variant

contents

Front cover: 'Nae Mair Pish'

Glasgow Autonomous Project (GAP)

Information and conversation about local and world affairs.

To encourage individuals and groups in the Glasgow area to take more control of their lives and to give them the support they need to do so, by providing a safe, welcoming venue where we can work and socialise together.

To work together for social change, rather than depending on politicians and other bosses, to participate directly in building a better society through grassroots organisations.

GAP has secured a space from May into June at:

58 Albion Street, (corner of Bell Street), Glasgow, G1

GAP (www.glasgow-autonomy.org) has an email list for those who wish to keep updated on what is going on with GAP and the organizing of the social centre: glasgowautonomy@lists.mutualaid.org

To subscribe go to:

http://lists.riseup.net/www/info/glasgowautonomyupdates

Feel free to drop in anytime for a coffee or a chat.

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Letters

Ourganisation: An Open Letter of Invitation

"In this utopia the common bond lowers the threshold of doubt." **Barrett Watten**

There has been some talk of DIY culture and 'post-media operators' in recent years and yet one of the facets of such cultural production that gets overlooked is the means of organisation, the institutional creativity that arises to generate and sustains such cultural work, such 'social doing'. In many ways the creative dynamic of co-operation and mutual influence has the added effect of producing the subjectivity of participants and exposing the myth of a separation between the 'individual' and the 'collective' as it has already been instituted by capitalist social relations. So, with cultural work and 'social doing' becoming central to the economy, such collective self-institutional endeavours (or 'constituent power' as Toni Negri calls it) reveal to us how cultural production is a 'social wealth', a pooling of experience and knowledge, that can be resistant to the private form of ownership.

Such activity can thus mark a shift from the individualist creativity involved in making cultural products to the creativity of the social relations that surround it. It is often the case that groupings institutionalise around a practical activity and by doing so they thus create a context for that activity, create a means of expression, a mode of relating, that can, in its wider political ramification of 'giving voice', create other channels of power in culture that resist and form alternatives to the use of culture as an alibi, as a motor of the economy. Is it not that such activities highlight a variety of human desires that outstrip their deformation into values that can be measured and made profitable? Is it not that the practices they encapsulate are modes of working together? 'living associative labour'? that can find no place in the labour process?

The history of these forms of self-organisation reaches back into the workers movement and autodidactic groups, into avant-garde groupings, into attempts to forge community and into the sound systems, pirate radio and micro-distribution networks of various musical scenes. These initiatives have been a constant means of not only creating physical and psychical spaces for critique and sustainable oppositionality, but of creating different social relations, means of being and doing together that are not imperilled and restricted by the 'need' to be profitable. Maybe, as the crisis of democratic representationality becomes even deeper, as the division between the social, the political and the cultural becomes revealed as a seamless continuum, these self-institutional practices come not only to give us the social confidence to be expressed, but, from that, become forms of revolutionary organisation that do not seek to represent the 'mass', but give articulation to divergent desires; a "freeing of the radical imaginary" as Cornelius Castoriadis has put it.

Maybe this marks a step away from the 60s notion of anti-institution, from the hierarchic and dogmatic political party and the cultural recapitulations of 'alternative spaces', into a wider recognition of self-institutions as creative, constituting forms and not just means of reproducing a bureaucratic and alienated social relation. It maybe, also, marks an acceptance of institutional internalisation or, to put it another way, how we produce ourselves by being together. As Castoriadis has said: 'Individuals become what they are by absorbing and internalising institutions. This internalisation... is anything but superficial: modes of thought and action, norms and values, and, ultimately the very identity of the individual as a social being are depedendent upon it. So the first object of a politics of autonomy: help the collectivity to create the institutions that, when internalised by individuals, will not limit,

but rather, enlarge their capacity for being autonomous.'

If, for DIY culture etc, the aim was to secede from an increasingly modelised culture, then, could it be that self-institutional initiatives become organs of an 'engaged withdrawal' or 'exodus' from capitalist social relations? Could it be, after the celebration of the divergent desires that have been given form by self-institutions, that the long term aim of such endeavours could be a re-creation, a re-assessment, of the 'public sphere', a linking-up of dispersed 'public spheres'? This would raise many questions, not least of which would be the status of the 'political' in this society: our cultural production, our 'social experience in the process of organising itself' through a variety of means, represents a social force, a power to create new social relations, that should no longer be separated from us in the form of political force, as the glare of representative politics that reflects back to blind us from our own power.

It is with such notions as these in mind that the Ourganisation project (http://docs.ourganisation.org/twiki/bin/view/Main/SecBackground) was developed. It is an open-access web site through which it is hoped that, by means of your participation, we can, together, build up an ongoing resource, archive and tool of collective investigation into the issues of self-institution. This process was initiated by an 'exchange situation' (http://docs.ourganisation.org/twiki/bin/view/Main/ExchangeSituation) held at the Copenhagen Free University (http://www.copenhagenfreeuniversity.dk/) and from this it was decided to offer other institutions and self-organisations the opportunity to self-interview and post the result to us in whatever format is most suitable (if it is in tape format we will do the transcription and liaise with you before posting; if it is written out in longhand we will do likewise). It was decided not to offer up a set of questions to participants as it was felt this could overdetermine response as well as foreclose areas that we haven't thought about. We will obviously respect the wishes of those groups and participants who wish to remain anonymous.

comradely greetings,
   Howard Slater

http://www.ourganisation.org/

Flaxman Lodge

-Flaxman Lodge is a transitional space currently located at Flaxman Terrace, London WC1 (020 7692 1693) and online at

http://flaxmanlodge.omweb.org

-This [the website] is where registered users can post articles, comments, suggest research, discussion topics and events. Users can also upload images, create, move or edit forums, open wiki's and alter the overall look of the site.

-It is also a key administrative motor for the space, with all decisions regarding content, organisation and economy passing through the forums and then into the public domain.

-The forums have been set up to facilitate exchange on all matters related to FL: users can post and respond in the Events (proposals) forum for example, set up open or closed meetings in the Meetings (proposals) forum, or discuss general issues by creating topics of their own.

-The space runs adjacent to the website; here anything proposed and discussed in the forums can be further played out—in meetings, presentations or any other use the space can be put to.

-There are no defined roles, no administrators, moderators, managers, directors, curators, editors,

committees, consultancies or funding bodies attached to FL and whatever happens here will be the result of negotiation between users (on the site, on the phone, in the space). See FlaxmanLodgeInvite on the wiki.

-There are also no salaries or programming budgets. After the intitial six month period, which is secure, the space will operate on a self-financing model or die. Proposals under consideration combine ideas of shadow, parallel and gift economies (eg. via irregular subscriptions, drinks sales, redirected resources/monies/grants, events etc.). See April1stMinutes.

-At present there are 30 registered users and this is now open to anyone who would like to participate.
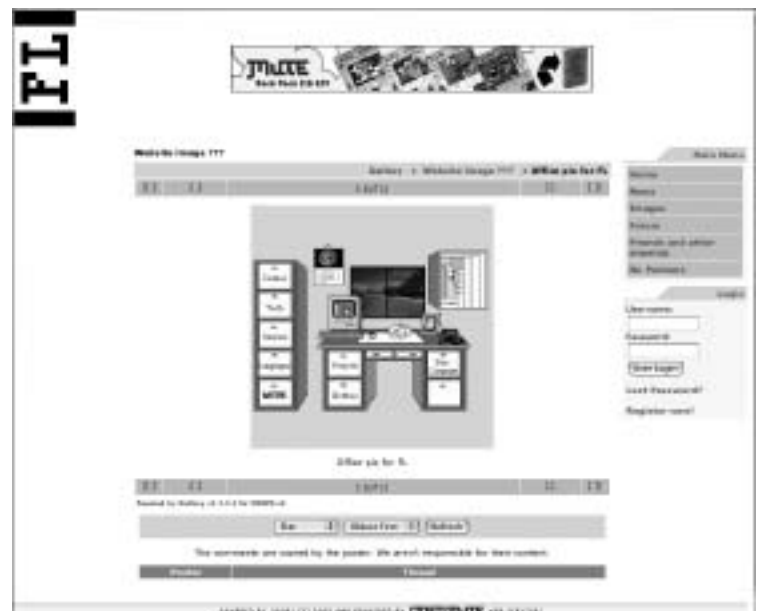
FBI Abducts Artist, Seizes Art

Feds Unable to Distinguish Art from Bioterrorism

Grieving Artist Denied Access to Deceased Wife's Body

Defense Fund Established

Steve Kurtz was already suffering from one tragedy when he called 911 early in the morning to tell them his wife had suffered a cardiac arrest and died in her sleep. The police arrived and, cranked up on the rhetoric of the "War on Terror", decided Kurtz's art supplies were actually bioterrorism weapons.

Thus began an Orwellian stream of events in which FBI agents abducted Kurtz without charges, sealed off his entire block, and confiscated his computers, manuscripts, art supplies... and even his wife's body.

Like the case of Brandon Mayfield, the Muslim lawyer from Portland imprisoned for two weeks on the flimsiest of false evidence, Kurtz's case amply demonstrates the dangers posed by the USA Patriot Act coupled with government-nurtured terrorism hysteria.

Fear Run Amok

Steve Kurtz is Associate Professor in the Department of Art at the State University of New York's University at Buffalo, and a member of the internationally-acclaimed Critical Art Ensemble.

Kurtz's wife, Hope Kurtz, died in her sleep of cardiac arrest in the early morning hours of May 11. Police arrived, became suspicious of Kurtz's art supplies and called the FBI.

Within hours, FBI agents had "detained" Kurtz as a suspected bioterrorist and cordoned off the entire block around his house. (Kurtz walked away the next day on the advice of a lawyer, his "detention" having proved to be illegal.) Over the next few days, dozens of agents in hazmat suits, from a number of law enforcement agencies, sifted through Kurtz's work, analyzing it on-site and impounding computers, manuscripts, books, equip-

ment, and even his wife's body for further analysis. Meanwhile, the Buffalo Health Department condemned his house as a health risk.

Kurtz, a member of the Critical Art Ensemble (CAE), makes art which addresses the politics of biotechnology. "Free Range Grains," CAE's latest project, included a mobile DNA extraction laboratory for testing food products for possible transgenic contamination. It was this equipment which triggered the Kafkaesque chain of events.

FBI field and laboratory tests have shown that Kurtz's equipment was not used for any illegal purpose. In fact, it is not even possible to use this equipment for the production or weaponization of dangerous germs. Furthermore, any person in the US may legally obtain and possess such equipment.

"Today, there is no legal way to stop huge corporations from putting genetically altered material in our food," said Defense Fund spokeswoman Carla Mendes. "Yet owning the equipment required to test for the presence of 'Frankenfood' will get you accused of 'terrorism'. You can be illegally detained by shadowy government agents, lose access to your home, work, and belongings, and find that your recently deceased spouse's body has been taken away for 'analysis'."

Though Kurtz has finally been able to return to his home and recover his wife's body, the FBI has still not returned any of his equipment, computers or manuscripts, nor given any indication of when they will. The case remains open.

Artists Subpoenaed in USA Patriot Act Case (May 25, 2004)

Feds STILL unable to distinguish art from bioterrorism

Grand jury to convene June 15

Four artists have been served subpoenas to appear before a federal grand jury that will consider bioterrorism charges against a university professor whose art involves the use of simple biology equipment. The subpoenas are the latest installment in a bizarre investigation in which members of the Joint Terrorism Task Force have mistaken an art project for a biological weapons laboratory. While most observers have assumed that the Task Force would realize the absurd error of its initial investigation of Steve Kurtz, the subpoenas indicate that the feds have instead chosen to press their "case" against the baffled professor. Two of the subpoenaed artists—Beatriz da Costa and Steve Barnes—are, like Kurtz, members of the internationally-acclaimed Critical Art Ensemble (CAE), an artists' collective that produces artwork to educate the public about the politics of biotechnology. They were served the subpoenas by federal agents who tailed them to an art show at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art. The third artist, Paul Vanouse, is, like Kurtz, an art professor at the University at Buffalo. He has worked with CAE in the past. The fourth, Dorian Burr, is a founding member of CAE.

The artists involved are at a loss to explain the increasingly bizarre case. "I have no idea why they're continuing (to investigate)," said Beatriz da Costa, one of those subpoenaed. "It was shocking that this investigation was ever launched. That it is continuing is

positively frightening, and shows how vulnerable the Patriot Act has made freedom of speech in this country." Da Costa is an art professor at the University of California at Irvine.

According to the subpoenas, the FBI is seeking charges under Section 175 of the US Biological Weapons Anti-Terrorism Act of 1989, which has been expanded by the USA Patriot Act. As expanded, this law prohibits the possession of "any biological agent, toxin, or delivery system" without the justification of "prophylactic, protective, bona fide research, or other peaceful purpose." (See http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/18/175.html for the 1989 law and http://www.ehrs.upenn.edu/protocols/patriot/sec817.html for its USA Patriot Act expansion.)

Even under the expanded powers of the USA Patriot Act, it is difficult to understand how anyone could view CAE's art as anything other than a "peaceful purpose". The equipment seized by the FBI consisted mainly of CAE's most recent project, a mobile DNA extraction laboratory to test store-bought food for possible contamination by genetically modified grains and organisms; such equipment can be found in any university's basic biology lab and even in many high schools (see "Lab Tour" at http://www.critical-art.net/biotech/free/ for more details).

The grand jury in the case is scheduled to convene June 15 in Buffalo, New York. Here, the jury will decide whether or not to indict Steve Kurtz on the charges brought by the FBI. A protest is being planned at 9 a.m. on June 15 outside the courthouse at 138 Delaware Ave. in Buffalo.

Six Subpoenas Issued in FBI Case Against Artist (June 4th, 2004)

Yesterday two more individuals were subpoenaed to appear before a Federal Grand Jury on June 15th. Thus far subpoenas have been issued to: Adele Henderson, Chair of the Art Department at UB; Andrew Johnson, Professor of Art at UB; Paul Vanouse, Professor of Art at UB; Beatriz da Costa, Professor of Art at UCI; Steven Barnes, FSU; and Dorian Burr.

Help Urgently Needed

A small fortune has already been spent on lawyers for Kurtz and other Critical Art Ensemble members. A defense fund has been established at http://www.rtmark.com/CAEdefense/ to help defray the legal costs which will continue to mount so long as the investigation continues. Donations go directly to the legal defense of Kurtz and other Critical Art Ensemble members. Should the funds raised exceed the cost of the legal defense, any remaining money will be used to help other artists in need.

To make a donation, please visit:

http://www.rtmark.com/CAEdefense/

For more information on the Critical Art Ensemble, please visit:

http://www.critical-art.net/

On advice of counsel, Steve Kurtz is unable to answer questions regarding his case. Please direct questions or comments to Carla Mendes: CAEdefense@rtmark.com

Free Range Grain

A project by Critical Art Ensemble, Beatriz da Costa, and Shyh-shiun Shyu
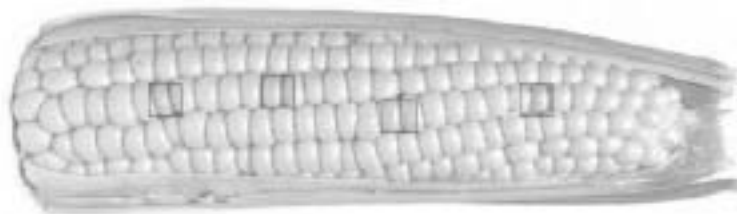
Comment

Global Liberalism is an Oxymoron

A little over a decade ago, Francis Fukuyama famously crowed that the triumph of liberal democracy was such that history had, in effect, reached its Hegelian 'end': the conflict of ideologies by which history was defined could no longer continue, since liberalism had been universally recognised as not just the best but the *only* political system left in the game. Those places around the world where liberalism was yet to ascend were merely the aberrations; it could only be a matter of time before they too fell into step with the New World Order. Even given that Fukuyama has since, rather coyly, revised this stance, the point is that it was, and still is, believed by so many.

Why, precisely, was the hubristic glee of Fukuyama and other neo-liberals so profoundly misplaced? Certainly not because of any coherent *internal* patterns of resistance in the West. Typically the answer to the question might include something about September 11th, 2001, but it's clear that Fukuyama was proved wrong long before this—in Africa, in Kosovo, in Latin America and in countless other places. James Rubin, an official in the Clinton administration, writing in a recent review of Chalmers Johnson's book *The Sorrows of Empire*, noted that, post-Afghanistan, post-Iraq and post-Abu Ghraib, it was not history which had ended, but the West's faith in the project of constitutional democracy itself. Why?

Events in Iraq over the past year, and in Guantanamo over the past two years, are evidence of a growing crisis of self-belief in the USA, a sign of intense vulnerability rather than as a show of imperial might. The 'theatre of war'—the *performance* of war as a demonstration of power—has a clearly visible subtext, which paradoxically proclaims America's crisis of faith in the very thing that it is supposedly bringing to the 'rest of the world'. The end of history hasn't happened, not because of a sustained attack from a competing ideology (like socialism), not even because of the more disparate—and nebulous—threat of 'terrorism' (the world is *not* a more dangerous place than it was a decade ago). History goes on precisely because 'liberal democracy' is itself a system that can only exist in a world where inequality is guaranteed. Global liberalism is an oxymoron; neo-imperialism, the 'Empire' of globalised capital, brings with it a new 'white man's burden', whereby the states that propound it must abandon its very principles in order to clutch desperately to power. Only by becoming ever more illiberal can they guarantee to us the eventual triumph of liberalism.

This issue of *Variant* continues an examination of racism in Ireland, with both Ronit Lentin and Colin Graham considering racism as an expression of the state's desire for control over the individual body, what Foucault called 'biopolitics'. This is a theme to which we'll be returning in future issues, as we consider the ever-changing political climate both north and south of the border, in the light of interrogations of the 'central myths' of Irish and Northern Irish racial subjectivity, most obviously the myth of whiteness. Northern Ireland recently claimed yet another shameful statistic with its first officially-recognised racist murder in Derry. It's clear that if the 'peace process' continues to focus on the 'two traditions' image of the North, those who will pay the price for parallel parity of esteem (or 'apartheid') are those whose faces don't fit. Watch this space.

From Hard Edged Compassion to Instrumentalism Light

"...it is time to slay a sixth giant—the poverty of aspiration which compromises all our attempts to lift people out of physical poverty. Engagement with culture can help alleviate this poverty of aspiration—but there is a huge gulf between the haves and have-nots.

Government must take this gulf as seriously as the other great issues of national identity, personal wellbeing and quality of life."

'Government and the Value of Culture'
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Tessa Jowell, Secretary of Culture, May 2004

Alistair Campbell is hardly out of his job and, if the main stream press is anything to go by, we are uncritically to accept—even welcome—the Dept. for Culture, Media and Sport's latest policy document, 'Government and the Value of Culture'. It has been interpreted as an olive branch to the cultural sector; an acknowledgement of past and current failures of New Labour's instrumentalisation of the arts in its subordination to other policy agendas—"education, the reduction of crime, improvements in wellbeing". Its personal tone and flattering appeal to arts institutions and the transcendental genius of producers of "complex culture", has been taken as signalling a change in the direction of government cultural policy.

The introduction sets the tone by immediately conflating New Labour corporatism with old Labour 'socialist' principles of fighting "physical poverty—want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness". It quickly shifts to a language of personal responsibility which displaces the burden of solving political problems from government onto individuals. The 'real world' problems of poverty are supplanted with an accusatory "poverty of aspiration". Having silently framed the 'guilty', We, set against this idle Other, are inculcated in their enlightened transformative process by being told: "Engagement with culture can help alleviate this poverty of aspiration".

Jowell claims "complex culture" provides indirect benefits to society, "...not a dumbed down culture, but a culture that is of the highest standard it can possibly be, at the heart of this government's core agenda, not as a piece of top down social engineering, but a bottom up realisation of possibility and potential," in that "...it can help with education, with keeping society stable..." But she never really lets on how this colonial civilising force remedies the savage (see 'Evaluating the Social Impact of participation in Arts Activities: A critical review of François Matarasso's *Use or Ornament?*', Paola Merli, Variant vol.2 no.19).

Despite its warm reception from media commentators and arts administrators alike, this document is far from a "departure from the perceived instrumentalism of recent government thinking" as David Edgar claims ('Where's the challenge?', *The Guardian*, 22nd May 2004). Anyone critically assessing the territory set out in this document must clearly see that. It is a prescriptive social agenda for the arts via the back door; as such it's hard to see how Jowell's position really deviates from the government's current instrumentalist policy, other than in its expedient softly-softly approach and flattery of the sector.

With all the deserved accusations of Stalinism, it would appear that New Labour has woken up to the fear of further alienating the UK's liberal cultural institutions with its instrumentalisation of the arts, driven through the funding bodies. Jowell's address is clearly one attempt by the Secretary for Culture and her scriptwriters to soothe the disillusionment in England, in the run-up to elections, by apparently inviting us to engage with her in defining a social role for culture, one supposedly not incompatible with an 'art for art's sake'. Jowell states: "...it's up to politicians in my position to give a lead in changing the atmosphere, and changing the terms of debate". But a change in "atmosphere" and "terms" is not a change in policy, it's about establishing a political framework, a background, against which everyday politics is conducted and perceived.

This document is little more than a repackaging of the current instrumentalist agenda, only now it is disingenuously presented as being incorporated by the Government from the "bottom up", not instigated from the "top down"—so down the rabbit hole we go. In a naturalisation of New Labour's world view, the delimited values of "complex culture" have magically become interchangeable with New Labour's social values. If this is true and the values of New Labour have been so thoroughly internalised by the Cultural Sector, then Jowell's tract becomes a reassuring reward for behaving 'properly'.

Throughout the document "complex culture" is presented as a positivistic, stabilising force, which facilitates a cohesive society. Alongside this there is a consumerist conflation of creativity with economy, as the arts are also attributed with being "a key part in reducing inequality of opportunity". The agenda is still that the arts are a means to reinforce the Thatcherite individuation of responsibility which has intensified under New Labour: that the solution to social and economic problems lies in cultural transformation and not directly with government, despite the evident decay and detritus of chronic underinvestment in physical infrastructure, the polarisation of incomes, etc.

