

innerspace

The magazine of the psychedelic community

50¢





drop CITY

by Ishmael

Drop City is a synergetic community begun two years ago by Curly Benson, Clard Svenson, Larry Lard and Drop Lady. It attempts to solve a major problem confronted by most creative artists (bad word, "artist"; read - human being): is it possible today to find a quiet constructive place to live and work where one will not be hounded, suffocated and eventually devoured by the obsolete structure of our society?

Artist usually driven to extremes, none totally satisfying. To the country for solitude, quiet, peace of mind, surroundings harmonious with his inner self. Then to the city for people he can communicate with and for money. Usually either-or. Both breed different types of asceticism and unfulfillment, both atrophy body and soul.

In Drop City we have attempted to create a totally living environment outside the structure of society, where the artist can remain in touch with himself, the universe and other creative human beings.

Each Dropper is free. Does what he wants, when he wants and how he wants. No rules, no duties, no obligations.

Anarchy. But as anarchistic as the growth of an organism. Has its own internal needs and desires; fulfills them in a natural simple way, without compulsion.

The need to work: out of guilt, emptiness. Need abandoned: desire (hopefully) arises. No longer work, but pleasure. As gratifying as eating or loving. Work - play.

Doing nothing is work.

We are based on the pleasure principle.

Our main concern is being alive.

Our only goal - if you can call it that - is, as Clard Svenson says, "constant orgasm."

None of us is employed or has a steady income.

How do we make it? Food? Materials?

At mercy of the gods.

But most of the time we don't worry about it. Drop City was begun without money, built on practically nothing.

Things have come to us.

Somehow we haven't gone hungry. Or done without materials. Yet.

a) more concern with spiritual body,





Drop City is six acres of abandoned goat pasture.

Population fourteen.

We live in geodesic domes, structures built along molecular principles, basic energetic building blocks of the universe, the strongest most efficient use of enclosed space. Following certain dynamic structural laws, the dome helps provide its own heat in winter, its own air conditioning in summer. Psychologically it creates an atmosphere of inner harmony and freedom. An expansive structure: no corners to hide in, no vertical-horizontal rigidities. Simplest to build. Cheapest. A 25 foot diameter dome costs less than \$200, sometimes much less.

Drop City is the first attempt to use domes for housing a community.

Five geodesic domes have been built, mostly from "waste materials." The largest, still under construction, has a forty foot diameter. When completed it will serve a dual function: as studio space and as a total involvement light music sound environment. The interior - over 2000 square feet - will be a painting.

The other four are housing.

We have branched off the geodesic dome and are working with other geometric structures.

An exploded stretched rhombic dodecahedron, its shell made of car-tops; the inside is an enormous canvas, painted by Clard Svenson, Larry Lard and Joe Clower.

A triple-fused cluster of truncated icosorhombic-dodecahedra, designed and engineered by Luke Cool. This is our latest addition, the first such structure ever built. Each of the three attached domes has a 36 foot diameter; they will be used for kitchen-dining-bath-recreation-guest facilities.

There are several remaining buildings of various shapes: chicken coop, goat house, storage dome, tool shed, outhouse, children's (four of them) play house.

Plans for the future include an infinite environment sphere.

Home Base #2 (Draft Drop City) is tentatively set in Canada.

Dropper Cool has acquired land near Corrales, New Mexico on which we are erecting what is probably the world's first solar heated dome; Dropper Wadman experimenting with pre-fabrication carry-your-home-with-your-gear in Boulder, Colorado.

We are not alone in Southwestern geodesia. USCO building temple in El Rito, New Mexico. John Chamberlain planning domes for studios and seminars in Santa Fe.

But although we consider our houses important, they are still only houses. More important is that we live in them and how we live in them.

Droppers come in all sizes, shapes and colors: painters, writers, architects, panhandlers, film-makers, magicians, gluttons, musicians, wizards, unclassifiables.

Each has his own individual endeavors and achievements. These perhaps tell better what we are doing than anything else. But they cannot be enumerated; they have to be seen/read/touched/heard. They speak for themselves.

But we all have this in common - whatever art we each produce is not separated from our lives.

Each of us is the pigment in his own life-painting.

All will be on view during the First Annual D.C. Festival and Bacchanale Post-Walpur-gis Pre-Equinox Overflow & Dropping. Freak-out in all media: ninety-six hours of continuous mind-blow. Tentatively June 1 - 4; symbols to be announced. Admission cheap: just come. Bring all your senses. Bring all your consorts. Bring everything.

For those who want to keep in touch we have, along with numerous publications/flicks/etc, a pseudo-monthly Newsletter. Just ask and it will be sent unto thee.

