They are like to children sitting in the marketplace, and speaking together, and saying: ‘We have piped to you, and you have not danced: we have mourned, and you have not wept.

(Luke chapter 7)

Tales from the script

Many things are done in an underhand and unaccountable way in the arts. Not just decision-making, but the political ideologies which are enforced upon it. At times people have to go to predecessor courts to disprove this.

The Scottish Arts Council (SAC) organised— and presumably paid for—a quiet event for an audience of ‘arts managers’ in Glasgow on 14/4/99. Grinkel called ‘Facing the Future’ for some reason this took the form of one lecture by Ian Christie, then director of the think tank ‘Demos’. After an obvious Arts Council unwarranted debate Mrs. Jack McConnell, Labour Party etc.) in which the audience clearly did not accept what they were told, the final words from Seona Reid (then Director of SAC) convey the impression that some form of transaction had taken place, that “SAC was working to ensure the arts were incorporated into the range of Government policies—but arts organisations and artists needed to play their part in making this a reality”.

Reality fabrication had also been the purpose of Christie’s talk, “A New Agenda for the Arts” which was also duly pushed around the SAC by ‘colleagues’ who followed the lead and felt the need to be seen to be urging others towards Christie’s big idea. This is the brainless fraud that need to be seen to be urging others towards Christie’s talk, “A New Agenda for the Arts” but arts organisations and artists needed to play their part in making this a reality”.

Although some may close their minds to it, the administrators know government policy is all a load of rubbish too. For Christie the work of both artists and administrators are the problem because “in these debates the ‘arts’ tend to appear as a distinct world, disconnected from other (government) policy areas.” His idea is that all cultural policy must align itself to “sectors which will command funding.” Such a polite way of putting it. But we are trying to get out of this cultural gulag not into it.

Arts administrators need to be primarily aware of the debates within the arts so as to be able to respond. What the government wants has to be counter balanced by what artists want. Or are we to be forever puppets? Administrators should not be led into nor encouraged—as they were with Christie’s talk, “A New Agenda for the Arts”—to play a role in poisoning and tainting this independent and open debate could possibly counter.

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expectations of their constituents. The utopian motive of ‘corporate community engagement’ is to pirate money from government social management institutions which will in the long term eventually abrogate responsibility for social policy to large financial concerns. A great deal of this has been rationalised by think tanks as part of a ‘Third way’ approach. As we will see later the people who run them are becoming adept at obtaining government money through phoney cultural projects.

The Sadistic Statistic

“The Third Way is to my mind the best label for the new politics that the progressive centre-left is forging in Britain and beyond.”

Tony Blair

And what would a new product be without a label. ‘Forging’ is an unfortunate choice of words though.

Christie also writes for Prospect—a small magazine desperately pushing the ‘Third Way’ which aspires to the role played by Encounter in the late 50s. In ‘Return to Sociology,’ adopting a manner not unlike Senator J e McCarthy, Christie blames the “1968 generation” for unspecified crimes against sociology.6

“The influence of continental theory grew—and generated a huge amount of posturing, barely exaggerated in Bradbury’s lethal portrait of his “history man.”

In Bradbury’s novel the History Man is not Howard Kirk (the character played by Anthony Sher in the BA TV adaptation) but an unseen shadowy figure but you know what he means. This is after all just propaganda. The point is to create the illusion that Marxism achieved a monopole in the sociology curriculum. Here again he relies on reductive, crude characterisations of the left (while ignoring the right—yes what is right-wing sociology?). The article is a perverse attempt to erase Marxist and left-wing influences (like the Stalins airbrushing their former comrades out of the picture). He cuts the history of sociology at 1963 and starts it again in 1997 with Demos. The unwanted material is then discarded as he settles down to relentlessly promote his own work and elevate the role of Demos and allied think tanks and consultancies because of their closeness to government. He then depicts them as the logical successor of British Empiricists Lord Young and Peter Willott, the nesstablishmentologists. The guys who get funding.

