The Media Allies of the San Francisco Hippies, 1965-67

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First Reader: Josh Schwartz
Second Reader: Thai Jones

[1] Front page, *Berkeley Barb*, 4.24, June 16, 1967.

Introduction

In September of 1965, the term "hippie" was first used to describe long-haired, marijuana-smoking, frequently jobless young adults of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury neighborhood. A few years and hundreds of thousands of converts later, proud "hippies" could be found in urban enclaves, rural communes, musical groups, newspaper staffs, magazine interviews and countless other spaces, physical and cultural, all over the continent.[2]

Although many tens of thousands wore the badge of "hippie" proudly into the 1970's and still do today, the word was originally derogatory. It was Michael Fallon, a columnist for the relatively conservative *San Francisco Examiner,* in his article "New Haven For Beatniks" who explicitly called his Haight-Ashbury subjects "hippies."[3] The article described a classic "crash pad" of the Haight-Ashbury, a spacious, multi-story house holding more bodies than one would expect, whose members were reckoning with the consequences of a marijuana raid conducted by police on their property a week prior. Fallon had fun with the hippies' laziness on display when they struggled to progress with their dinner plans.[4]

"Hippies," now often referred to as counterculturalists, disagreed about the extent to which they would embrace the term from the very start. Counterculturalist Guy Strait, in 1967, was proud to call himself a hippie, for to him hippies were a necessary consequence of ubiquitous dissatisfaction among American people–the result of frivolous wars, dehumanizing consumerism, sexual confusion, and demands of conformity. In Strait's view, hippies are those who gladly "sin" by refusing to play the "straight game of camouflage," dressing brightly,

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[2] Moretta, John. *The Hippies : A 1960s History.* Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2017, Chapter 7, "Hippies Elsewhere."

[3] "New Haven for Beatniks," *The San Francisco Examiner*, September 5, 1965. Though Fallon made the most public declaration of the word "hippie," it is also rumored that true Beatniks of San Francisco coined the term first. The Beats, though, also meant it as a gibe; Moretta, John. *The Hippies : A 1960s History*, 35.

[4] "New Haven for Beatniks," *The San Francisco Examiner*, September 5, 1965.

conspicuously expressing their sexual desires, and refusing to keep up with the Joneses.[5] The hippies were a leaderless group by design, but these general principles were adhered to by most hippies of the Haight-Ashbury–a low-rent neighborhood of San Francisco adjacent to Golden Gate Park and the first American hippie enclave, as nonconformity and non-consumerism were uniting threads between the early members of the psychedelic counterculture.[6,] Another, which Strait did not mention by name, was the use of psychedelic drugs.

Though Guy Strait proudly identified himself and his peers as hippies, others resisted the label that was thrust upon them without their endorsement. Ron Thelin, a prominent face in the hippie scene and the owner of one of the neighborhood's most popular establishments, the Psychedelic Shop, said that "hippies is a creation of the mass media… it has nothing to do in the world with what's happening."[7] A theatrical subgroup of hippies called the Diggers, who will be discussed at length later in this essay, agreed with Thelin's stance. After the prophesied but calamitous "Summer of Love" in 1967, the Diggers staged a "Death of Hippie" ceremony, during which they memorialized "hippie," a "devoted son of mass media," by parading a coffin full of hip regalia through the neighborhood, showing how they felt about media's involvement in the Haight[8]

Present from the very start of the hippie movement (San Francisco, 1965), therefore, was a tension between mainstream or "mass" culture and counterculture. Guy Strait and many more were proud to be called "hippies," while the Diggers, Ron Thelin, and others refused a label that

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[5] Ibid. "Straight" is a term that means "square," or un-hip; regular.
[6] The hippie movement is often referred to as the "counterculture." I will refer to them by this term as well as "psychedelic counterculture," because the word "counterculture" alone could suggest other sixties' movements. Regarding leadership in the hippie movement, no one figure comes to mind. Ken Kesey was influential, but in his own words, he was "too old" to be a hippie; Source: StudiocanalUK. *MAGIC TRIP - Official Trailer - Ken Kesey Documentary*, 2011. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6q8qlsx8tdA.
[7] As quoted in Bach, Damon R. *The American Counterculture: A History of Hippies and Cultural Dissidents*. University Press of Kansas, 2020. xii.
[8] Moretta, John. *The Hippies : A 1960s History*, 193-4.

could be used to misrepresent a complex cultural movement. Mass culture's engagement with the hippies only accelerated from this nascent period. By 1967, media had directed enough attention to the Haight-Ashbury that tens of thousands of young adults poured into the city during 1967's "Summer of Love," overwhelming the lodging capacities of the neighborhood to disastrous effect–the proliferation of disease, hard drugs, and violence.[9] When the dust settled, mainstream media was a popular culprit for bringing about the demise of the "Hashbury." The biggest problem, in the words of Grateful Dead manager Rock Scully, was that "the nation thought the Haight was a festival."[10]

Historians in decades since the Haight-Ashbury's 1960's blossom and decay have largely concurred with many heartbroken hippies who saw the movement's success as inverse to the amount of mass culture that was engaging with it. Indeed, a cocktail of media messaging must have persuaded tens of thousands to flock to the neighborhood without considering the consequences of the crush. Historian Damon R. Bach put it this way: "The national media played a major role in bringing about the Hashbury's problems, for it began defining the hippie image, culture, and values, and as a result, the legions of individuals that flooded the Hashbury differed significantly from the district's original denizens."[11] Bach summarized a popular view of national media's engagement with the counterculture: that it misrepresented and distorted the hippie movement, portraying it as something much different than it truly was, inspiring thousands of thrill-seekers who had no business flocking to the neighborhood. This echoed Ron Thelin and the Diggers, who saw this process unfolding in real time. Historian John Moretta wrote that most of the curious young people who flooded the Haight in the Summer of Love "simply *played* at

[9] Moretta, John. *The Hippies : A 1960s History*, Chapter 8, "The Summer of Love."
[10] As quoted in Von Hoffman, Nicholas. *We Are the People Our Parents Warned Us Against*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968, 25.
[11] Bach, Damon R. *The American Counterculture: A History of Hippies and Cultural Dissidents*, 118.

being hippie."[12] This was corroborated by sociologist Lewis Yablonsky, who dove headfirst into post-Summer of Love hippiedom by traveling and living with California hippies, and classified 50% of the hippies he met as "plastic hippies," who were either drug addicts, "part-timers," or generally uncommitted to being of a historically significant movement of individuals who consciously sought a more spiritually fulfilling lifepath.[13] Beyond those, thousands more returned to school immediately after their summer vacations, so the average visitor during the Summer of Love was perhaps less committed to the countercultural vision than Guy Strait's ilk of hippie would have hoped, and perhaps the newcomers to the Haight were tragically misled.

How did this work, the chronic misrepresentation of hippies performed by mass culture/mainstream media? Aniko Bodroghkozy, in her analysis of television portrayals of counterculture, *Groove Tube,* argued that national media networks had a general agenda of "domesticating" the of threat of the hippie counterculture. Making use of television, culture industries co-opted and therefore neutralized a movement that threatened to convert thousands of youth to its anti-consumerist, dropout side.[14] Other historians broadened the media "domestication" effort beyond television, as Timothy Miller, in *The Hippies and American Values*, wrote of the American music business that "the music that was the language of a generation was controlled by the interests it was supposed to be overthrowing. Period."[15] A writer for Madison, WI's underground magazine wrote in 1967, post-Summer of Love, took aim at avaricious outsiders of all kinds, testifying that the hippie movement was killed by being

[12] Moretta, *The Hippies: A 1960's History*, 2.
[13] Yablonsky, Lewis. *The Hippie Trip*. New York: Pegasus, 1968, 36. Another popular name for "part-timers" was and is "teenyboppers."
[14] Bodroghkozy, Aniko. *Groove Tube: Sixties Television and the Youth Rebellion*. Console-Ing Passions. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2001, 64.
[15] Miller, Timothy. *The Hippies and American Values*. First edition. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1991, 81.

"swallowed with dollar signs" by the "society of buy and sell."[16] Scores of historians concur that as mainstream/national media engagement with the Haight increased, so did the problems that unraveled the neighborhood. After all, media and commerce were full of self-interested individuals whose lifestyles and value systems probably had little in common with the longhaired peace-and-love acid heads they were televising. Or so the story goes.

Historians have generally fallen short of capturing the full, nuanced, and often un-hostile relationship that hippies had with mainstream media from 1965-67. The fact that hippie enclaves sprouted up all over the country by the end of the 1960's is evidence of the complimentary alliance between counterculture and mainstream culture. Spreading the message beyond the Haight, and beyond urban areas, was a goal of the psychedelic counterculture from its inception. Invitations to the neighborhood were generously doled out by San Franciscan bands and the Haight hippies' very own newspaper.[17] What is left out of the story of media and the early psychedelic counterculture, is that mainstream media and outside players often amplified the voices of hippies speaking for themselves. This essay does not exonerate national media for its ostensible crimes against the hippies done in 1967 and beyond. Instead, I wish to advance a reading of hippies' engagement with media not as David versus Goliath, as other studies have tended to do, but instead as an often mutually beneficial arrangement in the early stages of 1965-67 in San Francisco.

Chapter one will pick up the baton from the introduction, focusing on the dominant newspaper of the San Francisco Bay Area, the *San Francisco Chronicle,* and its interaction with the blossoming counterculture. Chapter two will focus on record labels, a key facet of mass

[16] As quoted in Bodroghkozy, *Groove Tube: Sixties Television and the Youth Rebellion*, 94.
[17] There is a lot of evidence that, like all sixties movements, the hippies wanted to spread their ideology and lifestyle across the country. Perhaps the most clear example is the "Council for a Summer of Love" celebrating the incoming thousands of youth in the pages of the Haight newspaper (discussed later). Source: "It All Depends On…" *San Francisco Oracle*, #8, June, 1967.

culture that also had vital interplay with the hippies. Chapter three will focus on the New Left of Berkeley, California, and their engagement with the hippie movement, particularly the ways in which it rebranded itself based on the aesthetics of a movement with whom it shared only modest ideological overlap.

All chapters in harmony will seek to show that many unlikely characters, some in media, some in straight-edged business, some in militant activism, were key ingredients of the hippie explosion of the 1960's, to the benefit of all parties involved.

Psychedelic Blues in Mainstream News

As historian Thomas Frank wrote in his book *The Conquest of Cool*, "many in American business… imagined the counterculture not as an enemy to be undermined… but as a hopeful sign.[18]" This chapter will focus on forces in culture industries that engaged with, but did not undermine, undersell, or deliberately misrepresent the hippie counterculture in San Francisco. Rather than highlight ways in which mainstream media corrupted the hippie movement, which has been done well by historians of the subject, this chapter will demonstrate ways in which "culture industries" were in fact instrumental to the growth of the movement.[19]

The *San Francisco Chronicle* was one such "mass culture" entity that related to the hippie movement as much more than a "domesticator." The *Chronicle* had, leading up to 1965, bested its competitor the *Examiner* and achieved a circulation of more than 363,000 readers.[20] The paper was relatively liberal, which reflected the general political sentiment of San Francisco: the

[18] Frank, Thomas. *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, 8.
[19] For hippie enclaves sprouting up all over America by 1967, Moretta, John. *The Hippies : A 1960s History,* "Hippies Elsewhere."
[20] Historic Newspapers. "A History of the San Francisco Chronicle," December 21, 2021. https://www.historic-newspapers.com/blog/san-francisco-chronicle-history/.

Chronicle reported Civil Rights and Vietnam news with an air of neutrality.[21] The *Chronicle* also had the good humor to post letters to the editor, even when the letters took aim at favorite columnists, such as music critic Ralph J. Gleason**.** One angry reader asked, "did you find him in a garbage can?"[22]

It is not in the least surprising that Gleason would offend the more conservative readers of the *Chronicle.* His bread and butter in his long and varied career was reviewing Jazz, with special attention to pioneers on the cutting edge, such as saxophonists John Coltrane and Archie Shepp.[23] So committed was Gleason to spreading awareness and appreciation of Jazz, and not favoring the whiter faces in the field, that he was awarded "Citizen of the Year" by the Sun Reporter, a primarily black newspaper, for his "continued interest and enthusiasm for the development of… equal opportunity in the field of music and entertainment."[24] Gleason also came to the defense of the political-comedic San Francisco Mime Troupe, a self-described "guerrilla theater" group who was banned from performing in the parks, their desired venue, on allegations of obscenity.[25] His interest in Jazz and defense of the irreverent arts made him polarizing, but on the whole popular.[26]

Hip and tastefully anti-establishment though he was, Gleason was forty-eight years old in the year 1965, so he was probably the oldest person in attendance at the Matrix watching the

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[21] See for example the December 31, 1966 issue of the *San Francisco Chronicle,* with its numerous articles on Vietnam.
[22] "Comments on the Troupe Banning," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, September 5, 1965.
[23] Gleason invited John Coltrane on his show in "John Coltrane Quartet." *Jazz Casual*, performance by the John Coltrane Quartet, hosted by Ralph J. Gleason. National Education Television, 1963.
Regarding his criticism of pioneering Jazz musicians, Reich, Howard. "Understanding the brilliance of jazz critic Ralph Gleason," *Chicago Tribune*, September 6, 2016.
https://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/music/howard-reich/ct-jazz-ralph-gleason-ent-0907-20160906-column.html
[24] "Negro Paper Honors Ralph Gleason," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, March 28, 1965
[25] "Comments on the Troupe Banning," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, September 5, 1965.
[26] Gleason is considered a legend of music criticism, and for every furious letter-writer to the *Chronicle*, there were a handful of positive reviews of Gleason as a public figure.