We have recently become incorporated: non-profit, tax-free, tax-deductible.

We are the recipients of R. Buckminster Fuller's Cymaxion Award for 1966.

A psychedelic community? Chemically, no. We consider drugs unnecessary. But etymologically, perhaps.

Drop City is many-faceted. All I have attempted to say can probably - and with equal validity - be contradicted.

Maxwell Truk: we are schmucks; we know nothing.

Drop City - mobility.

We are one spark of a great chain reaction.

DROP CTY AND THE NEW SOCIETY

An article by John Curl (aka "Ishmael")

(Published in the Drop City Newsletter #3, Trinidad, Colorado, USA, 1967)



DROP CITY AND THE NEW SOCIETY

(Many of the concepts here presented can be found fully documented in the works of Engels, Melinowski, Reich and R.R. Fulier.)

This is a time of revolution. The youth of our country already live in a world diametrically opposed to that of their fathers. Those under thirty have banded together in spirit and in fact. It is only a matter of time until they take over completely, when the old men in control of the power structure are forced to step aside.

Communes are springing up all over the country, new structures based on new premises for a new society. Drop City is one of them. These are temporary experimental solutions. Eventually a new mass society will arise founded on the same principles as these communes, new concepts of love, work, happiness, the possibilities of human existence, organization, a new view of society and the universe, a new vision of man's place in them.

Yet in a greater sense this new order is a natural outgrowth of the old. The old order has fulfilled its promises. Technological growth - which made these revolutions possible - has outstripped the framework in which it was accomplished. That framework, now obsolete, is crumbling of its own weight.

On what premises was it built? Why do they no longer apply? We shall look historically - even prehistorically - at man's social structures and what needs they have attempted to fulfill.

Civilization is an expression of the way of life of a people. This way is in turn an expression of how that people meets its needs for survival, a balance between man's biological-spiritual nature and the world he lives in. The "way" is expressed physically in his daily life, pictorially in his art, verbally in philosophy, morality, poetry.

The balance is always shifting and changing; man is forever adapting to the new situation, most of the time through a slow evolutionary process. But when a society has been tightly structured for a certain reality-factor over a long period and that factor suddenly reverses itself, we have what is called a revolution. The structure based on these now-false premises dissolves and a new structure based on the new reality arises.

Yet the transition is rarely painless. To the now-obsolete power structure and its priests the old order is society; its destruction is nihilism. They have always attempted to manipulate men's minds through equally obsolete moral dictums to prevent a new order from taking over.

This is not as difficult as it sounds, for the structure of a society - originally a physical expression of an adjustment to reality - remains a mental structure long after that physical structure is no longer valid. The less advantageous to the masses it has become,

the more it has to be re-inforced in their minds by the men in power (the only people it is advantageous to) no longer as a practical solution to an organizational problem, but as a morality. The last stronghold of the old order is always in our minds. It remains there as a stumblingblock to simple physical steps we could take to confront the new situation.



Brunislaw Malinowski (in *The Sexual Life of Savages*) documented a people, the Trobriand Islanders, in process of transition from a matriarchal to a patriarchal society. The end result of this transition is a society similar in essence to ours. (see also Engels' *Origin of the Family*)

Matriarchal society: line descended through mother, no "father", perhaps no connection between intercourse and baby-making, love partners dependent on personal desire, children a communal responsibility; wealth also communal, no individual hoarding, people use things not "own" them, just-enough-ness.

Patriarchal society: line descended through father; sexual restrictions outside of marriage; family is source and conservation of wealth; children a family responsibility; familial hoarding, too-muchness in some not-enough-ness in others.

Patriarchal family structure is inert and restrictive, sanctified by religion - taboos

Let us give one speculative account of how this changeover could have come about.

Matriarchal organization centered around priestess - spiritual/physical doctor, communal representative to universal forces. Men have power only in time of war - temporary military leader. But temporal power equivalent to spiritual power: leader is warrior-priest.

1st step: male priesthood becomes institution. After strife he retains spiritual powers.

Both priesthood and military leadership originally handed down to member of community most fitted. As close contact and training necessary especially for priesthood, disciple often child of former priest.

But along with power comes its misuse: in times of protracted strife warrior-priest able to control community.

2nd step: he uses this control in order to acquire wealth. Through wealth he can consolidate power and vice-versa. This carries over into peacetime.

3rd step: wealth and power passed down along with priesthood.

Priest-kingship becomes hereditary through male line. Priestess now secondary figure.

For first time it becomes important to a man to know whether or not a child is his. As king he makes rule no one else can have intercourse with his woman; as priest he justifies this by taboo.

Since wealth is now no longer communal each man, in order to provide for his own survival, must adopt the structure of priest-king's family and begin hoarding.

