



# *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand 30, Open*

Papers presented to the 30th Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand held on the Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia, July 2-5, 2013.

<http://www.griffith.edu.au/conference/sahanz-2013/>

Glen Hill, “Discipline Dodgers: Freedom and Control in the Intentional Communities of Australia’s Counterculture” in *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand: 30, Open*, edited by Alexandra Brown and Andrew Leach (Gold Coast, Qld: SAHANZ, 2013), vol. 2, p 569-581.

ISBN-10: 0-9876055-0-X

ISBN-13: 978-0-9876055-0-4

# *Discipline Dodgers*

## Freedom and Control in the Intentional Communities of Australia's Counterculture

*Glen Hill*

*University of Sydney*

1. Collaborators on this research project are Lee Stickells (University of Sydney), Felicity Scott (Columbia University) and Zanny Begg (University of Sydney).

*This paper fits within a larger project researching the emergence in the early 1970s of Australian counterculture architecture.<sup>1</sup> One of the many steps in this project is to research the various theoretical lenses through which the architecture of the counterculture might be interrogated. One of these lenses, a theoretical line that begins with Marx and ends with the thinking of Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Antonio Negri, is investigated in this paper. This lens is unusual because of the significance it ascribes to the counterculture movement. In economic terms it places the counterculture at a pivot point in the transformation from Fordist to post-Fordist modes of production and consumption. In social terms it places the counterculture at a pivot point in the transformation from Foucault's "disciplinary societies" to Deleuze's "societies of control." While much of the paper is dedicated to understanding the lens itself and the topography of the counterculture it exposes, the paper ultimately returns to first-hand accounts of Australians involved in constructing intentional communities and asks about the implications of this lens for understanding the Australian experience of the counterculture experiment.*

The focus of this paper is not primarily architectural history. The paper is instead an attempt to establish a *theoretical frame* to ground a particular, ongoing, architectural history project. This architectural history project is centred on the emergence of Australian counterculture architecture in the early 1970s. Many lenses are possible onto this moment in Australian architectural history. The lens investigated in this paper is a theoretical line that begins with Marx and ends with the thinking of Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Antonio Negri. This lens is unusual because of the significance it ascribes to the counterculture movement. In economic terms it places the counterculture at a pivot



point in the transformation from Fordist to post-Fordist modes of production and consumption. In social terms it places the counterculture at a pivot point in the transformation from Foucault's "disciplinary societies" to Deleuze's "societies of control."

The assumption of the paper is that the writing and reception of architectural history is inevitably 'framed' in some way. This assumption runs counter to the possibility of a "neutral" or "objective" historical account. From the perspective of the paper, objectivity simply implies that the frame is sufficiently commonplace to allow the 'truth' it reveals to appear self-evident. This however leaves the frame unarticulated and therefore unscrutinised. By articulating the theoretical frame in an architectural history context, it is hoped that the efficacy and value of the frame, as well as the history it discloses, is opened to interrogation and challenge.

### The Freedom to Consume

In her insightful book *Communes in Rural Australia: The Movement since 1970*, Margaret Munro-Clark points out that even in the nineteenth century there was widespread suggestion, promoted by thinkers such as Karl Marx, that "the enemy of being was having."<sup>2</sup> Munro-Clark reports that by the 1980s, the period in which she was writing, such perceptions had become a commonplace of popular culture:

They are expressed with varying intensity in a concern about the evils of consumerism, and in anxiety about the dangers of technology on an inhuman and uncontrollable scale, as well as in a preference for whatever is natural, organic, hand-made or otherwise on a human scale. Such concerns are often felt at an intense level by people who choose to live in a rural intentional community.<sup>3</sup>

The intensity of concern for such ethical issues—intensity sufficient to lead people to shun the mainstream world and attempt to physically construct an alternative world grounded on new ethical principles—is argued to have arrived as the outcome of a history of seismic shifts in subjectivity that led to a sense of placelessness and with it a crisis of self-identity.

In the pre-modern world,<sup>4</sup> the argument suggests, one's place in the social order, and along with it one's identity, was largely determined by birth and was normally immutable. Indeed, pre-

2. Margaret Munro-Clark, *Communes in Rural Australia: The Movement since 1970* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1986), 40.