Whilst the bureaucratic armies of focus groups and market researchers that are plaguing the arts are seemingly questioned, the surely now fatigued (and rumbled) consultative exercise is rolled out yet again. With all its New Labour rhetoric of "rights & responsibilities", the document concludes with a school teacher's wagging finger that the cultural sector has a "duty" to reply "constructively" to Jowell's interpretive framework. As has been mentioned elsewhere, with regard to New Labour's "Big Conversation"—which this document apes in approach—it constructs the agenda on a supposedly personal basis, invites a response, but fails to establish any structures for that so-called "listening" process, never mind any real beginnings to establish actual policy change.

This isn't an 'art for art's sake' manifesto (as David Lister of the *Independent* reported, 8th May 2004), it's art for art's sake with a big exclusionary 'if' about whether the arts can "help alleviate the poverty of aspiration". Disaffirming his earlier enthusiasm, Edgar in his *Guardian* article goes on to conclude: "Jowell edges uncomfortably close to a new social mission for the arts... What this leaves out—if not denies—is art's provocative role.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Government and the Value of Culture
dcms

Through much of the past 50 years, art has been properly concerned not to cement national identity but to question it. In that, it continued the great modernist project of 'making strange', of disrupting rather than confirming how we see the world and our place in it".

'Government and the Value of Culture' is remarkable only for its perverse attempt at a conciliatory, flattering appeal to the funded cultural sector for the replication rather than transformation of dominant cultural values. Sadly, even this muted appeal appears radical in the current Scottish cultural policy environment.

'Pathfinder': The End of Housing Benefit?

From February 2004 there are nine areas testing out "Pathfinder" Projects, a new Housing Benefit scheme, the "Local Housing Allowance". These are: Blackpool, Brighton & Hove, Conwy, Coventry, Edinburgh, Leeds, Lewisham, North East Lincolnshire (Cleethorpes), and Teignbridge. If the scheme 'works', whatever they may mean by that, it'll be rolled out nationwide (just like the privatisation of Benefit Centres' responsibilities in the form of Working Links: see www.variant.org.uk/18texts/18workinglinks.html).

The basic idea is that there will be one standard level of Housing Benefit for all claimants in privately rented accommodation, irrespective of their particular rent, depending on the type of property they live in, e.g. bedsit, one-bedroom flat, number of claimants etc. We don't know as yet what this amount will be. Apparently, people whose rent is less than standard will be able to keep the difference. But getting more benefit than your rent won't apply to many people, and once the cheaper landlords know what the standard is they'll be putting their rents up to that level.

This sounds like an excellent mechanism for making places a more expensive place to live than they already are, pushing the rents from the bottom up! It's funny, but when it comes to capping interest rates and loans, the Government understands very well the effects on the market of introducing a ceiling on what suppliers can ask for. They say they'll never introduce a maximum interest-rate to curb the activities of loan sharks, because then all the other moneylenders would raise their interest levels to that maximum level. Isn't that exactly what's going to happen in the case of Housing Benefit?

Further details of the scheme include the payment of rent directly to claimants, instead of the option being there of having it paid to the Landlord. It is almost impossible to find a Landlord in the privately rented sector that'll take a tenant on Housing Benefit as it is (then there's the issue of a deposit and the first month being paid in advance!), and then many of them demand that the payment be made straight from the Council into their pockets. Many Landlords may then accept the Council's lower rent 'assessment', £5 a week or so less than they're demanding, in return for what they think will be regular payments. It doesn't always turn out that way though! (In a highly saturated market, such as in heavily student populated areas, Landlords don't have to accept any shortfall in what they know they can get away with charging, and there is a Claimant's reassessment/reapplication every six months for Housing Benefit with all the delays inherent in that—this also happens with any supposed change in circumstances even when there hasn't been one, such as moving between Jobseekers Allowance and Working Links). By insisting that the burden of payment be on the claimant the Council will be saved loads of administration costs—no wonder they're keen to test the scheme out.

The ideology behind this 'reform'/'deform' stinks. The government openly talks about introducing "Shopping Incentives" for claimants to move into cheaper accommodation. How many Housing Benefit claimants do you know who that live in mansions? This is Social Apartheid. They are explicitly saying that people with less money should be encouraged to move into worse accommodation (and all this when there has been a shift in emphasis to the focusing of benefits to those in low-/under- paid work).

Housing Benefit has been around since 1985. Before that, your Housing costs used to be paid as part of your Benefits, all one payment from one Department of Social Security. In 1994 the Tories introduced a "Housing Benefit Reform" [sic] called the "Local Reference Rent". This is an amount equal to "the average of a range of rents in your locality". It is most often used as a maximum amount above which the Council will pay no Housing Benefit. This is why most claimants have to pay between £5-£10 extra a week in rent out of our giros. The introduction of the new Local Housing Allowance is a further extension of this Thatcherite policy, and will further undermine the already weak position of claimants on the rental market.

Instead of capping the amount of Housing Benefit to be paid, they should be capping the rents Landlords can charge, but no one ever talks about that.

What can be done? We haven't got time now to stop the Councils running "Pathfinder". We do, however, need to set up facilities to monitor the changes and make sure people's complaints get heard, so that the scheme doesn't get rolled out nationwide.

If you have any bad experiences with the new "Local Housing Allowance", definitely make a complaint.

Information from:

AWoL
c/o Brighton & Hove Unemployed Workers Centre
4 Crestway Parade
Brighton BN1 7BL

stopdoleprivatisation@yahoo.co.uk

From racial state to racist state
Ireland on the eve of the citizenship referendum
Ronit Lentin

Introduction: Racism in Ireland, the contradictions

On June 11 2004 the Irish electorate will vote in a referendum to change Article 9 of the Irish Constitution, according to which persons born on the island of Ireland who do not have at least one parent who is an Irish citizen, will not be entitled to Irish citizenship. This article looks at some implications of this referendum to racism and immigration controls in 21st century Ireland.

In June 2003, Michael McDowell, Ireland's Minister of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, within whose responsibility lie both immigration control and government-sponsored antiracism initiatives, stated that Ireland is *not* a racist society. The government's commitment—in itself contradictory—in the Programme for Government to both 'diversity, equality and cultural difference' and to an 'increase in the rate of repatriation (of asylum seekers)', summarises the contradictions inherent in the debate on racism in Ireland. While racism in Ireland is vehemently denied, in-migration is theorised as 'new' and 'sudden', and the effect of state policies on the lives of racialised populations in Ireland is minimised, the commitment to restrict immigration and increase deportations has never been more explicit.

Echoed by a chorus of media commentators, the Minister's insistence that only in the 1990s has Ireland been transformed from a 'nursery of emigrants' to a destination of in-migration, can easily be refuted. Multi-ethnicity, in-migration and racism are not new phenomena: Ireland has always been multi-ethnic; Travellers, black-Irish people, Jewish people and other immigrants have been part of Irish society for centuries, and in-migration had always co-existed with emigration. However, together with other socio-economic and political transformations since the mid-1990s and in particular in the wake of the Belfast Agreement, recent demographic transformations have given rise to new articulations of Irishness, and to new experiences of racism by existing racialised minorities and by new migrant populations alike.

I take racism to mean 'a political system aiming to regulate bodies', rather than merely the consequence of individual prejudice Racism always involves the state and its institutions, never only individuals. My contention is that Ireland has been evolving from a 'racial state', in which 'race' and 'nation' are defined in terms of each other—evident in the ethnically narrow framing of *Bunreacht na hÉireann*—to a racist state, where governmental 'biopolitics' and technologies of regulating immigration and asylum dictate the construction of Irishness. Calling immigrants and asylum seekers progressively 'bogus', 'illegal', and 'economic' discredits them, and via the media, feeds into common sense racism, which manifests in everyday incidents of racial harassment and institutional racial discrimination.

Racial terminology, which is about categorisation and control, constructs the state's response to cultural diversity and the ensuing racism in the wake of the arrival of a relatively small number of immigrants since the 1990s. In addition, 'intercultural' politics construct cultural difference and ethnic minority 'communities' as static, ignoring intra-ethnic heterogeneities and contestations such as class, gender, age, dis/ability and sexuality. Racial state thinking in Ireland has spawned various state-generated euphemisms such as 'non-nationals', and 'Irish born children' (to denote the children citizen of non-EU migrants). Furthermore, state asylum, immigration and inte-

gration policies approximate Foucault's theorisation of the modern nation-state as monitoring and controlling through a series of technologies the nation's biological life.

At the heart of state anti-racism initiatives, such as the KNOW RACISM National Anti-racism Awareness Programme, lies the Canadian model of multiculturalism and the 'politics of recognition' formulated by Charles Taylor with Canada in mind. However, this approach, which highlights racism as arising from 'lack of knowledge, fear or insecurity', erases the link between immigration and racism, conflates 'Irishness' and 'whiteness', and translates 'cultural diversity' to 'Forty shades of Green'.

In this article I point to the contradiction, in contemporary Ireland, between a declared politics of 'a caring society' and an increasing tendency to re-define the nation-state's boundaries by controlling not only in-migration, but also the self-definition of existing ethnic collectives within.

Ireland as a 'racial state'

David Theo Goldberg (*The Racial State*, 2002, Blackwell) posits modern nation-states as 'racial states', which exclude in order to construct homogeneity—which he sees as 'heterogeneity in denial'—while appropriating difference through celebrations of the multicultural. The racial state is *a state of power*, asserting its control over those within the state and excluding others from outside the state. Through constitutions, border controls, the law, policy making, bureaucracy and governmental technologies such as census categorisations, invented histories and traditions, ceremonies and cultural imaginings, modern states, each in its own way, are defined by their power to exclude (and include) in racially ordered terms, to categorise hierarchically, and to set aside. Goldberg posits two traditions of racial states: the first, naturalism, fixes racially conceived 'natives' as premodern, and naturally incapable of progress; the second, historicism, elevates Europeans over primitive or underdeveloped Others as a victory of progress.

Naturalism Irish-style is exemplified in English colonialism, from the seventeenth-century onwards, which racialised the Irish, casting them as bestial, and incapable of progress. While the Irish were naturalised by the British, the Irish state, constitutionally conceived as the space of white, settled men of property, historicises its own racial inferiors. This is achieved firstly (though not exclusively: see for example the racialisation of Irish Travellers, conceived as 'Irish national' though not always as 'white') through governmental technologies of asylum and immigration control, aiming to restore modernity's order just as all certainties—economic, civil, cultural, sexual—collapse; and secondly through biopolitical governmental technologies including regulations governing the lives of migrants, but also equality mechanisms, which reproduce racialised populations as ultimately unequal, since the promise of equality is always conditional.

In *The History of Sexuality, vol. I* Michel Foucault argues that when natural life becomes included in mechanisms of state power, politics turn into biopolitics, the territorial state becomes 'state of population', and the nation's biological life becomes a problem of sovereign power. Through a series of technologies, bio-power creates 'docile bodies', and the population—its welfare, wealth, longevity and health—becomes the ultimate goal of government.

In constructing homogeneities, the state therefore is not only denying its internal hetero-

geneities, it is also a normalising, regulating biopower state. As opposed to scapegoat theories of racism, which argue that under economic and social duress, sub-populations are cordoned off as intruders, blamed and used to deflect anxieties, Foucault's theory of racism is an expression of an ongoing social war nurtured by the biopolitical technologies of purification, making racism internal to the bio-political state.

The Irish state uses racialising technologies by doing all it can to maintain its homogeneity and 'managing' ethnic diversity. However it is not merely 'racial' in its formation and use of practices such as the law, but also 'racist' in terms of using biopower and governmental technologies to control, in particular, though not exclusively, migrant and minority ethnic populations.

The law in the service of the racial state

The law is central to modern state formation, promoting racial categorisation and identification, and shaping national identities through legislating on citizenship rights and immigration controls.

In 2003 the Irish state was contesting accepted definitions of populations. One example is the claim by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform that Travellers are not an ethnic group. It has taken Travellers a long time to be recognised as an ethnic group, yet on October 15 2003 the Minister for Justice can claim that Travellers 'do not constitute a distinct group from the population as a whole in terms of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin', which is why, he argues, 'discrimination against Travellers' was inserted as a 'separate ground' into the Equal Status Act and the Employment Equality Act—combining a biopolitics of 'caring' for Travellers with their discrimination. Further limiting their rights, the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, enacted in 2002, criminalizing Traveller camping on public and private property, gives Gardaí powers to arrest people without warrants, allows property to be confiscated and disposed of and trespassers to be jailed for a month or fined up to €3,000. This is despite the fact that commitments to provide adequate accommodation to Travellers made by the government in its 1995 Task Force on the Travelling Community went largely unfulfilled. In July 2002, the government decided to terminate the funding for the Citizen Traveller project, due, the Irish Traveller Movement claims, to its decision to run an outdoor poster campaign highlighting the negative implications for Travellers of the 'trespass law' and declaring the law 'racist'. Indeed, the decision to end the funding illustrates the contradiction between the racial state's naturalist approach to indigenous minorities and its alleged commitment to anti-racism, based on a 'biopolitics', according to which the role of the state is to 'manage' the population.

Furthermore, the Irish state is employing immigration legislation in order to prevent migrants from gaining equal access to the state. Thus the 1996 Refugee Act, hailed as 'progressive' at the time, was superseded by the 1999 Immigration Bill and the 2000 Illegal Immigration (Trafficking) Act, and was itself amended in 2003. The amended 2003 Refugee Act focuses on applicants' credibility, mandates finger printing of all applicants, makes provisions for detention, and disallows applications from countries designated as 'safe countries'. The amended Illegal Immigration (Trafficking) Act, according to the Irish Refugee Council, shifts the focus from identifying persons in need of protection, 'towards techniques devised to *screen out as many applications as possible*'…

A poignant illustration of the use of the law in controlling the citizenship rights of migrant populations is the relationship between the Irish state and migrant parents of children born in Ireland and who are therefore Irish citizens, as per the amended Article 2 of the Irish Constitution, as part of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement:

It is the entitlement and birthright of every person born in the island of Ireland, which includes its islands and seas, to be part of the Irish nation. That is also the entitlement of all persons otherwise qualified in accordance with law to be citizens of Ireland. Furthermore, the Irish nation cherishes its special affinity with people of Irish ancestry living abroad who share its cultural identity and heritage.

In 2004, the government is proposing to amend Article 9 of the Constitution aiming to deprive children born in Ireland to migrant parents despite the fact that citizenship was constitutionally granted to anyone who was a citizen of Saorstát Éireann (the Irish Free State) before the 1937 constitution. The 1956 and 1986 Nationality and Citizenship Act grants citizenship to anyone born in the 32 counties of Ireland, except children of diplomats. Thus granting automatic citizenship to people born in Ireland as part of the GFA was nothing new. What was new is their explicit entitlement to membership of 'the nation', a rather nebulous entity. Called a 'constitutional quirk' or a 'constitutional loophole', the amendment meant, as was ruled in the 1990 Fajujonu case, that migrant parents of children born in Ireland had a claim to remain in Ireland to provide 'care and company' to their citizen child. This process of application for permission to remain was overturned in January 2003 when the Supreme Court ruled in the Lobe and Osayande appeal, that 'non-national' parents no longer had a strong case to be allowed to remain in Ireland to bring up their child, privileging the State's right to deport, and the 'integrity of the asylum process' over these citizen children's rights, although it did not rescind the citizenship right of persons born in the island of Ireland.

The media debates following the January 2003 Supreme Court ruling exposed a host of contradictions. One contradiction is between nationality and citizenship. The *jus sanguinis* (blood-based) rights to Irish citizenship allows up to third generation Irish emigrants to claim Irish citizenship, while at the same time, the state is contesting the *jus solis* (soil-based) citizenship rights accorded to children of migrants by the Constitution. The second contradiction was between two constitutional entities, 'the nation' and 'the family', termed in Article 41.1.1 of the Constitution as 'the natural primary and fundamental unit group of Society'. The court's ruling in the case illustrates the centrality of the law as a governmental technology deployed by the racial state. Chief Justice Ronan Keane ruled that the State 'was entitled to take the view that the orderly system of dealing with immigration and asylum applications should not be undermined by persons seeking to take advantage' of the system.

On 19 February 2003, the Minister of Justice removed the process whereby an immigrant parent could seek permission to remain in Ireland solely on the grounds of having a child citizen, making 11,000 migrant families now precluded from applying for residency candidates for deportation and thousands of Irish citizen children candidates for removal from Ireland with their deported parents to foreign countries, where their safety and entitlements cannot be guaranteed, threatening the unity of the Irish 'nation'.

The proposed amendment was sought so as to defend 'the integrity of Irish citizenship', in response to a supposed 'crisis' in Dublin's maternity hospitals where, according to Department of Justice claims, 'non-national' women arrive at the late stages of their pregnancies to have babies who, in line with Irish law, become Irish citizens. However, the roots of the Government's stance was voiced by the Minister of Justice already in 1999.

Indeed, defending his performance on immigration, which came under attack from the opposition, former Minister for Justice John O'Donoghue said in November 1999: 'One reality—hard, though nevertheless a reality—is that if we were to apply an immigration policy which is significantly more flexible and liberal in its features than those applying in the rest of the European Community, there is a very little doubt that, over a period—and probably a relatively short period—we would be left to deal with an immigration inflow which we simply could not cope with… It is an extremely important and extremely complex issue . It needs to be addressed in a well-informed, comprehensive and humanitarian way'.

In 2004, after five years of deliberating on how to deal with this 'extremely important and extremely complex issue', the Irish Government decides that the most 'humanitarian' way is to hold a constitutional referendum on who would be allowed to be a citizen while at the same time taking rights away from children. Reacting to the government's restrictive immigration policies, anti-racism activist Pat Guerin was worried already in 1999 about the treatment of non-national parents of Irish children: 'Theoretically we could see a situation where Irish infants could see their parents deported'. In 2003-4 his prediction became reality with the deportations of scores of migrant parents and the removal of their Irish citizen children.

Facts, figures, myths

Part of state-inspired racism and xenophobia is the massaging of immigration figures and the tendency to homogenise migrant populations in negative terms. According to the 2002 census, 5.8 per cent of the population are 'non-national', though official asylum and immigration statistics are often deliberately misleading, contradictory and incomplete. The racial state's relation to asylum seekers is equally contradictory. While most asylum seekers are not allowed to work or access third level education, they *are* entitled to vote in local and European elections. The irony is that while voting for the local and European elections on June 11 2003, migrants may vote beside Irish citizens voting in a referendum to take away the citizenship rights of their children…

Indeed, although asylum seekers are the most disempowered group, whose right to work and access to education and training are severely limited, and although they are marginalized, excluded, poor, and, in many respects, lack freedom, many members of the Irish public believe, a belief not denied by officialdom, that asylum seekers are '90 per cent bogus', and that they 'take Irish jobs'.

A similar ambiguity exists in relation to labour migrants. In 2000 Tánaiste Mary Harney said that a failure to address Ireland's labour shortage could undermine its economic growth, since the availability of skilled workers was central to the concerns of multinational companies making investment decisions. However, more recently she indicated that with the EU enlargement, fewer non-EU workers would be needed. State regulations in relation to migrant labour are clearly dictated by its market needs, not by the human factor, another obvious illustration of the control exercised by the racial state over its boundaries.

Despite perceptions that migrants 'take Irish jobs', migrant workers make up only 2 per cent of the Irish labour force, hardly an 'influx'. Migrant workers not only pay taxes and social security contributions and purchase goods and services, they are also vital to the maintenance of the health system and the hospitality sector. But contrary to former Justice minister John O'Donoghue's claim that Ireland's migration system was 'the most open and flexible in Europe', studies for the Immigrants Council of Ireland and for the Equality Authority criticise the government's market-driven labour migration policy as two-tiered, and shows that most labour migrants experience discrimination.

Moreover, the state-spawned language of harmonisation, integration, management and mainstreaming in policy recommendations regarding migrant labour, is part of the construction of homogeneity as 'heterogeneity in denial' on the one hand, and of a multicultural discourse of 'racelessness', denoting a shift from biologically driven racism to culturalist conceptions of race, on the other. Assuming an ability to solve almost any problem put before them – including immigration – Irish state actors disavow the everyday racism experienced by racialised populations in the name of a universalism which asserts control over all dimensions of social life.

Conclusion: Multiculturalism, 'integration', and the promise of 'racelessness'

In contemporary multi-ethnic Ireland 'multiculturalism' is a common linguistic currency, but the experiences of 'the multiculturals' disavow their everyday, institutional and state racist undertones, in the name of racelessness. Assimilationism in relation to immigrants is unproblematically termed 'integration' by state agencies implementing multiculturalist (or 'interculturalist') policies, which ignore the multicultural illusion that face to face communication between the dominant and the dominated can subvert the structures of power. Indeed, by stressing integration as a 'two way process', the Irish state puts equal onus on migrants to play their part, and unequal power relations are not mentioned. In constructing immigrants and asylum seekers as both 'new' and a 'problem', 'the nation' is conceived not only as homogeneous, but also as 'invaded' by 'floods' of refugees, and therefore as arguably 'porous'.

The Irish racial state, while promoting racelessness, is always about its own white (Christian, settled) superiority. While declaring its commitment to equality, care and interculturalism—the Irish version of racelessness—the Irish racial state has already begun deporting migrant parents whose applications for residency on the ground of having an Irish citizen child have failed, together with their Irish citizen children. Instead of a language of 'integration' and 'interculturalism', I propose an interrogation of how the Irish nation can become other than white (Christian and settled), by privileging the voices of the racialised and subverting state immigration but also integration policies. Stage one of such interrogation would be to do all we can to defeat the citizenship referendum on June 11.

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Dancehall Dreams
Tom Jennings

Anyone keeping an eye on patterns of youth style in Britain over the last ten years cannot fail to have been struck by the increasing profile of Black music and its spinoffs in the media, advertising, fashion and leisure sectors, and, indeed, in spoken idiom and worldviews. Current styles were to some extent carried in from America with hip-hop—now by far the biggest-selling popular music genre in the world—and have blended with local vernaculars, steadily spreading into and irrevocably changing all youth cultural fields. The most obvious marker of the strength of influence is the degree of commercial appropriation—where all manner of celebrities have scrambled to affiliate; pop superstars copy the format to bolster their street-cred; and any number of crassly manufactured boy/girl band and pop idol-type embarrassments flood the teenybop market.

