

**A CINEMATOGRAPHIC SURVEY
OF A SELECTED ALTERNATIVE SUB-CULTURE
IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS**

BY ROWAN CHRISTOPHER GATFIELD



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BY ROWAN CHRISTOPHER GATFIELD

Submitted for the Degree of Master of Technology
in Graphic Design at the Faculty of Arts
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Supervisor: Richard Charles Andrew

DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER,
MRS ANNE GATFIELD

*In the 24 hours since this time yesterday,
over 200,000 acres of rain forest have been destroyed in our world.
13 million tons of toxic chemicals have been released into our environment.
Over 45,000 people have died of starvation,
38, 000 of them children.
And more than 130 plant or animal species have been driven to extinction
by the action of humans.*

(Hartmann 1999: 1)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the following people for their contribution to the completion of this study.

Thom Hartmann, author of *The Last Hours of Ancient Sunlight* for his inspiration as a writer and for having the courage to expose the extent of humanity's impact on this planet. My thanks also to him for allowing me to use the afore-mentioned quote in my film - *The Search for Utopia*.

My supervisor and mentor, Rick Andrew, for his intuitive guidance and unwavering belief in me, even when I did not believe in myself.

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To The Rainbow Family of Living Light and the many alternative community members, for their unconditional participation in this project.

To my family for all the wonderful support and care during my burns recovery.

DECLARATION

I, Rowan Christopher Gatfield, declare that **A Cinematographic Survey of a Selected Alternative Sub-culture in various locations** has not been previously accepted for any degree and is not being concurrently presented in candidature in any university.

The thesis is the result of my own personal investigation and practice, both in conception and execution except where otherwise stated in the text. Other sources are acknowledged in the bibliography.

Signature ,

Date15.04.2006.....

ABSTRACT

This document discusses the motivation for and the process of making a 52 minute television Art documentary designed to inform and to create an awareness of the problem of modern culture and its impact on the environment. Drawing on qualitative research from a worldwide research journey, it investigates modern culture's socially conditioned state and how television has assisted to that end. It then explores the philosophical views and constructs behind the Sixties movement and Rainbow - an alternative social collective that evolved out of the Sixties Movement, and uses these findings to serve as the creative basis for the making of the film, *The Search for Utopia*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	i
DECLARATION.....	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
MAP.....	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
LITERATURE SURVEY.....	5
TERMINOLOGY.....	7
CHAPTER 1: THE SEARCH FOR UTOPIA.....	9
1.1 GRAPHIC DESIGNER TO FILM-MAKER - presenting fact through Art.....	11
1.2 AN ART DOCUMENTARY WITHOUT A SCRIPT.....	14
CHAPTER 2: ADDRESSING THE CULTURAL INFLUENCE OF TELEVISION THROUGH THE USE OF TELEVISION.....	27
2.1 SOCIAL CONDITIONING.....	27
2.2 TV, FOOD AND A COMPETITIVE CULTURE.....	30
2.3 COMPETITION VS. CO-OPERATION.....	38
2.4 ENVIRONMENT IMPACT.....	41
2.5 A WITNESS TO THE WORLD.....	46
CHAPTER 3: CREATING A NEW VISION.....	51
3.1 MEASURING THE SIXTIES MOVEMENT.....	51
3.2 WHAT CAUSED THE SIXTIES REACTION?.....	53
3.3 CREATING A NEW VISION.....	56
3.3.1 Reaction against the establishment.....	60
3.3.2 A Movement made from Movements.....	61
3.3.3 The Counterculture Movement.....	61
3.3.4 LSD.....	64
3.3.5 Shifting Perspectives	66

3.4 APPLYING THE NEW VISION - The Back to the Land Movement	70
3.5 THE HIPPIE CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....	71
CHAPTER 4:	
RAINBOW - THE INTERNATIONAL FAMILY OF LIVING LIGHT.....	74
5.1 MAKING OF A NATIONAL GATHERING.....	78
5.1.2 Seed Camp	80
5.1.3 The Gathering	80
5.1.4 Collective Exercises.....	81
5.3 DIRECTING POSITIVE COLLECTIVE INTENT AND PRAYER	87
5.4 ALTERNATIVE LIVING.....	88
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION.....	98
5.1 OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY.....	99
5.1.1 The Search for Utopia	99
5.1.2 Conditioning, Television and the Environmentt.....	101
5.1.3 The Sixties - Creating a New Vision.....	102
5.1.4 The Rainbow Family of Living Light.....	102
5.4 THE FUTURE.....	104
5.4 PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS.....	105
APPENDIXES	
Appendix A : Personal Communication.....	106
Appendix B : Letter of Information.....	112
Appendix C : Question Guide.....	113
SOURCES CONSULTED.....	114
ILLUSTRATIONS.....	119

INTRODUCTION

Graphic Design is a discipline that was established to serve the visual and conceptual communication needs of modern society. Today much evidence points to how this discipline is being used to promote a culture that is wasteful, unhealthy for those that it targets, and damaging to the environment.

Historically the impetus of Graphic Design education has been on producing skilled visual and conceptual communicators, proficient in the art of disseminating propaganda, with little emphasis on how such visual communication impacts on cultures and on the earth.

With the inception of the internet and mass media, informed public concern has forced governments and the private sector into action regarding the environment. However there appears to be no real attempt at addressing the culture of excess endemic to modern society.

In Daniel Quinn's book *Ismael*, he explains the nature of this culture:

"What we know to be our culture is merely an explaining story, a story that stills our alarm. This explanation covers everything, including the deterioration of the ozone layer, the pollution of our oceans, the destruction of the rain forests, and even human extinction - and it satisfies us. It pacifies us."

We put our shoulders to the wheel during the day, stupefy ourselves with drugs and television at night, and try not to think too searchingly about the world we are leaving our children to cope with". (Quinn:1992:44)

The hippies of the sixties identified this culture as a destructive force within society realising that this culture could be addressed and possibly undone, exploring the notion that another path along which to evolve might exist...

This notion inspired this study. The purpose of this study is to produce and discuss the making of a 52 minute television Art documentary designed to inform and to create an awareness of the problem of modern culture and its impact on the environment.

I discuss and explore related literature and the fieldwork which underpins the *The Search For Utopia*, exploring alternative social ideas, through an investigation into the philosophy behind the Sixties movement, and Rainbow - an alternative social collective that evolved out of the Sixties Movement.

In 2001, primary research commenced in Bathurst South Africa. In-depth videographically recorded interviews were conducted with members of alternative communities (see appendix A, a schedule of these interviews on page 105) practising forms of self sufficient farming and methods of self sustainability. Thereafter interviews were conducted in Thailand, India, Australia, Brazil, England, U.S.A and Mexico with randomly

selected individuals associated with or intentionally involved in alternative practices (see Map on page IV, which shows the extent of the journey). Twenty-six hours of live footage and in-depth interviews were recorded, 10 hours of music and sounds captured and 600 photographs taken. In this phase of research I kept a journal as I reflected on the thoughts and philosophical view-points of this alternative group.

The journey facilitated the documentation of parts of society previously undocumented, namely remotely situated alternative communities and especially Rainbow - a social experiment. The research into related literature and live interviews conducted with communities and with Rainbow have been used to extract a common alternative point of view regarding the environmental destruction of the Earth. This collective 'message' forms the primary content for the 52 minute television documentary film that will hopefully be transmitted to the world's viewers.

To achieve this end I have structured the study as follows:

In chapter 1, I discuss the motivation for and purpose of making a 52 minute television documentary, that I have called *The Search for Utopia*. This is followed by a review of the transition made by myself from Graphic Designer to Filmmaker. I then explain the process of making a film without a script and the influences that affected the final outcome.

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In chapter 2, I discuss how society has been conditioned into a competitive, environmentally destructive, modern culture aided by the medium of television.

In chapter 3, I discuss the social movement known as the sixties movement that formed between 1960 and 1970, and its reaction to modern culture. I then discuss how those responses have affected society and have helped to form the contemporary alternative views of those within the alternative community and within Rainbow.

In chapter 4, I discuss my first hand experiences with Rainbow, a social experiment that is very influenced by the philosophical views of the sixties and of indigenous cultures.

In chapter 5, conclusions are drawn and suggestions of an alternative nature, regarding the responsibilities of the individual, are made.

It is important to note that although this study is in part of a sociological and a anthropological nature, my motivation for this study has come out of my interactions with society as a Graphic Designer and my interest and experience with film. I do not consciously apply anthropological or sociological methodology to the study, nor do I claim that the core constructs of society can be overturned.

LITERATURE SURVEY

The primary influence for the development of the concept for this study was a mixture of my personal disillusionment with society, my interest in Rainbow and a willingness to make the transition from Graphic Designer to Film-maker. The qualitative nature of this study meant that much conceptual development took place during the research phase in the field, as and when I came into contact with those expressing an alternative point of view. However, prior to this phase, I conducted a literature survey with its focus on society and social conditioning, ecology, the Sixties and alternative sustainability to establish a perspective regarding:

- Social conditioning a society into a competitive, environmentally destructive, modern culture aided by the medium of television.
- The environmental state of the planet.
- Philosophical view-points of the Sixties and the formation of the contemporary alternative view.
- Permaculture and alternative sustainability.

Much of the afore-mentioned subject matter, is covered by the award-winning author, international lecturer, teacher and psychotherapist, Thom Hartmann in his books, *The Last Hours of Ancient Sunlight* - a call to a consciousness that combines spirituality and ecology in an attempt at offering solutions for the future of the planet, and *The Prophets Way* - that melds together recent scientific discoveries with ancient meta-

physics, concluding that the Earth is endangered because of a human disconnection with the planet.

Hartmann offers an in-depth insight into modern man's pursuit of energy-bearing natural resources versus that of the spiritually inclined evolution of ancient indigenous tribes, however he offers no significant recognition of the social reaction of the Sixties to modern culture as a basis or influence for social change.

An expert in the area of The Counterculture Movement of the Sixties, who does recognise the Sixties' contribution to society and the alternative view, is renowned author and teacher Anne Charters. Charters' book, *The Sixties Reader*, is one of few comprehensive reflections on the Sixties. I found that the chronological patterns within this book are difficult to establish, due to its thematically linked poetic and literary content. It offers little insight into the connection between those participant in the Sixties, ecology and indigenous cultures, and it also fails to explore how LSD impacted on perceptions regarding social conditioning and its impact on the environment.

(Charters 2003)

In this study, I also cite Bill Mollinson, an author and scientist renowned for his concept of "Permaculture". His book entitled *Permaculture* describes the concept of permanent sustainable agriculture. Mollinson offers the notion that humans and their necessity for food does not mean that a competitive relationship with nature needs to prevail, on the contrary he explains in detail, assisted by comprehensive diagrams, his practical plan for a better, more co-operative relationship between man and the planet.

The book culminates with an outline for a more viable, co-operative economic system. Although the content of Mollinson's book is technical, it presents a practical and viable alternative perspective. (Mollinson 1999)

TERMINOLOGY

I frequently use the following terms for the purposes of this study, they are explained as follows:

Hippie - those active participants of the Sixties Movement, that supported peace and social freedom, and those that stood against conduct that was destructive to the planet and to society. Often those with long hair and unconventional dress.

Alternative - that in opposition to modern cultural ideas and activities.

Rainbow - The Rainbow Family of Living Light.

A Gathering - an event organised by The Rainbow Family of Living Light.

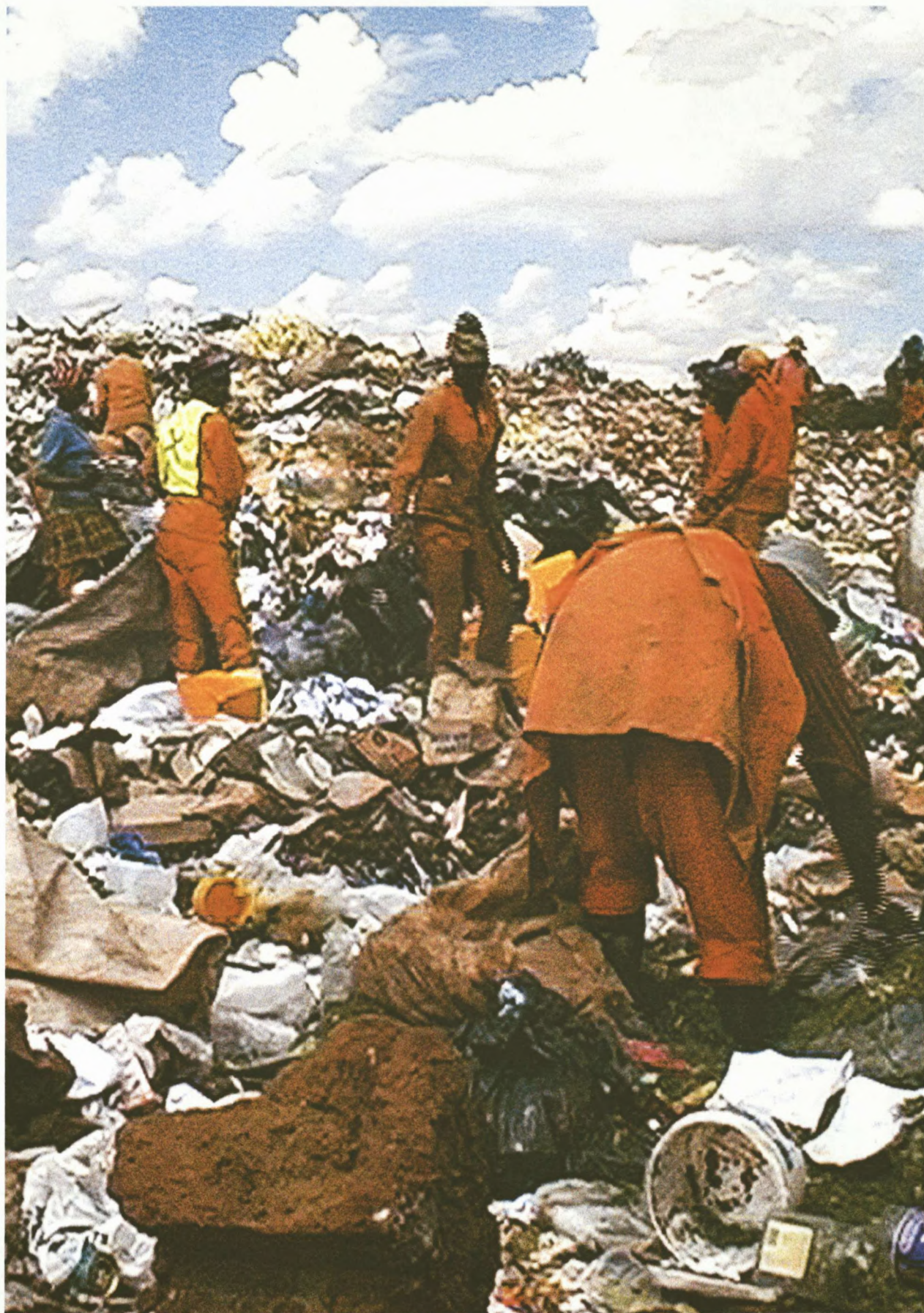


PLATE 2 JOHANNESBURG LANDFILL

CHAPTER 1

THE SEARCH FOR UTOPIA

This chapter discusses the motivation for and purpose of making a 52 minute television documentary, that I have called *The Search for Utopia*. This is followed by a review of the transition made by myself from Graphic Designer to Film-maker. I then discuss the process of making a documentary without a script and the influences that affected the final outcome.

Motivation for and purpose of making a television documentary

In 2001 I visited the Johannesburg Municipal landfill, where tons of non-biodegradable packaging was being buried in the ground. It occurred to me that this was the final resting place of products produced with the assistance of Graphic Design. The landfill was a product of a society that had been persuaded with the assistance of Graphic Design, into an ultimate neglect for its environmental impact on the planet. I realised that I, as a consequence of being a Graphic Designer and a consumer, was perpetuating the problem through my lifestyle. I began researching. I wanted to know what governments were doing about the problem, what the source of the problem was. I discovered that the report on the World Summit for Sustainable Development.

(Institute for Sustainable Development 2005)

In 1992, the World Summit for Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, proclaimed to have achieved a bargain known as the *Rio Bargain*. The bargain struck, was

that industrialized and developing countries would work together towards a shared goal of sustainable development. The term 'sustainable development' used at this summit referred to countries making significant environmentally conscious adjustments to their industrial and developmental processes in an attempt to achieve international sustainability. This act governed by multilateral environmental agreements, in particular the Convention of Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention for Climate Change, attempted to reach an understanding, that encouraged development that was environmentally benign (Institute for Sustainable Development 2005). However, up till the time of me sitting on the landfill mound, those governments concerned had failed to deliver on their agreement. I realised that the problem was bigger than I had thought. Clearly governments were for their own reasons unable or unwilling to meet such agreements. I decided that I should try to address the problem myself, given governments were not doing so. I decided to send out an appeal to the world.