Jefferson Airplane perform one early September night. Though he had written before about the Beatles, Gleason had not engaged very much with Rock music in his *Chronicle* column before his 9/13/65 article, "Jefferson Airplane–Sound and Style."[27] The Jefferson Airplane was a recently-formed Folk-Rock outfit with members fully enmeshed in the hippie scene. Unafraid to explore their bluesy sound to the tune of extended, improvised jams, the Airplane would be a staple group that helped define the "San Francisco Sound," which would be much talked about in the field of Rock music for years to come.[28] The Matrix, a former pizza restaurant, without even a dancing permit to its name, was the venue that Jefferson Airplane played weekly, which guitarist Marty Balin co-owned.[29] Gleason, acutely aware that American kids were growing "more interested in a career with a guitar" than "trying out for a bit part in a Hollywood flick," was impressed by the Airplane's sound, their good vocals and guitar playing. He noticed that they have "style," and their fans were "sophisticated and hip." The atmosphere was "groovy," and one gets the impression that Gleason had a particularly enjoyable evening checking out new local music.[30]

One sentence at the end of his article stood out: "I don't know who they will record for, but they will obviously record for someone."[31] What was obvious to Gleason had not been obvious to anyone else in the music industry, so Gleason's warm review attracted industry professionals to the Bay Area like moths to a flame. In the words of Bill Thompson, a copyist for the Chronicle and eventual road manager for Jefferson Airplane, "everybody jumped on a plane

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[27] "In 1964, the Beatles Emerged," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, January 3, 1965 and "Jefferson Airplane, Sound and Style," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, September 13, 1965.
[28] Gleason, Ralph J. *The Jefferson Airplane and the San Francisco Sound*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1969, 29.
[29] The article "Jefferson Airplane, Sound and Style," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, September 13, 1965, explains that the Airplane played weekly.
[30] "Jefferson Airplane, Sound and Style," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, September 13, 1965,
[31] Ibid

and came out to see the band… then there was a bidding war."[32] Bill Thompson contributed to this bidding war himself by publicizing the Matrix club in the *Chronicle* even before the venue opened.[33] In the months after his endorsement of the Jefferson Airplane, Gleason would attend and review numerous dance concerts that served as counterculture gatherings, voicing to *Chronicle* readers his support of the music itself and the way that hippies behaved themselves.[34] When San Francisco government sought to interfere with hippie music events and lifestyles, a moment that will be discussed later, Gleason used his platform to foster support for hippies and for Rock dances in the pages of the *Chronicle.*

So far, we have seen that the *San Francisco Chronicle*, a dominant cultural institution of the West coast, alone was too multifaceted to deliver one cohesive, anti-countercultural message. Though it was a standard-issue newspaper, the highest selling on the West coast, that ran standard liberal coverage of current events, its inclusion of Ralph Gleason infused the paper with an artistically-daring and lightly anti-establishment spirit that drew attention to the young San Francisco counterculture not through "domestication," but through genuine interest. But this is only one source of media, specific to the West Coast, and historians like Aniko Bodroghkozy and others were often writing about national media, especially television, when they discussed the adverse impacts of media on the counterculture.[35]

Problematically for proponents of the theory that hippies and mass media were intrinsically adversarial, however, Ralph Gleason was *also* a television figure, who hosted a

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[32] Graham, Bill, and Robert Greenfield. *Bill Graham Presents: My Life inside Rock and Out*. First edition. New York: Doubleday, 1992, 164.
[33] Gleason, Ralph J. *The Jefferson Airplane and the San Francisco Sound*, 33.
[34] This support of hippie behavior at concerts was especially evident in Gleason's article, "Censure, Praise for 'Trips' Festival," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, January 30, 1966.

[35] Bodroghkozy, Aniko. *Groove Tube: Sixties Television and the Youth Rebellion*, Introduction: "Turning on the Groove Tube."

series called "Jazz Casual" on National Education Television (the predecessor to PBS), starting in 1961, continuing into 1968. On that program, Gleason conducted interviews with contemporary Jazz musicians, and invited them to perform live in studio. Gleason unflinchingly invited numerous black musicians–Dizzy Gillespie, Carmen McRae, Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane and others, to play and discuss Jazz on his show. Given that approximately two decades later, MTV would resist airing black artists' videos until threatened by Michael Jackson's record label, Gleason was unique in his willingness to absorb criticism for integrating his program.[36] Here was a man who worked in national and West-coast media who used his platform to promote noteworthy music, whether it be made by dropout longhairs, African-Americans, women, or any other potentially polarizing group. Splitting time between two dominant cultural institutions, he was nonetheless able to serve the musicians he respected by sharing his spotlight with them.

The flood of attention he brought to the hippies introduced another key mass culture player into the fray, one whose influence was, much like the *Chronicle*, not wholly not detrimental to the growth of the psychedelic counterculture. This was the record label.

When the record label bidding war commenced over the Jefferson Airplane in San Francisco, a number of other San Francisco bands were in their nascent stages. The Great Society (featuring future Jefferson Airplane vocalist Grace Slick), The Quicksilver Messenger Service, Big Brother and the Holding Company, and the Warlocks (soon to be the Grateful Dead), were just a few of the bands beginning to play regularly in the area. All of these bands would signed to record labels by 1967, but none scored as big as the Airplane. Major record label RCA Victor offered them a $25,000 advance, at a time when "*nobody* got an advance.[37] The band accepted, and in doing so became the first San Francisco Rock band to firmly enter the music

[36] Swedien, Bruce, and Michael Jackson. *In the Studio with Michael Jackson*. Hal Leonard Corporation, 2009, 37.
[37] Graham, Bill, and Robert Greenfield. *Bill Graham Presents: My Life inside Rock and Out*, 164.

industry.[38] The prospect of breaking out of the San Francisco scene and achieving national notoriety was suddenly made real for the Airplane.

RCA Victor and Columbia Records were the two most dominant labels of the music business in the 1960's.[39] They had enormous budgets for advertising, recording, and distributing records, at a time when self-production of records was virtually impossible. There were smaller record labels that competed, but for years these two giants led the field.[40] Controlling the means of production of physical music, and possessing the capital to publicize a group through newspapers, magazines, and other outlets, RCA Victor and Columbia Records were mainstays of mainstream media. Despite this, we will now explore the ways in which these record label giants engaged with the bands of the San Francisco counterculture without an explicit agenda of "domesticating" their influence on American youth, and instead drew genuine interest to what San Francisco counterculturalists considered to be a very real part of their new culture.

The Airplane's leap into the industry did not begin smoothly. When it came time to record the Jefferson Airplane's first album, the label and band were at odds about artistic direction. Known locally for their improvisational tendencies, unstructured jams, and embrace of noise, the Airplane was a tricky animal to wrangle into the confines of studio recordings. RCA Victor insisted on marketability for the recordings; the songs should be short, much shorter than the live versions, lest the band and label shoot themselves in the foot by releasing a record unplayable on the radio. When the record was finished, Bay Area locals who were expecting something on par with a live Airplane performance were disappointed. A *Berkeley Barb* writer wrote that "The Airplane Just Didn't Take Off" on their debut album, suffering from guitarist and singer Marty

[38] Ibid
[39] Rorabaugh, W.J. *"American Hippies,"* Cambridge University Press. Accessed March 29, 2022, 60-61.
[40] Rorabaugh, W.J. *"American Hippies,"* 60-61. Capitol, Warner Brothers, Verve, Elektra, Vanguard were other record labels of the 1960's, among others.

Balin's emergence as a frontman, when fans of the band knew it operated more democratically in an organic environment.[41] This would be an unusual criticism for many other styles of music; the 1960's were a time when frontpeople were integral to most major bands and genres.[42] RCA Victor's desire to record the Jefferson Airplane like other popular artists was disappointing for local fans who valued the uniqueness of that group and other bands carving out the "San Francisco Sound."

Historians have seized on this lukewarm debut album to argue for the pacifying influence of RCA Victor. W.J. Rorabaugh wrote that "the engineers saw no virtue in riffs, improvisation, distorted sounds, or loop feedback, and obliterated all of these items."[43] While a digression into the specifics of this claim is tempting, it is sufficient to say that RCA Victor did not de-fang the Airplane's Blues-Rock debut to the extent that Rorabaugh suggested.[44] The truth is that, while the album maintained many key signifiers of Rock music, RCA did convince the band to arrange typical song forms, which did not allow for extended improvisations, or even any songs over 3:34 in length, among other alterations to their live in-person style.

But an analysis of RCA Victor's influence on the counterculture naturally needs to consider the Airplane's following release as well. Though the Airplane's debut album failed to meet the high expectations of local fans, their second record oozed with experimentation, local

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[41] "The Airplane Just Didn't Take Off," *Berkeley Barb*, 3.8, August 26, 1966.
[42] Big Band Jazz, Motown, Rock and Folk acts often had a recognizable frontperson in the sixties; usually the singer(s) were the marketed faces of touring acts (think Frank Sinatra, The Temptations, The Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, etc.).
[43] Rorabaugh, W.J. *"American Hippies,"* 60-61
[44] It is hard to imagine a Rock record without riffs or distorted sounds, and indeed RCA Victor did not cut these elements out of "Jefferson Airplane Takes Off." The bass tone on much, if not all of the album, is distorted, and plays a number of riffs. In fact, the very first musical content on the album, in "Blues From an Airplane," is electric bass and electric guitar playing overlapping riffs, with a distant bell pinging away in the background. Guitar riffs play even alongside the vocals in the verses of this first song on the album. Rorabaugh is correct that the band engaged in very few, if any, unstructured improvisational sections in any songs, and forgoes the use of unorthodox effects like loop feedback, but riffs and distorted bass were key to the Rock feel of the album.

flavor, and widespread appeal. New vocalist Grace Slick was a powerful presence on stage, and contributed material from her prior band, the Great Society, and it was in this formation that the Airplane really took off. No longer effortfully truncating songs designed for live settings, the Airplane had refined their studio approach, resulting in a breakthrough sophomore album that would be enormously influential. The "Surrealistic Pillow" record birthed three singles, "My Best Friend," "White Rabbit," and "Somebody to Love," on the strength of which the record rose to #2 on the Billboard charts.[45] Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead contributed much to the album, with instrumental advice and whatever else it was that caused the Airplane to credit him as "musical and spiritual advisor" in the liner notes.[46] After a slightly rocky start to their relationship with RCA Victor, the Airplane had by early 1967 produced an album of songs with varying lengths (1:52 to 6:20), references to hallucinations ("White Rabbit"), and using distorted sounds ("3/5 of a Mile in 10 Seconds"). Thus they cured all the ills that W.J. Rorabaugh had diagnosed in their first record, with the same label.

All this came at precisely the moment when many historians argue that media was its busiest in flooding America with inaccurate representations of the hippie movement. RCA Victor's sponsorship of "Surrealistic Pillow" allowed the Jefferson Airplane to launch national tours, sharing their uniquely San Franciscan product with curious audiences nationwide. And while historians blame "mass media" for spurring the deluge of the Haight in the Summer of Love, the Jefferson Airplane, in the months leading up to the Summer, was explicitly inviting audiences to come to San Francisco.[47] If RCA was contributing to the idea that the "Haight was a

[45] California Historical Society, "#OnthisDay 50 Years ago, Jefferson Airplane's Surrealistic Pillow was released," summerof.love. Accessed April 1, 2022. https://summerof.love/onthisday-50-years-ago-jefferson-airplanes-surrealistic-pillow-released/
[46] McNally, Dennis. *A Long Strange Trip: The inside History of the Grateful Dead*. First edition. New York: Broadway Books, 2002, 170.
[47] Gleason, Ralph J. *The Jefferson Airplane and the San Francisco Sound*, 146.

festival," it was by funding Jefferson Airplane's tour, and allowing the band to tell audiences something to that same effect.

Hopefully by now a pattern has emerged. Culture industries, even the largest record label, or the largest West Coast newspaper, or a music critic with a nationally televised program, all interacted in a nuanced, and at times quite favorable way with the psychedelic counterculture from its earliest stages. This should not be particularly surprising; it was clear not only from the Ralph Gleason article, but also the early concerts put on by hippie organizers (a trio called the Family Dog), that the scene in San Francisco was not just unique, but that it also had a very high economic ceiling.[48] Gleason mused, along with the Family Dog, and several others, that San Francisco could become "the next Liverpool."[49] It was in mainstream media's interest to propel a musical style that was clearly growing and had the power to draw a crowd of hundreds of young, colorful, anti-establishment counterculturalists on a weekly basis. In the Haight Ashbury scene's infancy, RCA asked Jefferson Airplane to change a few lyrics, particularly regarding casual sex and psychedelic trips, both of which were celebrated hippie practices.[50] But as the Haight-Ashbury scene grew, and RCA likely saw the virtue of allowing the band to more accurately represent a growing movement, they allowed the Airplane to work with Jerry Garcia and release an album full of vivid psychedelic sounds and blunt allusions to hippie aesthetics and practices. This is only one example of how the counterculture's growth led to an even greater acceptance by a culture industry, rather than a conservative, domesticating backlash. After all, with Gleason providing the wind in the sails of the "San Francisco Sound," it would be irrational

[48] This is a theme that recurs in Gleason, Ralph J. *The Jefferson Airplane and the San Francisco Sound,* Chapter 1, "The Bands… That's Where It's At."
[49] Gleason, *The Jefferson Airplane and the San Francisco Sound,* 2. Liverpool was home to a vibrant music scene full of countless bands in the early 1960's, one of which was the Beatles.
[50] Tamarkin, Jeff. *Got a Revolution!: The Turbulent Flight of Jefferson Airplane*. Simon and Schuster, 2003, 83.

for RCA to look to the past for examples of how to manage a Rock band. The "San Francisco Sound" was a good investment.

As mentioned in the introduction, Timothy Miller, looking at the chain reaction of bands signing to major labels, wrote that "the music that was the language of a generation was controlled by the interests it was supposed to be overthrowing. Period."[51] Miller though, like other historians, overgeneralized the relationship between San Francisco Rock bands and record labels. There were stories of disenchantment and disappointment if one looked for them, most notably Jefferson Airplane's and Big Brother and the Holding Company's debut albums for their respective labels, but that is only a sliver of the full picture.[52] The Grateful Dead, for instance, ever-wary of casting their lot with music businessmen, were another example of a band that found success in their dealings with their record label, a still young music branch of Warner Brothers, of Hollywood fame. Rather than controlling and manipulating the band they signed, Warner Brothers actually let the Dead, with their enormous local reputation, lead the way.