Major grass-roots impacts, however, have been in pirate radio and especially on dance culture—where UK garage[1] and now R&B/hip hop have severely eroded the hegemony of house, techno and other 'rave' forms in superclubs and dance bars in many UK cities. The new marketing category of 'urban music'[2] approximates this demographic well enough, reflecting both the multicultural atmosphere of urban centres and the generic hybridity of sounds which variously blend rap, soul, reggae, calypso and bhangra (among others). Under such pressure from consumers and MTV, and from a rising tide of home-grown production and performing talent, the mainstream UK industry is finally failing to sustain its historic policy of granting only periodic novelty value to urban music, which now dominates the Top 20 and provides most of those hits not manipulated into place through media hype and the complicity between record companies and retail cartels.

Most of the biggest chart successes of the past couple of years in the urban music field focus on the twin themes of the local club and neighbourhood environment, and sexual play and relationships. In terms of the latter, while heterosexual romance has been a core element of teenage pop culture since the 1950s, never before has there been such consistent questioning of sexual conduct and motivation and such sustained foregrounding of women's empowerment. The intensity of the hypersexualisation of young women in all mainstream media makes these issues particularly problematic, so that pictures of seductive passive bimbos often win out in productions where the record company's commercial agenda and the (not inconsiderable) misogyny of artists or producers are paramount. But, as with the censorship debates among feminists in the

1970s and '80s,[3] the implications of women's sexual expression and autonomy, and their representation in a pornographic era, are by no means simple. Urban music is therefore one compelling forum in which the practical translation of these issues into the daily real and mediated lives of our younger generations is taking place.[4]

Furthermore, the fact that the disco, nightclub, house- and street-party are so often the representational sites for reflection on and negotiation of these matters implies that the dance context is standing for society in general—a functional, public, community space, hedged in by institutional constraints and social conflict, to be sure, but where collective cultural expression and personal fulfilment is still possible. When commercial pressures dictate the erasure of any realistic specificity of social class and geography, the outcome tends to be laughable yuppie fantasies of upmarket havens populated by vacuous fashion clotheshorses. Even then, as above, the lyrical and thematic content of urban music performance, along with its assertive bravura, can usually be relied upon to shine through the glossy sheen. Better still, more openly political commentary regularly creeps into the material. And far from meeting resistance from consumers preoccupied with their privatised hedonistic pleasures—as presupposed by the industry and most critics—such content may be embraced if it is perceived as relevant and true to the lives of both performers and audiences. In effect, the ethics of our intimate lives are socialised in the public sphere of the dance, so that wider questions of social power and control may be woven in—provided that the setting is felt to be sufficiently local, communal and (hence) personal.

The everyday ordinariness of place and the joint involvement of audience and musicians as performers in the urban dance event recall the community, dialogic, participative nature of many Black musical traditions.[5] These elements appear to have survived even into today's over-commodified pop music, especially in those niche markets which have the most direct antecedents in the 'original', 'authentic' grass-roots forms of R&B, reggae and hip hop—musics developed and produced by and for lower class people for the express purpose of dancing. What follows discusses some important aspects of this history so as to sketch out their significance now that these marginal cultural forms have migrated, on the surface at least, to the centre of the popular mainstream—starting with a well-known recent example.

Where Is The Love?

A dramatic index of the profile of urban music appeared during the height of the UK's mass mobilisations against war in Iraq in 2003.

Notes

1. A relatively downtempo drum & bass derivative focusing on dance rather than, say, the manic raves of junglism, or avant garde taste and pretensions to being 'the new jazz'. Note that UK garage is primarily a southern British phenomenon with sparse interest elsewhere.

2. A US euphemism coined to avoid all reference to race and class; the more forthright British 'Music of Black Origins' (MOBO) being questionable for, among other reasons, seeming somewhat backward-looking as well as racially essentialist.

3. A comprehensive analysis of which can be found in Lynne Segal & Mary McIntosh (eds.), *Sex Exposed: Sexuality and the Pornography Debate* (Virago, 1992).

4. For varying blends of intelligence, self-possession and conformity to sexual objectification, see, for instance, current young UK urban artists Floetry, Ms Dynamite, Jamelia and Mis-teeq; as against pure product like Sugababes, Girls Aloud, Liberty X, etc.

5. See, for example, Cheryl Keyes, *Rap Music and Street Consciousness* (University of Illinois Press, 2002).

6. For excellent accounts of their activity, see: 'A Phenomenal Anti-War Movement?' *Aufheben*, No. 12, 2004, pp.28-35 [www.geocities.com/aufheben2]; and 'The Anti-War Movement in the North East', *Organise!*, No. 61, 2003, pp.7-10 http://www.afed.org.uk

7. Placing them in the jazzy, bluesy, Black consciousness, 'alternative' tradition—represented most famously by De La Soul and A Tribe Called Quest—which developed alongside hardcore and gangsta rap in the late 1980s.

8. A small selection of such bestselling hitmakers in the past year are: the soul/funk of Blu Cantrell; R. Kelly's loverman anthems; Beyoncè Knowles' hip-hop-disco; Sean Paul's 'sing-jay' reggae dancehall/lover's rock; Fatman Scoop's party perennials; Dr Dre's trademark funk under 50 Cent; the Neptunes' electronica, e.g. in Kelis' 'Milkshake'; Kevin Lyttle's carnival hits; Jamelia's ironic pop-R&B; the 'dirty South' hip-hop rhythm of Usher's 'Yeah'; Alicia Keys' evocations of classic soul; and the latter's exuberant sampling by Kanye West, e.g. in Twista's 'Slow Jamz'.

9. So, in political as well as personal preference, I wholeheartedly agree that: "If I can't dance; it's not *my* revolution!" (Emma Goldman, *Living My Life*, Knopf, 1931; see also Alix Kates Shulman (ed.), *Red Emma Speaks*, Wildwood House, 1979).

10. There is very little useful attention to these matters in the music literature, apart from the selective elitism of fandom and subcultures. Jacques Attali's fascinating *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (trans. Brian Massumi, University of Manchester Press, 1985), first published in 1976, anticipates the rise of hip-hop rituals and their grass-roots flouting of traditional expertise. Similarly, Simon Frith tentatively questions the demarcation of production and consumption in *Performance Rites: Evaluating Popular Music* (Oxford University Press, 1996), though seeming not to notice that hip-hop praxis had long since transcended such theory.

11. A recent account of R&B history can be found in: Brian Ward, *Just My Soul Responding: Rhythm & Blues, Black Consciousness and Race Relations* (UCL Press, 1998). Craig Werner discusses the social and political interactions of 'white' and 'Black' music in *A Change Is Gonna Come: Music, Race and the Soul of America* (Payback Press, 2000); and Paul Gilroy decisively strips the interpretive paradigm of its US blinkers in *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Verso, 1993).

12. For excellent writing on classic and contemporary soul and R&B see Mark Anthony Neal's *What the Music Said: Black Popular Music and Black Public Culture* (Routledge, 1998) and *Songs in the Key of Black Life: A Rhythm & Blues Nation* (Routledge, 2003). Perspectives on the development of hip-hop can be found in Alan Light (ed.), *The Vibe History of Hip Hop* (Plexus, 1999).

13. Bakari Kitwana gives an unflinching account of the contemporary pressures on US inner city Black communities, and their reflection in cultural patterns, in *The Hip Hop Generation: Young Blacks and the Crisis in African Culture* (Basic Civitas Books, 2002); and Todd Boyd's illuminating *The New H.N.I.C.: The Death of Civil Rights and the Reign of Hip-Hop* (New York University Press, 2003) discusses the political and cultural disillusionments and renaissances associated with rap music. Meanwhile, an important corrective to romantic notions of 'street' authenticity can be found in Keith Negus, 'The Music Business and Rap: Between the Streets and the Executive Suite' (*Cultural Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1999).

14. Mento was a creolisation, dating from the slavery period, of European folk dance with African rhythms and vocals, as originally were merengue, calypso, and mambo—all of which regularly cross-fertilised with newer latin and jazz styles.

15. Grant Fared's 'Wailin' Soul: Reggae's Debt to Black American Music' (in: Monique Guillory & Richard C. Green (eds.) *Soul: Black Power,*

Alongside the public debate and media frenzy, the pop music chart, commercial radio and MTV were all dominated for several months by the Black Eyed Peas' breakthrough single, 'Where Is The Love?'. Although such a phenomenon may not be a conventional measure of the depth of political feeling in society, the success of this song raises a number of questions—not least because a notable feature of the protests throughout the UK was the widespread presence of schoolchildren on demonstrations and other actions. While their involvement was a complete surprise to the established groups who organised the set-piece events, the kids also showed through their autonomy, determination and imagination that they had no intention of conforming to the usual, drearily predictable and aimless marching, vaguely liberal sloganeering and applauding of celebrity speakers.[6] Given that the mainstream singles market caters largely to teenagers and younger children, 'Where Is The Love' can thus be interpreted as a kind of 'anthem' to the concerns that led them to bunk off school and disrupt the public daily life of urban centres around the country (as well as spending pocket money on this particular cultural commodity).

In terms of musical content the song combines rather undistinguished R&B and hip-hop sensibilities, resembling the by-now routine radio-friendly muzak production intended to appeal to the widest audience while offending the fewest advertisers. However, the lyrics hark back to the golden era of soul as musical accompaniment to 1960s/'70s social consciousness concerning war and the state of society and the world (Marvin Gaye, Curtis Mayfield et al), and the video's narratives highlight poverty, police repression and inner city blight. Combining its catchy chorus with protest, lament, nostalgia and all-round righteous feelgood positivity, the resulting melange evidently struck chords with listeners of several generations and perspectives. It even reached DJ playlists in urban club environments where the prevailing 'cool' might have been expected to rule it out on the grounds of sheer naffness alone.

In fact, the Black Eyed Peas are a good example of rap's progress into the pop music mainstream. Comprising Will.I.Am, Taboo and Apl.de.ap, the group originated in the LA underground scene. Their early recordings and energetic live shows were well-received by the specialist press,[7] and their second album (*Bridging the Gap*, 2000) cemented their reputation with guest appearances by established R&B/hip-hop artists. The aspirations to greater commercial crossover have been amply fulfilled by the latest release, *Elephunk* (2003), and its three hit singles so far. Now with a female vocalist (Fergie) adding melody and harmony to musical forays into reggae and rock as well as the funk, R&B and hip hop influences, the performative styles have also expanded into a frenetic pantomime clowning in the video and stage acts (possibly trying to appeal to even younger children). The two follow-up singles ('Shut Up' and 'Hey Mama') tackle themes more familiar to contemporary R&B and hip hop than the generalised fluffy humanism of 'Where Is The Love?'—namely, sexual relations and the aesthetics of the party—but retain the explicit ethical and political inflections characteristic of all BEP's work.

The Life and Soul of the Party

Such concerns aren't necessarily so clear or up front in other major urban hit singles in 2003/4. But scratching the surface of the lyrical narratives reveals the same organising metaphors around love, pain and party, tied specifically to public sociality.[8] Simultaneously, the slick and apparently seamless musical textures juxtapose and integrate dense sonic references from at least six decades of Black cultural innovations, along with the more recent production devices of pop music manufacture. A genealogy through which to understand these distinctive current sounds of gangsta rap, R&B, ragga, nu-soul and neo-soca should have the capacity to do justice to all of this. Fortunately,

the mutually interacting resonance of (material) locality and (bodily) pleasure—where neither can be taken for granted—provide the grounds for glimpsing the past, present and future role of lower class dance; not as a corollary, or addendum, to some intrinsic aesthetic sublime, but at the centre of musical creation and practice.[9]

This is a subject almost universally scorned (on paper): not only in the orthodox snobbery of elite scholars and their high cultures and canons, but also in the faithful dissent of avant gardes, and the revisionism of rock criticism and its subcultures, as well as the supposedly subversive fields of media and cultural studies. The genius (or otherwise) of musicians and recording artists and their travails in the petit bourgeois and corporate marketplaces are, here, the fools gold of interpretation. Whereas what the art means in the corporeal consciousness of the dancehall—where both mind-body boundaries and distinctions between performers and audiences are blurred, rather than rigidly enforced by disciplinary discourse—is ignored or treated merely as 'effect'; as 'reception'. By extension, the significance of the lives of ordinary people, culture as active practice, and politics as the development of potential in particular material circumstances, are all obscured—allowing the conclusion to be drawn that the entire field must therefore be left to 'experts'; to forge and then to decipher.[10]

Returning to the development of contemporary urban music, a sensible anchor would seem to be the American folk tradition of the blues, which became transformed into an urban dance form during the great migrations of Black people into the industrial areas of the West, Midwest and Northern USA after the Second World War. Taking advantage of the dissemination of technological and infrastructural changes in sound production and distribution (electrification, media, recording, etc.), 1950s R&B quickly became 'classic'. Spreading inexorably into all geographical and cultural areas, mutually influencing and melding with jazz, latin, gospel and country styles, it then provided a foundation for virtually all subsequent pop and rock genres in the 'Black Atlantic' regions.[11]

The incredible fertility of R&B was a mixed blessing, however, in a period when possibilities and mechanisms for the mass commercial exploitation of organic culture were perfected. Its trajectory into rock, and those of soul into the pop mainstream and funk into upmarket disco, to some degree paralleled the liberal promises of the civil rights era for assimilation, aspiration and respectability; but utterly dislocated the musical expression from its core lower class bases. The legendary status of Michael Jackson and Prince just about kept 1980s pulses beating amid the bloodless middle-of-the-road showbiz balladeering that soul had sunk to. Meanwhile the new, and compositionally even more promiscuous, hip-hop underground re-energised the hearts and minds (and dancing shoes) of inner city youth struggling to adapt to the emerging patterns of post-industrial decline and oppression.[12]

But as hip-hop's entrepreneurs took on the

Politics and Pleasure, New York University Press, 1998) stresses the R&B connection. Meanwhile, Norman Stolzoff's magnificent *Wake the Town and Tell the People: Dancehall Culture in Jamaica* (Duke University Press, 2000) is practically unique in understanding popular culture in terms of those it is most popular amongst. Note also that from the continuous Jamaican diaspora came the New York cohort at the forefront of early hip-hop (see: Cheryl Keyes, note 5); and that the Jamaican 'DJ' is equivalent to a hip-hop 'MC' or rapper.

16. Louis Chude-Sokei's 'The Sound of Culture: Dread Discourse and Jamaican Sound Systems' (in Joseph K. Adjaye & Adrianne R. Andrews (eds.) *Language, Rhythm and Sound: Black Popular Cultures into the Twenty-First Century*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997) details how the discourses of race, class and geography were pivotal in the development of contemporary dancehall—showing how the compromise formations of roots reggae were increasingly unable to keep up with the lived experience of lower class Jamaicans (wherever they had moved to). Today's global hybridity and mobility of digital production, soundwaves and personnel mean that dancehall can thrive in and satisfy local reggae scenes, speak to current socio-cultural conditions, and cross over national and commercial borders. Concluding that this modern history shows how: "[R]ace is deconstructed as a universal principle and is fragmented by culture and differential histories of colonialism" (p.201)—Chude-Sokei thus reinforces Paul Gilroy's profound critique of the philosophy and politics of all racial(ist) essentialisms (in *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line*, Harvard University Press, 2000).

17. Rocksteady was a somewhat downtempo and upmarket verion of ska giving space for love songs and laments as well as the energy, anger and bombast. Likewise, lovers rock was a (mainly UK-conceived) 1970s form using roots music but allowing romantic balladeers back into the dance. Ragga is the UK term for modern reggae dancehall music.

18. While raunchy sexual chatter is nothing new (see Stephen Nye's sleeve notes to the classic reggae collected in the *Trojan X-Rated Box Set*, Sanctuary Records, 2002), its ragga expression raises the stakes far beyond prurience or coy, 'seaside postcard' naughtiness. Moreover, the direct and deliberate assertion by both men and women of working class and Black women's beauty, strength, pride and sexual autonomy resonates much further afield than do the perhaps rather more parochial socio-political references of the other lyrical styles.

19. From 'Virginity Revamped: Representations of Female Sexuality in the Lyrics of Bob Marley and Shabba Ranks' (in Kwesi Owusu (ed.) *Black British Culture and Society: A Text Reader*. Routledge, 2000, p.351). Shabba Ranks is notorious for abandoning his grass-roots support to 'sell out' for Grammy Awards and million-selling crossover albums; and for naively proclaiming on prime-time UK youf TV ('The Word') a version of the horrific West Indian fundamentalist homophobia. This blunder was seized upon as an excuse to excoriate and excommunicate all modern reggae by rock critics more comfortable with the idealisation of roots reggae. All cultural and historical context was ignored; not least the allusive utility of sexualised hatred encapsulating the disgust felt by the rich towards the 'emasculated' poor, who tragically displace this into attacks on their own 'others'. A discussion of homophobia in rap can be found in Farai Chideya, 'Homophobia: Hip Hop's Black Eye' in Kevin Powell (ed.) *Step Into A World: A Global Anthology of the New Black Literature*, Wiley, 2000).

20. In: *Noises in the Blood: Orality, Gender and the 'Vulgar' Body of Jamaican Popular Culture* (Macmillan Caribbean, 1993)—a landmark text situating sound system technique, DJ vocals and audience involvement not only as intrinsic to dancehall's social fabric, but also as a significant, sophisticated, logical progression from all prior Jamaican lower-class cultural patterns and literary/poetic traditions.

21. Warwick University, Centre for Caribbean Studies seminar, 21 January 2003 [www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/ccs/events/seminars/lyrics/]. Grant also emphasises that many dancehall lyrics do simply repeat and reinforce misogyny; while Stolzoff (note 15) cautions that in many dancehalls only glimpses (at best) of the potential for female autonomy are realised in practice. Interestingly, the UK scene tends to be better represented in terms of both women's empowerment and DJ 'Queens'—a current example on the recording side of things being Trinidad-born Queen Omega's excellent *Away From Babylon* (Greenhouse, 2004) with its blend of conscious roots and ragga styles. The feature film *Babymother* (dir. Julian Henriques, 1998) effectively explores many of the above themes as played out in the diaspora setting of North London (see: Rachel Moseley-Wood, 'Colonizin Englan in Reverse', *Visual Culture in Britain*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2004).

22. Although the suppression of women's involvement in rap still is a corporate commonplace, the specialist subcultural press and other ancillary industry sectors are, if anything, even more culpable—particularly in the UK. As for the disciplines of hip-hop, girls' games, for example, were part of the first national 'Fresh Fest' US concert tours before being repressed from the collective hip-hop memory (see Kyra D. Gaunt, 'Translating Double-Dutch to Hip-Hop: The Musical Vernacular of Black Girls' Play', in Adjaye & Andrews, note 16). Finally, the community orientation of commercial rap has been difficult to track, partly because the biographies of the thousands of urban areas where hip hop is substantially embraced vary so wildly. Murray Forman provides a scrupulous analysis of the importance of local markers of the ghetto, in *The 'Hood Comes First: Race, Space and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop* (Wesleyan University Press, 2002).

23. To considerable effect, for example with Roxanne Shante's legendary dissing of all comers (male and female) setting the scene for youthful

media and music industry and marched into radio stations, rock venue stadia and recording contracts, their attention shifted away from the almost insurmountable difficulties in maintaining a neighbourhood presence in embattled urban environments suffering the government withdrawal of public service to coincide with influxes of guns, drugs and ever more vicious paramilitary policing. Nevertheless, as rap matured it gradually reincorporated all manner of Black traditions which seemed to have been thoroughly 'lost' from the ghetto.[13] It was only a matter of time before the new crop of producers colonising the pop mainstream underpinned R&B vocals with rap's infectious, bass-heavy beats to cater to new club spaces in which to throw parties. And so, since the end of the 1980s, the local grass roots have increasingly come out again across the globe to dance. Mind you, in Kingston, Jamaica, they'd been rocking more or less non-stop since the fifties.

