variant

volume 2 number 22 • spring 2005

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Variant, no. 22, Spring 2005

ISSN 0954-8815

Variant is a magazine with the independence to be critical that addresses cultural issues in a social and political context.

Variant is a charitable organisation and functions with the assistance of subscriptions and advertising.

We welcome contributions in the form of news, reviews, articles, interviews, polemical pieces and artists' pages. Guidelines for writers are available on request and at the Variant website.

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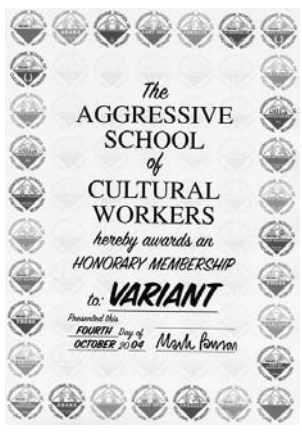
Printers: Spectator Newspapers, Bangor, BT20 4AF Co. Down, N. Ireland



Glasgow

Scottish Arts Council

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Variant is a member of the Independent News Collective: www.ink.uk.com

All articles from Variant vol.2 issues 1–21 are archived and available free at:

www.variant.org.uk

Variant is published 3 times a year. The most current issue is posted on the Variant website two months after publication of the newsprint edition.

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St. Vincent Street, Glasgow
Scotland, UK
Sort code: 87-37-99
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IBAN: GB06TSBS 873799 81142360
BIC Code: TSBS GB21210

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Images at the Edge

Jamie Docherty

Paris pioneered the stencil art explosion in the early 1980s and continues to be its principal centre, despite official disapproval and increasing harassment of artists. The stencilled images, or *pochoirs*, were influenced by the bold posters and situationist slogans of the 1968 uprising for sweeping social change. The introduction to Tristan Manco's book 'Stencil Graffiti' provides a good account of the importance of Paris in the spread of stencil street art[1], as does Lawrence Minsky's paper on US radical photographer Julian Backus' 'Ambush in the Streets' series on Parisienne *pochoiristes* to be viewed at the Cooper Union for Advancement of Science and Art, New York.[2]

Over the last couple of years its mark has begun to be made on Glasgow.[3] I was prompted to begin cataloguing Glasgow's burgeoning stencil art scene by the *Free Ulla* piece at the Glasgow Film Theatre's door. Ulla Roder is the Danish peace activist who had spent many months in gaol over her actions against weapons of mass destruction held on the Clyde.[4] I had recently shared a court appearance with Ulla at Helensburgh District Court following anti-nuclear missile protests at Faslane Naval Base. On further examination I found that many of the stencil artists had developed a political edge, that these pointed and often fleeting images posed telling retorts to commercial culture.

Ephemeral and often obscure in meaning and application, stencil art draws its strength from the necessary boldness of its image and ease of application. Exposed to the elements and in competition with ever changing flyers, the stencil's life is often short and unnoticed. While at first glance the topic may not be immediately apparent, more careful scrutiny will often be rewarded: themes of popular iconography and subversion of corporate logos in cityscapes

overloaded with advertising imagery. *Rogue One*, currently Glasgow's pre-eminent stylist, uses Star Wars typography and images for an anti-war message. With references to *Banksy*, the doyen of UK stencilists, *Rogue* often works in red and black on big pieces against a prepared white backdrop.

Life size vacuum cleaners on walls and portacabins across the West End and City Centre give an oblique reference to those who would hoover up after capitalism, the situationists to be found at www.vacuumcleaner.co.uk and their associates. For more on the subversion of corporate capitalism see the ever reliable "Adbusters".[5]

Movie stars and popular heroes cast their unflinching stare from dishevelled hoardings and utility boxes: Travis Bickle, Sub-Commandante Marcos, James Dean and Che Guevara reside in Barcelona, Brighton, Paris—and now Glasgow. Images are shared and adapted by individuals and collectives across the world. Kelvinbridge's *Blitz* shares the image of the stencil gas mask download provided by German Anti Fascist Action.[6]

Increasingly in Glasgow political issues are being addressed, in particular opposition to the Iraq War. This is not a surprise. Traditionally the stencil has been a voice of protest and subversion. Learning from the vivid statements of Rodchenko and the Russian and German *avant garde* and using cheap and easily obtained materials—paper/paint, the city wall as canvas—the stencil has long been a radical weapon. In the wake of the 1968 events the aerosol became a tool of protest in Paris. Susan Meiselas' famous 'Nicaragua' photo journal of 1981 used a stencil typeface on its cover and featured Sandinista stencil slogans.[7] Award winning US graphic artist Peter Kuper uses stencils almost exclusively. Some of his strongest work can be found in his comic book version of Upton Sinclair's radical classic, 'The Jungle'.[8] The London based *Arofish* has recently returned from Palestine where he has been "painting on the walls and generally making a right mess to the occasional annoyance of the occupying forces." This has included "views to peace", mock windows through the infamous 8 metre high wall being constructed around the West Bank.[9]

Not surprisingly, the stencil led image has been adopted for commercial purposes, especially when a youth market is targeted, as with Nike, Lucozade and the recent Snow Patrol album cover. The current TV ads for Red Square vodka based drink employs animated stencils. Much to the chagrin of the Keep Britain Tidy Campaign, Greenpeace has made use of "self confessed graffiti vandal" *Banksy's* work.[10] The *Glasgow Evening Times* recently reported that the City Council was not amused by the careful stencilling, or "vandalism", of city walls with the Council's own Graffiti Removal Hotline Number by persons unknown. Needless to say operatives were sent out without delay to remove the offending hotline number.

Around the corner from where one of *Rogue's* best pieces has recently been removed, an 'official' stencilled drinking Russian bids welcome on the rear of an Ashton Lane vodka bar. The familiar face of Che Guevara gazes down from the gantry of the Carnival Club. Incidentally, *Banksy's* web site contains the disclaimer: "He was not responsible for the current crap TV adverts with stencils in".[11] Manco questions whether this adoption of street tactics improves the brands' street credibility but concludes that "whatever the message or motivation, all stencils become part of our environment...and as we discover them, part of our experience."[12]

But the stencil is a growing component of the street and radical arts movements around the world, developing and adapting, changing and continuing to subvert. In the words of some artists:

"It's a fight for better images for all eyes, against obtrusive graphics and commercials, for a better graphic thinking for everyone."

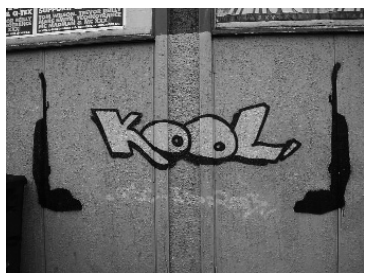
Hoernchen[13]

"We have taken branding advertising and identity and have played with it."

Faile[14]

"Stencils are actually quite easy to make, you know."

Banksy[15]



Notes

1. Manco, Tristan, 'Stencil Graffiti', Thames & Hudson, London 2002. Also see the spin off website www.stencilgraffiti.com
2. www.cooper.edu/art/lubalin/ambush
3. The best record of Glasgow's graffiti art, both stencil and wildstyle, is to be found at: www.duncancummings graffiti.co.uk
4. For more information about Ulla see www.free-ulla.org and www.tridentploughshares.org
5. www.adbusters.org
6. See www.ainfos.de/stencilgraffiti for more down loadable stencil images.
7. Meiselas, Susan, 'Nicaragua', Writers &Readers Cooperative, London 1981
8. Kuper, Peter, 'The Jungle Classics Illustrated'.
9. www.enrager.net/arofish
10. Keep Britain Tidy news release 02 August 04: Regional Director of Keep Britain Tidy, Justin Japp, said "...there is an old motto which says 'evil thrives when good men do nothing', this is exactly what has happened with graffiti..." The release goes on to name the 120 MP signatories to their Zero Tolerance of Graffiti Campaign, including Tony Blair who expounds, "Graffiti is not art. It's crime".
11. www.banksy.co.uk
12. Manco op cit p15
13. Quoted in Manco, Tristan, 'Street Logos', Thames & Hudson, London 2004, p98.
14. ibid p31
15. Banksy, 'Existencilism: Weapons of Mass Distraction', England 2002

Front Cover: *Rogue One*, 'Juggler'

News. What is it good for?

Stephen Baker & Greg McLaughlin

Once upon a time, news was regarded as the lifeblood of democracy, empowering the people with the sort of up-to-date and accurate information that enabled them to act as citizens in the political process. Nowadays the news is looked upon with a degree of circumspection by academics, politicians and journalists themselves. And if we are to go by the declining newspaper sales and viewing figures, the public also seem disappointed in the product.

Health warning: news impairs your understanding

While criticisms levelled at the news are as various as the people who make them, the overwhelming verdict seems to be that watching or reading the news can impair your ability to understand what's going on in the world. And lately plenty has been going on, although you probably won't have been able to make much sense of it—certainly not if your primary source of information is mainstream news.

The American humorist, Oscar Levant, once described the typical newsreel film as a 'series of catastrophes followed by a fashion show'.[1] Judging by the news agendas of the BBC, ITN, CNN and Fox News, little has changed. These broadcasters present a dispiriting vision of international affairs, one in which the world seems to defy rational explanation—a point illustrated by the reporting of the South Asian tsunami disaster in the past few weeks.

Such mystification usually serves the purposes of the powerful. As Greg Philo and Mike Berry argue in *Bad News from Israel*, the dominant frameworks for reporting the Israeli/Palestine conflict have skewed public understanding of what is really going on.[2] For example, TV viewers surveyed in their study believed that the death rate on the Israeli side was five times higher than that on the Palestinian side—the opposite of the actual statistic. It's that sort of reporting that endorses Israeli violence as a justifiable reaction to apparent Palestinian aggression. This in turn reinforces the Israeli monopoly of power and authority over information management and public relations.

The symptoms: No context, no explanation, no investigation.

At the root of all this misinformation is a lack of historical and political context in reporting. Whether it is conflict on picket lines or the latest crisis in the peace process in Northern Ireland, the explanatory potential of the news is found wanting. All too often journalists rely on being drip fed by 'official' sources or fall back on lazy clichés that present conflicts and carnage in terms of tragedy or evil. Robert Fisk of the *Independent* describes how normally sane journalists appear to lose it in the midst of conflict. He remembers a colleague reporting from Bosnia where "you can see evil and smell evil", while another stood solemnly to camera and intoned: "Behind me, unimaginable horrors are taking place in our time".[3] But of course, wars and conflicts represent the failure of politics and have avoidable causes and consequences. They cannot be explained by the metaphysical category of 'evil'.

John Pilger knows why the news is failing to illuminate the real causes of conflict. As he explained to Andrew Marr on BBC Radio 4's *Start the Week* (1 November 2004), investigative journalism just isn't on the news agenda anymore.

Investigative work is more time intensive and expensive, although it seems that broadcasters can always find money to spend on a studio revamp and new corporate logo, while newspapers are never short of funds to encourage confessions from C-list celebs or revelations from their ever-helpful 'friends'. However, what really counts against investigative journalism is its potential to bring newspapers and broadcasters into conflict with the powerful.

News corporations have left the risky business of uncovering the machinations of the powerful to the media bards and jokers. The most probing questions are being posed by comedians such as Michael Moore and Mark Thomas. As George Monbiot remarked in the *Guardian*, Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* asks the questions that should have been asked everyday for the past four years. The success of the film testifies to the rest of the media's failure' (13 July 2004).

The prognosis: the corrosion of democracy?

The consistent failure of the news to ask the appropriate questions of those in power has had a corrosive effect not just upon the traditions of journalism, but upon the democratic process itself. In the West voter turnouts are falling as people disengage from politics. After all, who would waste their time going to the polls in the world of 'one damn thing after another'?

Even the high turnout for the US elections conceals its own indictment of news. A recent poll, released by the Programme on International Policy Attitudes, showed that the overwhelming majority of Bush supporters still believe that Iraq had ties to al-Qaida or the September 11 terrorist attacks and weapons of mass destruction or a programme to develop them. Bush, his entourage and his supporters should have been confronted with the error of these assumptions at every step in the election contest, by journalists determined not to let such nonsense prevail in public.

One has to wonder, then, what *use* mainstream news really is to the democratic process? Received wisdom would indicate that its role is to serve to inform the public, to encourage public debate, and to scrutinise the actions of the powerful and hold them to account, but it has palpably failed on critical occasions to fulfil any of these important functions.

The cure?

News is not history or politics: those are different discourses. News is an institutional and professional selection of contemporary events that produces nothing more than an inventory of proceedings. Curtailed by time and space, it has no opportunity to expand upon or explain the events and issues it presents each day. In short, news just isn't up to the job of making the world intelligible. So here is a radical proposal: let's abolish it! And in its place let's invent a new media genre that can be relied upon to investigate, contextualise, inform and scrutinise.

Notes

1 Cited in Greg McLaughlin (2002) *The War Correspondent* (London: Pluto Press), p.35

2 Greg Philo and Mike Berry (2004) *Bad News from Israel* (London: Pluto Press)

3 Cited in McLaughlin, pp.166-7

Note on the authors

Stephen Baker is an independent writer and researcher based in Belfast. Greg McLaughlin is a lecturer in media studies at the University of Ulster, Coleraine. They have recently published an article on 'The Alternative Media, the "War on terror" and Northern Ireland', in Stig A. Nohrstedt and Rune Ottosen, eds., *U.S. and Others: Global Media Images on the "War on terror"* (Gothenburg: Nordicom Press, 2004).

10 Million
Reasons to be cheerful?

Martin Cloonan

On 1 December 2004 the British Phonographic Society (BPI), the umbrella organisation for the record companies in the UK, issued a press statement heralding their latest success in the battle against piracy. This stated that investigators from the BPI working with others from the Federation Against Copyright Theft (FACT) and Central Scotland police had launched a five day operation which raided 4 markets and 28 houses and led to the arrest of 28 suspects of whom 15 were reported to the Procurator Fiscal on charges under copyright and trademark legislation.

The BPI stated that the raids "seized in excess of £10 million worth of counterfeits". BPI Director of Anti Piracy, David Martin, was quoted as saying that the success of the raid was "nothing short of remarkable". The operation was named Vendura and was the result of several months work. All very impressive.

Then the BPI went on to give the figures for the CDs which were seized: 3992 music CDs including copies, unauthorised compilations and live recordings, 2979 films and DVDs and 1452 pornography and computer discs. In addition a range of software and hardware for CD production was seized. Note however, that the BPI figures according to their own press release were focussing on "£10 million of counterfeits", rather than any hardware. Now some quick sums. The total amount of CDs seized (including films and porn, in which the BPI has no remit) comes to 8323 CDs. 10 million divided by 8323 gives an average price of £1,201.49. This looks to me to be a little expensive. Certainly a lot more than the fiver punters are used to paying for fake CDs or the fifteen or twenty quid they might pay for porn or live CDs. So I asked the BPI how they got the figures. At first I was told that it was "based upon the black market value of the material seized". Note here that this is not the same as the press release which speaks of the counterfeit CDs *alone* being worth £10 Million, rather than including all the material seized. When I asked how 8323 CDs could be worth so much, I was asked what my interest was. I explained that I was an academic who researched music industries. They said they'd get back to me and they did. This was the explanation proffered by the BPI Press Officer:

"I don't have an exact breakdown, but having spoken to our investigators—I understand that the high value was down to the fact that these people were major dealers and had an unusually high number of MP3 master discs. As you can store up to ten albums on the discs, they sell for far higher prices—often fetching up to £15. But the real difference came with the business software and applications which can fetch high prices again on the black market".

Several points are worth commenting on here:

• When challenged the BPI can offer no breakdown of its figures. It thus seems that we have no way of telling whether the headline figure is accurate or not.

• Even if all the CDs seized are worth, very generously, £15, this comes to £127,845—a little short of £10 million. Unless the hardware and other software is worth £9,872, 155. But that brings us back to the original BPI claim (also in a Central Scotland Police press release) that the counterfeit CDs alone were worth £10 million.

• It's unclear how the BPI calculates value—the fiver it costs to buy on the black market or a £15 retail price. I would guess the latter. In fact, as the BPI itself acknowledge, most chart CDs sell for under a tenner—so again their sums look suspect

• The BPI is there to represent the record companies whereas CD and DVD retail prices include the distributors' and retailers' cuts. The actual amount that BPI members might "lose" on each fake CD is probably around £5-£6. The rest of the retail price is the distributors' and retailers' cuts. Still it's nice to see the BPI standing up for other people's profits (including those of pornographers).

• The BPI's estimation of value seems to be based on the idea that all of the CDs seized would have been sold. Is there any evidence for this?

• It also assumes that every fake CD sold represent a lost sale of the real thing. However, I suspect that people buy fake CDs because they are cheap, not because they would otherwise buy the real thing. (Indeed in the legitimate world the retailer Fopp has made a fortune by selling CDs cheap and encouraging their customers to spend a fiver on things which they would never buy at full price).

Now, let's do some more sums. Let's be generous and say that the value of the CDs is £130,000. And let's say that the hardware etc seized is worth twice that—£260,000. And, as it's Christmas, let's chuck in an extra £10k for luck. Very generously we might get to £400,000. Still not quite £10 million.

In order to estimate the worth of the raid, we'd need to deduct the cost of the operation. So, how much was spent on operation Vendura? We don't know. But, according to the BPI press release, some people spent "several months" working on it. I bet it wasn't cheap. Of course, we could ask the BPI and Central Scotland Police how much the operation cost, but could we believe what they told us? If we didn't, how could we check? In any case some cynics are suggesting that if the real market value of seized goods, as well as the cost of the operation, was known then the BPI might justly be accused of wasting police time.

Now the serious point. No one doubts that piracy is a major issue for record companies and other producers of CDs, DVDs etc. And, yes, the BPI is right to claim that bootlegging is linked to organised crime. How could it not be—it's a crime and it's organised. (By the way, what does *dis*organised crime look like? Pretty unsuccessful I would imagine). However, if those involved in fighting piracy want to be taken seriously then they must make sure their claims hold water. Moreover, they must be answerable to those whose taxes fund the raids. The £10 million figure looks so disingenuous that it's hard to take seriously. If the BPI and Central Scotland Police can provide a breakdown, let them do so.

Meanwhile if anyone wants a Snow Patrol CD I'll let them have it for £999. It's less than the BPI seems to think it's worth on the black market.

With heartfelt thanks to John Williamson for comments and insights.

"Don't trust anyone, not even us."

Much lauded by the west's liberal-left, Radio B92 was the former Yugoslavia's premier underground radio station in Belgrade under the rule of Slobodan Milosevic and the wars in the Balkans. Treated as traitors and subversives during this period, they were repeatedly forced off the airwaves by the government, but managed to keep broadcasting until Milosevic was overthrown. Matthew Collin's book 'This is Serbia Calling' and Doug Aubrey's film 'See You in the Next War' both conscientiously document this period of struggle from the perspective of those immediately involved in the scene in Belgrade.

Following a screening of Aubrey's film and a launch of Collin's 2nd edition of the book, both in the back room of the CCA bar in Glasgow, a discussion was held with Gordan Paunovic of B92 on Radio B92's impact and legacy. This is an edited transcript:

Matthew Colin: My connection to all this started eight years ago (1996) when I went to Belgrade to report on what I thought was a small story about student demonstrations. By the time I got there, ten days after it all kicked off, there was about half a million people in the streets demonstrating against the theft of election results by the government of Slobodan Milosevic. But there was another element to it; it wasn't just a political demonstration, students marching on the streets, just civic unrest, it had another 'cultural' element to it—music, film, art were all important to this. There were a lot of ways that messages were being transmitted, not just through your classic placard that you see on every demonstration, but in a really creative way, and this is what inspired me to get involved. Those demonstrations failed, as we all know, and some people argue that just being out on the streets in numbers and just creating a cultural alternative is not enough, that you actually need more power than that to get your message across. It took another four years for the ultimate goal of this protest movement to be realised, which was the overthrow of Milosevic, but it was a beginning.

Audience: Gordan, what do you think of Doug's representation of this time in Serbia, is it true to the feelings of people like you who were living in Serbia at the time?

Gordan Paunovic: The film definitely caught that moment in Belgrade; the time of the bombing (1999), the time after the bombing which was six, seven months when B92 was pretty much off air but still alive through different activities. It also caught the spirit of people who refused to surrender [to Milosevic and to the bombing]—for most people dealing with radio the transmitters being off would mean death to the whole thing, but B92 has never just been radio, maybe not even in '89—'90 at the very beginning. It was always more like a social movement, many things were based around the radio station. It was a focal point.

Audience: How did B92 start?

MC: It was set up as a temporary broadcaster to celebrate the birthday of Marshall Tito, the former ruler of Yugoslavia.

GP: He was already nine years dead!

MC: He was already dead, but Tito loved the youth... So this bunch of reprobates and wasters was given the chance to have two weeks airtime.

GP: We were making a youth programme which was broadcast daily on community radio in Belgrade for one hour everyday called "Rhythm of the Heart"—the official founder behind the whole programme was The Socialist Youth Organisation, which one was of the bodies you had in every communist country which was supposed to make sure that youth didn't do stupid things, and they wanted to be modern because already in '89 things were starting to change in Eastern Europe, so they thought that we should be given media to play with a little. We got a kind of temporary license for two weeks, which was the official time frame, but after two weeks somehow we fooled them.

Audience: So when did they get wise to you?

GP: Never, I think! After two weeks we just refused to stop. B92 was very lucky because at the same time they gave a chance to a group of other kids who set up a youth television, so when the two weeks expired they had to make a decision, whom are they going to shut down? And of course their common logic was that television was much more dangerous than radio so they shut down the TV and let us go on to give the impression that they weren't such bad guys all-in-all, and we survived. Youth Radio B92 was the official name at the beginning, and then after a couple of months we threw this 'youth' out.

Audience: Why was it called B92? Because of the American bombers?

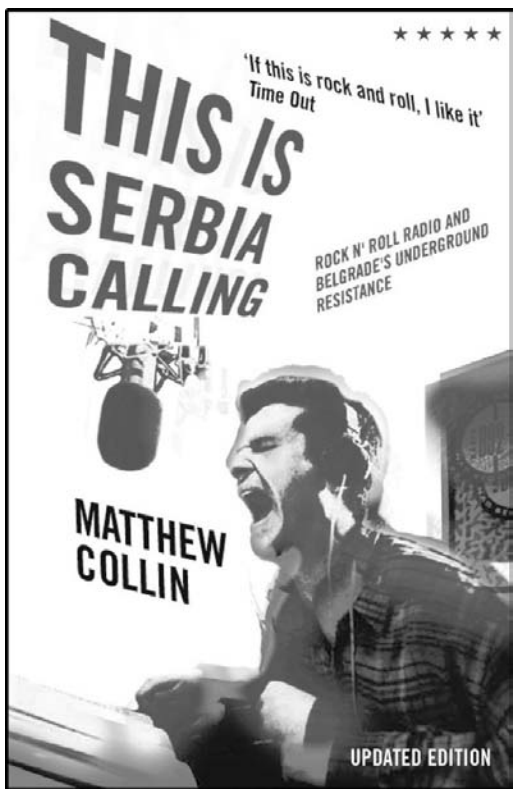
GP: That's one of the theories, but there's no big mystery behind it, actually. The frequency of the station was 92.5 and "B" stands for Belgrade. So it's very boring! Some people thought it was something to do with B-52, and we've been criticised many times over the years as being seen as promoting pro-western views, promoting this B-52 thing, but that was not the case.

Audience: Going back to B92's history and what it may have broadcast during the Bosnian conflict that could have upset the Serbian authorities, did B92 do anything like that?

GP: I wouldn't go into such a particular case as the Bosnian war, but generally we had problems all the time with the authorities because we were constantly expressing different political views from what they were promoting in their official statements, which constituted the basis of all national media broadcasts, so this was not just the case with the Bosnia conflict.

Audience: So did you never stand up for Sarajevo for example? Because what was happening in Sarajevo was very wrong.

GP: We stood up for Sarajevo before the war started, when the first barricades were put in Sarajevo, before the street fighting started we put the first barricade in Belgrade—which was more like an art performance—to bring to the attention of Belgraders what was happening in Sarajevo. In April '89 we had a concert in the main square of Belgrade with 50,000 people as a protest against



what was just about to happen in Sarajevo. Again, I'm talking about the kind of things we did which were wider than just being a radio station. Throughout the war we had our main reporters reporting from Sarajevo from inside the city.

DA: I think a good parallel is when 'Warchild' did that album for Bosnia, there was a track on it called "Serbia Calling", by 'K Foundation' which became the anthem of B92 in a lot of ways.

Audience: I spent two years in Sarajevo just after the war and there's a general conception, of even young people from Serbia and B92, that there was a lot of promotion given to injustice in Serbia—to a lot of people in Sarajevo it was Serbian bombs bombing them for four years on a roll continually and surrounding that city.

DA: That wasn't just Serbs though.

Audience: It was Serbs, Croats and Muslims in Sarajevo surrounded by Serbian warfare and a lot of Serbs actually saying: "Look, no, we will stand here and defend Sarajevo, a city that will be what Yugoslavia was. Everyone I knew in Sarajevo at that point had nothing from Belgrade. I just hope that B92 was also one of those beacons during that time. The NATO bombing of Belgrade was terrible, but for four years in Sarajevo a lot of Serbs, Croats and Muslims who wanted to live together as one nation looked out to hear something from Belgrade which was just down the road technically when you think about it (and they could drink coffee) and for four years Sarajevo was shelled with four thousand shells a day from Serbian artillery. I'm sorry I missed the film and I hope the film brought something up about it as that's a major issue about what happened.

MC: I think this is obviously a salient point, but when you're under a government which is suffocating you, to even get a voice which goes beyond your country is very difficult.