I knew that I would need to achieve a high level of public interest in 'the appeal' with as little financial investment as possible. It occurred to me that this public interest could only be achieved if the appeal was 'packaged'. The television documentary format seemed a logical choice, it meant that the flighting of 'the appeal' could be financially feasible, provided I could find suitable documentary subject matter as support. The piece would ideally be viewed by television channels as program content, and not as advertising, which is very expensive. Choosing the television documentary format meant that personal financial investment in the project could be recouped by myself,

through the sale of the project as program content. I decided that I would compose 'the appeal' from a series of interviews that I would conduct with the alternative community. From research conducted in 1999 for a BTech Degree in Graphic Design entitled *The Underworld - A study of Urban Subcultures* I had established that many within the alternative community shared my concerns about society and its impact on the environment. I felt that visuals of alternative life and the often unusually adorned individuals within the alternative community, with dreadlocks and tattoos, would be visually interesting to a public removed from contact with such individuals. (Gatfield 1999)

A concern however, was the nature of the television documentary, often dry and brutal in its presentation of the facts. I felt that the approach needed to be subtle, tasteful, emotive and even a little dramatic. I felt that these qualities could be achieved with the assistance of my Graphic Design knowledge. However, I felt that my Graphic Design training, could also adversely affect the outcome. Over the years, my own style of design has evolved to being slick and predictable in appearance, adapted to meet the demands of the advertising industry and the consumer. I needed to apply my skills, to communicate the essence of the alternative community, without leaving traces of that slick style. This essence, would need to be communicated by a Graphic Designer who had very little knowledge of being a film-maker.

GRAPHIC DESIGNER TO FILM-MAKER - presenting fact through Art

It has always been my belief that the transition from a Graphic Designer/Art Director for

still media to Art Director for moving media is a very a natural one. Graphic Design is a consolidation or a systematising of artistic expression into a practical application for the commercial world. I see that what makes me able to be a Graphic Designer, is that I am an artist.

Film is like a moving page, it can be sublime, ugly, obscure and beautiful in a single moment. The 'art' film gives the viewer a deeper emotive perspective, a beautiful moving canvas on which to paint. Very different to the candid television documentary found in mainstream television programming, often containing violence, foul language and unpaletttable content designed to 'stimulate' an often apathetic audience.

This apathy was evident with the marginal public reaction generated after a television documentary was flighted nationally across South Africa by an environmentally based programme known as 50/50, highlighting the imminent environmental impact of the proposed mining of a Transkei Nature Reserve.

Presenting the facts visually through television does not seem to bring enough change, fast enough. What I felt was required was an emotively based, artistic, communication of the facts - an art documentary film. I wanted to convince the viewer intellectually and emotionally, not just the former.

A documentary film is in my opinion, a film about the facts, unlike the art documen-

tary, which by nature is so often a film that concerns issues of the heart, facts, and a measure of poetic license and visual embellishment. It is the cold, often limited domain and precision of Graphic Design-based communication and the similar approach to conventional television documentaries, that in my opinion have failed to effectively convince or make a lasting and meaningful impression on the viewer's sensibilities or in influencing any significant ecological change.

In contrast, through trial and error, I have developed a few of my own approaches:

- Be gentle - present visuals that subtly make the point, avoid shock treatment.
- Evoke thought and communicate emotively - appeal to the viewer's sensitivity and intellect.
- Give people what people love to watch - people. Soap Operas are a massive success, thus supporting the idea that the best way to communicate any kind of message is to present 'people's lives'. It would appear that people just love watching how others live, in this case the alternative community.
- Use juxtaposed and conceptually contrasting visuals to draw comparisons and make points assisted by limited periods of narration or explanation.

The makers of television documentary films often only present the facts, not consider-

ing the necessity for poetic visual embellishment. By contrast, art films can often be too obscure, especially for the average audience, often romantically and laboriously drawing out a point.

I chose to present the facts in some cases, allude to the facts in others, and have the freedom to influence the audience towards certain conclusions using vehicles not used within the average television documentary film. This fusion of the two mediums would result in my version of the 'art' documentary film.

AN ART DOCUMENTARY WITHOUT A SCRIPT

The process of making the film was a 'spiritual' journey. I use the word 'spiritual' because each geographic phase of the film evolved with amazing synchronicity, as if engineered by a divine force - like meeting the right people at the right time, in the right place. My winning of the Emma Smith Award being another example, facilitating my purchase of an Around-the-World ticket, and the fact that the entire movie score and edit plan and title, *The Search for Utopia* came to me in a dream.

The Search for Utopia is a film that serves as a mouth-piece for the alternative community and as a record of an international discontent with the planet's ecological status. This discontent has been recorded by extracting a common thread or line of thinking, based on a question guide that I referred to with each interview conducted (see appendix C on page 122). I would also present the interviewee with a letter of informa-

tion (Appendix B on page 121) and would ensure that they understood that their interview would be used in a television documentary.

I used the question guide as a basis for the interviews, but also remained flexible, tailoring each interview to better extract the most suitable information from the informant, according to their areas of interest or expertise. I would come across a specialist in a particular field, like Permaculture or Alternative Power, and would then adjust my questions accordingly. I found that allowing the informant to lead the line of questioning, was the most fruitful approach, only intervening to correct the direction of the interview. *The Search for Utopia* is really one single linear point of view made up of many interviews, joined together by a narration, narrated by myself. There was no official script or frame by frame plan other than a crude geographic flight plan of the destinations I would visit, based on research I had done on the internet. I had tracked the movements and whereabouts of the alternative community for a year, prior to my journey (see Plate 1 on page IV). The transition made by myself, from working with a stills camera to moving video was a difficult adjustment, learning about the benefits of a tripod after filming hours of footage that proved to be uneditable due to camera shake. The real transition from Graphic Designer to Film-maker was during the edit stage.

Editing 25 hours of raw footage and 3 hours of sound was trying. I can say with safety that some beautiful pearls have had to 'hit the cutting room floor'. However it is at the

edit stage that my Graphic Design knowledge took the lead. Applying the trained eye of a designer to typographic animation, stills photography and moving footage, meant treating the screen as if it were a page.

I often tried to see these edited pieces of footage as nothing more than pages that could be combined together with other pages, often using colour as a key ingredient, to make statements. The editing software enabled me to significantly adjust the colour of the footage, further enhancing the mood and context of each filmed piece. I also learnt to adjust the tempo of the film, from real time to slow motion or from real time to high speed, which gave support to the points I was trying to make. In some instances I would slow down footage to allow the viewer to contemplate a point. An example of this was footage that I slowed down of workers in a rubbish dump, I wanted the viewer to really see the full extent of modern society's wasteful manner. In others cases I would speed up the footage. I increased the speed of footage of traffic, for example, to represent the frenetic quality of modern society. My knowledge of the principles of negative and positive space and most of all, the principle of maintaining visual tension, played an important role in producing a product that looked and felt like it was made by a Graphic Designer. David Carson, one of the world's leading Graphic Designers said at the 1998 South African Design Indaba, which I attended, that it's visual tension that is so often overlooked. Creating visual tension on paper is one thing, but on film it is that much more difficult, requiring hours of preparation that flicker by in seconds. Understanding how best to achieve visual tension through moving media came through

carefully studying and analysing professionally made productions.

I was very influenced by a number of films - Peter Greenaway's *The Pillow Book*, Richard Linklater's *Waking Life* and Ron Fricke's *Barraka*.

The Pillow Book introduced me to the concept of the multi-screen technique, a wonderful visual technique that allows the story to unfold using a series of shots shown simultaneously. This technique allows the editor to focus the viewer on specific smaller screens within the main screen. Visual hierarchy can be achieved within a multiscreen environment, between primary and secondary footage, by using various tonal and colour contrasts (eg using sepia and blue together or bright red with black and white).

(Greenaway 1996)

The Pillow Book also brought with it an incredible style particular to the Japanese film. This wonderful elegance and simplicity is magnified through multiscreen technology. Quite clearly the multiscreen technique enabled me a much greater freedom of creative movement. I found that it suited my own Graphic Design style. In *The Search for Utopia* I was able to use multiscreen technology to constantly draw comparisons between the nature of modern society, nature and the alternative point of view. *The Pillow Book* is narrated by the main character Nagiko played by Vivian Wu.

(Greenaway 1996) Initially I felt that I wanted to steer away from narration following the concept used in *Waking Life* of various interviewee's answers coupled together to

form the narration of the film (Linklater 2001). Later I realised that the lack of a script had left me with some conceptual loose ends. Certain themes within the film were disjointed, and this I remedied through a narration read by myself.

A consistent theme within *The Search for Utopia* is a sense of the spiritual. *The Search for Utopia* attempts to capture the underpinning spirituality of the alternative culture through the use of light - ambient early morning light as well as sparkling light on the surface of water. A sparkle of light, where a flash of light is converted by the camera into a starburst, is achievable with the camera's starburst-like filter, which converts twinkling light into star shapes. This twinkling light combined with softly spoken poetry created an intentionally subtle, spiritual effect.

A film that truly captures a sense of the spiritual is *Barraka* by Ron Fricke. Ron's technique is to use a series of long, slowly panning shots to slow the pace of the film (Fricke 1992). This I achieved by using similar slow pans of nature, the light of the sun twinkling through the trees, the bubble and swish of the sea on the sand, in an attempt to slow down the pace of the film. I felt this to be an effective contrast to the frenetic nature of much contemporary film. *The Search for Utopia* is a film about beauty and the lack thereof. It reflects on the beauty within nature, and by contrast, the lack of beauty within cities and the ugliness of greed. These qualities of beauty and greed were captured throughout my travels and through a series of interviews. I learnt that the process of interacting with interviewees, as an interviewer, is an arduous one.

Interviewing while filming is incredibly difficult, especially if one considers that the eyes of the interviewee need to be facing the camera lens. In other words, they needed to be making eye contact with me, the viewer, behind the camera. I had to constantly balance my efforts, between making eye contact with the interviewee and monitoring the filming through the eyepiece of the camera.

My first video interview was conducted at Amapondo Backpackers in the Transkei. I had phoned ahead in an attempt to soften the impact of my arrival. The owner, a 27 year old man and his wife seemed reluctantly agreeable. Based on the experience I had gained while shooting interviews for *The Underworld*, I was confident that all would run smoothly. I had planned to follow the question guide that I had prepared, (see Appendix C) and then feel my way through the interview.

As I began the interview, I realised how difficult it was to focus on filming, while simultaneously conducting an interview. I became nervous, stumbled through my questions and could not keep the camera still, having decided to keep the camera handheld for greater flexibility of camera angles.

That night I watched the interview - a practice I learnt to be very helpful. The footage was a mess - shaky and inconsistent. The interviewees looked nervous and edgy, almost shying away from the camera. I learnt that one should not reveal the camera for at least three days, prior to developing a relationship of confidence with the potential

at least three days, prior to developing a relationship of confidence with the potential interviewees. It got me thinking that much planning, in terms of how I would approach the film, would need to be done.

It was in Bathurst that I watched the movie *Barraka* for the first time. The film used no narration, only backing music set on long slow pans with intermittent ambient sound where applicable. It featured an assortment of landscapes, aerial shots of oil fields, time-lapse shots of traffic and commuters. *Barraka's* influence helped me to establish guidelines for the production of *The Search for Utopia*:

- Don't be afraid to slow down - slow the pan of a shot - viewers enjoy detail. This also forces the mind of the viewer to slow down and focus on what's being communicated.
- Always shoot at sunset or sunrise. A shot can be transformed through that low angled golden yellow light, softening the image and in so doing, creating a surrealistic visual impression.
- Focus on hands while doing an interview. An informant's hands can communicate much about them. This kind of footage serves well as a cut-away (a foreign or separate piece of footage laid over an existing soundtrack or voice over). The rolling of a cigarette or fidgeting fingers, or the hands of a farmer washing his vegetables, effectively describes the personality being interviewed.

- Be sensitive to the source and direction of ambient light. I became aware of shooting into the sun, allowing the subject to block the sun with his or her body, creating a midday silhouette. I also started to plan shots ahead of time, like dancing feet at the fire, rimlit by golden firelight or silhouettes of dancers against a camp fire.
- Plan ahead for using the slow-motion effect at the edit stage. The camera I was using - a 3CCD Panasonic broadcast quality camera only allowed for a slow-motion technique called the shutter effect - a kind of stuttered slow motion, which certainly has its place visually, but didn't quite serve as a decent substitute for slow-motion footage. Instead I was forced to do all slow motion in the edit. A downfall of digital video in my experience is its inability to successfully slow down. A subtle flicker or jerkiness can be detected.

2010-0317

- Reshoot each shot with various camera angles. I knew that my film was to be produced on a very low budget and so became increasingly aware of varying the shot angles to give the film that bigger budget feel. I would hang out of hotel windows, fix the camera to the end of an extended tripod and pan upwards to give that camera-crane feel, and shoot from aeroplane windows to get aerial views of cities, to give the viewer an impression of the magnitude of urban development.
- Film contrasting subject matter. Sometimes I would see the similarities and con

trasts between man's creations and nature, like commuters and ants or buildings and trees. As I mentioned earlier, the film tries to expose the differences and the similarities between the beauty within us and the ugliness we sometimes make.

- Divide the video frame into thirds. A common practice amongst graphic designers is working with a third of the page or in this case the screen or frame. By dividing the frame into three parts vertically or horizontally and then by placing the subject between two of the three segments of the frame, the shot is enhanced. A common mistake amongst Graphic Designers, is to want to place the subject in the centre of the frame.

The Search for Utopia is primarily a journey or type of travelogue. To successfully portray the feel of a journey, one must remain opportunistic and flexible to how one approaches each shot. My approach was to develop a series of shooting plans, based on shots I had seen in other films or ideas that came to me during my travels. Then to commit these ideas to my subconscious and to apply them as and when the opportunity arose. This flexibility I also applied to the edit, remaining open to how I approached the linking of each theme within the film. Similiarly this journey was an unpredictable event. Not committing myself to a script meant that the result, *The Search for Utopia* is just what I had intended it to be from the outset - a journey. (see appendix A for a schedule of the interviews conducted on page 105).

The Search for Utopia follows my journey around the globe, starting in Khao San Road, Thailand, a mecca for travellers. I must admit some influence from Alex Garland's movie *The Beach* which wonderfully captures Thailand's chaotic and dirty underworld. *The Beach* opens with a shot, narrated by central character Richard, played by Leonardo de Caprio, walking along a dirty Thai street at night, passing exotic foodstalls and strip clubs.

The Search for Utopia opens with a scene of myself, the narrator, sitting on a street corner observing the passing humanity. This scene of myself then cross-fades into a high speed, series of images that capture the sense of Thailand's exotic underworld, through frames of foodstalls, mixed with multiple cut-aways of Khao San Road's many instant hair-braid makers. The whole shot is laid over compounding ambient sounds and visuals, of crowds and traffic.

Staying open and flexible to what would come my way, proved fruitful. I had captured an interview with a rather arrogant American tourist who had obligingly swallowed the Thai equivalent of mopani worms especially for the camera. I didn't really know how this would fit into the scheme of things, but I was comfortable that the scene represented corporate America's stance on consumerism. I later edited the scene of the American directly before another of a Thai male beggar, grotesquely deformed, walking on his hands while fruitlessly attempting to beg with a styrofoam cup. What made the scene of the beggar so powerful, was the indifference of passing shoppers. The

combination of these two scenes proved to reflect the contrast of social circumstances.

I felt that this approach could create the visual tension, so important within *The Search for Utopia*.

Creating visual tension, by using the contrast between opposing visually represented concepts to cement a point, is only truly effective when handled with an awareness of how that power can be targeted to effectively yield a response. This principle is often applied to visual communication used in advertising. Creating power and tension, through the word and visual to sell or 'push home' a message is what a Graphic Designer is trained to do - to visually persuade the recipient of the communication to purchase products.

A Graphic Designer is required to be familiar with the principles of consumer buying behaviours, psychographics, demographics, living standards measures and target markets, so as to better understand how to market. The discipline of marketing assists the Graphic Designer to define who one wants to sell to, and how best to sell to them through visual communication.

When applying this training on a daily basis within a working environment, effectively selling to the consumer through visual communication becomes second nature for a designer. I feel that my experience as a marketer, combined with my training as a visual communicator has created a film that not only captivates the viewer through visual

tension, but also reflects an understanding of the process of communicating to the sensibilities of the viewer.