Thomas Frank wrote a highly influential book, *The Conquest of Cool*, in which he demonstrated how the industries of menswear and advertising embraced the counterculture's sensibilities and, rather than determined to resist, were eager to adopt them.[53] Though the Warner Brothers executives that courted the Dead were not oozing with cool, the play-by-play of their interactions with the band demonstrate a similar interest in the new, beyond just its profitability. The President of Warner Brothers, who was a friend of the hippest San Francisco DJ Tom Donahue, remarked about the Dead that "I don't think Jack Warner will ever understand this…

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[51] Miller, Timothy. *The Hippies and American Values*, 81.
[52] "Company Holding Big Bummer" *Berkeley Barb*, 5.8, August 5, 1967. In this article from the *Berkeley Barb*, the columnist lamented that Big Brother & the Holding Company were the victims of a bad contract, and that their debut release lacked Janis Joplin's "screeching blues," which was one of the band's trademarks.
[53] Frank, Thomas. *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism*, introduction.

but I really feel like they're good."[54] The desire to betray convention, so constant in Frank's analyses of menswear and advertising creatives, is also present in Warner Brothers, evidenced by an executive willing to take a risk on a band he knew his boss would not appreciate. Tom Donahue's word went a long way, as he was a radio personality beloved by the counterculture for his willingness to play new Rock music over the airwaves.[55] He was even employed by KYA, a Top 40 radio station.[56] In Tom Donahue, as well as Warner Brothers, we see two more prime examples of mainstream culture intersecting with and propelling the counterculture in its earliest stage.

The contract offered to the Dead was devoid of any demands that they domesticate their art, or conform their songs to contemporary conventions. They were afforded the liberties given to Jazz musicians in the studio; they would not be penalized for recording long songs. The icing on the cake was that they were allowed to keep their publishing rights, meaning that the music would be released only with their consent.[57] That it didn't fully succeed–only a handful of tracks really captured the live feel–had much less to do with restrictive demands by Warner Brothers, and much more to do with the Dead's inexperience with the recording process. In drummer Bill Kreutzmann's words, the record faltered because, in addition to taking too much Ritalin, they were still "learning how to be a band."[58] To reiterate, the industry heads at Warner Brothers were largely *not* responsible for the unspectacular debut Grateful Dead record. Rather, they provided the raw materials for what could have been a record that appealed to fans of the live, spontaneous Grateful Dead that they knew and loved. And much in the same way that the Airplane felt

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[54] McNally, Dennis. *A Long Strange Trip: The inside History of the Grateful Dead*, 171.
[55] Gleason, Ralph J. *The Jefferson Airplane and the San Francisco Sound,* 29.
[56] "Golden Gate Great Radio." https://kyaradio.com.
[57] McNally, Dennis. *A Long Strange Trip: The inside History of the Grateful Dead*, 172-3.
[58] Kreutzmann, Bill, and Benjy Eisen. *Deal: My Three Decades of Drumming, Dreams, and Drugs with the Grateful Dead*. First edition. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015, 69.

emboldened to take greater risks on their second album, the Dead would proceed similarly atop the supportive infrastructure of Warner Brothers. Guitarist Bob Weir remarked, in the band's early pre-record label days, that the industry would have to "take us the way we are."[59] So they did.[60]

The case studies of a couple of San Francisco Rock bands might seem like only trifling exceptions to the narrative that Bach, Bodroghkozy, Miller and more tell in their works. By promoting the bands, were record labels, Gleason, the Chronicle, really supporting the *counterculture*? Couldn't they be ignoring or subverting the hippies even while they try to ride the wave of hippie Rock? Certainly, any music industry story played out over decades will feature, in Ralph Gleason's words, "song sharks and record wolves," but in the gestation period of the hippie movement, 1965-67, such boogeymen did not predominate in relations between hippies and straight music businesspeople. To take the bands "as they were," as many labels attempted to do, meant to endorse the psychedelic underground, lock, stock and barrel.[61] Record labels still continued to promote the groups even though such support also boosted the extra-musical importance of the bands within the psychedelic counterculture.

To see why this is the case, it is important to understand the importance of Rock music to the counterculture from its inception. When discussing the very, very beginnings of what became the hippie movement, most scholars of the period point not to San Francisco, but to Virginia City, Nevada, where a music venue called the Red Dog Saloon attracted locals and visitors donning far-out garb, and acting out a sort of wild-west, Rock & Roll fantasy where LSD flowed as freely

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[59] Goldstein, Richard. *Reporting the Counterculture*. Routledge Library Editions: Journalism, v. 8. London ; New York: Routledge, 2016, 58.
[60] For those curious about the progression of Grateful Dead albums after their lukewarm debut, their following two albums, "Anthem of the Sun" and "Aoxomoxoa" were relentlessly experimental, and demonstrate well Warner Brothers' unwavering faith in the creative desires of the band.
[61] "Jefferson Airplane, Sound and Style," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, September 13, 1965.

as liquor. The house band was the Charlatans, who later moved to San Francisco and continued to play shows with big-name local bands like the Airplane and the Dead.[62] Given the centrality of the loud, dusk-till-dawn music to the atmosphere of the Red Dog Saloon, it is hard to imagine the bar having the same draw, or regional significance, if it didn't also have new Rock music on full display. In the subsequent years, as the scene moved West into San Francisco, the largest conduits of hippies continued to be places where music was played. The first show organized by the hippie trio known as The Family Dog, who had Ralph Gleason's blessing and guidance, entitled "Tribute to Dr. Strange," was held in a makeshift venue on the pier.[63] It was there, the unsurprising setting of a Rock concert, that many young heads realized how big of a scene the psychedelic underground was becoming.[64]

Music's role as a conduit of hippies only heightened after the "Tribute." On the formal end of the venue spectrum, there were the Fillmore and the Avalon, which held ticketed dances on weekends, and attracted hordes of young heads on a weekly basis. On the casual end, there was the Panhandle, a strip of Golden Gate Park, where bands often played for free, or the street, where amateurs played their own instruments. At the Digger Feed, a non-musical event, covered by the *Berkeley Barb* on 10/21/66, the hungry hippies spontaneously composed a song called "Evil Auto" about the bummer that was traffic through the neighborhood.[65] Just as the psychedelic counterculture began with music at the center, so it continued, even among groups like the Diggers for whom music was not a trademark activity.

Beyond just Rock music generally, Haight-Ashbury hippies especially cherished specific local bands like the Dead, the Airplane, Big Brother & the Holding Company, Quicksilver

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[62] Perry, Charles. *The Haight Ashbury*. London: Turnaround [distributor], 2005, 8-9.
[63] Gleason not only consulted the Family Dog organizers, but also advertised the concert using his platform in the Chronicle. Citation: Perry, Charles. *The Haight Ashbury*, 30.
[64] Gleason, *The Jefferson Airplane and the San Francisco Sound,* 27.
[65] "Delving the Diggers," *Berkeley Barb,* 3.16, October 21, 1966

Messenger Service and more. They weren't just Rock bands, but "they were our bands," and indeed the band members often lived right alongside their fans, even as they grew larger and more nationally recognized.[66] The improvisational and spontaneous bent of the bands was a key element of the "San Francisco Sound," and was one of many ways that the bands dissolved the pretentions that typically separated artist and spectator. Audience members felt like every show was a unique journey; at best the bands were devoid of "show biz," and instead oozing with authenticity.[67] The unpredictability of each concert was reminiscent of that same quality in acid trips, and to so many hippies, therein lay the beauty. Of course, no matter what is recorded onto a slab of vinyl, it cannot, like the live performances, be different each time. But by patronizing these bands, funding not only their albums but also their tours, which were presentations of *the real thing* brought to Americans' doorsteps all across the country, these record labels, perhaps unwittingly but more likely cognizantly, were sponsoring real countercultural players, and providing them with loudspeakers to invite one and all into the psychedelic counterculture.

In sum, Gleason's contributions to the *Chronicle*, and record labels' ensuing attraction to hippie bands of the Bay Area, served not to "domesticate" the hippie movement, but to amplify it. Scattered throughout were other players in mainstream media, Bill Thompson the *Chronicle* copy boy, Tom Donahue the mainstream radio DJ, and others who also used their mass culture platforms to project and legitimate the music of the counterculture, and consequently, the counterculture itself.

Keseyan Economics

[66] Hoskyns, Barney. *Beneath the Diamond Sky - Haight-Ashbury, 1965-1970*. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1997, and McNally, Dennis. *A Long Strange Trip: The inside History of the Grateful Dead*, 158-9.

[67] At the Monterey Pop Festival of 1967, Ralph Gleason criticized Jimi Hendrix and the Who as putting on "show biz" performances because of their guitar-destroying antics. Source: "The Beautiful Pops Festival," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 21, 1967.

While LSD has been mentioned a few times thus far in the essay, the reader needs to be reminded that the hallucinogenic chemical compound was a crucial element of the counterculture, and inspired many of the typical signifiers of hippiedom, like eastern religion, Rock concerts, ecstatic dancing, poster art, communal living, and more. Created while experimenting with rodents in a Sandoz Pharmaceuticals laboratory in Switzerland, and ingested accidentally by its creator Albert Hoffman, LSD piqued the interest of a select few institutions who were interested in its potential to alter the capacities of the human brain.[68] One such institution, years before alienated longhairs began taking the drug ritualistically, was the United States government. In the 1950's, the U.S. set up trials during which volunteers would ingest LSD and communicate with their supervisors about what they were experiencing.[69] Word got out about how interesting this compound was, and in 1959, per his friend's suggestion, a Stanford writing student named Ken Kesey participated in a trial at the Menlo Park Veterans Hospital in the South Bay Area.[70] Hugely inspired by his experience of being high on LSD, Kesey further spread the good news about the drug, which he called "acid," and found his way into a steady supply of it. This chapter will first demonstrate how Kesey's influence inspired many San Franciscans in the 1960's to stage events that simulated or invited his unique, daring style of LSD consumption. Subsequently, this chapter will explain how many of these events were hosted by a straight-laced businessman and outsider to the counterculture who proves once again the agreeable and mutually beneficial arrangement that the hippie movement had with players in mainstream media and business in its early days.

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[68] Shroder, Tom. "The Accidental, Psychedelic Discovery of LSD," The Atlantic, September 9, 2014.
[69] Ibid
[70] Tanner, Stephen L. *Ken Kesey*. Twayne's United States Authors Series, TUSAS 444. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1983, 14-15.

Very little had been written publically about the psychedelic experience by 1959, when Kesey took his first dose of LSD under the auspices of federal employees. Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception*, released in 1954, about being under the influence of mescaline, more or less stood alone in a field of literature that would blossom in the mid 1960's. Kesey, on the cutting edge of consciousness, was inspired to introduce his friends to the psychedelic experience, and became a magnet to whom "psychonauts" attached themselves.

By 1964, Kesey and his San Francisco-based entourage, known as the Merry Pranksters, hallucinated fearlessly. Though LSD was an inherently variable experience, and a "bad trip" was always a possibility, his cadre chose to embrace the uncertainty and take LSD in uncontrolled environments, stimulating themselves with as much sensory data as possible.[71] They would eventually pioneer their trademark LSD parties, known as "Acid Tests," which were comprised of strobe lights, Rock bands, complex sound systems, and inordinate amounts of acid, sometimes distributed in tubs of Kool-Aid.[72] Kesey and his band of Merry Pranksters flew the coop in 1964, embarking on a cross-country trip in a spray-painted Harvester bus, brilliantly rendered by Tom Wolfe and reminisced about by many others since.[73] Their neon bus, carrying its stoned cargo through middle America, was one long prank on the citizens of the country, during which Kesey's goal was to "tootle the masses."[74] This sentiment of unserious play abounded in the Pranksters' approach to LSD.

On the East Coast, a different figure had assumed the role of regional LSD guru. His name was Timothy Leary, and since being fired from Harvard for administering psilocybin (the

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[71] Moretta, John. *The Hippies : A 1960s History*, 80.
[72] Wolfe, Tom. *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*. New York: Bantam Books, 1969. Throughout the book, numerous different Acid Tests are described, but perhaps none were as typical as those held at Kesey's property in La Honda, California.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Moretta, John. *The Hippies : A 1960s History*, 77.

hallucinogenic compound in magic mushrooms) to students, his celebrity was growing rapidly.[75] His background in the scientific method showed in his approach to using psychedelics; he was a staunch advocate of controlling the experience, of making sure one's mindset and physical setting were suitable for a trip free of interruptions, so that one could properly explore the senses and heighten one's consciousness.[76] In other words, it was the diametric opposite of an Acid Test. When the Pranksters made it to the East Coast on their fabled bus trip, they paid a visit to the magnificent estate where Timothy Leary was living alongside fellow acid enthusiast Richard Alpert (later "Ram Dass"). Alpert met the freaks outside, and apologetically informed them that Leary would not be coming outside, because he was in the middle of a carefully-controlled, multi-day psychedelic experience, the type of academic project that Kesey and the Pranksters saw as sterile and pointless.[77] Without any progress in uniting two the two psychedelic muses, the Pranksters departed.

Though Leary, a founding member of the exclusive "League for Spiritual Discovery," would ascend to full-blown celebrity status, touring nationally and participating in high-exposure interviews, he would not surpass Kesey's influence on the psychedelically curious of the West Coast. Events either partially or totally inspired by the Pranksters' "Acid Tests" of 1965 began to spring up all over the Bay Area in the formative years of the psychedelic counterculture. In addition to the explicitly labeled Acid Tests were a number of concerts, parties, gatherings–"happenings" could describe all–that served as conduits for social hippies.[78] No

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[75] Prideaux, Ed, and Russell Cuffe. “Timothy Leary Turns 100: America’s LSD Messiah, Remembered By Those Who Knew Him.” *Vice*, October 23, 2020. https://www.vice.com/en/article/epdg3k/timothy-leary-lsd-acid-history.

[76] Leary, Timothy, Ralph Metzner and Richard Alpert. *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead*. University Books, 1964, "General Introduction."

[77] Wolfe, Tom. *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, Chapter IX, "The Crypt Trip."

[78] The Merry Pranksters continued organizing Acid Tests, and even hosted one in Watts, Los Angeles. Music venues like the Fillmore and especially the Avalon would turn into high-profile hippie event spaces as well.

historian, or participant, of the hippie movement would downplay the importance of these events in the establishing the visbility of hippies to the "straight" world, as one could see the ecstatic effects of dancing, Rock and Roll, sexual liberation, conspicuous attire, and LSD influence on full display.[79] Though a lack of formal organization was a key aspect of the hippie scene in the Haight-Ashbury, spurts of organizational effort led to the establishment of repeatable and legitimate hippie events that brought the scene together under the same roof, or in the same park, again and again.