Audience: I would say that I don't have all the facts, but that this film was about the B92 radio station and it surviving, and it talked more about a culture of people trying to exist at that time.

MC: And also trying to change the culture of their

own government that was doing these things.

GP: At least 70% of Belgrade, about two million people, knew who Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic were and what they were doing, and obviously there are limits to what one radio station can do. And some limits are there because of the power of your transmitter, how far you can reach with what you are doing. And the other thing is that as news media the maximum you can do in such a situation is report the truth about what is happening and I think we did that 101%. We did reports from everywhere, we had people who were inside [Sarajevo] and they were reporting all the time. There would be a huge propaganda campaign on Serbian national television that Muslims are launching a big offensive on Pale and actually it was the other way around, and we would report what was really happening with the shelling of Sarajevo. Our reporters were seriously risking their lives.

Audience: B92, it's an excellent idea, but it should extend beyond Serbia into Bosnia, Croatia and finding out about and accepting what happened in the whole region. If it's one of these major forces which we're claiming tonight it should really have covered the whole of the region.

Audience: Let's look at the reality rather the fiction. There was a clampdown, how then did B92 manage to broadcast. You're claiming things here that quite frankly weren't capable. How did B92 actually come to be able to broadcast and who were they capable of broadcasting to?

GP: Our reach was the wider area of Belgrade in some parts. Belgrade is quite hilly so if you were on the hill you could get it—if you were in a valley you could not. We were using an old Italian transmitter from 1956 which wasn't the best you can get, and those were real limitations. The real improvement came in 1997 when, thanks to the success of the protest that Matthew described, more than 70% of local municipalities in Serbia were held by democratic parties. According to our law, local media was controlled by local authorities which meant that suddenly in 70% of Serbia the main radio stations in these places were free. We immediately set up a network where we were supplying these stations that didn't have enough funding for their own news programmes—we supplied them with a couple of hours of news everyday.

Audience: I was confused about B92 being just news or music or...

GP: It was a mixture of programmes. B92 has never been a strictly formatted station in the meaning that you have here in the west, with stations that just play the top 40, or just do news—it was a mixture. Of course we had music throughout the day but also different political

shows, news around the clock, and whenever there was a crisis or when big issues came up our programme scheme was turned upside-down to adjust to the situation.

Audience: How free is the media now in Belgrade? What is the attitude of the people towards the Hague and Milosevic, and how do you feel still working there?

GP: I don't work on the radio but within the company. It's a really different time from the one you saw in the film and from the '90s. At the moment we have a much more subtle enemy than the one we had before. Now it's free market capitalism which is shaping the media in a totally different way. Right now every media in order to survive in Serbia is forced to make lots of compromises on a commercial basis.

DA: Do you have a playlist now?

GP: We do. We try to resist somehow not to but unfortunately these days we are relying on advertising sales and stuff like that. We haven't lost our political edge but generally it feels more commercial than it was.

Audience: I come from the Sarajevo region, and the prevailing opinion in Bosnia at the time of the war was the crime for the war was the ignorance of the people in Serbia. We didn't actually believe there was free media in Belgrade. I thought there wasn't really a force in Serbia that could actually stop the war, because they couldn't see what was happening in Bosnia. But we are all ignorant now, we have Iraq now and what are we to do? Ok, we acknowledge what is happening but we don't really do anything. And actually there was very little B92 could do. I think at the time Belgrade was probably the centre of free media, there was very little free media in Zagreb, in Sarajevo. I think Belgrade was the only one that actually had some free media, had some free opinion about what was going on in other parts of the country, but they could do nothing, absolutely nothing.

MC: Is there a sense here that you were allowed to have your free media as long as you were reaching the hilly parts of Belgrade, and as long as you're not reaching the entire population of the country then your President can say: "We have free media here: I am allowing this radio station, I'm allowing this newspaper that sells five thousand copies."?

Audience: As long as it exists, it's ok. Even if I can't access community radio because I don't have the resources, I'm glad it exists.

Audience: But you're talking about different things, different situations. In the Serbian countryside there's nothing, there's two channels telling you what to think, what to wear and how to vote, and ok, B92 reached some of Belgrade, but you've got to aspire to more than that.

Audience: If B92 wasn't only a radio, you had a publishing house as well as DJs, so what else did B92 do? For example, just after the war did you organise parties, send aid, send books?

GP: We didn't wait until the end of the war. When Sarajevo library was shut in 1992, immediately at the beginning of the war and burned down, B92 started its own publishing house—which now has over one hundred books published since it began. We published a number of small pocket books but didn't sell them, we called our listeners to come to B92 with books from their home to exchange them for what we published. So we collected tons of books, organised a convoy and sent the books to Sarajevo in 1993. You can say it didn't help people, but it was a gesture. During the war we were constantly collecting food, clothes and stuff, and every two or three months sending them. You can also say it didn't stop the war—it didn't—but I mean, what can you do? We could all have gone to Pale and stood in front of cannons and got shot—maybe that would be something, but it wouldn't have stopped the war.

Audience: I think you're being a bit unfair here. We've just watched a fantastic film that captured a moment, a reality, and you're trying to have a political discussion about who was right and who was wrong. Why don't we try and understand what we've seen. I thought it was amazing seeing the film, Gordan doesn't need to sit there defending himself. What was really special was that we've got a committed film-maker who goes there and meets the people and tries to get some voices out, then we've got some fantastic editor that's put something like that together. Speaking personally I don't understand the whole politics of the thing, but at the same time we've had the privilege of meeting people there who are in a very deep sophisticated way trying to understand what's happened to them.

Audience: I understand that B92 was completely closed down during the war, can you tell me what happened then?

Gordon: B92 was shut down several times during the war, and the longest time was when it was physically thrown out of its premises, when even the name was taken by other people. The organisation that founded B92 in 1989, the youth organisation I mentioned before, was suddenly reactivated in 1999 for the purpose of throwing out the original B92 people—to throw them out of the premises, off the equipment, and to put pro-government guys in. B92 was always a part of the scene in Belgrade that was not just radio or the media, there were a couple of small local NGOs who were anti-war activists, there were feminist groups, minority groups, different kinds of things, it was like a big umbrella for all of them. But it was very difficult to work during the time of the bombing, and at the end of the day B92 was just a radio station, no matter how important it was—it was very important, of course—but we had a bigger problem.

Audience: So who listened to it?

GP: Well, at that time no-one, it was shut down!

Audience: Doug, how did you find out about B92? Did you take your camera, go there and discover them, or did you have knowledge of it before you went?

DA: The whole Balkan conflict was like a whirlpool, you got on a train somewhere and ended up getting sucked into it, and that's how I got involved with B92. Some friends of mine knew about other things that had gone on, and it grew from there. You identify things that are important and relevant and cross all borders, and I think that's what B92 did actually, it managed to cross all borders, whether you happened to be a Croat, Serb, Muslim, Hindu, whatever—an American even. But my question is, we've seen the reality, we've lived the reality, so what do you guys make of the B92 Hollywood movie?

MC: It's a farce, obviously!

Audience: How does Yugoslavia and specifically Serbia look at themselves in the sense of Europeanism, in the sense that it was their own

European neighbours that fought against them and bombed them. How do they see themselves becoming part of this united Europe, and where does B92 figure in this?

GP: I can tell you honestly that very few people in Serbia really believe that their country's going to become a part of Europe, ever. It's not some kind of widely-spread anti-Europe attitude, but rather that the majority of the people are aware that there are far too many troubles still going on within society for it to happen.

Audience: Is it about that Serbian cynicism you spoke about in the film, about how you were the good guys for a short period of time and then you were back to being the bad guys. How much does that affect the Serbian attitude to Europe?

GP: Europe isn't that happy with Serbia these days, there are still lots of problems which are perhaps typical of countries with a troubled past, that are now deeply into some kind of a transition, but even in comparison with countries that are now part of the EU—like Slovenia, Hungary, the Czech Republic—I think there are much more unusual things happening in Serbia. There is no general consensus in society about our direction and I think that's the main problem, and all the other problems we're having are because of this. We can watch on B92 television the Hague tribunal live, how Milosevic is still fighting against the whole world and I have to say for many people this kind of thing produces a counter-effect because for many people he's again being seen as someone who is fighting against injustice. It has something to do with the Balkan mentality that says you have to go against everyone.

Audience: You mentioned Milosevic fighting against the world. Don't you think it would be better if he was in the hands of Serbian justice instead of in the Hague?

GP: That's a common opinion, many people see the main injustice being that he's being tried by people that are also some sort of criminals, maybe bigger or smaller than him.

MC: The question is, is it 'victors' justice'?

GP: It's a big question whether Serbs would really be able to conduct a fair trial, because when it comes to hardcore national issues, unfortunately despite all the changes, there still are so many people who believe he was a real defender of Serbia—who believe that he was the one who for the first time in history of the Serbian nation gave the Serbs a state in Bosnia which they had never had before, and this is seen as a major achievement. So I'm not sure that putting him on trial in Belgrade would be better. I think much better would be a serious trial against him with much better funded evidence.

Audience: My point is his crime was against Serbs and Bosnians and all the peoples in the region generally.

GP: Exactly, given the nature of his crime the question could be: "Who has the right to put him on trial first?"

MC: This is a question we're not going to be able to answer tonight.

Audience: It's probably the perfect question with which to end the night, what does the future hold for B92?

GP: That's not the perfect question! I think B92 as it was portrayed in the film is pretty much finished, because ever since the end of the war B92 has existed in different conditions, in a media market that doesn't have censorship like there used to be, they can broadcast the news they like without any interference from the top. Generally today there are three or four television stations that are broadcasting relatively correct news. Ok, they are all somehow under different political

influences, but this is pretty much what you have in any society nowadays. Basically, we are just trying to stay normal.

Afterthoughts

Based on an e-mail exchange between Variant and Doug Aubrey, 'See You in the Next War.'

Variant: What of B92's internet and satellite broadcasts that you documented?

DA: These really came down to the super-human efforts of Gordan P and assorted global supporters of what B92 represented, that ranged from web-visionaries such as Radio Qualia and the Amsterdam Xs4All mob, and other assorted anarchists/autonomists to the dodgy involvement of alleged MI6 agents.

It was a strange temporary marriage between extremes really, that took place in Vienna, Amsterdam and finally back in Belgrade—that proved that voices from the margins perhaps really are the mainstream when it comes to dealing with the realities of war.

V: How did this relate to other media at the time, nationally and internationally?

DA: The mainstream media simply became a vehicle for western propaganda—as we all know.

In many ways what Net-aid/B92 were trying to do pre-empted much of what has come since on the www.

It also added to the romance/myth/legend and spirit of B92 as pirate broadcasters—which they never were—at least in the sense that we here regard pirates.

V: How did B92 function in terms of support/funding, infrastructure, technical ability and reach; and in terms of its content? I'm thinking of Help B92 / Free B92 (Amsterdam's XS4All)...?

DA: A pan-European love-in? The autonomous spirit at its best? I don't know…

Despite the idealism and super-human efforts of Gordon P and the webheads of free-Europe, I think the editorial and real strings were being pulled by both those in Belgrade being bombed (rightly so, they were on the frontline) and, without getting into conspiracy theories, by some dodgy western outsiders, 'trainers' and financial managers, who were 'minding things'.

V: ...and the transition to B2-B92 (said to be financed by Soros / US) and the charges of allegedly propagandising liberal-democratic free-market values during this period?

DA: Matt deals with this well in his book, but as B92s Editor-in-Chief Veran Matic says in the film: "You cannot fool all of the people all of the time..."

During the war, there was also an element of the likes of MTV, CNN and even the BBC to some extent washing their own conscience by supporting B92, i.e. winning the free your mind award from MTV and REM on the one hand, and on the other receiving 'training from the BBC'.

Now do talented people like many at B92 really need training in how to play good music?! and if so, for what, to learn to play what they're told and introduce playlists etc.?

Another aspect is that critics of B92 said they didn't think twice about cosying up to dodgy Serbian politicians/establishment figures to get back on air as B292. It's something that's not really been dealt with in depth—even by Matt—as far as I can tell...

In the end I guess B92 got what they wanted—recognition and mainstream status, which perhaps has alienated a new generation who were growing up and also a lot of their original supporters.

V: What of the eventual shift to IMF enforced free-market values, which includes not just private but foreign ownership of media? Where does this leave independent media (once said to be 'the basis for any democratic change and reform') today?

DA: You should really ask them this, all I can talk about is my film—which has generally been ignored, or accused of pandering to Serbian nationalist sentiments.

But just look at what's happened here to anything half decent—in any media—dissenting and different voices are marginalized or censored for being in some way 'political' for daring to combine content and style.

Just look at where we ended up showing the film—was the audience marginal or mainstream—I ask you that!?

As an outsider looking in now, who has by choice not been back to the Balkan region since 2001, I think you just have to look at what's happened since the 'peace' came to ex-Yu in general: There's no future, a shit past and a state of stagnating limbo-land for many who didn't have the mafia connections to jump on the free-market gravy train, something that's mirrored in the underclass here.

B92 really was true to the spirit of the rock 'n' roll dream and represented all that's positive about art, music, youth and rebellion too—they caught a moment and moved on.

Now with 'democracy' and the free market, it's perhaps ironic that their mainstream image is more suited to euro-trashing (C4's Passengers for instance made a totally exploitative piece about the station) and the forthcoming Hollywood musical based I guess extremely loosely on Matt's book.

I guess both the voices and truth I was chasing in 'See You in the Next War' will be largely written out of the mainstream-take on history now—which is why the CCA gig was important because it at least raised some critical debate in a place and culture increasingly devoid of such things.

To sum up, good art and rock 'n' roll at its best helps people survive and escape...but in the free (global) market it's also, as we discovered with what happened to punk, a bit of a swindle. That's Capitalism. As the B92 slogan used to say:

"Trust no one—not even us—but keep the faith..."

'This is Serbia Calling: Rock 'n' Roll Radio and Belgrade's Underground Resistance', Matthew Collin; *Serpent's Tail, ISBN 1-85242-776-0.*

For copy and screening information of 'See You in the Next War' please contact: Autonomi ltd, 35 Old Dumbarton Road, Glasgow, G3 8RD, email marie@autonomi.tv, www.autonomi.tv

Biting your tongue:
Globalised power and the international language

Eilish Gaffey

The notion that an international *lingua franca* is necessary to allow worldwide communication has emerged in correspondence with the ongoing process of globalisation.[1] Although the spread of the English language is often portrayed as an inevitable consequence of global forces, it can also be conceived as a subtle and insidious form of western imperialism. The proliferation of English Language Teaching (ELT) programmes can be viewed as an instrumental part of this. The inequality produced from the global spread of English, through the threat it poses to indigenous languages and cultures, raises questions about the common representation of ELT as universally beneficial.

Merely focusing on the function of language as a means of generating mutual intelligibility trivialises its importance in individual identity and group culture. According to the Whorfian hypothesis, the structure of a language directly influences how speakers will understand and organise the social and natural world around them.[2] In opposition to this, sociolinguists have tended to view language as a reflection of the social structure.[3] Similarly, the structural-functionalist approach to language identifies its functional role in the maintenance of social structure.[4] All of these positions, however, point to the integral role of language in the formation of personal and distinctive cultural meanings and identity. Language can thus be seen as a repository of a unique world view, so that the disappearance of a particular language will have major social consequences.

Language also cannot be removed from its economic and political context. According to Antonio Gramsci, language is a field of force where different ideologies, interests and styles can compete.[5] Likewise, the post-structuralist position moves beyond the conception of language as merely a functional linguistic system, pointing to the existence of 'discourses', the articulations of ideology and power relations in language. The promotion of and resistance to the global spread of English, therefore, cannot be separated from broader economic, social and political contexts.[6]

The global spread of English

Braj Kachru's 'circles' model outlines the different roles English plays in different countries, and how this relates to its powerful global position. At the centre, including the economically-powerful countries of Britain, Australia and the USA, English is the core language of all public discourse. Exemplified in India and South Africa, the outer circle is composed of countries where English has had a long history of institutionalised functions and is particularly important in the areas of education and political administration. Finally, within the expanding circle, English is utilised for specific purposes such as for scientific knowledge (as seen in China and Japan).[7] Chinese is the world's most commonly-spoken language but is subordinate to English in terms of economic significance; English has gained supremacy because it has become the "main language of books, newspapers, airport and air-traffic control, international business and academic conferences, science, technology, medicine, diplomacy, sports, international competitions, pop music, and advertising".[8]

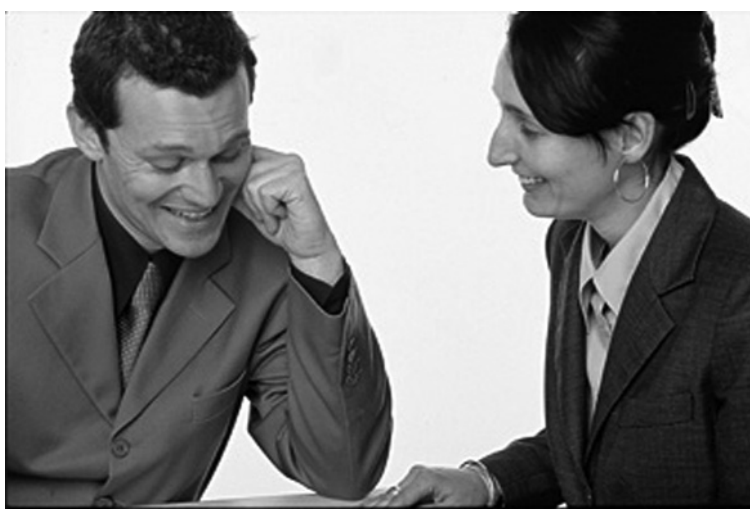
The spread of English can be seen as the consequence of its penetration into economic and political institutions worldwide, which in turn arose from the growth in the global economic market controlled by the English-speaking countries.[9] Language planning has been used for centuries in the engineering of social change; it can be argued that the increase in English language usage is the result of a directly orchestrated systematic strategy, particularly through education policies, to facilitate the development of Anglo-American political and economic power. Robert Phillipson suggests that "the very concept of an international, or world, language was an invention of Western imperialism".[10]

The process of globalisation, facilitated by rapid advancements in information and communications technology and marked by increased mass communication and movement of people, can be viewed as imperialist in spirit. Changes in structural relations have helped maintain global inequalities, which in turn serve the interests of capitalism in English-speaking countries. Thus, English has become the language of capitalism. As well as functioning as the medium of globalisation, English also works as a tool for its extension, the gatekeeper of access to international trade and information.[11]

The attempt to create a dominant global position for English can be traced back to the nineteenth century, when British colonialism reached every continent and language teaching came to be used for the active development of political unity. English successfully acquired an official status in many countries because it was promoted as a neutral solution to competition between indigenous languages; many African countries have retained it as a *lingua franca* for communication at a national level. Because Britain was one of the earliest countries to develop industrially, English developed a monopoly of certain technical terminology. By the end of the century, the USA became a major influence in the global spread of English, its economy surpassing that of Britain. "The fact that the North Americans speak English" was Bismarck's response in 1898 when asked what he believed was the most important feature in the determining of modern history.[12] Linguistic imperialism was then used in conjunction with military colonisation, with language central to the conduct of trade and the communication of information and cultural norms. Western planning policies, and in particular the introduction of British and American teaching programmes, were instrumental in this process.[13]

Language planning was chiefly justified through the application of the core ideas of Modernisation Theory which argued that countries could be successfully modernised in a similar manner to the rebuilding of Europe. This ethnocentric interventionist approach, which included the Enlightenment ideal of creating human progress through educational investment, produced the perception of a dichotomy between so-called developed and developing countries, whereby the latter needed to be liberated from traditional institutional structures which inhibited economic growth.[14] Furthermore, it was asserted that improvements could be achieved through an imitation of the institutions and cultures of industrialised countries. Recent approaches, such as Dependency Theory and World Systems Theory, have questioned the notion of a linear development towards modernity and point to the role of aid in disguising business investments. Modernised western countries are considered responsible for creating and maintaining the barriers to economic prosperity and international equality.[15]

The use of English in maintaining and extending western power has also depended on an imperialist discourse whereby the creation of a hegemonic position for English has been sought. This has involved the presentation of English language learning as commonsensical; an idea to be internalised even though it may not be in the interests of non-native speakers to do so.[16] English can then be viewed as the 'Trojan horse' of western imperialism.[17] The implied superiority of English can be linked to its promotion as a language which is intrinsically varied, interesting and capable of adapting to societal changes although it is, in fact, an extremely difficult language to learn, particularly because of its unusual vowel sounds and highly



idiomatic nature.[18] The endeavour to create an ideology whereby acquiring a knowledge of English is necessary to overcome disadvantage is also enhanced through extrinsic factors, with huge levels of resources being allocated towards the training of teachers and the publication of textbooks and dictionaries. Perhaps the most significant aspect relating to the status of English is the emphasis placed on its functional qualities in offering potential access to information, prestige and economic prosperity.[19]

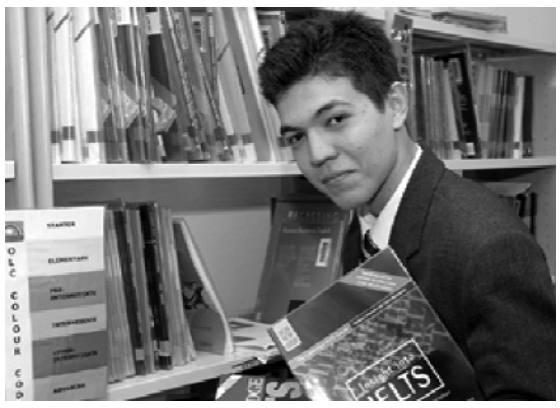
The ideology of English

The idea that language assists in achieving a better quality of life is the core dogma of language planning, and the supposed functional benefits of English mean that acquiring knowledge of it is deemed a practical solution to economic disadvantage. This notion is particularly supported by a frequent exaggeration of the benefits of monolingual communication. A study conducted by Fishman in 1968 suggested that a correlation exists between financial success and communication, and that this is facilitated by linguistic homogeneity. His findings have been unquestioningly accepted although those states which displayed economic prosperity were also educationally and politically stable. English is usually presented as the most feasible *lingua franca*, especially in African countries.[20] The glorification of English extends also to its ideological connection to social organisation and democracy, with an implication that it can serve as the voice of freedom and be used as a symbol of unity.[21]

While the development of hegemony relies on a promotion of the perceived benefits of one language, there will also be a corresponding inferred threat that negative consequences will result from a failure to convert to the dominant ideology. The attribution of undesirable connotations, such as poverty and conflict, to minority languages, which are then seen as handicaps to accessing resources, is intended to increase the desire to acquire knowledge of English.[22] A disciplining of those who do not comply can also occur, exemplified in the denial of political rights to non-English speakers in Britain and the USA.[23]

However, the very spread of English has meant that the UK and the USA no longer have sole possession of English: its fragmentation into international varieties is thus possible. The success of linguistic imperialism then depends on the dominant countries retaining authority, through a lack of reciprocity, exemplified in the standardisation of English through dictionaries and texts which are controlled by the educational and media institutions of western industrialised countries.[24] The flow of knowledge through English is largely unidirectional as seen in the almost monopolistic control by the USA over the software industry, at a time when the Internet is becoming increasingly important in international communication.[25] The greatest possible threat to the use of English as a global language "it has been said with more than a little irony, would have taken place a generation ago—if Bill Gates had grown up speaking Chinese".[26] However, despite efforts to hinder the legitimacy of alternative varieties of English, the development of telecommunications technology can provide an opening for the organisation of resistance to a dominant capitalist ideology.

The aim to foster an asymmetrical relationship in the flow of information can be extended to the dissemination of western culture, so that linguistic and cultural imperialism are clearly intertwined. The USA spends a larger proportion of its gross national product on mass advertising than any other country and the enormous circulation of its newspapers is unequalled.[27] There has been growing interest in art forms from developing



countries but the USA still retains a strong position in the international music and film markets so that "it is extremely difficult for a society to practice the free flow of media and enjoy a national culture at the same time—unless it happens to be the United States of America".[28] In the Arab world, globalisation and the international spread of English are often viewed as synonymous with Americanisation; American culture is present in a variety of forms, including fashion, entertainment, food and business transactions. Similarly, the cultural and ideological consequences of the ideological elevation of English can be seen in East and South East Asia where the language is presented as a 'magic wand' for gaining access to the perceived advantages of an American lifestyle.[29]

ELT and globalised culture

The international spread of English has primarily occurred through the medium of education, which has always been a major part of language planning. English is the main medium of teaching in higher education in many nations, including countries where it has not achieved official status. ELT is one of the world's largest expanding industries; it is estimated that 1,000 million people may currently be learning English.[30] ELT is presented as a service industry, a response to the increasing global demand for English, but it can be argued that this demand has been manufactured by those countries that are responsible for the provision of foreign teaching programmes. The retention of control over the teaching of English facilitates its use as a form of linguistic imperialism.[31]

The frequent perception of ELT as an area distinct from broader political policy is misleading, as seen in the authority of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office to determine which countries will be targeted for the introduction of teaching programmes (currently the focus is on Africa and the Middle East, areas that are of great strategic importance for Anglo-American political and commercial connections). Winston Churchill clearly recognised the economic and political advantages of a spread in English abroad: "I am very much interested in the question of basic English. The widespread use of this would be a gain for us far more durable and fruitful than the annexation of great provinces".[32] The original objective of the British Council, alongside the promotion of British culture, was the spread of the English language.[33]

The British Council, in its early stages, explicitly referred to its role in the active establishment of English as a universal language and in the 1950s it began a collaboration with the USA, which involved the joint teaching of courses. At this point, both countries adopted a policy of promoting the use of English as an international second language in order to develop and maintain western economic interests.[34]

ELT providers have focused almost exclusively on professionalism in teaching, which facilitates a perceived separation of ELT from its political, economic and cultural context and means that the introduction of an explicit imperialist agenda can now be avoided. The British Council set up the School of Applied Linguistics in 1957 to give its teaching programmes a theoretical basis but the studies conducted therein remained firmly within the field of functional linguistics, excluding areas such as psychology, sociology and anthropology. Its research policy continues to avoid any analysis of broader issues and focuses mainly on language, literature and teaching practices. Funds are not allocated directly towards research, which generally involves an evaluation of small projects. The disconnection of pedagogy from its relationship with political and economic concerns serves to absolve ELT experts from questions of cultural and linguistic imperialism and allows for the assumption by teachers that their services are undeniably beneficial in the counteracting of underdevelopment and promoting democracy.[35]

The preoccupation with teaching practices draws attention away from the ideological implications of ELT, with the result that teachers may remain unaware of the political contexts of education. Power relations in classrooms reflect authority-relations Kachru's 'centre'. Traditionally, classes have been organised in a hierarchical fashion where the teacher often directs choral responses from students. More recently, methods have been adopted which appear to give more control to students but this frequently places them in a situation whereby they are forced to lead discussions at the command of a teacher who continues to follow a curriculum and encourages students to give correct answers, rather than allowing debates over rationality or meaning.[36] Even when teachers recognise the imperialist agenda of ELT, they are generally employed as short-term employees and trained to use an uncritical pedagogy so that it is extremely difficult for them to apply a more flexible approach to the teaching of English.

