TERRA AQUARIUS

A MARXIST ANALYSIS OF THE ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE IN NIMBIN

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

PhD

in

Social Anthropology

at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

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2000
ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at the alternative lifestyle culture in Northern New South Wales, particularly those alternative lifestyle participants living around the township of Nimbin. I use a Marxist analysis, incorporating historical materialist ethnographic techniques. The primary purpose of this study was to gain insights into the class structure of modern capitalist societies.

I look at Nimbin’s rural peripheral status and examine how this has impacted upon transport and work patterns, on migration, and on tourism.

I consider the role the alternative settlers play in the rural economy, the “urban” culture introduced by the new settlers, the effects of welfare subsistence on the economy, and the articulation of drug-use with the economy and with the ideology of the alternative lifestyle participants. This analysis also identifies how these processes have led to an engendering of an ethnic or class identity among the alternative lifestyle community, and of their political engagement with the national economy.

I show the extent to which the alternative lifestyle community forms a distinct micro-class, the benefit peasantry, and the economic, social and cultural characteristics particular to that class, and the role of migration as the primary class-forming process.

On the basis of this research I make predictions about the future development of the alternative lifestyle class, the effect of the alternative lifestyle community on Australian capitalism, and the inter-generational inheritability of the class position as the children of the original migrants reach adulthood.
IN MEMORY OF

DAWSON
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank many people for their help with this thesis, the writing of which has brought me great joy over the time I have spent on it. I acknowledge with gratitude the intellectual stimulation and encouragement given to me by Brendan Tuohy throughout the entire process.

To Brendan, and to Harry Nowell I owe a huge debt for the painstaking work involved in constructing the beautiful maps that show voting patterns. I could never have done it without you. I would like to thank my supervisor, Jeff Sissons, who accommodated my work habits and academic independence with grace.

Thanks is due also to Micky Barry, Lake, Flame, Charlie Barry, Andree Jones, Cheyenne, Paul Childs, Felicity Tuohy, Sylvia Hudson, Bill Metcalf, and to all of the Dwyer family.

I would like to thank the people who consented to be interviewed (many of whom are known in thesis by pseudonym), and the people associated with Rainbow Power, the Nimbin Explorer, Nimbin News, and Granny’s Farm Youth Hostel.

Then there are a group of friendly and helpful people whom I hope one day to meet. These persons include Carol de Launey, David Willis, Graeme Dunstan, Andi Islinger, Paul Tait, Jeni Kendell, Jan Tilden, Tricia Shantz, Dave Lambert, Ros Derrett and Alan Hill (with thanks for referring me to Bill Metcalf and to an association that made this thesis that much easier to write).

The group of persons onto whom I foisted proofreading include Rosemary Olive Matthews, John Jolliff, Emily Holmes, Bernie Tuohy, Susan Halliwell, Cecilie Rooke, Louise Morris. I owe a debt of gratitude to my partners at ReddFish Intergalactic, Michael (Spike) Thomas, Conal Tuohy, Greg Ford, Miriam Tuohy, Harry Nowell and Brendan Tuohy. Ian Rotherham scanned the photographs for this thesis. Thank you all for your help.

I acknowledge with gratitude the Massey Doctoral Scholarship. This money made my life a great deal easier. I also thank the Graduate Research Fund for contributing to the cost of data acquisition for the voting pattern maps. Thanks must go also to the DRC people who helped to keep my formal relationship with the University bureaucracy on an even keel.

Finally, I would like to thank the people in Nimbin, known and unknown, that have made this ethnography possible. I hope you like it and that it gives strength to your endeavours.
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