But at what point does a woman have to stop sexual relations with other men? When she becomes "wife" through "marriage".

4th step: religious sanctification of sexual restrictions.

But new children before marriage must be prevented as they are no longer communally provided for: abstinence laws. Being unnatural they can only be enforced by moral dictums - God says so.

But although wealth and power can be inherited, holiness cannot - sooner or later king's right-hand man becomes priest. His functions: religion/medicine and sanctifying position of king's family. To obfuscate the fact that religion has become tool of wealth and power, he takes on trappings of outward poverty; to consolidate the connection between abstinence and holiness he becomes chaste.

So what originally was a practical measure (based on greed) developed into a religious doctrine. The moment the king's priest instilled the thought in the people's collective mind that it is a positive action not to have sex, the battle was won.

From that point in history sex, religion, politics and economics were intimately connected. Only in our own time have they begun to unravel. We shall soon see how.



Matriarchial religion was sexual in character. It never completely died but remained underground, mostly in the countryside. In Europe this religion took the form of "witchcraft". The purges of the middle ages only drove it further underground.

In the meantime Christian patriarchal religion was having problems of its own. The mainstay of its power over men - sexual restrictions - had by the renaissance broken down. The church was concerned only with temporal power and wealth; priesthood had become a hustle. In a desperate attempt to smooth over the gap between doctrine and fact, celibacy restrictions on priests were lifted - they were now allowed to marry.

But religion had been tied up with celibacy for so many centuries it had become the priests' only claim to holiness; they had lost all connection with

real spirituality. So when even the pretence of celibacy was no longer required, the whole church structure was on the verge of crumbling.

Cesare Borgia, son of Pope Alexander III and heir-apparent, attempted to unite Italy by military conquest. He was well on his way to success - which would have meant his becoming king and pope, both hereditary - when he suddenly took ill and died.

Pathetically, the 'only men of the time with any real claim to holiness' were the ones who still upheld the ancient moral code. These men soon took over: the reformation and counter-reformation. Both reasserted patriarchal morality.

But this reassertion would have been impossible if not for a certain reality-factor. Co-incidental with the discovery of the new world was the entry of syphilis into Europe. It ran rampant.

The priests used this as a fulcrum to regain their lost power: disease and death a punishment by God for immorality.

So until our time the two main reasons for sexual restrictions were conservation of wealth in the family structure and fear of disease, both justified and sanctified by religion.



The changeover from matriarchial to patriarchal societies also precipitated a change from an esthetic of leisure to one of work. Just-enough-ness to too-much-ness; communal sharing to individual hoarding.

The first development of this was the class system, originally a simple extension of the compulsive family, later rigidified into one of the foundations of western civilization (the use of conquered peoples as slaves aided this process).

The upper classes retained an esthetic of leisure; they forced upon the lower classes a morality of work. This morality, along with the class system itself, they instilled into the people's collective mind as god-given.

The lower classes were caught in a double-bind. The wealthy and powerful had a monopoly on the means of survival; to be outside the system meant to be outlawed, which in turn meant death by starvation or violence. Even more important, their instincts were turned against themselves; each man had become a little "defender of the faith" against his own interests. Once a man's back is broken sexually it is broken for all other aspects of survival as well; he has lost contact with his inner drives and can no longer provide for their fulfillment in a direct natural way. He is brainwashed. When he is told shit is steak he believes it; he eats it; he might even convince himself he enjoys it. Few wars have ever been

fought for the benefit of those doing the fighting, but like good little "fixed" puppies men believe and obey.

So work, originally a natural providing of necessities for one's self and one's community, became an enforced providing of luxuries for others. Originally pleasant, it became begrudging.

By the renaissance a new class arose - the middle class. Although wealthy they did not have an esthetic of leisure but (as they had risen from lower classes) one of work. With Calvinism it became a bourgeois religious doctrine.

Nineteenth century: the industrial revolution. Work reached a peak of horror. Pure exploitation enforced by a strong work-morality structured through the class system and the compulsive family.

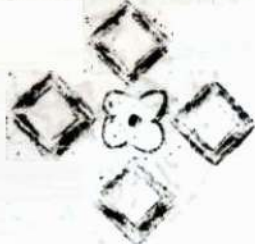
But just as the old matriarchial religion had never died in the countryside, neither did a leisure work-ethic. At worst - when a man did not own land - he was still working in the open, with the soil, in a looser structure based on daily and seasonal natural rhythms. And he always had time.

But the industrial revolution was unstoppable because of the promise it held - the end of work itself as man has known it.

Yet this promise seemed a ruse, a trick, another false vision to keep the people entrapped. It promised liberation, it produced slaves.