Similarly, teachers may also remain largely unconscious of their implicit role in the dissemination of western culture. This ethnocentric approach, where teachers will always work according to their own world view, means that learners are often stigmatised as deficient and so need to be educated and re-socialised. The notion that ELT programmes can be applied uniformly irrespective of context ultimately leads to a devaluing of other cultures and education systems. Efforts are not made to integrate teachers into communities and the blurring of lines between different types of ELT, such as English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL), conveys that little differentiation is made between the needs of various groups. Course content frequently contradicts the norms and values of other societies and even when a more cosmopolitan approach is attempted in the preparation of textbooks and curricula, this has tended to deal with the area of travel, even though notions of holiday romances and the casual spending of money are inappropriate to many cultural groups.[37]

Outlined at the Makeree conference in 1961, the tenets of ELT reflect its eurocentric approach and lend support to the inequality produced from the global spread of English. For example, the principle that monolingual instruction will foster efficiency facilitates a legitimation of a patronising view of native languages and cultures and has allowed bilingualism to be associated with poverty and conflict. In the USA, ELT has been used to aid the assimilation of foreign languages into English. Resistance has occurred here, however, where groups have attempted a revival of minority languages, as in the introduction of bilingual signage in areas of New York to facilitate the large Puerto Rican community.[38] The perceived threat to the dominance of English can be seen in the foundation of the English Only Movement in the

USA, which can be seen as a form of racism.[39] The advocation of monolingualism has often led to the suppression of minority languages and cultures.[40] Even when the existence of indigenous languages has not been directly threatened, ELT programmes have allowed for the adoption of English loan words so that some languages have undergone major structural changes through linguistic borrowing.

The ELT tenet that the ideal teacher will be a native speaker who can serve as a model for students to aspire towards, ensures that teachers retain their authoritative status and a monopoly over the meaning of words.[41] This also facilitates a possible stratification within the English language, with so-called Standard English holding the highest position, followed by American English. A study conducted by L. E. Smith suggests that native speakers are among the least intelligible when providing instruction. He also argues that where teachers have English as their mother tongue, students tend to be held responsible when problems with understanding arise.[42] The placing of responsibility on students rather than teachers in the occurrence of language learning difficulties reflects a neo-classical approach which concentrates on individuals and allows the motives and consequences of ELT to remain unquestioned. This focus on individualism, an important feature of capitalist ideology, can be linked to language planning as part of promoting the global spread of English.

Unequal access to ELT programmes also play a major part in the reproduction of existing social structures and facilitates the maintenance of inequalities. An exploration of the broader issues surrounding ELT, through the adoption of a historical-structural approach, shows that education allows for the institutionalisation and rationalisation of inequality. Many countries on the 'periphery' are characterised by a dual system where English can be used as a barrier to entry to academic and political institutions. The confining of English to certain domains can further threaten local languages through linguistic curtailment, where it retains a monopoly over words used in particular fields.[43]

If ELT can be conceived as an integral element of contemporary linguistic imperialism, questions can be raised about its potential introduction into Iraq. If military occupation becomes illegal, it can be argued that the teaching of English will be used as an instrument for the retention of US dominance where "EFL administrators and teacher trainers in the British Council and United States Information Agency are likely poised to hitch a ride into Basra and Baghdad on the back of the tanks, laying the groundwork for the Operation Iraqi English Literacy to follow" [*Editor's Note*: Perhaps 'Operation Iraqi Literacy' would have a more apt acronym?].[44] As an ELT teacher, Julian Edge raises concerns about the role of his colleagues in the creation of a hegemonic position for English in Iraq which would serve to reinforce current power structures: "I believe that it is now possible to see us, EFL teachers, as a second wave of imperial troopers. Before the armoured divisions have withdrawn from the city limits, while the soldiers are still patrolling the streets, English teachers will be facilitating the policies that the tanks were sent to impose".[45]

Resisting the linguistic imperative

Viewing the global spread of English, and the instrumental role of ELT therein, as a subtle form of imperialism can lead to a pessimistic outlook for the future of other languages and cultures. However, resistance to the threats it imposes can be attempted in various ways, such as through separatist movements, a greater awareness of the broader contexts of ELT, a challenge to the perceived need for an international language or the strict application of international laws on

linguistic human rights.

The development of counter-hegemonies is possible if the international spread of English is dependent on its hegemonic position, in which the learning of the language is seen as a rational response to an inescapable process of globalisation. Because hegemony is never static and requires acceptance of the dominant ideology by its recipients, the formation and legitimation of challenges could potentially influence changes to existing power structures.

Resistance has occurred in many areas. Swahili has replaced English as the official language of Kenya.[46] Following the employment of ELT experts in China in the 1970s so that English could be utilised to facilitate access to technological and scientific information and to attract multinational corporations, increases in structural inequality and fears regarding the endangerment of Chinese traditions has led to a growing hostility towards language teaching programmes. However, despite the restrictions that have been placed on these programmes, a dependence on foreign investors means that a demand for English teachers remains.[47]

It may therefore be possible that English has already reached a position whereby a failure to incorporate it into educational institutions means that countries will no longer be capable of communicating beyond their borders, and find themselves in a position of economic, technological and academic disadvantage. The potential for resistance could then lie in the attainment of English and in using it as a tool for expressing unique cultural identities. A tolerance of diverse forms could then mean that people would not be confined to communicating with native speakers of English.[48]

In agreement with Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of using the novel as an instrument for the development and articulation of counter-hegemony, resistance has frequently occurred through the arts.[49] If translation can be used as a power resource, the practice of 'writing back' could possibly be used to decolonise the ethnocentric assumptions of imperialists. Language itself can be a site as well as a means of conflict, involving struggles over meaning and syntax. A rejection of western standards for the so-called correct usages and meaning of words, along with an appropriation of English to reflect a particular cultural context can counteract the unidirectional flow of information and culture. Paradoxically, the development of a post-colonial nationalist discourse in Africa was largely created through writings in English. In using the arts as resistance, however, there is always a danger that works will be stereotyped into a type of folkorism and English speakers will have been influenced by western culture in their education.[50] Also, artistic products can have the long-term effect of revitalising the English language.[51] The development of new forms of English and the potential for it to be influenced by other languages has already raised concerns about the lowering of standards, leading to a hierarchy of Englishes and the possible future emergence of a 'World Standard Spoken English'.[52]

An awareness of a broader structural context among ELT experts and teachers along with recognition of the significance of materials, methods and classroom practices in the formation of identity could be highly influential in the transformation of power relations.[53] Greater self-reflexivity through the introduction of a critical pedagogy could be used as a discursive intervention in order to reduce inequality. Teachers could be trained to be conscious that they are entering a different society and adapt their curricula accordingly, so that indigenous cultures can be consolidated rather than threatened. Likewise, students should be informed that both a language and a culture are being taught and that neither is superior to their own. The potential existence of varieties in rationality which apparently contradict western reason must also be accepted. Debates over meaning should be permitted to convey that English can express a variety of cultures. An awareness that education is always a political arena on which classroom authority-relations can have an impact must be acknowledged. The instruction of 'situational survival' English, which is condescending, could be replaced by the teaching of skills in the understanding and discussion of topics which would allow students to use their own political voice through English.[54] Also, the accreditation of non-native speakers as teachers could help to de-centralise ELT and remove the Centre's monopoly over teaching methods, textbook production and standards of English.[55] However, if ELT is understood as an instrument of imperialism, an alternative pedagogy is unlikely to be introduced.

A rejection of the ELT principle of monolingualism could also offer a potential alleviation to the dangers imposed on indigenous languages and cultures. The perceived requirement of English for business transactions does not allow for the necessity of native languages in local trade and it is possible that different languages could be used in specific spheres.[56] In Australia, the protection of minority languages is viewed as essential to its economic prosperity.[57] The teaching of bilingualism, however, is extremely time-consuming and costly to finance. Because it is most effective in young children, the learning of a second language at this stage would have a major impact on a person's socialisation and early development.

A need for different languages could remain feasible, however, through a reduction in the teaching of English and a questioning of the requirement of a global language. The growing sophistication in communications technology could make translation more efficient and less expensive. Currently, 90% of Internet hosts are in English but HTML standards can support multilingual browsing, so an increased availability of teaching materials in other languages is possible. The proliferation of communication and movement of people could lead to a rise in trade between continents outside the 'centre'. Also, increased economic exchanges between Asian countries could lead to use of Mandarin as their *lingua franca*.[58]

The recent accommodation of a variety of cultures in Eastern European countries conveys the possibility of a tolerance of heterogeneity in languages.[59] Under international law, people have the linguistic human right to the protection of their mother tongue, which includes the provision of basic education and political representation in their native language. Because

of a lack of clarity in the application of rights and also because complaint procedures must be individual rather than collective, minority languages and cultures continue to be threatened by the spread of English. A clarification of laws, increased access to courts and the introduction of measures to ensure the implementation of rights could limit the rapid spread of English and the inequality that this produces. Also, teachers should be made fully aware of the multiple dimensions of linguistic human rights.[60]

So far, however, there has been little concerted action to control the worldwide spread of English. Although it can no longer be tied to a specific country, the future of English may be connected to the future of the USA, particularly because the weakening of national governments through globalisation has greatly increased the reach of American media and culture.[61] The development of political alliances among non-English speaking countries or changes in demographic patterns may challenge English's dominant international position. There are many possibilities for a limiting of the dangers that English poses to other languages and cultures. However, because the growth of English as an international language can be conceived as linguistic imperialism and is linked to the current global supremacy of capitalism, it is difficult to envisage any serious threat to the global dominance of English without a shift in the balance of world power.

Notes

1 P. Trudgill (1974) *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books).

2 Benjamin Lee Whorf argues that the linguistic system itself "shapes ideas, the program and guide for the individual's mental activity, for his analysis of impressions, for his synthesis of his mental stock in trade". Language itself determines how speakers perceive and organise the natural and social world around them. See Whorf in Wardhaugh, R. (1986) *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

3 This explains why anthropologists are frequently concerned with vocabulary in their analyses of social groups. In different parts of the world, taboo words can vary significantly according to the values of a particular society. The numerous taboo words relating to sex can be viewed as an expression of the sexual morality in western culture. In other societies, there are inhibitions concerning words for game animals or one's left hand. See Trudgill.

4 G. Williams (1992) *Sociolinguistics: A Sociological Critique* (London & New York: Routledge).

5 C. Brandist (1996) 'Gramsci, Bakhtin and the Semiotics of Hegemony', *New Left Review* 216.

6 A. Pennycook (1994) *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language* (London: Longman Group Limited).

7 B. Kachru and C. Nelson (2001) 'World Englishes', in A. Burns and C. Coffin, eds., *Analysing English in a Global Context* (London & New York: Routledge).

8 D. Crystal (2003) *English as a Global Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.358.

9 J. W. Tollefson (1991) *Planning Language: Planning Inequality* (London: Longman Group Limited).

10 R. Phillipson (1992) *Linguistic Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.1.

11 M. R. Zughoul (2003) 'Globalisation and EFL/ESL Pedagogy in the Arab World' in *Journal of Language and Learning*, vol. 2, no.1.

12 Quoted in Crystal, p.77.

13 Crystal.

14 Tollefson.

15 Pennycook.

16 Phillipson.

17 Pennycook.

18 R. McCrum, W. Cran and R. MacNeil (1986) *The Story of English* (London: Faber and Faber Limited).

19 Phillipson.

20 Attempts have been made to use the language of Esperanto because it is not linked to a particular country but these have been largely unsuccessful. Also, the presentation of Esperanto as a neutral language can be criticised because of its European-style grammar. See Trudgill.

21 When the USA colonised the Philippines at the beginning of the twentieth century, English was given official status with the idea that it would build national solidarity. It was used to foster loyalty to the new administration. Furthermore, the teaching of English was unevenly distributed, with the sons of indigenous leaders exclusively targeted. The unification of tribes through English maintained the existing power relations and meant that it became possible for the USA to employ a policy of indirect rule. Despite its representation as sign of integration, the introduction of language teaching resulted in the reproduction of inequality. See J. Brutt-Griffler (2002) *World English: A Study of its Development*. (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Limited).

22 T. Skutnabb-Kangas and R. Phillipson (1995) 'Linguistic human rights, past and present' in T. Skutnabb-Kangas and R. Phillipson, eds., *Linguistic Human Rights: Overcoming Linguistic Discrimination* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter).

23 Crystal.

24 Williams.

25 Also, because access to technological information relates to national structures, many countries have undeveloped computer networks. Governments become forced to expose their institutions to the direct control and influence by countries of the 'centre' in order to gain assistance. See Tollefson.

26 Crystal, p.122.

27 Crystal, p.122.

28 Smith in Pennycook, p.38.

29 Zughoul.

30 Crystal.

31 Phillipson.

32 Quoted in Pennycook, A., p.107

33 This is conveyed in the outlining of its goals by the Prince of Wales: "The basis of our work must be the English language. Our object is to assist the largest number possible to appreciate fully the glories of our literature, our contribution to the arts and sciences, and our pre-eminent contribution to the political sciences. This can be best achieved by promoting the study of our language abroad". Quoted in Pennycook.

34 In 1981, the UN Institute for Namibia conducted a study in order to develop a national education policy. Afrikaans was the dominant language but it was decided to replace it with English although less than 1% of the population had it as a mother tongue. The choice was based on criteria that were mainly functional and ignored other areas such as culture and identity. It is then possible to argue that these criteria were selected to ensure that English emerged as the chosen language. See Phillipson.

35 Phillipson.

36 Tollefson.

37 Phillipson.

38 Trudgill.

39 Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson.

40 Trudgill.

41 Trudgill.

42 This is exemplified in a study on ELT in China where teachers perceived differences as flaws in students that needed to be corrected. See Kachru and Nelson.

43 Kachru and Nelson.

44 B. Templer (2004) 'Teaching the Language of the Conqueror', www.zmag.org/ZmagSite/Jun2003/templerprint0603.html

45 J. Edge (2004) 'TEFL and International Politics: A Personal Narrative', www.developingteachers.com/articles_tchtraining/intlpolitics_julian.htm

46 Crystal.

47 Tollefson.

48 Crystal.

49 Brandist.

50 Pennycook.

51 This is clearly seen in the Irish context through the proliferation of Anglo-Irish literature in the Celtic Renaissance.

52 Crystal.

53 B. Morgan (2002) 'Review of 'The Sociopolitics of English Language Teaching, J. K. Hall and W. G. Eggington, eds.', www.utpjournals.com/product/cmlr/584/Sociopolitics-2.htm

54 Pennycook.

55 D. Graddol (2001) 'English in the future' in A. Burns and C. Coffin, eds., Analysing English in a Global Context. (London & New York: Routledge)

56 J. J. Smolicz (1995) 'Australia's language policies and minority rights: a core value perspective' in Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson.

57 This is illustrated in the introduction of a successful bilingual teaching programme for Lebanese children, where their first language was considered a valuable asset for the learning of English. Languages were always kept separate which meant that each was afforded equal respect. See J. Gibbons, W White and P. Gibbons (1995) 'Combating educational disadvantage among Lebanese Australian children' in Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson.

58 Graddol.

59 F. Grin (1995) 'Combining immigrant and autochthonous language rights: a territorial approach to multilingualism' in Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson.

60 T. Skutnabb-Kangas and R. Phillipson, eds. (1995) *Linguistic Human Rights: Overcoming Linguistic Discrimination*. (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter).

61 G. Melchers and P. Shaw (2003) *World Englishes* (London: Arnold).

Independent Collaborative Hospitality

Dave Beech

Avantgardism is no longer the war cry it used to be. I'm not one of those who have fallen for the sophistic argument that avantgardism has become conservative while conservatism has become the new avantgardism, but I have to admit that I don't know of any artists that I respect today who would call themselves avantgarde. Calling oneself an avantgardist in pluralist times, everyone knows, is a recipe for disaster. And yet the demands of the historical avantgarde for the reconciliation of art and society, for the negation of aesthetic distinction, for the politicization of culture, and so on, have neither been met nor superseded, despite the fact that they are continually neglected, denied, bullied and ridiculed. This is why the avantgarde continues to echo through the practices and debates of contemporary artists, radical cultural movements, artist-run organizations, independent curatorial projects and critical writing on art.

Let's begin, then, with a concept that is pivotal for avantgardism and has not entirely lost its appeal to the contemporary artist—this is independence. It is one of the great inspiring features of avantgardism that it struggled vigorously against the various institutions, traditions and conventions of the cultural establishment. Destruction, negation, revolt and rebellion aimed barbs at a solidified tyranny presided over by the great and the good, sweeping inherited practices aside in order to make way for new cultural forms and new social relations for art. Some of these avantgarde ambitions have dated, especially those which call for a brave new world based on modern, scientific principles. Nevertheless, independence is no naïve desideratum these days. Independence is not to be taken lightly or taken for granted; it is hard to conceive, hard to establish and even harder to sustain. Dealers, curators and collectors may have replaced Masters, Academicians and panels of judges, but contemporary artists are not thereby released from the needs of activism, setting up and

maintaining alternative networks, and continually reconfiguring the political relations of culture.

In the summer of 2003 Nick Crowe and Ian Rawlinson, two artists working out of Manchester, curated the biggest public art project the UK has ever known with a budget of £530. The exhibition, Artranspennine03 (known as ATP03, http://nickcrowe.net/atp/console.html), revived an institutionally top-heavy exhibition ATP98, which originally cost £3million and was organised primarily by curators at the Tate in Liverpool and the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds. Working on a shoe-string budget and curatorially hands-off, Crowe and Rawlinson effectively handed over the official blockbuster public exhibition to the artists. Independence is not brought about by rejecting previous practices—rather than go out of their way to distance themselves from ATP98, Crowe and Rawlinson stress their indebtedness to ATP98—the independence of ATP03 is won by occupying ATP98 differently. If avantgardism is to be salvaged from the postmodern caricature of oedipal protest, then we need to develop a conception of artistic independence on such models as ATP03, as occupying contested spaces differently.

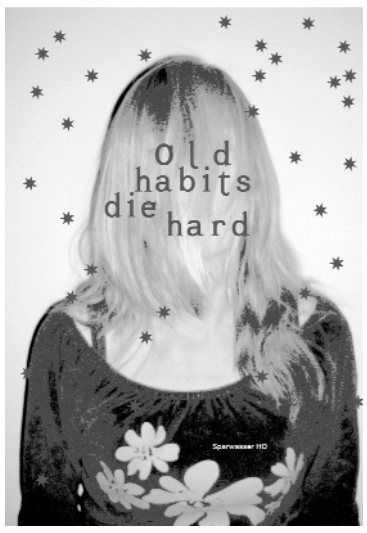
Consider artist-run spaces. It is clear that a number of artist-run spaces are set up for no other reason than to catch the attention of the market and art's large public institutions in the spirit of entrepreneurial enterprise. Such spaces may be funded and run as independent concerns, but they are in no way ideologically or culturally independent. A stronger brand of independence would entail some substantial divergence from business-as-usual. In fact, we could even go so far as to say that spaces which fail to promote this stronger brand of independence are not artist-run spaces at all; the artists involved are agents for those that they address. Independence in art and culture, therefore, means contesting art and culture. If artists are to contest culture, then one of the key aspects of the culture that they must contest is the category of the artist. Artist-run spaces contest the established role of the artist (displacing the artist from the studio, for one thing) as well as clearing intellectual and physical space for occupying culture differently. This is independence.

Towards the end of 2003 Sparwasser HQ (www.sparwasserhq.de), an artist run space in Berlin, invited 50 artist run spaces worldwide to contribute their 'favourite' video for Old Habits Die Hard. The project had an informality about it that nevertheless dovetailed with a serious and genuine commitment to an international community of independent art projects. Ambition, informality and hospitality combine to establish a form of cultural independence that sets its own agenda. What's more, the suggested criterion for selecting the video, that it be your 'favourite', was a precise subversion of professional practice in which artists and curators select works in order to gain cultural capital. Small potatoes, perhaps, but these are the ways in which independent practices manufacture their independence.

Independence in art is not given, but has to be won by distinguishing between contesting the cultural field on the one hand and practices of adapting oneself to the existing culture and its institutions on the other. Establishing a physical distance from the existing institutions is not a sure-fire strategy for attaining independence. Physical distance often turns out to be a red-herring, failing to guarantee that the space will be independent in the fuller sense. This is why art's existing institutions can be re-used independently if they are treated as contested spaces. Artists and curators can gain independence by virtue of doing something else in the art's established spaces. The first condition of art's independence is not art's isolation but its re-occupation of the cultural field, whether in setting up alternative spaces or by doing alternative things in existing spaces.

Nicolas Bourriaud's little book Postproduction does not match the emphasis on cultural contestation and collaborative independence that is so conspicuous in the networks and projects of the new socially oriented artists. True, Bourriaud argues that "art can be a form of using the world", but when it comes to the details, Bourriaud converts these social events back into those of an encounter "between the artist and the one who comes to view the work". His new artist is a 'semionaut' (the DJ, the programmer, the web surfer), whose 'collaborations' with the social world are reduced to exchanges of signs. When he speaks of how the semionaut "activates the history" of appropriated material, Bourriaud is referring to the generation of new meanings. And because he places his hope in the liberatory effects of semiotic play, he takes his position in direct opposition to the avantgardist, framing this opposition thus: the avantgardist asked "what can we make that is new?" while the semionaut begins with the motto, "how can we make do with what we have?" I think the new socially oriented artists are closer to the avantgarde than this, with a question that goes beyond Bourriaud's semiotic play: how we can make what we have do something else?

ATP03 and Old Habits Die Hard emphasise an aspect of contemporary independent art at odds with Bourriaud's conceptualisation of the semionaut. The semionaut is an individual who, in Bourriaud's account, is in opposition to others. In particular, the semionaut is hostile to the obsolete producers on whom the semionaut's appropriational practice depends. Of course, this opposition can be redescribed in collaborative terms. The DJ and the socially oriented artist acts in a spirit of hospitality rather than hostility. While hospitality can contain its own forms of hostility—when inclusion is nothing but a positive spin on the neutralisation of opposition, for instance—there can be a tenderness to hospitality that is worth encouraging. As a genre of social interaction, hospitality is more promising, ethically, as a



model for an artist run space than, say, entrepreneurialism or semiotic play. Collaborative independence, involving hospitalities within hospitalities, is a form of independence that does not delude itself that autonomy (self-determination) is equivalent to isolation (the myth of the self-created self) The 'self' of 'self-determination' is understood, within collaborative independence, to be co-produced with others. That is, the self of self-determination is not self-sufficient. And thus, the independence in collaborative independence is necessarily based on the individual's utter dependence on others.

We are not semionauts; we are, if anything, socionauts. Socially oriented artists do not demonstrate any inclination today to reduce social encounters to semiotic encounters. At the same time, such social encounters are not typically those between an artist and a viewer mediated by the object that is made by the former for the visual pleasure of the latter. If the contemporary artist contests culture by, among other things, contesting the role of the artist, then it follows that the contemporary artist contest culture by contesting the modes of attention of the viewer (the artist's traditional collaborator). In fact, contemporary artists seem to be in the process of converting the viewer into a doer, an active participator in the events and actions set up by the socionaut. In this sense, the contemporary artist in the first decade of the 21st century has in common with the avantgardist in the first part of the 20th century a vital commitment: the merging of art and life as a critique of the isolation of art from everything else. If the avantgarde's sense of breaking new ground gave them a social superiority complex, the current crop of socially oriented artists are avantgarde only insofar as they share the political programme of the avantgarde, not their social position at the head of culture. Avantgardism was always independent but now it has become independent collaborative hospitality.

