

# Jet Settlements: A Regressive Utopia

By Daniel Hundsdörfer and Daniel Mock

## Prologue: the land registry system

You seldom see it, but you are always coming across it. For simplicity's sake it is called the "land registry system".

Some adventurers repeatedly protested that they had seen it – usually in the polar whiteout. They reported that it moved on supports as high as a house.

Many scholars believe that the land registry system was the heir to the classical figure of Atlas. And they point out that Atlas used to carry the vault of heaven, before he went over to shouldering the weight of the terrestrial globe.

Anyway – this much seems certain – we owe our addresses to the land registry system; it led to the taxonomic pyramid model of hierarchical differences; with its help everyone can understand what is white, what is at the top, what is at the bottom. It is constantly establishing reserves.

Perhaps it is best to imagine the land registry system as a chessboard, populated with chessmen, fighting to rule and occupy a strategic field. It follows instructions to purchase secure land; constantly practises triangulation; is involved in a never-ending series of forays; accompanied by the voices of patronizing parents who answer on behalf of their silenced child, the land registry system never tires of repeating: the victim of probability is called future. The victim of probability is called future. The victim of probability ...

## Precarious existences as insurance sanctuaries

Prognoses are possible only within groups facing equal risks. Actuarial calculations break space down into a field of reserve variants, completely homogenized internally – archipelagos, populated by people facing the same risk.

The idealistic credo of the security fantasists asserting that chance must ultimately be defeated has yielded to the practical insight that it is enough simply to allow chance to happen somewhere else. The insurance companies' silent retreat from risky terrain confirms a turn to the paradigm of global prevention, which tolerates local destruction.

Comprehensive removal of solidarity corresponds with the segregating element of actuarial space structures. Guidance towards care for the self became accepted against the background of lifestyles deviating from imposing a sanction. The sanction has a name: uninsurability. Uninsurability is the sword of Damocles for the self-responsibility so dear to neo-liberalism. In areas that cannot be insured, those-who-are-not-even-exploited-any-more have to eke out their precarious existences.

Access to the insurance sanctuary is purchased by (self-)adaptation. This leads to a colonization of souls: Inside Empire.

But there are always some of those-who-are-not-even-exploited-any-more who do not yield to increasing pressure from criminalization. Agreed that through no fault of their own they have got into a state of generalized excludedness, they form solidarity communities. They embark ever more frequently on a desperate search for suitable land, so that they can demand their rights vociferously – at least their rights to unfettered consumption. And while the most extreme of those-who-are-not-even-exploited-any-more push all their worldly goods along the highway – in this way following the promise that physical mobility will bring social mobility with it – they come to believe more strongly in the commandment of flexibility.

## Old school cargo cult (extensive colonization)

No wonder that setting up the Inside Empire led to the comeback of a cult that once accompanied the final phase of extensive colonization – the so-called “cargo cult”, as it became known via the inhabitants of Polynesian islands.

Towards the end of the Second World War, the American forces in the South Pacific identified an archipelago with strategic military value and established a base there. Military equipment and supplies (food, etc., in other words cargo/commodities) were parachuted down from aircraft. These blessed commodities fell like the biblical manna from heaven. The indigenous population felt they had arrived in paradise. They arranged a potlatch by solemnly destroying products and crops and refusing to do work in any form. They hoped this would mean the arrival of more cargoes. Trails were beaten down across the jungle to create landing strips; objects incapable of flying were produced, imitating aircraft. The cargo cults disappeared a few years later.

## Jet Settlers and neo-cargo (intensive colonization)

Jet Settlers was the name given to what is possibly the most striking grouping of those-who-are-not-even-exploited-any-more, who had decided to escape from those-who-could-no-longer-be-rescued. The Jet Settlers were recruited from the defunct American Express Society – a parallel society who constantly postponed exhausting their credit by skilfully recycling debt between various credit cards, in order to realize their “Instant Wish Fulfilment” (IWF). Nothing could have contradicted the ascetic thrift model of wish postponement more than IWF, because debt or indebtedness inside the American Express Society was not the negative result of an action, but its cause. But the time came when the creditors’ optimism evaporated, and they insisted on having the money they had lent paid back. Only those with good insurance and criminals risked IWF from then on. Lady Luck seemed to have switched sides unnoticed: she was no longer for the hard-working, she was for the insured.