Communism was the nineteenth century's answer to this situation, a valid one for its time.

But today the situation is changed.



Scientific-technological advances of the twentieth century have undercut the reality on which the whole structure of western civilization was based.

With birth control and antibiotics, sex no longer had any logical connection with religion and wealth. As children were no longer a necessary result of intercourse, the compulsive family was with one blow shattered. As there was now no more reason for pre-marital celibacy (fear of conception and disease), the institution of marriage reverted to its simplest form: an economic arrangement to provide for children (as the community no longer took this responsibility), one which could be entered into or not, without compulsion.

The only remaining argument of the old order, "it pisses God off to see people screw", no one of course could take seriously.

Economically technology has produced an affluent society; the end of the class system. A point has been reached where today only four percent of the population need work to provide necessities for themselves and the other 96 percent.

In neither the Soviet Union nor the United States do communism or capitalism exist; they are corporate states organized along bureaucratic lines. Their only argument is whether one is more efficient than the other.

It is only a matter of a few years until automation will take the place of all disagreeable jobs. The four percent left working in vital positions will be those who enjoy those positions. This leaves 96 percent of all human energies free. Free for what?

The last generation saw the breakdown of the compulsive family and compulsive sexual morality; this generation will see the breakdown of compulsive work.



But let us try to see exactly what "work" is.

Life is an expression of energy. The forms life takes - human, animal, plant, microbe, etc - are structural expressions of specific energetic contents (just as the form of a snowflake is an expression of its energetic content, the molecular structure of water, under certain conditions). Energy expresses itself structurally in form, dynamically in movement. Work is a dynamic expression of energy.

No one movement of an organism is any more meaningful than any other. Dancing may be different from eating, but in essence no better. The only judgement we can make is whether one movement is more fulfilling than another. For most people intercourse is more fulfilling than masturbation, therefore more to be desired.

So the work we do is as much an expression of our content - our inner selves - as the love we make. It is either natural and fulfilling or not. If fulfilling it is fun, something we would do whether we were paid for it or not.

Work - in the best sense of the word is play.

Art is play. If a man's work fully expresses himself he is an artist. We must expand our concept of art to include all forms of human activity - all media.

The artistic process is nothing more than un-compulsive work. It is always pleasurable; if not done out of love it is not done at all.

Ninety-six percent of the population now has the opportunity to engage in un-compulsive work.



But what does the old order have to say about this? It is a threat to their very existence. They are taking steps

to hold the now-obsolete structure of society together by fabricating jobs even more disagreeable than those of the past and attempting to tighten the framework so that all men will either be forced in or outlawed.

They are trying to prevent us from reaping the benefits that are already ours.

Our answer - that of the generation under thirty - has been to thumb our nose.

We have banded together to help one another survive this difficult period of transition until the old men now in power are forced to step aside and we take over completely.

The commune is one manifestation of this banding together, in many respects a reversion to the tribal organization of matriarchial society. It is the first step toward a new mass organizational structure based on new premises. These premises are the results of those revolutions in sex, morality, religion, science, art, drugs, economics, all of which are in turn the results of technological growth.

Drop City is one of these experimental communities. We have abandoned compulsive work. We spend all our time in work-play, permitting our energies to express themselves in their own natural form and manner. We build, we eat, we paint, we write, we sleep, we talk, we love, we sit around and do nothing - when we want and how we want, at leisure.

We are resented by those members of society still under the compulsive work, morality. To them we are bums. Which, as I have said before, is true. But they do not realize that our whole civilization will soon consist of what they now call bums. Cybernetic bums.

They do not join us although it would be in their own interests to do so. They see only nothingness beyond societal games. Why?

Work like sex has become a psychological problem. There is no reason for each person not finding fulfilling work and sexual relationships today, but few can.

We have been taught since childhood that work is a necessary unpleasantness,

Compulsively we do it because we feel we must.

Result: an inner emptiness. People work compulsively to cover up this emptiness; many have sex for the same reason. These people are forever trying to occupy themselves to dissipate nervous energy; release of tension is the closest they ever come to fulfillment. The most terrible thing to them is to do nothing; to be alone with themselves. Death is their only hope for peace.

We are a generation who will find peace in life; rest after unrestricted movement. Our only restraints are our own desires and the last vestiges of an obsolete morality in dusty corners of our minds.

Those of us still in our early teens are probably free of even those dusty corners.

Time is on our side. The old men now in control are on their death beds; in less than twenty years one of us will be president - if that office still exists.

The exact form of the new society - our society - we cannot yet know. But we already know its content.

The last stand of the old order is in our minds. We must blow our minds.

ISHMAEL