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Transfiguration of the Commonplace

Anna Dezeuze

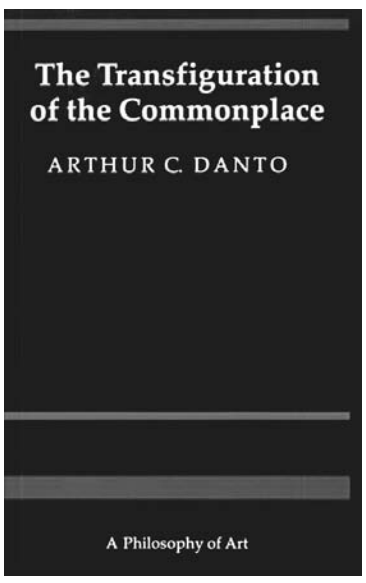
The Old 'Art and Life' Chestnut

'Art is what makes life more interesting than art.' Such was the apt definition provided by Robert Filliou, a French artist who was affiliated to the Fluxus group in the 1960s.[1] The relation between art and life has long been a recurrent trope of aesthetics and artistic practice of various kinds, and the 1960s was a period when artists seemed particularly concerned with this issue. Robert Rauschenberg, for example, famously said: 'Painting relates to both art and life. … (I try to work in that gap between the two).'[2] Allan Kaprow, the inventor of 'happenings,' stated on his part that 'the line between art and life should be kept as fluid, and perhaps indistinct, as possible.'[3]

If it is by now widely acknowledged that the opening of art to life in the 1960s radically changed the definition of art, then these three statements alone point to important differences between the forms that this relation (between art and life) can take. Acting in the gap *between* art and life like Rauschenberg does not imply the same kind of activity as creating works which, according to Filliou, serve somehow as marginal tools to make life more interesting than art. And surely there is quite a substantial distinction between keeping a line fluid, and blurring boundaries altogether, even if Kaprow tentatively aligns one with another.

My contention is that the reasons why these differences are, more often than not, neglected by art historians and philosophers alike is that discussions tend to forget the other term of the relationship. Instead of asking 'what is art?,' shouldn't we be asking: what is life? This question is obviously much too general to be answered by any one single person, and could indeed be considered as the main question of philosophy and other forms of enquiry. When it is posed in a specific context, however, a more precise focus can be singled out for discussion. In the cases of Rauschenberg, Kaprow and Filliou, for example, it is clear that their concerns lay specifically in the realm of everyday life, and in particular the everyday life that had been excluded so forcefully by the Abstract Expressionist generation of painters and Clement Greenberg's formalist criticism.

In order to explore the relations between art and what has variously been called the everyday, the commonplace, the ordinary, the banal, I will be referring in particular to two texts: Arthur Danto's landmark work, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, and a more recent book by the French curator and critic Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*. While sketching out the ways in which these two authors responded to the emergence of the everyday in artistic practices ranging from Andy Warhol and Fluxus to 1990s contemporary art, I will also examine their ideas in the light of theories of everyday life, in particular Michel de Certeau's 1980 *Practice of Everyday Life*. Specific artistic practices will be the guiding thread in this discussion, for it is artists who pose the questions that aesthetics struggle to answer.



The Conditions of Transfiguration

Between art and everyday life, there is no difference... The difference between a chair by Duchamp and one of my chairs could be that Duchamp's chair is on a pedestal and mine can still be used.

George Brecht[4]

One of Danto's greatest achievements lies in his analysis of the sudden visibility of the everyday in 1960s art. Danto has often recounted how seeing Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* at the Stable Gallery in 1964 was the trigger for his reflections on the differences between artworks and everyday objects. The Warhol *Boxes*, he explains in the introduction to *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, 'so totally resemble what by common consent are *not* art works' that they 'make the question of definition urgent.'[5] Analysing key notions of illusionism, mimesis, belief, interpretation, style and expression, Danto develops the argument that one of the differences between a Brillo box and the new 'Brillo-box-as-work-of-art' is the fact that the artwork takes the non-artwork as its subject-matter and simultaneously makes a point about how this subject-matter is presented. The mode of representation thus creates a surplus meaning which does not allow the two objects to be equated one with another.

'Make a salad.' This 1963 *Proposition* by Alison Knowles is cited by Arthur Danto in a recent essay on Fluxus as one of many examples of the group's engagement with everyday life. In this discussion, Danto also quotes Brecht's statement (cited above) about the difference between his chairs and Duchamp's readymades. Brecht's contribution to the 1961 exhibition Environment, *Situations, Spaces (Six Artists)*, at the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York, was the placement of three different chairs in various parts of the gallery. Since viewers had no indication that these chairs were part of an artwork, some visitors sat on them without a second thought, much to Brecht's satisfaction.

In the same essay, Danto extends to Fluxus his earlier discussion of Pop art, revisiting specific ideas from *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* which, indeed, seem to fit Fluxus like a glove. In particular, Danto points to the fact that in the 1960s he shared with Fluxus an interest in Zen, and he reproduces a quote by Zen Buddhist Ching Yuan which he had included in *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*:

Before I had studied Zen for thirty years, I saw mountains as mountains and waters as waters. When I arrived at a more intimate knowledge, I came to the point where I saw that mountains are not mountains and waters are not waters. But now I have got to the very substance I am at rest. For it is just that I saw mountains again as mountains and waters once again as waters.[6]

The idea that there is nothing internal to these three experiences which distinguishes them obviously from one another was in tune with Danto's preoccupations with the absence of differences between artworks and mere things. What, indeed, is the difference between performing Knowles' instruction and the act of making a salad that many of us regularly perform? As in the case of Warhol's *Brillo Boxes*, Danto concludes:

What Fluxus helped us see is that no theory of art could help us pick out which were the artworks, since art can resemble reality to any chosen degree. Fluxus was right that the question is not which are the art works, but how we view anything if we see it as art.[7]

In their critical study of Danto's aesthetics, Greg Horowitz and Tom Huhn have discussed the

conditions required for this 'transfiguration' of the everyday into art.[8] The question they ask is the following: does Pop according to Danto allow the everyday to take over art ('a return *of* the everyday *in* art') or is it rather a moment in which art seizes the everyday for its purposes ('a return *to* the everyday *by* art')? If, as in the former, Pop marks a return *of* the everyday *in* art, then it means that there is no possibility of its redemption, since transfiguration can only occur when there is a distance that allows the everyday to be presented as art. Pop, Horowitz and Huhn conclude, therefore needs to be a return *to* the everyday *by* art in order to remain art. If Pop artists did embrace the everyday, then, in contrast with Abstract Expressionists before them, they nevertheless kept a critical distance from it by using it for other purposes than presenting the raw everydayness of their material—in order, for example, to comment simultaneously about the state of art, the accelerating production and increasing sophistication of packaging and advertising.[9] When Danto claims that Warhol and Fluxus question 'how we view anything if we see it as art,' he is thus implicitly positing this distance from the everyday. As Horowitz and Huhn suggest, the experience which allows the viewer to bind art and the everyday according to Danto can only function if this distance is introduced even *before* any artistic process takes place: in order to make the everyday available for aesthetic experience, the artist, and the viewer, need to have detached one specific aspect of the commonplace (its novelty, its aesthetic qualities, its strangeness…) from its original 'rawness'.

While I agree that this 'pre-aestheticising' process operates in Pop, I would like to argue that Fluxus works such as Brecht's *Three Chair Events* or Knowles' *Proposition* shrink the distance presumed by Danto, in order to explore the rawness which aesthetics seeks to exclude for the sake of transfiguration. This aesthetic distance was preserved by Danto, and the Pop artists, by eliminating one particular aspect of the everyday's rawness: use and habit. Brecht has recounted how once he tried to sit down on the chair included in Rauschenberg's 1960 combine, *Pilgrim*, only to be stopped and told that he could not. Recalling his frustration, Brecht explained: 'After all, if it's a chair why shouldn't you sit in it?'[10] Unlike Brecht's, Rauschenberg's chair can no more revert to its initial function than Warhol's painted wood Brillo boxes. By shifting the emphasis from object to performance, Fluxus works emphasise use and habit, and thus establish a radically different relation to the commonplace. Fluxus picked up another aspect of Zen: the full embrace of everyday activities such as eating, drinking and sleeping. For, whether Ching Yuan saw mountains as mountains or whether he saw mountains as *not* mountains would never have prevented him from climbing one of them when he wanted to go for a walk. In doing so, he may have been performing a Fluxus score by Takehisa Kosugi (*Theatre Music*, c. 1963) which simply reads: 'Keep walking intently.'

Relational Aesthetics

I started to make things so that people could use them... [My work] is not meant to be put out with other sculpture or like another relic to be looked at, but you

have to use it...

Rirkrit Tiravanija[11]

Thirty years after the birth of Fluxus in 1962, artist Rirkrit Tiravanija presented *Untitled (Free)* at the 303 gallery in New York, a work in which he decided to put all the things he found in the storeroom and office into the gallery itself, using the storeroom to cook Thai curries for the visitors to the gallery and leaving the leftovers, kitchen utensils and used food packets in the gallery when he was not here. This work is typical of what Nicolas Bourriaud called a new 'relational art,' which requires a new kind of 'relational aesthetics' in order to account for its emergence and to describe its characteristics. Relational art, according to Bourriaud, is characterised by the fact that it takes 'as its starting point human relations and their social context, as opposed to autonomous and exclusive art.'[12] Hence, relational aesthetics must be 'an aesthetic theory consisting in judging artworks in terms of the inter-human relations which they show, produce, or give rise to.'[13] Bourriaud's relational aesthetics could be seen as an alternative to Danto's transfiguration of the commonplace because it seems to focus precisely on the terms which the latter excludes. Bourriaud for example explains that contemporary works such as Tiravanija's should not be considered as spaces to be walked through but instead as durations to be experienced, where the performative aspect of the work is more important than either objects to be viewed in space or the space of the gallery itself. Focusing on the relations between the artist and the gallery visitors, the interactions between the guests, and the atmosphere created by Tiravanija's cooking obviously shifts the emphasis away from the finished object towards the process, the performance, the behaviours which emerge from the artist's everyday intervention. It is much more difficult to define what the form of the work actually consists in. Whereas Danto systematically tried to define the Fluxus and Pop works as ontological entities, Bourriaud is content with describing 'form' as nothing more than a 'coherent plane' on which heterogeneous entities can meet; it must be unstable, open to exchange and dialogue.[14]

Instead of an opposition between art and the everyday articulated in the transfiguration of the commonplace, Bourriaud describes art as a 'social interstice.' Bourriaud borrows the term 'interstice' from Marx, who used it to describe exchange spaces which can escape from the dominant capitalist economy (barter is one of his examples). For Bourriaud, artworks exist in such a space, a space that is part of the global system but nonetheless suggests the possibility of alternative exchanges. Bourriaud singles out in the global capitalist system one particular aspect of everyday life which art can resist by multiplying new 'social interstices': the commercialisation and spectacularisation of inter-personal relations in everyday life.

By emphasising events, performance, and behaviours; alternative modes of exchange over unusable, commodified objects; by privileging flexible notions of form instead of trying to define art, Bourriaud's relational aesthetics seem to be more able to describe the nature of the everyday in works by Tiravanija and Fluxus alike. Yet, if Danto's aesthetics may be too restricted to encompass the variety of relations between art and everyday life, Bourriaud's ideas, for their part, suffer from not being precise enough. There are many obvious reasons for this: Bourriaud is a critic rather than a philosopher, an advocate rather than an analyst of these artists, and he is clearly implicated in the commercial and institutional art world (he is the co-director of the Palais de Tokyo, which was founded a few years ago as an institutional showcase for contemporary art in Paris). Perhaps there is even a deliberate decision on the part of Bourriaud to elude, for the sake of packaging a new generation of artists, the crucial questions of how exactly inter-personal relations have become commercialised and spectacularised, and how getting together to have a curry with Tiravanija somehow resists this state of things. What I would like to underline here is that, despite his apparent embrace of the everyday, Bourriaud, like Danto, seems to take for granted a universal definition of the commonplace. Only by retrieving the specificity of the everyday can the works discussed by Bourriaud and Danto be extracted from the rhetorical uses to which they have been subjected.

Describing the Everyday

If [Michel de Certeau's] *Practice of Everyday Life* is seen as attempting to register the *poiesis* of everyday life through poetics, then it is a poetics that articulates activities rather than expresses identities—a poetics of *uses* rather than *users*.

Ben Highmore[15]

Knowles' proposition to 'make a salad' relates to an act that we perform in our everyday life, and the form it takes evokes very directly an object of everyday life: the recipe. In her study of cooking as a practice of everyday life, Luce Giard explains that:

In every language, recipes comprise a kind of minimal text, defined by its internal economy, its concision and its low degree of ambiguity.[16]

Knowles' *Proposition* is certainly presented in a concise and minimal format, but it does not, however, provide any of the information which is considered to be 'indispensable' in a recipe: it states neither the ingredients nor the utensils and techniques to be used, and the name of the prepared dish is generic rather than particular, leaving the whole process as ambiguous as possible (Knowles says 'salad' rather than 'Greek salad,' or 'salade niçoise,' for example). Thus, while we can conclude that Knowles' piece is actually totally useless as a recipe, we can also see how it uses the format of the recipes to explore key characteristics that are relevant both to Fluxus and to cooking. Four of these dimensions can be briefly outlined here. Firstly, authorship for recipes is usually collective, if not anonymous. Similarly, Fluxus as a group explored ways of undermining the highly personalised traditional notions of authorship both through collective production and an increased reliance on reader/spectator participation. Secondly, recipes can be transmitted orally as well as through publications, which is also the case for many Fluxus scores: you do not need Knowles' book to own *Proposition*. Swedish folklore specialist and Fluxus artist Bengt af Klintberg highlighted the relations between these two aspects of cooking when he explained that Fluxus 'reacted against the pompous image of the artist as a genius with a unique, personal style' by creating 'simple pieces filled with energy and humour, pieces without any personal stylistic features, pieces that could be transmitted orally just like folklore and performed by everyone who wanted to.'[17]

The third aspect of recipes which Knowles' *Proposition* brings to the fore is the complex relations which recipes set up between process and result. Any cook knows that sometimes, for practical reasons, you may need to replace one ingredient by another, but of course, if you replace too many ingredients, then it becomes a whole new recipe. In Fluxus pieces, which emerged from the context of experimental music, this relation between the specific and the general is akin to the relation between a musical score and the ways of performing it. How badly does a score by Mozart need to be played before ceasing to be a Mozart piece? This complex question is central to any study of musical performance. The performative dimension of the recipe is closely linked to the fourth, and final, characteristic which I would like to list here. The recipe is one tool among others within a process, and cannot be considered as an isolated object: it is necessarily part of a wider, more complex, network which includes ingredients, implements, spaces, family life, tradition and innovation, to cite only some of the terms analysed by Giard.

Thus, viewed from the perspective of art, Knowles' work questions traditional notions of authorship and the status of the artwork, but if it were to be encountered in a recipe book, for example, it may be read as liberating for the cook. By reducing the instructions to a generic invitation, Knowles frees cooks from the stringent demands of the recipe, which dictate a type of behaviour and emphasise the finished product, to be judged according to absolute criteria of quality. Everyday life becomes a practice to be explored, rather than a boring routine that needs to be transfigured by art.

The term 'practice of everyday life' is a translation of the title of Michel de Certeau's 1980 *L'Invention du quotidien* (literally the 'invention' of the everyday), and it was in the second volume of this book that Luce Giard's analysis of cooking was included. In *Relational Aesthetics*, Bourriaud actually refers to de Certeau and the '*invention du quotidien*' when he writes about relational practices such as Tiravanija's. For example, Bourriaud claims that the practice of everyday life is 'not an object less worthy of attention' than 'the messianic utopias' specific to modern art.[18] In this opposition between everyday practices and 'messianic utopias,' Bourriaud follows de Certeau's distinction between tactics and strategy. Strategy, according to de Certeau, is a means of calculation and manipulation in order to gain power over another, in situations where the distinction between one's own space and the other's is clear-cut. In contrast, tactics describe actions which take place solely within the 'other's space' because it is impossible to isolate the two spaces from each other. The 'interstice' occupied by relational art according to Bourriaud seems to be the very space of everyday life in which de Certeau places tactics, those everyday ruses with which some members of society 'tinker' with the dominant social order for it to work in their favour.[19] The question of whether relational art is politically radical or not is thus closely related to the general issue of whether, as de Certeau claims, certain tactical practice can effectively subvert the everyday life in which they are embedded.

De Certeau's considerable contribution to the study of everyday life has been not only to highlight the complexity of everyday practices such as cooking, walking or inhabiting living












spaces, but also to reflect on the methods for studying these practices. As Ben Highmore has explained, de Certeau sought to create a general poetics of everyday life which aims at achieving the generality of a science without losing sight of the singularity of the actual—an issue that resonates with Fluxus event scores which oscillate between the extreme generality of the instruction and the inevitable specificity of each individual performance of its terms.[20] De Certeau's poetics successfully capture the singularity of everyday life, but encounter problems when trying to theorise the political, subversive potential of its practices. This issue, which is one of the central problems of studies of everyday life throughout the twentieth century, plagues Bourriaud's relational aesthetics as well. To analyse Bourriaud's text, it would thus be useful to start by unpacking the models of everyday life to which he is referring. In the process, one would find that he seems to be combining de Certeau's non-oppositional theorisation with references to Situationist thinkers such as Guy Debord and Henri Lefebvre, who came from a Marxist tradition obviously bent on a transformation of capitalist society.

The tension between conflicting models of the 'critique of everyday life' is arguably inherent to the very works acclaimed by Bourriaud. Janet Kraynak has aptly criticised discourses such as Bourriaud's which describe Tiravanija's work as generous offerings providing an alternative exchange logic to commodity fetishism.[21] Tiravanija's art, Kraynak argues, occupies an ambiguous position which exceeds such simplistic celebrations of a supposed return of everyday life in art. On the one hand, she explains, Tiravanija's work embraces the shift in the new globalised economy from the production and exchange of material objects to that of an equally alienating 'symbolic capital'. On the other hand, however, it simultaneously reveals the increased homogenisation of cultures as they enter the new symbolic order of global capitalism. Where Fluxus could still dream of a de-commodified everyday life based on collaboration, participation and other modes of 'folkloric' exchange, 'relational art' in the 1990s marked an embrace, rather than a rejection, of the museum, as well as a return to traditional modes of authorship—Tiravanija's presence, as Kraynak points out, is by now acknowledged to be a necessary aspect of his work.

Conclusion

Both Danto's *Transfiguration of the Commonplace* and Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics* are significant attempts to grapple with the new relation between art and life explored by successive generations of artists. While Danto's reflections successfully highlight the importance of the everyday in works by Warhol or Fluxus, I have suggested that his ontological enquiry is restricted by the static polarity it sets up between art and a commonplace which remains in essence everything that is not art. Bourriaud's definition of relational aesthetics introduced post-structuralist, Deleuzian notions of flow and dynamic forms that are more amenable to capture the nature of practices by Fluxus or Tiravanija. Nevertheless, as I have shown, the kind of everyday practices which Bourriaud celebrates remains sketchy, as he refuses to address the ways in which they participate in, or resist, a dominant social order. Studies of everyday life such as de Certeau's complement enquiries such as Danto's or Bourriaud's by disrupting reductive descriptions of a universal everyday and looking at the specificities of the practices with which art practices stand in dialogue.

Filliou's quip about art being what makes life more interesting than art may suggest that art should become less interesting—indeed, works such as Knowles' *Proposition*, Brecht's *Three Chair Event* or Tiravanija's meals, deliberately *ask* to be dismissed as unremarkable occurrences which exist in the same time and space as everyday activities, in a way that neither Rauschenberg's 'combines' nor Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* could ever dream of. At the same time, the important thing about Filliou's definition of art is that it exists as a dynamic, reversible movement, in which the artwork can make life more interesting not because it is as boring as life, but because life is at least as complex as art. It may seem paradoxical to conclude that we may need simple, often literal, forms of art to tell us about the complexity of everyday life. And it may seem rather pathetic that we need to be told that everyday life is complex in the first place. Yet the question of whether, and how, the everyday can be studied is in fact a complex topic in itself—a topic that requires a further discussion, over a salad or a Thai curry, it goes without saying.

Notes

1 Robert Filliou (1970) 'Interview', quoted in *Robert Filliou: Génie sans talent*, (2004) exh. cat. (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Musee d'Art Moderne Lille Métropole), back cover.

2 Robert Rauschenberg (1959) 'Untitled Statement,' in Dorothy C. Miller, ed., *Sixteen Americans* (New York: Museum of Modern Art), p.58.

3 Allan Kaprow (1966) *Assemblages, Environments and Happenings* (New York: Harry N. Abrams), p.188.

4 George Brecht (1965) 'A Conversation about Something Else: an Interview with George Brecht by Ben Vautier and Marcel Alocco,' in *Identités*, nos. 11-12; rep. in Henry Martin, ed. (1978) *An Introduction to George Brecht's Book of the Tumbler on Fire* (Milan: Multhipla edizioni), p.71.

5 Arthur Danto (1981) *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: a Philosophy of Art* (Cambridge, MA, & London: Harvard University Press), p.vii.

6 Ching Yuan, in D.T. Suzuki, *Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings of D.T. Suzuki*, quoted by Danto (2002) 'The World as Warehouse: Fluxus and Philosophy,' in Jon Hendricks, ed., *What's Fluxus? What's Not! Why*., exh. cat. (Brasília: Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil), p.31. This passage is reproduced in *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, p. 133.

7 Danto, 'The World as Warehouse: Fluxus and Philosophy,' op. cit., 31.

8 Greg Horowitz and Tom Huhn (1998) 'The Wake of Art: Criticism, Philosophy and the ends of Taste,' in Greg Horowitz and Tom Huhn, eds., *The Wake of Art: Criticism, Philosophy and the ends of Taste* (Amsterdam: G+B Arts International), pp.1-56.

9 For such an analysis of these different aspects of Warhol's works, see Benjamin Buchloh (1989) 'Andy Warhol's One-dimensional Art, 1956-1966,' in Kynaston McShine, ed., *Andy Warhol: a Retrospective*, exh. cat. (New York: Museum of Modern Art), pp.39-61.

10 George Brecht (1967) 'Interview with Henry Martin,' in *Art International*, vol. XI, no. 9, rep. in Henry Martin, p.80.

11 Rirkrit Tiravanija, quoted in Janet Kraynak (1998) 'Rirkrit Tiravanija's Liability,' *Documents*, no. 13, p.36.

12 Nicolas Bourriaud (1998) *Esthétique relationnelle* (Dijon: Presses du réel), p.117 (my translation). An English translation by Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods was published in 2002 (*Relational Aesthetics*, Dijon: Presses du réel).

13 Bourriaud, p.117.

14 Bourriaud, p.115.

15 Ben Highmore (2002) *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge), p.156.

16 'Dans chaque langue, les recettes de cuisine composent une sorte de texte minimal, défini par son économie interne, sa concision et son faible degré d'équivocité.' Luce Giard (1980) 'Faire-la-cuisine,' in Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard, Pierre Mayol, *L'Invention du quotidien*, vol. 2: Habiter, Cuisiner (Paris: Gallimard), 1990 ed., p.303 (my translation).

17 Jean Sellem (1991) 'The Fluxus Outpost in Sweden: an Interview with Bengt af Klintberg', in Jean Sellem, ed., *Fluxus Research*, special issue of *Lund Art Press*, vol. 2, no. 2, p.69.

18 Bourriaud, p.14.

19 Michel de Certeau (1980) *L'Invention du quotidien, vol. 1: Arts de faire* (Paris: Gallimard), 1990 ed., p.xxxix.

20 Highmore, ch. 8. For more about the general and the specific in Fluxus scores, see Ina Blom (1992) 'The Intermedia Dynamic,' in Ken Friedman, ed., *Fluxus Virus*, 1962-1992, exh. cat. (Cologne: Galerie Schüppenhauer and Kölnischer Kunstverein), p.216.

21 Kraynak, pp.26-40.

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Some notes on deconstructing Ireland's Whiteness: Immigrants, emigrants and the perils of jazz

"Are the Irish Black?" Bill Rolston asks in his eponymous essay, and proposes that so long as they identify as anti-colonial, the answer might be 'yes'.[1] Rolston expands upon A.V. Sivanandan's paradigm that locates the Irish within the anti-colonial crucible of the 'black struggle'. Both thinkers approach 'race' and its categories of 'black' and 'white' as political constructs; as historically unstable inventions and performed social locations. But the binary of black-as-anti-colonial versus white-as-colonial is far too reductive a paradigm. Following some historical examples of Irish people who have 'acted white' (i.e. dominated non-whites), and others who have allied themselves with black and native peoples, Rolston answers "Are the Irish black?" with a conclusive "of course not". In a footnoted reference, he explains that there are "some people of colour in Ireland, who, along with members of the Travelling community, are subject to racial abuse and attacks".[2] This is patently true, but since Rolston's preceding meditation on the Irish as 'black' appears to have required suspending Ireland's non-whites into footnotes, there is a certain inconsistency in his approach to both 'white' and 'black' as constructs. What emerges is something like a naturalistic view of the Irish as *a priori* white subjects, who can look to 'blackness' for edification. Displacing "people of colour" and Travellers into the footnotes of a hypothetical discussion of whether the Irish might be 'black' can also read as their sequestering from the category 'Irish'. Yet the essay is saturated with the potential to move past its limitations, since Rolston prepares the ground for an enquiry he doesn't pursue but that I think bubbles under the surface. Instead of asking whether the Irish might be black, the question that seems to me more apposite is, "how are the Irish white?" How has Ireland's whiteness been constructed; and how can we deconstruct naturalized notions of the Irish as 'white'?

For the past couple of years, I've been examining how culture, events and discourses represent 'Ireland' and 'the Irish' as 'white', and how they construct gendered meanings about this whiteness. I've extracted some examples from a few texts I'm working on, of images and events that fabricate the Irish as 'white' in contrast to a 'non-white' other, to sketch some of the shapes this 'whiteness' takes, in the paragraphs below.