Routes and Cultures

Jamaica's indigenous 'mento' styles had been increasingly tinged with other Caribbean and American musics in the first half of the twentieth century.[14] But R&B took over, just as in the US, among the burgeoning urban poor in the fifties; whereas DJs and sound systems, rather than live shows, fed the dancehalls as Jamaican performers either emigrated or staffed the fledgling tourist industry. So, the exclusively 'downtown' sound system 'blues dances' were built musically, infrastructurally and demographically on R&B, and, with uptempo percussion and jazz flourishes, they nurtured the 1960s dance revelation of ska. This was both the first purely Jamaican popular form and an openly political expression of the new 'rude boy' working-/underclass faced with the suffocating postcolonial legacy of a feudal ruling autocracy and fundamentalist christianity. These cultural developments driven by the lower classes thus not only birthed the embryonic expressions of all reggae and the major performative innovations of hip-hop, but crystallised a series of overarching social and political struggles too.[15]

The subsequent broadening of Jamaican music from ska and rocksteady to roots reggae quickly enlisted the Rastafari religion brought by the rural poor, along with 'burru' (African drumming) and ganja, into the Kingston ghettoes. As class segregation faltered, and Garveyite Black nationalists and middle class urban youth became involved, the lyrics presented an increasingly powerful critique of class, race and nation as articulated by the conservative elites—whose political/criminal factions have persistently co-opted and manipulated the reggae industry ever since. Then—while the phenomenal international success of Bob Marley led the transitional phase of roots to be misinterpreted abroad as the culmination of Jamaican lower class expression—the Kingston producers and DJs beat something of a retreat to the studios as street violence shut many of the main dancehalls, temporarily muting the sound systems. The remarkable creativity of the 1970s evolution of dub, mixing, juggling, toasting and other production innovations—often for smaller parties as well as radio and recording purposes, and always with their effectivity in the dancehall in mind—nourished the home market and exile communities in North America and the UK; etched templates for hip-hop and ragga experimentation; and set the scene for the reggae dancehall renaissance.[16]

If anything, the political turmoil was even more brutal into the 1980s. But enough of an equilibrium developed for the dancehalls to reassert their central role in the lives of ordinary Jamaicans—while infrastructural and technological change, political (=gang) affiliations, and cash earned from reggae's overseas outposts all gave the sound systems even more clout. The spectrum of musical styles for selectors to choose from encompassed rocksteady, roots, lovers rock, dub and the new synthesised dance rhythms of ragga, along with all the new US imports.[17] Perhaps reflecting greater
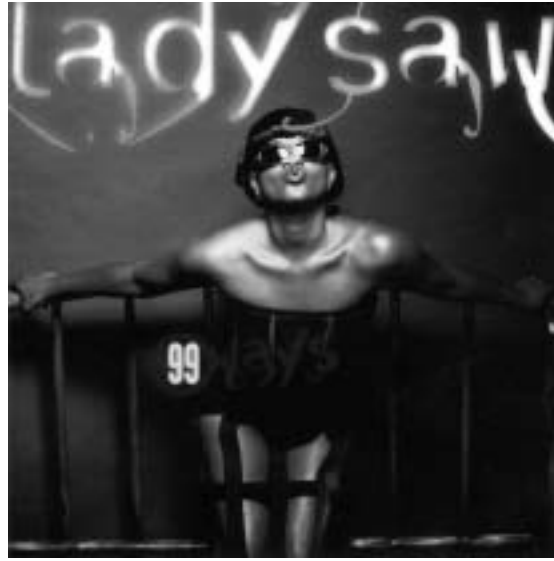
cosmopolitanism as well as confidence, the dancehall event could now express more openly than ever before—including in the wider public realms of the media—its own class-specific preoccupations and desires. Ever since, modern gangster 'gun-talk', the neo-Rasta Bobo DJs' insurrectionary spiritualism, and the extreme sexual licence of slackness, have jostled for the engagement of crowds showing no concern for, or interest in, traditional bourgeois and religious standards and sensitivities.[18]

The redoubled focus on sexuality was the prime key to dancehall's effortless intimacy with its increasingly secular communities—not least those overseas where the baleful grip of Old Testament morality had ceased to hold so much sway. A revealing comparison of Shabba Ranks and Bob Marley by Jamaican scholar Carolyn Cooper exposes the archaic and reactionary gender politics coexisting with otherwise revolutionary material in roots. Noting that most male lyricists of all reggae generations tend to indulge in the patriarchal objectification of woman as property, Cooper nevertheless emphasises that—despite being rare in privileging mature sexual love as a necessary feature of any truly radical Rasta project—Marley's outlook also confirms the traditional chauvinism of the nigh-on ubiquitous madonna-versus-whore dichotomy. Whereas the obscenities of ragga, far from being "a devaluation of female sexuality ... [are] a reclamation of active, adult female sexuality from the entrapping passivity of sexless Victorian virtue".[19]

Nor should there be any suspicion that women merely 'receive' this attention passively in the dancehall. Although reggae's sidelining of women as stage performers or recording artists has often amounted to outright exclusion, during the dance event women are actively central—indeed, slack lyrics make little sense without their and the DJs' fully mutual call and response. Carolyn Cooper's crucial 'Slackness Hiding from Culture: Erotic Play in the Dancehall'[20] illuminates the complementary rhetorical—and literal—functions of dirty talk in the DJ's oral stage art and dirty movement in the cauldron of the dance. Temporarily escaping their (more or less) embittering daily grind, local women dress up for the party and conduct themselves wholly on their own terms—deciding when, to what and with whom to 'grind' (i.e. dance), setting the tone for the success of the entire night. Parading the sexiest gear and most gymnastic contortions, the haughtily intimidating 'dancehall divas' clear space for all the women present to enjoy themselves without feeling beseiged by men.

Better yet, these relatively subtle and implicit subversions of masculinist privilege perpetrated by women in the dancehall are openly and loudly celebrated in the raw power and lyrics of female DJs and their full frontal assaults on the hypocrisy, double dealing and everyday oppression enacted by men, money and society. Though regrettably few in number, artists such as Patra, Lady Saw and Tanya Stephens have always been among the most popular with Jamaican dancehall participants. In '"Gyal You Body Good!": The Dynamics of Female Empowerment in Jamaican Dancehall Lyrics',†Kala Grant argues that the lyrical negotiations of class and gender fashioned by

womanists like Salt 'N' Pepa to dismiss male adolescent arrogance, assert their own desires and re-emphasise the dance interaction as the most appropriate venue for such activities.

24. Building understanding of wider social and political issues from responses to the most dramatic or immediately felt constraints, women classic jazz and blues singers as well as rappers were more likely to start from love and relationships (see Tricia Rose, 'Bad Sistas: Black Women Rappers and Sexual Politics in Rap Music', in: *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*, Wesleyan University Press, 1994). This compares to the police and economic violence perceived as dominant in their lives by men, whose treatment of women in terms of refuge from and defence against this experience then has its own repercussions (see Ch. 4 in Kitwana, note 13). For details of the establishment by women of their positions as rap artists, see 'First Ladies' by Cristina Veran (in *Vibe Hip Hop Divas* , Plexus, 2001—which also contains short essays on many of the most famous women MCs).

25. Bell Hooks writes clearly on the poison of the commercial agendas, for example in 'Selling Hot Pussy' (in *Black Looks: Race and Representation*, Turnaround Press, 1992) and 'Spending Culture: Marketing the Black Underclass' (in Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations, Routledge, 1995). Gaunt (note 22) discusses the deployment of heterosexual discourse for purposes of autosexuality in dance and in women's dialogue; and discussions of lower-class feminism in rap can be found in Imani Perry's 'It's my thang and I'll swing it the way that I feel!' (in Gail Dines & Jean M. Humez (eds.), *Gender, Race and Class in Media*, Sage, 1995); Ch. 7 in Keyes (note 5); and Rose (note 24).

26. A demographic well known to be the most attracted to cultural commodities combining violent and sexist imagery in rap and elsewhere. For more on gangsta rap and misogyny, see: bell hooks, 'Gangsta Culture' (in *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations*, Routledge, 1995); Ch. 4 in Russell Potter, *Spectacular Vernaculars: Hip Hop and the Politics of Postmodernism* (State University of New York Press, 1995); and my 'Br(other) Rabbit's Tale' (in Variant, no. 17, 2003).

27. Concerning the risks of recuperation into traditional sexism, see, for example: Imani Perry's 'Who(se) am I: Ownership, Identity and Multitextual Readings of Women in Hip Hop' (in: Dines & Humez (eds.), *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text-Reader*, 2nd ed., Sage, 2002; and Joan Morgan's autobiographical *When Chickenheads Come Home to Roost: My Life as a Hip Hop Feminist* (Simon & Schuster, 1999). Examples from hip-hop influenced cinema include *Just Another Girl on the I.R.T.* (dir. Leslie Harris, 1992, see: AndrÈ Willis, 'A Womanist Turn on the Hip-Hop Theme', in Adjaye & Andrews, note 16; and Tricia Rose, 'Rewriting the Pleasure/Danger Dialectic: Black Female Teenage Sexuality in the Popular Imagination', in Elizabeth Long (ed.), *From Sociology to Cultural Studies: New Perspectives*, Blackwell, 1997), and to a lesser extent Girl 6 (dir. Spike Lee, 1996) and *Player's Club* (dir. Ice Cube, 1998).

28. Who thus arrogantly dismiss the far more sophisticated arguments of their lower class Black sisters. In a famous example, young R&B/rap group TLC's hit 'Ain't Too Proud To Beg' openly advocated sexual self-possession and control. However the parts of their message demanding safe sex (including explicit lyrics and wearing monster condom hats in the video) were barred from broadcasting, replaced in the radio version by the usual narcissistic froth (see Tricia Rose, '2 Inches and a Yard: Censoring TLC', in Ella Sholhat (ed.), *Cross Talk: Anthology of Multicultural Feminism*, MIT Press, 1999).

29. And, *in extremis*, to the ludicrous hypersexual amazonia of, for example, Lil Kim and Foxy Brown. Despite their peripheral membership of rap crews, Eve (Ruff Ryders) and Rah Digga (Flipmode Squad) are arguably more talented rappers than their male peers, who fail to acknowledge (let alone support) their specifically woman-centred themes in return for their beautification of collective efforts.

30. So 'common sense' tells critics that outrageous sexual licence panders to male consumers' pornographic fantasies. However, for example, men stand sheepishly by as women clubgoers dance in delight to the rap inversions of social and carnal control implicit and explicit in Lil' Kim's, 'How Many Licks', Khia's 'My Neck, My Back', and Jackie O's 'Nookie'. For strategies used to circumvent sexist commercial packaging see, for example, Perry (note 27), and Suzanne Bost's excellent '"Be deceived if ya wanna be foolish": (Re)constructing Body, Genre and Gender in Feminist Rap', *Postmodern Culture*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2001 [http://www.iath.virginia.edu/pmc]. Finally, the success of women MCs has initiated persistent debates about the limits of the expression of femininity as strength, and a consequent questioning of sexual identity—often in terms of lesbianism, starting with Queen Latifah. See: Venise T. Berry, 'Feminine or Masculine? The Conflicting Nature of Female Images in Rap Music' (in: Susan C. Cook & Judy S. Tsou (eds.), *Cecilia Reclaimed: Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Music*, University of Illinois Press, 1994).

31. With the NY 'New Jack Swing' of Teddy Riley, Puff Daddy's promiscuous mixing of state of the art rhythms with either rapping, singing, or both, and the transfer of the West Coast G-Funk sound to vocal styles other than hardcore gangsta rap, the beats and textures of R&B/hip-hop fit the convivial dancing requirements of clubbers better than many contemporary developments in rap—for example the Wu Tang Clan, which although vastly more innovative in purely sonic terms was more suited to recorded formats.

32. Instances would include Mary J. Blige and Faith Evans; whereas many of the recent generation of manufactured stars have either scant musical talent (for example, Ashanti) or any apparent interest in socially conscious themes (such as Beyoncè Knowles of Destiny's

Lady Saw and others articulate in complex ways with wider socio-political issues—thus striving for "the paradigm shifts necessary to critically analyse ... society from the grassroots up. The marginalised working class, the oppressed, the socially ostracised, will always be able to find an empowering voice through the dynamics of this ghetto born sound".[21] And with a far greater (and growing) number and range of strong women rapping and singing, glowering and flowering, the same can certainly be said of the current hip-hop generations.

The 'Real' Sex and the City

In its early days hip-hop was all about neighbourhood dances at which the whole range of locals enjoyed themselves. This is why the parties were so successful and why word of mouth, circulation of homemade mixtapes and other forms of grassroots communication spread the news so quickly. As organisers planned successive evenings of entertainment, they chose blends of the most reliably successful activities, which became shaped into the artforms now seen as integral to the genre. Obviously it was crucial to attract as many women as possible to the dance in the first place, but they were also present in numbers as performers, promoters, etc. However, the forging of a recording and concert industry from the late 1970s narrowed the marketing focus to a subculture for young men. The women integral to hip-hop's community presence seemed to evaporate from its public profile, only gradually re-emerging later on record and on stage.[22]

After several years of hearing voiceless women insulted on bragging records by their male peers, women rappers began to answer back in the same vernacular.[23] At this stage much of the lyrical content and orientation of women's raps tended to correspond to the formula of the 'female complaint', whereby the interplay and cross-referencing in the lyrics matched aspects of the real-life frustrations and conflicts of the artists and their audiences.[24] Then space was steadily carved out for a greater range of women's points of view, stories and attitudes, where commercial success set a series of thematic precedents—as in the sheer ghetto storytelling prowess of MC Lyte and the explicit programmatic social consciousness of Queen Latifah. This access to the mainstream massively accelerated with the 1990s embrace of soul traditions back into the music, so that today every conceivable permutation of views on life, relationships and the world—as articulated by men and women—can be found on rap record.

The simple presence of so many female MCs as successful, self-possessed musical artists in a surrounding miasma of sexual objectification indicates a level of personal autonomy that belies the ostensible message coming from much of commercial rap and R&B that women are merely sexual commodities. When their active physical presence is celebrated with pride and pleasure, presented as born from a ghetto upbringing and in explicit defiance of control by men—and yet showing solidarity both with other lower class women and those same men—the two-dimensional view as the property of pimps and playthings of playboys is

quickly undermined. There is clearly a series of class, sex and race dialogues underway in this field of media representations—not least using discourses of sexuality to symbolise a passionate engagement with life in general—that the preferred critical interpretation of the hopeless nihilism of the black underclass cannot contain.[25]

As in 1970s 'blaxploitation', the violence of gangsta mythology comes from wider US traditions rather than specifically Black culture, and can thus be seen as a response to respectable patriarchal gangsterism (i.e. capitalism) as well as to society's racism. Similarly, male dominative sexual fantasies in lyrics and videos are modulated by thoroughly mainstream pornographic tropes and attitudes towards lower class black women's bodies and sexuality. Both are also reinforced by the music corporations' relentless quest for white male suburban youth consumers.[26] However, women MCs persistently expose the double standards both of their own communities and of mainstream society, and use sex-talk and dance to get their points across—just as the Black traditions always have—although this claiming of the body and its desires necessarily flirts with an acceptance of the framework of internalised sexism historically enforced by the status quo. Even though none of these tensions can be resolved in culture alone, a variety of liberatory possibilities are reasserted and kept open through the experimental expressions of women's rap.[27]

Of course, the commercial power of major media and music companies operates directly by attempting to stifle more openly subversive assertions of women's sexual autonomy. Precedents for the media censorship of rap developed in conjunction with the moralising efforts of some feminists,[28] others of the dreary middle class political correctness brigade and their government, Black church and religious right allies. More subtle forms of corporate subversion include isolating individual women artists in all-male crews, or merely demanding that they play up their sexpot trappings irrespective of their lyrics or beliefs—the latter leading to artists with much more serious intent confusing themselves and their audiences as glamourpusses.[29] Even then, affirming messages about women's sexual and social desire and capability still result, because audiences—being rather media-literate themselves—can discriminate between, and go beyond, attempts to dominate them through narcotising imagery, hysterical hype and the lowest commercial denominator.[30]

Soul Survivors

Meanwhile, as R&B and rap intermingled in the 1990s the new hybrid form quickly became successful in club environments as well as commercially, due to production interventions aimed at reinvigorating dance culture.[31] As the renown grew of a crop of new producers and studios with their own corporate empire-building in mind, this combination of circumstances unfortunately encouraged musical design purely for stereotypical commercial acceptability rather than for purposes of originality and expression. Thematic concerns in lyrics and video portrayals followed suit, stressing the acquisition of wealth and displays of conspicuous consumption (including of

Child). In terms of aspiration, in the hands of the same producers gangsta rap swiftly became a postmodern cartoon caricature of blaxploitation, exchanging the urban grit for 'bling bling' fantasies of infinite throwaway riches—equally nihilistic, maybe, but by now frankly ridiculous.

33. Which is ironic, given that songs such as 'No Scrubs' by TLC and several from Destiny's Child ('Bills, Bills, Bills', 'Independent Woman', etc.) were written by Kandi Burruss (formerly of girl group Xscape) in angry response to her perceptions of R&B/hip-hop's repeated denigration of the moral integrity of lower class women as 'gold-diggers' and 'hoes'.

34. Suzanne Bost (note 30) presents a comprehensive analysis of Da Brat—among the most successful women MCs in R&B/rap (allied to Atlanta producer Jermaine Dupri, himself one of the super-producers responsible for the genre). Bost details how the self-fashioning of Da Brat's image, presentation, lyrics and narratives appears on the surface to conform to traditional and contemporary expectations—but actually slyly complicates, questions, transgresses and exceeds all the limits placed on her, both as a commercial artist under pressure from the industry and media and as a Black woman from a lower-class background struggling to make her way in a hostile world.

35. In the same alternative tradition that the early Black Eyed Peas came up in. See Bost (note 30) for a discussion of rap poets such as Ursula Rucker, Dana Bryant and Sarah Jones (most famous for her riff on Scott Heron's 'The Revolution Will Not Be Televised': Your revolution / Will not take place between *these* thighs).

36. As often resulted in the liberal civil rights era, with its classic soul backing seen as expressing a generalised human spirit (hence the term 'soul'); or the response to such naivetè/duplicity in the Black nationalist faith in racial essence again common currency in late 1980s rap. See Gilroy (note 16) for an account of the ramifications of this problematic.

37. The nu-soul pioneers were Maxwell, Erykah Badu and D'Angelo—who mentored many new voices, including those of Angie Stone (an original old school MC), Bilal, Jill Scott, Musiq, Jaguar Wright and Dwele. Now the UK also has the sublime Floetry, singer-songwriter Terri Walker, and the impressive nu-soul/R&B/rap/ragga/garage collective NSM (New Sector Movement).

38. This includes outspoken political rap—for example by Dead Prez, Paris, the Coup, and the sophisticated cultural politics of Talib Kweli, Mos Def and the Roots (plus spoken word artists such as Saul Williams and those cited in note 35). In *Songs in the Key of Black Life* (note 12), Mark Anthony Neal shows how the gender subversions of "soul outlaws" Meshell Ndegeocello, Macy Gray and Res allow commercial R&B/hip-hop stars like Missy Elliott and Tweet to question sexual identity and fixity in specifically dance-oriented music.

39. So house and rave appear now to represent little more than drug-based weekend and package holiday hedonism, despite the utopian desires and energetic grass-roots organisation nurtured by their pioneers (see George McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain*, Verso, 1998; Sean Bidder, *Pump Up The Volume: A History of House*, Channel 4 Books, 2001; and Sara Thornton's thoughtful *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital*, Polity Press, 1995).

40. The UK trajectory has been usefully sketched in BBC Radio 1 R&B DJ Trevor Nelson's *Soul Nation* TV series (Channel 4, 2003). Note that until the current resurgence of club-based urban music, UK R&B has largely depended on two decades-worth of strong female artists for commercial visibility—most of whom chose ordinary 'round-the-way-girl' stances from which to launch their powerful voices and exceptional songwriting skills (for example Gabrielle, Mica Paris and the wonderful Beverley Knight; Sade being far more upmarket).

41. For discussions of recent UK Asian styles, see Sanjay Sharma, John Jutnyk & Ashwari Sharma (eds.), *Dis-Orienting Rhythms: The Politics of the New Asian Dance Music* (Zed Books, 1996). While ragga is strong and self-contained in its communities (e.g. in London, Bristol, Birmingham and Nottingham), UK hip-hop has stubborny clung to a rabid defensive purism in the face of industry indifference (although frustrated artists often break out of the rigidly-enforced subcultural boundaries). Local hip-hop, such as in my city of Newcastle, often contains a wealth of talent but complete disregard for the dance-hall—so its parties merely showcase performers for passive audiences (also see Andy Bennett, 'Hip hop am Main, Rappin' on the Tyne: Hip Hop Culture as a Local Construct in Two European Cities', in *Popular Music and Youth Culture: Music, Identity and Place*, Macmillan, 2000).

42. For example Chris Wells, editor of UK Black music magazine *Echoes*, informed readers in April 2001 'Why R&B Has No Soul'.

43. From *Club Cultures* (note 39, p.76)—a study which contains excellent analyses of the class, race and gender biases which make up the ideology of recent popular UK dance cultures, despite being hampered by the relentlessly petit bourgeois delusions and agendas of the promoters who were her informants. Angela McRobbie also discusses the class and gender elitisms informing well-established UK attitudes to dancing and clubs in: 'Shut Up And Dance: Youth Culture and Changing Modes of Femininity' (*Cultural Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 1993) and 'Dance and Social Fantasy' (in: McRobbie & Mica Nava (eds.) Gender and Generation, Macmillan, 1994).

44. See, for example: Peter Stallybrass & Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, (Methuen, 1986); Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (trans. Richard Nice, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984); and Zygmunt Bauman, *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor* (Open University Press, 1998). My observations on contemporary urban music clubs come from many

women as objects both of the male gaze and physical proprietorship)—and a new breed of R&B divas now found their ghettocentric stories translated into smug middle class tales of upward mobility.[32]

The trend peaked with a series of late '90s hits which appeared to insult men simply for being short of cash. Though actually insisting on financial and sexual autonomy for women, the lyrics floated in a marketing environment where such freedom was touted as a luxury for sale. With sanitised visual styles emphasising expensive grooming and yuppie accoutrements, any socially aware messages risked being completely swamped—transformed into simple class-based contempt.[33] However, the crossover commercial strategy means that different audiences do not respond uniformly to the music. The superficial confections and showbiz celebrity blather of pop appear to coexist with a strong affinity among urban listeners for those artists with more to say, thanks in particular to the lower class-specific pitch of their lyrics—and to some extent irrespective of the media packaging (which is understood for what it is).[34]

In the mid-1990s the subgenre of nu-soul also brought R&B back into play using a different route—hip-hop's reinscription of jazz and blues idiom and the spoken word commentary of Gil Scott Heron and the Last Poets.[35] Confident in using hip-hop beats from the pace at which the R&B/rap hybrid flourished, the more mature nu-soul stance weaves in the ethical and spiritual musings of soul. Young adults reflect honestly on their problems, yearn for positive solutions and regularly pay respect to their working class neighbourhoods and social networks. The intricate effects of class, gender and race interact and inform the deliberations of the men as well as the women, with difference and conflict no longer wished away in bourgeois fictions of universal equality.[36] Nu-soul consistently delivers far more complex notions of what might be needed for personal and collective well-being—without being preachy and moralistic and alienating the youth.[37]

So, understood broadly, hip-hop now reflects a rich, diverse tapestry of musical and lyrical styles—expansive and generous rather than inward-looking and exclusive—justifying its characterisation as culture rather than subculture. Thanks to rap's intense class consciousness and the abiding emphasis on lived experience, locality and dance, there is also room for more revolutionary and radical themes to be voiced without instant recuperation into the consumerist lifestyle type of ghetto.[38] And while commercial success enhances the breadth of R&B/hip-hop's appeal, the risks of superficial populism are tempered by the rough edges and echoes of the music's links in the Signifyin' chain of Black traditions—reminders of all the forms of social domination suffered from historic slavery up to our present and future versions.