3. Munro-Clark, *Communes in Rural Australia*, 40–41.

4. "Pre-modern" and "modern" are interpreted here not as historical periods, but as interpretive perspectives that appear and disappear within history, and may co-exist at the same time.

modernity is defined by the acceptance a fixed (God-) given order that binds all parts of society: ruler and ruled, master and servant, husband and wife, child and parent.

The enlightenment eroded and eventually supplanted this pre-modern commitment to the given. As David Harvey points out, in the face of the stability of the pre-modern world, “[e]nlightenment thinkers welcomed the maelstrom of change and saw the transitory, the fleeting, the fragmentary as a necessary condition through which the modernising project could be achieved. Doctrines of equality, liberty, faith in human intelligence (once allowed the benefits of education), and universal reason abounded.”<sup>5</sup>

5. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 13.

The removal of a (God-) given place as the ground for being, left a void which each individual in modernity was required to build over. In contrast to the pre-modern world, in which a person’s place was given, in modernity individuals became “free” to find their own place. If the overarching *project of being* for the pre-modern world was “to be in a way that is appropriate to your (ascribed) place,” then in modernity the overarching *project of being* became “making your own place.” This brought with it both the freedom, and the anxiety, that is the so-called “condition of modernity.”

Quite early in the uneven transition from pre-modernity to modernity two contrasting responses can be detected to the loss of the givenness of place. The dominant response was to assemble a façade of (consumer) culture aimed at gaining regard and social standing. Georg Simmel noted that from the early Renaissance, a person’s mode of dress increasingly operated to construct the public face of their personal identity.<sup>6</sup> In the middle ages in Europe dress styles were relatively stable, and played a role in communicating people’s place within the fairly fixed social order. But from the latter half of the fourteenth century, the “lower” social ranks were beginning to imitate the style of dress of the “upper” social ranks, though difference was still maintained through variation in the quality of fabric and detailing.<sup>7</sup> However by the sixteenth century servants were attempting to more closely follow the style and quality of dress of their masters. Resentment to this was aired in the claim that “if servants were allowed to be fashionable it became impossible to tell who was the mistress and who was the maid.”<sup>8</sup> The only recourse the upper social ranks had for this incursion onto their public identity was to keep changing dress style in order to maintain difference. The (now

6. Georg Simmel, “Fashion,” *American Journal of Sociology* 62 (1957): 541–58. First published 1904.

7. Simmel, “Fashion,” 541–58.

8. Diana De Marly, *Working Dress: A History of Occupational Clothing* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986). See also Efrat Tselon, *The Masque of Femininity: the Presentation of Woman in Everyday Life* (London: Thousand Oaks, 1995).



familiar) result was the ever-quickenening cycle of fashion transformations. Like clothing, buildings in pre-modernity played a role in communicating the occupant's place within the social strata of a community. Rules dictating the aesthetic qualities of buildings and clothing in relation to social rank not only maintained the legibility of the station of the occupant, it helped suppress consumption associated with aesthetic competition.<sup>9</sup>

The growing wealth of the merchant class in the early modern period, and the dissemination of concepts of egalitarianism and individualism, saw the gradual erosion of these notions of decorum in both buildings and clothing. Even so, Richard Sennett suggests that the conviction that a person's disposition should be "sincerely" reflected in their public presentation lingered in Europe until the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Finally, with the withdrawal of any moral obligation to match one's situation to one's public presentation, architecture, clothing and the whole gamut of consumer culture was freed to be deployed in the competition for place and the regard of others.

Capitalism benefitted from the increasing deployment of consumer culture in modernity's new context of free competition for place and regard. The burgeoning importance of the role of consumer culture paralleled capitalism's expansion and transformation from its early industrial form, which Marx locates in the late eighteenth century, to its more immaterial form. That is, over time, capitalism relied less on trading material 'needs' and more on creating and trading immaterial 'wants'. In this way, personal identity increasingly became a product of the market.