Let's begin with an anti-Semitic cartoon published in 1911, in *The Irish Worker*. Titled "Gentlemen of the Jewry", it represents an encounter between an idealised family of man, woman and baby that read as 'Irish'; and a threesome comprising one woman and two men who read as 'Jewish' stereotypes. The latter are traders engaged in a buffoonish attempt to pass as natives; their shops are the "Aaron go Bragh Store" (proprietor "Ikey O'Moses") and "The Emmet Emporium", so their patriotism is depicted as of a mercenary variety. One asks another, "Begob Ikey, ven vill us poor Irish get Home Rule?" Underneath the image, the caption avers "We have no objection to any man, Jew or Gentile, on account of his nationality or creed. What we do object to is the practice, which is becoming all too common, of Foreigners masquerading under Irish names".[3]

Historically in Ireland, their racialisation has seen Jews ambivalently positioned in the hinterland of whiteness, and more often than not, clear of the category 'white' altogether. At the time of the cartoon's production (7 years after the anti-Semitic Limerick pogrom), Jewish values were construed as threatening to Catholic Ireland, and its communities of Jews deemed racially 'other'. The Irish were also believed, and believed themselves to belong to a distinct 'race'. The language of 'race' became exclusively hitched to chromatic differences only later into the twentieth century, whereas during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the orthodoxy was that the inhabitants of the British Isles comprised a number of different 'races', with the Irish cast as the 'Celtic race'.

Maintaining the notion of the Irish as a different 'race' from the English, as Steve Garner has argued, Irish nationalist mobilisation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century conceived of the struggle in terms of "Celt-Gael" versus "Anglo-Saxon".[4] In order to establish that the Irish were a European culture worthy of self-governance, nationalists stressed a positive identity for the "Celt-Gael" as white and equal to, yet distinct from the "Anglo-Saxon", using the conceptual means of their day. At times this involved what Kavita Philip has identified as eulogising the spirituality and artistry that the Victorians considered characteristics of the 'feminine' (i.e. 'irrational') Celt. Padraig Pearse put the distinctiveness of the Gael down to 'his' eschewal of the spade, loom and sword to recover idealism and rejuvenate the world's literature.[5] Thus re-cycled, the 'feminine' tendencies of the Celt could scarcely be more exalted. Dublin cartoonists also created the idealised figure of handsome Pat the Irishman; and the visual culture of late nineteenth and early twentieth century nationalism also had its female personification of Ireland in the lovely, lily-white 'Erin'.

Back to the anti-Semitic cartoon, and the idealised 'Irish' family could be said to consist of a match between Pat and Erin, in young parenthood. The cartoon collapses political identity into an ethnic and racial identity of white, sedentary, Catholic, and these are composites of 'Irish national identity' embodied by the idealised family with its prescribed gender roles. But when adopted by the stereotyped Jews, signs of Irishness and nationalist aspiration wear like purloined clothing. The two women, the Irish one a maternal beauty, the Jewish caricature an oaf sporting an over-sized Tara brooch, also carry particular meanings. If each of the little units to which they are attached symbolises an ethnic or 'racial' collective, the women are structured in opposition to one another within overarching patriarchal economies, in this symbolic scene of competition. The sentiment conveyed in the cartoon is that the Jewish woman, unnaturally non-maternal and lurking in the shop doorway as if on the ominous threshold between masculinity and femininity, stakes a risible claim to the national identity of the idealised Irish woman. While both are feminine figures, our Jewish and Irish women appear irreconcilably cleaved from one another by their 'racial' and/as national difference. The image hints at the over-determination of 'Irish womanhood' as reproducer of the national stock in the 1937 Constitution of Ireland some years later—which both marginalises women as citizens, while placing them in

hegemonic positions over the State's 'others', its minorities within and its 'aliens' without. In the cartoon, one woman's national qualifier as 'Irish' determines her idealised gender identity, while the Jewish woman's grotesque difference serves to further define what 'Irish womanhood' is.

Articulating its concerns about national identity through overlapping ideological concepts of nation, 'race' and gender, this cartoon puts me in mind of the pivotal role that the 'non-national' (read 'non-white') woman played in much more recent attempts to define Irish belonging—Ireland's referendum on citizenship in June 2004. At the time of its announcement, the government claimed that pregnant 'non-national' women are travelling to Ireland solely to give birth to a child that will have a right to Irish citizenship. Since 1921, anyone born in Ireland has been entitled to Irish citizenship on the grounds of '*jus soli*', whereby nationality is determined by one's place of birth (the traditional Republican form common to over 40 countries). Without any corroborating statistics, the government alleged that pregnant 'non-national' women are over-stretching the resources of Dublin's maternity hospitals. Despite that accounts of besieged maternity wards were fictional, this misogynistic spectre of the unregulated 'non-national' maternal body must surely have proved a persuasive cipher of otherness unfettered, for many of the 79% who voted to alter the basis of Irish citizenship from *jus soli*—determined by place of birth—to *jus sanguinis*—transmitted through bloodline. The targets of the referendum were Africans, Asians and Eastern Europeans—the subjects of variable processes of racialisation, against whom the Irish electorate identified themselves differentially as a white, settled majority. This whiteness remains as historically artificial a construct as ever despite its assumption as simply the Irish norm. And as James Baldwin wrote, "as long as you think you are white, there's no hope for you", emphasising 'white' as a dominating political category, but nonetheless as negotiable and constructed, rather than naturally occurring.[6]

A few days after the results of the referendum were announced, the government chief whip Mary Hanafin reasoned that having one Irish emigrant grandparent affords innumerable Americans a 'tie' to Ireland, and therefore an unassailable right to citizenship. Still reeling from the results of the referendum, I was struck by her affirmation of an inconceivably vast diaspora, in the wake of a racist and exclusionary outcome that threatens many in Ireland with deportation. Yet coincidentally, very different thinkers to Hanafin have stressed trans-national links with Irish emigrants, but as a means of thinking Ireland in more plural and inclusive ways. In *Postnationalist Ireland*, Richard Kearney suggests that the nation be re-thought as a "migrant nation […] the nation as an extended family", to embrace the millions worldwide who claim Irish descent.[7] The 'migrant nation' is one of the reformulations of 'Ireland' he proposes as an alternative to nationalism and its assemblages of race, language, history and religion into a homogenous and exclusionary form of identity. Seeking a motif for the 'migrant nation' in Irish culture, Kearney excavates the ancient mythical location known as the 'fifth province'. Whereas the

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island of Ireland is conceived of as four provinces, in the Irish language the term 'province' itself means a fivefold division— an idea thus "as old as Ireland itself".[8] 'Ireland' is therefore always a question of thinking 'otherwise'. The 'migrant nation' he suggests is a conceptual network of relations that extends from local communities in Ireland to emigrant lives beyond the national territory—that might offer up "different racial confections as well".[9] And there lies the blind-spot: while Kearney has identified 'race' within nationalism's toolbox of exclusionary concepts, he also suggests that racial difference lies out there beyond the national shores.[10]

Identifying herself as a black Irish woman, Philomena Mullen finds the commonplace, hateful comments in the media about black and Asian immigrants evoke all too familiar feelings of being unwanted in her place of origin, despite it being a country that readily "claims over forty million people of Irish descent worldwide".[11] It seems that symbolic generosity can be boundless when it comes to extending the hand of friendship to Irish-descended emigrants (although I wonder if Mary Hanafin would feel as open towards the 'Black Irish' of Montserrat as to the powerful, white-identified Irish American bloc), but vanishes with any attempt to refigure Ireland as an immigrant nation.

Here's a recent story of Ireland being thought 'otherwise', although probably not in the sense Kearney intends. Shortly before the electorate cast their votes in the citizenship referendum, my friend answered an advert looking for extras for a film that was being shot in Dublin. The advert was specific in the type of extras it sought—they had to be 'ethnic' (read 'non-white'), and the casting was for a film set in New York. So the film-maker's intention was to cluster some of Dublin's non-white faces into Stephen's Green or wherever, and—hey presto—transform it into multi-racial 'New York'! During the audition, the casting agent asked the extras if they all lived in Dublin. "That depends on the referendum" was one wry response. Viewed from an oblique angle, this vignette is more than an account of how a fictitious movie world is manufactured. This imaginary transportation of some of Dublin's 'ethnics' into the urban spaces of 'New York', has resonances with the displacement (to anywhere but the emerald isle) of non-whites from dominant accounts of Ireland.

Ireland's 'imagined community' (to repeat Benedict Anderson's well known term; "It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.") has, as the anti-Semitic cartoon

indicates, its long-standing racialised others who've been constituted as an abnormal and troubling presence within the spaces of nation, and fetishised into an intensely visible spectacle by the media. Otherness has also long since been constructed through symbolic forms in Irish culture. From the early nineteenth century, the white-filtered, stereotypical images of 'blackness' performed by whites in minstrel shows were hugely popular on the Irish stage. So much so, that in his study of minstrelsy in Ireland between 1830-1860, Douglas C. Riach contends that "… the cause of the Negro in America suffered the failure of the abolitionists in Ireland to condemn as wholly inaccurate the image of the Negro most often presented on the Irish stage, and carried to America in the minds of countless Irish emigrants".[12] So with a nod to Noel Ignatief, we can ask did the Irish really have to wait until they got to America to 'become white' by differentiating themselves from 'non-whiteness'? Nineteenth century minstrel shows, with their derogatory stereotypes of 'blackness' prevailed into the twentieth century and shaped the emergent Hollywood film industry.[13] The most famous minstrel film, *The Jazz Singer* (1927), a big hit in Ireland, features Al Jolson's journey in blackface from Jewish immigrant to white American and repeats the journey of earlier Irish emigrants whom blackface carried across the cultural borderland into whiteness.[14]

The Jazz Singer, as Susan Gubar observes, features very little actual jazz. Nonetheless, jazz was certainly prominent enough on the cultural landscape to yield a potent signifier of otherness in the Irish Free State. It was viewed as 'African', and the Catholic church denounced jazz as a debauched form that threatened sexual morality and exercised a "denationalizing" influence on young people.[15] In the 1920s and 1930s, the Irish provincial press, as Louise Ryan shows, widely condemned jazz and modern dancing—its 'savage' and 'uncivilized' partner in crime. *The Limerick Leader* decried these as "apish and heathenish inventions"; while the Limerick Gaelic Athletic Association warned "African dances have come to the country of late".[16] The Gaelic League launched its anti-jazz campaign in 1934 and decried the "anti-national" behaviour of politicians such as the Minister of Finance, who had allowed jazz to be played on Radio Eireann and was therefore guilty of "selling the musical soul of the nation". Some County Councils adopted resolutions that condemned jazz, with District Justices warning of the dangers of immoral "nigger music".[17] The realm of this impiety was the unregulated dance, where the sexes could mingle to the 'African' rhythms of jazz. In 1935, the Public Dance Halls Act was passed, which made dances subject to the sanction of the clergy, police and judiciary. That women were deemed in need of policing against the depredations of jazz-playing dance halls indicates how discourses of 'race', 'nation' and 'woman' have interwoven to fabricate 'Irish womanhood' as a site of whiteness invested with the function of boundary marker, and therefore in need of policing.

On the subject of jazz in the early decades of the twentieth century, there's another cartoon to turn to, published in 1922 in *The Leader* (thanks to Moynagh Sullivan for telling me about this image). It features quite a fetching white Irishman on the shores of the nation, armed and purposeful with a sweeping brush.[18] "Some Work Before Us" is the cartoon's title, connoting the labour needed if the 'Soul of Ireland' is to be recouped. Our well-heeled protagonist throws himself into the task, briskly sweeping a stereotyped, grinning black musician, an equally merry white English music hall comedian, "dirty Press', "Jazz dance music" and "English novels", into the sea to return to where they came from. The stereotyped black performer ties in with the concerns that abounded over the 'pagan' power of jazz and hints at other symbolic forms of 'blackness'. In this cartoon, Ireland's whiteness results from staving off 'foreign' influences symbolised by figures of popular entertainment, and their whiff of promiscuous interracial identifications and mixing in the cultural spaces of the hoi polloi.

The alarm that jazz fans sounded in the nascent Irish state was down to their cross-racial identifications and symbolic traversals of nation as 'race'. They showed how fragile the bindings of 'race' really are, despite how much is invested in its belief and in racial difference. They also had the potential to trouble the notion that 'white' is somehow just what Irish people naturally are, and to expose it as a jealously maintained construct, hitched to the logic of domination.

Notes

1: Bill Rolston (1999) 'Are the Irish Black?' *Race and Class*, vol. 41, no. 1-2, p.95.

2: Rolston, p.102.

3: This cartoon is reproduced in Dermot Keogh (1998) *Jews in Twentieth-Century Ireland: Refugees, Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust* (Cork: Cork University Press), p.55.

4: Steve Garner (2004) *Racism in the Irish Experience* (London: Pluto) p.31. See Colin Graham's review of Garner in *Variant* 20, Summer 2004 (www.variant.org.uk).

5 : Kavita Philip (2002) 'Race, Class and the Imperial Politics of Ethnography in India, Ireland and London, 1850-1910', *Irish Studies Review*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 297-299.

6 : James Baldwin, quoted in Alastair Bonnett (2000) 'Constructions of Whiteness in European and American Anti-Racism', in Torres, Rodolfo D.; Miron, Louis F; and Inda, Jonathan Xavier, eds., *Race, Identity and Citizenship: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell), p.213.

7 : Richard Kearney (1997) *Postnationalist Ireland: Politics, Culture and Philosophy* (London: Routledge), p.9.

8 : Kearney, p.100.

9 : Kearney, p.5.

10: *Editor's Note*: It may be interesting to mention here the ways in which Kearney's 'other Ireland' prefigured certain changes in the *constitution* of Ireland (in both senses of that word). Following the referendum on the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution (in which had resided the territorial claim to Northern Ireland) were amended so that the territory of the state was described *aspirationally*, defined in terms that do not *yet* exist or apply, as (being in) a state of incompleteness (perhaps this lies behind Bertie Ahern's recent claim to live 'in the future'). The extra-territorial link with "people of Irish ancestry" was recognised, but over and above this the "birthright of every person born in the island of Ireland…to be part of the Irish Nation" was affirmed. In 1998, then, *jus soli* was made concrete, while at the same time the strictly territorial definition of the state was subjected to a degree of creative ambiguity. As Chan points out, the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act of 2004 has replaced *jus soli* with *jus sanguinis*, and appears to privilege the notional 'inalienable birthright' of "people of Irish ancestry" over any 'rights' of the 'Irish-born child' (a particularly vile and spurious neologism, coined in the run-up to the referendum in order to establish some kind of innate 'difference' between the children of immigrants and those of the 'real'—white—Irish. The question we should ask is whether the current situation is a *reversal* or a *continuation* of the trend begun in 1998, with the territorial redefinition of the state.

11: Philomena Mullen (1999) 'On Being Black, Irish and a Woman', *Women's Studies Review* 6, p.45.

12: Douglas Riach (1973) 'Blacks and Blackface on the Irish Stage, 1830-60', *Journal of American Studies*, vol. 7, no. 3, p.241.

13: Susan Gubar (1997) *Racechanges: White Skin, Black Face in American Culture* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press), p.55.

14: Michael Rogin (1994) '"Democracy and Burnt Cork": The End of Blackface and the Beginning of Civil Rights', *Representations* 46, p.2.

15: Louise Ryan (2002) *Gender, Identity and the Irish Press*, 1922-1937: Embodying the Nation (Lewiston, Queeston & Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press), p.50. Myrtle Hill (2003) *Women in Ireland. A Century of Change* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press), p.106.

16: Ryan, p.183.

17: Jim Smyth (1993) 'Dancing, Depravity and All That Jazz: The Public Dancehalls Act of 1935', *History Ireland*, Summer, p.54.

18: Paul Delany (2003) 'D.P. Moran and The Leader: Writing an Irish Ireland Through Partition', *Eire-Ireland*, no. 38.

Thanks to Maria Azambuja for the account of the casting session for 'ethnic' extras in Dublin.

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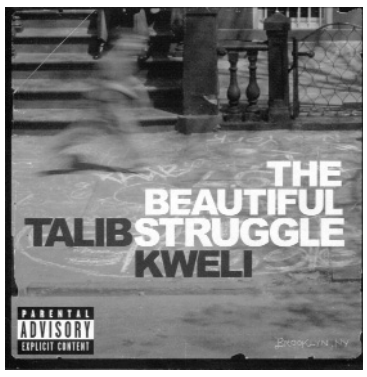
Beautiful Struggles and Gangsta Blues

Tom Jennings



'Life is a beautiful struggle / People search through the rubble / For a suitable hustle / Some people using their noodle / Some people using their muscle / Some people put it all together / Make it fit like a puzzle'

Talib Kweli, 'I Try'

'I'm tired of the hunger I see on people's faces / Tired of the animosity between the races / Tired of corruption in high and low places ... / Maybe life ain't as bad as it seems / But if dreaming is the best I can do / Then I'll be dreaming my whole life through'

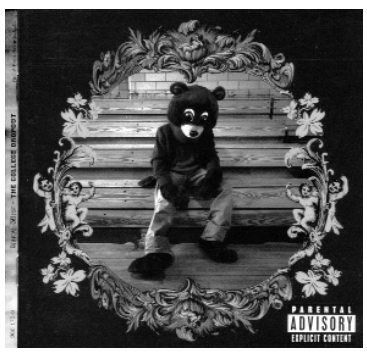
Tanya Stephens, 'What A Day'

In many ways 2004 has been one of the worst years in living memory, for all sorts of depressingly familiar reasons in the fields of politics, economics and the sheer ballooning scale of human misery and suffering. Things in the sphere of the mass media have also been far from hot—for popular music in particular given the relentless advance of vacant pretty pop idols and their attendant trivia masquerading as culture. But, scratch the apparently ubiquitous naffness of surface, and a surprisingly rich texture comes to light—with, for example, some of the most outstanding mainstream releases of recent times in all regions of the Black Atlantic rap/R&B/reggae nexus appearing in the course of this benighted year.[1] The fact that such intelligent, troubling, uplifting, hard-hitting, heart-warming, honest and challenging material can coexist with widespread popular appeal in musically sophisticated, exciting and imaginative formats is testament to the creativity and persistence of its makers as well as the appetites of sizeable publics of all ages and backgrounds.

The Low Down

One noticeable trend from the grass-roots has been a welcome re-emphasis on dance and the party—understood as a local, community occurrence rather than the favoured corporate option of the stadium megaconcert. Younger UK generations may have spent teenage years in the rave and jungle scenes but were deeply, if subliminally, influenced by the parental record collections too—of soul and reggae for example. Now they turn to their other love—the hip-hop they've also grown up with—out of a desire to connect with wider audiences (and possibly earn a living); and DIY and independent labels are progressing along a slow but steady learning curve inspired by the US experience of playing the majors' game without losing all autonomy.

Across the Atlantic, the economic and cultural power of the diversified market for R&B and rap is well-developed, and its cultural practices more routinely recuperated. The production processes of digital sonic design are wholly integrated into the compositional complexity of music which—as with reggae—prioritises combinations of vocal layers (spoken and/or sung lyrics and choruses), but whose origins sit squarely in dance music.[2] The most recent and wildly successful phenomenon here is the synthesised Deep South minimalism of Atlanta party hip-hop, exemplified in Lil' Jon's anthemic 'Get Low' and double album *Crunk Juice*. The precursors of this lowest common denominator (and no worse for it) approach, however, are more varied. When copyright holders increasingly interfered with and suppressed hip-hop's original sampling and repetition of broken beats in the 1990s, further fascinating and fruitful paradigm shifts ensued: Dr Dre's G-Funk meticulously manipulates instrumental samples and studio orchestration; Timbaland's hypnotically sultry bass and percussion alchemy highlights organic recorded fragments;[3] and the genius of the Neptunes creates compelling stripped-bare synthetic beats capable of resonating with virtually any style known to humanity.



Quality Quirks

Together with the classic NY breakbeat structure and along with the slower jazz-inflected arrangements associated with Philadelphia production and nu-soul, this vastly expanded hip-hop palette has facilitated the reincorporation of musical and cultural traditions that its artists have long aspired to. Now, with the twin leverage of commercial success and (relatively) independent status, hip-hop is itself overflowing into other genres. Discounting Common's misfiring tribute to 1960s psychedelia (*Electric Circus)*, Atlanta's Outkast have led the way, fusing Southern States soul and funk with Big Beat and the camp, irony and rhythms of disco in *Speakerboxx/The Love Below* (2003); *Fear Of A Mixed Planet* from Shock G[4] reimagines both the music and the planetary humanism of George Clinton; Mos Def falters in his quest to blend raw electric blues with rap in the disappointing *The New Danger*; and, hooking up with various hip-hop guests, Zap Mama's *Ancestry in Progress* is a beautiful rendering of African vocal styles and 'World Music' in bluesy, soulful clothing.

First class honours for innovation, though, go to Chicago's Kanye West—already a sought-after hit-making producer signed to Jay-Z's Roc-A-Fella—whose *College Dropout* breaks new ground for fun. Accelerating classic soul vocal samples is not itself unique,[5] but West is particularly clever in mobilising them to suit a range of tempos and themes, and his rhythmic design perfectly matches the vocals. His concept album exploits the theme of education to attack the whole panoply of official and unofficial institutions which reproduce economic, cultural and social domination. His insightful and very witty lyrics reveal personal ambivalence, and the passion, pain and hope which persist in the face of the blight of consumerism and the damaging dishonesties of liberal and ghetto aspiration, mainstream politics and religion. Meanwhile, the sheer brilliance of the arrangements transcends the weakness of his MC voice—as does the raft of ranking guests.

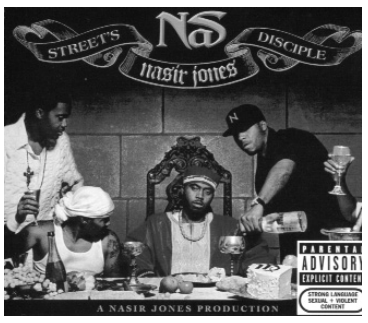
Highlights of Low Lives

Among those whose hip-hop credentials rest purely on their MC shoulders, though, there's nothing wrong with Jean Grae's vocal cadence—and her skills place her right up there with the cream of the wordplay crop.[6] Her 2004 output includes a second full length release, *This Week*,[7] which, although patchy in terms of production, displays exhilarating lyrical dexterity and range. Born in South Africa to jazz pianist Abdullah Ibrahim and singer Sathima Bea Benjamin, and having majored in singing at NY's La Guardia 'Fame' School, her frustrating travails in hip-hop have tempted retirement while also honing her hunger. Now with the option of joining the Philly hip-hop ensemble and live-instrument champions The Roots, her solo status will soar if only an appropriate recording and performing jigsaw puzzle can be assembled. *This Week* contains highly infectious germs; perhaps the next album *Jeanius* (wholly produced by the gifted 9th Wonder) will release a Grae epidemic.

If Jean Grae's breakthrough is overdue, Masta Ace has long been a hip-hop hero—in the legendary Juice Crew and then for two early '90s rap classics: *Slaughtahouse* and *Sittin' On Chrome*. The reflective 5th release, *A Long Hot Summer*, will be his final album because "it's time for me to live through other people".[8] Fortunately it's a superb bowing out, full of sonic poignancy, sober maturity and wisdom. The magical first single, 'Good Ol' Love' is possibly the most heartfelt affirmation of love for humanity, with absolutely no piety or sentimentality, you'll ever hear. And a deep, wry, affection for the warts-and-all potential of lower class guts shines through Ace's *Summer* (i.e. his young adulthood)—with a passionate and honest understanding of the misguided choices we all make in conditions we cannot control, and their ramifications for all of our karmas. In an ideal rap memoir, the consistently excellent guests and producers are privileged to pay tribute.

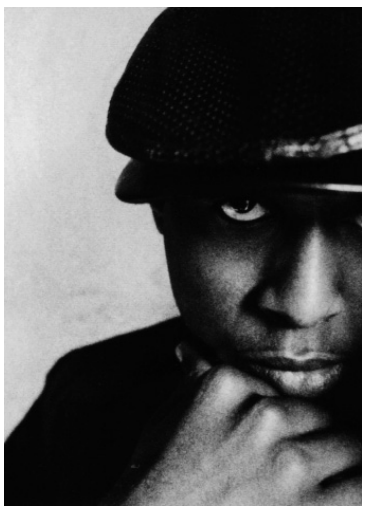
Nas is something of a veteran, too, but while also more seasoned he's stayed angry, sustaining an output of cutting edge ghetto hip-hop since the zenith of *Illmatic* (1994). His subsequent work has often suffered critically—largely through a persistent misunderstanding of his vision. The project has always been to chronicle, critique and overcome through musical poetry—mobilising as medium and metaphor his own responses and resonances—the existential anguish arising from the material and social reality of his people. *Street's Disciple*, the new double album, continues and in fact transcends prior achievements by more fully approaching a synthesis of personal and political spirit. Over throbbing beats he spits fury at the electoral charade, the damage done by the domestic and New World Orders, and the complacent stupidities of media stars and fantasy lifestyles. Suggestively interspersed with more melodic arrangements, allegories of sin and crime (passion, money, sex, violence, drugs, relationships) culminate in his impending marriage[9] offered as redemption. Nothing is

resolved; as in life—which *Street's Disciple* is a magnificent representational slice of.[10]



Revolutionary and Gangsta?

Despite the depth of lyrical talent and personal exploration all of these MCs express, however, the political consciousness in their work is, at best, confused. To compensate, and with explicit historical and political analysis, Dead Prez' album *Revolutionary But Gangsta* impressively showcases M1 and Stic.man's straight talking and powerful beats—as in their previous work.[11] But even better for that elusive combination of individual and collective consciousness in 2004 hip-hop is undoubtedly Talib Kweli's *The Beautiful Struggle*.[12] This album shifts current urban music gears with sought-after producers and guest vocalists queuing up in support—showing why so many hip hop fans name-check Kweli as simply the best.[13] While an internet leak of unmastered versions backfired—since the remixes are even better—his uncompromising radical politics and fierce lyrical prowess embody a refusal to kowtow to commercial agendas.[14] And if his vocal timbre lacks variety and depth and the delivery has difficulty capturing conversational idiom, the direct thematic and musical address to the grass-roots remains resolute.



