"All is ours"] No°. 23 Summertyme ['tis free, fooles!

THE VARIANT

SMOKE

of the

BOTTOMLESSE PIT

or a Catalogue of

Many of the Errours, Heresies, Blasphemies & Pernicious Practices

of the Sectaries of this time,
vented and acted here
in these last

EIGHT YEARS

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Editorial

I don't have time for this

Most artists and arts administrators agree that the last thing they want to do is go to another meeting about future strategies for arts funding. There's so much 'public consultation' already, most of it performed by 'independent' third parties, who somehow never manage to 'consult' the most relevant people. We're a little worn out by it, and we seldom seem to see the benefits of it. The trouble is, the decisions that are about to be taken, in both Scotland and Northern Ireland, will affect the shape of arts provision for a generation. Fundamental questions are now being asked by central and devolved governments about how the arts should be funded. Tedious as it may seem, it's essential that practitioners and arts organisations involve themselves in addressing these questions; particularly because politicians may already have answers of their own in mind about what 'uses' culture might have.

In Northern Ireland, the Review of Public Administration (RPA) has just been published. It aims to cut the size of the public sector in the North, from the 26 District Councils to the various Executive Agencies and 'Executive Non-Departmental Bodies' such as the Pig Production Development Committee and, of course, our own dear Arts Council of Northern Ireland. The laudable plan is to pass as much responsibility as possible back from the many unaccountable quangos set up during twenty-five years of direct rule to the various departments of the new Executive.

The relevant passage of the RPA reads as follows: "The alternative to the existing executive public body would be to delegate most of the Arts Council's grant giving power to local government and to bring the remaining funding within DCAL [Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, Northern Ireland] for direct support of regionally important projects."

The potential for political influence is clearly one problem with direct executive funding of the arts. This isn't some conspiracy theory, just an observation about politicians' priorities: if you can redirect arts funding towards so-called 'social regeneration', particularly the kind that's very visible in your own constituency, then why not? The various political parties in the North have not so far had any particular love for the arts. It's quite possible that after any resumption of the Executive, Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionists could be running DCAL. The DUP are more well known for picketing and censoring art forms they don't like than for supporting experimentation and innovation. As the RPA itself points out, "… there is support for the long established principle that [arts funding] is best done at arm's length from government to avoid the suspicion of undue political influence in individual decisions and to protect Ministers from being directly answerable for the policies and performance of organisations or individuals in receipt of funding."

The principle of peer review and expertise is also at stake. Within the current Arts Council, imperfect as it undoubtedly is, there is an established system of evaluation of applications by panels of artists, and furthermore there's the many years of experience that arts officers have in assessing artforms. The politicians and civil servants don't have that. So why waste time duplicating, relearning, and so on, when the object is supposedly to save money? This is all very straightforward for (say) pig production, but cultural provision is not just about economic throughput and return. The return is largely – horror of horrors! – unquantifiable.

If grant-giving powers are devolved to the local authorities and DCAL, furthermore, then small arts organisations face yet more bureaucracy. Those not designated as 'regionally important' (probably this excludes most organisations that aren't the Ulster Orchestra or the Grand Opera House), but who routinely carry out arts activity in different council regions, will have to duplicate their funding applications to several authorities. They'll also have to work out which one will provide their core funding.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland, having realised last year that their future could only be secured if they made common cause with their clients, are now organising a series of 'workshops' across the North to meet clients and concerned parties with regard to their response to the RPA, which has to be submitted by the end of September. It's in all our interests that this response makes as strong a case as possible against direct executive funding. We'd therefore urge all interested parties to get involved in the consultation process – the dates of the various discussions are shown in the ACNI's ad elsewhere in the magazine.

In case you think that the closure of the Arts Council is an unlikely option, bear in mind that this was precisely what the Welsh Assembly wanted to do to the Arts Council of Wales. Only at the last minute did practitioners manage to raise enough of a rumpus to scupper the Assembly's plans. Several 'regionally important' groups – theatres and orchestras again – were nonetheless 'topsliced' and are now funded not by the ACW but by the Assembly.

Meanwhile...