Again there are relentless puffs for Geoff Mulgan’s book (it would have been nice of Christie to mention that Mulgan helps ‘advise’ Prospect). Eventually we are guided towards Anthony Giddens the chief salesian (i.e. Tony Blair hired him) of the Third Way. Giddens resembles an old so-called version of Howard Kirk: he was a Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Leicester from 1961-70. He has never left the Academy and—having climbed the greasy pole at Cambridge from Lecturer, Reader to Professor of Sociology—is now the director of the London School of Economics and Political Science. Once a Marxist sociologist he now advocates that socialism is dead. It’s the old “The God That Failed” routine where his mistakes, his failings and sell-outs are attributed and projected onto a failed ‘Left’.

Giddens’ ideas such as the ‘responsible risk taker’ grew out of conversations with Mulgan. Together they concocted ill thought-out concepts for social experimentation on the poor as if they were a bunch of lab rats. What they derived was ‘embedded’ in the Government’s Social Exclusion Unit. Now with the Performance and Innovation Unit there is the development of a desperate propaganda aspect that think tank activities, and as ever it is blooming back in his face.

In 1996 at the direction of the Government, an ‘online think tank’ called Nexus was initiated (within ‘on-side’ academic circles) a series of debates on the Third Way, involving Anthony Giddens; David Marquand, Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford (also Demos); Julian Le Grand, Professor of Social Policy at the LSE; and the Directors of the Institute for Public Policy Research and the Fabian Society. The whole sad little gang, but no academic backing was given to the practical meaning or legitimacy of the Third Way. Nexus was held up as providing a “tested model of how intellectuals, academics, social entrepreneurs and policy experts would assist the development of the public policy of centre-left governments”. It soon deteriorated to extinction. One more confirmation of the vacuum in Third Way thinking, and the inability of its proponents to apply its ideas to concrete social realities.7

But not everyone can make money out of the discussion of poverty. As Christie accidentally admits: “The reform of local government and the welfare state is creating a huge demand for information about the preferences of the consumers of public services.”8 One of the most blatant hype critical examples of this ‘internal market’ being the ERS/Government funded Research Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE). In its second year in 1999 it managed to spend £764,000 on themselves, only producing a couple of books and reports which are overwhelmingly influenced by the work of the Director, John Hills who writes with Geoff Mulgan. The whole point of CASE seems to be to report to Mulgan and tell him what he already knows.9

An accurate picture would be against the national interest old bean

Central to the gang’s ideas is the portrayal of both ‘Old Left’ and ‘New Right’ as coherent, monolithic political ideologies; this is a convenient myth—but a misleading form of product differentiation. Whether elaborated by Blair, Giddens, Mulgan or Christ, the Third Way is always in search of meaning, presenting concepts awaiting precise definition. But does political expediency actually need or desire intellectual and moral justification? If the Third Way remains a fuzzy undefined concept, there be no political accountability. Which is handy because there is no political accountability. The establishment position can’t really account for its complicity in the suppression and repression which was targeted at the left in those years Christie wants to so conveniently avoid—none of it is in the history books or the official accounts, most of the relevant information is a secret we are told. The prevailing illusion is that this only happened during the ‘Cold War’ and that everything now is open. This has gone on so long that a great deal of that suppression and covert compliance with government (and the market ideology) has become internalised and institutionalised within what is passed off as intellectual culture. This is a major or problem. A fundamental cultural insecurity.

In the Thatcher years and before, many independent journalists took the influence of think tanks to be a malignant and covert right-wing influence in politics. They realised certain organisations were providing doubtless research to reinforce government/intelligence services propaganda. Overall this was rarely acknowledged in academia and the papers and TV who were themselves manipulated. In some cases contrary evidence was vociferously kept out of debate by those within institutions who were connected and/or sympathetic in recruiting and training within academia. Paul Wilkinson up in St. Andrews University immediately comes to mind; and he is still providing a service to the budgets of M15 with his sinister input into laoehshelegislation such as the recent “Terror” Act. These previous Marxists: Giddens, Mulgan, Demos, despise political activism because they—the ‘policy entrepreneurs’ as they call themselves—want to dictate policy: why else would they do what they do if they didn’t. The ‘Third Way’ mirrors their own personal sel-outs and biditical political conscience. But it this way ‘Policy entrepreneurs’ could easily become Cockney rhyming slang for ‘agent provocateurs’. As we shall see below, they have found a place as agents of influence, joining up with what Anthony Verrier called the ‘permanent government.’