A prime example of an early hippie event that modeled itself after the Kesey method of LSD consumption was the "Trips Festival" of January, 1966, held at the Longshoreman's Hall, the same venue where the Family Dog hosted their "Tribute to Dr. Strange."[80] The three-night festival assembled several bands, a speaker from America Needs Indians, and loads of loud equipment to stimulate the crowds of stoned attendees.[81] Though a number of local hands came together to actualize the festival, once it began it was chaotic and essentially structureless. Members of bands roamed freely around the crowd until they were summoned to play, or until it felt right to do so.[82] The sound of the venue, which was not built for live music, was reverberant and muddy. Most attendees bought a ticket, but Ken Kesey, wearing an astronaut helmet, was letting friends in for free through a side door.[83] Jerry Garcia's guitar had been broken, and the Grateful Dead decided not to play. It was chaos, deliberately so.

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[79] Moretta, John. *The Hippies : A 1960s History*, Chapter 4, "The Hippies and Rock and Roll."
[80] Perry, Charles. *The Haight Ashbury*, 44.
[81] Selvin, Joel. *Summer of Love: The inside Story of LSD, Rock & Roll, Free Love, and High Times in the Wild West*. New York: Dutton, 1994, 47-9. Hippies were interested in Native American spirituality, but often in an unspecific, general way.
[82] McNally, Dennis. *A Long Strange Trip: The inside History of the Grateful Dead*. First edition. New York: Broadway Books, 2002, 235.
[83] Selvin, Joel. *Summer of Love: The inside Story of LSD, Rock & Roll, Free Love, and High Times in the Wild West*, 47-8.

Another key feature of the Trips Festival was the incorporation of liquid light shows, a homegrown practice that became a frequent compliment to San Francisco Rock concerts. Born out of experimentation with liquid gel and projectors at San Francisco State University, visual projections onto the walls of music venues provided visual stimulus that was as live and spontaneous as the adventurous Rock music filling the hall.[84] Light shows were such a draw that in future concerts the light artists were often mentioned on concert posters alongside the bands.[85] The total experience, with dancing, loud Rock music and projected light experiments, was about as close as hippies could get to inculcating concertgoers into the madness of a Kesey-esque acid trip, with or without the aid of the substance.

To quote Martin Lee and Bruce Shlain of *Acid Dreams*, at events like these, "a special kind of delirium took hold."[86] While the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, two of the bands whipping young audiences into a frenzy in the "British Invasion" of the United States, could also claim delirium at their concerts, the San Franciscan variety was a much different flavor. The young audiences of the Beatles and Stones were notoriously obsessive, screaming throughout shows, rushing towards the stage, and mythologizing the musicians they so loved.[87] The audiences at the psychedelicized concerts such as the Trips Festival focused their attention every which way: the band onstage was only one point of interest. Another might be a spontaneous dance partner, the lights on the wall, or profound hallucinations induced by LSD. While the

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[84] In Perry, Charles. *The Haight Ashbury*, 9, one can find a description of the inception of liquid light shows. Throughout Perry's descriptions of hippie dance-concerts in the rest of the book, one will see them mentioned frequently as an attraction.

[85] One of many dance/concert posters that advertised a light projection artist was a poster for a Country Joe and the Fish concert in *Berkeley Barb*, 3.24, December 1, 1966.

[86] Lee, Martin A. *Acid Dreams : The CIA, LSD, and the Sixties Rebellion*. New York: Grove Press, 1985, 142.

[87] Wolfe, Tom. *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, Chapter XV, "Cloud," describes Kesey and the Pranksters attending a Beatles concert. Among many memorable lines, Wolfe wrote, "Inside the [venue] it is very roaring hell."

Beatles and Stones attracted a tunnel-vision of attention, the San Francisco happenings were three-hundred-sixty degree by design.

This achievement by concert organizers in the hippie movement was perfectly in line with the goal of the bands of the Haight-Ashbury as well. Grateful Dead biographer Dennis McNally wrote that in the Acid Test era, the band saw their relationship with the audience as "a partnership of equals, of companions in an odyssey."[88] The Trips Festival, by enveloping audience members in spectacle and strangeness on all sides, de-sanctified the performers in a way that pleased musicians of the Haight who saw all hippies as companions and equals, and non-performing hippies who shared the same outlook. The Trips Festival rolled up many signature elements of hippie gatherings, governed by hippie sentiments, under one roof for three consecutive nights.

Further, also typical of large hippie happenings in the early days, this event bumped up against mainstream media. But it did so on purpose, and to the benefit of the hippie cause. Firstly, hippie organizers actually hired a publicity company to help spread word about the festival.[89] Even though it meant commodifying ephemeral experience, which hippies so often avoided at any cost, organizers would make an exception if it allowed them to introduce new audiences to the joys of psychedelic delirium.

Secondly, Ralph Gleason, who was in attendance for two of the three nights of the festival, wrote a review in the *San Francisco Chronicle* about the whole experience. While he found the lack of structure disappointing, he praised the quality of the music and the electrifying combination of dancing and music, about which he wrote "it is harmless and it is legal. It is, in

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[88] McNally, Dennis. *A Long Strange Trip: The inside History of the Grateful Dead*. First edition. New York: Broadway Books, 2002, 119.
[89] Perry, Charles. *The Haight Ashbury*, 44.

fact, a delight."[90] He even preemptively defended events such as the Trips Festival against law enforcement, quoting none other than Ken Kesey, who said "There's a lot of stuff that isn't quite illegal but they know there must be something wrong with it."[91] Once again, media involvement with the massive countercultural "happening" was not to the detriment of the hippie movement, but to its benefit. The Trips Festival was a defining weekend in the history of the San Francisco hippie scene, and it was legitimated by publicity, before and after the event, which further proved the economic viability of such events to organizers who may otherwise be skeptical.

Lastly, the Trips Festival was also typical in that it was organized in large part by a sober, turtlenecked, notoriously penny-pinching individual who would spend his night counting every last dollar that came his way over the course of the evening. This individual was Bill Graham, a Jewish immigrant who came to San Francisco in the early 1960's after failing to break through in the New York theater scene. He was as buttoned-up as they came, an outsider to the counterculture in innumerable ways, but he was yet another player who consciously supported the hippie movement despite coming from a different world, with the bottom line being his primary concern.

Graham was acquainted with the city's underground art scene before hippie events became widespread. In 1965, he had allied himself with the San Francisco Mime Troupe, an irreverent corps of street actors whose performances made racy commentary on current events. They were deliberately conspicuous, choosing public parks as their venue, and attracted the attention of law enforcement who revoked their performance permit on the grounds of obscenity.[92] Bill Graham, then the accountant of the Mime Troupe, had the idea of staging a

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[90] "Censure, Praise for 'Trips' Festival," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, January 30, 1966.
[91] Ibid. LSD was in fact legal to consume in January 1966, and remained so until October of the same year. Source: Perry, Charles. *The Haight Ashbury*, 95.

[92] Perry, Charles. *The Haight Ashbury*, 31.

benefit concert to help the Troupe fight their banning in court. The result was the Appeal Party, whose promotional poster laid out the basics of their justification, which hinged on their assertion that the performers were committing no crimes, and that the public, not the Recreation and Parks commission, should be the judges of the art being performed.[93]

The entertainment at the Appeal party showed an arts scene in transition from the Beat generation to the Hippie. Poet and co-founder of seminal beatnik magnet City Lights Bookstore, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, was on the bill for the Appeal, as was the John Handy Quintet, providing post-bop Jazz which also helped define the Beat era in San Francisco.[94] The Folk-Rock group The Fugs from New York City were there as well, a scrappy political band who found a cult fanbase among Leftist activists.[95] The still-very-young Jefferson Airplane also made an appearance, and being neither of the beatnik or political arenas, they represented the imminent future of San Francisco music.[96]

"The Appeal" was a resounding success, and inspired future events with the same name, for the same cause. Perhaps more importantly, Bill Graham had succeeded in hosting an event that brought together a large contingent of the San Francisco underground, including constituents of the materializing counterculture. While his background in theater made him an understandable ally of the Mime Troupe, his connection to the Jefferson Airplane was much less intuitive. Graham was sober, conservative, not involved with music, and focused primarily on the bottom line. He would probably place quite low on the list of people most likely to organize the types of Kesey-inspired, acid-drenched "happenings" that the Jefferson Airplane and other San Francisco

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[93] "SF Mime Troupe Benefit – Appeal I Handbill." Wolfgang's. Accessed January 2, 2022. https://www.wolfgangs.com/posters/sf-mime-troupe-benefit-appeal-i/handbill/HOW651106.html

[94] Take, for example, Jack Kerouac's numerous references to Jazz music and "Frisco" Jazz clubs in *On The Road.*

[95] 'Unfabling The Fugs" *Berkeley Barb*, 2.18, May 6, 1966.

[96] "SF Mime Troupe Benefit – Appeal I Handbill." Wolfgang's. Accessed January 2, 2022. https://www.wolfgangs.com/posters/sf-mime-troupe-benefit-appeal-i/handbill/HOW651106.html

Rock bands were beginning to play on a weekly basis.[97] It would be reasonable to suspect that he only put the Airplane on the bill of The Appeal to sell more tickets.

But when it came to organizing the second Appeal benefit concert, Graham made a number of choices that showed he may have truly had a finger on the pulse of the counterculture. First off, he decided to host it at a proper music venue; the Fillmore Auditorium, located in a predominantly black, low-income neighborhood of the same name. Graham used the Fillmore because for the night of the Appeal he would be granted access to the dance permit held by the venue's usual promoter, a black entrepreneur named Charles Sullivan.[98] By understanding the necessity of dancing at a hip happening, he had made one great decision to ensure the success and broad appeal of the "Appeal II." He even, in bold red letters at the top of the poster, advertised the event as a "DANCE~CONCERT." Besides choosing the dance-friendly venue, Bill Graham also did right by the longhairs by tripling down on rising psychedelic Rock bands; alongside the Jefferson Airplane this time would be San Francisco bands The Mystery Trend and The Great Society. San Francisco psychedelic Rock bands comprised three-fifths of the advertised acts on the poster.[99]

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[97] Bill Graham was notoriously stubborn about letting people into concerts for free. Immigrating penniless from Eastern Europe gave him a vastly different perspective on money than many of the children of middle-class wealth who dropped out of the rat race to become hippies. Source: Graham, Bill, and Robert Greenfield. *Bill Graham Presents: My Life inside Rock and Out*, Part One: "In the Beginning."

[98] Sullivan became a friend and ally of Graham's in his Graham's future battles with the city. Sullivan died mysteriously in August of 1966 , and should be an considered underrated hero of both the San Francisco counterculture, and of American Rock and Roll, for the patience he demonstrated with Bill Graham in the face of Graham's legal struggles to keep the dance permit at the Fillmore.

[99] This information is printed on the poster.

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With the enormous success of the Mime Troupe Appeal concerts (there were ultimately three), Bill Graham had begun his soon-to-be legendary career in concert promotion. The Fillmore, which became his de-facto event space thanks to the cooperation of Charles Sullivan, was instrumental in his success. While his love of Jazz would be evident in his future bookings, it was Rock n' Roll, especially of bluesy persuasions, often of local psychedelic flavor, that predominated the events he hosted at the venue that he would make legendary. He never stopped being staunchly conservative in his financial dealings; when he declared a ticket price, he saw to it that everyone who came paid it, that not a dollar was lost in exchanging hands, and that no one was let in for free. He also never became any less "straight," abstaining from marijuana and LSD,

[100] Poster for Bill Graham's "Appeal II" benefit concert for the San Francisco Mime Troupe. Screenshotted from Jefferson Airplane's Facebook page, where no information was given regarding its internet origin. https://m.facebook.com/JeffersonAirplaneOfficial/photos/forever-a-band-of-righteous-pursuits-jefferson-airplane-played-at-the-first-bill/2495587403843932/

and appeasing police by making at least an effort to prevent marijuana smoking inside the venue.[101]

Graham's inroads into the world of hippie music and event production were not without some turbulence. At the Trips Festival, weeks after the second successful Appeal concert, Graham, brought on board to jumpstart the organization of an event that had great potential but was stalling, met Kesey and the Merry Pranksters for the first time, to comical effect. Graham's experience at the event, he recalled, can be best summarized by his confrontation with Kesey about letting people in for free, during which Kesey, wearing a space helmet, closed the visor of the helmet rather than respond to Graham's furious yelling.[102] Graham was remembered by many as someone who "didn't get it," trying to bring order to the happy mayhem of the Trips Festival.[103] But Graham was not deterred, nor were hippies who, despite mixed first reactions upon meeting him, trusted Graham, populating and performing at his events for years to come.

All in all, Graham, a clear outsider to the counterculture, was not merely a shrewd entrepreneur who saw San Francisco Rock as a stepping stone on the way to a fortune. Rather, he demonstrated numerous times throughout his career a fierce solidarity with counterculturalists and activists who he saw being bullied by people in power. It was his organizational skill and creative fundraising tactics (a sliding scale of admission, free for those making less than $20/week, $48 for those making $100,000/year) made the Appeal I a great success, but the very fact that he took up the task of fundraising for a street theater group banned from parks because of their obscenity is a testament to his impassioned, cause-driven entrepreneurship. Such alliances were typical throughout his career in the early San Francisco counterculture.

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[101] Graham, Bill, and Robert Greenfield. *Bill Graham Presents: My Life inside Rock and Out*, 125-26.
[102] Ibid, 139. "I just nodded and it went plop" remembered Kesey, recalling the moment vividly.
[103] Ibid, 137.

Another testament to Graham's genuine engagement with, and not mere profiting off, the San Francisco hippie movement was his long relationship with artist Wes Wilson. Wilson was a Bay Area artist whose forays in promotional flyers, as well as political art, attracted the attention of promoters in and out of the Haight-Ashbury.[104] Wilson was a favorite artist of hip concert promoter Chet Helms, who put on shows alongside Bill Graham at the Fillmore for the first few months of its blossoming as a counterculture-friendly Rock venue. Helms was a proponent of many business strategies that were irrational from a profit standpoint. He was exceptionally generous in giving out free tickets to events that he hosted; according to Graham, "if you met him once or you could convince him that you met him, he would let you in [for free]."[105] Another decision that Helms made that might have betrayed conventional logic was to hire artists whose posters obscured the information of the event to the effect of near illegibility. Wes Wilson was one of these experimental artists, playing with bubbly fonts and contorted images that established unique hippie aesthetics that remain recognizable today.[106]

When Helms and Graham had a falling out, arising from their incompatibilities as businesspeople, the Fillmore lost its closest tie to the Haight-Ashbury counterculture.[107] As Helms went, so did the anti-commercial, anti-profit attitudes that he exhibited in shows that he organized. His practices would resume at the venue which he took over along with the aforementioned "Family Dog" organizers, the Avalon Ballroom. Presumably, Graham would leave the illegible, psychedelic poster art to the Avalon as well, favoring posters, like that of the Appeal II, that cleary told prospective audiences who would be playing, where, and when.