Arts Council charm offensive hits first hurdle with return of literalist bureaucracy!

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland will have to work harder to convince practitioners that "we're all on the same side really". Applicants for this year's General Arts Awards to individuals who had also received an award under the same scheme last year were told that their applications could not be considered, since the rules state very clearly that only one award may be made in any twelve-month period. Most applicants probably felt that the 364 days that separated the 2004 and 2005 deadlines constituted twelve months: surely one was 'last year's award' and one was 'this year's'? Unfortunately the Arts Council did not feel the same. Public funds will now be wasted considering the inevitable appeals, and extra money may have to be found to subsidise applications for which there was no sane grounds for disqualification. Little misunderstandings such as this may not help the ACNI's new project of encouraging us to find common cause with them in their hour of need.

Letters

Dear Variant, 21/4/05

I read with great interest Leigh French's article on progress with producing a new visual-arts magazine for Scotland. It was good to see made so explicit how such a magazine has to negotiate a complex theoretical, political and cultural minefield if it is to be useful and successful.

There were a number of aspects of the article which touched on CIRCA, and I would like to add a few correctives:

(a) In 1996 the Scottish Arts Council gave CIRCA £2,000 towards researching a Scottish supplement to the magazine. The supplement itself was self-financing, through advertising (and because CIRCA covered the overheads). The Editorial Panel – Sam Ainsley, Malcolm Dickson, Judith Findlay, Neil Firth, Kevin Henderson and Eva Rothschild – determined the content. The British Council, because they were approached by us and because it was a one-off event, agreed to send the supplement to all British embassies.

(b) CIRCA did not tender for the new Scottish visual-arts magazine.

(c) We haven't decided to ditch the compact format of CIRCA – though we are in a process of redesign, and anything could happen.

(d) It's a bit of a stretch to describe CIRCA as "almost entirely publicly subsidised"; approximately 40% of our income comes in grants from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and the Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon.

If, as the article suggests, CIRCA is the model in some people's minds for how the new Scottish magazine might appear, then I can guess at one reason why progress has been slow: although it is a large sum, £200,000 over three years is probably completely inadequate. The key problem, as far as I can see, is that by the time advertising income is at a healthy level – after a year or two, say – production costs, salaries and overheads will have dug a very deep hole of debt from which it might be impossible to recover. Just a guess. In that respect, teaming up with The List does make sense, as some costs can be shared. As for only employing the editor two days a week – as the article suggests – and expecting the magazine to come together: I suspect the editor would spend the remaining five days of the week in therapy.

I really hope the new magazine does appear, and soon, whoever the publisher may be. There is so much good art, and so many good writers in Scotland, that such a magazine is long overdue.

Keep up the good work,
Peter

Peter FitzGerald
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Variant responds:

Dear Peter,
Thank you for clarifying that CIRCA did not tender for the Scottish Arts Council's new Visual Arts magazine—which narrows their 'selection' even more.

You may perceive the British Council support for the supplement in CIRCA as 'matter of fact', but inequitable use of institutional resources is just that, inequitable.

We can inform CIRCA that The Map was launched in Edinburgh in early February and is commercially published by The List group. Despite recently being further underpinned by a SAC subscriptions drive, this 'invisibility' neatly serves to illustrate the deficiencies in their imposed market 'solutions'.

Presenting the SAC's decision making processes as merely pragmatic is to negate their political complexity, and the negative impact such corporatist consolidations of market and institutional power have on 'cultural diversity'—to use their language.

There may well be 'many good writers in Scotland', but this is largely due to the support of self-organised networks, and this latest rebuttal is based on the market exploitation of their knowledge and circumstances.

You may consider that £200,000 is small fry to produce a magazine with salaried staff, even with privileged institutional co-operation, but we would like to take the opportunity to thank the SAC Literature Department in awarding Variant an annual project grant of £9,200 towards the production of three issues of Variant magazine and for their support of the independence of Variant's editorial.

Letters (continued)

Commons Service Group

In response to the WTO's empire, we recommend art.

