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Counterculture Studies - Contents and Editorial 1(1) 2018

Anthony Ashbolt

University of Wollongong, aashbolt@uow.edu.au

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Abstract

Table of Contents and Editorial by Anthony Ashbolt, for the inaugural edition of, Counterculture Studies, 1(1), 2018.

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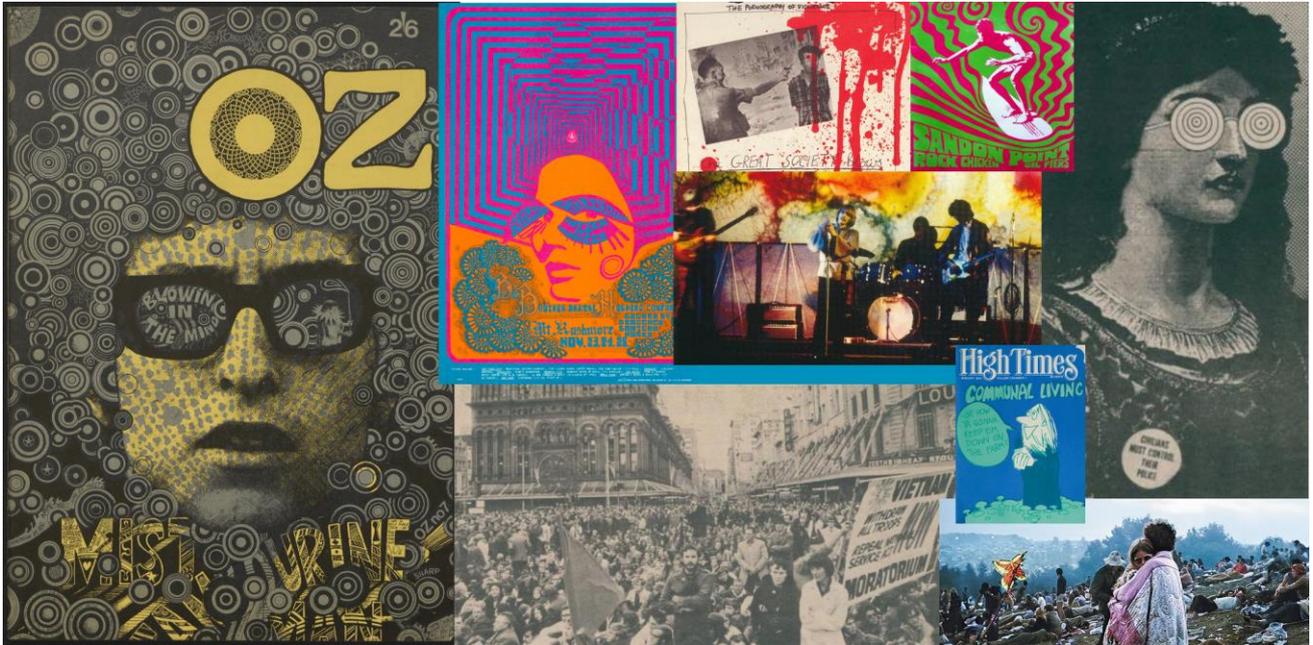
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Counterculture Studies



Counterculture Studies is an open access journal with both refereed and non-refereed material, published twice yearly and dedicated to studies of the counterculture.

Editor

Anthony Ashbolt

Email: aashbolt@uow.edu.au

Website: <http://ro.uow.edu.au/ccs>

Twitter: @counter1967

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/counterculturestudies>

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All enquiries should be made to the Editor.

Design editor: Michael Organ

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Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of the *Journal of Counterculture Studies*. The journal arises out of discussions that Michael Organ and I have been having for many years about the role that the University of Wollongong can play in promoting research into, and writing about, the counterculture. As an archivist at the University, Michael has negotiated and arranged the digitisation of various significant countercultural archives including, and most prominently, *OZ* magazine. *OZ* was a leading underground magazine in London, England, from 1967-1973 but had started life in Sydney, Australia, as a dissident alternative newspaper/magazine in 1963. It is a publication that in many ways captures a certain style of Sixties radicalism even in its early incarnation as a voice of larrikin dissent in the midst of a culture of stifling conformity. It is not the place here to provide a substantial analysis of the role of *OZ* in relation to both Australian and English political culture. We on the editorial board hope that future issues might feature contributions concerning the magazine and its place in history. Yet it is important to note the role of *OZ* in sparking conversations that have led to the creation of this journal.