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[104] Montgomery, Scott B. “Radical Trips: Exploring the Political Dimension and Context of the 1960s Psychedelic Poster.” *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 13, no. 1 (2019): 121–54.
[105] Graham, Bill, and Robert Greenfield. *Bill Graham Presents: My Life inside Rock and Out*, 149.
[106] Montgomery, Scott B. “Radical Trips: Exploring the Political Dimension and Context of the 1960s Psychedelic Poster.”
[107] Graham, Bill, and Robert Greenfield. *Bill Graham Presents: My Life inside Rock and Out*, 148.

But after Chet Helms and the Family Dog left the Fillmore partnership, Bill Graham kept Wes Wilson on hand, paying him $75 for each innovative psychedelic poster he drew up and printed for Fillmore events.[108] Before long, Wilson, along with Chet Helms's go-to artists Alton Kelley and Stanley "Mouse" Miller, were defining the aesthetics of San Francisco Rock dances, the major weekly conduits for hippie gatherings and Kesey-esque events.[109]

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[108] Graham, Bill, and Robert Greenfield. *Bill Graham Presents: My Life inside Rock and Out*, 162. Of the $75, Wilson recalls netting about $45, which is equal to about $450 in 2022 dollars. For each poster, he estimated that he did about eight hours of work. It was a reasonably generous arrangement.
[109] Alton Kelley and "Mouse" Miller designed one of the Grateful Dead's primary logos, which they found in the *Rubáiyat of Omar Khayyán* (McNally, Dennis. *A Long Strange Trip: The inside History of the Grateful Dead,* 156), showing that their influence on countercultural musical aesthetics ran very deep. The logo can be found most clearly on their 1971 live album, titled "Grateful Dead" just like their debut.
[110] Two posters for Rock concerts in early 1967. One was commissioned by a hippie, one was commissioned by a straight, tactical businessman. Both represent the aesthetics of the psychedelic counterculture. Sources: "Grateful Dead Poster." Wolfgang's. Accessed March 25, 2022. https://www.wolfgangs.com/posters/grateful-dead/poster/BG051.html?st=P2&gclid=Cj0KCQjw5-WRBh

Graham's sponsoring of countercultural aesthetics through Wes Wilson was one way he incorporated elements of genuine hippiedom into his events. Another was that Graham never sold alcohol at his Fillmore events in the early hippie period. Alcohol sales are and were a major source of income for music venues, and naturally a factor in crowd behavior. Graham aligned with hippies in thinking that the less drunk the crowd, the better the concert atmosphere. Graham, significantly, was much more tolerant of an acid-tripper, potentially hallucinating wildly and experiencing bizarre visions, but usually totally peaceful, than of an alcohol-drinker, prone to initiating physical violence.[111] Bill distributed apples to people with the intention of giving sober concert-goers something to keep their hands and mouths busy.[112] It was rare for Graham to willingly forfeit easy money, but in this instance he did, in a way that demonstrated his preference for stoned hippies over drunk straights.

It was this consistent peace at the Fillmore that Graham could rely upon in his defense to keep the Fillmore's dance permit when city law enforcement tried to revoke it by digging up a 1909 ordinance that banned minors from entering a dancehall without an adult chaperone.[113] Dancing, particularly in an unstructured, improvisational fashion (in this way like most other elements of a hippie happening) was a staple practice at hippie happenings, and its banning at the Fillmore would have made the venue essentially obsolete as a counterculture gathering space. Graham's defense–that the Fillmore was in fact a particularly safe place for a minor to enjoy oneself–found a lot of support where it counted, particularly in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which was once again calling attention to the merits, not the evils or dangers, of the

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CKARIsAAId9FmyLtFh2OgVGjBvz9ghqcM7lFvBkBhNNkx3AGrGOey-u4aww7tee44aAmqeEALw_wcB and "The Doors Concert Poster 1967 Avalon Ballroom." Oddtoes. Accessed March 25, 2022. https://www.oddtoes.com/product/the-doors-concert-poster-1967-avalon-ballroom/

[111] Graham, Bill, and Robert Greenfield. *Bill Graham Presents: My Life inside Rock and Out*, 155.

[112] Ibid, 143.

[113] Selvin, Joel. *Summer of Love: The inside Story of LSD, Rock & Roll, Free Love, and High Times in the Wild West*, 55.

counterculture. Ralph Gleason was clear in his article "Dance Renaissance In the Fillmore" about what side he was on. "Like all other rock dances I've attended at the Fillmore…" he wrote, "it was as peaceful as a Sunday school picnic and a lot more fun."[114] Even more to the Fillmore's credit, "the music, incidentally, is becoming more and more fascinating."[115] Gleason was going to continue to throw his considerable social influence behind Graham and young dancers who flocked to the Fillmore until the issue was resolved.

On April 21, 1966, while rumors were swirling that the city wanted to stop the Fillmore dances, mostly on the grounds of the extra effort it required to have police patrolling the venue late at night, the *Chronicle* ran an editorial entitled "The Fillmore Auditorium Case" which voiced adamant support for Graham against local law enforcement. Graham called this a "*big* turning point" in his struggle with law enforcement.[116] It was the next day that the police came to the door of the Fillmore invoking the 1909 ordinance, but public opinion was firmly on Graham's side. By June, the city conceded, allowing Graham to keep the permit.[117] The timing, and the placement, of the pro-Fillmore editorial was not a coincidence. Like the buzz about the Matrix Rock music club, copyist Bill Thompson at the *Chronicle*, with the support of Ralph Gleason, convinced the editorial department to come to Graham's defense.[118] Once again, the *Chronicle* came to the aid of counterculture Rock, this time in its defense of straight entrepreneur Bill Graham's venue.

This chapter focused on Bill Graham to demonstrate how "straight," non-hippie businesspeople were instrumental in the production and legitimation of grassroots style Rock

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[114] "Dance Renaissance In the Fillmore," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, March 14, 1966.
[115] Ibid
[116] Graham, Bill, and Robert Greenfield. *Bill Graham Presents: My Life inside Rock and Out*, 155.
[117] Ibid. It is worth mentioning that Charles Sullivan's life would have been made much easier if he had given up the dance permit on behalf of Graham; Graham was still borrowing the venue from Sullivan. But Sullivan refused to comply in letting the city bully Graham out of his ability to throw dances.
[118] Graham, Bill, and Robert Greenfield. *Bill Graham Presents: My Life inside Rock and Out*, 154.

concerts that simulated many aspects of Kesey-method acid trips. Though he was an outsider to the movement in countless ways, he helped hippies stage concerts that welcomed liberated dancing, immersive light shows, and quality Rock and Roll. His partnership with hippie poster artist Wes Wilson created a mutually-beneficial relationship in which the proliferation of hippie aesthetics translated to ticket sales for Graham, and the healthy competition between posters advertising Chet Helms's venue, the Avalon Ballroom, and the Fillmore led to a flood of psychedelic art that only deepend and further legitimated hippie aesthetics. When the Fillmore faced the revocation of their dance permit, it was the *San Francisco Chronicle* that swayed public opinion in their favor. All in all, a number of non-countercultural allies helped prop up straight, middle-class Bill Graham, and in turn, the San Francisco style of Rock dance, whose influence would spread around the country and be seen on increasingly bigger stages as the decade progressed. Media was, in the case of the seminal San Francisco Rock venue of the Fillmore, not a specter or domesticator, but a legitimator and ally.

The Hippie-Lefty Bridge

To student activists mired in UC Berkeley's stifling bureaucracy, legendary novelist Ken Kesey seemed like an excellent choice to speak at the Vietnam Day Committee's rally in the autumn of 1965. To the New Left "politicos" of the East Bay Area, Kesey's reputation as the author of the provocative novel *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* likely overshadowed his connection to the burgeoning San Francisco psychedelic counterculture. In his breakout novel he created the inimitable Randle McMurphy, martyr in the battle against uptight, hypocritical establishment figures of law and order. Amid a crowd of likely fans of Randle McMurphy, Kesey was a safe bet to further rile up the crowd in preparation for a march towards the Oakland Army Terminal, during which the demonstrators were sure to meet police head-on.[119] But it was a bad

[119] Wolfe, Tom. *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, 217.

sign when Kesey and the Merry Pranksters pulled up to the event in their signature Harvester bus decorated not with its typical neon spray paint, but with swastikas, hammers and sickles, and whatever other provocative imagery they could fathom.[120]

Kesey's coterie, dressed in battle regalia, watched patiently while a student on the platform delivered a rousing anti-war speech, full of vigor and contempt. When it was Kesey's turn, he went on stage, derided the previous speaker as egotistical (*"That's the cry of this rally!... Me! Me! Me!*) compared him to Mussolini, and told the crowd the best that they could do is to turn their backs to the war and say "F*** it." He then pulled out his harmonica, fumbled through "Home on the Range," and stepped down into a mass of stunned, betrayed demonstrators.[121]

Though perhaps the most extreme example of it, Kesey's prank swastikas and befuddling speech were emblematic of a gaping rift between two geographically adjacent counterculture movements: the psychedelic hippies of San Francisco, and the New Left ("politicos") of Berkeley.[122] Though both were aligned in opposition to the "establishment," they sharply contrasted in their methods of achieving liberation. Between 1965 and 1967, though, the Berkeley New Left would exchange its distaste for the hippie movement with a respect for it, and in doing so incorporate numerous elements of hippie aesthetics and event-producing into their own movement. At this point in the essay, we have already proven that mainstream or mass media did not treat the hippies only as a threat to be neutralized in the early stages of the movement. From here on, the focus will be on other outsiders who also used their media platforms to legitimate hippie practices and expression. This chapter will explore how the gulf between the hippies and politicos was bridged, and demonstrate that the fast-growing American

[120] Ibid, 218.
[121] Ibid, 222-224.
[122] One should not conclude from this that hippies were the types to use swastikas as pranks; Kesey was an enormously influential proponent of LSD, but his brand of absurd pranks was his personal style, unadopted by hippies on the whole.

media style of underground newspapers was another influential engine of American culture–albeit on a smaller scale than the *Chronicle* or RCA Victor–that supported and legitimated the counterculture.

The differences between the New Left and the hippies were plenty. New Left groups valued organization, sought to reform college campuses, and pulled no punches in the struggle to end the Vietnam War. They campaigned for left-wing politicians, slandered right-wing ones, and lampooned the Executive branch. In the New Left's manifesto, the "Port Huron Statement" of 1962, Students for a Democratic Society (S.D.S.) organizer Tom Hayden began with a declaration about who comprised the New Left, writing "we are people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit."[123] The problems that S.D.S. spotlighted in their manifesto revolved around the injustices, hypocrisy and negligence that the United States government heaped upon its everyday people. Most important to S.D.S. was the "Southern struggle against racial bigotry," the threat of nuclear war, and rampant inequality. Despite urgent action needed to address these existential crises, they saw America as idling "in national stalemate," unwilling to strive to better the living conditions of its citizens.[124] Like hippies, S.D.S. wanted to see "love of man" overtake "the idolatrous worship of things by man," laying the foundation for social relations which value unique individuals and foster "fraternity and honesty."[125]

The means to getting there was establishing "participatory democracy," under which American individuals would always have a voice in matters pertaining to their well-being. It was about expanding the average American's ability to create desirable living conditions by making it

[123] "Port Huron Statement, 1962." Accessed February 23, 2022. https://history.hanover.edu/courses/excerpts/111huron.html.
[124] Ibid
[125] Ibid

easier to enter the political process, and easier to vote on quality-of-life issues. Not only would politics reform thus, but in S.D.S.'s template, economics would also change to allow for more humanity. Work, ideally, would be "educative, not stultifying; creative, not mechanical; self-directed, not manipulated."[126] In sum, the New Left wanted to incorporate all Americans into the "modest comfort" that the middle class enjoyed, and overhaul American democracy by greatly expanding the average citizen's input on affairs that affect their lives. In order to achieve these goals, the New Left would need to be "committed to deliberativeness" and "militant." S.D.S. established chapters across the country, and thousands of New Leftists, affiliates of S.D.S. or not, flooded the 1960's with a downpour of left-wing publications that put forth radical perspectives on current events. Among these were the underground newspapers that constituted the Underground Press Syndicate (U.P.S.); The Bay Area's *Berkeley Barb*, New York's *East Village Other*, the *Los Angeles Free Press,* Michigan State's *The Paper*, and Detroit's *The Fifth Estate*.[127]

Underground newspapers were a product of unprecedented access to large-scale printing technology, and of student radicals who urgently wanted a platform for their "participatory journalism." In the words of Joan Didion, "it is the genius of these papers that they talk directly to their readers," and they did so by rostering columnists who were participants in the events that they covered, and shared the leftist lenses of their readers.[128] Several underground papers achieved massive circulations, like the *Los Angeles Free Press*, for example, whose circulation

[126] Ibid
[127] McMillian, John Campbell. *Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America*, Chapter 1, "A Hundred Blooming Papers."
[128] As quoted in McMillian, John Campbell. *Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America*, 8.

surpassed 85,000 by 1968.[129] With such reach, there was genuine enthusiasm among New Leftists that they would be able to make real political gains, inch by inch, vote by vote.