What's really special is that the social and political implications arising from everyday life, society and history are broached and dissected with effortless aplomb—never self-righteous, patronising, or preaching. His honest, deeply personal perspective probes ambiguity, conflict, and human fallibility by acknowledging his own mistakes, confusions and limitations. Measuring your insights and experiences against those of people around you and your/their culture and traditions facilitates the avoidance of moral posturing and sophistry, narcissistic self-aggrandisement, and all the other simplistic stupidities and dangerous duplicities that plague political philosophies and practices (not to mention rap).

Instead a pragmatic ethic stitches the personal to political (without reducing one to the other) with no hint of hierarchy or superiority. Anger, sadness and determination are present and correct along with exuberance, spirituality (irrespective of religion) and all the productive varieties of love in a mature race-, gender- and class-consciousness. Alternately (or simultaneously) angry and joyful, encouraging solidarity and direct action, Kweli regularly advocates revolution—seeing the beauty in struggle from its prefiguring of the results (a.k.a. 'creating a new world in the shell of the old'). For seriously pleasurable, street-level, contemporary music throbbing with passion, intelligence and integrity, Talib Kweli remains a beacon in US hip-hop.

Grime Pays UK

British hip-hop too has had outstanding ambassadors for a while, without breaking out of partly self-imposed shadows. Now finally maturing into a genuine art form in its own right, highly distinctive figureheads abound. Among 2004's notable releases were Tommy Evans' politically acute *New Year's Revolutions*, and the scattershot stand-up comedy of Pitman's *It Takes A Nation Of Tossers*.[15] However, Skinnyman is probably the most talented UK rap lyricist and performer yet. Pushing roughly past industry indifference and the self-indulgent adolescent arrogance of many peers, his first full-length album, *Council Estate of Mind*, presents an autobiographical odyssey structured around dialogue from the renowned television film *Made In Britain*.[16] But rather than rehearsing yet another earnest wake-up call to the liberal middle classes, Skinny shows instead how the hardest of hard times can generate an astonishing degree of rebellious imagination, positivity and persistence—valuable resources in countering depression, self-hatred and sociopathy, but leading to neither conformist respectability nor resignation to domination. With vocal style and philosophy formed in a West Indian neighbourhood childhood in Leeds, the reggae influence is echoed in musical production, with a prevailing mood of laid-back hip-hop reflecting the tenor of the lyrics.

Skinnyman's single-minded intention to shine in music—putting in enormous amounts of work and with widespread acclaim from jungle, garage, grime and hip-hop enthusiasts, but hitherto without financial support—was preceded by years of exclusion from school, and repeatedly interrupted since by time inside for dealing herbal cannabis. This puts him in a good position to explore the marginalisation of the underclass and the neo-slavery of the prison system. All the while the lyrics ooze humility and warmth towards the communities which have nurtured him—while fully aware of their and his own shortcomings. Though too modest to make such claims for himself, he is a worthy ghetto griot with skills to rival the best in the genre.

Meanwhile, the British drum and bass renaissance continues to feed hip-hop. UK garage exploded Ms Dynamite, The Streets, Craig David and sundry So Solid Crew cohorts into the mainstream, and now the roughneck exponents of Grime are stepping up. Both subgenres showed love to those like Skinnyman in temporary exile from rap, and it's clearly a reciprocal process. Dizzee Rascal led the way back with a strange cockney speed-squawk which, when slowed down enough to make sense of, revealed prodigious MC skills. And judging by her debut, *Diamond in the Dirt*, Shystie not only has that competence to spare, but things worth saying as well. Equally at home in hip-hop, R&B or the mania of junglism, she revels in elaborate spiralling lyrics which are, as yet, unfocused while still in thrall to a wounded teenage ego. Even so, the underclass feminism of 'Woman's World', the contemplative, gospel-infused 'Can't Play' and 'Somedayz', and the singles 'One Wish' and 'Make It Easy' bode very well indeed. Grittier angles are also handled with complete conviction and ease—hinting that if she develops more ease with herself, Shystie could be sensational.

Not-so-new and Nu Soul

Two other UK debuts of 2004 sprang from slightly older heads. Veteran MC Rodney P (ex-London Posse), delivered *The Future*—an accomplished, languorously soulful set with lyrical flows built on dub basslines. Even better is Estelle's exuberant *The 18th Day*—a long-awaited treat for those who've witnessed her fearsome, committed and effortlessly top-ranking MC spots on guest verses for those brave enough to host a strong woman who suffers fools gladly, not.[17] But if her lyrics can blow away the best, her singing style has that rare raw quavering emotionality that can make you weep. Mix in passionate intelligence, an activist's ardour and a very determined self-confidence, and you get pure inspirational soul. The album is full of highlights, with utterly authentic personal biography more interesting for eschewing self-indulgence. The arrangements are a surprising bonus, with up-tempo gospel flourishes, bass-heavy dance beats, and a deep love of hip-hop, funk and R&B breaking out all over the place in exemplary fashion.[18]

For 'soul' more conventionally understood, these shores could also muster a solid *Affirmation* of Beverley Knight's diva larynx,[19] and a second album (*Thank You*) by young pretendress Jamelia—whose catwalk looks imply the adage about exceptions and rules, as her musical potential is considerable. In America Angie Stone's latest release, *Stone Love*, has some decent tunes to show off her thrilling style—but far more filler than the first two; and Anthony Hamilton's debut *Comin' From Where I'm From* reveals both a depth of secular spirituality and a rich soul voice to rival Jaheim or D'Angelo. For pure joy, though, *Beautifully Human* is simply majestic. Equally at home soaring acrobatic with Minnie Ripperton, earthy as Kitt, melancholic as Nina Simone, or whimsically bad(u) like Erykah, Jill Scott demonstrates nu-soul's unique capacity to quantum leap beyond all standards. Any one of 'Golden', 'Bedda At Home', 'Family Reunion' or 'Rasool' would make an album on its own; together they are breathtaking. Apparently she's had a good time in her life since blowing up with *Who Is Jill Scott?* (2000)[20]—but if *Beautifully Human* is the harvest of happiness, heaven knows what will crop up when she gets the Blues …

Reggae of the Decade

… Speaking of which, for my money, Tanya Stephens' *Gangsta Blues* is not only the best album of 2004, but also one of the most significant releases of the dancehall era—extending and expanding the scope of what reggae can do in several unique directions simultaneously. This multiplicity of innovation is even more adventurous than Buju Banton's *Til Shiloh* (in relinquishing his prior nihilism), Capleton's *Prophecy* (in heights of production sophistication), or the similarly strong and ground-breaking work of, for example, Bounty Killer, Sizzla and Anthony B. And whereas other crossover attempts have had largely commercial motivations—abandoning Jamaica along with the generic conventions[21]—Stephens stays true to her St Mary's roots while excelling as riddim rider, lyricist, songwriter and social critic. All these forceful personality facets were already abundantly apparent from her previous singles and albums.[22] This time they're fully integrated into a thoroughly satisfying whole.

Throughout the set her gorgeous mesmerising contralto and consistently sharp poetics are seamlessly enriched by musical depth—looking forward via the lush production possibilities of dancehall and harking back to roots, dub, the blues and R&B heritage and the barefaced cheek of calypso.[23] The uninhibited humour of her sexual patter always favours female empowerment without degenerating into caricaturing either men or women,[24] yet the disappointments of romance never dampen her spirit. The intransigence of the material world and its politicians in allaying suffering come in for harsher, more pointed attention—but here too familiar cliches are avoided while the historical and class (as well as gender) awareness rings true and clear as a bell.

One tiny caveat with *Gangsta Blues* is that I'd

have lapped up more of the driving, pounding, bring-the-house-down grandstanding of her best party tunes.[25] But then, she's already been there and done that, better than anyone else, for a decade (apart from three years purgatory in the Swedish alternative rock wilderness!). In Tanya Stephens' own words: "If you want a collection of played-out singles—don't buy this album. If you want a bunch of recycled lyrics—don't buy this album. If you're looking for innovation and free flowing creative juices, prepare to be blown away"[26] … Fair enough; I was.

Notes

1. Those pictured constituting my 'Top Ten'.
2. See my 'Dancehall Dreams', *Variant* 20, 2004.
3. E.g. a stallion's whinny, signalling female phallic power in Missy Elliott's 'Hit Em Wit Da Hee'; an infant's chuckle, evoking the nurturance of love in Aaliyah's 'Are You That Sombody?'. Missy Elliott has recently pioneered the move back to simulated 'old school' party beats, using only synthesised basslines and percussion—starting with the 2001 single 'Get Ur Freak On'.
4. Prime joker of California's legendary Digital Underground, here critiquing both white racism and black nationalism (e.g. Public Enemy's *Fear of A Black Planet*).
5. 9th Wonder uses a similar technique with, if anything, even more haunting results—see his work for Jean Grae, Masta Ace and any number of others artists. Outstanding examples of voice manipulation in *College Dropout* include 'Spaceship', 'All Falls Down', 'Slow Jamz' and 'Jesus Walks'.
6. Not only having one of the best female flows ever—rivalling Roxanne Shante, Rah Digga, MC Lyte and Lauryn Hill—but potentially the level of poetic complexity, attack and attitude of a Nas, MF Doom, Jay-Z or Eminem. See, for example, *This Week's* 'Not Like Me', 'Supa Luv', 'Going Crazy' and 'Whatever'.
7. Plus the viciously apposite *The Grae Mixtape*—joshing a slew of hip-hop pretensions, including Jay-Z and Danger Mouse scavenging the Beatles (in *The Black Album* and *The Grey Album* respectively). Going for the thug jugular, the forthcoming *Jean Unit* mixtape further flays the fashion for gangster narcissism (as in 50 Cent's G-Unit). The previous releases are *Attack of the Attacking Things*, and *The Bootleg Of The Bootleg* EP.
8. From an interview in Philip Mlynar, 'His Masta's Voice', *Hip Hop Connection*, Jan/Feb 2005, pp.70-73. Now busy building his own M3 label, Ace emphasises that he'll continue to write and guest perform for others, as well as nurturing the flowering of newcomers—so thankfully his measured dulcet tones will not disappear from the ether altogether.
9. To R&B singer Kelis, who he woos with biographical tales of his overlong adolescence and excess as a pledge of present change and future growth—see, e.g. 'The Makings Of A Perfect B****', 'Getting Married' and 'No One Else In The Room'. And if the listener may occasionally cringe (perhaps with self-recognition)—well, that's part of the process.
10. Aided nobly, by production in tune with the concepts—a potted history of hip-hop over the period of Nas' career being made explicit in the track 'Unauthorized Biography of Rakim' (Nas' prime MC influence); and with valiant vocal support from Scarlett, Quan, Kelis, Emily—and jazz trumpeter Olu Dara (Nas' father) in 'Bridging the Gap's generational meeting of psyche-somas.
11. The superb *Let's Get Free* and two excellent mixtape CDs—*Turn Off The Radio* and *Get Free Or Die Tryin'*—the latter playing on 50 Cent's fashionable NY gangster rap nihilism in *Get Rich Or Die Tryin'*). Stic.man and M-1's latest release continues their hard-hitting juggling act—translating their political activism into commodity form without losing the plot or pandering to commercialism. According to M-1, "the critical part of revolutionary struggle is taking power out of the hands of people who stole it from us all these years and returning back those resources … a conscious worldwide struggle with decisive victory won in the area of defeating capitalism and imperialism". Or, to Stic.man, "Revolution is based on the victims of a certain society—government—that recognizes that they are being used and abused by the system and it's not in their best interest … seizing control over the institutions that are oppressing the people such as the court system, police department, military system and educational system all together. Food and all the things needed for life are being exploited and people recognize that you have to have control over these things, so revolution is the process in which you seize that power" (interview in www.thetalkingdrum.com/rbg.html).
12. Following the innovative underground hip-hop classic *Black Star* (with fellow Brooklyn MC Mos Def), the sublime jazz/blues/soulful *Reflection Eternal* (+ producer Hi-Tek), and *Quality's* powerful R&B/funk.
13. Including Jay-Z and 50 Cent—commercial superstars not often noted for their political acumen—as well as Nas.
14. Kweli doesn't object to piracy for those who can't pay, just lack of respect for half-finished art. Anyway, a bigger obstacle was the Beatles sample not being cleared on the fantastic 'Lonely People'. Even without this track, *The Beautiful Struggle* is strong from start to finish.
15. Another reference to Public Enemy, this time *It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back*.
16. Directed by Alan Clarke (1982); following Tim Roth's delinquent youth through an official 'system' whose callousness, hypocrisy and brutality inevitably produce a vicious anti-social thug. The album title refers to a benchmark for the ghetto poet MC—'New York State Of Mind' by Nas (from *Illmatic*)—and rather than Queensbridge, Skinnyman riffs on his travails in and around Finsbury Park, London. Standout cuts include 'Hayden', 'Love's Gone From The Streets', 'Life In My Rhymes', 'No Big Ting' and the title outro.
17. Noticeable in her part-embarrassed, part pissed-off, part-fatalistic acceptance of 'Best Newcomer' awards; and on the record in, for example, the impatience of 'Dance Bitch', the imperious 'Don't Talk', the urgent feel of 'Change Is Coming' and the urgings of 'Why Don't You?'.
18. Why 'Freedom' (featuring Talib Kweli)—b-side of second single 'Free'—was not included is a mystery. It would have been the pick of the album, both musically and lyrically. Estelle's voice is also on fine form in 'On And On', 'I Wanna Love You', and 'Free', and the lyrics are especially powerful in '1980', 'Hey Girl', 'Go Gone' and 'Gonna Win'.
19. Regrettably, record company shenanigans may be messing with Beverley once again—with an awful rock power ballad version of 'Come As You Are' released as first single. That's no way to treat a proverbial 'national treasure', now is it?
20. With material covering her round-the-way-girl youth; followed by a live double, *Experience*, showcasing her quest for maturity and justifiably emphasising her awesome stage presence.
21. Famous examples include Shabba Ranks and Patra. Beenie Man learned from their mistakes and maintains parallel careers in softer R&B overseas and hardcore ragga at home.
22. *Big Tings A Gwan*, *Too Hype* and *Rough Rider*. The Jamaican tradition is that a rapid turnover of single releases keeps a reggae artist hot. Tanya Stephens' hits since 1994 would fill several albums, any of which would likely be considered superior to all comers.
23. For down and dirty blues variations, hear especially the heart-rending 'Sound Of My Tears', the vicious 'The Other Cheek' the mournful 'What A Day' and the defiant 'I Am Woman'. Unusual twists on calypsoesque subjects can be found in 'Little White Lie' and 'Tek Him Back'.
24. Something which can't always be said of the most popular and celebrated female exponent of slackness—Lady Saw—whose own push for seriousness, the more spiritual *Give Me The Reason*, was largely ignored by the grass-roots. This may have been due to its relative lack of lyrical and musical imagination compared to the sheer magnetic power and commitment of *Gangsta Blues*.
25. Really only kicking in 'Boom Wuk', 'Good Ride', 'We A Lead', and especially in the lustful, wistful 'It's A Pity'—riding the old-school 'Doctor's Darlin' beat most familiar from Gregory Isaacs' 'Night Nurse'.
26. Quoted from the unusually accurate press release for *Gangsta Blues*.

Discography

DJ Tomcat's Top Ten 2004:

Gold: Tanya Stephens, *Gangsta Blues* (VP)

Silver: Talib Kweli, *The Beautiful Struggle* (Rawkus)

Bronze: Estelle, *The 18th Day* (V2)

Joints: Jean Grae, *This Week* (Babygrande)

Masta Ace: *A Long Hot Summer* (M3)

Nas: *Street's Disciple* (Ill Will/Columbia)

Jill Scott, *Beautifully Human: Words & Sounds Volume 2* (Hidden Beach)

Shystie: *Diamond in the Dirt* (Polydor)

SkinnyMan: *Council Estate of Mind* (Low Life)

Kanye West: *College Dropout* (Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam)

Others:

Aaliyah: 'Are You That Sombody?' (*I Care 4 U*, Blackground, 2003)

Buju Banton: *Til Shiloh* (Island, 1995)

Capleton: *Prophecy* (Universal, 1996)

Common: *Electric Circus* (Universal, 2003)

Danger Mouse: *The Grey Album* (2003)

Dead Prez: *Let's Get Free* (Sony, 2000); *Turn Off The Radio* (Holla Black, 2002); *Get Free Or Die Tryin'* (Boss Up, 2003); *Revolutionary But Gangsta* (Sony, 2004)

Missy Elliott: 'Hit Em Wit Da Hee' (*Supa Dup Fly*, Elektra, 1997); 'Get Ur Freak On' (*So Addictive*, Elektra, 2001)

Estelle: 'Freedom' (B-side of 'Free', V2, 2004)

Tommy Evans: *New Year's Revolutions* (YNR, 2004)

50 Cent: *Get Rich Or Die Tryin'* (Shady Records/Interscope, 2002)

Jean Grae: *Attack of the Attacking Things* (Third Earth, 2002); *The Bootleg Of The Bootleg* (EP, Babygande, 2003); *The Grae Mixtape* ([White], 2004); *Jeanius* (forthcoming); and *Jean Unit* (mixtape, forthcoming)

Anthony Hamilton: *Comin' From Where I'm From* (Arista, 2004)

Jamelia: *Thank You* (Parlophone, 2004)

Jay-Z: *The Black Album* (Roc-A-Fella, 2003)

Beverley Knight: *Affirmation* (Parlophone, 2004)

Talib Kweli: *Black Star* (with Mos Def, Rawkus, 1998); *Reflection Eternal* (with Hi-Tek, Rawkus, 2000); *Quality* (Rawkus, 2002)

Lady Saw: *Give Me The Reason* (Diamond Rush, 1996)

Lil' Jon & The East Side Boyz: 'Get Low' (*Kings Of Crunk*, TVT, 2002); *Crunk Juice* (TVT, 2004)

Masta Ace Incorporated: *Slaughtahouse* (Atlantic, 1993); *Sittin' On Chrome* (Delicious Vinyl, 1995)

Mos Def: *The New Danger* (Universal, 2004)

Nas: *Illmatic* (Columbia, 1994)

Outkast: *Speakerboxx/The Love Below* (Arista, 2003)

Pitman: *It Takes A Nation Of Tossers* (Son, 2004)

Public Enemy: *It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back* (Def Jam, 1988); *Fear Of A Black Planet* (Def Jam,1990)

Rodney P, *The Future* (Riddim Killa, 2004)

Jill Scott: *Who Is Jill Scott: Words & Sounds Vol. 1* (Hidden Beach, 2000); *Experience* (Hidden Beach, 2002)

Shock G: *Fear Of A Mixed Planet* (SG, 2004)

Tanya Stephens: *Big Tings A Gwan* (X-Rated, 1994); *Too Hype* (VP, 1997); *Ruff Rider* (VP, 1998).

Angie Stone: *Stone Love* (J Records, 2004)

Zap Mama: *Ancestry in Progress* (Luaka Bop, 2004)

Rappin in a Loki
Scottish HipHop

In December 2004 I met up with Loki to have a chat about his music and the Scottish HipHop scene, Kris The Lyricist was also there. The following text from the conversation/interview has been transcribed/tampered with by Tomas Rev.

Martha Brophy : I've seen you live a couple of times, how did you start up in the Glasgow HipHop scene?

Darren Garvey (aka Loki): I was always into art, drawing. I did a bit of acting with Red Index Productions (shout to Kevin Devine) while at school and did A grade drama. In the house I would make up dance tapes, mostly sampling. My dad suggested writing a hook, some lyrics, so I did this story about a boy in school called GuMBo who got bullied, 'GuMBo's Balls'—which was quite humorous, got a laugh, the kind of encouragement I needed. Red Index were producing a soundtrack and I offered some of my stuff to David Burnett, but it went nowhere. Kevin Devine gave me a contact, for me to take my music further, and that turned out to be Big Div from Kriminal Recordz. We did a demo which included 'It Seems Like Only Yesterday' a track that goes down well in the city.

I would write in the house, practise, rehearse; tighten up the lines, write, practise and rehearse, so when I went out on the Open Mike Circuit I could deliver—in a professional manner. Those in the scene know what I mean. You are judged on this circuit by audience approval to the lyrics, your style, delivery, timing, your (mis)demeanour. I would also get involved in the 'Battling Rap' scene. This is a kind of rappers contest, live on stage—trading verbals, head-to-head. The audience decides the winner. Loki is the name quality is delivered. I need to stress the importance of coming to the mike in a professional way—practising, rehearsing (to be good), writing tight, concentrating on each syllable. Hone the talent because mike-time is real-time. I'm hungry for it.

MB: What's this 'Spitting in Cyphers' thing about?

DG: Well it's another part of Rap's underground city. In these 'Cypher Circles' rappers, mc's would gather and just rap in turns, on all kinds of things; routines; appreciation's; mentions, they'd have the back-pack, the hoody, a smoke and attitude.

MB: So Open Mike Circuit would be where?

DG: A few places—Strawberry Fields was probably the main one for me, Stereo, 13th Note—the place I've played the most in Glasgow, Jaspers, at Hamish's Hoose in Paisley, and at the The Arches I supported 'A Guy Called Gerald'.

MB: I saw you at the 13th Note at a PowerCut productions gig for the Clyde Built album and again at Stereo. I was totally amazed by the lyrics, the immediacy and sound—rapping in a Glaswegian accent was like wow, what is this!!!!

DG: This is my style. The subject matter—life in Glasgow schemes has a universal urban message. Rapping Glasgow style is honest, true, it reflects my personality and it gives meaning, real meaning to experience as lived right now. How it sounds is an intrinsic part of the Rap. This is why I work on every line, syllable, to get it right—it's in your face.

MB: It sounds like there's an audience out there looking for this...have you done any recordings?

DG: Yeah, my first album was 'Welcome to the Ninth World', Splash Productions, September 2003, and coming soon 'Friendly World', Kriminal Recordz—it was recorded at Urban Studios with Big Div in the chair with Casual 7, Woodchopper DoJo, aided and abetted by my hype-man, Kris The Lyricist, who is also with the Kriminal crew.

Kris The Lyricist: I back Loki up on vocals and raps. I keep the hype up while he grabs a few deep breaths. I also do my own stuff as well. I like to think of my stuff as quirky, humorous and serious—I hope it reflects my personality. 2005 is the year of the professional so do the 'work out' or 'get cut out'

DG: Yeah, we can step up to anyone.

MB: 'Friendly World' is coming out soon, where can you get it?

DG: We are looking at a date near the the end of February 2005 for the album and the single 'Sunshine and Short Skirts' on the Kriminal Recordz label. The single should have a few bonus tracks not on Friendly World, available from places like Fopp, Avalanche Records, Rub a Dub, y'know independent shops. You can get the info on the website.

MB: I was about to ask about the website.

DG: Well I have my own site www.misterlowkey.moonfruit.com

MB: The website's really good, loads of information but the music hits you first.

DG: Yeah that was a deliberate ploy to immediately get your attention, it's like the 'money shot' thing—presenting the music comes first and foremost. It's been up since July 2003, there's been about 9000 hits. It's a great way to keep in touch with our fan base, let people know when we're playing, if we're releasing anything.

MB: So the albums, are they cd or vinyl?

DG: Friendly World will be on vinyl. Vinyl is crucial, especially when we're playing live, it gives the DJs material to spin for us MCs. The old school way was about the DJ, he was the man and the MC was just there to rap over the beats.

MB: Have you ever thought about Pirate Radio?

DG : It's not an option really. We can't afford to have our equipment confiscated. The net has changed everything as well—there's loads of radio stations. I'll mention two—radio magnetic www.radiomagnetic.com and Sub City Radio, www.subcity.org.

MB: To get back to Scottish/Glaswegian HipHop. Would you tone down your lyrics to get a wider audience.

DG: I'm very much aware of this 'sell-out' tag if I get to promote my music on the UK HipHop scene, I would in certain respects 'play the game' but I maintain the philosophy of 'loyalties over royalties'. You can only tone down somethings, it's about a rawness—say what you want to say, which is honest, is me, is the West of Scotland. People generally deliver in an American accent because that's the way it's heard. The Proclaimers were distinct because of their 'Scottishness'. I'm not about TARTAN BISCUIT TIN, shooting haggis aficionados. I live in an urban, underground city whose sounds have as much validity as London, NY, Paris—and if they don't like it TUFF.

MB: How do you make a living!!!!!

DG: At the moment I'm living in Support Accommodation for Young Homeless People—it sounds bad but it's ok—I've got my own flat basically. I do the occasional radio slot for BBC Radio. I also work in homework clubs which involves 10 year olds in schools—so when they get to my age (20) they will be major rappers. But I'm a full-time Rapper—I'm hungry for mike-time; that's the life, I've got something to say—no back up, go for it—full on. Still spitting in cyphers for y'r life.

MB: I noted the New Buzz stuff on your website. Are you giving mentions to people on the scene.

DG: The thing is I want to give big respect to: Baltik, Can Dan, Skandal, Kids that be Sick, Gard Feez, Elixir, Gasp and the Easy Rider Graffiti Crew.

MB: Have you ever thought of writing a book?

DG: I would love to put my lyrics in the cd cover—sooner or later I'll be able to do that. But as far as doing a book is concerned that's in the Lap of The Gods.

MB: I'm going to the bar, does anyone want a drink? Don't let me stop you talking.

Kris: Well I would like to plug the album...

Loki: www.misterlowkey.moonfruit.com

Kriminal Recordz: www.kriminal.co.uk

MAJOR THREAT: www.majorthreat.tk

RESPEK BA : www.respekba.tk

The Map: The Nation waits

Leigh French

On 01/04/2004, the Scottish Arts Council (SAC) web site ambitiously announced:

"A new magazine to promote the *strength* and *diversity* of Scotland's contemporary visual arts scene will soon appear on newsstands worldwide.