PLATE 3 THE BRADY BUNCH

CHAPTER 2

CONDITIONING, TELEVISION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

This chapter discusses how society has been conditioned into a competitive, environmentally destructive, modern culture aided by the medium of television.

SOCIAL CONDITIONING

My marketing experience in the advertising industry, gave me an understanding of how consumers are enticed by advertising. Seeing that only a little bit of visualisation, in the form of advertising material, is needed to influence a purchase. It is as if consumers are being subconsciously manipulated. The subtle nature of this manipulation or conditioning of social behaviour is explained by his Divine Grace, Bhaktivedanta Srila Prabhupada Das.

In his book *The Science of Self Realisation*, he explains that “a metal poker placed in a fire will, after a while, take on the qualities of fire and become glowing and hot. So too do we become like our surroundings, without even realising it.”

(Bhaktividanta 1968:56)

Social environments subtly affect those within that environment, affecting personal identities, thinking, emotions and even one's subconscious. As McKenzie puts it, “society

tities, thinking, emotions and even one's subconscious. As McKenzie puts it, " society does not stop on the surface of our skins, it penetrates us as much as it envelopes us. Our bondage to society, is not so much established by conquest as by collusion" (McKenzie 1996:22). I see that this collusive influence or unconscious conditioning is permeating modern society, slowly transforming its culture into a culture that is showing evidence of being unhealthy. For example I believe that:

- Social interaction and the social skills yielded through interaction, are being lost, within the nuclear family and within society.
- Diminished hours of sleep due to the keeping of irregular hours, work pressure and increased stress loads, are leading to heart disease and a multitude of medical dysfunctions.
- Unhealthy changes in diet and the introduction of fast foods, non-organic and genetically modified foods, are contributing to obesity, heart disease and malnutrition.
- A diminishing sense of humanity is developing, causing a lack of respect and compassion for fellow humans and for animals. Many in society take the view that animals are biological machines or commodities, open to exploitation and cruelty.

- Societal apathy and indifference to social and environmental problems seem to be on the increase.
- A disassociation between society and nature, and as a consequence of that disassociation, society becoming comfortable with the abuse and mismanagement of natural resources, indicates no attempt at forethought or concern for the long term ramifications to the environmental ecosystem.
- Anger and hatred fuelled violence is accepted as a solution by society to land disputes, in the pursuit of fiscal gain and religious disputes.
- Food and clothing are being viewed as commodities and as entertainment.
- Police and military intervention is viewed as a solution conflict.
- People are being de-humanised, viewed as consumers and referred to as a target audience.

Thom Hartmann explains that “understanding why we have got ourselves into this mess, is the key to saving our future, it opens the door to solutions”. (Hartmann1998:5)

I think a solution can be found in how society has been conditioned.

It would appear that collusive manipulation has encouraged human habits, that are not

geared towards the welfare of the planet, and its people. These socially accepted norms, that are sacrosanct in society, appear to have been engineered. The following evidence points to the possibility that this kind of social conditioning could be reversed. It explains that the human mind is a clean slate to begin with, and points to social conditioning being the product of environment.

In September 1920, The Reverend Singh, the local village parishioner responded to appeals from fellow villagers in Bengal, India. They had in their possession two feral girls, raised by wolves. The Reverend Singh, after taking exhaustive measures, was unable to rehabilitate the children back to the ways of normal socially acceptable behaviour. He explains that "they had cultivated the animal nature and condition of life almost to perfection"(Mc Crone, 1993). After reading about these feral girls I became aware of the possibility that human beings are very open to being socially conditioned through environment.

TV, FOOD AND A COMPETITIVE CULTURE

My visit to the Johannesburg landfill mound of mostly non-biodegradeable garbage, reinforced this notion of the vulnerability of society to conditioning. The mountain of refuse was a perfect example of the kind of culture that is being propagated. An attribute of modern culture is to be wasteful - it is as if, the value of things has been lost.

This culture of being wasteful is reasonably new to me - I was raised with a different

value for things. My parents were resourceful and thrifty - my mother wrapped our presents with wrapping paper that had been saved from the previous Christmas, and my father took our empty glass bottles to the corner shop in return for a deposit. It was a culture mindful of the value of things - even milk was sold in glass bottles that were recycled.

My parents' value system was instilled into us on a daily basis. We walked - we walked 3km to school, walked 2km to church and 2 kms to the beach. Riding in a vehicle was a treat. We worked in the garden for our pocket money, were encouraged to play in the indigenous forest next to the sea for our entertainment, only watching television for an hour or so at night.

This culture and value system, transferred from one generation to another generation, is not just what has been passed on by parents and peers. It is the sum of one's parents' value system and one's own life experience, that is ultimately imparted to the next generation. In my case, the transference of the culture of my parents' generation to my generation was interfered with. The Johannesburg landfill was a very significant reminder to me, that the values of my parents and the value system of my generation had been modified, that this way of being wasteful was being taught to the next generation by my generation. But why? How had my generation's value system been so dramatically altered? I believe the answer is Television.

South Africans saw television for the first time on May 10, 1976. Test transmissions began from the state-backed South African Broadcast Corporation - the S.A.B.C. The Pretoria government had finally yielded to public pressure after years of banning television as being morally corrupting. Half the broadcasts were in English and half in Afrikaans (Civilization Canada 2005).

The new broadcasting service followed the format of radio - as an entertainment and information service. My memories of this initial service is of lengthy, very boring documentaries. It wasn't long before more entertaining shows like *The Brady Bunch* and advertising commercials were introduced. *The Brady Bunch* was produced by the American Broadcast Corporation, (ABC Television). The first flighting featured *The Honeymoon*. For the first time South African viewers were presented with the American family and American culture (Winans 2005).

My one hour in front of the TV changed to hours, and with this change, I began the reconditioning of my culture by associating with another culture - American consumerism. Today, I believe that our children are 'immersed' in American culture. Much evidence points to television being at the root of the negative conditioning of society and of children, the result of which is the assortment of social ills, like anti-social behaviour and social violence, manifesting within modern culture.

In 2004, a study entitled *Television Facts* from the University of Michigan shows that:

TV viewing between the ages of 6 and 10 predicts antisocial behavior as a young adult. In this study, both males and females who were heavy TV-violence viewers as children were significantly more likely to engage in serious physical aggression and criminal behavior later in life; in addition, the heavy violence viewers were twice as likely as the others to engage in spousal abuse when they became adults (University of Michigan 2004).

The source of the problem also lies in the fact that the continual displays of violence and aggression are reinforcing and perpetuating the problem. If an entire childhood is consumed in watching violence, then it is reasonably logical that this conditioning will eventually manifest itself. Similarly, if an entire childhood is spent watching advertising, it stands to reason that by the time that a viewer reaches adulthood, he or she will manifest those qualities being reinforced through commercials.

Commercials make up a substantial portion of our TV programming. Very little of that advertising, seems directed at educating viewers about being environmentally conscious. On the contrary, the emphasis seems to be focussed primarily on selling products and services. It appears that commercial advertising uses the principal of flighting repetitively to induce a need within the viewer's unconscious mind to purchase products. In response viewers will often be led to make a purchase unconsciously based on this reinforcement, and not on a value system.

According to Dr. George Gerbner, Dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, explains that, "living with television means growing up in a world of about 22,000 commercials a year, 5,000 of them for food products, more than half of which are for low-nutrition sweets and snacks" (University of Michigan 2004). The Fast food Industry seems to be a primary source for the conditioning of children into bad eating habits without regulation. The consequences of this lack of regulation, with primary emphasis on selling unhealthy products and the marginal emphasis on health food is very evident. Obesity and heart disease are at an all time high. 400 000 Americans will die of obesity related illnesses this year. Obesity causes heart disease, high blood pressure, colon cancer, gout and an assortment of other diseases (Spurlock 2005:13).

It was only after studying these facts about television's impact on society, especially in the area of food and nutrition, that I realised that it was not only television itself that was to blame for social degeneration. This degeneration, was in part, due to those behind the television programming, those whose focus is only on how they can profit from society, without concern for the long term ramifications of those actions. One of those bodies is most certainly the food and beverage industry.

In 2001, the largest menu item consumed on an international scale, was the hamburger. McDonald's Restaurant Group stood at 28, 000 restaurants around the globe (Schollosser 2001:4). Fours years later McDonalds now operates around 31, 000 restu-

rants serving 46 million people a day (Spurlock 2005:60). McDonalds and most of the food industry seem to be prospering from the social conditioning that no longer views food as a basic pre-requisite for living, but as "entertainment".

Viewing food as entertainment means that the U.S. Food and Beverage Industry, is now able to sell approximately ten thousand new processed food products every year to a very amicable target market (Schollosser 2001: 124). The ecological impact caused by the disposable packaging that houses these products, could have devastating consequences. The current rate of recycling by society seems proportionately insufficient, and suitable biodegradable substitutes are yet to be discovered. It appears that the food and beverage industry has no concern for their actions, especially when one considers the massive landfills, run by municipalities desperately trying to accommodate all that packaging.

An example of such disconcern is the meat industry. An industry responsible for contributing significantly to landfills, often in the form of unbiodegradeable styrofoam containers. In the United States alone a single slaughterhouse somewhere in the High Plains area, slaughters approximately five thousand head of cattle daily in an attempt to meet the demand of the world's consumers (Schollosser 2001:4).

What is so ironic, is that the meat industry is not only unnecessary, given that much medical evidence points to humans not requiring meat to be sustained, but is also not

economically feasible if one considers the world hunger crisis. *In Diet for a Small Planet*, Frances Moore Lappe asks us to:

"Imagine yourself sitting down to an eight-ounce steak and then to imagine the room filled with 45 to 50 people with empty bowls in front of them. For the 'feed cost' of your steak, each of their bowls could be filled with a cup of cooked grain. Facts such as these have led food experts to point out that the world hunger problem is artificial. Even now we are already producing more than enough food for everyone on the planet, but we are allocating it wastefully"

(Moore Lappe F. 2004).

In many cases the Food industry is not even selling what used to resemble food.

Scientists are being employed by the food industry to synthesise tastes. These tastes are developed on the premise that, the need of a consumer that purchases food, is no longer expressed as a need to feel physically full or be nourished, it is about the pleasuring the tongue of that consumer. Scientists are now able to convincingly synthesise any flavour known to our palettes.

For example, a Burger King Strawberry Milk Shake is made up of the following ingredients:

Amyl acetate, amyl butyrate, amyl valerate, anthol, anisyl formate, benzyl acetate, benzyl isobutyrate, butyric acid, cinnamyl isobutyrate, cinnamyl valerate, cognac essential oil, diacetyl, dipropyl ketone ethyl acetate, ethyl amyl ketone,

ethyl butyrate, ethyl cinnamate, ethyl heptanoate, ethyl heptylate, ethyl lactate, ethyl methylphenylglycidate, ethyl nitrate, ethyl propionate, ethyl valerate, heliotropin, hydroxyphenyl-2-butanone (10 percent solution in alcohol), aionone, isobutyl anthranilate, isobutyl butyrate, lemon essential oil, maltol, 4-methylacetophenone, methyl anthranilate, methyl benzoate, methyl cinnamate, methyl heptine carbonate, methyl naphthyl ketone, methyl salicylate, mint essential oil, neroli essential oil, nerolin, neryl isobutyrate, orris butter, phenethyl alcohol, rose, rum ether. γ -undecalactone, vanillin, and solvent (Schollosser 2001:125).

All this, to trick the tongue, into telling the mind to buy. The Fast Food Industry's conduct, serves as a fitting example of how business divorces itself from humanity and the environment that it serves.

It appears that the business sector's disconcern for humanity and the environment, is being facilitated by the media. Television broadcasters transmit communication material designed to induce a the demand for the products that business produces. The transferral of the culture or value system, from my parents to myself, has been interfered with, by the introduction of American consumer culture through television. American culture did not share the values of my parents. My generation's values have been altered.

Consumer culture is not solely to blame for society becoming anti-social, violent and

unhealthy. Rather the story of this modern culture, seems to echo a central theme, that of a competition.

COMPETITION VS CO-OPERATION

From young we are taught to compete, to beat the person next to us. We are rewarded each time we do, receiving medals for winning a race or for beating the other team.

Man with his intelligence and wisdom, seems never to have noticed that the natural eco-systems all around him evolve co-operatively. Even if he has noticed this, he seems never to have applied the concept of co-operation to society.

While on my travels around South Africa I came across a paleontologist living on a self-sustaining farm. He explained how nature evolves co-operatively. A certain kind of flower cannot exist without pollination by a certain kind of wasp. The wasp and the flower need each other, they are both products of co-operative evolution (Appendix A. Greenaway R. 27/07/02).

Man seems to ignore nature's truths, replacing this reality, with a reality created by science. Hartmann explains that two of the primary tenets of science are that things are ultimately divisible into tiny, definable building blocks and for there to be a "true" reality, the observer must be separate from the observed, This belief, accepted as an absolute truth and the underpinning of our modern culture, led to viewing humankind as separate from the natural world. The classic question "If a tree falls in the forest and

there's nobody to hear it, is a sound made?"; assumes that the nobody there to hear it, would be human. Only humans, so the story went, were capable of classifying and separating things, breaking them into pieces as Aristotle taught us" (Hartmann 1988:70).

Hartmann's statement serves as an example of how man not only separates himself from nature, but arrogantly places himself above it. Science seems to view nature as the sum of separate things, viewing nature as unlinked, as a competitive or as a disassociated system.

In 1868 in the village of Les Eyzies in France, 5 skeletons (3 adult males, an adult female, and a child) were found during an excavation by workmen. The estimated age of the site is 30,000 years old. They were buried along with stone tools, carved reindeer antlers, ivory pendants and shells (Foley 2002).

I wonder if 30,000 years from now, an excavation team had to uncover a modern family's remains, what artefacts the excavators would find? Possibly, a completely intact unbiodegradable KFC container, a glass coke bottle and perhaps, a multichannel remote control. It's clear that society's value system has changed, from living alongside nature to living in conflict with it. Why? It seems that food seems to be at the centre of modern culture's destructive evolution.

The discovery of fire together with the human tendency to be resourceful, allowed man to better adjust to his environment and to meet his immediate needs. Cooking food and being able to preserve it, may have created cause for competition. Hartmann explains that "the ability to preserve food created a culturally destructive side effect. This possibly being the introduction of a class structure. Those who excelled at storing food, or stealing stored food, ended up with the greatest food-wealth. During food shortages, individuals or tribes had to submit themselves to the will of the wealthy ones in order to obtain enough food to survive"(Hartmann 1999:158). About 40, 000 years ago man began to farm. "There is even evidence of wild wheat harvesting with hand made stone sickles". (Prideaux 1973:48) Subsistence Farming formed the basis for humans to settle, given that food was readily available. "Evidence places the domestication of sheep at around 9000 B.C." (Prideaux 1973:152).

By 1960 world human population was at 3 billion. With the refinement of processes and the development of food production technology, the subsistence farming introduced by early man had been almost totally replaced. Agriculture went into full swing. "It took just fourteen years, from 1960 to 1974, for the world population to grow to 4 billion humans worldwide. At the current rate of growth we will hit 80 billion by 2150" (Hartmann 1999:18). That's 80 billion people very likely conditioned into a competitive society, apathetic to its environmental impact.

ENVIRONMENT IMPACT

This social apathy towards the state of the environment became very apparent to me when I read a *Sunday Times* newspaper article entitled *Time running out for Earth* written by journalist Andrew Donaldson. He explains that "If mankind continues to exploit the world's natural resources at it's present rate we will have to colonise two planets in outer space within the next 50 years to survive" (Donaldson A. 2002). He goes on to list the extent of the devastation outlining that, " a fifth of the world's population - around 1.2 billion people, have no access to clean drinking water". In Africa we have dropped from 65,000 black rhino in 1970 to only 3000 in 2002. Freshwater fish have lost 55% of their kinds of species, with marine species declining by 35% in this period together with a 15% decline in forest species. (Donaldson A. 2002)

Unbelievably, there seems to be little public alarm. Unlike the alarm bells being struck to combat public apathy in Narangba, Australia.

On the 11th of February 2003, I visited a group of 'Eco Warriors' otherwise referred to as Ecological Activists, protesting against the building of a food irradiation plant in Narangba, Queensland, 10km from the city of Auckland. Food irradiation involves exposing food to ionising radiation either from Gamma Radiation or from a radioactive source of electronic beam (e-beam) which is a machine source. Both sources of ionising radiation have harmful effects on food. Currently herbal teas are being irradiated using a radioactive material - Cobalt 60, produced by Canadian Nuclear Reactors over a two year period. The process is designed to decontaminate and sterilise, prolong

food's shelf life, Prohibit sprouting and /or germination of weed seeds.