Hippies on the other hand saw the New Left's thirst for power as inherently toxic. Though they certainly would all have, given the chance, ended the Vietnam War or Jim Crow with a snap of their fingers, they generally saw political power struggles as spiritual dead-ends. Barrel-chested left-wing protestors shouting at conservatives and police wouldn't bring the nation any closer to curing its deepest ills, those borne of America's mindless culture of consumption and consequent spiritual and emotional emptiness. Respite from the vacuousness of American culture, hippie advocates contended, could be found in psychedelic drugs that often fostered group ecstasy and profound reflection on how one lived, and by abandonment of the two-car, picket-fence middle class dream from which many hippies defected.[130] Hippies were not out to struggle for incremental gains in existing political, economic and social systems. Many saw their goal as creating a society that ran on a different track than traditional culture, quite literally a "counterculture."[131] The goal was not, for example, to improve conditions in the workplace, but to question whether "workplaces" should exist at all. Likewise, the goal was not reforming college campus censorship, but dropping out of college altogether. The airy, often impractical nature of hippies' countercultural approaches made the movement an inconsistent ally of the concurrent Black Power and Civil Rights movements, as hippies were voluntarily abandoning the middle-class comforts that African-Americans had been fighting for decades to enjoy.[132] These were the source of some of the many divisions between the hippies and the New Left.

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[129] Fessier, Bruce. "L.A. Free Press Founder Recalled as Pioneering Underground Journalist and 'Alchemist of Life.'" The Desert Sun. Accessed March 31, 2022.
[130] This idea can be found in essentially any summary of the hippie movement. Charles Perry, in his oft-cited book, explained these hippie values on Perry, Charles. *The Haight Ashbury*, 5.
[131] Yablonsky, Lewis. *The Hippie Trip*, 26.
[132] Moretta, John. *The Hippies : A 1960s History*, Chapter 3, "Hippies and the Emergence of Drug Culture."

So in the beginning neither movement paid much attention to the other; Berkeley's young underground newspaper (est. 8/13/65), the *Berkeley Barb*, founded by lifetime activist Max Scherr, was conspicuously slow to discuss the hippies, the Haight-Ashbury, or any signposts of the Haight-Ashbury hippie scene, save for an advertisement here or there for a Jefferson Airplane concert on campus.[133] When they mentioned LSD in the paper, it was mostly in reference to the East Coast's psychedelic popularizer Timothy Leary, whose ties to the Haight-Ashbury were only tenuous.

Despite these major divides and an early pattern of non-recognition of the hippies, the Berkeley New Left, as well as the New Left across the United States, would soon embrace the hippie movement. As the Bay Area movements are concerned, this transition from apathy towards to amplification of the psychedelic counterculture began with a subgroup of Haight-Ashbury hippies named after seventeenth-century English dissidents called the Diggers.

Given the hippies' general principles of sharing nearly everything (houses, money, sometimes romantic partners) and their desacralizing of the almighty dollar, the Diggers were a natural outgrowth of the Haight-Ashbury scene. The core members of the group were previously members of San Francisco's notorious Mime Troupe, a self-proclaimed "guerrilla theater" group who performed racy, polemical shows in public places, occasionally clashing with law enforcement.[134] After countless well-received performances, including a national tour of the daring satire, "Civil Rights in a Cracker Barrel," members Emmett Grogan, Peter Coyote and Peter Berg among others brought elements of the Mime Troupe and hippie movement into

[133] For example, an advertisement from *Berkeley Barb*, 1.11, October 22, 1965, which promoted a Jefferson Airplane concert at UC Berkeley's Harmon Gym. It was co-headlined by a comedian who was part of a comedy troupe known for political humor.
[134] Lozano, Pedro Galán. "The Counterculture on Stage: Radical Theater and the Reclamation of the Public Space in 1960's San Francisco." *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 12, no. 2 (2018): 40.

harmony in the form of the Diggers, a group that would employ theatrical tactics to realize the concept of "free," with more resolve than any subgroup of hippies had yet shown.[135]

Formed in September of 1966, the Diggers had grown impatient with the airy, detached inaction of the dominant strain of Haight-Ashbury hippies, and sought to pair psychedelic wisdom with palpable social change. In doing so, they carried with them an intensity of purpose that was largely absent in the Haight before the group's founding.[136] Their flagship action was the "Digger feed," which took place daily in Golden Gate Park and provided free food to anyone who wanted to partake. Free meals in Golden Gate Park for constantly cash-strapped hippies was a counterculture paradise made manifest, but such an ambitious project required legwork. Diggers would frequent grocery stores and ask for leftover food, and when storeowners were uncooperative, they authorized "liberating" food from its hostage state.[137] In preparation for the feed itself, many hands went to work in making soups, sandwiches, whatever food items were logical given a day's yield, and the food was transported to the Panhandle in Golden Gate Park for all, for free.[138] Though the Diggers shunned the idea of central leadership, they were

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[135] Braunstein, Peter, and Michael William Doyle, eds. *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960's and 70's*. New York: Routledge, 2001, 76.

[136] The average hippie was, as has been discussed, not an active organizer. But there were some instances of hippie collective action in the early years besides the Diggers. Most notably, Haight entrepreneurs shut out of the pre-existing Haight-Ashbury Merchants Association formed their own association, entitled the Haight Independent Proprietors (H.I.P.). Members of H.I.P. set out to ensure that their stores had net positive impacts on the counterculture. In 1967, H.I.P. launched a job co-op to help turn the Summer of Love's overflow of newcomers more manageable and useful. Source: Perry, Charles. *The Haight Ashbury*, 108, 132.

[137] Braunstein, Peter, and Michael William Doyle, eds. *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960's and 70's*, 82.

[138] Perry, Charles. *The Haight Ashbury*, 98-99.

In her book *Daughters of Aquarius: Women of the Sixties Counterculture*, Gretchen Lemke-Santangelo explains that most of the food-preparation work was done by women. Like the New Left, the hippies and Diggers also often sidelined women into traditional domestic roles. The fact that the movements, which sought to subvert so much of generic American life, failed to address their own underlying patterns of gender relations is a testament to the maleness of each movement, and the limitations of both movements in their efforts to holistically change American consciousness. The issues of gender and sexual explicitness is even what splintered the *Barb* into two different papers in the late 1960's, with the offshoot paper the *Tribe* committing to feminism, tired of revenue coming from sexual advertising. Source:

determined enough to realize their ambitious "free" initiatives. Following free feeds, they launched several free projects over the course of the year, like a free clothing store, free housing, a free medical clinic, and they convinced local bands to play free concerts in the park.[139]

Finally, Berkeley politicos began to take notice of the goings-on in the Haight-Ashbury. On October 21, 1966, a near-entire page of the *Berkeley Barb* was devoted to introducing the New Left to the Diggers. An article entitled "Delving the Diggers" described the scene of a Digger feed, and included some overheard Digger catchphrases, most notably, "it's free because it's yours," a head-scratching line meant to remind everyone at Digger functions that they were as much in charge as anyone else.[140] Directly below that article on page three of *Barb's* vol. 3 issue 16 was a short article entitled "Burocops Proboscis Probes Digger Bag." This article touched on an issue shared by both Diggers and politicos–harassment at the hands of police. "Burocops Proboscis…" described the Diggers' origin; they coalesced on the night of police's fatal shooting of suspected car thief Matthew Johnson in the economically depressed San Francisco neighborhood of Hunter's Point. Formed in reaction to that tragedy, the Diggers would go on to have many spats with law enforcement.[141] For example at an event as innocent as the Panhandle feed, "Health Department noses poked in," but left when assured by feeders that it was a mere picnic. More irritating, "flics cited a car for having 2 wheels on the grass–while it was delivering food."[142]

"Berkeley Barb, Underground Newspaper." Berkeley Historical Plaque Project, Accessed January 28, 2022. https://berkeleyplaques.org/e-plaque/berkeley-barb-underground-newspaper/

[139] Braunstein, Peter, and Michael William Doyle, eds. *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960's and 70's*, 81.

[140] "Delving the Diggers." *Berkeley Barb*, 3.16, October 21, 1966.

[141] The Diggers' problems with San Francisco Police are well-documented in Perry, Charles. *The Haight Ashbury*, Chapter 4, "Big Plans." Regarding the "Burocops…" article itself, "Burocops Proboscis Probes Digger Bag." *Berkeley Barb*, 3.16, October 21, 1966

[142] "Delving the Diggers," *Berkeley Barb*, 3.16, October 21, 1966. ("Flics," like "fuzz," was another word for police).

Two weeks later, the *Barb* published a deeply sympathetic front-page article about the Diggers' Halloween celebration, in the aftermath of which police arrested a number of hippies for their activity in the street.[143] The article told of the "Full Moon Public Celebration of Halloween" at the intersection of Haight and Ashbury, where the Diggers initiated a game of "Intersection," during which players ran back and forth across the street making as many polygon shapes as they could. More than a silly sport, "Intersection" resembled the efforts by hippies to reduce the traffic coming through their neighborhood by "carloads of people who had come to stare at them through rolled-up windows and locked doors."[144] The police ("the fuzz" in the *Barb*) arrived to redirect traffic and shut down the Digger's party, which culminated in an argument between a police office and two Diggers inside of a giant puppet costume. The Diggers in the puppet costume were arrested along with one other who protested the Digger arrests.[145] Despite the trouble, the Diggers were still able to feed dozens of hungry hippies for free on schedule the next day. The *Barb*, after a lively retelling of these events, invited their readers to "pick up on their style" by attending a Digger Feed any day of the week.[146]

The Berkeley New Left was so inspired by the Diggers that they swiftly formed their own group in the same mold. The "Provos," named after a European leftist group, just like the Diggers, set out to actualize nearly the exact same project of providing food at a regular time every day, all for free, no questions asked.[147] Also in strict adherence to Digger principles, the

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[143] "The Frame," *Berkeley Barb*, 3.18, November 4, 1966. The "LSD Graduation" party was an epilogue to the string of "Acid Tests" conducted in 1965 and 1966. Regarding the Diggers' picketing, Long Strange, 163.
[144] Braunstein, Peter, and Michael William Doyle, eds. *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960's and 70's*, 83
[145] Ibid, 84.
[146] "The Frame," *Berkeley Barb*, 3.18, November 4, 1966
[147] "For Love Not Lucre," *Berkeley Barb*, 3.21, November 25, 1966.

Provos refused money as a donation, an extremely strong echo of the Diggers' outright disavowal of money.[148]

Surprisingly, or perhaps not, Diggers were mentioned before the word "hippie" was ever used (in reference to a psychedelic counterculturalist) in a *Barb* article, despite the term "hippie" predating the Diggers by over a year and making enough waves to inspire similar hippie experiments across the country and fuel enough buzz about LSD to prompt its illegalization on a federal level by concerned politicians.[149] New York City's underground newspaper and fellow member of the Underground Press Syndicate the *East Village Other* even started following San Francisco psychedelia before the *Barb*, by covering the famous Acid Tests, three-thousand miles from their local hippie scene in the East Village of New York City. The New York paper even had a "San Francisco Reporter" contributing updates about the scene, who prefaced the Acid Test recap with, "no doubt you've heard rumors about Acid Tests in San Francisco."[150] The only mentions of the Acid Tests in the *Barb,* however, were from a transcript of Ken Kesey's (prank) suicide note, a critique of U.S. ambassador to the U.N. Arthur Goldberg, who apparently used the phrase incorrectly, and recurring advertisements for a recording of "Ken Kesey's *The Acid Test,*" being sold at a Berkeley record store.[151]

Issue 3.18 of the *Barb* changed that tune irreversibly. From that point on, the political paper would consistently cover high-profile hippie happenings, describe and discuss injustices done unto the hippies, and take a great interest in psychedelic substances. What it took for the

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[148] Ibid.
[149] Lee, Martin A. *Acid Dreams : The CIA, LSD, and the Sixties Rebellion*. New York: Grove Press, 1985, 149. Also, recall that "New Haven for Beatniks," *The San Francisco Examiner*, September 5, 1965 introduced "hippie" into local vernacular in September of 1965.
[150] "Acid Test Report," *The East Village Other*, 1.10, April 15, 1966. The *East Village Other*, from its inception, was more interested in
[151] "Kesey's 'Last Words,'" *Berkeley Barb*, 2.7 February 18, 1966, Shakespeare and Co. advertisement in *Berkeley Barb*, 2.11, March 18, 1966, "Goldberg Flunks 'The Acid Test'" *Berkeley Barb*, 2.13, April 1, 1966.

politicos to take the hippies seriously was not national attention–the hippies already had that–but a subgroup of hippies that more closely resembled themselves, which they found in the Diggers, who appeared as a hybrid of the political and psychedelic strains of Bay Area movements. While the New Left's sympathy for the Diggers was perhaps not all that surprising, what came next certainly was. The Berkeley New Left went beyond the Diggers and began to embrace the hippie scene as a whole, even the elements that had no political or organizational goals whatsoever, and even those elements that the Diggers themselves disliked about the movement. This rather abrupt transition from apathy to embrace can be seen all over the pages of the *Barb* in 1966-67.

Music columnist, concert promoter, and eventual band manager Ed Denson's weekly column, "The Folk Scene," is a good reference point for tracking the fairly rapid shift from hippie skepticism to hippie embrace that the *Barb* underwent following the formation of the Diggers. The first shift may have nothing to do with Denson at all. His column, previously signified by a black bar with plain lowercase lettering, was overhauled into a grand psychedelic design beginning on October 14, 1966.[152] Though psychedelic poster art had wiggled its way into

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the *Barb* in the prior months of 1966 via concert posters advertising Bill Graham's Fillmore concerts, never before had the newspaper branded any section of itself with the psychedelic font shown off in Denson's new column header. Significantly, though the Diggers' formation was what attracted the *Barb* to the hippies, psychedelic fonts were not a trademark of the Diggers.

[152] "The Folk Scene" *Berkeley Barb*, 3.15, October 14, 1966.
[153] The "Big City Blues" article comes from "The Folk Scene" *Berkeley Barb,* 3.12, September 23, 1966. In between these two different articles, branded by different designs, was the formation of the Diggers.

Digger sheets, produced approximately biweekly and distributed by Diggers to Haight residents, were typed in plain fonts, more reminiscent of the *Barb*'s own plain 1965 style. Though it took up no more than a few inches of space in the 3.15 issue of the *Barb*, the new design of Denson's column showed that the *Barb's* interest in the Diggers was already warming them up to other aspects of the hippie movement they had previously not engaged with.