Urban music's connections to a history of struggles shaping its musical and cultural foundations, and the politics thus facilitated and (sometimes) nourished, give it a progressive potential absent from other contemporary UK dance styles—which have little explicit content to counteract and complicate commercial takeover and neutralisation.[39] The pathways followed by classic R&B in Britain, moreover, have always straddled popular, serious and dance-based perspectives, winding from the 60s Mods through Northern Soul, tacky and posh variants of '70s disco and later smooth jazz and funk styles and 'rare grooves'.[40] With the late 1980s Soul II Soul production renaissance, club nights devoted to the new crossovers with reggae, hip-hop and soul began to appear in many UK cities, maintaining a faltering presence ever since—until youthful infusions of equally open-minded UK garage, hip-hop and bhangra afficionados have recently cemented the scene.[41]

Many Nations Under A Groove

As urban music booms through the limited, liminal spaces of nightclubs and parties worldwide as well as above ground on radio and TV, it is easy to draw conclusions based on a homogenisation of commercial popular culture and the neo-imperialism of globalisation. Likewise, no one evangelises the genre in the kinds of 'taste war' waged by journalists, critics and the entrepreneurial marketers of new musical subcultures in the public forums of student unions and trendy fashion and style magazines. All serious opinion seems to concur that urban music is supremely fake: 'hip-pop' and 'rhythm & bullshit' (modern reggae being hardly worth mentioning at all).[42] However, as Sara Thornton emphasises, such concerns really only preoccupy those guarding their own accumulation of 'cultural capital', whereas: "the authenticities of dance music are complex and contradictory. They waver between an ancestral world of real bodies and city places and the new high-tech order of faceless machines and global dislocation".[43]

In practice, urban music dance participation openly embraces its multiple antecedents, conflicts and futurisms—both in bodily appreciation of the hybrid processing in the music, and in its social resonances and repercussions—without feeling any need to justify or explain itself. Due to the open expressive vulgarity of musical call and dance response, social prestige, stratification and snobbery get short shrift among crowds so heterogeneous in age, race, background and dress code—where it is middle class slummers with noses in the air, besuited after-party businessmen, and rhythm-free pub-circuit punters who stand out like sore thumbs. In sociological provenance we are in the realms simultaneously of the feudal parodies and transgressions of carnival, the modern excesses of display of those for whom hardship recurs randomly according to the whims of the world, and the newly globalising peripheral working classes who consume so as to partake of postmodern human essence.[44]

The treatment of difference in the 'temporary autonomous zones' of urban dancehall is a final element to draw attention to. Of course this is no utopia, and tensions of various kinds regularly simmer and boil over in overt conflict. But there is an overriding sense of respect for the conviviality of place and occasion, even in the presence of the kinds of antagonisms which—in other contexts even in the same city and time—seem irreconcilable. This is the 'respect' that hip-hop is famous for flogging like a dead horse, but as an empathetic burgeoning of tentative practical solidarity it is no mean feat in the new 'refugee camps' which the planet's urban regions are becoming.[45] In particular, the space carved out by women to exist, enjoy, express and experiment—despite the pressures and temptations to retreat to the disco's cattle-market mentality—seems to me to be a significant precedent to set if matched in the thousands of new urban dancehalls in the New World's menacing Order, where communities will need the ability to mobilise and draw on the capacities of all our people in the grassroots struggles ahead.[46] Dancehall dreams indeed.

years of participation on Tyneside and the comparable experiences of others here and elsewhere.

45. 1990s Rap/R&B group the Fugees popularised this concept in their juxtaposition of hip-hop, soul and Caribbean styles. Tyneside, for example, is still an overwhelmingly 'white' area—with extremes of ugly racism still prevalent in everyday life. But in no other setting here have I ever witnessed even the peaceful co-presence of—let alone such fraternal relations among—British and foreign people from all conceivable lines of descent and ethnicity (as well as age) that can be found at urban dance events.

46. Few writers tackle the kinds of themes brought together in this essay. Those that do tend to draw provisional and cautious conclusions along remotely similar lines. See for example Tricia Rose, 'Cultural Survivalisms and Marketplace Subversions: Black Popular Culture and Politics into the 21st Century' (in: Adjaye & Andrews, note 16), and George Lipsitz, 'Facing Up to What's Killing Us: Artistic Practice and Grassroots Social Theory' (in: Long, note 27).
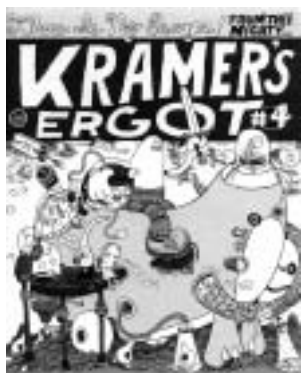
http://www.tomjennings.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

Zine & Comic Reviews

Mark Pawson

I'm sneaking this column back into Variant and hoping that nobody has noticed its absence for the last year!

KRAMERS ERGOT #4 is a mammoth sized, avant-garde cartoon anthology with recent strips/doodles/sketchbooks/collages/anything in between by 25 artists. Who are these people inhabiting the hallucinogenic KRAMERS ERGOT dreamland? Well you might possibly have heard of Marc Bell, Mat Brinkman and Ron Rege Jr, so I guess the others are their pals and gals, some kind of post Fort Thunder generation born and raised listening to Lightning Bolt? We're definitely into comics as art territory here, cor baby it's really free, with esoteric obsessive-compulsive drawing aplenty here, lots of it on the art-brut-not-art-brut trip. With over 300 pages, each contributor gets as much space as they want, all in full colour and they all have a go at drawing a cover as well. I'm pleased to admit that I'm reviewing KRAMERS ERGOT #4 without having read it all, it's just too big to devour in a couple of evenings, and deserves repeated readings/viewings/flicking-throughs.

S. Blanquet's Graphic Novel LA NOUVELLE AUX PIS is the strangest, most incredible book I've seen in the last couple of years. The wordless story is told in 11 chapters illustrated in beautifully repulsive silhouette pen drawings, like small creepy-crawly insects have been dipped in ink and then let loose on the pages. The narratives in each chapter gradually weave together and interlink into a complex scary fairy tale involving a gang of feral sisters living in the forest, a baby clothed in a dead dog, nasty nuns, a bleak orphanage and a skeleton chasing the new inhabitants of his skin! LA NOUVELLE AUX PIS is an extraordinarily accomplished work from French-Canadian artist Blanquet, his work is an acquired taste and has suffered in the past from overproduction and repeated exploration of favourite themes. LA NOUVELLE AUX PIS will amply reward anyone who manages to track down a copy.

BLOOD ORANGE #1 is a new anthology that covers similar ground to KRAMERS ERGOT, and shares some of the same contributors, but BLOOD ORANGE concentrates on slightly less unconventional comic strip formats. It's published by Fantagraphics, so should be relatively easy to get hold of a copy in the UK, think of it as an affordable taster for sampling this new wave of mark-makers, whilst saving your pennies for a copy of KRAMERS ERGOT.

There's a few pages of Gary Baseman's sketchbooks in BLOOD ORANGE which look like preparatory sketches for his wonderful collaboration with Tim Biskup, MODULAR POPULOUS—a set of 48 interchangeable postcards which you can arrange to create your own characters from the different heads, bodies and legs painted on 48 identical size canvases by Baseman and Biskup. Their styles work well together. Biskup's clear curvaceous graphic style complements Baseman's raw-edged brushwork—there's beatnik birds, mystery aquatic creatures, hapless cute animals, manga-robots and godzillas galore, for you to build frankenstein-like into thousands of different combinations (4096 to be precise). MODULAR POPULOUS is the perfect combination of a piece of art and a toy, keep one copy framed on the wall and another to play with, yes it's a set of postcards but they're too-nice-to-post postcards. It reminds me of Gary Panter and Charles Burns' similarly great FACETASM book even down to the two complementary styles, one with ultra clean lines, the other more raw edged, a reminder to myself to get FACETASM down off the shelf for its annual viewing. Baseman and Biskup are busy boys, both have new books out—Baseman's DUMB LUCK and Biskup's 100 PAINTINGS will be on bookshop shelves when you read this and they've also both had sets of toys issued in the VANIMAL ZOO series.
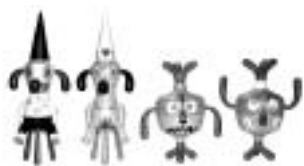
A project of Sony Creative Products in Japan, VANIMAL ZOO has worked with artists/illustrators to turn their drawings and paintings into collectable, covetable figures, there's 5 figures in each set, packed randomly so you don't know which one you're getting. So far there's been 10 different sets, half by Japanese designers, the rest by US artists. They're like postmodern designer Kinder Egg toys. Unlike Pete Fowler's MONSTERISM figures (Series 3 on the way my industry informants reveal) you can't rearrange the VANIMAL ZOO figures, once you've opened the package they just sit on a shelf. In their native Japan VANIMAL ZOO sells for £3.00 each, figure on paying twice that once they've made their way here. There's also SETON figures from Medicom, which I can only describe as IKEA-style flat-pack canines—dogs with square heads and a series of flat interlocking panels for bodies! It's an interesting sign of the way things are going that in the new Forbidden Planet London Megastore comics and books have been relegated to the basement whilst action figures, toys and collectibles with higher profit margins fill the entire ground floor.

Akiko Shishido's BRITISH GREASY SPOON INSTRUCTION MANUAL is a practical guide for newcomers on how to use these ubiquitous dining establishments. Clear diagrams show how to locate, enter and order your meal in a greasy spoon cafe, then how to accessorise your traditional english breakfast (no other menu options are considered) with all available condiments, sugar excepted. It comes packaged in a cheapo red and white stripy plastic bag accompanied with a set of 3 postcards with annotated illustrations of generic take-away restaurants—Fish and Chips, Kebab, Chinese. It's a tidy little package all right, but c'mon Akiko, six quid is a bit steep init? I'll give you two ninety five for it—same price as a full english. Forget all this citizenship ceremony nonsense, copies of the BRITISH GREASY SPOON INSTRUCTION MANUAL should be given to every person coming to live in the UK.

San Francisco's Skullz Press booklets usually feature work by graffiti artists, COLLECTED WRITINGS OF BOB LICKY is a bit of an oddity. Bob Licky wasn't content to be just another graffiti kid with a can of stolen spraypaint, so instead he decided to take his message to the street on a series of mysterious rubberstamped stickers. COLLECTED WRITINGS OF BOB LICKY features 250 of his enigmatic, sloganeering stickers, producing new designs weekly of Bob Licky continually thick black ink on white stickers. Something of a start-your-own-cult feel to this and spreading slogans virus-like on the street, brings Shepard Fairey/Andre The Giant to mind, which is certainly good company for Bob Licky to find himself in. File next to Ivor Cutler's 'Befriend a Bacterium' booklet, a collection of his Able-Label stickers.

WESTERN SUIT by Derek McCormack is a fictional account of Western singer 'Hank' preparing for his debut at the Grand Ole Opry, and the ensuing tussle for Hank's affection and wardrobe duties between his girlfriend 'Audrey', with her homemade stage-outfits, and 'Nudie', a manipulative, malignant tailor of extraordinary beautiful Western stage outfits. You may recognise some of the characters as undisguised real life Country and Western celebrities! The book is meticulously designed and illustrated by Pas de Chance/Ian Philips (whose LOST collection of lost pet posters was previously reviewed in this column), and comes bound in brown suedette fabric with the title on an embroidered jeans-style label sewn onto the cover. And as if this wasn't enough, it's accompanied with a sewing pattern and instructions for making your own elaborately detailed Cowboy-style shirt and comes packaged inside a full colour envelope.

Face it, you're never going to

own one of Mark Ryden's surreal paintings, because Leonardo Di Caprio and Marilyn Manson have bought them all already! You'll have to settle for a copy of BLOOD - MINIATURE PAINTINGS OF SORROW AND FEAR. This tiny exhibition catalogue is exquisitely produced with a leather-look embossed cover and features some of Ryden's darkest imagery to date. These miniatures, typically 4 x 6 inches in size, are stripped-down versions of Ryden's work, which is usually chock-a-block full of pop culture imagery and references. The inspiration behind this series of paintings may owe something to the artist's mood after his recent acrimonious divorce. The catalogue is accompanied with a separate CD soundtrack by Stan Ridgeway. All previous Mark Ryden publications have sold out instantly, the enormous 20,000 print run for BLOOD - MINIATURE PAINTINGS OF SORROW AND FEAR ensures there's enough copies for everyone who wants one.

The enterprising Borbonesa gang, who are also behind Brighton's Permanent Gallery/Bookshop, have sent their strange and wonderful publications for review before and would be quite justified in being annoyed that I never quite got round to mentioning them. Their latest curious production, TURTLE SOUP, is "a collection of literary, illustrative and sonic ruminations issued quarterly in four distinct parts. Each part vaguely deliberates the interactions between humankind and the natural world." The precious package contains 2 intricately folded leaflets, a poster and 3 inch CD that I actually listened to more than once. There's a retro-futuristic feel to it all—tales of a machine enabling conversation with pets and plans for

the world's first Airborne Menagerie (inside a hot air balloon) are accompanied with a list of records to watch seagulls fly to, and a recipe for cheese and chicken quiche entirely in drawings.

Reprints of Italian polymath artist/product designer Bruno Munari's books from the 1960s/'70s continue to emerge. Many of these books were originally issued in minuscule, long unavailable private press editions and are being made available to a wider audience for the first time. In ROSES IN THE SALAD from 1974, Munari takes a sharp knife to a basket full of vegetables and flowers, slices across them and has fun using the cut faces as rubber stamps. The swirling organic shapes of onions, cabbage and celery stalks make intriguing prints. It's post potato-print printing, try this at home! What would happen if the Vienna Vegetable Orchestra, who perform using instruments made from fresh vegetables and after their concerts make soup from the instruments they've just played and serve it to the audience, get hold of a copy of this book and decide to incorporate vegetable print-making into their performances as well!

NUDE #3 has US punk poster designer Frank Kozik, Burlesque performance artist Marisa Carnesky, retro-typographers House Industries, pop culture outfitters the Contemporary Wardrobe and Variant cover artist Lorna Miller. Certainly hip, definitely not trendy, NUDE is put together by Suzy Prince and Ian Lowey who were the moving forces between two of London's most loved (now sadly missed) shops, Last Chance Saloon and Strangely Satisfying, their fiercely independent spirit shows in this welcome addition to the newstand shelves. The first couple of NUDE's were freebies, now it's ambitiously swollen to 48 pages with a modest cover price of £1.50 which you can't really complain about.

CHEAP DATE is back, the Spring/Summer 2004 issue has pin-ups, photo-stories, Fashion Strike, Jimmy Saville, Jumble Sales, Frees Stuff Parties, Supermodels in Charity Shop Outfits and Harry Hill's paintings—which are 1000% better than Vic Reeves' Daubs. This
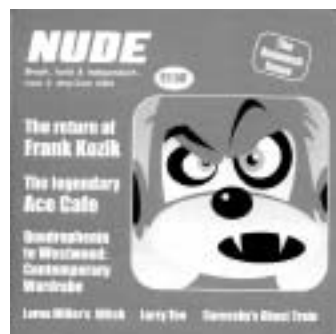
big issue with plenty of full-colour is a return to top form for CHEAP DATE.

SMOKE - A LONDON PECULIAR is a miscellany of photos and witty, wordy articles about contemporary London. The photographs are nicely observed details of unglamorous, everyday parts of London. The articles—about canals, supermarkets and power stations—all seem to take the same travel writing approach about the authors' city of residence, which is fine for one article but several contributors all trying to be a little bit too whimsical and writerly becomes irritating. SMOKE has already received favourable coverage on local radio and is apparently popular amongst Taxi Drivers(?). This issue feels disjointed, too much of a miscellany, perhaps each issue would benefit from having a theme. I'm sure that with a few more issues SMOKE will carve out its own place somewhere in the vast gulf between I. Sinclair and E. Standard.

Taking a very different approach to London is Gabrielle O'Connor's THE WEEKLY SPECTACLE which consists entirely of HEAT magazine style photo exposés of the author going about her everyday business around London town. Gabrielle is a large lady and wears a Minnie Mouse style red and white polka dot dress whilst waiting at the bus stop, sitting on a park bench and getting into a taxi. By putting herself in each picture wearing this over-the-top glamorous costume she's critiquing HEAT magazine and its readers' pathetically shallow fascination with celebrities whilst simultaneously affecting repulsion at an extra ounce of gained weight or the mere hint of underarm perspiration. The confident lady in these photos looks pretty happy with her ample size and I think she can live with that little bit of 'orange peel' exposed when she does the classic 'getting into a Taxi' photo.

The Tyranny of Structurelessness

Jo Freeman, 1970

Introduction

This article by Jo Freeman (aka Joreen) has been widely reproduced, and deservedly so. Though originally addressed to the early women's liberation movement, it remains applicable to other areas of radical struggle. I also recommend it to your attention as a fine example of theoretical lucidity and modesty. Notice how thoughtfully Freeman presents the ramifications of this particular issue, setting out the factors that people need to consider without offering simplistic solutions or indulging in heated rhetoric. This sounds easy, but it is all too rare in the arena of political debate.

These merits can perhaps be appreciated more clearly by noting the contrast with Cathy Levine's response , *The Tyranny of Tyranny* (www.angelfire.com/id/ASP/UNTYINGTHEK). Levine's text may at first seem to present a more radical viewpoint, but if you examine it carefully I think you will see that it actually does little but evade the issue. Freeman addressed an undeniable problem that was already beginning to be widely recognized, and drew attention to the important distinction between groups (whether large or small) that have explicit structures and those that have hidden ones. Instead of facing this problem, Levine drowns it out with oversimplified platitudes about the evils of large groups and the virtues of small ones, then goes off on a variety of irrelevant tangential issues. Those issues may be important in other contexts; and Freeman's activities and perspectives may have been less radical in other regards (see her own autobiographical account of the period www.jofreeman.com/aboutjo/persorg.htm). The point is that at this particular juncture Freeman made an exemplary theoretical contribution, while Levine's response is a good example of the opposite—of ideology and the counterproductive role it always serves.

 As far as I know, this piece is not copyrighted. In any case, it was clearly intended to be freely reproduced and discussed. It was originally written in 1970; the present version incorporates some additions and minor revisions made by the author for subsequent reprintings.

 For an examination of some other aspects of women's situation in radical movements (particularly within the situationist milieu), see Jeanne Charles' *Arms and the Woman* http://bopsecrets.org/PS/women.htm .

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The Tyranny of Structurelessness [revised version]

During the years in which the women's liberation movement has been taking shape, a great emphasis has been placed on what are called leaderless, structureless groups as the main—if not sole—organizational form of the movement. The source of this idea was a natural reaction against the overstructured society in which most of us found ourselves, the inevitable control this gave others over our lives, and the continual elitism of the Left and similar groups among those who were supposedly fighting this overstructuredness.

The idea of "structurelessness," however, has moved from a healthy counter to those tendencies to becoming a goddess in its own right. The idea is as little examined as the term is much used, but it has become an intrinsic and unquestioned part of women's liberation ideology. For the early development of the movement this did not much matter. It early defined its main goal, and its main method, as consciousness-raising, and the "structureless rap group" was an excellent means to this end. The looseness and informality of it encouraged participation in discussion, and its often supportive atmosphere elicited personal insight. If nothing more concrete than personal insight ever resulted from these groups, that did not much matter, because their purpose did not really extend beyond this.

The basic problems didn't appear until individual rap groups exhausted the virtues of consciousness-raising and decided they wanted to do something more specific. At this point they usually floundered because most groups were unwilling to change their structure when they changed their tasks. Women had thoroughly accepted the idea of "structurelessness" without realizing the limitations of its uses. People would try to use the "structureless" group and the informal conference for purposes for which they were unsuitable out of a blind belief that no other means could possibly be anything but oppressive.

If the movement is to grow beyond these elementary stages of development, it will have to disabuse itself of some of its prejudices about organization and structure. There is nothing inherently bad about either of these. They can be and often are misused, but to reject them out of hand because they are misused is to deny ourselves the necessary tools to further development. We need to understand why "structurelessness" does not work.

Formal and Informal Structures

Contrary to what we would like to believe, there is no such thing as a "structureless" group. Any group of people of whatever nature that comes together for any length of time for any purpose will inevitably structure itself in some fashion. The structure may be flexible; it may vary over time; it may evenly or unevenly distribute tasks, power and resources over the members of the group. But it will be formed regardless of the abilities, personalities, or intentions of the people involved. The very fact that we are individuals, with different talents, predispositions, and backgrounds, makes this inevitable. Only if we refused to relate or interact on any basis whatsoever could we approximate structurelessness—and that is not the nature of a human group.

This means that to strive for a structureless group is as useful, and as deceptive, as to aim at an "objective" news story, "value-free" social science, or a "free" economy. A "laissez faire" group is about as realistic as a "laissez faire" society; the idea becomes a smokescreen for the strong or the lucky to establish unquestioned hegemony over others. This hegemony can so easily be established because the idea of "structurelessness" does not prevent the formation of informal structures, only formal ones. Similarly "laissez faire" philosophy did not prevent the economically powerful from establishing control over wages, prices, and distribution of goods; it only prevented the government from doing so. Thus structurelessness becomes a way of masking power, and within the women's movement it is usually most strongly advocated by those who are the most powerful (whether they are conscious of their power or not). As long as the structure of the group is informal, the rules of how decisions are made are known only to a few and awareness of power is limited to those who know the rules. Those who do not know the rules and are not chosen for initiation must remain in confusion, or suffer from paranoid delusions that something is happening of which they are not quite aware.

For everyone to have the opportunity to be involved in a given group and to participate in its activities the structure must be explicit, not implicit. The rules of decision-making must be open and available to everyone, and this can happen only if they are formalized. This is not to say that formalization of a structure of a group will destroy the informal structure. It usually doesn't. But it does hinder the informal structure from having predominant control and makes available some means of attacking it if the people involved are not at least responsible to the needs of the group at large. "Structurelessness" is organizationally impossible. We cannot decide whether to have a structured or structureless group, only whether or not to have a formally structured one. Therefore the word will not be used any longer except to refer to the idea it represents. "Unstructured" will refer to those groups which have not been deliberately structured in a particular manner. "Structured" will refer to those which have. A structured group always has formal structure, and may also have an informal, or covert, structure. It is this informal structure, particularly in unstructured groups, which forms the basis for elites.

The Nature of Elitism

"Elitist" is probably the most abused word in the women's liberation movement. It is used as frequently, and for the same reasons, as "pinko" was used in the fifties. It is rarely used correctly. Within the movement it commonly refers to individuals, though the personal characteristics and activities of those to whom it is directed may differ widely. An individual, as an individual, can never be an elitist, because the only proper application of the term "elite" is to groups. Any individual, regardless of how well-known that person may be, can never be an elite.