In putting together *Counterculture Studies* and, in particular, the foundation issue, we have been very conscious of the need to highlight important debates about the 1960s (or the long Sixties) and the crucial role played by the counterculture. We have also been keen to provide some detailed examination of counterculture history in Australia and internationally. Future issues will focus more on aspects of the international scene but this one includes reflections on the Australian counterculture from participants and historians. Amongst the participants, we have important reminiscences from Phillip Frazer who pioneered pop music journalism in Australia through *Go Set* and then the Australian edition of *Rolling Stone*. He was also editor of the prominent counterculture

newspaper of the early 1970s *The Digger* (also digitized by the University of Wollongong). Another snapshot of the time is provided by Roger Foley who was, as Ellis D. Fogg, the light show maestro of Sydney's rock music scene in the late 1960s and early 1970s. He was also involved in Martin Sharp's Yellow House, which is the subject of this issue's featured article by Michael Organ. Sharp was the brilliant graphic designer/pop artist associated with *OZ* magazine from its birth to its days in London. Returning to Sydney, Australia, in 1970 he established the Yellow House as a cultural space for artists, film-makers, musicians and performers to experiment and entertain and educate. While Sharp is best known for his work at *OZ*, his psychedelic posters of Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix, and his album covers for Cream's *Disraeli Gears* and *Wheels of Fire*, the attempt to forge a community of cultural workers around the Yellow House is another notable contribution to countercultural life and history.

A section of the journal is devoted to the theme of *Remembering and Forgetting the 1960s*. This will be a recurring section as furious debates about the meaning of the Sixties regularly appear in the mainstream media, particularly at times when there is a significant anniversary. This year, of course, marks the fiftieth anniversary of that explosive year 1968. There is a certain sense in which an entire generation defines itself in relation to the events of that year. The point is not to wallow in nostalgia about 1968 but to remember accurately the struggles concerning, amongst other things, the American War in Vietnam. The story of '68 not only includes the Yippies in Chicago but also involves the Vietnamese fighting for national liberation during Tet. There are many important moments from 1968 that should not be forgotten. It is the task of revisionist historians and journalists working on behalf of the empire and the establishment to cast radicals from the period in negative roles and to elide or forget their contribution to significant struggles against war and for social justice and civil rights. If they do not actively forget, they seek to tame and domesticate dissent. So it is their task to render Martin Luther King an establishment figure when he died fighting against class domination

and the politics of empire. It is their task also to caricature the counterculture as a regressive infantile revolt against parents. In this, they are sometimes joined by leftist critics who perceive the cultural upsurges of the 1960s as a spectacle of self-indulgence paving the way for neoliberalism. This political amnesia must be confronted and we do so in this issue with articles by Michelle Boulous Walker and Anthony Ashbolt.

One of the bands that played regularly at gigs where Ellis D. Fogg provided enlightenment was *Tamam Shud*. This surfing psychedelic band captured a spirit of sixties rebellion that had even caught hold in sleepy suburban Thirroul, north of Wollongong. In a highly personal reflection on those times, local historian Joe Davis remembers the surfing subculture with ironic affection. Finally, Pete Steedman has contributed a review he wrote of Richard Neville's *Hippie Hippie Shake* upon publication in 1996. He never found a willing publisher at the time but we decided it reflected critically upon a significant moment in countercultural history. As one of the key editors of *OZ* magazine, Richard Neville was well placed to write a survey of those years in swinging London when Australia spoke to the world through expatriates like him and other *Oz* contributors Germaine Greer, Barry Humphries and Robert Hughes. *Hippie Hippie Shake* proved an enjoyable trip and Steedman's critique provides a reminder of the cultural ferment it was part of.

We would like to dedicate this foundation issue of the journal to the memory of *OZ* magazine and two of its late great founders, Richard Neville and Martin Sharp.

Anthony Ashbolt