Dear Variant, 28/3/05

The Commons Service Group, a curatorial collective based at the *Ecole du Magasin Professional Curatorial Training Program*, writes to you from Grenoble, France. We are interested in *Variant's* position as a "form of collaborative curatorial / aesthetic practice in its own right and an educational, discursive public space" (Editorial Winter 2004). We would like to invite *Variant* to participate in a curatorial project that functions as an "aesthetic maneuver" to disseminate information on the significance of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) for contemporary art production.

The GATS is an agreement between the 146 member countries of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). When the GATS came into effect in January 1995, culture was initially exempted—but only for a period of ten years. In 2005, culture and many other publicly funded "services" are due to be renegotiated. The GATS will have serious consequences for the cultural field, yet little information is available because GATS negotiations have occurred outside democratic processes. The GATS reduces the trade of immaterial goods—designated as "services"—to solely commercial value, and encapsulates the cultural sphere within the category "Recreational, cultural and sporting services". Of particular concern is that GATS "national treatment" rules designate government funding of public services and non-profit organizations as "distorting trade" and a potential "barrier to trade", violating the GATS.

The Commons Service Group is working with artists to create a series of A5 single-page "inserts" which will be disseminated via an international selection of free contemporary art publications—both in print and on-line—in May and June. We propose that Variant participate through the placement of inserts in the next issue, and also via the web version. These inserts comprise one element of a larger curatorial project. *The Commons Service Group* declares contemporary art a "GATS Free Zone" and will be present at the professional opening of the Venice Biennale with a portable kiosk—to be created by artist/architect collaborators *Public Works*.

We believe that art is part of the commons, that it should circulate freely, and that culture cannot be regulated as a trade commodity. We have specifically chosen to work with free art publications because they are supported by public cultural funding. We align ourselves with artistic practices that propose alternative economies and modes of exchange, and that envision new models of work. We admire Variant's initiative and dedication in creating a space for critical engagement with the social, economic and political context of contemporary cultural production. For these reasons we are asking for *Variant's* collaboration.

We will happily answer any questions you have about this project. We also invite you to visit our web site where we have created an information kit on the GATS:

www.ecoledumagasin.com/csg/

Heather Anderson, Jerome Grand, Julia Maier
Commons Service Group
commonsservicegroup@gmail.com

The Commons Service Group are delighted that *Variant* has participated in this project, presenting readers with inserts created in collaboration with artists: Lara Almárcegui (Netherlands), Etienne Cliquet (France), Maura Doyle (Canada), Claude Lévêque (France), Chris Lloyd (Canada), Public Works (UK), Antje Schiffers (Germany), YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES (Korea).

Other participating publications: *L'Art Même* (Belgium), *Fucking Good Art* (Netherlands), *Hors d'Oeuvre* (France), http://multitudes.samizdat.net (France), *Nero* (Italy), *Republicart* (EU), http://samplesize.ca (Canada).

Elsa Stansfield (1945-2004)

Pioneer of European artists' video

For more than thirty years, the Amsterdam-based artists Madelon Hooykaas and Elsa Stansfield have been creating both discrete and monumental works and installations across the world. Now this successful international partnership has drawn to an end. In the morning of Tuesday, November 30, Elsa Stansfield died, after a two month struggle against acute leukemia.

Elsa Stansfield was born and grew up in Glasgow and later trained in London, where she studied film at the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London. From 1972 she worked regularly with Madelon Hooykaas on collaborative film- and videoprojects in London and Amsterdam. In 1980 she was asked to develop the department of video/sound at the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht and consequently she decided to settle down permanently in the Netherlands.

Stansfield and Hooykaas are closely associated with the development of video art in the Netherlands although they might be more properly referred to as sculptors using a wide range of media, both old and new. Materials such as copper, lead and stone are combined with contemporary media and methods resulting often in keynote commissions such as their work 'Abri' situated in the sand dunes near Wijk aan Zee The work manifests itself as a kind of parabolic dish, situated within it is a seat, giving view over dunes and sea. Visitors can, sheltered by this 'shield', listen to the amplified sounds of wind, birds and the breaking of waves.