Correctly, an elite refers to a small group of people who have power over a larger group of which they are part, usually without direct responsibility to that larger group, and often without their knowledge or consent. A person becomes an elitist by being part of, or advocating the rule by, such a small group, whether or not that individual is well known or not known at all. Notoriety is not a definition of an elitist. The most insidious elites are usually run by people not known to the larger public at all. Intelligent elitists are usually smart enough not to allow themselves to become well known; when they become known, they are watched, and the mask over their power is no longer firmly lodged.

Elites are not conspiracies. Very seldom does a small group of people get together and deliberately try take over a larger group for its own ends. Elites are nothing more, and nothing less, than

groups of friends who also happen to participate in the same political activities. They would probably maintain their friendship whether or not they were involved in political activities; they would probably be involved in political activities whether or not they maintained their friendships. It is the coincidence of these two phenomena which creates elites in any group and makes them so difficult to break.

These friendship groups function as networks of communication outside any regular channels for such communication that may have been set up by a group. If no channels are set up, they function as the only networks of communication. Because these people are friends, because they usually share the same values and orientations, because they talk to each other socially and consult with each other when common decisions have to be made, the people involved in these networks have more power in the group than those who don't. And it is a rare group that does not establish some informal networks of communication through the friends that are made in it.

Some groups, depending on their size, may have more than one such informal communications network. Networks may even overlap. When only one such network exists, it is the elite of an otherwise unstructured group, whether the participants in it want to be elitists or not. If it is the only such network in a structured group it may or may not be an elite depending on its composition and the nature of the formal structure. If there are two or more such networks of friends, they may compete for power within the group, thus forming factions, or one may deliberately opt out of the competition, leaving the other as the elite. In a structured group, two or more such friendship networks usually compete with each other for formal power. This is often the healthiest situation, as the other members are in a position to arbitrate between the two competitors for power and thus to make demands of those to whom they give their temporary allegiance.

The inevitably elitist and exclusive nature of informal communication networks of friends is neither a new phenomenon characteristic of the women's movement nor a phenomenon new to women. Such informal relationships have excluded women for centuries from participating in integrated groups of which they were a part. In any profession or organization these networks have created the "locker room" mentality and the "old school" ties which have effectively prevented women as a group (as well as some men individually) from having equal access to the sources of power or social reward. Much of the energy of past women's movements has been directed to having the structures of decision-making and the selection processes formalized so that the exclusion of women could be confronted directly. As we well know, these efforts have not prevented the informal male-only networks from discriminating against women, but they have made it more difficult.

Because elites are informal does not mean they are invisible. At any small group meeting anyone with a sharp eye and an acute ear can tell who is influencing whom. The member of a friendship group will relate more to each other than to other people. They listen more attentively, and interrupt less; they repeat each other's points and give in amiably; they tend to ignore or grapple with the "outs" whose approval is not necessary for making a decision. But it is necessary for the "outs" to stay on good terms with the "ins." Of course the lines are not as sharp as I have drawn them. They are nuances of interaction, not prewritten scripts. But they are discernible, and they do have their effect. Once one knows with whom it is important to check before a decision is made, and whose approval is the stamp of acceptance, one knows who is running things.

Since movement groups have made no concrete decisions about who shall exercise power within them, many different criteria are used around the country. Most criteria are along the lines of traditional female characteristics. For instance, in the early days of the movement, marriage was usually a prerequisite for participation in the informal elite. As women have been traditionally taught, married women relate primarily to each other, and look upon single women as too threatening to have as close friends. In many cities, this criterion was further refined to include only those women married to New Left men. This standard had more than tradition behind it, however, because New Left men often had access to resources needed by the movement—such as mailing lists, printing presses, contacts, and information—and women were used to getting what they needed through men rather than independently. As the movement has changed through time, marriage has become a less universal criterion for effective participation, but all informal elites establish standards by which only women who possess certain material or personal characteristics may join. They frequently include: middle-class background (despite all the rhetoric about relating to the working class); being married; not being married but living with someone; being or pretending to be a lesbian; being between the ages of twenty and thirty; being college educated or at least having some college background; being "hip"; not being too "hip"; holding a certain political line or identification as a "radical"; having children or at least liking them; not having children; having certain "feminine" personality characteristics such as being "nice"; dressing right (whether in the traditional style or the antitraditional style); etc. There are also some characteristics which will almost always tag one as a "deviant" who should not be related to. They include: being too old; working full-time, particularly if one is actively committed to a "career"; not being "nice"; and being avowedly single (i.e. neither heterosexual nor homosexual).

Other criteria could be included, but they all have common themes. The characteristics prerequisite for participating in the informal elites of the movement, and thus for exercising power, concern one's background, personality, or allocation of time. They do not include one's competence, dedication to feminism, talents, or potential contribution to the movement. The former are the criteria one usually uses in determining one's friends. The latter are what any movement or organization has to use if it is going to be politically effective.

The criteria of participation may differ from group to group, but the means of becoming a member of the informal elite if one meets those criteria are pretty much the same. The only main difference depends on whether one is in a group from the beginning, or joins it after it has begun. If involved from the beginning it is important to have as many of one's personal friends as possible also join. If no one knows anyone else very well, then one must deliberately form friendships with a select number and establish the informal interaction patterns crucial to the creation of an informal structure. Once the informal patterns are formed they act to maintain themselves, and one of the most successful tactics of maintenance is to continuously recruit new people who "fit in." One joins such an elite much the same way one

pledges a sorority. If perceived as a potential addition, one is "rushed" by the members of the informal structure and eventually either dropped or initiated. If the sorority is not politically aware enough to actively engage in this process itself it can be started by the outsider pretty much the same way one joins any private club. Find a sponsor, i.e., pick some member of the elite who appears to be well respected within it, and actively cultivate that person's friendship. Eventually, she will most likely bring you into the inner circle.

All of these procedures take time. So if one works full time or has a similar major commitment, it is usually impossible to join simply because there are not enough hours left to go to all the meetings and cultivate the personal relationships necessary to have a voice in the decision-making. That is why formal structures of decision-making are a boon to the overworked person. Having an established process for decision-making ensures that everyone can participate in it to some extent.

Although this dissection of the process of elite formation within small groups has been critical in perspective, it is not made in the belief that these informal structures are inevitably bad — merely that they are inevitable. All groups create informal structures as a result of interaction patterns among the members of the group. Such informal structures can do very useful things. But only unstructured groups are totally governed by them. When informal elites are combined with a myth of "structurelessness," there can be no attempt to put limits on the use of power. It becomes capricious.

This has two potentially negative consequences of which we should be aware. The first is that the informal structure of decision-making will be much like a sorority—one in which people listen to others because they like them and not because they say significant things. As long as the movement does not do significant things this does not much matter. But if its development is not to be arrested at this preliminary stage, it will have to alter this trend. The second is that informal structures have no obligation to be responsible to the group at large. Their power was not given to them; it cannot be taken away. Their influence is not based on what they do for the group; therefore they cannot be directly influenced by the group. This does not necessarily make informal structures irresponsible. Those who are concerned with maintaining their influence will usually try to be responsible. The group simply cannot compel such responsibility; it is dependent on the interests of the elite.

The "Star" System

The idea of "structurelessness" has created the "star" system. We live in a society which expects political groups to make decisions and to select people to articulate those decisions to the public at large. The press and the public do not know how to listen seriously to individual women as women; they want to know how the group feels. Only three techniques have ever been developed for establishing mass group opinion: the vote or referendum, the public opinion survey questionnaire, and the selection of group spokespeople at an appropriate meeting. The women's liberation

movement has used none of these to communicate with the public. Neither the movement as a whole nor most of the multitudinous groups within it have established a means of explaining their position on various issues. But the public is conditioned to look for spokespeople.

While it has consciously not chosen spokespeople, the movement has thrown up many women who have caught the public eye for varying reasons. These women represent no particular group or established opinion; they know this and usually say so. But because there are no official spokespeople nor any decision-making body that the press can query when it wants to know the movement's position on a subject, these women are perceived as the spokespeople. Thus, whether they want to or not, whether the movement likes it or not, women of public note are put in the role of spokespeople by default.

This is one source of the ire that is often felt towards the women who are labeled "stars." Because they were not selected by the women in the movement to represent the movement's views, they are resented when the press presumes that they speak for the movement. But as long as the movement does not select its own spokeswomen, such women will be placed in that role by the press and the public, regardless of their desires.

This has several negative consequences for both the movement and the women labeled "stars." First, because the movement didn't put them in the role of spokesperson, the movement cannot remove them. The press put them there and only the press can choose not to listen. The press will continue to look to "stars" as spokeswomen as long as it has no official alternatives to go to for authoritative statements from the movement. The movement has no control in the selection of its representatives to the public as long as it believes that it should have no representatives at all. Second, women put in this position often find themselves viciously attacked by their sisters. This achieves nothing for the movement and is painfully destructive to the individuals involved. Such attacks only result in either the woman leaving the movement entirely—often bitterly alienated— or in her ceasing to feel responsible to her "sisters." She may maintain some loyalty to the movement, vaguely defined, but she is no longer susceptible to pressures from other women in it. One cannot feel responsible to people who have been the source of such pain without being a masochist, and these women are usually too strong to bow to that kind of personal pressure. Thus the backlash to the "star" system in effect encourages the very kind of individualistic nonresponsibility that the movement condemns. By purging a sister as a "star," the movement loses whatever control it may have had over the person who then becomes free to commit all of the individualistic sins of which she has been accused.

Political Impotence

Unstructured groups may be very effective in getting women to talk about their lives; they aren't very good for getting things done. It is when people get tired of "just talking" and want to do something more that the groups flounder, unless they change the nature of their operation. Occasionally, the developed informal structure of the group coincides with an available need that the group can fill in such a way as to give the appearance that an unstructured group "works."

That is, the group has fortuitously developed precisely the kind of structure best suited for engaging in a particular project.

While working in this kind of group is a very heady experience, it is also rare and very hard to replicate. There are almost inevitably four conditions found in such a group:

1) It is task oriented. Its function is very narrow and very specific, like putting on a conference or putting out a newspaper. It is the task that basically structures the group. The task determines what needs to be done and when it needs to be done. It provides a guide by which people can judge their actions and make plans for future activity.

2) It is relatively small and homogeneous. Homogeneity is necessary to ensure that participants have a "common language" or interaction. People from widely different backgrounds may provide richness to a consciousness-raising group where each can learn from the others' experience, but too great a diversity among members of a task-oriented group means only that they continually misunderstand each other. Such diverse people interpret words and actions differently. They have different expectations about each other's behavior and judge the results according to different criteria. If everyone knows everyone else well enough to understand the nuances, these can be accommodated. Usually, they only lead to confusion and endless hours spent straightening out conflicts no one ever thought would arise.

3) There is a high degree of communication. Information must be passed on to everyone, opinions checked, work divided up, and participation assured in the relevant decisions. This is only possible if the group is small and people practically live together for the most crucial phases of the task. Needless to say, the number of interactions necessary to involve everybody increases geometrically with the number of participants. This inevitably limits group participants to about five, or excludes some from some of the decisions. Successful groups can be as large as 10 or 15, but only when they are in fact composed of several smaller subgroups which perform specific parts of the task, and whose members overlap with each other so that knowledge of what the different subgroups are doing can be passed around easily.

4) There is a low degree of skill specialization. Not everyone has to be able to do everything, but everything must be able to be done by more than one person. Thus no one is indispensable. To a certain extent, people become interchangeable parts.

While these conditions can occur serendipitously in small groups, this is not possible in large ones. Consequently, because the larger movement in most cities is as unstructured as individual rap groups, it is not too much more effective than the separate groups at specific tasks. The informal structure is rarely together enough or in touch enough with the people to be able to operate effectively. So the movement generates much motion and few results. Unfortunately, the consequences of all this motion are not as innocuous as the results, and their victim is the movement itself.

Some groups have formed themselves into local action projects if they do not involve many people and work on a small scale. But this form restricts movement activity to the local level; it cannot be done on the regional or national. Also, to function

well the groups must usually pare themselves down to that informal group of friends who were running things in the first place. This excludes many women from participating. As long as the only way women can participate in the movement is through membership in a small group, the nongregarious are at a distinct disadvantage. As long as friendship groups are the main means of organizational activity, elitism becomes institutionalized.

For those groups which cannot find a local project to which to devote themselves, the mere act of staying together becomes the reason for their staying together. When a group has no specific task (and consciousness-raising is a task), the people in it turn their energies to controlling others in the group. This is not done so much out of a malicious desire to manipulate others (though sometimes it is) as out of a lack of anything better to do with their talents. Able people with time on their hands and a need to justify their coming together put their efforts into personal control, and spend their time criticizing the personalities of the other members in the group. Infighting and personal power games rule the day. When a group is involved in a task, people learn to get along with others as they are and to subsume personal dislikes for the sake of the larger goal. There are limits placed on the compulsion to remold every person in our image of what they should be.

The end of consciousness-raising leaves people with no place to go, and the lack of structure leaves them with no way of getting there. The women the movement either turn in on themselves and their sisters or seek other alternatives of action. There are few that are available. Some women just "do their own thing." This can lead to a great deal of individual creativity, much of which is useful for the movement, but it is not a viable alternative for most women and certainly does not foster a spirit of cooperative group effort. Other women drift out of the movement entirely because they don't want to develop an individual project and they have found no way of discovering, joining, or starting group projects that interest them.

Many turn to other political organizations to give them the kind of structured, effective activity that they have not been able to find in the women's movement. Those political organizations which see women's liberation as only one of many issues to which women should devote their time thus find the movement a vast recruiting ground for new members. There is no need for such organizations to "infiltrate" (though this is not precluded). The desire for meaningful political activity generated in women by their becoming part of the women's liberation movement is sufficient to make them eager to join other organizations when the movement itself provides no outlets for their new ideas and energies.

Those women who join other political organizations while remaining within the women's liberation movement, or who join women's liberation while remaining in other political organizations, in turn become the framework for new informal structures. These friendship networks are based upon their common nonfeminist politics rather than the characteristics discussed earlier, but operate in much the same way. Because these women share common values, ideas, and political orientations, they too become informal, unplanned, unselected, unresponsible elites— whether they intend to be so or not.

These new informal elites are often perceived as threats by the old informal elites previously developed within different movement groups. This is a correct perception. Such politically oriented networks are rarely willing to be merely "sororities" as many of the old ones were, and want to proselytize their political as well as their feminist ideas. This is only natural, but its implications for women's liberation have never been adequately discussed. The old elites are rarely willing to bring

such differences of opinion out into the open because it would involve exposing the nature of the informal structure of the group. Many of these informal elites have been hiding under the banner of "anti-elitism" and "structurelessness." To effectively counter the competition from another informal structure, they would have to become "public," and this possibility is fraught with many dangerous implications. Thus, to maintain its own power, it is easier to rationalize the exclusion of the members of the other informal structure by such means as "red-baiting," "reformist-baiting," "lesbian-baiting," or "straight-baiting." The only other alternative is to formally structure the group in such a way that the original power structure is institutionalized. This is not always possible. If the informal elites have been well structured and have exercised a fair amount of power in the past, such a task is feasible. These groups have a history of being somewhat politically effective in the past, as the tightness of the informal structure has proven an adequate substitute for a formal structure. Becoming structured does not alter their operation much, though the institutionalization of the power structure does open it to formal challenge. It is those groups which are in greatest need of structure that are often least capable of creating it. Their informal structures have not been too well formed and adherence to the ideology of "structurelessness" makes them reluctant to change tactics. The more unstructured a group is, the more lacking it is in informal structures, and the more it adheres to an ideology of "structurelessness," the more vulnerable it is to being taken over by a group of political comrades.

Since the movement at large is just as unstructured as most of its constituent groups, it is similarly susceptible to indirect influence. But the phenomenon manifests itself differently. On a local level most groups can operate autonomously; but the only groups that can organize a national activity are nationally organized groups. Thus, it is often the structured feminist organizations that provide national direction for feminist activities, and this direction is determined by the priorities of those organizations. Such groups as NOW, WEAL, and some leftist women's caucuses are simply the only organizations capable of mounting a national campaign. The multitude of unstructured women's liberation groups can choose to support or not support the national campaigns, but are incapable of mounting their own. Thus their members become the troops under the leadership of the structured organizations. The avowedly unstructured group has no way of drawing upon the movement's vast resources to support its priorities. It doesn't even have a way of deciding what those priorities are.

The more unstructured a movement is, the less control it has over the directions in which it develops and the political actions in which it engages. This does not mean that its ideas do not spread. Given a certain amount of interest by the media and the appropriateness of social conditions, the ideas will still be diffused widely. But diffusion of ideas does not mean they are implemented; it only

means they are talked about. Insofar as they can be applied individually they may be acted on; insofar as they require coordinated political power to be implemented, they will not be. As long as the women's liberation movement stays dedicated to a form of organization which stresses small, inactive discussion groups among friends, the worst problems of unstructuredness will not be felt. But this style of organization has its limits; it is politically inefficacious, exclusive, and discriminatory against those women who are not or cannot be tied into the friendship networks. Those who do not fit into what already exists because of class, race, occupation, education, parental or marital status, personality, etc., will inevitably be discouraged from trying to participate. Those who do fit in will develop vested interests in maintaining things as they are.

The informal groups' vested interests will be sustained by the informal structures which exist, and the movement will have no way of determining who shall exercise power within it. If the movement continues deliberately to not select who shall exercise power, it does not thereby abolish power. All it does is abdicate the right to demand that those who do exercise power and influence be responsible for it. If the movement continues to keep power as diffuse as possible because it knows it cannot demand responsibility from those who have it, it does prevent any group or person from totally dominating. But it simultaneously ensures that the movement is as ineffective as possible. Some middle ground between domination and ineffectiveness can and must be found.

These problems are coming to a head at this time because the nature of the movement is necessarily changing. Consciousness-raising as the main function of the women's liberation movement is becoming obsolete. Due to the intense press publicity of the last two years and the numerous overground books and articles now being circulated, women's liberation has become a household word. Its issues are discussed and informal rap groups are formed by people who have no explicit connection with any movement group. The movement must go on to other tasks. It now needs to establish its priorities, articulate its goals, and pursue its objectives in a coordinated fashion. To do this it must get organized—locally, regionally, and nationally.

Principles of Democratic Structuring

Once the movement no longer clings tenaciously to the ideology of "structurelessness," it is free to develop those forms of organization best suited to its healthy functioning. This does not mean that we should go to the other extreme and blindly imitate the traditional forms of organization. But neither should we blindly reject them all. Some of the traditional techniques will prove useful, albeit not perfect; some will give us insights into what we should and should not do to obtain certain ends with minimal costs to the individuals in the movement. Mostly, we will have to experiment with different kinds of structuring and develop a variety of techniques to use for different situations. The Lot System is one such idea which has

emerged from the movement. It is not applicable to all situations, but is useful in some. Other ideas for structuring are needed. But before we can proceed to experiment intelligently, we must accept the idea that there is nothing inherently bad about structure itself—only its excess use.

While engaging in this trial-and-error process, there are some principles we can keep in mind that are essential to democratic structuring and are also politically effective:

1) Delegation of specific authority to specific individuals for specific tasks by democratic procedures. Letting people assume jobs or tasks only by default means they are not dependably done. If people are selected to do a task, preferably after expressing an interest or willingness to do it, they have made a commitment which cannot so easily be ignored.

2) Requiring all those to whom authority has been delegated to be responsible to those who selected them. This is how the group has control over people in positions of authority. Individuals may exercise power, but it is the group that has ultimate say over how the power is exercised.

3) Distribution of authority among as many people as is reasonably possible. This prevents monopoly of power and requires those in positions of authority to consult with many others in the process of exercising it. It also gives many people the opportunity to have responsibility for specific tasks and thereby to learn different skills.

4) Rotation of tasks among individuals. Responsibilities which are held too long by one person, formally or informally, come to be seen as that person's "property" and are not easily relinquished or controlled by the group. Conversely, if tasks are rotated too frequently the individual does not have time to learn her job well and acquire the sense of satisfaction of doing a good job.

5) Allocation of tasks along rational criteria. Selecting someone for a position because they are liked by the group or giving them hard work because they are disliked serves neither the group nor the person in the long run. Ability, interest, and responsibility have got to be the major concerns in such selection. People should be given an opportunity to learn skills they do not have, but this is best done through some sort of "apprenticeship" program rather than the "sink or swim" method. Having a responsibility one can't handle well is demoralizing. Conversely, being blacklisted from doing what one can do well does not encourage one to develop one's skills. Women have been punished for being competent throughout most of human history; the movement does not need to repeat this process.

6) Diffusion of information to everyone as frequently as possible. Information is power. Access to information enhances one's power. When an informal network spreads new ideas and information among themselves outside the group, they are already engaged in the process of forming an opinion—without the group participating. The more one knows about how things work and what is happening, the more politically effective one can be.

7) Equal access to resources needed by the group. This is not always perfectly possible, but should be striven for. A member who maintains a monopoly over a needed resource (like a printing press owned by a husband, or a darkroom) can unduly influence the use of that resource. Skills and information are also resources. Members' skills can be equitably available only when members are willing to teach what they know to others.

When these principles are applied, they ensure that whatever structures are developed by different movement groups will be controlled by and responsible to the group. The group of people in positions of authority will be diffuse, flexible, open, and temporary. They will not be in such an easy position to institutionalize their power because ultimate decisions will be made by the group at large, The group will have the power to determine who shall exercise authority within it.

Your Machines: Your Culture
Simon Yuill

YOUR MACHINES is a series of workshops and discussions introducing FOSS and its relevance to artists' practice. The first of these took place during the Machinista festival and others will come later this year. FOSS stands for Free Open Source Software. Sometimes it is also known as FLOSS, where the "L" stands for *Libre*, inserted to emphasize the notion of "free" in its political and ethical, rather than economic sense. As Richard Stallman, one of its early proponents, puts it, it's "free as in free speech". The vast majority of FOSS technology, however, is available without cost and this in itself makes it alluring for artists, media activists and non-profit groups as a viable means of providing access to software tools. Of course, you can always go down to the Barras and pick up a CD of commercial software at "competitively" reduced prices but there is more to FOSS than just saving pennies. It is much more an attitude about how software should be produced, distributed and used. Aspects of this attitude have relevance beyond software itself and, as many are beginning to realise, may have particular significance for artists wishing to work in a more autonomous way and trying to gain more control over the circumstances in which they work and how their work gets out into the wider world.