A company Steritech, Pty, Ltd. has had its application A413, to irradiate herbs, spices and herbal teas, submitted to the Australian Government approved. It has also submitted further application to irradiate tropical fruit (breadfruit, carambola, custard apple, litchi, longan, mango, mangosteen, papaya and rambutan).

Further, the risk of the transportation of this radioactive material by road through suburban areas a few kilometres from the site, poses a huge threat to the immediate environment through possible leakage. In addition, the Federation of American Scientists released a report which recognises nuclear food irradiation facilities as potential terrorist targets. The report outlines the concern that "if one of the Cobalt 60 pencils were exploded, an area of 1000 square kilometres would be contaminated". An irradiation facility holds hundreds of such pencils (Federation of American Scientists 2004).

I was invited by the Nimbin Environmental Centre to document the protest action at Deception Castle - the name given to the anti-food irradiation protest camp. The facade of the camp is in the form of a castle made of cardboard, guarded by 'knights' made from old tyres, 45 gallon drums and an assortment of junk .

The camp was constructed in June 2002 and is situated directly across the road from the food irradiation plant building site. The 8 month old protest camp has been

inhabited by activists who sustain themselves, without any kind of external funding.

The camp has no water source and toilet facilities are in the form of holes dug into the ground.

On arrival at the camp I was taken on a tour, conducted by a dreadlocked, bearded man named Wombat. He showed me a series of holes that had been dug 6 metres down into the ground. At the base of these holes, large plastic tubes had been cemented into the ground. These tubes are known as "Lock On Pipes". In the event of the police trying to evict the activists from the camp, each activist clad in foam armbands and specially modified chains, 'locks on' to a ring concreted into the base of each pipe. This means that the police would have to dig out the protesters, in order to remove them (Appendix A. Wombat 15/03/03).

Environmental activism has become somewhat of a tradition amongst the alternative community within Australia. Those brave enough to follow this tradition often do so at a personal price. I interviewed some veteran activists who had been involved in a previous protest. They explained how Australian policeman, loggers and security guards had beaten them and sprayed pepper spray into their eyes, while they were handcuffed to the bumpers of police trucks. I later watched a video, documenting this event. On another occasion, during an anti-logging action, an activist was totally incapacitated. He received internal injuries inflicted after being beaten by loggers with a pick-axe handle. After his beating, he was thrown over a cliff onto the rocks below (Appendix A. Rasta 15/03/03).

The Nimbin Environment Centre in the town of Nimbin about 300 km from Melbourne on the East Coast of Australia, often plays host to very similar protests. Representatives there explained that although the price to pay, is often a dear one, there have been some marked victories. 25 years later, the forests around Nimbin are beginning to flourish again. These ancient indigenous forests were nearly completely destroyed, had it not been for years of environmental protest action. These areas have now been proclaimed "Natural Conservancies".

If it wasn't for those few alternative environmental activists, who monitor the activities of Corporate Development and Industrialisation, these issues might not get much press. As a Wombat put it "protest action is just a media circus. We are just trying to bring attention to the problem, in the hope that someone might notice" (Appendix A.Wombat, 15/03/03). Public apathy towards environmentally damaging conduct by business is possibly fuelled by the fact that little support is given to those questioning the validity of projects like these.

An issue that does seem to be treated with apathy is genetic modification. It seems so often that we, the public, only hear about these issues once they reach epidemic proportions and they are often, by that stage, too large a problem for the 'man on the street' to address. Genetic modification, otherwise referred to as GM, is a frightening phenomenon. Silently infiltrating everyday life and more alarmingly, everyday food.

The True Food Guide published by the GeneEthics Network, a subsidiary of Greenpeace, describes how GM takes genes from bacteria, viruses from other plants and even humans, and forces them with other gene modifying organisms (GMO's) into our food. Right now, millions of the world's inhabitants are quite obliviously munching on GM foods (GeneEthics Network 2002). Besides the issue of gentic tampering, the issue of GM presents another frightening possibility, that of seed control. Plants can now be genetically engineered to grow robustly and repel disease, but simultaneously to be seedless. This means that the freedom to grows one's own food is being limited, placing the masses at the mercy of those in control of the seed (Appendix A.Watkins, 8/07/02).

It is only when those concerned with environmental tampering and the control of seed, publish or lobby parliament, that the truth about the abuse of natural resources comes to the fore. Making the public aware is only the first step towards a solution. It then needs a constant flow of money and organisation on the part of the alternative community to attempt any kind of significant action against this unbelievably well equipped foe.

The sad truth is that facts about food irradiation, the extinction of species and water resources and the genetic tampering with nature, will never be well received by an apathetic society conditioned into being competitive. The imminent environmental disaster and the effects this could have on the masses, appear to be viewed with scepticism.

There are those that still firmly believe that the annual percentage increase of new market niches, necessary to sustain capitalism in the world, is very necessary sound business practice. They believe that the Earth can and will continually absorb the abuse rendered to its environment and that the problem is artificial.

A WITNESS TO THE WORLD

I knew that my travels would provide a personal perspective, which would be invaluable. That what I would gain in witnessing such problems first hand, would make my argument credible and most of all, that my indifference might be addressed. My indifference didn't stand a chance.

I witnessed humanity with a capital H, and it shook me. Bangkok, my first stop, was the epitome of overpopulation. The air is so thick with carbon monoxide produced by exhaust fumes, that extra effort is needed to breathe. The problem is compounded by a dense humidity, the stench of rotting food and excrement, and hundreds of mosquitoes. There is no tap-drinking water. It is only available in bottled form, but at inflated prices. Prostitution is rife with a high percentage of sex changed 'Lady Boys' who service mostly foreign middle-aged tourists.

Bombay, now known as Mumbai, had similiar qualities. For a country so apparently 'spiritually inclined' there seemed to be very little concern for the planet that God had created. In the whole of India I never once saw a dustbin. Littering is rife. In Hampi,

Karnataka Province, cows roam the streets, spreading disease and feeding in rubbish dumps. Most toilets are squat toilets, probably more hygienic than western toilets by design, but local etiquette and the fact that these are septic tank based toilets, often require the visitor to wash oneself with ones hands. Soap and toilet paper are seldom provided. This spreads diseases like eColi, Salmonella, and Amoebic Dysentery. Malaria is also a constant threat. There is no drinkable tap water, garbage disposal systems or adequate, affordable medical facilities.

A traveller told me how doctors at a hospital forced her to pay R300 per night for a bed, making her stay a week. She was told that she had malaria, but was later diagnosed with food poisoning. The social conditions are so poor that in Bombay you can hire a child to beg with for a day. Many beggars have their eyes gouged out or limbs chopped off by Mafia-type gangs that control the begging industry.

India and Thailand both have very little if any, ecological or alternative forms of farming, barring local subsistence farming, which mostly accounts for a little rice, coconuts and bananas. Much of the population seems to be starving. According to the United Nations World Food Programme 314.9 million of the world's hungry live in South Asia - more than the populations of Australia and the USA (United Nations World Food Programme 2005).

Australia by comparison, appears to be one of the most ecologically-minded countries

I visited. That is, if you ignore the fact that they condone nuclear irradiation of their food. Permaculture, an alternative system of farming, begun in Australia, and is very popular with farmers. Water conservation billboards can be seen everywhere and although there is still logging of indigenous trees, most forests are being allowed to re-grow. It strikes me that this is the result of the tenacious efforts and stamina of protest action, much like that at Narangba.

Today Australia has a political party known as the 'Green Party' lobbying parliament on environmental issues. The party was formed on the basis of increased public interest in the Australian environment. This increased interest was brought about through the consistent exposure by 'eco warriors' of corrupt elements. Those fighting corruption and conditioning in Australia give hope; they have been fighting since the sixties to save their environment and their efforts seem to be paying off. Maybe this is what it will take - another thirty years lobbying governments like India and Thailand.

My visits to India and Thailand gave me an insight into the unhealthy state of the world. My travels into Brazil, Mexico, America, England and Germany gave me added insight. It made me realise that globally the environmental problems are very similar - the world is too full of people and the resources are rapidly being depleted. I had witnessed the world first hand, and the experience had given me what no newspaper or television documentary could give me. I was there, I saw what modern society has evolved to.

Modern society is run by governments. Governments are financed by the taxes of the people, but are influenced by big business. Big business is mostly only concerned with the 'bottom line' - profit. It is not the nature of business to concern itself with anything other than itself. The only party that has ever made a difference or can continue to make a difference as to how business proceeds, is the consumer - the man on the ground - who controls the demand for products. (Brigemann D. 2003)

The Search for Utopia is my attempt at trying to address some of the environmental and social problems by appealing to the hearts and minds of the 'the man on the ground'.



PLATE 4 THE HUMAN BE-IN

CHAPTER 3

THE SIXTIES - CREATING A NEW VISION

In this chapter, I discuss the social movement known as the sixties movement that formed between 1960 and 1970, and its reaction to modern culture. I then discuss how those responses have affected society and have helped to form the contemporary alternative views of those within the alternative community and within Rainbow.

MEASURING THE SIXTIES MOVEMENT

When I first began to read about the sixties, I was surprised at the way in which that decade was presented in literature. Events described in texts from literature written on the sixties period, seem to have unfolded erratically and in a disjointed manner. They are often not described in chronological order. This I think is due to many sub-movements being formed at irregular intervals and these movements, interacting with each other as they formed. In addition, the writing style of that day, like the poetry, was often obscure, written in a kind of underground street code. It was as if people just expressed themselves as they wished, however they wished. I placated myself, concluding that this is the true nature of the soul - uninhibited and expressive and often erratic, and by definition, the nature of the Sixties. As a result this period is not an easy one for me to understand, especially as I was not there to witness it. I also found it very difficult to clearly define or measure the success or failure of all that expression, especially, when the word LSD (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide) was continually being used, in various texts.

After much deliberation I have concluded that the use of drugs within the sixties, can only be understood if one keeps an open mind. Especially if one is sincere about understanding why and how the sixties movement happened. I see that a large measure of success in the sixties can be identified, but only if this hallucinogenic drug is viewed as a small part of the equation. A kind of necessary, catalytic evil. If one attempts to measure the sixties against socially accepted measures for success, then yes, it would appear that the hippies failed. The hippies did not knock down the cities and rebuild new environmentally conscious ones. Nor did they restructure government, or manage to pass new laws.

It was only after reading about the countless police beatings of the protestors in the USA, that I realised that it was not those involved in the sixties movement, but those in power who had possibly failed. Not seeing, or knowingly suppressing the potential that lay beneath the veneer of all that Rock n' Roll, long hair, fashion and drugs.

It would appear that governmental suppression was motivated by the very conservative and modernistic mindset of the period. By 1960, post-war America and its mainstream press were focussed on building a modernistic reality. Paging through an old edition of a 1969 Life Magazine from this period, I discovered a six page feature on the moon landing, indicative of this modernistic mindset. A mindset that appeared intent on ignoring the hippie's effort, given that this effort was intent on challenging this conser-

vative, modernistic mindset. The following quote from *The Sixties Reader*, points to the true achievement of the sixties movement - the freedom to be oneself.

Events in the sixties caused so many Americans to question their basic beliefs about race, patriotism, social roles, and the environment, that it became a time when individual expression was encouraged to an unprecedented degree (Charters 2003: XIV).

WHAT CAUSED THE SIXTIES REACTION?

The suppression of the hippie effort by the American leadership, only seemed to fuel the reaction. Where there is suppression of any kind there is most often a reaction by those suppressed. Such is the nature of the human spirit. Human history is filled with cases of the reaction to suppression. The reaction within the sixties movement was fuelled by factors such as the American government's large scale Vietnam war draft and excessive nuclear activity. The true catalyst for this reaction I believe to be as a result of modern society's path of evolution. To understand the nature of this reaction I looked to those who had evolved along another path.

The East and the indigenous tribal people of the world, have evolved in another way, their evolution has been far less devastating. An example of this is the Kayapo - the native people of the rainforests of Northern Brazil. They have lived in that area for the last eight thousand years. Their co-operative way of life has been continuous for that entire period. These people have been practicing a kind

of agriculture that works co-operatively with nature in the forests of that area. They have been able to sustain themselves in this way without inflicting any significant long-term ecological damage, allowing the forests to regrow in a mutually beneficial manner (Hartmann 1999:169).

Previously, I described how society has evolved to being competitive, with food and energy resources as primary motivations. The San Bushmen of Botswana are a good example of how man has evolved co-operatively with nature, only ever taking what was needed from the earth to survive and giving it as easily. Hartmann explains that in San culture, to give food and water without the necessity for thanks, is simply good manners. Even if this means endangering your own life. He asks us "to imagine a world where feeding a person is as much an automatic response as stopping for a red light" (Hartmann 1999:167).

In contrast, the competitive mindset seems to embrace the concept of taking what is wanted, often forcefully. Sometimes even taking from those whose belief systems include the notion that no one really owns anything, that the earth's resources are for all of us to enjoy or that the Earth belongs to God and it is not man's place to entertain the notion of ownership.

Thousands of years ago the Kayapo spread across most of Brazil with village settlements of 4000 strong. A society that practiced systems of sustainable, co-operative

farming, followed an ancient oral tradition, pagan religion and history, and were blissfully unaware of the concept of warfare. Then the Spanish Conquistadors arrived, bringing with them a new religion, and array of diseases, killing many of the Karapo, while harvesting the Mahogany trees amongst which the Kayapo lived (Hartmann 1999:135).

It would appear that at some point in history, modern society decided that it should own all land and energy resources, and shifted to believing that it should simultaneously absorb all other cultures into its own culture, with the accrual of that land. Maybe this is the point in the history of man where the culture shifted from evolving co-operatively to evolving competitively.

According to the Oxford Dictionary to 'compete' is to try to gain or win something by defeating others. (Oxford 2001:170) History, is filled with stories of competition and of slaughter and defeat: One of the most pertinent to this study is the slaughter of the Japanese by the Americans with the Atomic Bomb. I wonder if the Atomic Bomb was that 'cherry on top', that led to those within American society to deciding that they had had enough of the competitive mindset of their government.

At 3.09 on the 5th August 1945 the bombing crew on a United States Air force B-29 bomber released a bomb over Hiroshima Japan. It landed 100 feet from its aiming point. The fireball was 18000 feet across. The temperature at the centre

of the fireball was 100, 000,000 degrees. The people who were near the centre became nothing. 70 000 people were killed right away or died within a few hours. Those who did not die at once suffered great pain. Few of them were soldiers (Charters 2003:116).

By the mid 1960's instead of nuclear war, the United States had involved itself in another conventional war in South east Asia, apparently undeterred by the heavy losses of American troops in the previous decade's engagement in Korea.

Full scale war was under way by 1965, when President Johnson ordered air strikes on Communist targets over North Vietnam. By the end of 1965, 175 000 American troops and 40 000 navy personnel were in South Vietnam; twelve months later 400 000 U.S. service men were fighting there. In 1966, the United States suffered 4 800 fatalities, the first year American combat deaths exceeded those of the South Vietnamese soldiers. That year anti-war demonstrations were organised on college campuses throughout the United States (Charters 2003:119).

CREATING A NEW VISION

Social reaction most often occurs as a consequence of a minority, dissatisfied by its surroundings, having listened to those brave enough to speak out against their oppressors. At 39, Ginsberg was established as the dominant figure of the new literary underground and one of the founders of a group known as the Beat Poets. It was his poem ‘,

published in 1956, that broke through to the new consciousness of America with its famous opening line:

*I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness,
starving, hysterical, naked* (Charters 2003:24).

Haight Ashbury chronicler Charles Perry explains:

"It was the Beats who first coined the the term 'Hippie' as a derisive nickname for 'junior grade hipsters'. The Beats had preceeded the Hippies as a San Fransisco subculture, claiming the North Beach district for themselves in the 1950's and early 1960's. Many elements of the Hippie ethos derived from beat interests" (Charters 2003:293).

The beats, like the Hippies supported experimental music; for the Beats it was Jazz. It was the Beats who played with light shows, hallucinogenic or psychotropic drugs and took a permissive attitude towards sex. Some Beats subscribed to the tenants of Eastern spiritual disciplines such as Zen Buddhism. Allen Ginsberg and Gary Snyder were integral in encouraging hippie interest in these philosophies. Unlike the Beats' brooding outlook, the hippie philosophy embraced a far more optimistic and joyful attitude. Often playful at times, seeing that light could be made of a serious situation (Charters 2003:293). This playful attitude must have diffused tensions between government officials and war protestors, being non-violent, experimental and highly original,

and quite possibly a shock to American post world war, conservative society.