Happy ever after in the market place

Those of us who have observed the resistible rise of the Blairites inside the Labour Party are not in the least surprised by the [the decision to exempt Formula One from the tobacco sponsorship ban]. We expected nothing else from people who routinely broke the rules of their own party, lied about their own actions, smeared fellow Party members, abused Party funds to pursue factional advantage, rigged votes, repeatedly revised policy without consulting any of the Party’s democratic organs, and ensured a steady flow of jobs and patronage to those loyal and patriotic members of Party leadership. Their attitude to the rules that apply to ordinary people is like Leona Helmsley’s towards taxes: they’re “for little people.”

Yes times have been good for Demos, it has increased its staff and moved to new offices in Waterloo (let’s hope that’s ironic) sharing with the MI5 connected Foreign Policy Centre, among others10, Tim Bentley (a former advisor to David Blunkett on education) is now the Director with Beth Egan (advisor to Gordon Brown) as Deputy Director. They still maintain that they are independent from government.

Their web site promotes links to several right-wing think tanks who occasionally, in the cold war including The Royal Institute of International Affairs, The RAND Corporation, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Hudson Institute (founded by Herman Khan the model for Kubrick’s Dr Strangelove), The Heritage Foundation, The Centre for Policy Studies, The Institute of Economic Affairs, The Aspen Institute, The Adam Smith Institute and so on. Demos trustees bring together mind benders Sir Douglas Hague (former advisor to Margaret Thatcher), Jim Hall (Chief Executive of the advertising agency Gold Greenties Trott), Martin Jacques (Co-founder of Demos, former editor of Marxism Today, currently the anti-socialist jour- nal) and Julia Hobsbawm (Chief Executive of Common Purpose).

Geoff Mulgan now chairs the Advisory Council alongside Martin Taylor, who just happens to be a steering group member of the group (a notorious secretive elite gathering). After his disastrous time at Barclays Bank, Taylor received a £2.5 million payout (in addition his shares would be worth £3.2 million). A leading member of Labour’s taskforce on welfare reform, he is one of the party’s prominent supporters in the City. The millionaire immediately targeted the poorest peo-ple in the UK in the guise of “Social Exclusion policy”. Taylor argued that in order to reduce the growing number of workless households, both partners in an unemployed childless couple

Anthony Sher as Howard Kirk
should have to make themselves available for work. People who get a thrill out of punishing the helpless need help themselves.

Ian Christie is still on the Advisory Council (with Matthew D’Ancona, Editor, The Sunday Telegraph), Terry Leahy (Chief Executive, Tesco plc), Mark Leonard (Director, Foreign Policy Centre), David Marquand (Principal, Wolfson College, Oxford), Anita Roddick (Body Shop plc) and the curiously named Perri E who is researching into us all being taken over by robots. He has also done extensive research into mind-altering drugs.

It is amazing just how far the Demos team have ‘moved on’ from their days ‘upholding’ Marxism to embrace the ideology of the right, any old post-modern cobbled, big business and the shadowy connotations of think tanks. Demos has spawned all manner of parasitical children.

Take the example of Common Purpose (CP). This was started by Demos trustee Julian Middleton. It has been around for sometime but gained a great deal of funding with the advent of New Labour and its seat among business elites. Initially money was put in by David Bell, the Chairman of the Financial Times (and the Millennium Bridge Trust). CP is another strange organisation, a kind of secret society for careerists.

Again the board has some mysterious figures presiding including Lord Dahrendorf, the chairman of the Long-Ditch-Foundation and Paul. Laurenson Martin of the like-minded Royal Institute of International Affairs. It could well be a note paper job, CP is composed of representatives of big business (mostly Labour Party donors) including multi-nationals, the police, the MOD, banks and their associates, eyes down for a Full House.