FOSS has been gathering momentum within the programming world over the past decades but many of its principles and arguments are now spilling out into other sectors such as biotechnology, education and the arts. The reason for this is that FOSS poses one of the most significant challenges to prevailing models of production and distribution, in particular those of Intellectual Property and the commodification of knowledge.

At a basic level, FOSS emerged out of the principles that the best software is made by sharing the knowledge of many programmers and that programming code operates more like a form of vernacular language—changing and evolving through daily use—rather than as a series of mechanical components or hermetic science. The simple pragmatics of this are: if someone using a piece of software developed by another person comes across a bug in it, or realises that it could benefit from additional features, given access to the code from which it is produced they can make the necessary changes and pass these benefits onto others. Corporate software, such as that produced by Microsoft, prevents such access to the code, leaving users dependent on what the company decides is best. Corporate software adopts a paternalistic attitude towards its users whereas FOSS is more communitarian, a folk science which emphasises the collective autonomy of the users. FOSS recognises that software is an inherently social medium (think of just how much email and texting play a part in our contemporary social lives) and that it is best created through a social process and, indeed, constitutes a form of social practice in its own right. One area where this dimension is brought to life is in the numerous online discussion forums that provide help and assistance to newcomers and experienced users alike. This is contrary to the logic of the intellectual property market which only sees strength in restricting and hiding knowledge rather than sharing it.

During the seventies, as computer science shifted from the University labs, where sharing knowledge was the norm, into the commercial sector, Stallman noticed that commercial software companies were actively blocking this sharing of knowledge through copyrighting code and placing their employees under non-disclosure agreements. Stallman's response was to introduce, in opposition to copy*right*, the concept of copy*left*. What makes FOSS work is a thing called the GNU General Public License (GPL for short). This is a legal document that programmers distribute with their code. It is similar to the licensing agreements that you have to click on "I accept" for when you load commercial software on your computer. Unlike the commercial licenses, which prevent you from installing multiple copies of the software or passing it on to others, the GPL encourages the distribution of the code:

"The licenses for most software are designed to take away your freedom to share and change it. By contrast, the GNU General Public License is intended to guarantee your freedom to share and change free software--to make sure the software is free for all its users. [...] Our General Public Licenses are designed to make sure that you have the freedom to distribute copies of free software, that you receive source code or can get it if you want it, that you can change the software or use pieces of it in new free programs; and that you know you can do these things.

The GPL does not preclude the possibility of charging for services in the production and distribution of software. It recognises that costs may be involved in this, but what it ensures is that the software is not exclusively commodified. As Stallman points out, software is not just code, it is also made from ideas, and even comparatively simple programs often combine a broad range of ideas and concepts in their construction. Exclusive copyright measures, and intellectual property patents, undermine this and as a result we get worse software. Given how much of the world is managed through software systems these days, the consequence of this is we also end up with a world that runs less effectively."

Extract from the GPL

Amongst some of the major innovations and success of the FOSS movement have been things like "GNU/Linux"—a free operating system that the vast majority of websites now run from, "CVS"—a means of co-ordinating software development across the internet and "wikis"—a form of open collaborative web-site infrastructure. Partly through these, the FOSS ethos has spread beyond programming, spawning developments such as "open content", or "open knowledge", and "cultural commons". These practices are developing ways in which knowledge dissemination and cultural production may be supported through similar structures to FOSS. As individuals from farmers to high level academics are realising, the logic of the intellectual property market is harmful on many levels. Absurd situations such as patents being applied to traditional crop seeds, as Monsanto and others have been doing, are resulting in traditional farming knowledge being "privatised", and farmers being placed in licensing straight-jackets which are harmful to those in both the developing and developed nations. Academic researchers are finding that the push to patent and copyright their work that has come from the commercialisation of university research is hampering rather than supporting their work.

But it's not only the issue of exchange of information that FOSS addresses, it also provides access to different possibilities of representing and constructing information. The interfaces through which you read a word document, browse the web, manipulate sound and image files are all essentially metaphorical models which structure what information you can access and how you can manipulate it. The idea of a "desktop" as your main interface is also such a metaphor deriving from computing's close links to office culture and the emphasis upon the computer as a work tool rather than a plaything. This extends deeper than merely surface dressing, however, right down into the ways in which information is structured and filtered in codes and data systems. With proprietary software, those metaphors are always chosen for you by someone else and you have to work within the paradigms such companies consider appropriate to the tasks you wish to do. With FOSS there is the possibility to adopt and change those metaphors, often both at the surface level and at the deeper level, and of course, also to grow your own. In place of an homogenised digital monoculture FOSS encourages diverse vernaculars of multiple digital cultures. Whilst this might raise the fear of a digital Tower of Babel, FOSS in fact, through its central emphasis upon exchange, has also fostered a culture in which the formats for information exchange are openly standardised and published. Documents produced through FOSS technologies are generally far more easy to transfer between different softwares and systems than proprietary ones.

The "cultural commons" is an extension of FOSS principles into a broader cultural paradigm. It recognises that many areas of cultural practice are under similar threats from the logic of Intellectual Property. It adopts the idea of the "common land", land set aside from private ownership for the use of the community, and makes the claim that we must ensure similar such common rights to cultural produce, rights which were once widespread but now with the expansion of Intellectual Property market are swiftly vanishing. "Creative Commons" is an organisation which has been set up to support cultural producers through adapting the principles of the GPL to other media and practices.

Stallman is a bit of an old hippy. He has long unkempt hair, frequently goes around barefoot and is often pictured playing a wooden flute alongside his computers. Like the faint smell of patchuoli oil in an unwashed kaftan, there is an aroma of hippy ethos imbuing FOSS. As Francis McKee has pointed out, there is much in common between aspects of the FOSS movement and the anti-capitalist activities of groups such as the Diggers. He also draws comparison to the Grateful Dead's practice of encouraging their fans to make their own tape recordings of their concerts. But FOSS emerged in the late 1970's and there is also a great deal of the punk DIY ethic at play here too. The front cover of the first issue of Sniffin' Glu fanzine depicted the diagrams for three guitar chords accompanied by the words: "learn these, now form your own band". This carried over into the development of self-publishing and distribution networks, merging with the anarchist press in many cases, such as groups like Crass facilitated. The GPL is, in many ways, a programmer's equivalent to the "PAY NO MORE THAN 1.00 FOR THIS RECORD" that many bands printed on their record sleeves.

Attend any FOSS developers convention, or scan a selection of FOSS sites on the web, however, and you will see that it is not just old hippies and and angry anarchists who are supporting it. Apple's new operating system, OS X, is built on top of FOSS technologies and you can run just about any FOSS application on it. IBM are also steadily pushing the FOSS operating system GNU/Linux in place of Microsoft. This has raised a mixture of alarm and celebration amongst FOSS communities depending on how they view the involvement of big business. This is a big area of debate within the FOSS world, but one of the main reasons big companies like Apple and IBM are adopting FOSS is simply because the software works and it works extremely well. In India, China, Mexico, Brazil, and now many European countries, FOSS technologies are also being adopted by governments and major institutions. In a world in which governments are largely managed through IT systems, a government run on Microsoft is, in some ways, a government run by Microsoft, choosing FOSS technologies in this context not only prevents vast sums of public money going into the hands of a single private corporation but also raises many issues around the relationships between governance and private business. As the pro-FOSS lawyer Lawrence Lessig has argued, Open Source code is inherently democratic, it maintains the knowledge of how things work in the public domain. Whether the adoption of FOSS in these sectors will lead to more fundamental changes or be co-opted back into restrictive practices remains to be seen, but we are currently in a situation where a sizable crack has been made into the realms of proprietary-based governance.

The first two YOUR MACHINES events were a discussion, held at Mono Cafe, and a workshop on wireless networks at the CCA. The discussion included three speakers: Bob Kerr from the EdLUG (Edinburgh Linux Users Group), James Wallbank from Lowtech in Sheffield, and Lawrence Liang, a lawyer from the Alternative Law Forum in Bangalore. The wireless workshop was presented by members of the group TAKE2030 who had performed at Machinista.

Bob Kerr is part of the Edinburgh Linux Users Group (EdLUG). Like many such groups they provide local voluntary support for people interested in using free software. They are also increasingly active in promoting

free software usage particularly in public sector institutions. IT support has been one of the main areas where the Blairite public-private initiative has led to public money going into the profits of private enterprise. Free software is one way of reversing this abuse of public funding. Bob has recently persuaded the libraries across Scotland to lend free software cd-roms, thereby enabling people without broadband or internet access a way of obtaining the software at no cost. He has also begun a scheme of donating CD copiers to schools so that they may run off their own copies of software for pupils to use at home. During his talk he handed out copies of these cds which have "OpenOffice" on them. OpenOffice is a set of free software applications providing word processing, management and accountancy packages. It runs on GNU/Linux, Windows and OS X. It provides a viable, and free, alternative to Microsoft's "Office" applications. It is particularly suitable for small-scale non-profit groups who simply can't afford the cost of commercial software licenses, as well as schools wanting to provide software to their students so that everyone can have equal access to the tools to learn and work with. Thanks to the efforts of groups across the world contributing to it, OpenOffice also provides far superior international language support to any commercial text editor, ranging from Farsi to Gaelic.

James Wallbank spoke about the history and ideas behind Lowtech. Lowtech began life as an artist-run project utilising unwanted computers. Following the success of this (over 300 computers were donated in a space of two weeks), Lowtech evolved into a free public access media lab, which is now one of the longest running and most heavily used in the UK. The lab runs entirely on FOSS technology, using GNU/Linux on all its machines. Lowtech have also been involved in setting up similar no-cost labs for educational and community projects in Sheffield, where they are based. Their current project, "Grow your own media lab", aims to make the knowledge that has been gained from this success to be available to others.

Access to Information Technologies is a major issue in developing countries. Lawrence Liang spoke about the perspective on Free Software and Open Source from India. He pointed out that, whereas software piracy was seen as an "illegal" practice in the West, it played a significant role in enabling developing countries to compete with the frequently monopolised market policies of the Western corporations. To most people in India today "free software" means Microsoft because the only way people can get access to computing is through pirated software. Lawrence showed how the current situation regarding software should be understood in relation to the recent past history of the music industry in India. Prior to the 1980's, the music market was almost entirely monopolised by HMV who had gained this position during the colonial era. HMV's marketing policies had led to an homogenisation of Indian music. With the availability of cheap tape-to-tape copying in the 1980's, however, small, local music distributors began to emerge. They were able to get a foothold in the market through initially pirating the mainstream music produced by HMV. The profits from this, however, were able to feed into publishing more locally orientated music. This eventually toppled HMV's monopolisation of the market and enabled a more homegrown musical culture to be available to the public.

The current situation with software should be seen in a similar light. The widespread dominance of Microsoft systems within the business world means that, at present, smaller companies can only enter this arena through the use of pirate software. Lawrence's final argument was that, whilst he believed that the principles of Free Software and a digital "cultural commons" were definitely the right way forward, they were currently shaped by a purely Western model of authorship and cultural production. For these models to have significance globally they must also incorporate models of authorship and cultural production from other traditions and contexts. In many developing countries, what is stigmatised as "piracy" is often the only viable means of developing local cultural production and until this is properly appreciated, the discourse of a "cultural commons" will be inadequate to the needs of these countries.

One of the key areas of software and the use of computer systems to support social structures are networks.

Wireless networking (also known as wi-fi) utilises an area of radio bandwidth that has been made available for public use. At present this is a relatively unregulated sector. One of its advantages is that it enables independent broadband network connections to be set up at little cost. This has been taken up by groups trying to establish free, or lo-cost, internet access for communities in both urban and rural contexts for whom telecoms-based broadband is limited or expensive, or simply where people want to make access to information as free as possible. Sizeable "freenetwork" movements are active in cities such as London and Berlin, but there is growing support for them in areas such as the Western Isles and freenetwork groups exist in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

In TAKE2030's wireless workshop, Ilze Black and Shu Lea Chang presented a talk on the development of the freenetwork movement and the way in which their performance projects were trying to promote awareness of it. In the second half of the workshop Alexei Blinov explained the technology which enabled wireless networks and how simple some of this could be to build. He then went on to show the participants how to build their own antenna using the precut metal parts and some basic electrical connector components. Everyone made their own antenna, some of which were capable of producing quite strong signals. Participants in this workshop included individuals from the Glasgow freenetwork group as well as community activists from Edinburgh. People were able to take the working antenna away with them and some are now being put to use in setting up open wireless nodes.

Future workshops will provide hands-on tuition in audio and video editing with free software as well online audio-video webcast systems and tools for making interactive installation and performance works.

One of the main off-shoots from the workshop has been the establishing of contacts between the artist community in Glasgow with the Linux and community-activist groups. The Glasgow artist-run space, the Chateau, are currently setting up a medialab and open wireless node with the assistance of the Glasgow Linux community. The same people have also been assisting the Glasgow Autonomous Project set up computer facilities at their drop-in centre on Albion Street. In both cases the facilities are being equipped with recycled computer hardware, effectively meaning both groups are able to provide public access facilities for less than more established institutions spend on buying a single computer. La Chateau will be the first artist-run space to provide broadband internet access for free, and through its wireless node, make that available for others.

As the various examples outlined above demonstrate, FOSS is very much about viewing the development of technology in terms of its social and cultural contexts, and very much about how they may be supported by it. It recognises that collaborative rather than competitive practice is ultimately more effective. It also demonstrates that such principles can and do work at a practical level.

There are many ways in which FOSS is significant to artists. At one level there is the issue of tools. FOSS can provide free and powerful tools useful to a whole range of activities from producing software art, animation, audio and video work to managing your accounts and writing applications. There are specialised distributions of GNU/Linux, such as Dyne-bolic, which come ready packaged with all the tools you need. You can even run the system straight from a cdrom without having to install it over your existing operating system, enabling you to experiment with FOSS tools whilst still holding onto your old commercial software. The FOSS approach is also of benefit to artist-run groups who can cheaply equip their offices and put more of their funding income towards making and supporting art rather than managerial costs. Within arts education, if more courses teaching media-based practice were to switch to FOSS systems, their students would have access to the same software that they learn with, and be able to leave college and continue using it. Similarly, galleries running media labs could save money on license costs and put it towards the much more valuable costs of human staffing—which in turn could marginally boost an important area of income for many artists doing teaching and gallery admin.

But there are other ways in which FOSS may have benefit to artists which are less to do with the technology and more to do with working practice. One of the main achievements of the GPL is that it has enabled those who manually produce code to have control over its future use and distribution and it has sought to do this in a way that feeds benefit back to others who do similar work. The internet has provided a means of distribution that cuts out the need for marketing and management middlemen and FOSS projects generally disseminate their output more in a form of dialogue between users and developers than through marketing mechanisms. Many artists working with the internet and software art have similarly been very successful in side-stepping much of the institutional hierarchy of the artworld. Whereas the new media scene of the 1980's and '90's was heavily dominated by big institutions and corporate sponsorship, there is now a very vibrant artist-led framework within which many artists produce and distribute their work. Characteristic of this are festivals such as READ_ME, a software art festival in which those who submit define the main themes and content of the festival rather than a group of curators imposing their own criteria and definitions. This scene has developed a strong symbiosis with FOSS, with artists developing their own tools and supporting FOSS projects. Similarly within the music and audio arts scene, many artists now distribute their work online and the internet has enabled small-scale music publishers to flourish.

As Francis McKee has pointed out there are many parallels with the attitudes of FOSS developers and contemporary artists, whose main motivation is not success within the art market but rather the realisation of personal projects and interests within the context of a creative community. Artist-run spaces like the Switchspace and la Chateau have been particularly good at enabling this. We are currently facing a window of opportunity, Francis believes, in which artists could take the lead in developing and changing the systems of distribution and presentation through which their work reaches its audiences. He has initiated several small-scale projects exploring this, some, like RandomState and Agile Process, utilising new media platforms, others, like Sue Tompkins' "Country Grammar" tape, making use of older media. Given the current turn by the Scottish Executive towards commercialisation of the arts, forcing it into a "creative industries" paradigm in which we will see more public funding and public spaces going into private enterprise and management, the arts community in Scotland is realising the need to formulate more autonomous forms of organisation, production and distribution. The concept of the "self-institution" is one such model, currently being articulated by Josephine Berry and Saul Albert among others. As they have found, there is much that artists can learn from the tactics and experience of the FOSS movement.

URLs:

YOUR MACHINES - http://www.yourmachines.org
Free Software Foundation - http://www.fsf.org
Creative Commons - http://creativecommons.org
OpenOffice - http://www.openoffice.org
Dyne-bolic - http://dyne.org
Lowtech - http://www.lowtech.org
Freenetworks - http://www.freenetworks.org
Glasgownet - http://www.glasgownet.com
Glasgow Autonomous Project - http://glasgow-autonomy.org
READ_ME festival - http://readme.runme.org
RandomState - http://www.randomstate.org
Agile Process - http://www.agile-process.com
Saul Albert - http://twenteenthcentury.com/saul/
Josephine Berry - http://www.ourganisation.org

Mise en Scene au Chateau

Guy vEale: Who is involved in Mise en Scene, and how did the idea for an event that includes mixing film screenings, music performances and exhibitions come together?

Karen Veitch: The idea was thought up by a mate Yvonne, she asked me to come on board to see what we could manage to organise. We wanted to give film makers in Glasgow (and, as it turned out, abroad) a platform to have their work screened. We realise that it's difficult for budding film makers to get their work shown in Glasgow, and along with nights such as Café Flicker at Glasgow Media Access Centre [see www.variant.org.uk/6texts/Sound_Vision.html] and groups such as Bungle, there are not too many opportunities.

The original idea was to put on a screening in the Botanic Gardens (which may still happen this summer) however due to the Glasgow weather and the fact that in the summer it doesn't get dark 'til about 11pm, we opted for hosting the screenings in our friends' arts studios, the *Chateau*.

There are a few of us involved in making these nights happen and people can get as involved as they want (we realise that it is difficult to be completely involved all the time –this is all done in our spare time). There are a few of us dedicated to the preparations, from making the film submis-

sions posters, to getting them out, to watching all the films, to then sorting out the PR for the actual night, to organising the films onto one format. More people get on board when it comes to preparing the space for the night. At the *Chateau* this can take days!—tidying; blacking out windows; heaving chairs and the *Mise* purple cushions, carpets and sofas about; and walking up and down 6 flights of stairs hundreds of times! And we also have people who get involved for the night—sound system and djs; caroline, who is our technical wizard; the posse who run the café (popcorn, toasties and we even had tapas at one of the nights); performers and film makers. All have made these nights possible…

Robb Mitchell: Basically, to get going a community of creative folk. Through the *Chateau*, making studio facilities cheaper and more interesting, exciting even in terms of range of activities/personnel, seemed to offer a means to creating a thriving work and play atmosphere. A low rent deal on the building as a whole held out the promise of allowing those sharing the rent to actually be using the building and getting to know each other all the more—as opposed to doing extra shifts at the call centre or restaurant.

The hope was to bring together ideas and knowledge, energy, support and resources (e.g. sharing tools) to help all involved further themselves—not necessarily in a careeristic sense. This exchange and buzz functions even on the most simplistic level—just a great (perhaps the best?)

way of passing the time.

And it was hoped that this would both feed off and into some interesting events. Ones in which the audience might say more to other casual acquaintances. We wanted to try and really give people something to talk about, so there's a bit more of the "Hey look at that!" and "What if...?"s. Possibly even some "Why don't we...?"s.

It is a little over common for event organisers to promise something in which all art forms come together, but then with few resources to be devoted to anything other than the main musical attractions. Thus many multi-arts events become a means for unwaged artists providing the labour and materials for a commercial club night's decor. The balance of musicians, artists and designers amongst the *Chateau* founders offered the opportunity for more equal and thriving relationships between different fields.

We didn't think Glasgow needed another big unfriendly space.

People always talk about lack of exhibition space but it seems that if people have the time and resources (that's quite a big "if", I know) and they really want to show work then they always find a way to do so.

For a long time I have seen the lack of any meaningful exchange between exhibitor and audience as a bigger problem. Having more galleries doesn't necessarily help in that respect—in might even make it worse.

A sizeable venue operated by thoughtful folk doing things for the love of it seemed to offer the possibility of actually making people appreciate, (I don't really like the word "access" but okay here it is...) access, respond and even give feedback, to whatever is shown or happens.

A large multi-roomed venue could host extended events and thus keep the audience together for a duration far beyond the standard busy hour or so of an exhibition opening. This would give people a chance to relax and look at things 'properly'—that is not to prescribe to viewers that they must concentrate purely on the work shown at the expense of all other sensations. Often revelations of deeper understanding can occur as one drifts in and out of attentiveness, a bit like the lyrics of a song taking shape whilst watching a movie, or having an idea for a design whilst being half asleep—and standing in an exhibition looking at art is a bit like asking the sales assistant in a record shop to play you snippets of unfamiliar tracks.

The scale of venue appeared to offer plenty of room for both local and not local, popular and unpopular performers/artists of all kinds to appear/show simultaneously, whether in collaboration or in parallel. Also non-art audiences are much more likely to give an honest (often too honest?) appraisal of an art work.

If you show non local artists by themselves, almost no-one comes to the exhibition. If you show local artists, the same old people come all the time. Likewise, with mixing practitioners from different genres/disciplines. Exhibitions' openings mixed with musical performances is not an original format but to do it large scale in a creative and friendly manner seemed worth a shot.

Both the dominant formats for showcasing "emerging" practitioners in these genres, namely the so-called DIY exhibition opening and the small gig, have many similarities. Their main value and appeal lies in their sociable function rather than the audience attending for pure stimulation. At exhibition openings, at least half of the audience members stand with their backs to the work and give by far the bulk of their attention to fellow attendees (more when the work is exclusively wall based). Similarly at small gigs, the audience can often seem to be attending far more for a chat (and sometimes a pose) before, after and normally during a performance.

Getting a music "crowd" along to an exhibition and a visual arts "crowd" along to a gig, offered exciting possibilities of increasing the size not just

of audiences but the attention given to performers/works. Respectful of each other's territories, both groups would probably pay much more attention to the work of the less familiar format than they would to that of their own "scene".

The quality of the artists' and musicians' wares often seem to suffer from the formal and technical constraints imposed by the dominant formats. That is to say, work often appears much more interesting and enjoyable in its private studio/band-practice setting than in a low-to-no budget public exposition. This is without mentioning the appeal of alcohol supplied at both functions, i.e. either free/very cheap at exhibitions and unlimited in the case of music events without the restrictions on taking drinks into performances common to theatres and cinemas.