This experimental thinking present in the sixties anti war period, is exemplified in a letter, written by Ginsberg, in November 1965, in response to a request by the Free Speech Movement to make suggestions as to how they might conduct an upcoming war protest, given that a conflict with the pro-war Hells Angels Motorcycle gang was imminent.

The following are specific suggestions for organising a march and turning marchers onto their roles in the demonstration:

- *Masses of Flowers - a visual spectacle- especially concentrated in the front lines, can be used to set up barricades, to present to Hells Angels, police, politicians, press and spectators whenever needed.*
- *Marchers should bring crosses, to be held up in front in case of violence; like in the movies dealing with Dracula.*
- *Marchers who use American Flags should bring those: at least one front row of American Flags.*
- *Marchers should bring harmonicas, flutes, recorders, guitars, banjos and violins, bongos and tambourines.*

- *Marchers should bring children's toys which can be used for distracting attackers.*
- *Small floats or replicas in front: Christ with sacred heart and cross; Buddha in meditation; George Washington,; Lincoln Whitman; Thoreau behind Bars; Birch Society Float (Old ladies in tennis sneakers); Napoleon and Caesar.*
- *In case of heavy anxiety, confusion or struggle in isolated spots marchers could be led in Sit Down; Calisthenics; The Lord's Prayer; Three Bind Mice; OM (AUM) long breath in unison; Star Spangled Banner; Mary Had a Little Lamb*
(Charters 2003:209)

It was as if the youth wanted to show that America was their country too, that the war was unnecessary and overly serious, suggesting that violence should be fought with the likes of nursery rhymes. They used American cherished symbols and archetypes in new ways, using these 'sacred cornerstones' in support of the new vision.

Some felt that this new vision and philosophical points of view being formed were in reaction to the American governments' perception of itself, as superior to its neighbours and especially towards its citizens. An excerpt by Susan Sontag cited in *The Sixties Reader* puts it quite succinctly. "Everything that one feels about this country is, or ought to be, conditioned by the awareness of American Power: of America as the arch-imperium of the planet, holding man's biological as well as his historical future in its

King Kong paws.” (Charters 2003:120) This new awareness of the misuse of American Power seemed to ignite the nation’s youth into a full scale reaction.

Reaction against the establishment

It was apparent that the government that was appointed by the people to “protect and serve” was not acting in the interests of its citizens. In 1962, college students marched on Washington, calling for a ban on nuclear weapons. These were mostly white students, joined later by black students, fuelled on by white America’s consistent racial stance (Charters 2003:193).

The Sixties movement was gaining momentum, and this was not only due to the efforts of the Hippies and the Beat poets. In fact it is probably safe to say that the Hippies were encouraged by the bravery and efforts of those in the Civil Rights Movement, led by Martin Luther King Jr. Eldridge Cleaver wrote in *Soul on Ice* that the “spontaneous protests on southern campuses over the repressive measures of college administrations” had shown the way for the Berkeley students. As Cleaver understood, “in countless ways, the rebellion of the black students served as catalyst for the brewing revolt of the whites” (Charters 2003:478). By 1967 many whites, blacks and indigenous people began to mobilise. It was this unified movement that became of great concern to the American Government.

A Movement made from Movements

The Free Speech Movement was one of the first formed by white students at Berkeley University. Then the Woman's Movement, which became known for its 1968 protest against the Miss America Beauty Pageant in Atlantic City, insisting that women be "no longer enslaved by ludicrous beauty standards". This heralded the beginning of the Sexual Revolution and the Environmental Movement, formed in defence of the Earth.

In that same year amidst the Vietnam War and action by the Black Panthers, the militant wing of the Black Consciousness Movement, the indigenous tribes of America began to speak out too, when two members of the Chippewa tribe formed the American Indian Movement (AIM).

These were political movements whose primary purpose was to attack policy and to address an assortment of issues, pertaining to the democratic rights, human rights and the constitutional rights of its members. The Counterculture Movement, by comparison was something different.

The Counterculture Movement

The Counterculture Movement, was an attempt at a cultural revolution. This movement sought to counter the prevalent American culture or to even create a new culture in a non-political and non-violent manner. Through music, dance, art and experimenting with and by challenging socially accepted norms. It was as if the hippies were taking

this new philosophical vision and trying it out on themselves and on their peers. In late 1969, in a manifesto titled *Foreplay* Abbie Hoffman spelled out the essential difference that he saw between political and cultural revolution.

The rebellious inhabitants of the new communities, such as the Haight Ashbury hippies in San Fransisco, shared the feeling that " I'm not angry over Vietnam and racism and imperialism. Naturally, I'm against all that shit, but I'm pissed cause my friends are in prison for dope and cops stop me on the street cause I have long hair. I'm guilty of a conspiracy, all right. Guilty of creating a liberated land in which we can do whatever the fuck we decide" (Charters 2003:241).

The Counterculture movement was in search of the freedom of cultural expression separate to that of the establishment. Its instrument of information dissemination was the music and the poetry that swept across the country like wildfire, at festivals and concerts. Among them, was what was referred to as The Sunrise of the Movement Be-In, in San Fransisco Park. The Be-In also referred to as, Human-Be-In was a vehicle for the Counterculture to focus the ideas of its participants. I visited the San Fransisco Park where the Be-In took place on my travels, finding that like-minded people still gather every Sunday in the park to celebrate the Hippie Ideal.

The 'Human Be-In' was an event that took place on the evening of January 14, 1967. It was a prelude to San Francisco's Summer of Love, which made the Haight-Ashbury

district a household word as the center of an American counterculture. The aim of the 'Human Be-In' was to focus the key ideas of the sixties counterculture, by encouraging dialogue between key figures within the movement, on issues of personal empowerment, cultural and political decentralization, communal living, ecological awareness and consciousness expansion. Oracle publisher and Be-In co-organizer Allen Cohen, characterized the event as "a necessary meeting-of-the-minds", bringing together the philosophically opposed factions of the late 1966 San Francisco-based counterculture: on one side, the Berkeley radicals, and the other side, the Haight-Ashbury hippies. The Human Be-In, not only brought together various viewpoints, but served to exhibit a unified front to the public, three hundred thousand people with a similar point of view "we are one"! Timothy Leary and Allen Ginsberg were there. Leary, repeating the famous words - "Tune-in, turn-on, drop out". The press were there, calling it the dawning of a new era for the country (Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia 2005).

This new era brought with it a new view, that took a stance against the conditioned, established view, better known as 'the establishment'. The Establishment was driven by an interpretation of Christian doctrine. Anne Charters claims that "The philosophers of the sixties, knew that the new drugs were reintroducing the platonic agnostic vision. That these men had read their theological history and understood both the glorious possibility and the angered reaction of the priestly establishment" (Charters 2003:331).

The Agnostic view, of accepting the presence of God, but not engaging directly with God by worshipping him, does seem to be the stance taken by many Hippies. It appears that the real motivation behind the Agnostic view being adopted, was partly that the Counterculture movement felt it necessary to distance itself from the American Government's take on Christianity, but also that LSD had brought with it the insight of everything being relative, that God was merely there, as a part of everything, that people, the planet and God are all relative to each other. I can only surmise, that the rapid outlawing of the drug by the American Government was at the hands of the Church and the "glorious possibilities" of the drug, that Charters speaks of, would have to be explored illegally in the future.

The first important factor to further the new philosophical social view - was the disillusionment and disdain for the establishment felt by many of its youth. The second was the consolidation of that disillusionment. Those who shared a cause or viewpoint, based on this disillusionment formed social movements. These movements acted independently, attacked policy relating to their respective social issues. The third came in the form of LSD.

LSD

By the fall of 1960 there was in existence, an informal international network of scientists and scholars who had taken the drug-induced psychedelic trip and who foresaw the powerful effect that the new alkaloids would have on human culture. The members

of this group differed in age and temperament, but the basic vision was common to all - they believed these wondrous plants and drugs could free man's consciousness and bring about a new conception of man, his psychology and philosophy (Charters 2003:331). These new drugs may well have offered an insight previously unobtainable.

To better understand these insights, I began to read about the experiences of those that had taken these drugs. Most responded that it gave them a sense of being connected to the Earth, that the feeling inside themselves was the same as what was outside themselves. That everything is connected. That to be "normal" or "LSD free" was to be detached from one's surroundings (Charters 2003:331). This view, of wanting to feel-connected to nature, is endemic to hippies and the present-day alternative community, and is quite possibly as a result of these LSD induced insights gained in the sixties.

Timothy Leary, a psychologist who underwent a series of experiments with LSD, shared a similar view:

"People use the word 'natural'... What is natural to me is these botanical species which interact directly with the nervous system. What I consider artificial is 4 years at Harvard, and the Bible, and Saint Patrick's cathedral, and the Sunday school teachings" (The Deoxyribonucleic Hyperdimension 2005).

As Leary put it: "In the months that followed we began to see ourselves as unwitting agents of a social process that was far too powerful for us to control or more than

dimly understand. A historical movement that would inevitably change man at the very center of his nature, his consciousness". These pioneers realised that they were not alone in their quest, as more and more people began to try LSD. They began to "turn on" to what they believed was a movement that had been going for centuries. An ancient shared sentiment of alchemists, artists, mystics, alienated visionaries, dropouts and the disenchanted young. Leary explains that they felt like they were a part of an ancient and honourable fellowship which had pursued this journey since the dawn of recorded history - the tantrics, the sufis, Bauls, Gnostics, hermetics, Sivaites and sadhus (Charters 2003:343).

Shifting Perspectives

Those that believed in LSD, began to distribute it. Leary believed that LSD should be taken in a peaceful setting to produce a personal contemplative, spiritual experience. The intention being to cause a shift in perspective or as Leary put it "You have to be out of your mind to use your head." The Merry Pranksters, a group formed by Ken Kesey author of the book *One flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* disagreed, they viewed LSD as more of a sport, a test of endurance for the hip. They thought LSD should be taken in an atmosphere where anything could happen and went out of their way to organise tricks and scary, edgy situations for themselves (Miles 2003:25).

Shortly afterwards on 4 October 1966, Psychedelia experienced both a major set back and a major milestone. The set back came in the form of a California law that came

into fruition on this day prohibiting the use of LSD. The milestone came in the form of the Declaration of Personal Freedom, read at the Love Pageant Rally, in the Panhandle in Haight Ashbury at 2pm. The Declaration was drawn up by the Psychedelic Rangers.

The declaration was entitled - *A Prophecy of a Declaration of Independence*.

The following is an excerpt from the declaration.

When in the flow of human events it becomes necessary for the people to cease to recognize the obsolete social patterns which have isolated man from his consciousness and to create with the youthful energies of the world revolutionary communities of harmonious relations to which the two-billion-year-old life process entitles them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind should declare the causes which impell them to this creation. We hold these experiences to be self-evident, that all is equal, that the creation endows us with certain inalienable rights, that among these are: The freedom of body, the pursuit of joy and the expansion of consciousness and that to secure these rights, we, the citizens of the earth, declare our love and compassion for all conflicting hate-carrying men and women of the world. We declare the identity of flesh and consciousness; all reason and law must respect this holy identity (Anthony 2002:122).

The Declaration of Personal Freedom captures the impetus of the sixties philosophy - to be free. Free from the constraints of religious doctrine, the capitalistic mindset, and

the residing autocratic social structure. Those within the movement were consistently re-inforcing both the concepts of freedom and of what is, what could be and what should be, free of charge. This non-violent campaign against the impeding American mindset, used clever and unusual tactics. A group primarily responsible for such activity called themselves The Diggers.

The Diggers were originally a group based on the seventeenth century anarchistic communal farming group in Cromwell England. Those Diggers lived on wastelands. They wanted the land to be free for all who needed it. Those ideological roots were re-established by the Diggers in the Haight (Anthony 2002:27).

The San Francisco Diggers experimented with non-violent anarchy. They built a 13 foot wooden frame and set it up in front of their events as a portal through which Digger activity could be seen by passing traffic as a 'Digger Free Frame of Reference'. They started a 'Free Store' where everything was free and offered free rides on a swing made from rope attached to the rafters. They also supplied free food (Anthony 2002:29).

In 1967 when the Diggers' Be-In took place, the press, the fashion mongers and the entrepreneurs were all having a field day. The movement had spread around the globe and the influx of young runaways was at an unprecedented level. The Diggers did their best to sustain these runaways with offerings of collected food. LSD, marijuana, psilo-

cybin mushrooms, peyote and its synthetic counterpart, mescaline had by this stage become very popular. The psychedelic age and its psychedelic drugs were out of control.

Hippie culture had gone commercial and those who had been there at the beginning began to realise that this was the end of what was called, the Summer of Love.

The Summer of Love had come and gone and perhaps 100,000 people had come to the Haight on a pilgrimage to see what was happening. Just about every group or organization the Haight had developed to deal with the influx had dissolved, burnt out or divided under the strain. Hard drugs had infiltrated the area and the veins of some of the best of the players. The FBI, the CIA, and the Intelligence divisions of the San Francisco Police were rumored to be involved in the sudden availability of Heroin and Methamphetamine, and the rash of arrests and civil disturbances that had begun to plague the Haight. The Diggers developed another approach. In October 1967, appalled by the spotlight of the media on the Haight, and eager to attract it at the same time, they staged a 'Death of the Hippie' ceremonial march down Haight street with a coffin filled with hippie paraphernalia and flowers signifying the death of the media generated hippie, and his rebirth as a Free Man in a Free city with Free necessities provided to all (Rockument 2004).

Hippie interest in the Haight began to wane. It appeared that the those intent on the distruction and dissolution of the sixties movement had won the war. An interviewee in

Haight explained that the American government had intentionally distributed bad LSD to those in Haight so as to disrupt the social epicenter of the movement (Appendix A. Antler 10/04/03).

The 'new vision' was put to the test. Possibly fuelled by the impending demise of the Sixties movement and a willingness to establish if true social freedom could be achieved, practically and in a new non-urban environment. The Back to the Land Movement was formed.

APPLYING THE NEW VISION - The Back to the Land Movement

1968 -1977 was a time when the Back to the Land Movement was at its peak. Hippies all over the world, retreated away from the cities. This movement's philosophy held that the planet should be viewed as the mother, the provider, and a maternal material entity and that humans needed to return to interacting with nature, both physically and spiritually.

The most successful example of this return to the land, is what is known simply as The Farm. The Farm, is a 24-year old community guided by a spiritual teacher, Stephen Gaskin, from the emerging psychedelic revolution in San Francisco. The community was developed following a seven-month caravan around the country in brightly-painted schoolbuses and vans, and then proceeded to one of the wildest areas of Tennessee, where they settled in May, 1971, at the height of the Vietnam War.

The Farm was one of the largest hippie communes in North America, peaking out at around 1500 people in 1980, before reducing to its current population of about 200. The Farm pioneered in soy-based vegetarian diet, midwifery and home birth, anti-nuclear activism, alternative energy and communal living. Around 4,000 people were official, signed-on members of the Farm at one time or another in its history, and there were over 100,000 overnight visitors to the community during its first ten years. (Bates 1999)

Today The Farm has evolved into an Eco Village.

THE HIPPIE CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY

I believe we have much to thank the hippies for, as Miles puts it “the true impact of the hippie movement can be measured in political terms in both the US and the UK. The establishment is no longer sacrosanct and a much greater degree of accountability and transparency is required by society at large these days, both in public institutions and among politicians” (Miles 2003:22).

The Sixties movement laid the way for a multitude of social breakthroughs. It established the idea that man has a right to express himself freely. That war, environmental destruction, racism, gender inequality and discrimination against sexual orientation are evils that do not need to be tolerated. It proved that the consciousness of, and the action against these issues by a collective, can have a real affect. That we should not be bullied by those that we have elected. These ideals, did not die in Golden Gate Park. What died was

the commercialisation of the hippie.

Many that were serious about following the hippie ideal did so, based on two important decisions. To establish self sustaining communities and to start Rainbow.

Today the Intentional Communities Network is a testament to that endeavour. Hartmann explains that, "there are over 500 listed Intentional Communities in the Communities Directory of America today, and the publishers point out that several hundred additional communities asked not to be listed. This network has expanded internationally" (Hartmann 1999:281).

Rainbow, based on an Ancient American Indian Prophecy, was to gather once a year in a remote public space, to live communally and in so doing, offer encouragement to each other to uphold those philosophical views that came out of the Sixties. In 1972 in Strawberry Lake, Colorado, The International Rainbow family of Living Light was established and is still alive today.

The Search for Utopia is influenced by these philosophical views from the Sixties, it attempts to convey the spirit of these views through interviews with those actively engaged in alternative community and those active within Rainbow.