Gillian Ashmore (Cabinet Office), Sir Jeremy Beecham (Association of Metropolitan Authorities), David Bell (Financial Times), Dr Andrew Bird (Wall Street Journal), Dr Kevin Bond (Yorkshire Water), Jeremy Hall (Dean Clough Ltd), Richard Hatfield (Ministry of Defence). John Lee (Halifax plc), Ruth MacKenzie (ex-Scottish Opera), Vincent McNab (Sir James MacGregor Scott & Spencer), Genista McIntosh (Royal National Theatre), Tim Melville-Ross (Institute of Directors), Sir Alan Morton (Shadow Strategic Railway Authority and British Railway Board), Sir Herman Ouseley (Commission for Racial Equality), Janet Paraskeva (National Lottery Charities Board), Graham Prentice (Nestle UK Ltd), Jim Rivas (Rolls-Royce), Sir Barry Robinson (Arms Council of England), Richard Sambrook (BBC), Barry Shaw (Cleveland Constabulary), Jan Shawe (Prudential Corporation plc), Vivien Way (The Times), Tim Waterfield (Director, Centre for Film and Television Studies), Peter Stoddart (Nissan UK Ltd), Paul Whitehouse (Sussex Police), Ken Williams (Norfolk Constabulary), Ruth Wishart (Freelance journalist).

Their list of corporate sponsors is impressive and they say they have offices in every UK city. Put politely CP tries to promote corporate community engagement, the synergy between big business and well... it’s a bit like the asbestos factory owner’s daughter handing out religious tracts to the workers coughing at the factory gates. Relationships between corporate CP funders such as BAE, Royal Ordinance and GEC Marconi and say the work of CP trustee David Grayson of the national Disability Council are ignored however. The idea is to accentuate the positive.

The real value of CP must be measured by its closeness to power — access to which is what is on offer. CP was only one member who was openly employed by government, Gillian Ashmore, her record speaks for itself:

‘Gillian Ashmore is currently on secondment from the Department of Transport to the British Railways Board working on railway privatisation. She joined the Civil Service in 1971 and has worked variously in the Departments of the Environment, Transport, Employment and Trade and Industry. On the Transport side, she has worked mainly in the public transport field. In the latter two Departments she was Deputy Director of the Enterprise and Deregulation Unit. Mrs. Ashmore has also been a non-executive director of P & O European Transport.’

Incredibly with a line up like that the CP constitution has been: ‘is diverse and non-aligned. It is drawn on the widest possible variety of sectors, areas, and social groups and recognises only peer level and geographical boundaries as common factors to each group. It is always independent, always balanced and owes no historical or other allegiance to any other organisation. Common Purpose works for the benefit of society as a whole.’

What a pack of lies. CP creates the illusion that it is for ordinary people, but it is not only run by an elite, its projects cater exclusively for an elite: ‘the rising generation of decision makers’ as they say in their web site. This also states that: ‘We are looking for applicants who are decision-makers in their city or towns area’, and that ‘participants are over 30 and already hold a position of considerable responsibility.’ They say their long-term aim is ‘educating the generation of leaders in each city or town’. On this basis it is a fraudulent organisation.

Funded by big business and public bodies (everyone from Arms companies, Banks to curiousраtions to the workers coughing at the fac- tory gates. Relationships between corporate CP funders such as BAE, Royal Ordinance and GEC Marconi and say the work of CP trustee David Grayson of the national Disability Council are ignored however. The idea is to accentuate the positive.

For instance, Labour MP Robert Young’s School for Social Entrepreneurs, which is. Amusingly an exactly similar organisation to ‘Citizen’s Connection’ already existed with Lord Young’s School for Social Entrepreneurs, which is funded by HSBC, the National Lottery and a pecu- liar ‘charity’ the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation Trust, run by the wife of the former chairman of the SAC, Magnus Linklater.