The counter response to the growing use of consumer culture in the modern competition for place was to reject the affectations of culture and instead attempt to nurture one's "inner" qualities in order to secure place and gain regard. As early as the mid-eighteenth century Jacques Rousseau railed against the cultural affectations that were intended to signal a person's social station, but that he instead believed masked their innate morality.<sup>11</sup> The growth of industrialism and consumerism prompted late nineteenth century thinkers such as Marx to agonise about the corrupting effect of forced production and material consumption on the human spirit, and to advocate that as free, self-creating subjects we should be able to remake our world, our social relations and ourselves. By the 1950s existentialists such as Martin

9. For an account of the overturning of European prejudices against consumption in the early eighteenth century, see Michael Kwass, "Ordering the World of Goods: Consumer Revolution and the Classification of Objects in Eighteenth-Century France," *Representations* 82 (Spring 2003), 90.

10. Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Knopf, 1977).

11. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Pub. Co., 1992).

Heidegger and John Paul Sartre could argue that those in the modern world were so bound to the global system of production and consumption they were unable to act “authentically.” In this view, modern humans had become ensnared in a technological web in which both nature and “man” were mere resources awaiting exploitation. For Sartre, capitalism’s challenge to human freedom arises from the divergence between how individuals want to exist and how the system requires them to exist in order to survive. Regardless of their ensnared condition, Sartre held that individuals who blamed their choices on circumstance rather than taking responsibility for their actions were concealing their own essential freedom and acting in “bad faith.”

Emerging from the context of increasing material prosperity in the 1950s and 1960s, it is possible to identify the endpoints of the two trajectories described above. On one side, in “developed” market economies there was overwhelming participation in the capitalist system of production and consumption where consumer culture was deployed to attain status and the regard of others. The normalised understanding was that engaging in production could generate (individual) wealth, and that wealth allowed participation in consumer culture and the potential transformation of (an individual’s) place in society. On the other side there was a minority, often Marxian intellectual critique arguing that the capitalist, consumerist, technologically dependent system was not only resulting in social and ecological damage, but, most significantly, a loss of autonomy and personal freedom. In this view, freedom within a system directed toward service of market was not real freedom.

12. Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and its Youthful Opposition* (London: Faber, 1970).

The counterculture, it has been argued,<sup>12</sup> adopted and advanced this critique of mainstream consumer society not through political action, but by radically altering their lifestyles. Changing one’s way of life can be seen to resonate with the philosophical arguments found in Marx, Heidegger and Sartre: remaking one’s self also requires remaking one’s world and one’s social relations. Thus the making of new worlds—in Australia’s case the design, construction and management of self-sufficient intentional rural communities—is not an incidental outcome of countercultural aspirations. Rather, remaking one’s physical environment in accordance with specific social, economic and environmental principles was the essential route to achieving both an authentic identity, and freedom.



## The Refusal to Consume

The counterculture movement of the late 1960s and early '70s is often presented as a marginal historical episode that had little influence on the trajectory of capitalism or of mainstream society generally. However Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt argue that the counterculture was pivotal in the transformation of society and the market economy.

From the standpoint of the traditional 'political' segments of the U.S. movements of the 1960s, the various forms of cultural experimentation that blossomed with a vengeance during that period all appeared as a kind of distraction from the "real" political and economic struggles, but what they failed to see was that *the "merely cultural" experimentation had very profound political and economic effects.*<sup>13</sup>

13. Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Empire* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 274.

Negri and Hardt argue that in the period of the twentieth century leading up to the emergence of the counterculture movement, capitalism was in such a state of crisis it was not at all certain that it would survive. Negri and Hardt rehearse various scenarios of the logic of this crisis: on one side it appeared that the limits of nature's capacity to service capital's ever increasing demand for resources were being reached; on the other, workers were demanding a greater share of capital in order to achieve a guaranteed social wage and a high level of welfare.<sup>14</sup> Negri and Hardt then point out that capitalism not only survived this crisis, but also emerged stronger than ever. The reason, he suggests, is that the counterculture movement's refusal to be contained by the old disciplinary regimes or engage in the old modes of mass production and mass consumption, forced the development of new modes of production, new sites for consumption, and new, more flexible forms of control to ensure all cultural activities were ensnared by the market,