PLATE 5 RAINBOW CIRCLE

CHAPTER 4

RAINBOW - THE INTERNATIONAL FAMILY OF LIVING LIGHT

In this chapter, I discuss my first-hand experiences with Rainbow, a social experiment that is very influenced by the philosophical views of the sixties and of indigenous cultures.

By the late 1970's, many of the hippies, as a result of searching for alternative viewpoints were familiar with the views of marginalised cultures. Allen Ginsberg explains that the Beat Poets' 'New Vision' was like a spiritual revolution that was interested in an exploration of the underworld and underground, counterculture and marginal cultures". (McIntyre:1979) One of these marginalised cultures is the Native Americans.

When the earth is ravaged and animals are dying, a new tribe of people shall come unto the earth from many colours, classes, creeds, and who by their actions and deeds shall make the Earth green again. They will be known as the warriors of the Rainbow – Old Native American Prophecy (Welcome Home 2005).

The Native American prophecy speaks of a new international culture being formed, that is based on tribal principles and of one that actively co-operates with the environment. The Native American prophecy is very closely aligned to the hippie view of there being a social division between themselves and the social patterns of American

society described in the *Prophecy of a Declaration of Independence* (Anthony 2002:122).

This new international culture, known as The Rainbow Family of Living Light was established in 1972 in Strawberry Lake, Colorado, America, by an unknown group of hippies coming out of the Sixties movement. It appears that this small group when defining the perimeters of the Rainbow social structure and philosophy, were very influenced by the traditions of marginalised cultures, and the view-points and concepts of the sixties.

Rainbow is non-hierarchical in structure, it has no leaders and no followers, no registered members, no chairman, secretary, treasurer and no bank account. It is said to be the biggest international non-organisation in the world. This non-organisation only gathers in remote areas, as far away from cities as possible, in an attempt to distance itself from modern society. This distance facilitates Rainbow's need to experiment with social concepts.

According to interviews conducted with members of Rainbow, I conclude that Rainbow has two primary purposes:

- It is a social experiment based on the views of the sixties, and oral traditions of indigenous cultures. It represents a part of humanity that is

attempting to undo and address, modern cultural conditioning.

- It is a social collective mindful of promoting a co-operative mindset

(Appendix A.Aurora 2/02/03).

Modern cultural conditioning so often advocates the abdication of many of our personal responsibilities, regarding the birthing and schooling of one's own children, the growing of one's own food, building of one's home, care for the old and burial of one's own dead (Appendix A.willow 24/12/02). By comparison, Rainbow encourages a self-sufficiency and personal responsibility, that is fuelled by free will. I see Rainbow's experimental challenge of modern social conditioning as an attempt at environmentally conscious anarchistic Utopia. Almost an ordered chaos.

Modern culture supports the idea that the people cannot maintain order themselves without force, instituting police forces and armies. Rainbow has proven this to be untrue - gatherings can number up to 3000 without any police presence or military supervision. A success of Rainbow, is its success in non-violence. Rainbow has been able to sustain an ethos of non-violence within a demographically international community, of mostly individuals, who are strangers to each other, for the period of a month (Welcome Home 2005).

With an unofficial membership of 500, 000, Rainbow aligns itself to ethnic tribalism,

believing that the ethnic tribal knowledge and traditions of the world's ethnic tribes, that are so rapidly being lost, are the key to aiding our survival (Appendix A. Gareth 2/02/03).

Much of this knowledge, gained from ethnic tribes is being applied to Rainbow gatherings. In the four years that I have spent researching Rainbow, I have attended three gatherings in three different countries, each gathering was exactly the same in its make up. Based on the Pagan principle of observing the lunar cycles, (Higginbotham 2002:16) gatherings last from full moon to full moon - a month of living together as a community. People cook together, make decisions together and live side by side in nature for that period. All of this without alcohol, chemical drugs, meat, water purification plants, security guards, electricity, televisions, radios, newspapers, gas cookers or flushing toilets. The big question that comes to mind, is how does Rainbow, in such austere conditions, peacefully, self-govern so many people from such diverse racial and religious backgrounds? The answer is Consensus Government.

This form of governance takes place at meetings known as Councils, in which an adopted American Indian custom, known as the talking stick is used. The talking stick, often in the form of a decorated stick, entitles the bearer to the complete attention of the rest of the council. Each at the council gets a chance to be heard, as the stick is passed around the circle. Councils are 'open circles', anyone who is interested in participating can do so. The outcome of the council approach, is non-hierarchical consen-

sus, meaning that there is no such thing as an unequally weighted vote. A focaliser will raise an issue to be discussed. After the stick has been passed to every member of the circle, the focaliser will call for consensus. A 10 minute moment of silence is called. If that silence is broken, the discussion will be continued until consensus is reached. Rainbow's non-hierarchical management style has led it to develop the Focaliser System. Unlike the role of a leader, present in the hierarchical system of modern society, the role of the focaliser has been created with the understanding that with power, comes ego, and with ego comes a misguided system of management. A Focaliser's primary function is to organise group events known as Gatherings that last from New Moon to New Moon in accordance with Pagan lunar ritualistic principles and to focus the Gathering in accordance with the consensus reached in the talking circle.

MAKING OF A NATIONAL GATHERING

A single focaliser with no independent decision-making power, but with the vision for a gathering, establishes a network of focalisers nationally. At provincial level, each focaliser, creates what is known as a Focus Group. The provincial focalisers are responsible for the dissemination of information about the gathering within their provinces. Scouts are nominated from the focus groups and are sent out to investigate prospective gathering sites.

In Brazil, host to the 3rd International Gathering, scouts met at Jereouquaquara on the southern coast. From there, scouts were sent out to potential sites and brought back

photographs of each site visited. Aripiranga was the final site of choice, fulfilling all the criteria. The criteria for a site is complex:

- The site must have clean drinking water, lots of it, preferably natural spring water.
- It must be able to easily accommodate 300 - 3000 people, though some gatherings have been known to reach up to 10 000 people. The site should have enough space for camping and to accommodate a circle of standing people who are holding hands with arms out stretched. Prayers, spiritual rituals, brunch and supper are held at this main circle venue.
- The site must be reasonably inaccessible, meaning that visitors must leave their cars in a demarcated space and walk 3 - 8 km to get to the main site. Rainbow seeks to filter out unwanted guests.
- It should be in a natural environment, that will hopefully withstand the environmental impact of so many people.

Scouts and the focus group meet and reach consensus on the potential site. Land owners or Tribal Headmen will then be approached to reach some agreement about the site. Normally the land must be offered freely and Rainbow tends to avoid financial or legal transactions for sites. Often times an energy exchange programme is set up to repay

the parties concerned. This normally takes the form of environmental land restoration, crop harvesting or planting.

The Provincial focus group, manages the preparations and fund-raising for a Seed Camp. Seed Camp is a national gathering of the focalisers and focus groups prior to the main gathering, this is when infrastructural necessities are attended to.

Seed Camp

A period of approximately two weeks - to a month long, Seed Camp is a period where provincial focalisers meet with the focus group to begin preparing the site. The area needs to have a parking area, a Welcome Centre - this is where rules are explained and where alcohol, chemical drugs and electronic equipment are returned to visitors' cars. Compost toilets, better known as Shit Pits, must be dug, Directional Road Signage, Site Signage and Information Boards are made and put up, Water facilities, like piping from rivers and drinking areas are set up, Fire Wood is collected and sometimes gardens, for cooking herbs, are planted. Camping sites need to be cleared of alien weeds and thorns, and safe fire places are dug.

The Gathering

The experience of living together for a whole month, normally has two kinds of effects on visitors. They either leave after a few days, appalled at the lack of convenience and apparent low levels of hygiene or they are transformed, into much kinder and gentler

souls. One of the reasons for this transformation, is the lack of mirrors. Living out in nature, away from modern conveniences, like mirrors for example, can assist the healing of a damaged ego. When I left my first Gathering in Imboyttjie Transkei, I felt like a different person. I hadn't seen myself for a whole month and it was wonderful. I had a beard, hadn't worried about my hair, had only washed my clothes in the river, without soap and had a nice tan. Moving one's focus away from oneself towards becoming a part of a family is an incredibly liberating experience and really just the first step in learning to be part of a co-operative society.

At a gathering everything is voluntary, so it functions out of free will. In Rainbow they have a saying, "if you see a job it's yours", as a result, the transferal of personal agendas onto others is minimised. Firewood gets collected. Food gets cooked. Water gets collected, and skill-sharing workshops are given, all out of free will.

A completely voluntary society co-operating in harmony. The nature of the conditioned mind seems to be our biggest enemy. Rainbow is an exercise in addressing that conditioning, a taste of what it is like to live, think, eat and breathe in a whole new way. For the first time in his or her life, a visitor to Rainbow has the opportunity to explore what it is like to live in a society that is free from mainstream conditioning.

Rainbow has taken the oral traditions and philosophies of co-operative tribal cultures and has distilled these ideas into a social system that allows each individual to success-

- breakdown inhibitions and pride within
- allow time to listen to one's inner voice, body and soul
- experience the opposite of a socially conditioned mindset
- commune, connect and interact with nature
- discover how to love oneself
- discover that platonic love can exist within society.

Collective Exercises

The above ideas may sound idealistic, but have been proven to be achievable through practical group exercises. Rainbow is all about the collective - a collective consciousness applied through collective action. It has developed a few interesting exercises that are always performed as a group, designed to adjust the way one sees, feels and thinks.

Eye Contact - People sit in a circle. Each person in the circle makes eye contact with every other person in the circle. It's a strange experience to look directly into someone's eyes. Something we have been conditioned not to do. Not looking someone in the eye, means you don't have to recognise their existence, supporting a conditioned idea that we should be separate and insular. This exercise breaks down our inacceptance of others. Feeling accepted, and accepting others is the first step towards co-operating with others. It is also a very necessary prelude to another exercise - Angel Walk.

Angel Walk - A focaliser first explains the concept to the circle - a completely platonic exercise in love. The task is for each of the participants to consciously embrace the collective while simultaneously moving the focus away from themselves. The aim is to change perceptions about the relationship between people.

A corridor of facing, standing people is made. All eyes are closed except for the focaliser who monitors the exercise, making sure that sexuality does not creep into the equation. The entire corridor begins to OM - a chant of a word borrowed from Hinduism and is said to contain the sound vibration that can connect one to the spiritual realm. One by one walkers are led with their eyes closed down the corridor. The idea is that the entire experience should be that of being anonymous to each other. This addresses the issue of visual perception. Words of kindness, a gentle touch or caress are administered to the walkers, by 'the corridor'. The walk is ended with an embrace administered by the focaliser. Simple, but incredibly powerful. Human contact and kindness seem to be the key, within the correct context, to breaking down personal perceptions and issues. This process I see as a loving social exchange.

Ginsberg explains it quite succinctly in his testimony at the Chicago Seven Trial. "As part of our nature, as part of our human nature we have many loves, many of which are denied, many of which we deny ourselves". Ginsberg goes on to explain how Walt Whitman in his poem *Love Poem on Theme*, describes how "the reclaiming of those loves and becoming aware of those loves was the only way that this nation (America)

could save itself and become a democratic and spiritual republic" (The Chicago Seven Trial Transcript: 1969).

Angel Walk also addresses the issue of Social Love. I think that at some point in history, a social love, used to exist between strangers. I remember sitting in church one day listening to the preacher talk about the Greek words for love - 'Eros' - love between a man and a woman; 'Storge' - love between a parent and child; 'Agape' - love for God and 'Philia' - the love between friends. The love between strangers was never discussed by the preacher. Its this love that I feel is unexplored.

Angel walk explores this love. The experience, left me feeling like I was a part of a whole. It occurred to me, that we have evolved into a society that places too much emphasis on the individual, not realising the ability of the collective to operate as a whole, to make decisions and to achieve collectively.

The aim of Angel walk is simple - unconditional love for all - that platonic love could exist between men and women, between woman, and between men. Rainbow advocates a rediscovery or initiation of this type of love, through the theory that we are all family. Initially this notion of platonic love between a strange man and myself, was daunting to embrace, but it occurred to me that the M.O.T.H.s - Memorable Order Of Tin Hats Society practice exactly that.

During the Second World War Men fought and lived together for approximately eight years - feeding each other, protecting each other, and confiding in each other, under horrific conditions. These kinds of situations, of discomfort and terror, often leads to a greater co-operation between strangers. My thinking is that this co-operation must have developed into a kind of love. As a result many must have felt separated from their comrades after the war, and were led to form the M.O.T.H.s to retain that love. While practicing Angel Walk, I experienced what I think might be a similiar love, I found myself submersed in a collective state of mind. This sense of being a part of the collective can only be achieved when one relinquishes one's personal ego and embraces the collective. A third practice specifically designed to relinquish one's individual ego or pride, is an un-named exercise which I observed at the Third International Gathering in Brazil

Working with Ego - A focaliser explains the aim of this exercise - To develop a sense of social equality that is free of ego. A circle is formed. Participants are asked one at a time to exhibit mannerisms, that would make them appear foolish. This exhibition, could mean impersonating a monkey, a strange dance, song, sound etc. Each person in the group then imitates the first. This continues until everyone in the group has had a chance. Incredibly simple, humourous and powerful.

According to those within Rainbow, successful, collectively-minded tribalism requires that an ego-free relationship exists between those of the tribe and between the tribe and

the earth. Some say it's about linking into the energy of the earth. This composite relationship between man and his fellow man and with nature is tribal Rainbow (Appendix A. Budgie 18/04/03).

The loss of modern society from its own root tribe is compounded by the loss of tribal spirituality. Rainbow is trying to address this loss of tribal spirituality, by associating with indigenous cultures. Rainbow originated in America in 1972 and then spread into Europe in 1981 moving onto Japan, India and Central America in 1992. So gatherings demographically are predominately made up of Europeans and Americans with the balance made up of people of non-European descent.

Europeans have lost their connection to their original tribe - the Celts. The Celts, practising Paganism, originally occupied most of Europe, but were slowly driven back by the Romans to the last outpost of Celtic Civilisation in Ireland. The Irish were resilient, holding off the Romans for some time, but finally conceded to Christianity, amalgamating many Pagan Festivals. The word *Pagan*, is derived from the Latin word *paganus*, which means 'country dweller'. Paganism is an earth-centred religion, constructed around the flow of the seasons and places particular emphasis on being conscious of one's actions in relation to the environment (Higginbotham 2002:16).

By 395 AD during the Byzantine Period, under the rule of Roman Emporer Flavius Theodosius, the Pagan season-based celebrations had been effectively absorbed by the

Christian Roman Empire (Wikipedia.org 2005). The amalgamation of these festivals is quite evident when examining the root of modern Western festivals:

Festivals like *Samhain* - now known as Halloween, *Imbolg*, also known as St Brigid's Day canonised by the Catholic Church, *Beltane*, originally a festival of fertility, the phallic Maypole surrounded by dancing virgins, known as May Day, *Yule*, the Winter Solstice - now known as Christmas and *Ostara* - Spring Equinox now known as Easter - the word derived from the Babylonian Ishtar, this festival includes the colouring of eggs (Higginbotham 2002:17).

With the loss of earth-centred spirituality within modern society and the disconnection between society and the mechanics of nature, it appears that man has become increasingly arrogant, placing his preservation over that of the earth and its animals. Many within modern society have identified that arrogance within themselves, and are expressing a need to reconnect themselves with tribal, earth-centered religions. Many within Rainbow and within the alternative community are celebrating these festivals in their original form.

This celebrated connection with nature, is a key function of Rainbow. Honouring the Earth and its elements is the first step to developing some kind of relationship with the Earth. Rainbow is also concerned with another form of connection, the relationship between its collective prayer and the rest of the planet's people.

DIRECTING POSITIVE COLLECTIVE INTENT AND PRAYER

Rainbow supports directing a collective intent, or using collective prayer to affect the inhabitants of the world positively. I am unaware of the origin of this practice.

Loosely, Rainbow's theory is that each of us, is able to manifest our own reality by connecting our personal energy to the energy of the Universe or to God, or to both, according to one's belief.

Rainbow focusses on turning negative energy into positive energy. As one interviewee explains "If you are singing about love twenty times a day, it becomes a mantra"(Appendix A. Stephan 11/05/03). Love and Light, are key words within Rainbow and have been adopted as a farewell greeting. Probably the most important function of Rainbow is its ability to focus the intent of so many all at once. A focaliser will explain the kind of intent needed and then the group will apply that intent collectively in the form of individual prayer, conducted in a moment of silence.