"Thanks to a three-year investment from the Scottish Arts Council, totalling £170,000, the publishers of Scotland's leading arts and entertainment magazine The List will launch a new visual arts magazine at the end of the summer.

"Editorially independent, the magazine will be in a 'compact' format (similar to the women's monthly Glamour magazine) and published four times a year. The first issue is expected in September." [Emphasis added in all quotes.]

Lurching from a stress on its editorial independence, at a time when there was no editor, to institutional collective responsibility, we're told:

"The magazine forms part of the Scottish Arts Council's Visual Arts team's aim to raise the profile of contemporary visual art through a range of initiatives..."

The magazine-to-be was similarly announced in The List at the same time, under an untitled installation shot of Douglas Gordon's work, "at the Hayward Gallery, London", stressing its location over its title. Acknowledging sustained criticism of the SAC from practitioners through to the Scottish Executive, the "fiercely independent" List came to the defence of its new found bed fellow, as they put it. We're also told that "ads for the post of editor will appear in The List ... as well as in The Guardian". It didn't make the Summer or subsequent Autumn announcement, but is now expected to appear in late February 2005, under the title of The Map.

The map is not the territory—it is rather a tool of intentionality, or a suitable lie

We need to know how the culmination of over a decade of SAC Visual Arts and Lottery spending on research, surveys, focus groups, consultations arrived at this 'market solution'? Just how many consultations have there been to address the perceived lack of critical writing and publishing on the visual arts in Scotland, and at what cost?

As a recipient of project funding Variant has a stake in the allocation of SAC funds. To briefly plot the situation: Variant first launched in 1984 and in 1990 received SAC funding for a consultancy by Nick Spice of London Review of Books to assess the viability of SAC funding it. The report ultimately hinged around a business plan where SAC support would decrease over time—this is something that would form the premise of SAC core funding of magazines. On the back of this, Variant were 'teased' into applying for SAC support, leading to the eventual withdrawal of revenue funding in 1994.

Variant relaunched in its current format in 1996, received stops and starts of SAC Visual Arts project funding but resisted attempts for yet another 'business planning exercise'. In 2002, Graham Berry, Director of the Scottish Arts Council, set Andrew Brighton (then Tate Modern) the remit of an "objective appraisal" of all aspects of Variant. The resulting independent report was 'glowing', yet to our knowledge nothing of substance came of it either.

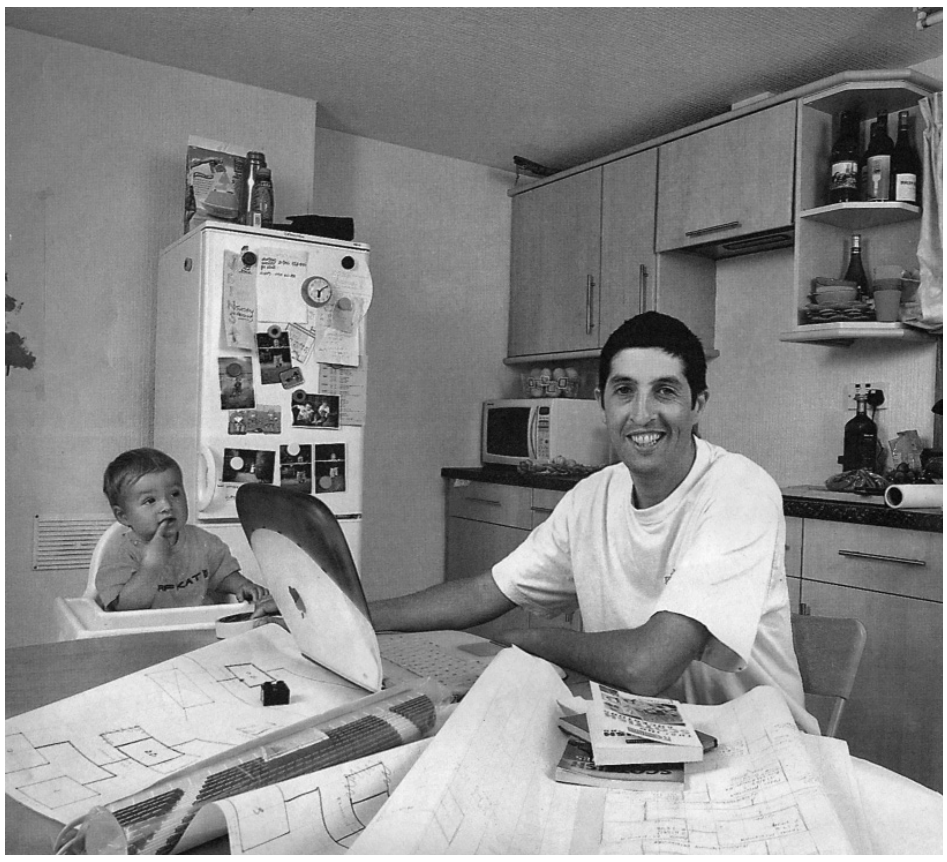
From 1995, the SAC Visual Arts' favoured term for avoiding talking about publications became 'Critical Writing'. This was elevated to an SAC priority in the absence of what Visual Arts perceived to be an arts magazine, at least one explicitly reflective of their own world view or departmental interests. To this effect, in 1996 SAC funded a Scottish Supplement to the Irish arts magazine Circa, "distributed by the British Council to embassies and consulates worldwide"—a privilege not extended to others.

The Arts Council of Wales undertook a review of arts publications across the UK in October 2001. At the same time in Scotland a 'Critical Writing' consultation process started, from which significant critical commentators were initially excluded.

Sculpture Matters was the newsletter of the Scottish Sculpture Trust, started in 1997. In 1999 it undertook subscriptions as "a biannual magazine about sculpture in Scotland". By 2000 it had dropped its explicit 'Sculpture' remit to become Matters and provide a "broader appeal to artists working across media", with the appointment of guest editors. The Trust received £5,000 in 2000/01 from Visual Arts to commission "a lead curator/writer to work with the magazine... for one year." The Trust then received £4,000 in April 2002 from Literature "towards publishing issues 11 - 13 of Matters magazine". Encouraged by the SAC, the Trust had undergone a substantial feasibility study for Matters. In December 2002, an £11,000 grant was made "towards the cost of the forthcoming issue of 'Matters' magazine". The Spring 2003, issue 16, of Matters was the first of two to be guest edited by Kate Tregaskis (formerly Director of Still Gallery, Edinburgh) and Malcolm Dickson (founding editor of Variant and Director of StreetLevel Photoworks gallery, Glasgow). Having pursued SAC, additional cash is understood to have been offered for the second issue, which set out to coincide with 'Zenomap', the premiere of the Scottish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, June 2003. Touted by the SAC at the Biennale as its magazine of choice and with a recognisable pattern of encouragement, all the signs seemed to point in Matters' favour, but this was to be the last issue. Matters was caught up in the forced closure of the Scottish Sculpture Trust and the creation of another SAC franchise, one for a "national body for the development of public art in Scotland"—bizarrely, one of whose remits is to "help develop critical writing on public art through publications and other means", something which Matters was clearly doing.

Product magazine has had a similarly precarious existence of Lottery and annual project funding, with the exception of being under the auspices of the Literature Department, so in 2003 they received a more practical £18,000 "towards increasing the audience for Product by use of cover mounts, advertising and point-of-sale materials".

In 2002 SAC Visual Arts commissioned market research from ScotInform, an Edinburgh-based market research company, to determine demand for a visual arts magazine "that would promote contemporary practice from Scotland within an international context" and "meet the aims of [SAC's] Visual Arts strategy".[1]



ScotInform were also commissioned by SAC to update the one year old Arts Council of Wales' review of arts publications, with the inclusion of four other titles.

This was followed by an 'Indicative Business Plan' by Richard Gerald Associates (RGA) Consulting Ltd, Edinburgh, who describe themselves as "consultants specialising in hospitality, leisure, tourism and the arts". They are currently undertaking a best practice Digitisation Impact Assessment Study for Scottish Museums Council, and have provided "finance and business planning" to... National Theatre for Scotland; a Marketing plan for An Lanntair Arts Centre, Stornoway; redevelopment feasibility study for Corran Halls, Oban; an Arts marketing consortium viability assessment, Dundee City Council; marketing plan, Edinburgh International Film Festival; business planning, Edinburgh

Below left & Below: 'At home with ... Roderick Buchanan', 'Family affair', 31/8/03, *Scotland on Sunday*, *atHome* magazine. "Roderick Buchanan and Jaqueline Donachie are living in a croft beside the Glenfiddich distillery—and it has been a welcome break from the city"

Fiona Bradley, Director of Fruitmarket Gallery won the Art Category of the 2004 Glenfiddich Spirit of Scotland Awards—developed to recognise individuals who are leading the way in various aspects of Scottish culture.

Scotland on Sunday "joined forces with Glenfiddich®, the world's premier single malt Scotch whisky, to give you the chance to vote in the Glenfiddich® Spirit of Scotland Awards."

International Book Festival; marketing strategy, The Piping Centre, Glasgow; Arts, cultural and conference review and development, the Stirling Initiative, Macroberts Arts Centre; tourism case studies and advertising impact analysis, Scottish Arts Council; policy Review and Strategic Recommendations, Arts and Older People, Scottish Arts Council; Pilot Project Review, Arts and Older People, Scottish Arts Council; Marketing Audit and Strategic Plan, Scottish Poetry Library; Strategic Business Planning for Advancement Funding, Lemon Tree Theatre Trust Aberdeen; Strategic Business Planning for Advancement Funding, Pitlochry Festival Theatre...

ScotInform presented 'Selected Information' from RGA's findings in their drawing up of their final task for SAC, a 'Visual Arts Magazine: Indicative Business Plan'. The "overall conclusions from the research" are grossly obvious and outline the need for a magazine whose "aims and objectives" must carefully match SAC's own. It conflates promoting the 'very *best* contemporary visual art', with '*comprehensive* and informed coverage' while never questioning the nature of these terms or their mutual exclusivity, or how what's presented as the unproblematic arbitration of taste has replaced any discourse around what *might* constitute progressive cultural practice.

Similarly, they point out that "the magazine is unlikely to be self-financing and will require an element of [public] subsidy" but which should be reduced over time. However, the Report states that the "forecast for sales figures for the new magazine [1,500] mean it will not be self-financing, especially given the requirement for a high quality publication." So just what is the role of the private sector here?

These documents were drawn together—along with a June 2002 'Visual Arts Magazine for Scotland: Market Research Study' and the SAC's 'A Call for Tenders: An opportunity to establish and deliver a Visual Arts Magazine for Scotland'—to form the information pack that prospective tenderers for the new magazine received.

Throughout ScotInform's report is the clear expression of a lack of information on the part of SAC with regard to art publications' distribution and subscriptions—it includes tautological classics such as "...unless distribution channels were available the magazine was unlikely to reach an important target segment". They suggest a two-fold response: "The key issue of distribution should be addressed either separately or as part of the audience development work *currently* being conducted by the Scottish Arts Council"—more consultation leading to a "planned distribution policy". The "audience development work currently being conducted" is reflective of real and perceived sales / distribution problems with the SAC Visual Arts flagship galleries' own publishing, which has clearly raised concern about the new magazine. But the real unidentified problem is the market driven policy itself—that the Scottish Executive and SAC see the visual arts as a marketplace phenomenon driving a creative and competitive Scotland.

The introductory paragraph of the audience development work—SAC Visual Arts 2004 publishers' questionnaire, 'Distribution and Marketing of Visual Arts Publications in Scotland'—sets out the millstones of this further round of consultation:

"In 2002 the Scottish Arts Council undertook a survey to identify the issues which predicated against effective distribution of visual arts publications in Scotland. This had come out of *discussions* on support for publications and critical writing. A *focus group* discussed the findings and agreed that a *research report* should be commissioned to investigate possible initiatives to support development, test these with the sector, prioritise and cost them.

"Edinburgh College of Art took the lead on this, with the support of a *steering group*. The research was funded through the Audience Development lottery fund, SAC. This research is intended to complete and cost that unfinished research." Visual Arts Officer Sue Pirnie resigned her post at SAC to then be employed by them as a consultant to take up and finish the very research that she implemented and oversaw as Arts Officer. Top of the list of proposals for development from her assessment of the 'research to date' is "a 2 year *pilot post* with marketing expertise to complement the galleries' expertise—to co-ordinate initiatives and provide support." This is the consolidation of power in one post as "a one-stop contact", accompanied by a "*steering group* to monitor progress and assist with selections and sector expertise". But what exactly there will be to monitor is questionable, as only a "core group of gallery/publishers [are] to be supported to develop the infrastructure", and this access is to be based upon "*commitment* to publication, *quality* of past publications, and *support* for the initiative". The elusive, exclusive terms may be familiar to those that have dealt with the department over the years. It gets better though, only a "'package' of visual arts publications from the core group [are] to be promoted once or twice a year—to reviewers, editors, and international curators." So not even the whole "8-12 publishers", but only a choice selection, and then only once or twice a year!

The justification for yet more consultation omits to mention that the market-driven solutions fostered within the flagship galleries are failing. The solution: the misuse of public funds to support the commercial activities of a narrow clique.

So we don't really know how many consultations there have been, at what cost, or how many more there are likely to be—we might not actually be allowed to know.

The Freedom of Information Act came into full effect on 1st January 2004. According to the SAC website it was "designed to promote a culture of openness and accountability...by providing people with rights of access to the information held by them." Importantly, "It is intended that by granting rights to information under publication schemes, people will better understand how public authorities carry out their duties, why they make the decisions they do and how they spend public money." It also stresses that "there are exemptions to the information the Council has to provide" including "where information is of a commercially sensitive nature."

Variant has requested from SAC Visual Arts (a number of times) the ScotInform update of the Arts Council of Wales' review of arts publications. SAC did not circulate the update with the tender documents to prospective bidders, despite being included by ScotInform as an Appendix. It was described by SAC as 'restricted information'. Initially not being able to locate the document, we're now told it's being looked at by the SAC's Freedom of Information Officer.

Charm offensive

In July 2003, we were informed that the SAC was inviting tenders for start up (3 year) funding "in the region of £200,000" for A Visual Arts Magazine for Scotland, "based on market research". Confirmation of putting in a tender was to be in by 31st July. Despite the tight time frame for comfirmation—one month—the tender documents weren't available, as there were 'still things to be ironed out' by the unheard of 'Corporate Department'. Documents were eventually received on the 16th, confirmation had been moved to 4th August, with a conciliatory officious deadline for tenders of 9am 15th September.

From ScotInform's 'Indicative Business Plan Review of Options', the SAC's bullet pointed 'Call for Tenders', and the Corporate Departments' crafting of the finalised versions, the only outcome was going to be a 'new' magazine with the backing of private capital.

We don't know who actually did bid, but along with Matters it is believed, amongst others, AN, Circa, and Tate magazine. Variant did not show an interest or put in a bid, nor did Product.

Tregaskis and Dickson put in a tender to acknowledge and pick up on the legacy of Matters, which may have been the only other Scotland-based bid to make the short-list. ScotInform's 'Review of Options' identified Matters as "the only publication in the review that offers the potential to re-develop on a broader basis..." with "potential for Matters to become viable and this is worth exploring *if this option is to be considered further*." Only to then dismiss Matters before any bid had been made and to contradict what it had just stated: "The final option [of a New Publication] is the one that emerges most strongly from the research, given the potential levels of demand and the *lack of an obvious publication for re-development*." How could such 'confusion' arise?

Similarly, the Report states Product magazine was relaunching and likely "to have an 'alternative' stance on arts and political culture that will not fit with the broad-based identity of the new publication." Underlying this is the claim of consensual neutrality. This inclusivity is disingenuous—it politically positions Product as 'outside', as marginal, while deliberately ignoring the ideological agenda of Scottish arts policy that is explicit throughout the tender documents. The fact is that Product does *not* have a radicalised alternative stance, its tongue-in-cheek by-line is "over-the-counter culture". But what it does do is acknowledge that 'culture' is ideological territory

that is constantly being fought over—which is something even the main staples of jobbing arts journalism dare occasionally report on when it comes to such things as the Culture Commission. But for the most, 'Scotland the Brand' cultural reporting is just colourful consumer material for Sunday supplement lifestyle sections, the very market The List is being squeezed by. In late 2000 / early 2001 ScotInform carried out audience research for The List, used to put together its lifestyle entertainment profile of its readership for potential advertisers. This profiling stresses the indicators of a 'young', 'mobile', 'discerning and cultured' consumer.

What we are experiencing is the prejudicial exclusion of grass-roots organisations and networks by a professional managerial class that is increasingly encouraged to see the provision of public services as the role of the private sector, albeit underwritten by public money. The SAC Visual Arts can excuse themselves by claiming to have commissioned research, consulted artists, held focus groups, conducted phone polls, but what it has *not* done is draw attention to, or enter into any discussion about, the explicit political nature of the economic model that was determined for this magazine from the outset. Any bidder not backed by private capital was wasting their time, or worse, unwittingly acting as unpaid consultants to further inform SAC's arrangements.

Straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel

The shortlistings for interview were informed by a hush-hush 'Independent Advisor' from London, Gilda Williams, Commissioning Editor for Contemporary Art at Phaidon Press. Formerly Managing Editor of Flash Art International, "Williams is an art, photography and film critic who contributes regularly to periodicals including Art Monthly, Parkett and Sight and Sound." Not surprisingly, Williams has written on the Scotia-Nostra artists, such as Roderick Buchanan.

The panel that interviewed the list of bidders for the tender was made up of: Sue Pirnie, then SAC Visual Arts Officer; Elisabeth McLean, Deputy Director, Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh; Gordon Cosh, SAC Financial Compliance Officer; Sophy Dale, SAC Officer Literature Dept.; Katherine Pearson, SAC Creative Arts Committee.

So who are they, what experience and knowledge do they bring to confirming who would be 'promoting contemporary practice from Scotland in an international context'?

According to the SAC website:

"The Creative Arts Committee assists Council in the monitoring of its aims and objectives and informing the development of its work into the future on policy matters relating to creative arts ... in Scotland. It also considers the broad spectrum of work that crosses these artforms, ensuring that Council policy areas, such as audience development, equalities and education are embedded in their work."

Committee member Katherine Pearson is the former Director of Creative Partnerships Durham / Sunderland (based at Arts Council England), and formerly the City of Sunderland's Head of Arts. The National Glass Centre Sunderland appointed Pearson its sixth chief executive in as many years in September 2004.

Creative Partnerships Durham / Sunderland is a Dept. of Culture Media & Sport and Dept. for Education & Skills scheme involving some 22 schools in "the most economically and socially challenged neighbourhoods" in areas of England as selected by Government ministers. Have no doubt about the political agenda: "Creative Partnerships looks to stimulate whole school change... invoking shifts in thinking and doing in the wider education system in the longer term." So what of the '*partnerships*'? Under the header 'Business partners' we hit the nail: "... Organisations and employers are increasingly looking for a creatively agile workforce and there is a growing awareness of the advantages of starting this work early on in the school years. Key to this vision of creative education is the development of relationships with a variety of partners from the cultural, creative and business sectors..."

According to BBC online: "The £17m [National Glass Centre] has struggled to hit visitor targets since opening in 1998, but Arts Council bosses have pledged to continue subsidising the centre", which has "lurched from crisis to crisis in its short life". The Centre is "dedicated to promoting glass in all its uses". The University of Sunderland's Glass, Architectural Glass and Ceramics Departments are located there, as is the international Institute for Research in Glass. We're now all too familiar with the UK-wide successes of such Third Way symbols.

So why is someone exclusively working in England one of only a handful of people 'informing' the Scottish Arts council, *especially* in this exceptional decision, where an informed understanding of the actual (not government imagined or desired) cultural activity on the ground in Scotland one would have thought was essential? Could it be the lack of skilled and informed professionals in Scotland, or perhaps Pearson's involvement in a politically motivated scheme for reshaping educational practices and the role the arts have in this?

With such an historic decision to be made and such an unprecedented amount of cash on the table, it is a pity the Head of Visual Arts, Amanda Catto, couldn't make the interviews. But perhaps such a distancing from the project at that stage was no bad thing, as Catto is understood to be good friends with the Director of the SAC 'flagship' Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, Fiona Bradley—whose partner happens to be... Nick Barley, the editor of The List. So it may come as a surprise to some that the *only* person not directly employed by the SAC on the panel is the Deputy Director of the Fruitmarket Gallery, Elisabeth McLean.

McLean's inclusion is perhaps testimony to one of the few existing gallery bookshops[2] in Scotland (fighting for space as it does between the cafe, the stairs and the pavement), and to her experience in the production of shelves of Fruitmarket catalogues.

However, at a time when the incestuousness of Scotland's political and media institutions is in question—brought into focus by the family

holidaying of Newsnight's Kirsty Wark and Scotland's First Minister Jack McConnell, in what has been called by some an "abject lack of judgment"—this single inclusion by the SAC is worrying, and calls into question the perception of neutrality and impartiality.

Interviews for the tender were 9th December 2003—those who were unsuccessful were told the very next day... in writing.

Bedazzled

What of The List, the "Glasgow and Edinburgh fortnightly events guide"?

Before moving to Scotland to become The List editor in 2003, Nick Barley was publisher of Blueprint[3] and Tate magazines in London.

The Sunday Herald article 'All change as The List gets caught in crossfire of newspaper wars' 24/10/04,[4] gives a helpful insight. Interviewing editor Nick Barley, it paints a picture of recent difficulties—of being "under threat" from online services and the "huge rise in listings magazines in newspapers". Claiming to have weathered these troubled waters, Barley plans to "make the magazine more features orientated" and cut back the listings content by "50% to 40% of the word count", moving them online. It has no plans to extend to other cities in Scotland, as it is believed there is not enough customer or advertiser demand—the article estimates "the circulation is rising again (to over 10,500)". These changes are being "implemented cautiously ... in case it gives potential rivals an opening."

ScotInform's report was also cautious, warning off infringing on The List's events listings. If only the SAC were as mindful of others. We should question if amongst all this consultation there's been an impact study on Scotland-based annual project funded magazines' main source of revenue, advertising? Maybe that wasn't their concern. ScotInform invoke a "conventional competitive strategy" as an incentive for existing magazines "covering the whole of the UK" to focus more on "Scottish content". It doesn't examine or question the market effect on the nature of this content, or this contents effect on artistic practice, while invoking the market fantasy of a level playing field with equal access for all—all £200,000 of it.

The List is already embedded as a sizeable state cultural mediator, according to their website: "The List is also the official supplier of information about events in all parts of Scotland to VisitScotland for publication online and in print." With its head office in Edinburgh, VisitScotland is the official site for Scotland's National Tourism Board, 'offering a guide to Scottish arts and cultural events'. The List's publisher, Robin Hodge, also has a sizeable collection of other titles: "The List also publishes a number of special issues to support major arts events and festivals in both Glasgow and Edinburgh... T in the Park, the Edinburgh International Festival and Fringe, the Edinburgh International Film Festival, The Edinburgh International Book Festival, Gig on the Green, and Glasgow and Edinburgh Hogmanay."

Someone more competent may well have questioned the effect on an environment shaped and largely created by mass-circulation newspapers and magazines which are almost completely dominated by the commercial motives of their publishers and their clients.

In trying to find an "editor of the highest calibre", the promised (2.5 by 3.5 inch) Guardian ad for a "Freelance contract, approx. two days per week" appeared and went. There was no mention of salary. The closing date was 10 May 2004, roughly six weeks after the initial announcement in The List and by SAC—you could be forgiven for missing the notice.

The figure bandied around for the post of editor was £10,000, this was to "...provide the inspiration for the magazine's editorial strategy, oversee its launch, and manage a small team of editorial and design staff. Based at The List's offices in Edinburgh and Glasgow, you will work closely with the magazine's publisher...", Robin Hodge. The List were looking for someone with at least three year's experience.

Anyone with experience would know there's more than 2 days a week to starting a critically informed magazine, from scratch, never mind sustaining it. Especially one that has no track record and no proven distribution mechanism. So who exactly was this £10,000 prestigious income going to attract?

Things got worse, some applied only to be told the sum was to be split between five assistant editors, each working two days apeice—that's £2,000 a year, or £500 per issue, or a staggering £21 a day for an alleged 2 days a week work, before tax and travel. Others were approached and turned down the generous offer.

The reasons for the launches being put back was that The List was struggling to secure an editor, or editors. Effectively, the fall back was onto List staff, some of whom were already involved, though had no recent experience of the contemporary arts scenes across Scotland—something one would have thought was essential. This was hardly looking like the 'Credible', 'Informed', 'Leading', 'Creative' and 'Confident' editorial that was demanded. Time for Arts Officers to start 'shitting themselves'.

The magazine is to be published from the List offices edited by former List writer Alice Bain (who also oversaw interviews for the post(s) of editor) along with Ruth Hedges, acting as deputy editor—rostered on the List website as a Researcher, Art section editor, City life / Travel section editor, and Kids News, let's hope she has time.

The reason Glamour magazine was mentioned in the SAC and List press releases was, one would hope, not primarily for its content but for its format. Probably out of fear of finger pointing, it would be uncouth for them to say the model is probably going to be poached from the Irish arts magazine Circa—especially when they may well have tendered for the job (and now want to ditch the 'compact' format themselves). Not without its own problems, Circa has been muttered about as a desired model for a while, and now in terms of a stand-alone commercial viability. This really shows the naivety of those involved as Circa is, and has been for a very long time, almost entirely publicly subsidised.

Having initially rejected pretty much all suggested Scottish-based contemporary arts writers for a more cheap-and-cheerful List touch—not so much representation as re-presentation—they appear to have fallen back on the writers within the arts communities intimate with other magazines.