14. Negri and Hardt, *Empire*, 262.

"Dropping out" was really a poor conception of what was going on in Haight-Ashbury and across the United States in the 1960s. The two essential operations were the refusal of the disciplinary regime and the experimentation with new forms of productivity.<sup>15</sup>

15. Negri and Hardt, *Empire*, 274.

In particular, the counterculture rejected the disciplinary regimes that had been enacted through the family, the school and the factory,

The refusal appeared in a wide variety of guises and proliferated in thousands of daily practices. It was the college student who experimented with LSD instead of looking for a job; it was the young woman who refused to get married and make a family; it was the “shiftless” African-American worker who moved on “CP” (colored people’s) time, refusing work in every way possible. The youth who refused the deadening repetition of the factory-society invented new forms of mobility and flexibility, new styles of living.<sup>16</sup>

16. Negri and Hardt, *Empire*, 274.

Through its refusal to participate in existing societal processes, the counterculture revalued previously under-valued labour and cultural activity,

Student movements forced a high social value to be accorded to knowledge and intellectual labor. Feminist movements that made clear the political content of “personal” relationships and refused patriarchal discipline raised the social value of what has traditionally been considered women’s work, which involves a high content of affective or caring labor and centers on services necessary for social reproduction. The entire panoply of movements and the entire emerging counterculture highlighted the social value of cooperation and communication. This massive transvaluation of the values of social production and production of new subjectivities opened the way for a powerful transformation of labor power.<sup>17</sup>

17. Negri and Hardt, *Empire*, 274–75.

In economic terms this account places the counterculture at a pivotal point in the transformation from Fordist to post-Fordist modes of production and consumption. In social terms it places the counterculture at a pivotal point in the transformation from Foucault’s “Disciplinary Societies” to Deleuze’s “Societies of Control.”

### **The Refusal to Consume in Australia**

The counterculture movement is thus posited as a site of struggle and change. For those *in* the movement it was a struggle to gain place, identity and freedom *outside* of the commodifying forces of capital. For capital, it was a struggle to *recapture* that escapee movement and return it to the consumer market.





If this account has merit, then it would be expected that the counterculture's existential experimentation should show specific evidence of resistance to Fordist modes of production and Foucaultian regimes of discipline. Early results of analysis of memoirs and first hand portrayals of countercultural experimentation in Australian intentional communities is used here to briefly and tentatively suggest local evidence of such resistance. These first hand portrayals also hint at the emergence of processes within counterculture communities that anticipate the transformation from a Disciplinary Society to a Society of Control.

The shift from Fordism to post-Fordism has a parallel logic to the shift from a Disciplinary Society to a Society of Control. Fordism used mass production to service mass consumption. Factories, using division of labour and Taylorist time management, cheaply mass-produced a limited range of generic products suited to the social class of the consumer. By contrast, post-Fordism, or Flexibilism, uses a flexible skilled labour market to produce diverse specialised product lines matched to diverse and specialised consumer markets. The key features of post-Fordism—flexibility and constant monitoring of consumers—are similar to the features that differentiate Disciplinary Societies from Societies of Control. Indeed, Negri and Hardt argue that “disciplinarity is at once a form of production and a form of government such that disciplinary production and Disciplinary Society tend to coincide completely.”<sup>18</sup> The Disciplinary Society operated by conditioning subjects to participate effectively in production and consumption. The model used by Foucault to illustrate the Disciplinary Society was the Panopticon prison designed by Jeremy Bentham. Here discipline is achieved, not by the existence of the constant gaze of the guards hidden in the central tower, but by the *threat* of the existence of the gaze, which leads subjects to discipline themselves, and others. Subjects in disciplinary societies passed from one site of confinement and (self-) conditioning to another: the family, the school, the factory, and so on. By contrast, the Society of Control, which was only ever briefly outlined by Deleuze,<sup>19</sup> does not entirely displace the Disciplinary Society, but instead adds new, more subtle (and perhaps therefore more insidious) modalities of discipline. Here control is continual and modulates in response to context. The boundaries between sites of confinement become more fluid. For example, through technologies such as mobile phones, email and the Internet, the space of work has infiltrated the space of the family (“you are always at work”) allowing employee surveillance to be unobtrusively designed into the flows