Ed Denson's October 14th, 1966 article bore a cumbersome name, "All Aboard And Turn On A-Holding," which made reference to the band he would be praising, and also the parlance of hippies, "turning on" meaning being introduced to psychedelics.[154] Big Brother was a San Francisco band that had been a mainstay of the burgeoning Rock scene developing in the mid 1960's in San Francisco. Along with the Jefferson Airplane, Grateful Dead, Quicksilver Messenger Service, Great Society and more, Big Brother & The Holding Company could be seen live at the Fillmore, the Avalon, and various benefit concerts around the Bay Area.[155]

Denson's column was entitled "The Folk Scene," which clearly told which type of music he most enjoyed discussing. But much like how folk musicians felt an urge to dip their toes in rock music either to stay relevant or simply to develop their style, Denson branched out into reviewing up-and-coming Rock and Blues bands across the country.[156] While Denson wrote raving reviews of blues acts that passed through the Bay Area, he was consistently skeptical of the rock music scene in San Francisco and the United States in general. In a June 3, 1966 column he wrote that "the present rock scene is almost a year old, and the doting indulgence which greeted earlier bands as they blasted people out of the coffeehouses and onto the dance floors is

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[154] "All Aboard And Turn On A-Holding" *Berkeley Barb* 3.15, October 14, 1966.
[155] Such as an event supporting Timothy Leary's legal defense ("Allen Ginsberg, Meet Tim Leary." *Berkeley Barb* 2.23 June 17, 66), the Independence Ball at the Fillmore with Quicksilver Messenger Service (*Berkeley Barb* 2.26 July 1, 1966), and "Bilbo's Birthday" with the Great Society at California Hall, to name only a few that advertised themselves in the *Barb* (*Berkeley Barb* 3.3 June 22, 1966).
[156] Moretta, John. *The Hippies : A 1960s History*, Chapter 4, "The Hippies and Rock and Roll."

passing… the honeymoon is over."[157] Denson panned two out-of-town bands, including the now legendary Captain Beefheart and his Magic Band, who played comprised a bill at the Avalon Ballroom, a venue managed by "The Family Dog," the promoters mentioned previously in this essay.[158] Though this Denson critique of the dance hall scene used mostly out-of-town bands as evidence, his general ignoring of San Francisco bands showed that his opinions of the local Rock artists was no higher. One needs to dig to find mentions of even the most familiar of San Francisco rock bands; in a sea of Denson's excited folk and blues reviews one might find a brief acknowledgment of "our commercial rockers, the [Jefferson] Airplane," who "are not very good."[159]

But in October of 1966, the month in which the *Barb* began to mend the rift between politicos and hippies, Denson went to see folk group Kweskin's Jug Band at the Avalon Ballroom.[160] They were preceded by San Francisco Rock band Big Brother & the Holding Company, who left a deep impression on Denson. He began the article by admitting that he wrote off the San Francisco Rock scene because he found the bands "almost uniformly uninteresting."[161] After being underwhelmed by the first band of the evening, Denson was struck by Big Brother's originality, and by their widely-hyped new singer, a Texas transplant named Janis Joplin. Her blues influences came through, "from Shirley & Lee back to Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith," which appealed to Denson, who also was drawn in by her visceral delivery for which she soon became famous. The instrumentalists were "out of sight," the guitar player

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[157] "Not Even For Free." *Berkeley Barb*, 2.22, June 3, 1966.
[158] This is a theme that recurs in Gleason, *The Jefferson Airplane and the San Francisco Sound,* Chapter 1, "The Bands… That's Where It's At"
[159] "Rock'n' Freak," *Berkeley Barb*, 2.25 June 24, 1966.
[160] Jug Bands were quintessential folk music; usually featuring acoustic and homemade instruments, and often an empty jug through which buzzing lip sounds could be amplified.
[161] "All Aboard And Turn On A-Holding" *Berkeley Barb* 3.15, October 14, 1966.

especially, with his creative use of volume swells. With his expectations thoroughly surpassed, Denson made one last observation, "the group was making their music, not just their living."[162]

This final compliment to Big Brother & the Holding Company expanded on the theme discussed in the previous chapter about the importance of Rock to the psychedelic counterculture. Denson was cluing in to the idea that the band's music was offering more than economic value, but also real social value. Grateful Dead biographer Dennis McNally described the Dead's mission, and the same can be said for most San Francisco Rock groups of the mid-sixties, as promoting "not as a means of making money, but to influence the times."[163] Big Brother & the Holding Company, of course, was its own unit distinct from the Grateful Dead, but like the Dead they played numerous hippie venues and events, which often yielded paltry (or zero) payouts, for the love of the music scene.[164] That Denson picked up on this essence in his glowing review demonstrates the respect he was fostering for the band and, like other writers of the *Barb* in October, of the hippie individuals who comprised it.

Denson made sure that his skepticism about the San Francisco Rock scene was still loud and clear–Big Brother was one great band amid a sea of Chicago blues imitators and "adequate, typical" performers, most of which were not more interesting than the accompanying light shows.[165] But only one week later, Denson would dive back into the hippie well, and this time with more of an open mind. On October 21, 1966, the same day as the *Barb's* warm introduction of the Diggers to its readership, Denson penned an article titled "The Holy Rockers," in which he reflected on the potent group catharsis that consistently took place at all kinds rock shows, even when the sound systems were poor and the lyrics were inaudible. A Beatles concert had an

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[162] Ibid
[163] McNally, Dennis. *A Long Strange Trip: The inside History of the Grateful Dead*, 159.
[164] Ibid, 274.
[165] "All Aboard And Turn On A-Holding" *Berkeley Barb* 3.15, October 14, 1966.

atmosphere of hysteria, as screaming fans nearly drowned out the music for the entire show. A blues performance might feature a black bandleader assuming the roles of bluesman and preacher interchangeably, leading an audience through the "isolation and despair of sin" to "redemption and the catharsis of forgiveness." San Francisco Rock productions combined both strains: a calm, reverent atmosphere and also "total experience," with light shows, loud volume, and ecstatic dancing which draw all audience members to the immediate moment.[166] One week after cautiously endorsing one "Frisco" Rock band, Denson showed his intrigue in the scene at large, seeing its immersive qualities as worthy of deep analysis. True to form, he footnoted his article by explaining that the voluntary, temporary nature of bohemian movements such as the hippies made the communal catharsis less sustainable than a congregation-esque Blues concert, because the permanence of being black creates deeper bonds than the choice to be hippie.[167] Nonetheless, Denson was showing great interest in a scene he once wrote off as being derivative and dull.

One columnist's reviews and psychedelic new look hardly say anything about the strengthening bonds between the political and apolitical elements of sixties Bay Area without being put in context with the other changes in aesthetics and content taking place in the rest of the paper. As local businesses were gradually dipping their toes into psychedelic aesthetics, such as making the words into the objects they were selling, or using squiggly letters reminiscent of Fillmore concert posters, contributors within the *Barb* began doing the same. Most notably, the Vietnam Day Committee (VDC), organizers of the very same anti-war march that Ken Kesey pranked one year prior, promoted their benefit concert with a poster employing difficult-to-read psychedelic font, a sexually suggestive body, and strategic use of the word "happening."

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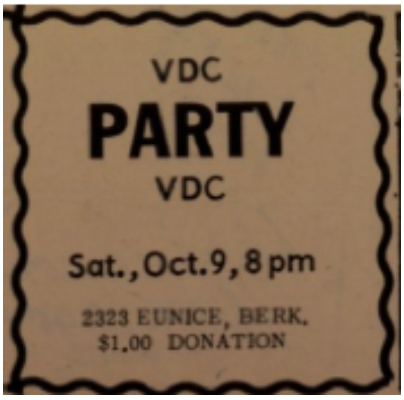
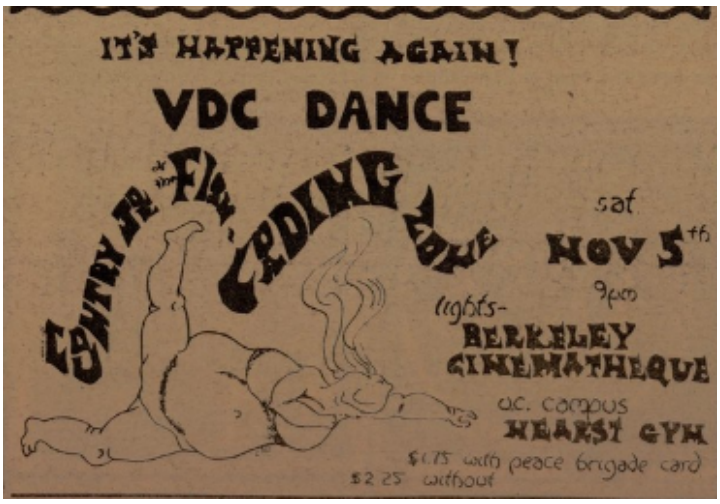
[166] "The Holy Rockers," *Berkeley Barb*, 3.16, October 21, 1966
[167] Ibid

Compared with an advertisement for the same event one year prior, there is a night and day difference in style.





[168]

The 1966 VDC dance featured two significant Bay Area bands, Berkeley's political folk-rockers Country Joe & the Fish, and Berkeley Rock band the Loading Zone, who shared numerous bills with the Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane in the early-going, including the Trips Festival of January, 1966.[169]

By incorporating Rock music, contemporary psychedelic art a la the Avalon and Fillmore poster style, and calling itself a "Dance," rather than a "Party" as they did the year before, the Vietnam Day Committee's benefit event co-opted key aspects of hippie Rock dances of the Fillmore and Avalon. They even put a light show on the bill to boot. Though the Diggers were likely what finally sparked the VDC's interest in the Haight-Ashbury scene, the type of event that the VDC was imitating with this poster was not even the type that the Diggers would typically attend. In fact, it was more like the events that the confounding Ken Kesey would show up at.

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[168] Advertisement from *Berkeley Barb*, 1.9 October 8, 1965 (Left) and advertisement from *Berkeley Barb*, 3.18, November 4, 1966 (Right).
[169] "Trips Festival 1966 (1991) Handbill." Wes Wilson Store. Accessed February 27, 2022. https://www.wes-wilson.com/store/p34/Trips_Festival_1966_(1991)_Handbill.html

After all, indoor concerts, like the VDC dance, cost money, and the Diggers were so staunchly committed to everything being free that they famously picketed a hip concert they found too expensive, and convinced the Grateful Dead to play shows for free, which was a pivotal moment in the hippie movement.[170] This distinction shows the wholesale interest in Hippie culture by the Berkeley New Left after the formation of the Diggers directed their eyes south-west towards the Haight.

In the late Summer of 1966, another key bridge between New Left and hippie had been born, but would take months to mature. Haight-Ashbury residents, primarily Allen Cohen and Jay Thelin, realized their vision of a Haight-Ashbury newspaper.[171] The publishers of the Haight newspaper, eventually entitled the *City of San Francisco Oracle*, would use several of the methods of the underground political papers, such as amateur contributions, eyewitness reporting and grassroots funding. They were also committed to pushing the envelope in ways political papers had not. The *Oracle* publishers wanted not only to provide readers with subjects of hippie interest–psychedelics, poems, spirituality–but also to deliver those contents in a visually stunning way. Noticing that underground newspapers by and large followed the same conventions as the newspapers they opposed, the *Oracle* designers wanted to rethink the basic structures of the articles that would populate their paper.

The first issue of the *Oracle*, (not yet called by that name), published on 9/2/66, did not include many bold layout choices. Its subject matter–front page stories about Vietnam and concentration camps–were darker than most of the articles that would fill the paper going forward.[172] The issue's layout was also conventional, with articles written in predictable columns,

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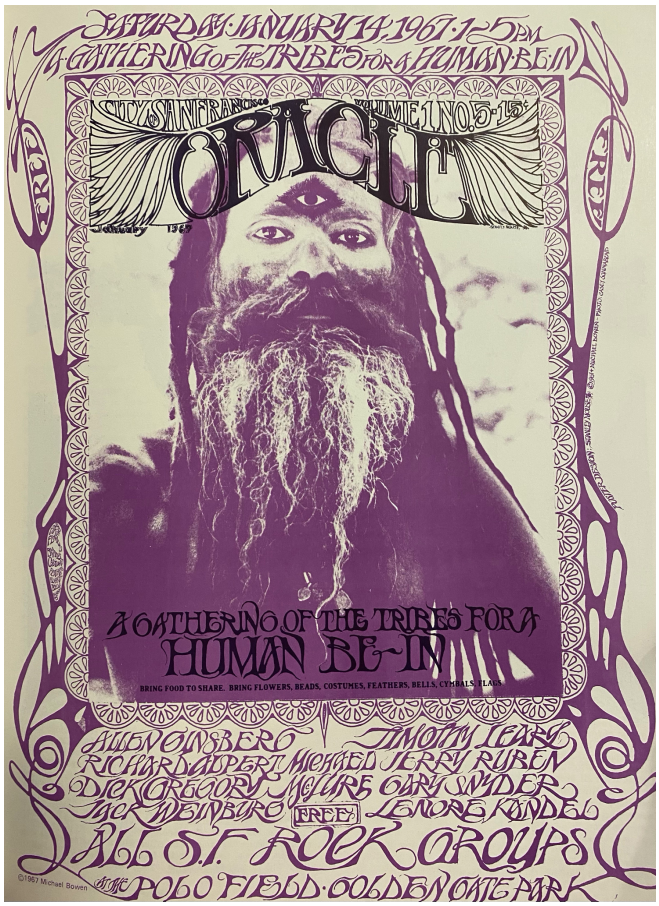
[170] Perry, Charles. *The Haight Ashbury*, 151, and McNally, Dennis. *A Long Strange Trip: The inside History of the Grateful Dead*, 164.
[171] Perry, Charles. *The Haight Ashbury,* 89.
[172]Cohen, Allen, ed."The San Francisco Oracle, Facsimile Edition : The Psychedelic Newspaper of the Haight-Ashbury, 1966-1968." 1991. "P.O. Frisco."