People have to pay to join up for any CP program and very few of the ‘members’ (about all of CP’s projects are extensions of PR exercises run by big companies, such as the ‘Your Turn’ pro- ject, which was directly run by BT’s PR consul- tants, so effectively these are being written paid for. Yet—even while CP got millions for their web site—‘Your Turn’ was specifically given additional funding by the National Lottery Charities Board, as we have seen with CP work better.Marjane satan Parasekva has a conflict of interest, which she regards as a common purpose and her turn for some money.

Manufactured, twisted...more tenuous

‘We now live in a world in which fantasy and reality are hard if not impossible to distinguish. Information is the raw material of both fact and fantasy, and has been so industrialised that its origins are rarely visible. Now it can be manufactured, twisted, multiplied and disseminated almost without limit. Assisted by the power of computing, it can be created as if from nothing: tailor made to cognitive needs, put together as pastiche or copy. It needs only minimal reference points. The links between ideas and an objective reality—truth, justice, positivism and enlightenment—are ever more tenuous. As a result for the receiver there are few grounds for judgement, apart from received authority.’

This con artist’s confession was written by Geoff Mulgan a few years ago, when he was...a lonely Sociology lecturer in Sheffield University. You can just smell the post-modernism: confusing fantasy with reality, providing a cloak for the exercises away the government pay you to fuck with people’s minds. From there Geoff’s ‘limited exper- ience’ (and how he limits others), and his strange fantasies became confused with reality, in first the Social Exclusion Unit, then enforcing these poli- cies in the journal ‘News of the New World’ of the right and is associated with coining the phrase

Anthony Giddens

Gillian Ashmore meets Glenda Jackson

‘My God! That journey felt like a Ken Russell movie’
across the country. A national network of Commis- sars. But the fact is that the Arts Council are losing the support of even their own commit- tees members. The peak of folly is to black- mail or put into corners, doubling up on their jobs, shortening their lives with the stress of com- peting in this phoney market place. The internal market becomes internalised market values—pre- tend partnerships where the mentor becomes the tormentor. There will never be a shortage of money for government stories like Ian Christie and his like, those who advocate that we maintain in ignorance of the relevance of our own culture. I'd love to sell my soul myself, but they think I'm the Devil.

notes
1. Zeldin is studying 'Happiness' at the moment in Oxford.
2. (Quoted from Zeldin’s ‘An Intimate History of Humanity’ from a review by Sean McWilliams)
3. http://www.green-alliance.org.uk/Documents/Newsletters/InsideTrac k_Highlights_Autumn1999.pdf. GA together with the Fabian Society and the Royal Institute for International Affairs published Peter Hain’s ‘The End of Foreign Policy’. Mulgan and Christie are also involved in Green Futures magazine.
5. Quoted from http://www.prospect.org/print-friendly lyprint/M/1045klein.html
6. Prospect, 1 January 1999 http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/highights/return_sociology/index.html. Prospect is modelled on the American prospect founded by Daniel Bell in the USA. The Prospect editor, David Goodhart is an ardent admirer. Laughably it presents Demos, (Mulgan, Martin J.) as the opponents of the government.
8. Third Way Debate Summary can be found at http://www.net nexus.org/library/papers/3away.html. Their own figures say that it got 140 postings by 45 people.
10. See Bob Holman interview in this issue. “CASE, subsumes the former LSE Welfare State program” with additional sup- port coming from “the Suntory and Toyota International Centres for economics and Related Disciplines, including for the Centre’s Toyota Research Officer.”
11. Together with the Foreign Policy Centre, Demos shares its address: The Mezzanine, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London SE1 7NQ, with a number of organisations which grew out of it or are government fronts or who are funded to run Mulgan’s Social Exclusion policies: The Family Matters, No 51 Spring/Summer 1998 sets out Zeldin’s influence.
12. op cit.
13. Which recently shifted its name to the ‘Community Fund’, Monopoly anyone?
18. Mulgan gave a briefing to the Ditchley Foundation in Florence on 19-21 November 1999 on the ‘Third Way.’ The Director of Communications of the Council on Foreign Relations was also in attend- ance together with various ‘diplomats’ and Sir Samuel Brittan Principal economics commentator, The Financial Times.