Most performance work and more classical musical styles demand a more intensive, sit down, shut up and actually look and listen at the work. Which probably explains why Glasgow's rock/dance music and art scenes are so close, compared to the much weaker links between any of these and the theatre and more formal musical styles. Recently though groups of artists like *EmergeD*, *Market Gallery* and *Silencio* have gone some way to bringing emerging performance and visual practitioners together.

GeV: Why does *Mise en Scene* differ from regular, short film screenings? Can you give a brief overview of previous *Mise en Scene* events? What sort of criteria would you/do you have in mind for submissions? Are there any rules or definitions of what is admissible, or constraints upon the content or structure?

KV: The films we've had entered into *Mise en Scene* have varied greatly. At first we wanted it to be short films with a political or social comment, however seeing the submissions we realised there were a lot of films out there made with a purely artistic or experimental point-of-view, or even made just for fun! We then decided to expand on our original thought to include these—so you can expect to see a whole variety of films. After the first film night we also expanded to include performances and installations, which gave the night even more of a buzz. Live music was also included in the second *Mise en Scene* with Kevin Reid's "Tony's Song About a Chicken Headed Man".

RM: I think *Mise en Scene* differs from other film nights not so much in content of films but in atmosphere. The packed house spread over all manner of homemade, second and third hand furniture creates a cosy people-scape. Frequent intermissions ensure legs get stretched and all the films get chatted about.

GeV: What are the main hopes and aims you have in putting on events like this?

KV: To give the public access to see short films that they otherwise might not see in Glasgow. Also to give film makers, artists and performers the opportunities to show their work. Combined with satisfying my urge to organise...

RM: Mis En Scene attracts an audience far wider than just film creators and their mates. It's an opportunity for a large number of makers and others to meet—though how much productive new relationships are formed isn't (and perhaps shouldn't?) be measured. We are not a dating agency either but I did like the case of the event we did at the old jail when a girl who didn't realise she was going to a gig, met a boy who had no idea he was at an exhibition.

GeV: Are there any sponsors or funding bodies involved?

KV: We don't have any budget or funders. We initially put on the night using our own cash, and after the first night of charging £2 on the door, we used this to cover costs and had a little left for the next night. The idea that putting on these screenings is not at all costly is key (we're not getting paid for putting on the film nights, it's all on a voluntary basis). Anyone could do it... This idea was discussed at last week's workshop as part of *Mise*

en Scene, that Mick Fuzz from *Beyond TV* held (http://www.beyondtv.org). *Beyond TV* are a group with links to *Undercurrents* and *Indymedia* based in Manchester. They put on film nights and have been doing a tour of the UK with their *Medicine Show*, which we were privileged to see. Mick's workshop discussed the idea of low cost digital video and how to have access to films through the internet… how to burn CDRoms and create your own film night at extremely little expense. He is planning to come to Glasgow again in July and burn his CDRoms onto a few computers around Glasgow (possibly through *Camcorder Guerrillas* and the *Print Works Social Centre*) and this will give film makers and events organisers free access to new films to burn and potentially use in film nights here in Glasgow. Mick's main goal is "to share techniques and help build a network of media activists who can share ideas for screening nights and the films themselves."

RM: I'm often asked "Are you applying for funding"? Funding for what? If no one came to *Chateau* events then in order to put them on we would need to apply for funding, but then why apply to fund something no one wants?

Funding so that everyone involved got paid would be nice, but if everyone that contributed to an event got paid (including whoever was writing the applications and all the film makers) it would be too expensive to be funded in the current climate. There's seems much more good will towards something if everyone is a volunteer.

If publicly funded we would also be obliged to undertake more rigorous marketing activity and since we are already over subscribed in terms of 'visitor numbers', then that would seem like a waste of money.

Funding for hospitality to give away refreshments seems an attractive prospect. However we have annual visitor numbers approaching five figures without needing to bribe the audience into attending through free refreshments.

GeV: What are your plans for the future of *Mise en Scene*?

KV: I would like to develop a *Mise en Scene* website (at the moment we have a web page to advertise the nights (www.machinista.org/miseenscene/) and I have an idea to create a rolling submission for people to be able to send their films in and know that they will get shown at some point. This is the same way the Exploding Cinema works [see also www.variant.org.uk/7texts/Stefan_Szczelkun.html]. I was inspired by them when they appeared at The Arches this year. I'll have to learn how to create a website first I suppose!

Putting on a screening outdoors is still one I'd like to pursue, using renewable energy—a certain friend of mine has a 12V sound system and renewable energy such as batteries, solar and wind power, and could well be up for this idea.

Due to the constraints of working life, it is hard to put on regular nights (e.g. once per month), so the nights have tended to have a 4 month gap in between each event, so if anyone out there has time and energy and wants to get involved, then get in touch! (karenveitch12@yahoo.co.uk)

RM: The future of *Chateau* generally—we'll continue to look out for interesting places and people to do events with, both locally and further afield. Apparently folk in London are still talking about the super-hula hoop-fantastich finale to our event in Islington last year so some other club promoters down south are offering to support a mini *Chateau* tour.

In Glasgow recently, we accepted an informal offer of a year's free lease on a 40 thousand square foot West End property. Hopefully the good intentions will survive the nitty gritty of legal small print.

This week I met separately with representatives from the *Glasgow Gospel Choir* (to plan a rooftop performance) and the *Scottish Linux Users Group* who are helping us set up a computer recycling facility and to provide a free community wireless internet access across a large portion of central Glasgow. Both groups were really positive, but with hindsight I wish that I met with both of them simultaneously as there would be probably be some interesting undreamt of connections between the groups or individuals within them. Next time.

Thanks to everyone involved in *Mise en Scene* and to all the film makers that have sent their films in to us. Thanks to Mel and Yvonne. Another night coming soon!

Links

Many sacrifices were made at the altar of *machinista* preparations: www.machinista.org/miseenscene/

The Chateau: www.chateaugateau.co.uk

Some Mise En Scene participants...

http://holeinmypocket.com

http://www.ray-mundo.co.uk/

http://www.oncewerefarmers.com

http://www.artpleasure.com/

http://www.beyondtv.org

and others...

Exploding Cinema: http://explodingcinema.org

GAP - Print Works Social Centre: www.glasgow-autonomy.org

Scottish Linux Users Group: www.scotlug.org.uk

*Glasgow Media Access Centr*e: www.g-mac.co.uk

EmergeD: www.emerged.net

Market Gallery: www.marketgallery.org.uk/

Silencio: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/silencionet/

Indymedia: www.indymedia.org.uk

Guy vEale is a musician, DJ, promoter and writer based in Glasgow—longtime assocate of indie Swiss label www.spezialmaterial.ch . *A brief biography of Guy vEale can be found under welcome at* www.machinista.org

Racism in the Irish Experience

Colin Graham

Steve Garner, *Racism in the Irish Experience*, London, Pluto, 2004, £16.99, ISBN 07453 1996 3

'She never let them in, he cried again through his laughter'. So the unctuous Mr Deasy in James Joyce's *Ulysses* answers his own question, explaining why Ireland is the only country 'which never persecuted the Jews'. Joyce, ahead of the game as ever, shows Mr Deasy's prejudice to be mere ignorance, in the shape of Leopold Bloom, son of a Hungarian, Jewish refugee. And *Ulysses* also reminds us that Bloom's Jewishness rarely goes unnoticed by those supposedly non-persecuting fellow Irishmen around him.

Deasy's joke relies on an erasure of racial difference in Ireland which has as long a history as the immigrants it forgets. It's a forgetfulness which was particularly important to the calcification of 'Irishness' at the beginning of the twentieth century, when *Ulysses* is set. The 'revival' of Irish cultural nationalism in the *fin de siecle* and after eagerly took part in the inherently racialised ideas of nation which were embedded in European thinking at the time. And so the Irish, outside and inside Ireland, came to be thought of as a 'race', with all the dubious benefits of collectivity that bestows, and all the allergic responses to other 'races' which are dragged along with it.

A century after the fictitious events of *Ulysses*, and in the midst of celebrations of the novel, the Irish Government's slapdash referendum on citizenship rights suggests that the self-denial parodied by Deasy's joke is still in operation. The whole framework of the state is being changed in response to the 'threat' from 'citizenship tourists' who apparently come to Ireland to have their children, and thus to claim EU citizenship. The numbers, it turns out, are tiny, but the 'threat' is understood as substantive. Throughout the debate no political party dared to say the real truth—that racism, of an institutionalised, quietistic, self-denying kind, is at the heart of this disproportionate response. The 'offence' caused by the new immigrants, both legal and 'illegal' is partly an economic one, where the poor of the third world have the temerity to want to use first world resources to have their children, but it is also a visceral and bodily repulsion at the idea of what the charity collectors used to describe as 'black babies', being born in Dublin. As Garner succinctly puts it towards the end of his book, 'it is clear that one of the functions of racism is the control of bodies'. For an Irish state that went through the pain of referenda on abortion, the X case, child abuse by clerics and the scandals of infected blood products in the last decades, the citizenship referendum was just another twist in the incapable anxiety of a state seeking to regulate the bodies of its citizens, and most often those, including women, asylum-seekers and refugees, whose bodies are at once vulnerable and threatening.

Steve Garner's *Racism in the Irish Experience* is then what is usually called a 'timely' book. Garner's sociological analysis is the most thorough yet of the history of racism in the Irish consciousness, and in its final chapters brings a fresh clarity to thinking on the 'new racism' in contemporary Ireland. Recent writings on racism in Ireland have, in often radical or at least well-meaning ways, hedged around the possibility that Ireland, as a western nation, and for all its colonial history, may be an inevitably racialised, maybe even racist, entity. Garner, quoting Rathzel, suggests that 'racism cannot be fought adequately within the nation state'. In Ireland the nation, the state which represents nationality, and most of all the nationalism which lead to the formation of the Irish state, are still imagined as radical entities.

The single-handed overthrow of the might of the British Empire is an Irish national story yet capable of surfacing in the midst of cosmopolitan Europeanness, as if to separate out the Irish experience from the less laudable histories of continental Europe, and indeed Britain. Yet this hides what all nationalisms depend on – a necessity to define themselves against Others and aliens, and a historic structure in doing so which assumes that skin colour and cultural difference equals definitive alterity.

Garner has little patience for any residual belief that nationalism, or at least the state, can offer a real agenda for anti-racism. His anti-essentialist reasoning argues that 'race' itself is not a real category of analysis, but rather a way in which singular identities have been constructed, in defiance of a world which only ever offers multiple, fluid and above all migrant identities. 'Race' then becomes a fetishised fixity in the midst of change, and as Garner reminds us, 'race' as an essential category of identity is an idea which has developed in relatively recent times. It's on this argument that Garner is able to say genuinely new things about the forms of anti-racism which can be effective, since he implicates much of what passes for anti-racist thinking, especially in Ireland, as itself buying into the idea that racial differences are visible, immutable and permanent.

To get to this point Garner has to tread carefully. One of the recurrent and persistent tropes of recent discussions of race in Ireland is that those who despair of the 'new racism' which rose with the Celtic Tiger counter racism in Ireland with what Garner calls the 'historical duty' argument. Ireland's diasporic history, its long experience of migration, is used to tick off those Irish who now exhibit a lack of charity towards those whose diasporas cast them onto Irish shores. In two painstakingly thorough chapters Garner examines the history of anti-Irish racism in the United States and in Britain, and his conclusion is not surprisingly that here too it can be seen that 'race' is a shifting concept. He reminds us how the Irish in the US existed on both sides of the boundaries of racial prejudice, discriminating and discriminated against; how the Irish were at once colonised by the British and yet, individually and sometimes more collectively, took an active part in the worst atrocities of the British empire. In discussing this latter, Garner implicitly dismisses those arguments about Irish racism which circle back to blame the British empire, or even the Irish diaspora, for the importation of racism into Ireland—as if 'Ireland' itself, whatever it is, could not possibly be contaminated with such foreign and unpalatable beliefs. It is possible, Garner says, to have anti-semitism in a country without Jews, though he reminds us of the more or less constant and centuries-long Jewish presence in Ireland.

It is however when he discusses the 'new racism' that Garner's book makes its most important interventions in a debate which is otherwise in danger of collapsing under the weight of a liberal decency. When the Irish left Ireland during the Famine they were, as Garner points out, what could now feasibly be classed as economic migrants—and yet in the contemporary Western world 'economic migrancy', an effect entirely created by the logic of globalised Western capital, is seen not only as illegitimate but almost criminal. In Irish discussion of race there has been something much worse than diaspora amnesia—there is a wilful and 'racist' ignoring of the many types of immigration which are happening in the wake of the Celtic Tiger. There is a continual lack of distinction between asylum-seekers, refugees and 'legal' non-national workers, shoving all into one

category, with the always available possibility of them all being 'bogus'. The citizenship referendum of 2004 sought shift the grounds of Irishness from *ius solis* (the right to citizenship by place of birth) to a fudged version which mixes in *ius sanguinis* (the bloodline qualification). The latter allowed that 'bogus' sporting asylum-seeker Tony Cascarino, to have a long career with the Irish football team through a fictitious grandmother, but more importantly it has been the avenue by which Ireland has kept open its often lucrative connections to the diaspora; *ius solis* will stay in place as a partial contradiction because it is written into the Good Friday Agreement, with the result that Ian Paisley will have the unalienable right to claim Irish citizenship, because he was born on the island through a bloodline on the island, while the Phillipino nurses without whom the Irish health service would crash cannot get Irish citizenship for their children unless they live in Ireland for three years (work permits are currently normally given for two years). This illiberal mess is only explicable as a product of racist thinking, and bringing the Irish constitution into line with other EU states is little excuse for the doing the wrong thing.

In May 2004, just before the Referendum on Citizenship in Ireland, the journalist Fintan O'Toole used his column in *The Irish Times* to list a series of around 100 famous Irishmen and women—including St Patrick, Charles Stewart Parnell and Eamon De Valera—whose parentage would have made them, post-referendum, dubiously Irish. O'Toole argued that Irishness was always a porous category, open to migrants and returning sons and daughters. Garner's book goes a stage further and asks us to wonder if when we assert our nationality, Irish or otherwise, we are not always conjuring the ghost of racism.

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Cultural Provision for the Twenty-first Century
The Cultural Policy Collective

Beyond Social Inclusion/Towards Cultural Democracy was launched at the *Eighth Independent Radical Book Fair* in Edinburgh on 11 June, 2004. The pamphlet is written by the Cultural Policy Collective, a group of educators, curators and cultural workers in the arts and media. In response to the contemporary poverty of argument, we outline an approach to cultural provision in terms which critique the historic inconsistencies and anti-democratic tendencies of government policy.

Despite the Blairite rhetoric of radicalism, current cultural provision owes its evolution to a top-down tradition first instituted in Britain during the 1950s. Since then, governments and their various agencies have vainly attempted to democratise 'unpopular' cultural activities and prestige institutions. Today, the desire to channel people through social inclusion and outreach initiatives continues to promote the logic of top-down, technocratic control, albeit in a more overtly instrumentalised form. Such 'ameliorative' policies are not only tokenising and practically unworkable, but they often continue to privilege formally attenuated and alienating forms of cultural practice. Neither do they do much to disrupt traditional institutional hierarchies. By contrast, cultural democracy belongs within a radical tradition which aims to unleash the democratic potential of cultural arenas that are already popular, although nowadays either bureaucratically regimented or dominated by the market.

We argue that publicly-owned cultural forums, currently under threat of privatisation or market-led marginalisation, need to be defended and extended. At the centre of our agenda is a call for a wider redistribution of cultural (and other) resources. Thus rather than investing in perennially under-used 'white cube' gallery spaces or specialist centres, our pamphlet extends the argument for transforming libraries into a network of multi-use cultural venues. A renewed library network could host and diffuse a range of cultural activities presently located in city centres. In turn, public libraries could be reinvigorated and better equipped to defend free access to knowledge in the twenty-first century. Information technology has already extended the role of libraries, but privatisation is likely to continue to impinge on reflexive forms of knowledge. Historically, public libraries have been places where people educated themselves critically and independently. That important legacy needs to be protected and strengthened through the promotion of libraries' wider cultural functions.

Another crucial site of contest is public sector broadcasting (PSB). Whilst the BBC's ability to speak in the name of the citizen has always been problematic, its public rhetoric is all the more exposed as broadcasting is increasingly justified only in the name of the consumer. If PSB is to survive, then it must be democratised, retrieving the BBC from both the market and the hands of establishment appointees. Only if it is given over to a pluralised governance offering much greater public participation in programme-making can the BBC overcome the founding untruth of the 'arm's length principle' and drop its pretence of impartiality. In this way, the BBC would become a more lively public forum, promoting democratic communication and putting an end to a moribund administration that clasps government too close behind a façade of independence. For the BBC, the cosy relations of the Keynesian post-war settlement can no longer function under the pressures of neoliberalism. As the pamphlet argues, the full political implications of such a transformation have yet to be grasped.

The exigencies of funding in arts and culture extend directly to issues surrounding ethnicity and 'race'. Under the social inclusion agenda, the discourse of 'cultural diversity' is endlessly deployed to celebrate multiculturalism and ethnic difference. However, our pamphlet argues that such instrumentality is far from benign and sits uneasily with the politics of vilifying 'bogus' asylum seekers as economic migrants. Historically, uneven capitalist development has brought with it mass economic migrations. Under the conditions of globalisation it has become difficult for the far right to hang on to reductive racist values; increasingly it has pinpointed exactly those it wants to exclude—above all, economic migrants. Whilst the far right is becoming more precise about the terms of its discrimination, Third Way politics, devoid of any notion of solidarity in the face of capital, can only be vague about the terms of inclusion. As we suggest, a concentration on the histories and experiences of immigration is the best means of opposing racism in the public sector. The vacuous celebration of 'cultural diversity'—the leader of the BNP now describes himself as a 'multiculturalist'—is something which the marketplace has appropriated and extended to a point of near meaninglessness.

The Cultural Policy Collective aims to generate critical debate and address a number of pressing problems raised by the current implementation of cultural policy. The deceptively reform-minded rhetoric of social inclusion is still with us, yet its policies are persistently found wanting in a period when the gap between rich and poor is growing, democratic accountability is in decline, and the reality of prejudice and discrimination refuses to diminish.

The pamphlet outlines the extent to which inclusion is failing to deliver its social justice goals and the way in which its policy logic is perpetuated by false promises of upward mobility. The fantasy of cultural transcendence—encapsulated by the film *Billy Elliot*—continues to saturate the British consciousness. However if, as Raymond Williams once argued, 'culture is ordinary' then there is no reason why culture should not be the object of ordinary politics. As we argue, forging such a politics is now vital, not least to counter intensified forms of corporatist government in Britain which mobilise culture to obscure structural inequalities and to defuse the pressure for political change. The sheer vacuity of the official debate on cultural provision is striking in Scotland today, as elsewhere. We hope to arm our readers against the continual reinvention of shallow official language and technocratic methods which serve only to perpetuate social injustice.

The neoliberal discourse of rights and responsibilities is clearly made manifest in New Labour's cultural policy. With a wounding, economistic logic, cultural provision seeks to engender entrepreneurialism through projects of the self. This position is implicit in the most recent policy document, 'Government and the value of culture', released by Tessa Jowell, the English Minister of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. In a superficially seductive argument, she suggests that 'complex cultural activity' is the means by which the 'poverty of aspiration' can be overcome. But lying behind her beguiling rhetoric is the notion of 'governing by culture', a central plank of Blairite politics, a major goal of which is to transfer responsibility for inequality from state to citizen. The individual has only to embrace the opportunities for equality which arts projects mysteriously provide; inclusion is achieved ('inclusion into what, and to what end?' we want to ask) and

self-motivating tendencies are encouraged through exposure to high culture. Jowell's latest document is less a ministerial concession to the arts, than an attempt to bolster the authority of a failing policy. At no point does she refuse the instrumentalisation of culture or offer practical programmes to address sustained inequalities in cultural provision.

The invidious (and impossible) notion that social justice should be earned—a core aspect of social inclusion policy—has its historical roots in corporatist politics and the state's attempt to neutralise political struggle. From the point of view of cultural democracy Tessa Jowell offers nothing new: she enthuses over the improving capacities of high culture thereby providing the rationale for policies of access and participation in traditionally privileged art forms. It is particularly striking that she has nothing to say about reversing the privatisation of the mass media, a vital component of a democratic culture. Against the background of uneven subsidies and extensive audience non-participation in high art forms, Jowell's arguments lack any empirical basis on which to promote a broad-based policy.

Today, democracy itself is amongst the failing 'milestones' of inclusion in Britain. Under Blairism, electoral participation is gradually descending to levels seen in the United States. The far right is making electoral gains and a stupefying politics of celebrity gathers apace. Social democracy in Britain is suffering a terminal legitimation crisis, marked most notably by acute working-class disenfranchisement. Social inclusion has done nothing to reverse this process, whilst related Blairite ideologies—communitarianism, for example—fail to offer any political resources with which to counter the challenges imposed by globalisation (this is, of course, precisely their purpose). In practice, social inclusion replaces *politics* and *ideology* with various vacuous notions of *partnership* and *culture.* Cultural regeneration projects, appealing only to the interests of the managerial classes, remove democratic power from ordinary people and diminish local political accountability. The administrative fix of postal voting cannot restore the complex political cultures of democratic decision-making now being slowly eroded across Britain.

Beyond Social Inclusion/Towards Cultural Democracy is a contribution to overturning this dangerous democratic deficit. Its rationale within the sphere of cultural provision is to expand the realm of politics and democratic accountability. It offers a challenge to corporatist visions of 'governing by culture' which can only obscure—and in practice do little to rectify—the social and political causes of cultural inequality. If the authority of social inclusion discourse is already disintegrating, then our pamphlet warns against the rhetorical seduction of its likely successors. Already the language of 'cultural entitlement' has been widely aired by politicians in Scotland and it may well figure heavily in the Executive's current policy review. But if this particular rhetorical quick fix is to acquire any meaning, its logic must include an entitlement to a contested politics of culture. We encourage arts workers and their audiences to take up this banner of contest. It is one of the many first, vital steps towards a better world.

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