

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

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

SAM MURRAY

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, Andréé 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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	2
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS	5
SECTION I: INTRODUCTION	9
0.1 Why Nimbin?	9
0.2 Main ethical concerns	12
0.3 Methodology	18
0.4 Organisation of the thesis	23
CHAPTER 1. MODELLING THE ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE	28
1.2 Theoretical Introduction	28
1.2 How others have dealt with the alternative movement	33
1.3 My approach to the studying the alternative lifestyle	42
CHAPTER 2. SITUATING NIMBIN	47
2.0 Introduction	47
2.1 Settlement patterns	48
2.3 Geological and Aboriginal History of Nimbin	51
2.4 White settlement	60
2.5 The influence of core-periphery development patterns	65
CHAPTER 3. CLASS-FORMING PROCESSES	71
3.0 Introduction	71
3.1 How I define the alternative lifestyle participants	73
3.2 Component parts of the class-forming process	76

SECTION II: MIGRATION	91
<hr/>	
CHAPTER 4. MIGRATION TO NIMBIN	97
4.0 Introduction	97
4.1 Why Nimbin?	97
4.2 The economic basis of the alternative migration	103
4.3 Recruitment	106
CHAPTER 5. MIGRATORY FLOWS	108
5.0 Introduction	108
5.1 Variations within the alternative lifestyle population	110
5.2 Dialectics of acceptance and resistance	132
5.3 How did this class of benefit peasants come into being?	144
5.4 Summary	151
SECTION III: PRODUCTION RELATIONS	153
<hr/>	
CHAPTER 6. HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTION	157
6.0 Introduction to household focussed activity	157
6.1 Alternatives and household production	160
6.2 The logic of production & ideological renegotiations	165
6.3 Children as production	177
6.4 Voluntary work	189
CHAPTER 7. LAND USE PATTERNS	193
7.0 Introduction	193
7.1 Reviewing the theory of ground rent	193
7.2 The development of primary industry in Nimbin	195
7.3 Alternative settlement of the land	200
7.4 Land management and exchange of cultural practices	216
7.5 Saving the planet – an economic contribution	220
CHAPTER 8. CANNABIS CROPPING	228
8.0 Introduction	228

8.1	History of cannabis cropping in Nimbin	228
8.2	Analysis of cannabis growing and selling in Nimbin	230
8.3	Marketing the crop	240
8.4	Likely trajectory if cannabis is legalised	247
SECTION IV: VALUE-ADDED WORK		251
CHAPTER 9. TOURISM		252
9.0	Introduction	252
9.1	Transport and accommodation	255
9.2	Tourism distorts economy	261
9.3	Independence	273
9.4	Artisans	280
CHAPTER 10. RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT WORK		297
10.0	Introduction	297
10.1	Rainbow Power Company – Case Study	303
10.2	Computer-based work	321
SECTION V: CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE		329
CHAPTER 11. CORE MEANINGS IN ALTERNATIVE IDEOLOGY		335
11.0	Introduction	335
11.1	Judging the determining power of ideology	336
11.2	United by cultural practice into a movement	348
CHAPTER 12. PRODUCTIVE CORE OF THE HIPPIE NATION		356
12.0	Introduction	356
12.1	A specialist ideological industry	356
12.2	Relationship with mainstream media	357
12.3	Independent media	362
12.4	Language, class consciousness and ideology	371
12.5	A political statement or cultural expression?	388

SECTION VI: CLASS POSITION	404
13.0 Introduction	406
13.1 Locating the alternative class	406
13.2 Benefit Peasants	408
13.3 Benefit entitlement, migration, rent & citizenship	417
13.4 Class transitions	419
CHAPTER 14. CLASS FOR ITSELF	424
14.0 Introduction	424
14.1 Political history: moral critique	424
14.2 Benefit Peasants and class action	430
14.3 What it compels them to do	432
14.4 Local body, state and federal politics	458
CHAPTER 15. LIKELY CLASS TRAJECTORY	474
15.0 Introduction	474
15.1 Potential for political alliances and class activism	476
15.2 Personal to global class consciousness	477
15.3 Class unity	483
SECTION VII: SUMMARY	484
BIBLIOGRAPHY	496
OTHER RESOURCES	514