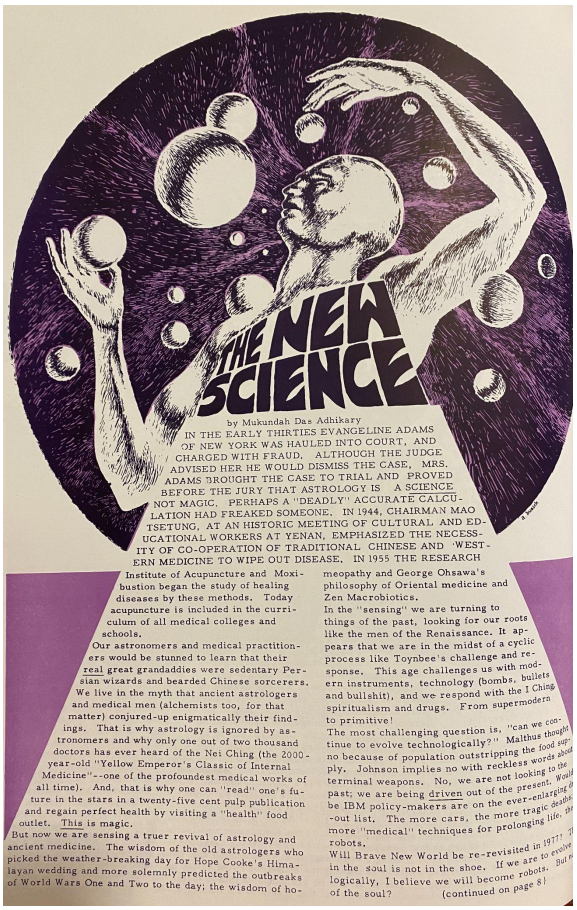
bunched against one another. It would not take long, though, for the *Oracle* writers and artists to develop trademark devices that set their newspaper apart from the rest. They embraced full-page artworks rich with psychedelic imagery, text breaking out of rigid columns maneuvering designs across the pages, and text atop of background art. These techniques occasionally made the articles hard to read, but the effect, a unique blend of text and art, was exactly what the publishers had in mind.[173] The contents of the articles were not the only, or even the primary, points of interest for some readers, as the newspapers would be likely entertaining even for people who hallucinating too vividly to read.

Issue no. 4 of the *Oracle*, published in January of 1967, was a triumph of these visual experimentations, featuring numerous memorable full page spreads, some of which were even in color, which was a stunning development in its own right. The front page was an advertisement for the biggest happening the hippies had ever attempted; the "Human Be-In" (or "Gathering of the Tribes"), to be held in Golden Gate Park, with speakers (Allen Ginsberg, Timothy Leary, Jerry Rubin, Lenore Kandel and more), bands (The Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Big Brother & the Holding Company, plus others), and attendees decked out in "beads, flowers, costumes, feathers" like the poster suggested they do. The next page featured an article entitled "The New Science," in which contributor Mukundah Das Adhikary defended astrology, with words that formed a trapezoid, underneath an epic celestial drawing. The real masterpiece, though, came in the sprawling, two-page Allen Ginsberg poem and accompanying drawing called "Renaissance or Die." The words, enclosed in a heart-shaped frame, are at the center of an intricate drawing overflowing with symbolic content. Ginsberg writes in the tradition of

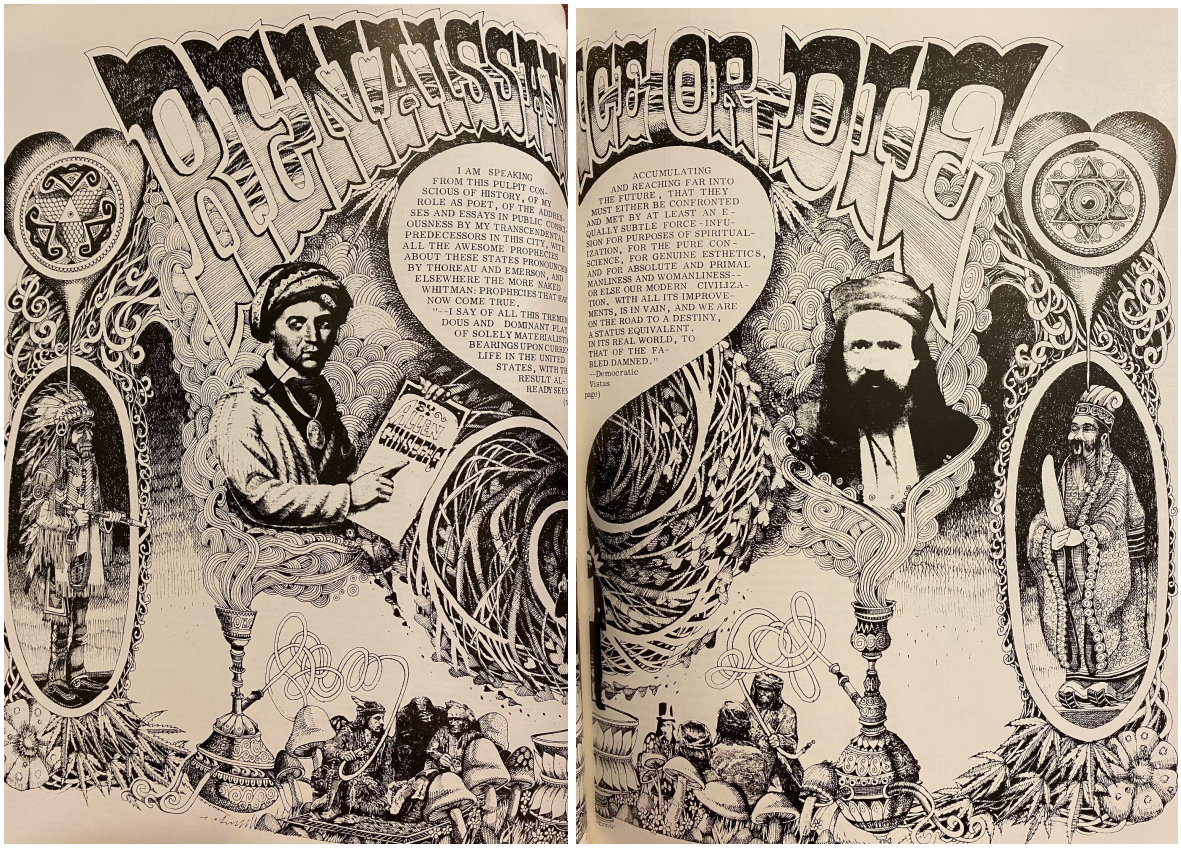
[173] Perry, Charles. *The Haight Ashbury,* 123-4

"Thoreau and Emerson, and… the more naked Whitman," warning the materialistic United States that its spiritual deficiencies are leading its citizens to the world of "the fabled damned."[174]





[174] "Renaissance or Die." *San Francisco Oracle*, #4, January, 1967.



As eye-catching and revolutionary as these *Oracle* experiments were, they did not impress everyone in the neighborhood.[175] The Diggers saw the *Oracle* as an "old rag of misinformation," full of "psychedelic bullshit art" and "pre-masticated verbal masturbation about what we already know."[176] Reading through articles like "The New Science," one could imagine how the Diggers, and presumably the New Left politicos as well, saw this as more incoherent, ineffective and aimless hippie expression. After all, the hippies were still not organizing to achieve concrete goals. The Human Be-In, advertised on the front page of the early January issue, was designed to bring people together for a beautiful, loving afternoon, not to demand

[175] Images: Front cover. *The City of San Francisco Oracle*, #4, January, 1967, and "The New Science." *The City of San Francisco Oracle*, #4, January, 1967. And "Renaissance or Die." *San Francisco Oracle*, #4, January, 1967.
[176] As quoted in Moretta, John. *The Hippies : A 1960s History,* 51

anything from the government, as a Berkeley gathering of the same magnitude would certainly try to do.[177]

Interestingly enough, rather than turn their noses up at the politically punchless *Oracle*, the *Barb* publishers were so inspired by the *Oracle* that they used it as an inspiration for their own paper. The first changes were gradual; the *Barb* began to include more art that had no apparent connection to articles. Little line drawings of spirals served as psychedelic easter eggs to a readership that was gradually "turning on" to trippy hippie ways.[178] In November, aforementioned music columnist Ed Denson wrote an article entitled "Quiet…QU-I-ETTT?!X!" in which he reflected about the role of sound in daily life, consciousness, and the hippies. At times he raved: "is there anyone more alienated from mass culture than hippies?... Are the rock dances attempts to create an entirely different reality? Is that good? Why are they inside? Why are they at night? Why do the police attempt to stop the dances?"[179] Several facets of this article, from its nonsense title, to its unusual pace, to its digressions on consciousness, are reminiscent of articles and poems from the first three issues of the *Oracle*, which had been published by Denson's writing of this bizarre "Folk Scene" article.

Soon after, the *Barb* dove headfirst into apolitical artistic flourishes, with full-page drawings full of nude, astrological, and Native American imagery, all three of which were characteristic of hippie art of the Haight. On April 28, 1967, an entire page of the *Barb* was taken up by a drawing of a (presumably) Native American man looking into the distance, while a Goddess-esque figure shelters eight faceless babies in a patch of weeds and flowers amid

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[177] Though the Human Be-In was devoid of political demands, it was also a celebration of the increasingly friendly hippie and New Left movements. Activist Jerry Rubin was a speaker, and politicos of the East Bay were welcomed. The *Berkeley Barb* expressed enthusiasm about joining "San Francisco's hippies in a lovefeast that will, hopefully, wipe out the last remnants of mutual skepticism and suspicion." Source: "The Beginning is the Human Be-In," *Berkeley Barb*, 4.1, January 6, 1967.
[178] Such as in *Berkeley Barb*, 3.18, November 4, 1966 and *Berkeley Barb*, 4.4, January 27, 1967.
[179] "Quiet… QU-I-ETTT?!X!" *Berkeley Barb*, 3.21, November 25, 1966.

hundreds of stars and planets in the night sky. Only one week later, *Barb* topped themselves, taking psychedelic art to its front page, and *in color* as well, which they had never before attempted. On the cover of issue 4.18, published May 5th, 1967, another nude woman in a flower patch dances joyously while an old bearded man stares into space. Beside him, an eye looks directly at the reader through a purple tapestry in space. Yin-Yang circles border the art on each corner. If there was ever a piece of "psychedelic bullshit art" published in a Bay Area newspaper, it was on the front cover of *Barb* in the first week of May.

 [180]

The love of the Diggers, the VDC Dance, Ed Denson's evolving Folk Scene column and the emergence of indulgent psychedelic art into the pages of the *Barb* show a clear bridging of the once cavernous rift between the Berkeley New Left and the San Francisco hippies between 1965 and 1967. Though they were outsiders to the psychedelic counterculture, the straight-laced politicos of the Bay Area, following the emergence of the Diggers, saw common cause with the

[180] Front covers of *Berkeley Barb*, 4.17, April 28, 1967 (Left) and *Berkeley Barb*, 4.18, May 5, 1967 (Right), respectively.

hippies and further legitimated their events and aesthetics through the platform of the *Berkeley Barb*. Their participation in the Underground Press Syndicate, along with four other New Left papers, also predominantly manned by young New Leftists, made their support of hippies all the more substantial, because their increasingly pro-hippie stance was therefore accessible to readers in Michigan, New York and Los Angeles.

Conclusion

In sum, this essay has sought to show how often media and outsider entrepreneurs interacted with the hippie movement with no agenda to tame or "domesticate" the counterculture. We have seen that mass media, such as the *Chronicle* and RCA Victor, was not, as some historians have generalized, determined to neutralize the hippie movement from its inception in San Francisco, 1965. We have even seen that many members of the counterculture proudly identified themselves as "hippies," even though the term was a disparaging one fueled by the media. We have seen also that entrepreneurial outsiders such as Bill Graham, a member of the "society of buy and sell" as one underground newspaper contributor called it, had a genuine respect for hippie art and life, and ensured that his events legitimated the counterculture even as money exchanged hands. And lastly, we have seen that the New Left of Berkeley embraced the Diggers, and ultimately the hippie movement in general despite being scorned by psychedelic guru Ken Kesey. One final image should suffice to conclude this essay, which requires only little explanation.

[181]

Country Joe & The Fish were a Berkeley-based folk-rock band in the mid-late 1960's, contemporaries of the Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane, led by "Country Joe" Macdonald. Before he enlisted "The Fish" as a permanent backing band, Macdonald mostly performed folk songs with a political edge, much in the style of early Bob Dylan. He played college campuses at events sponsored by Students for a Democratic Society (S.D.S.), attended teach-ins at UC Berkeley with guitar in tow, and played at political demonstrations.[182] When Country Joe & The Fish reached their final form, they signed with Vanguard Records, a sizable record label that had a history of rostering political and folk artists such as Paul Robeson, Joan Baez, and Pete Seeger.[183] Country Joe & The Fish would have a busy 1967, releasing two albums with Vanguard Records and playing dozens of shows around the Bay Area, particularly in Berkeley.[184]

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[181] Advertisement from *Berkeley Barb,* 4.18, May 5, 1967.
[182] An oral history of Country Joe's 1960's career can be found at "Country Joe And The Fish." chickenonaunicycle.com. http://www.chickenonaunicycle.com/Country%20Joe%20Shows.htm
[183] "Discography of the Vanguard Label." Vanguard Records. Accessed April 1, 2022. http://www.bsnpubs.com/new/vanguard.pdf
[184] "Country Joe And The Fish." chickenonaunicycle.com. http://www.chickenonaunicycle.com/Country%20Joe%20Shows.htm

Country Joe & The Fish's first album, "Electric Music For The Mind And Body" was drenched in the San Francisco psychedelic style, with wild guitar solos, blues influence and surreal lyrics. The follow-up, "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-To-Die," featured a title track with biting ironic patriotism–"It's one, two, three, what are we fightin' for / Don't ask me I don't give a damn / next stop is Vietnam–" and more psychedelic sounds like delayed vocals and aggressively distorted guitars.

Echoing Chapter One, Vanguard showed a total unwillingness to domesticate, tame, or defang either The Fish's political intensity or their psychedelic experimentation. Further echoing Chapter One, Ralph Gleason of the *Chronicle* gave the band a warm review in advance of their debut Vanguard record, writing that "their music and songs have potential that could put them among the handful of top bands in the country," possibly putting more wind in their sails with such comments.[185]

Echoing Chapter Two, several font choices in the poster are strikingly reminiscent of Wes Wilson's poster art for the Fillmore, which was commissioned by Bill Graham, week after week. Like Bill Graham, it was businesspeople unaffiliated with the counterculture who funded this two-page psychedelic sprawl in the *Berkeley Barb*.

And **as seen in Chapter Three**, Country Joe was a politically-minded resident of Berkeley who ultimately infused his political art with heaps of San Francisco psychedelia, much like how the *Barb* rethought their New Left newspaper after warming to the hippie movement.

Altogether, it seems there is no better image to sum up the contents and arguments of this essay.

[185] "The Big Sound of Bay Area Bands." *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 7, 1967.

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