be suggested here that I am specifically referring to the more radical wing of the counterculture exemplified by the Diggers and not by the hip proprietors like Ron Thelin from the Psychedelic Shop. Yet even those entrepreneurs were hardly doyens of

finance capital and had a sincere, if at times attenuated, concept of serving the community. It could be suggested, of course, that the Diggers were not hippies and set themselves up deliberately as a counterpoint to hippie lifestyle. That, however, only touches on an essential truth because they were part of the Haight-Ashbury community rather than service workers who just happened to spy the need for welfare on the streets. To be sure, they and Chester Anderson from the Communications Company had profound criticisms of tendencies in the Haight but they were not outside it. They constituted a more radical wing of what was itself a radical protest against the state of America and the world. Besides which, there is no point getting into fine differences in definition, given that the term hippie did not itself come organically from the community but was invented by a *San Francisco Examiner* journalist. Many “hippies” preferred the term “freak” but hippie has become an historical and sociological category and descriptor that cannot just be shoved aside. There were “weekend hippies”, tourists briefly within the counterculture, but that is not the essential subject of this paper. Besides which, some of those “tourists” exported the radical commitment witnessed in the Haight back into the mainstream.

Hippies were, of course, drawing upon critiques of conformism, suburbia and the decline of community developed by many others from Jane Jacobs to Paul and Percival Goodman to Kenneth Rexroth. Rexroth, as leading light of the San Francisco Literary Renaissance, was particularly influential. The Renaissance (especially the poet Gary Snyder who did become a fixture in the Haight) laid the groundwork for the ecological consciousness and devotion to a communal ideal later worked upon by hippies. And it is no coincidence that the early momentum for the growth of the Haight community was provided by exiles from North Beach searching out cheaper rents. So it is not surprising to find Kenneth Rexroth, in an essay on community planning in 1964 using these words: “We make fun of the word ‘togetherness’ but there is nothing funny about the increasing failure of

our own togetherness with ourselves and the rest of life on this planet. Ecology is the science of togetherness of living things and their environment.”²⁸ Rexroth also championed William Morris’s critique of the ideology of progress embraced by Edward Bellamy.²⁹ Morris, like Rexroth and many of those in the Bay Area’s radical counterculture, appealed to an aesthetic sensibility that valued attachment to nature: “What! Shall man go on generation after generation gaining fresh command over the powers of nature...yet generation after generation losing some portion of his natural senses: that is, of his life and soul?”³⁰ As Kristin Ross has shown in detail, William Morris was influenced powerfully by the ideals of the Paris Commune.³¹ History is full of radical breaks but also certain continuities, some of which can seem at first almost surreal. After all, who would have thought that 1960s radicals would gather together in homage to England’s seventeenth century Diggers? The very concept of “communal luxury” associated with the Paris Commune is in some ways a precursor of the hippie philosophy of love and togetherness. Radical communities so far apart geographically and temporally had, in fact, a shared commitment to the very simple but significant idea that “we can be together”.

²⁸ Kenneth Rexroth, “Community Planning” (1964), reprinted in *The Alternative Society: Essays from the Other World*, Herder & Herder, New York, 1972, p. 28.

²⁹ Kenneth Rexroth, “Urbanism” (1964), reprinted in *The Alternative Society*, pp. 31-38.

³⁰ William Morris cited by James Redmond, in “Introduction”, to William Morris, *News From Nowhere* (ed. James Redmond), Routledge, London, 1970, p. xxxix. *News from Nowhere* was originally published as a series of stories in 1890.

³¹ Kristin Ross, *Communal Luxury: The Political Imaginary of the Paris Commune*, Verso, London, 2015, particularly pp. 60-77, 107-116.