Since then even the act of humility known as admitting complete failure offered redemption. What remained open to them was flight on the spot. Hoping for duty freedom they moved to the many disused airfields – hence the name “Jet Settlers”.

Globalization’s implementation techniques had become superfluous when their programme came to perfection – absolute availability of everything everywhere. When the ubiquitous condition started to dawn, aircraft and other movables became useless relics of a past age of mobility, the scrap of civilization. Somehow or other it was easy for the Jet Settlers to construct architecture from the aircraft parts. They let the engines howl every night, as the death knell of technocratic utopias. They practised the old mobility dogma exclusively within the properties – the immovables – as a now meaningless habit. The lively hustle and bustle familiar from airports ... All that remained as reinsurance for these uninsured persons was routine as a copied adaptation of an outmoded success model.

## The dawn of divine derivatives

In 1968, the Peruvian psychologist Carlos Castaneda returned to the United States from his anthropological field studies on the indigenous Central American Yagqui peoples. He had the teachings of the Mexican magician Don Juan Mantus in his luggage, and intended to distribute them in the West among folk with disappointed ambitions. Ennobled as New Age shamans, Castaneda led them to a spiritually boosted lifestyle. Borrowing from Buckminster Fuller, he called his message “Tensegrity”. Castaneda detected the two driving forces of Don Juan Mantus’ “magic channels” in Tensegrity.

Tensegrity is a compound of tension and integrity. Castaneda understood this to mean the interre-

lationship of muscular contractions and relaxation that contribute to the body's integrity as a physical and energetic unit. Thus Castaneda was reconceptualizing the basic physical assumptions of Fuller's Tensegrity principle as paraphysiological metaphysics. In this way, Tensegrity became the art of controlling one's own energy dynamics and the way they fuse with the energies of others. Tensegrity à la Castaneda is carried out as a physical practice intended to be assimilated completely into the integrity of the community. Like is linked with like, and reinforces itself; unlike rejects itself.

The Jet Settlers recognized this as well. Escapism seemed to them to be the only remaining chance of removing boundaries – physical flight into the exclusive territory of the spoiled was now no longer open to them. But for those to whom the gates are closed, the “doors of perception” – as Aldous Huxley would have it – remain open.

Life is what you make it – for everyone, if the karma is right. A particular profession came into being under the pretext of helping people to realize themselves: counsellors. They sold their own whisperings to the insecure at a high price, and called it the Castaneda course. Or Tensegrity Training.

## Epilogue: walking monument

Henceforth, black New Age clouds darkened the Jet Settlements' event horizons. The inhabitants collected the day's driftwood together and built a temple of it. But the temples of history have welcomed only those who allow the promise of paradise to console them for the privations of daily life. The New Age helped the Walking Monument to move. When the trans-subjective resonances vibrate in complete harmony – so the prophecy runs – a condition of levitation will occur, causing the Walking Monument to float. By following the others, the Jet Settlers were taking the trackless way of the Walking Monument. Like an infinite stage dive, they carried the Monument in their hands. Certain that they were at last following their own destiny, they led themselves into the forests. Here they intended to put down roots again. Here the power of a united will was to invert the despotic pyramid and transform it into a tree. The tree with its mesmeric aura was to gather the future society under its crown. The Jet Settlers would bind its roots with the spirit of the earth and their ancestors, so that the lost foundations of their existence might be brought back to them...

But at some point, euphoria became hysteria. Despite their Monument, the Jet Settlers never built the longed-for paradise; instead of this, they left behind nothing but desolation and chaos, and finally went down amidst the deafening noise of their fanfares and trumpets.

A very few of the former Jet Settlers were found years later, scattered in the most remote forests, where they dreamed of the Waldensee in wooden huts they had crafted for themselves...