Naturally the effects and success of collective intent is difficult to monitor. However, if this kind of positive collective intent is in fact having an effect on the global unconsciousness, the possibility then exists, that it may be acting as a neutralising force. That ill intent is being neutralised by the positive intent of Rainbow.

ALTERNATIVE LIVING

It would appear that Rainbow's experimentation with collective intent and social inter-

action, is bearing fruit - in some cases up to 3000 people can live together in relative harmony and with few open displays of conflict or contempt. The possibility of familiarity within Rainbow developing into contempt, may be lessened by the fact that gatherings are always only a month long. Rainbow is a nomadic culture, and part of its success, is its ability to accomodate a continual interaction between like-minded people for short periods of time. There may be 1500 people on a given day within the gathering, but over a period of a month 3000 people may have passed through.

Rainbow has developed a community in Spain that has been in existence for nearly 12 years. No one person lives there permanently. It is a community for nomadically orientated people (Appendix A.Omgi 21/05/03).

Many 'permanent' Rainbow Family members, interact with mainstream society, but remain nomadic, only stopping, to interact on an economic level with mainstream society - selling hand-made goods or to work as farm labourers on Organic Farms, also known as WOOFERS - Willing Workers On Organic Farms. This system of trading energy for food and shelter, allows the traveller to undergo in-house training in Permaculture and Organic Farming in return for services rendered. The nomadic way of life is not the only reason for Rainbow's sustained social harmony, another is Rainbow's concept of Family

Tribal families very often view the tribe, as the extended family of their nuclear family

(Appendix A. Willow 24/12/05). Rainbow experiments with this tribal concept, taking the view that the entire human race is one family.

The success of the 'human family' concept, was very evident at the Third International Gathering in Brazil. 30 countries were represented there, by some 1500 people. I witnessed few altercations in the period that I visited. They call each other Brother and Sister, and apply the same family values used everyday, within a nuclear family.

Rainbow's experimentation with the dynamics of social interaction has led to the development of a series of communal rituals and practices. Some borrowed from tribal culture and others developed over time.

What makes Rainbow so unique is that it is, to my knowledge, the only tribe that is still creating itself, by ensuring that it is being continually influenced by other tribal cultures. Most remaining, ethnic tribes live in remote areas, like those favoured by Rainbow for its gathering sites. Tribal locals, often out of curiosity, visit gatherings, sharing their culture with the Rainbow Family. Rainbow seems to view each night as a time for the tribe to reunite and to connect, dancing and singing around a Sacred Fire. Fire is honoured as an element of the earth. No electronic equipment is allowed, so only natural instruments are used to make music. The Jembe, an African drum that is said to have its origins in central Africa, the Didgerido, an Aboriginal hollow wooden wind instrument, the celtic flute, penny-whistle, guitar and the mandolin are all incorporated in making 'spur-of-the moment' music. The drum in my view is the most

interesting addition. It seems to draw in those listening and is the underpinning and central component in the composition of 'hand-made' music. It provides the bass riff with which other instruments can be complemented.

While conducting research within the Rave culture, as part of my BTech study, it occurred to me that the repetitive bass riff of the music was a unifying drawcard. At raves, 3000 people will dance all night to a predominantly bass-driven tune. I concluded, that there must be some kind of connection between the human heartbeat and the bass drum. Tribes have been connecting with the drum through music and dance for centuries. Rainbow has replicated this tribal experience so accurately, that a visitor to Rainbow could easily mistake it for an authentic indigenous tribal experience.

Part of this adherence to tribal tradition is the daily gathering of 'the tribe' in a circle. This happens twice a day before every meal. A circle of people is formed by holding hands. The circle appears to me to also serve as a symbolisim of Rainbow's stance on a non-hierachical social unity. The Rainbow Song is sung. It is as follows:

We are circling
circling together
we are singing, singing our heartsong
this is family
this is unity
this is sacred

The song sums up Rainbow's commitment to their core values and touches on the notion that a non-religious, non-racial, spiritual experience can be achieved by viewing the event as sanctified.

An approximately five minute Om Chant follows - An incredible experience simultaneously performed by 1500 people. This I experienced in Brazil.

The earth is then honoured by each individual touching the ground with their hands.

Food is served in the circle by volunteers, and the entire family eats together. The menu is always vegetarian, free of any flavourants or chemicals, hot spices, salt or sugar. This food is financed through a system of money collection known as the Magic Hat.

The Magic Hat is a concept possibly borrowed from the Digger's concept of free. At the time of the Human-be-in, a benefit evening was organised to thank and remunerate Emmet Grogan and the Diggers for their hard work. Ginsberg and Gary Snyder decided to pass a hat around the bar for a collection. On receipt of the money Grogan declared "The only type of benefit that could be thrown for the Diggers is one where everything is free." They then gave the money to the bartender declaring free rounds for as long as the money would last (Charters 2003:270).

In a similar way, the Magic Hat is passed around after each meal. A group of musicians and singers move around the circle with a hat. Contributions to the hat are not of a fixed amount and are on a voluntary principle. Any individual who openly displays a dislike for money, is a potential candidate to serve as the guardian of the hat and to be responsible for its safety. The candidate is nominated and the amount collected is publicly announced after each collection. The money is used to finance food and infrastructural needs. Money is always a contentious issue and Rainbow serves to always appear transparent regarding this issue.

Another contentious issue is that of drug use. To begin I must make clear that commentary on this subject is purely through observation and is not an official statement by Rainbow. This is not an easy subject to fully articulate, but is no doubt necessary within the context of this dissertation, given that public perception of the sixties is that so much of its activities were drug related. Throughout this research process I have found that this perception still prevails today.

Rainbow does not condone drugs, but is sympathetic when defining the term 'drug'. A drug is defined by The Merriam Webster online dictionary as "an illegal substance that causes addiction". The definition represents a view held by those within modern society to which Rainbow does not align itself. What is deemed 'illegal' by modern society is not necessarily what is viewed as illegal by tribal cultures to which Rainbow does align itself. Many within Rainbow believe that 'addiction' only occurs when consuming chemically engineered substances.

Rainbow's stance is that no chemically engineered drugs are to be used within the gathering, precluding substances that have proven to be addictive, have harmful side effects, and that interfere with the pursuit of harmony and peace. This includes: Alcohol, LSD or Acid, Cocaine, Ecstasy or any other chemically-engineered or processed drugs. Marijuana and Magic Mushrooms, naturally occurring hallucinogens, previously used in tribal shamanic rituals, are sometimes used.

It would appear that modern society's perspective on drugs is limited. Much indigenous knowledge and some of the experimentation with drugs in the sixties, points to drugs having a place and purpose in altering perceptions and in the case of tribal cultures, serving as the key to another realm. Similarly society seems to dismiss the concept of nudity, before fully exploring the benefits.

One of western society's biggest problems is the abuse of sexuality. A problem compounded by the seductive visual media readily available - it's common knowledge in the advertising industry that you can sell anything through a sexual innuendo.

According to those in Rainbow, the social problem of sexual abuse and promiscuity, is not as a result of a lack of modesty, but rather a lack of nudity. What one cannot see, one wants. The hiding of nudity, has made it seductive and alluring. It would appear that open displays of nudity within Rainbow, occur as a result of those in Rainbow

wanting to fully authenticate the tribal experience. Those within Rainbow claim that open displays of nudity diffuse any possibilities of seduction. I witnessed no orgies or displays of wild sexuality, on the contrary, Rainbow is an incredibly unsexual, respectful experience.

Rainbow also deals with the nature around it, in a similar respectful manner. Rainbow advocates recycling and always sets up a separating depot for plastic, glass, metal and paper. A compost hole is dug and all vegetable waste is returned to the earth. Personal fires are not allowed, so as to minimise fire hazards. Bio-soaps are used and one is encouraged to wash and camp away from rivers. No live trees are cut for firewood, only fallen wood is gathered. Fire is honoured and nothing beside wood is thrown in the fire. At the end of the gathering a clean up operation commences. Paths are broken up, fire pits covered, bare patches replanted or re-seeded. Potential erosion areas stabilised, basically the site is returned as much as possible, to its natural state.

In December 2004 I acted as the focaliser of a national South African Gathering. This has allowed me to study the entire process of a gathering from beginning to end. It has helped me to understand the complexities of co-operation, governance and human interaction, given that those of modern society, conditioned to compete with each other, are also those in Rainbow.

Initially for the first week, the group of 30 strangers grappled to come to terms with

living together. Gradually problems were ironed out through a series of Talking
Circles, resulting in a further three weeks of complete social equilibrium and harmony.
This has given me a belief that the secrets behind how we see ourselves and how we
interact with each other are yet to be uncovered.

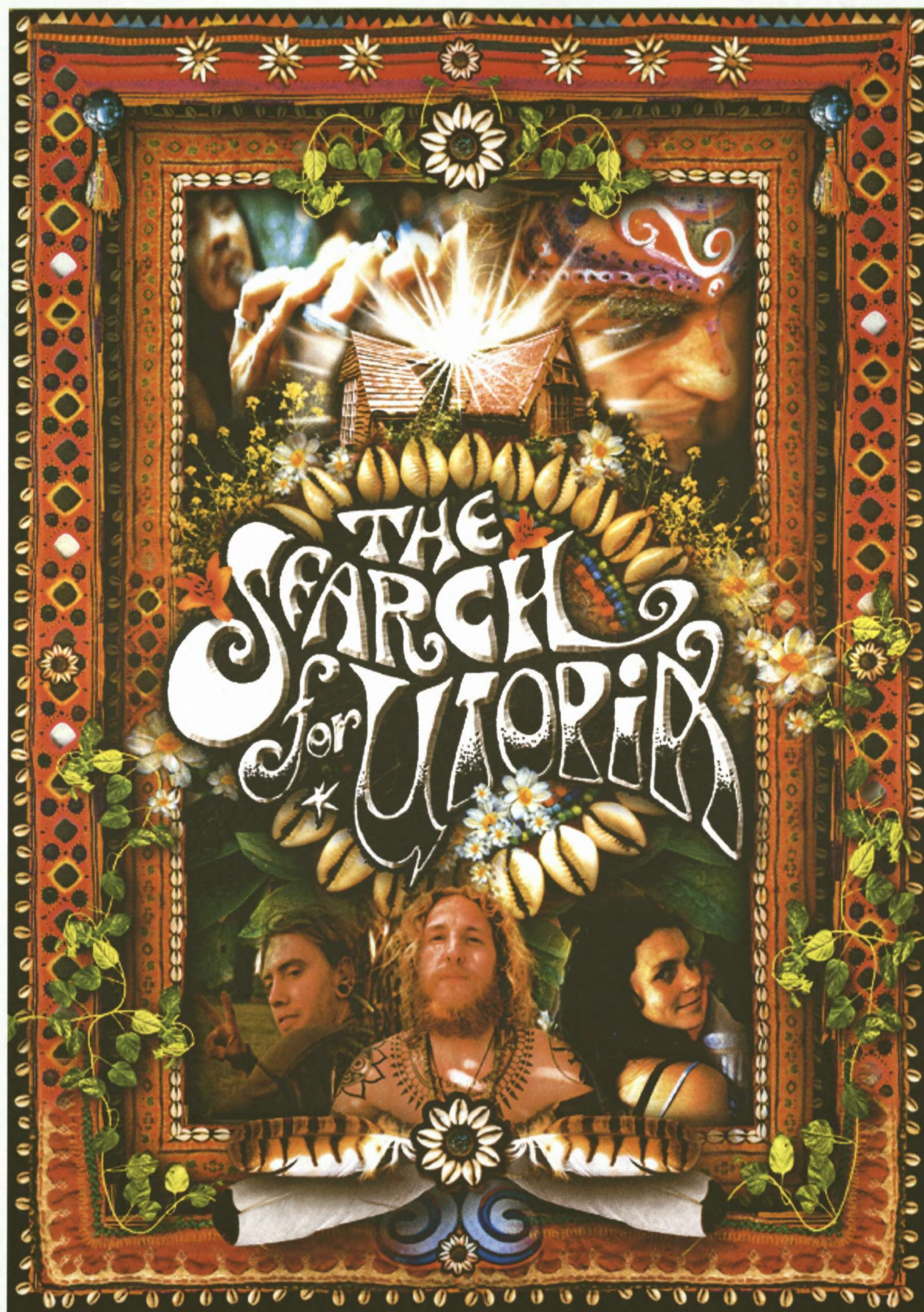


PLATE 6 MOVIE POSTER FOR THE SEARCH FOR UTOPIA

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, conclusions are drawn, suggestions of an alternative nature and suggestions regarding individual responsibilities are made.

The physical result of this study is both this text and *The Search for Utopia*, produced in DVD format for television. This text documents the making of *The Search for Utopia*. It explores the environmental predicament of the Earth and the social predicament of its inhabitants. It then explores the period known as 'the Sixties'. The social reaction evident during the sixties has been explored yielding the core philosophical viewpoints shared by those in the sixties. Some of these viewpoints have been adopted by Rainbow.

The Search for Utopia and the study do not presume to offer a concrete alternative social system to that of mainstream society. Rather my intention has been two pronged: to produce a film that is a thought provoking catalyst for social and environmental change and to produce a document that achieves a similiar end. That the reader of this study, after reading about the Sixties philosophy combined with Rainbow's practical social attempt might be led to consider how the society we live in, could change to better serve a sustainable future.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- To produce and discuss the making of a 52 minute television Art documentary designed to inform and to create an awareness of the problem of modern culture.
- To discuss how society has been conditioned into a competitive, environmentally destructive, modern culture aided by the medium of television.
- To understand the construct and philosophical viewpoints of the Sixties movement and of Rainbow as a basis for alternative approaches to culture and lifestyle.
- To draw conclusions from the material gathered during this investigation.

The Search for Utopia

The objectives of the film were as follows:

- To serve as a platform from which points of view by members of the alternative community could be made. In order to fulfill this objective, interview content, selected from the 25 hours of raw footage needed to be of an environmental nature; reflect on the nature of modern culture; be informative and represent the global environmental devastation statistically; communicate the concepts of competition

and co-operation and offer a window into alternative living, sustainable energy sources, Permaculture and alternative medicine.

- To visually embody the spirit of the Sixties and of Rainbow
- To be visually evocative and to appeal emotionally and intellectually to those in the target audience.
- To be 52 minutes in duration as per Broadcast Industry standards.
- To practically apply the influences of other films to the editing process.

On reflection, I believe that the afore-mentioned criteria have been successfully fulfilled in the construct and content of the *The Search for Utopia*. I believe that the film not only informs the viewer of the environmental problems, but offers an honest and intimate perspective into the alternative world. I feel *The Search for Utopia*, successfully dispels of certain common misconceptions that those within the alternative community are unintelligent and uneducated. Rather it delivers the informed and insightful wisdom of a group of people mindful of the planet's future. To date *The Search for Utopia* has not been broadcast on television, making it difficult to measure the impact of the film. However the responses of those that have viewed the film is encouraging. It would appear that film not only serves as an encouragement to those considering

alternatives, but also encourages dialogue regarding the well being of the planet.

Conditioning, Television and the Environment

The cause and effects of society's actions are not always immediately apparent to a novice researcher. I have discovered that society is being systematically drawn into a competitive and unhealthy social system with the aid of television.

Television is being used to condition its audience into being apathetic regarding its environmental impact and has assisted in altering the value systems of society, promoting violence and unhealthy living. The sale of food is at the centre of unhealthy living, promoted by a thriving Food and beverage industry, apparently unconcerned with its environmental impact in the form of disposable packaging. The Food and Beverage Industry is using science irresponsibly to further its aims, chemically synthesising flavours, genetically tampering with nature and irradiating food with nuclear material.

The ultimate effects of a conditioned, competitive society is a damaged environment. I have seen the state of the environment first-hand through my journey. It would appear that the solution to the environmental problem does not lie with governments or big business (Brigemann D. 2003). Rather the solution lies with the individual consumer who has the power to affect the demands placed on business. *The Search for Utopia* is my attempt at addressing the effects of television by using this medium to communicate to the individual and to ultimately address the environmental problem.

The Sixties - Creating a New Vision

The New Vision was about personal and social freedom. This involved those in the sixties challenging and experimenting with many of the American establishment's socially accepted norms. That reaction was not only a reaction to the Vietnam War, nuclear armament and the oppressive manner of the American Government, it was a reaction to the competitive mindset. A mindset that had separated itself from the co-operative mindset of indigenous cultures previously in history. This reaction evolved into social movements, that began to attack policy and an assortment of issues, culminating in the formation of the Counterculture movement. This movement explored the freedom of cultural expression, it experimented with LSD, this mind altering hallucinogenic, served as the catalyst for change, it shifted perspectives, tapping into what Leary describes as "an ancient fellowship" (Charters 2003:343). The New Vision inspired by this experience, sought to change the nature of man, by undoing social conditioning and by promoting a new consciousness of personal freedom.