18. Negri and Hardt, *Empire*, 243.

19. “Control and Becoming,” a conversation with Toni Negri originally published in *Futur Anterieur* in Spring 1990, and “Postscript on Control Societies,” originally published in *l'Autre Journal* in May 1990. Both are collected and translated in Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972–1990*, trans. M. Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

of daily life.<sup>20</sup> Rather than the solidarity of unionised labourers receiving the same wage for the same work, in the Society of Control the performance of individual employees is continually monitored as they compete against each other for financial and other rewards. Instead of the confinement of a prison, the metaphor used by Deleuze to illustrate the constrained ‘freedom’ of the Society of Control is a highway system, which offers almost unlimited routes and destinations ... but the car can never leave the road!

Resistance to the Disciplinary Society’s normalising sites of confinement (family, work, factory etc) is readily recognised in counterculture communities, including those emerging in Australia in the early 1970s. In terms of the family, the norms of the nuclear family were challenged by arrangements that included multiple partners of any gender, shared community parenting, and flexible, impermanent coupling rather than life-long monogamy. Jan Tilden of Frog’s Hollow, which began as an all female community and was located inland of Queensland’s Sunshine Coast, describes the ethical and practical considerations of its transformation into a mixed-sex community:

men have other ways of recommending themselves as necessary to women’s lives, so Frog’s Hollow quickly became a mixed-sex group and the issue of just who was “a partner for the time being” soon had to be dealt with. Did we accept anyone who came and learn to get along with them? Or did we place the obligation on the newcomer to prove his or her suitability to join? What about the new lovers of existing members? Where did they stand?<sup>21</sup>

21. Jan Tilden, “From Academic Exercises to Jumping Spiders,” in *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality: Cooperative Lifestyles in Australia*, ed. Bill Metcalf (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1995), 62.

22. Yeshe Khadro, “From Catholic Farm Girl to Bhuddist Nun,” in *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality*, 121.

The normalised disciplining inherent in traditional child rearing and schooling was often resisted within counterculture communities. Chenrezig community, inland from Queensland’s Sunshine Coast, had made a failed attempt to set up their own school.<sup>22</sup> Glen Ochre, who describes herself as a feminist, communist and social activist and was part of the Commonground urban commune in Victoria, indicates the complexity of the decisions involved in child rearing when traditional social norms are contested,

Even more challenging was our commitment to shared child-raising. We were not wanting to eradicate or deny the primary parent/child relationships, but to offset the private “ownership” and total responsibility for children inherent in



the nuclear family. For me, this has been both difficult and joyful. Difficult because we were breaking such new ground and challenging deeply ingrained patterns of behaviour towards children. Joyful because I know we all love and enjoy our non-biological children.<sup>23</sup>

23. Glen Ochre, "From a Circle of Stones to Commonground Dreaming," *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality*, 149–50.

Accounts of those living in Australian counterculture settlements indicate general resistance to the discipline of the conventional workplace. Members of intentional communities sought autonomy, flexibility, and control of their own routines of work and leisure—the type of lifestyle described by Bill Smale of the Mandala intentional community near Warwick in Queensland,

I started building a little hut for temporary accommodation, learning as I went. Most mornings I would get up at dawn, then work until noon. My afternoons and evenings were spent bathing in the creek, yarning and being generally good-natured with those camping near the shack.<sup>24</sup>