Grand Gestures

Burdened with the title The Map, an embodiment of arrogance whose self-delusional quality raises as many questions as hackles, there is little doubt the topography of the landscape of this magazine has been modelled by personnel attached to the SAC Visual Arts Department.

Maybe for fear of what others might produce, there are some extraordinary contradictions at work here between the SAC's alleged commitment to 'social inclusion', its fetish with an overly specialised artistic production, and the use of public funds in a market-driven distribution policy. One based upon the sophistry that the private sector can deliver upon unproven promises of 'appealing to a wider audience'.

Instead of coveting the narrow star-system focus that makes up the bulk of what passes as the art press, this should have been an opportunity for a serious unpacking of the institutional precincts that territorially guard access to our cultural life in Scotland. Instead, a good while after the boat went out everywhere else, we're having visited upon us grand gestures more akin to the consumerism of the 1980s at the expense of multiple, self-determined standpoints of observation. It's an all too familiar hierarchy reflective of the gallery system that artist-run projects are said to have been challenging for decades; an advantaged managerial class with an underclass of artists and writers existing hand-to-mouth in its shadow.

With all the paraphernalia extolling the virtues of 'Cultural Diversity', the tendency towards monopoly on so many levels is staggering. What of the impact of such a corporate media consolidation of power in the fields of the arts and publishing in Scotland? SAC should be enabling broad democratic expression in the social sphere, instead we have been afflicted with a centralised apparatus conferring dominance on the mores of 'Scotland the Brand'.

Notes

1. For an account see 'Through the Looking Glass', Leigh French, Variant issue 16, Winter 2002, www.variant.org.uk/16texts/Events.html
2. For one of the few Scottish arts bookshops, The List is one of only eight, recently updated, links on the Fruitmarket Gallery's website under the Bookshop: the others being, Art Monthly, Booklab, Bookworks, Frieze, Parkett, Scottish Book Trust, Scottish Poetry Library.
3. Blueprint was established in '83 and still edited by Deyan Sudjic, Director of the Glasgow 1999 UK City of Architecture.
4. www.sundayherald.com/45500

In on the Pitch

Peter McCluskey

'Football In The New Media Age', Raymond Boyle and Richard Haynes; Routledge, 2004; ISBN: 0-415-31791-6

In a mere ten years or so, professional football has come a long way. Once an opium for the working class masses of the terrace, it has transformed itself into a shiny new media industry: it is now an opium for the middle class too.

In October 2002, Boyle and Haynes point out, football dominated the UK news agenda. The coverage of stories alleging criminal conduct, often sexual, by young professional football players had become prevalent in tabloids, broadsheets and broadcast news. But they were soon joined by the story of Manchester United defender Rio Ferdinand's ban from the England national team for missing a drugs test. Football was clearly no longer merely back page news. Our national obsession with the sport saw it migrate to the front pages, as well as the lead slot on the *Six O'clock News*.

Compared to its previous lowly place in the media firmament, this represents something of a meteoric rise to celebrity status for "the game". As recently as the 1980s, the saturation coverage we now know was nowhere in sight. Hooliganism still tarnished the sport's image and the only live matches screened in the UK were cup finals and the odd international fixture. The league associations believed that showing anything more than highlights on *Match of the Day*, for instance, would tempt fans to stay at home. That they were right at the time, and that attendances are now higher, despite live football available most nights on pay-TV, shows how much has changed.

The repackaging process of the sport into a more widely marketable product began in the aftermath of the 1989 Hillsborough disaster when 96 Liverpool supporters died on the Sheffield terraces. The Taylor Report into the disaster led to improved facilities and made stadia all-seater. Whether by design or not, the removal of the terraces took with it the terrace culture that the uninitiated would find intimidating.

At the same time, the deregulation of the broadcast media sector by the Conservative Thatcher government in the late 1980s spelled the end for the ITV-BBC sport cartel which had hitherto provided all Britain's sport coverage since the 1950s. It also signalled the beginning of the end for public service broadcasting.

News Corporation's Sky TV was still jostling for position to establish itself in the burgeoning UK pay-TV market when it saw the chance for a take-over of its main rival. The struggling state-sponsored British Satellite Broadcasting, launched in 1988, was soon swallowed up in 1990 to create the behemoth that we now know as BSkyB.

In 1992 the top division in England, the old First Division, kicked itself free from the rest of the league and set itself up as the Premiership. The reason for this act of secession was simple: to keep for themselves all of BSkyB's forthcoming offer of £304 million for live broadcast rights, rather than continue to share TV revenue among the clubs of the other three divisions.

The huge financial gamble paid off handsomely. Not only for BSkyB, whose business model for pay-TV services—securing exclusive live football—has been copied across Europe, but also for the Premiership.

The last three-year deal, starting season 2004/05, netted a massive £1 billion for the league. At the last count in 2002, 36% of income for the world's wealthiest club, Manchester United, came from media rights—some £56 million. So successful has been the branding and marketing of England's top flight as a global product that one sixth of the world's population are now estimated to watch a Premiership game in the course of a year.

By the latter half of the 1990s, football had become the panacea for new communications companies. NTL, ITV Digital, Lycos, Vodafone, Zenith Media, all believed football would drive audiences to their new technology and so give a return on their massive investments.

Broadcasters too remained under football's spell. Across Europe, no digital station has been launched without an exclusive live football deal in place and the three dedicated sport channels in 1995 had grown to sixty by 2000.

Football is now the key content provider for new media platforms right across Europe. However, the reason why this cultural and media obsession has developed is not something that appears to interest Boyle and Haynes. What clearly does interest them, though, is *how* this has happened.

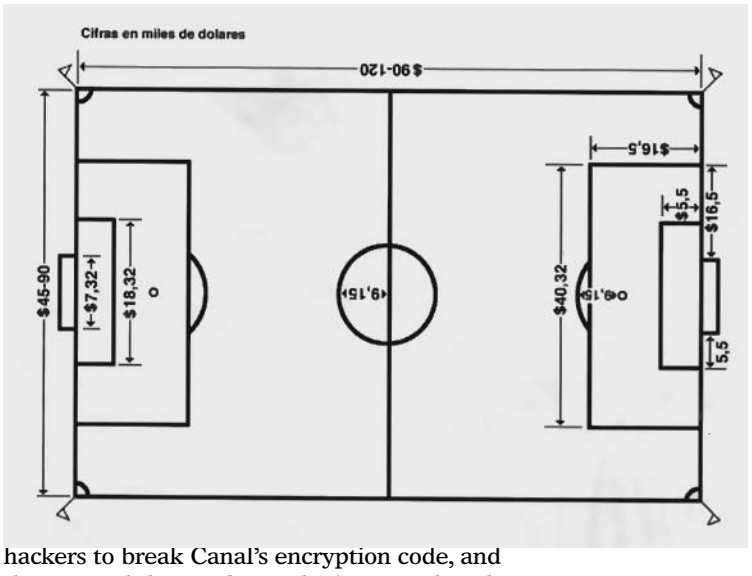
On that front, they re-tread the road to football ubiquity in fastidious academic detail, stopping to pour over the various milestone deals until the reader is asleep at the kerb. But while the style is invariably dull, events remain fascinating.

For instance, the new media market's obsession with football led to a dangerous and economically unsustainable scramble for broadcast rights. Boyle and Haines give blow by blow accounts of this "land grab" which ended with a downturn in the advertising market and the fiasco of ITV Digital's collapse in 2002.

Desperate to avoid being left without live football in its digital portfolio, the Granada/Carlton venture paid £315 million for a three-year deal to screen matches from England's irredeemably unfashionable Nationwide League. This was an excellent deal for the League, who previously had received only £25 million for broadcast rights. But for UK Digital it was a death sentence.

The chapter entitled "The European dimension" gives a pointed contrast to the response by the UK Labour government to the Nationwide's plight. Whereas the UK's new digital service was left to flounder and disappear from the BSkyB-dominated media-scape, German politicians stepped in to rescue KirchMedia in its hour of need. Financially adrift on a sea of hyper-inflated rights deals, KirchMedia found itself facing a meltdown that would suck in the German Bundesliga, whose broadcast rights it held. The package drawn up saved Germany's top flight, unlike many Nationwide League clubs, who were plunged into fiscal crisis after banking on ITV Digital's huge cash injection.

But this is not just a cautionary tale of boom-and-bust bad luck or poor timing in a fickle new marketplace. It also shows the cut-throat nature of the new media market. A huge problem facing ITV Digital in the face of stagnant sales figures was the high level of piracy of the smart cards needed to de-encrypt its signal. In early 2002, Canal Plus Technologies, who produced the cards, filed a $1 billion lawsuit in the US courts alleging piracy of their technology by rival manufacturer, NDS. NDS was part of News Corporation and Rupert Murdoch's son Lachlan was on the board. NDS refuted the allegations that they had paid



hackers to break Canal's encryption code, and then posted the results on the internet, but the case was not dropped until a year later. That was when News Corporation bought a controlling share in Italy's Telepui from Canal's debt-ridden parent company, Vivendi Universal. Meantime the damage was done to ITV Digital.

The European chapter is the strongest part of Boyle and Haines' study. While the bulk of the book's material amounts to a dull academic rendering of information that is largely to be found in the UK quality press, the European scene at least have the virtue of being new territory.

The pro-competition ethos of DG4, the EC watchdog which investigated in 2003 the Premiership's exclusive deal with BSkyB, is understood as, above all, pro-technology. It wishes to see the dissemination of new technology, regardless of all other considerations. Also, European levels of uptake of digital TV provide a context to judge UK levels, which at 36% of households is double that of France or Spain. New media operators and football clubs, notably Real Madrid, seek to "control and exploit media rights and the burgeoning market of image rights." The emergent on-line and interactive TV markets are seen as the "battlegrounds" for the struggle between them.

Boyle and Haynes claim that their investigation of this "battleground" will lead us out from football, on to wider cultural dynamics.

"We argue throughout the book that football offers us an insight into ... some of the wider cultural and political shifts that are taking place within the terrain of popular culture." (P.14)

But it doesn't materialise. There is no demonstration of how blow-by-blow accounts of the pay-TV football market provide these insights: argument, after all, requires more than simply laying out facts, figures and prices.

Throughout, the methodology is narrowly empirical. With an academic study, we are entitled to expect a cultural theory or analytical model. Instead, there are stacks of the data of deals, the cost of contracts, and the price of players, but no framework to connect them to "wider cultural shifts".

There is nothing more intellectually feeble than condemning a piece of work for failing to achieve a purpose that lies only in the critic's mind. In a sense, all criticism is essentially a matter of judging whether a piece of writing meets certain expectations. But the expectations must come from *the work itself*. The critic must guard against lazily allowing his or her own

subjective preferences to form their expectations and hence their critical stance.

So what is the intended purpose behind *Football in the New Media Age*?

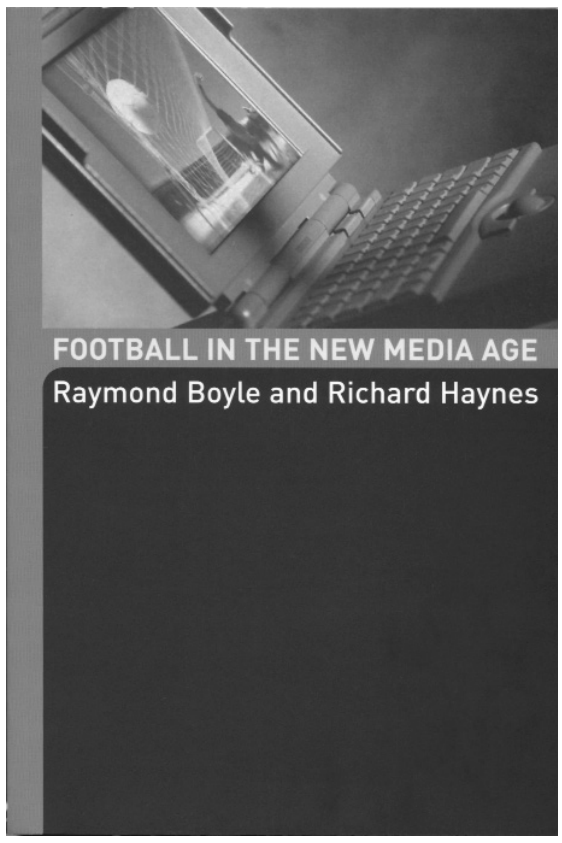
Deploying time-honoured academic stylistics, there is explicit signposting of Boyle and Haynes' purported aim. For instance:

"[A] central theme throughout the book is a concern with the political economy of communication as well as its relationship to wider cultural and social practice. What we are attempting to track ... is the importance of contemporary media developments in helping to act as a driver for wider cultural change." (p. 25)

But if you take this to mean we should expect a study of how pay-TV is affecting our cultural values, possibly even our political values, then forget it—it doesn't materialise.

Despite claiming to investigate the market's power struggles, the major share-holder behind BSkyB, News Corporation, is mentioned only in terms of its deals. We learn nothing of its global power, or wider strategy, or ideology, despite its place in the vanguard of the globalisation of the world economy. Consequently, it's a bit like reading a history of the Second World War without finding a mention of fascism or totalitarianism. An inventory of loss and gain reveals nothing about the real power struggle that lies behind it. Instead, we get BSkyB's business model. And even that is presented as something that simply emerges in response to the market and is borne of nothing beyond the market itself.

Football in the New Media Age therefore reveals itself as a fetishisation of the market itself. In fact, the closest we get to a thesis or controlling idea is that of marketisation. To Boyle and Haynes, players, clubs, league associations and media corporations are seen purely in terms of their relevance to the new media market: only the market confers cultural meaning.



" ... too much writing about the impact of globalisation is driven by a form of technological determinism. A view which identifies digital technology itself as the prime agency driving change across the broadcasting market in particular ... The advent of the digital age is really part of a wider structural process of marketisation; as the market has become the central frame of reference for cultural activity." (Ch 3, p. 52)

Unfortunately for the misled reader, who was entitled to expect a wider, meta-analysis, the market has also become the central frame of reference for Boyle and Haines.

If Capitalism must reproduce the means of production, and to do that it must also reproduce the ideological apparatus for that production, then you can bet your annual BSkyB subscription that global media corporations will *necessarily* reproduce the ideology that suits their interest. How could they do otherwise? What, then, are we to make of the current obsession with football?

Is there any analogy to be drawn between our current obsession and football's promotion by dictatorships—albeit at a cultural, rather than political level? Mussolini was determined that Italy would host and win the 1938 World Cup, and so they did—apparently thanks to a few knobbled referees. Argentina's Junta served up a world cup too, in 1978; and Franco made sure his team, Real Madrid, had the world's best players in the 1950s and 1960s in order to conquer Europe. In times of oppression, nothing diverts the collective mind quite like football.

Clearly, we do not live in a time of political oppression. However, the political agenda is veering ever right-wards. As recently as the 1980s we could not have imagined a Labour leader taking Britain into five wars in the space of two terms. And at home there is the commodification of, well, everything. Boyle and Haines, rather than stand back and tell us something objective about what is happening in our culture, are instead fixed on the movement of money. When Media Studies is reduced to little more than a branch of Market Studies, we know that "wider cultural change" has been brought about. The global media corporations who helped bring this about would no doubt approve.

Enough is Enough!

Esther Leslie

Cultural Policy, Toby Miller and George Yúdice, Sage, London 2002, 246pp.

Rethinking Cultural Policy, Jim McGuigan, Open University Press/McGraw-Hill Education, Maidenhead 2004, 171pp.

Cultural policy—we get word of it frequently: in the bar of Santa's Ghetto, the post-punk-comix art gallery that popped up on London's Charing Cross Road in December, stuffed with artists discussing arts council funding; or on TV's Ceefax, when the announcement that scrapping museum entrance charges has led to a 75% increase in visitor admissions. Cultural policy effects various actions, from library opening hours in the UK, to the destruction of Buddhist statues in Afghanistan, the banning of Kurdish in Turkish schools to Albrecht Dürer's promotion of perspectival and geometric relationships. Cultural policy is diffuse, ranging from the banal to the fatal. Its all too vast scope, lightningly touched on in just about all its aspects in Toby Miller and George Yúdice's *Cultural Policy*, did not prevent Tony Bennett, the leading Australian proponent of Cultural Studies, insisting, back in 1992, that Cultural Studies stop being so useless and become practical. It should engage in policy, recommending cultural strategies to managers and governments. This specific form of Cultural Studies' turn to the practical is analysed by Jim McGuigan in *Rethinking Cultural Policy* as symptomatic of late capitalism. It adapted itself in the face of neo-liberal economics with its rhetoric of choice. This seemed to gel with Cultural Studies' long-standing promotion of cultural populism. For McGuigan, such a practical turn produced nothing but what he cattily calls "would-be management consultants who could only operate, however, as administrative researchers in a beleaguered public sector and with precious little credibility in the burgeoning private sector". (p139)

But, doesn't a formula such as 'cultural policy' clang on the ears? Isn't it a contradiction in terms or a yoking together of two things of different orders? Adorno balked at the semantic horror of the mismatch in *Kulturkritik*—a Latin word grafted onto a Greek word—but the hitching of culture to policy or, more specifically, to politics in a governmental sense is a far more monstrous act. That the free development of culture, of creativity, could be wedded to the instrumental demands of policy damages, or even negates, culture and always reflects poorly on politics. Real art is always elsewhere. Both books under review here remind us of the monsters 'cultural policy' has bred, most graphically in the Third Reich where not only was all cultural production subjected to government review and censorship, but also that which was rejected was vilified in mocking public displays such as the touring Degenerate Art Exhibition, before being destroyed or sold for hard cash abroad. Both books reveal how behind the phrase 'cultural policy' lurk the machinations of power wielded by sinister and oppressive forces.

Miller and Yúdice's suspicion of cultural policy takes shape through Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality. They tell us how, from the eighteenth century onwards, the state has always troubled itself about its individuals, initiating public-health campaigns or compulsory education. The modern state and its values enter deep into the lives of citizens, moulding a 'social body' that should be fit, docile and industrious. Cultural policy is not invented in this process of making modern citizens—the imposition of certain languages, for example, pre-dated the rise of the modern state—but along with the rise of the state comes the establishment of bureaucratic institutions able to recommend and even enforce cultural policies. Miller and Yúdice cite as instances: governments, trade unions, judicial systems, schools and colleges, arts organisations, community groups, foundations, charities and businesses. These bodies, which make or deliver cultural policy, instrumentalise culture, seeing it as the medium through which appropriate behaviours can be encouraged. And so, for example, in Matthew Arnold's Victorian vision, through education, the self is harmonised with the national bloc and its aims, and through theatre and novels, the liberal, reasonable individual is created who repudiates anarchy and populist excess. In their introduction Miller and Yúdice trace this moulding operation into the current day. Their arguments swell and muddy as a genealogy of cultural policy turns into a history of theorizing culture and matters of taste and then flips onto the well-worn contours of high versus low culture, only to move on to notions of citizenship in a 'postnational world', before briefly outlining the history of cultural policy studies. For Miller and Yúdice cultural policy is a slippery thing, and they are fighting a battle for its good soul, against its evil implementations. They state: "Our book seeks … to articulate knowledge with social reproduction, with governments as primary *loci* of power, authorization, and responsibility." (p5) If there are primary loci of power, then there must be secondary ones too. They identify two types of cultural policy: one is transformative of the social order (on the side of angels, the oppressed, the disenfranchised) and one is functionalist, replicating the social order, imposing middle-class values on those who never wanted them. Cultural policy is no one thing, then, for these two writers, indeed it presents a terrain worth fighting on, and in the following chapters—on command cultures and the post-colonial, a history of museums, transnational cultural policy, the cultural industries, the US and the National Endowment for the Arts—they track not only cultural policy's oppressions, but also its contradictions and the micro-struggles that take place in its orbit. Miller and Yúdice, true to the governmentality model of Foucauldian resistance, assert possibilities of counter-hegemony or micro-shifts in administrative policy, which can be pushed through by 'women and people of color'. For them, the state is all—it "monopolizes both violence and national representation, even as its legitimacy depends on a space for its subjects to appeal to it for redress on both these scores." (p185) "Resistance goes nowhere", they pronounce, "unless it takes hold institutionally". (p34) But they don't mean a Leninist seizure of the state, as first stage in abolishing it. This is infiltration and gentle reformism directed by a politics of identity. Hence their approving quotation of U2's Bono on how the glamour of barricades palls besides the real business of sitting with briefcase-carrying men in suits and sorting out the world. (p185) Hopeful reform at an administrative level is the remedy. 'The world can be made good, if we just get our identities bureaucratically represented', would seem to be the vain cry. Miller and Yúdice

acknowledge the compulsions of commerce and the exigencies of the free market, but again and again they return to fashionably political rather than economic categories, insisting on work on 'cultural citizenship' and identity, democratic representation in cultural policy, global citizen and worker rights, and 'renegotiations of the citizen-consumer couplet'. For all their well-meaningness, they have succumbed to a language that is familiar in cultural policy wherever it manifests itself, including in its most pernicious market-friendly forms.

McGuigan's expository textbook (including a useful glossary of jargon terms) is more cogently suspicious of the ends of cultural policy—dividing it into three types, state (now superseded, in the main, in the west), market (the prevalent model) and, the oppositional variant, civil/communicative. In contrast to Miller and Yúdice, McGuigan discerns a tangible impulse behind the dominant contemporary trend of cultural policy making: the economy, or more specifically economic policy. McGuigan's book sets cultural policymaking firmly within the efforts towards neo-liberalism or privatisation of the economy over the last twenty years. More generally, *Rethinking Cultural Policy* sets itself within a world altered by globalisation and the 'NICL', the new international division of cultural labour, and subjected to criticism by anti-capitalists (the book's motto is 'Ya Basta!', the Zapatista slogan of 'enough is enough'). McGuigan stridently dissects and historically specifies the terrain of cultural policy. He attacks the 'governmentality' model, accusing it of insufficient distinction between the state and the market, politics and economics. For governmentality, all government is the same shade, and government, through the administrative functions of the state, is the driving force of modernity. Capitalism and the economy are written out of the equation. The governmentality model results, McGuigan claims, in an insensitivity to political and economic distinctions, e.g. that the welfare state was a real gain won by organised labour, and public funding of the arts was a democratic achievement, even if it also imposed certain cultural models deemed to be beneficial to individuals. McGuigan returns to something more akin to a Marxist framework, as parsed through Raymond Williams. This entails a shattering of the rhetoric of much cultural policy as just so much ideological hot air or consolatory compensation, at best, and, at worst, partner to the economic remodelling of the entire cultural front, akin to IMF restructuring to make economies functional for neo-liberal capitalism. McGuigan is fascinated in how the dominant ideological discourses of capitalism contaminate the language of theoretical explanation and diagnosis. He traces a shift from public to private finance through various topics: museum policy, eco-tourism, and branding. McGuigan prefers empirical research, frustrated as he is by the post-Foucauldian and post-Situationist speculations about spectacle, exhibitionary-complexes and disciplinary gazes. The extended empirical case study here compares the 1851 Great Exhibition to the Millennium Dome of 2000, and insists, in the course of this, on the "value of multidimensional analysis of culture and cultural policy" (p5), that is to say, that there is more to the museal experience than disciplining and the gaze. To this extent, this book is not simply about cultural policy. It is a question of the proper definition of culture and how cultural analysis should be carried out. The twin dangers to avoid, he suggests, are instrumentalizing culture, for example, in order to embellish the nation-state or reducing it, or its value, to exchange value. In both processes cultural autonomy is lost. But McGuigan is actually less interested in autonomy than in articulating culture as a component of a Habermasian public sphere, as enacted in revolutionary and reformist practices such as Culture Jamming or the Cultural Environment Movement.

The motor of the book takes its cue from a significant discussion document on 'desetatization', a French term which translates as 'privatization' or 'autonomization'. This document stems from a round table discussion on museums in Amsterdam in the late 1990s. Here, principles of privatization relevant to public-sector culture were drawn up. They included 'divestiture' (selling off public property), free transfer of property rights (giving it away), the change of state organization into a more independent organization, the agency model of giving internally more discrete power to the public manager, contracting-out of work such as cleaning and catering, use of volunteers, private funding, individual patronage and corporate sponsorship. Just as in other sectors of the state (health, utilities), the shift in cultural policy amounts to sundering cultural institutions from the state and attracting private money. For McGuigan, such development is contradictory, involving a mix of privatisation (a bad thing) and a devolving of power (which might give more power and accountability to local managers or audiences). But the essential drive of the desetatization policy is economic in the sphere of culture as elsewhere. Where for Miller and Yúdice everything has become a cultural question in a post-Baudrillardian world of signs and codes, McGuigan's sense is that even culture, or at least cultural policy, has less to do with culture in these neo-liberal times and more to do with economics. Where once cultural value was deemed sufficient justification for art-oriented activities, now cultural value is subsumed into economic value. Everyone has to justify culture's marketability—culture becomes valuable only because, as Cultural Studies gurus such as Angela McRobbie have gleefully announced, in the guise of 'cultural industries' it contributes to the (UK) economy.

McGuigan's efforts to rethink cultural policy are useful in that they allow a novice into the discourses and lay out the arguments with some vigour and in a combative tone. The book suffers occasionally from its textbooky and academic format—offputtingly the introduction reads like a book proposal. It improves after that, as the explicitly critical and political drive comes to the fore, and McGuigan's trademark bitchiness lashes out satisfyingly at points. If we have to have cultural policy—which it seems currently we do, for where would all the artists and galleries and magazines be without their lovely lottery money—then McGuigan is a good historian and judge of its priorities. But, despite the efforts of these books concerning an area that Cultural Studies has deemed a necessary part of the curriculum, a feeling lingers: culture happens despite policy wonks, even in the most hostile circumstances. And any culture that assumes or bids for its policy-usefulness isn't worth the lottery ticket.