The true impact of the sixties can be measured in political terms. The social experimentation, the attacks on Government policy and the American establishment, achieved the ultimate goal. A greater sense of personal freedom.

The Rainbow Family of Living Light

Seeing these philosophical viewpoints practically applied to Rainbow first hand has given me a new perspective regarding the viability of this new alternative culture.

In December 2004 I decided to organise and focalise in consultation with a focus group, the 8th South African National Gathering, which was held in Dargle KwaZulu Natal. The experience left me with two major deductions:

- Rainbow should not be viewed as an alternative social model to that of mainstream society. Its infrastructure, management and construct is only designed for one month. Rather it should be viewed as a catalyst for ideas or as a kind of conference where workshops are given, social experimentation takes place and decisions are made.
- Rainbow should rather be viewed as a spiritual organisation. It successfully fosters environmental consciousness and positive social interaction amongst those who visit.

I view Rainbow as embryonic and rather clumsy, like Bambi taking his first steps. Many of the elders from the sixties seem to not support it, maybe due to austere conditions of the journey to the gathering and the living arrangements at the gathering. So much is left to younger inexperienced focalisers. To consider it as a replacement to the modern social model, may be a little hasty. However the fruits that have come out of its experimentation, give me hope and clearly indicate to me that the world hasn't considered all the options yet.

THE FUTURE

Some say that you cannot change the world, what is, is predestined. That the history of the world has already been written and ultimately we are on a path to destruction. Then there are those who change things, usually those who are laughed at and shunned by the mainstream society - individuals like the Beat Poets, Timothy Leary, Emmet Grogan and all of those brave enough to dream and to believe in themselves.

Many similar individuals, environmentalists and ecological activists have had to contend with those who have the power to change the future of the planet, but see the Earth as nothing more than a source of revenue. I have always held that the power of the individual is underrated. I felt, that despite the overwhelming odds against my success, I must try, even if it takes my lifetime to do it.

My goal is to educate those ignorant and inspire those indifferent to the ecological and social problems. Whatever path one chooses in becoming aware of how one is conditioned, how one conditions others and how one approaches changing the consciousness of those who view the planet as a commodity, it's bound to take time.

D.H. Lawrence knew this well. "You can't change your nature and mode of consciousness like changing your shoes. It is a gradual shedding. Years must go by and centuries must elapse before you have finished. It is a long and half secret process."

D.H. Lawrence (Deloria 1998:1).

PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

Much of the environmental devastation that has occurred, has been caused through the pursuit of energy resources. Energy is all around us. In fact we make our own fuel - human faeces emits methane gas. Water power, wind power and sun power are right in front of our noses and we still have not made any substantial attempt at converting to these relatively environmentally friendly alternatives. The problem is not really the inability or lack of knowledge of those within society, rather it is that social apathy conditioned into society towards exploring solutions.

To solve the problem as D.H. Lawrence puts it, is "a gradual shedding". A shedding of the bad conditioning and the taking on-board of a new conditioning that is conscious of co-operating with ecology. Making this step begins with taking responsibility as a consumer, relinquishing one reliability on governments, becoming concious of the powerful persuasive grip of modern culture over society, and by working towards minimising our environmental impact and by becoming self sufficient.

APPENDIX A: PERSONAL COMMUNICATION: Schedule of Interviews

Name of Informant	Date	Time	Location	Area of Interest	Topics	Media Format	Tape No
Andrew Rick and Friends	6/06/01	12.15pm	Asssegai KZN South Africa	Lecturer Musician	The Sixties	MAC	1
Antler	10/04/03		San Fransisco USA	Farmer/ Distributor	Medicinal Marijuana	DVC	15
Andrew	22/12/02	8.00am	Pai Thailand	Traveller	Rebirth Cleansing Rituals	DVC	8
Aurora	2/02/03	10.15pm	Honey Beach Karnataka India	Rainbow Focalsier	Rainbow Boycoting Capitalism	DVC	14
Brandon	22/12/02	8.00am	Pai Thailand	Traveller	Rebirth Cleansing Rituals	DVC	8
Budjie	18/04/03	12.00am	Aripiranga Brazil	Rainbow Focalsier	Tribalism Tribal International	DVC	21
Clemonte	24/12/02	11.00pm	Pai Thailand	Reiki Practitioner	Reiki	DVC	9
Dale	14/04/03	9.30pm	San Fransisco USA	Tribal Piercers	Body Modification	DVC	18
Dan	15/03/03	3.25am	Narangba Australia	Nimbin Environment Centre Chairman	Food Irradiation	DVC	20
Degan John	20/09/02	12.15pm	Transformation Farm Kynsna South Africa	Nomadic Traveller	Nomadic Travel	DVC	4
Erica	24/07/02	9.45pm	Anapondo Backpackers Port St Johns South Africa	Tourism	Backpacking	DVC	1
Feathers	20/09/02	12.30pm	Natures Valley South Africa	Alternative Builder	Alternative Building	DVC	4
Gareth	2/02/03	9.15pm	Honey Beach Karnataka India	Rainbow Focalsier	Rainbow Tribal Tatooing	DVC	14
Greenaway Serena	25/07/02	1.30pm	Bathurst South Africa	Mother	Nutrition Stress	DVC	1
Greenaway Rob	26/07/02	12.15pm	Bathurst South Africa	Paleontology	Permaculture	DVC	1
Greenaway Serena	27/07/02	2.30pm	Bathurst South Africa	Mother	Gardening	DVC	2

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DVC - Digital Video Cassette

APPENDIX A/2: PERSONAL COMMUNICATION: Schedule of Interviews

Name of Informant	Date	Time	Location Interest	Area of Interest	Topics Format	Media No	Tape
Greenaway Rob	27 /07/02	3.15am	Bathurst South Africa	Paleontology	Sustainable Survival Competition vs Co-operation	DVC	2
Greenaway Rob	27/07/02	3.45pm	Bathurst South Africa	Paleontology	Hipie Culture	DVC	2
Greenaway Rob	27/07/02	4.00pm	Bathurst South Africa	Paleontology	Permaculture	DVC	2
Greenaway Rob	28/07/02	3.00pm	Bathurst South Africa	Paleontology	Parenting	DVC	3
Greenaway Rob	28/07/02	3.00pm	Bathurst South Africa	Paleontology	Donkey Cart Travel	DVC	4
Greg	4/07/02	9.45am	Amapondo Backpackers Port St Johns South Africa	Tourism	Backpacking	DVC	1
Hamilton Michael	2/01/03	2.00pm	Pai Thailand	Yoga	Yoga Instructor	DVC	10
Ivan	24 09/02	10.15pm	Kynsna South Africa	Community Member	Alternative Medicine Taloing	DVC	7
Jagad	5 /05/03	2.45pm	Aripiranga Brazil	Israeli War Veteran	War Rainbow	DVC	18
Juan	25 /04/03	12.30am	Las Payabos Mexico	Community Member	Community Overpopulation	DVC	18
Julie	14/04/03	9.30pm	San Fransisco USA	Body Piercer	Body Modification	DVC	18
Julisa	20 /09/02	10.15pm	Transformation Farm Kynsna South Africa	Community Member	Community	DVC	4
Joti	2 /07/3	11.15pm	Tinker's Bubble Yeoville England	Mother Environmentalist	Motherhood Food/Nutrition	DVC	25
Karma	30 Jan 2003	1.15pm	Honey Beach Karnataka India	Traveller Belly Dancer	Rainbow	DVC	12A
Kate	28/01/03	11.15pm	Honey Beach Karnataka India	Traveller	Rainbow	DVC	12A
ate	29/01/03	11.15pm	Honey Beach Karnataka India	Traveller	Vegetarianism	DVC	13

APPENDIX A/3: PERSONAL COMMUNICATION: Schedule of Interviews

Name of Informant	Date	Time	Location Interest	Area of Interest	Topics Format	Media	Tape No
Lisa	24/09/02	9.45pm	Kynsna South Africa	Mother	Home Schooling Drug use	DVC	7
Lindy	15/03/03	2.15am	Narangba Australia	Environmental Activist	Food Irradiation Females in Environmental Activism	DVC	17
Luigi	30/01/03	3.30am	Honey Beach Karnatka India	Traveller	Technology	DVC	13
Mary	6/07/03	11.15pm	Tinker's Bubble Yeoville England	Community Member	Choosing the Alternative life/Milk	DVC	26
Michael	27/08/02	4.15pm	Hogsback South Africa	Potter	Drugs Community Consensus vs Democracy Pottery Building Techniques	DVC	3
Mike	20/06/03	3.00pm	Middlewood Farm Lancaster England	Steinner School Teacher/Farmer	Alternative Living/Community	DVC	24
Michelle	13/01/03	11.15pm	Khao San Rd Thailand	Traveller	Khao San Rd	DVC	11
Marcus	2/01/03	12.15pm	Khao San Rd Thailand	Traveller	Khao San Rd	DVC	11
Matteus	2/02/03	9.15pm	Honey Beach India	Architect	Entertainment Housing/Building	MAC	4
Max	1/04/03	12.30pm	San Francisco USA	Unknown	Urban Community Love Tribal Piercing	DVC	15
Max	11/04/03	9.45am	San Francisco USA	Unknown	Iraqi War	DVC	15
Nick	7/04/03	12.15pm	Tinker's Bubble Yeoville England	Community Member/Carpenter	Woodworking Fatherhood	DVC	26
Om	30/01/03	2.15am	Honey Beach Karnatka India	Reiki Instructor	Reiki Spirituality	DVC	12A
Omgi	21/05/03	4.00pm	Aripiranga Brazil	Traveller	Rainbow Philosophy	DVC	22

APPENDIX A/4: PERSONAL COMMUNICATION: Schedule of Interviews

Name of Informant	Date	Time	Location Interest	Area of Interest	Topics Format	Media	Tape No
Pascal	13/01/03	11.00pm	Khao San Rd Thailand	Civil Engineer Traveller	Travelling	DVC	11
Pete	8/06/03	10.15am	Tinker's Bubble Yeoville England	Engineer	Organic Farming Alternative Energy	DVC	26
Peddles Peter	25/03/003	4.15am	Rainbow Power Company Nimbin Australia	Alternative Energy Engineer	Sustainable Energy	DVC	17
Raga	22/05/03	12.30pm	Aripiranga Brazil	Hemp Industry	Hemp	DVC	22
Rasta	15/03/03	11.50am	Narangba Australia	Environmental Activist	Food Irradiation Environmental Activism	DVC	17
Rake Solara	9/04/03	11.00am	San Francisco USA	Plates Instructor	San Francisco Park Pilates	DVC	15
Rita	3/03/03	9.45am	The Channon Market Nimbin Australia	Traveller Jeweller	Reality Nomadic Travel	DVC	14
Saldana Raoull	28/12/02	12.30pm	Pai Thailand	Musician Community Member Peace Water Awareness	Music Spiritual life	DVC	9
Schiwiman Mateus	26/01/03	8.45am	Honey Beach Karnataka India	Architect	Alternative Building Entertainmentism	DVC	12A
Shannon	3/03/03	9.15am	The Channon Nimbin Australia	Didge Maker	Didgereedoo The Old Ways	DVC	14
Shannon	3/03/03	9.35am	The Channon Nimbin Australia	Didge Maker	Didgereedoo The Environment Parenthood Energy Mainstream Society	DVC	14
Sharon	13/06/03	1.00am	Lancaster England	Hedge Wich	War	DVC	24
Sharon	13/06/03	1.30am	Lancaster England	Hedge Wich	Paganism	DVC	24

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Appendix A/5: Schedule of Interviews

Name of Informant	Informant's Area of Interest	Date	Location	Time	Topics	Media Format	Tape No
Simon	Environmental Activist	15 March 2003	Narangba Australia	12.15am	Environmentalism Food Irradiation Environmental Activism Nimbin	DVC	17
Stephan	Prophet	21 May 2003	Aripiranga Brazil	3.00am	Prophecies	DVC	21
Stephan	Prophet	21 May 2003	Aripiranga Brazil	3.00am	War	DVC	22
Stephan	Rainbow Focaliser Designer	10 May 2003	Aripiranga Brazil	2.00am	Television Rainbow	DVC	18
Stephan	Rainbow Focaliser Designer	11 May 2003	Aripiranga Brazil	3.00am	Rainbow Graphic Design	MAC	6
Steve	Street Beggar Carpenter	7 April 2003	San Fransisco USA	1.30am	The Sixties	DVC	15
Steve	Carpenter	3 July 2003	Tinker's Bubble Yeoville England	1.30am	Building & Planning	DVC	15
Tyler	Traveller	16 Dec 2002	Pai Thailand	4.35am	Travel Ethics	DVC	8
Watkins Mike	Dairy Farmer Wiccan	8 July 2002	Bathurst South Africa	12.15pm	Seed Control andWorldDomination	MAC	2
Watkins Mike	Dairy Farmer Wiccan	8 July 2002	Bathurst South Africa	1.15pm	Wicca	MAC	2
Willow	Psychologist	24 Dec 2002	Pai Thailand	9.00am	Facies as Energy Source	MAC	3
Willow	Psychologist	24 Dec 2002	Pai Thailand	9.15am	The Sixties/Seventies Permaculture	MAC	3
Willow	Psychologist	24 Dec 2002	Pai Thailand	12.00pm	Community Permaculture Co-operation Competition	DVC	9

MAC - Mini Audio Cassette

DVC - Digital Video Cassette

APPENDIX A/6: PERSONAL COMMUNICATION: Schedule of Interviews

Name of Informant	Date	Time	Location Interest	Area of Interest	Topics Format	Media	Tape No
Wombat	15/03/03	11.15pm	Narangba Australia	Environmental Activist	Environmental Activism Food Irradiation	DVC	17
Wombat	15 /03/03	3.45pm	Narangba Australia	Environmental Activist	Food Irradiation	DVC	20
Zaccariotto	22/05/03	11.00am	Aripiranga Brazil	Traveller	Rainbow Philosophy	DVC	22

MAC - Mini Audio Cassette

DVC - Digital Video Cassette



LETTER OF INFORMATION

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An advertising education
initiative sponsored by
TBWA Hunt Lascaris

DURBAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF GRAPHIC DESIGN

Dear Participant

Topic of Research: - a cinematographic survey of a selected sub-culture in various locations.

This is to certify that Rowan Christopher Gatfield is a student at Durban Institute of Technology, Durban, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. Rowan is an enrolled student in the Masters of Technology degree in Graphic Design at the Faculty of Arts.

This project is to take the form of a cinematographic documentary film as well as a dissertation. Its major aim is to present an alternative sociological, ecological, spiritual and medical model to the current model practised by mainstream society.

The survey will involve being interviewed by the researcher. This document serves as an appeal for your assistance by participating in this survey and agreeing to be interviewed.

Portions of proceeds gained from the sale or broadcast of this project will be donated to the respective groups or organisations involved.

Footage covering drugs and nudity will be dealt with in the strictest manner so as to protect the participant's identities.

Your willingness to participate will be very helpful and appreciated.

APPENDIX C

QUESTION GUIDE

These questions were used only as a guide and were only used where applicable.

- 1) Have you read the letter of information and understand that this footage will be used for a television documentary film?
- 2) We hear about Global warming and how the ice caps are melting, the damage to the ozone layer, we hear about the climates changing and the imminent war in Iraq, why do you think it has come to this?
- 3) What are you as an individual as a member of the alternative community doing about the problem?
- 4) Are you running away from your responsibilities within society by living in these remote places?
- 5) As a parent, how will you raise and educate your children?
- 6) What is your background and area of expertise?

Most questions asked during interviews were structured in relation to the informant's area of interest or expertise. This was established prior to the video interview in the form of an informal interview.

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PLATE 1: MAP & EARTHLIGHTS

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(This Satellite photograph shows the lights of houses and buildings, showing how populated the Earth is.

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(Map indicates Rowan Gatfield's Research journey around the globe)

PLATE 2 JOHANNESBURG LANDFILL

Gatfield, R. 2001.

(Screenshot from *The Search for Utopia*)

PLATE 3 THE BRADY BUNCH

Gatfield, R. 2001.

(Screenshot from *The Search for Utopia*)

PLATE 4 THE HUMAN BE-IN

Anthony, G 1967. *The Summer of Love*. USA: The Sixties Foundation

PLATE 5 RAINBOW CIRCLE

Gatfield, R. 2002

(circle at the 3rd International Rainbow Gathering of Living Light, Brazil)

PLATE 6 MOVIE POSTER FOR THE SEARCH FOR UTOPIA

Gatfield, R. 2004