24. Bill Smale, "From Outrage to Insight(?)," in *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality*, 106–7.

Resisting the discipline of the conventional workplace appeared to bring the most anxiety to those trying to create counterculture communities. It was generally expected that the aspiration of work-life autonomy would be achieved by attaining self-sufficiency for the settlement. As most intentional communities were in rural locations, self-sufficiency was usually imagined being achieved through some form of agricultural practice. No account that I have so far read indicates self-sufficiency was ever actually achieved. Even if it were attainable, the early years of these settlements were extremely vexed because establishment costs such as purchasing land, erecting buildings and setting up a farm, were difficult to offset in the initial period of limited farm production. Most community members therefore resorted to gaining income from a combination of government benefits (particularly 'the dole'),<sup>25</sup> part time work,<sup>26</sup> or sending one partner to work to allow the other to concentrate on establishing settlement buildings and infrastructure.<sup>27</sup> Gloria Constine reported how members of Tuntable Falls community "one by one ... all started work in the local shoe factory,"<sup>28</sup> and Bill Smale reported going to the Commonwealth Employment service and getting "a job so awful that I can't bear to tell what it was, but the money was good enough to let us buy building materials."<sup>29</sup>

25. Bill Metcalf, ed., *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality*, 47, 64, 90, 108.

26. Metcalf, *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality*, 97, 76, 108, 175.

27. Metcalf, *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality*, 111.

28. Gloria Constine, "From a London Slum to Nimbin's Magic!," in *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality*, 76.

29. Smale, "From Outrage to Insight(?)," 108.

Many of the accounts of counterculture community members appear to show an understanding, perhaps intuitive, of the danger of being drawn into emerging systems of control. The type

of surveillance mechanisms that develop and ensnare individuals in the Society of Control are subtle, and include databases of personal information built up from simply paying bills for services or applying for credit. Indeed debt is identified as a powerful mechanism to encourage the “freedom” to consume and thereby make earning money, and by implication participation in production, a necessity. There are many accounts of resistance to infrastructure connection, particular electricity, water, sewerage, and telecommunications.<sup>30</sup> As alternatives, construction of “autonomous” infrastructure systems in the form of private renewable energy (micro-hydro, solar and wind) and waste treatment systems are commonly described.<sup>31</sup> Citizen band (CB) radio, which was non-contractual and free to use, was noted as being common for communication.<sup>32</sup> Refusing to connect to public infrastructure had a pragmatic as well as a philosophical logic: financially, it eliminated ongoing service and usage charges; ecologically, it avoided participation in often environmentally damaging infrastructure systems; and existentially, it avoided ongoing dependence on the mainstream culture that was being “countered.” Resistance sometimes went beyond individual refusal to connect to infrastructure, to attempts to prevent its more general infiltration. Peter Cock, of Moora Moora intentional community near Healesville in Victoria, recounts: “[a] high point of our collective strength and unity was when thirteen of us got arrested while trying to stop the extension of the electricity grid to our mountain.”<sup>33</sup> Attempts to resist being drawn into debt dependent financial systems were also common. Barter systems developed by counterculture communities, such as LETS (Local Economic Trading System), avoided participation in the mainstream monetary system and allowed local, rather than mainstream market valuation of the goods being consumed.<sup>34</sup> There are also accounts of communal ownership of land being deliberately maintained, and subdivision being resisted,<sup>35</sup> to prevent community members using the property as security for bank loans.<sup>36</sup> Don and Estelle Gobbett, of the “post-Christian” Cennednyss community in the Adelaide Hills, describe the anxiety they felt in compromising this principle,

We are committed to communal ownership of property but a situation arose where we felt obliged to own property privately. When our son and his partner wanted to acquire property adjoining Cennednyss, there wasn’t agreement [from the community] on their buying it jointly with the commu-

30. Metcalf, *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality*, 65, 78, 160.

31. Metcalf, *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality*, 55, 137, 159.

32. Metcalf, *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality*, 78.

33. Peter Cock, “From Communal Theory to Eco-spiritual Practice” in *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality*, 163.

34. Metcalf, *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality*, 80.

35. Cock, “From Communal Theory to Eco-spiritual Practice,” 163.

36. Metcalf, *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality*, 93, 80.



nity. We wanted to have them close to us, so we decided to buy it with them. This was, and is, a painful dilemma for us, a sign of personal inconsistency ...<sup>37</sup>

37. Don and Estelle Gobbett, "From Mission Field to Potato Patch," in *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality*, 93.

As an aside, this account also indicates the weakening of consumption-dependent construction of place and identity in countercultural communities. For these community members, personal identity and kudos were less tied to ownership of material goods (in this case land), than being seen by their peers to uphold the non-mainstream ethos of the community.

Ironically, while there is ample evidence of strong resistance to the disciplinary regimes of mainstream society, there are hints that the systems of governance developed by counterculture community members themselves began to demonstrate features of a Society of Control. The issue of equality of workload within the settlement is particularly revealing. As already noted, counterculture community members aspired to flexibility and autonomy in the work they undertook within the community (in contrast to the regime they submitted to outside the community). As might be anticipated, this flexibility allowed the possibility of workload inequality.

Accounts of counterculture members contain repeated complaints about other members not contributing equitably.<sup>38</sup> Counterculture communities, which were often deliberately anarchical at their conception, appear to have gradually developed their own unique disciplinary regimes. Peter Cock, who as well as being a member of an intentional community provided guidance on their establishment, advised that "[t]here must be social pressure for individuals to participate and to carry out their agreed tasks ...."<sup>39</sup>

38. Metcalf, *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality*, 83, 92, 103, 163, 178.

What appears to have developed in most intentional communities is a system of rules, where compliance is monitored by surveillance, and sanctions and shaming are applied for non-compliance. Dharmananda intentional community required "one days work per week";<sup>40</sup> Moora Moora required members to "pay if they do not do community work."<sup>41</sup> Gloria Constine of Tuntable Falls reported that "inducement to working together is provided by a reduction of over 50% in our individual rates if we do work for the community such as road building, helping building our hall, slashing tracks or tree planting."<sup>42</sup> Community meetings appear to have been used as the venue for reporting non-compliance, applying sanctions and shaming.<sup>43</sup> While this control regime, which marries freedom and autonomy with surveillance and sanctions, shares characteristics of the Society of Control, a significant difference is of course that the controls did not benefit

39. Cock, "From Communal Theory to Eco-spiritual Practice," 164.

40. Leigh Davison, "From Barbecues to Biodynamic Bananas," in *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality*, 43

41. Cock, "From Communal Theory to Eco-spiritual Practice," 163.

42. Constine, "From a London Slum to Nimbin's Magic!" 80.

43. Metcalf, *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality*, 44, 69, 70, 81, 92, 93, 95, 107, 131, 134, 137, 146, 158, 164, 178, 182.

the (mainstream) neo-liberal market economy (though there was an attempt by the federal government to “normalise” countercultural communities through the development of a government “Kibbutz” system ... but that is another story).

### **Conclusion**

The theoretical frame investigated in this paper appears to have the potential to reveal aspects of Architecture’s role in the counterculture’s contestation of the disciplining of society and the commodification of identity. The paper has presented initial intimations of how, in the Australian countercultural context, architecture may have participated in the struggle for place, identity and freedom *outside* of the commodifying forces of capital. For example, architectural experimentation nurtured the possibility of resisting disciplinary control through its (generally unrealised) promise of self-sufficiency or autonomy. The projection of the possibility of autonomy may also have contributed to a conviction that mainstream infrastructure projects (such as expanding the electricity grid) could and should be resisted. Conversely, the sheer physical demands of striving for self-sufficient settlements appear to have contributed to the emergence of internal disciplining regimes that were perhaps more onerous than those operating in mainstream society. The exploration has also hinted at how architecture may have participated in providing alternative mechanisms for achieving individual self-esteem and gaining the regard of others, beyond those offered by consumer society. There is evidence of the pride taken in anti-consumerist stances, and the valuing of creativity that does not rely consumer products—such as hand-producing buildings from scavenged materials. The paper also revealed evidence of the deliberate deployment of particular forms of land title to counter the temptation to commodify property, infrastructure and architecture, and thereby fall back into debt regimes that would deliver communitarians back to the control society.

Ultimately, because the inferences drawn about intentional counterculture communities have relied upon a limited number of first-hand accounts of members of Australian intentional communities, these inferences can only be claimed to be tentative. It is hoped that the research project of which this forms a part will provide a much larger and more diverse range of biographical and autobiographical accounts, thereby allowing broader and more robust conclusions to be drawn.