The work she made with Hooykaas has been exhibited all over the world, for example at the Documenta in 1987, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and at exhibitions in Sydney, Montreal and Tokyo. Elsa retained strong links with Scotland, exhibiting their first video installation at the Third Eye Centre in Glasgow in 1975, and most recently a new video installation at the Visual Research Centre, Dundee Contemporary Arts in April 2004. Stansfield and Hooykaas were well known and respected by their peers across the UK. David Hall, the pioneer of British video art commented on hearing of Elsa's death:

"Elsa was the first artist to be awarded an Arts Council bursary to work with video in my department at Maidstone College of Art in the mid-seventies. Later, from 1980, as head of time-based media at the Jan van Eyck Academy, Maastricht, Holland, she enthusiastically organised international seminars and exhibitions. Her work in association with Madelon Hooykas will be remembered as of profound importance in the developing European video art scene."

Sue Hall, another colleague from the early days of European video scene said:

"From one of Elsa & Madelon's art videos I remember the chaotic tranquillity & soothing rhythm of breaking waves. That's the image I see when I think of Elsa. Compact, dark, intense, clever & a completely original artist. On her own path, with Madelon, a unique talent whose art could immerse an audience in her world."

Elsa was an artist, inspirational teacher, and profound thinker. One of her ex-students Justin Bennett, now an established new media artist, offers the following thoughts:

"I met Elsa for the first time in 1991 through a mysterious bullet hole in the window of a gallery she and Madelon were exhibiting in. Although I was a fan of their work since seeing the grey, grainy photos in an old LYC booklet, the meeting was the start of a long, though sporadic relationship. I studied with Elsa the next year at the Jan Van Eyck Akademie in Maastricht, and thereafter collaborated occasionally by making soundtracks for their work. Elsa was a great teacher – one who didn't have to say very much to get me thinking. Sometimes her comments could be completely off the wall, and only much later it would dawn on me what she had meant.

Steve Partridge

The New Girl

Pilvi Takala and Lucy McKenzie

L. I just read *Event on Garnethill*, and found it very interesting, particularly because I have a close relationship to the art school and Garnethill area. In 2001 I made a project including the neo-geo murals that got painted over last summer beside the student union at GSA, and am interested in the community projects since the 1970s. I'm glad that you identify this place as an intense site for enquiry.

Your project seems concerned with structures which produce identity and the misuse by individuals of the inherent rules contained therein to expose these structures. In the form of a book documenting an action it asserts itself as an experiment in cause and effect, and is an ascetic, matter of fact account of what happened and its consequences. The reader of the documentation is denied immediate access to the drama implied by what took place, and does not get the satisfaction of witnessing a young female artist dressed up as a schoolgirl. There are barriers in place to stop it entering the bloodstream too fast.

In this respect it reminds me very much of the book "A Glasgow Gang Observed" by James Patrick published in 1973. Patrick, a young sociologist, infiltrates a late '50's Maryhill Young Team, and conveys in a dry and unexploitative manner what he experienced, and postulates on what social conditions are required to create intense gang culture. In the end the sociological study has as much tension as something using fictional tropes. In regard to your project taking place so specifically to Glasgow using its social ambits, currently I am living in Brooklyn which is made up of very concentrated communities. My area is African American close to Hassidic Jews, Poles, Italians and gentrification hipsters in Williamsburg, and I could imagine a similar experiment here. Though unlike Glasgow, New York is historically built on a dense population of different racial and religious groups, and relies on a certain level of tolerance to be able to function at all. Glasgow, while suffering from chronic racism, is nowhere near the same type of extreme. Your project highlights how much in Glasgow codified dress defines class and allegiance.

Firstly, perhaps you could tell me something about the decisions you made in what to present and what to leave out in documenting your action?

P. When I started the project I thought of the various ways of recording what happens and felt a bit inadequate. So I decided to just write down everything that happens; which is of course a bit inaccurate, but possible, since I stayed out less than half an hour at a time. I thought the final outcome might be a book already when I started, but it took a couple of months after the event to decide how to deal with what happened. Firstly I wanted to do something visually effective, but as I didn't have a possibility to use any images of the school kids; I would have never got permission from the school. I didn't want to use an image of me in the uniform both because it just felt too obvious and I wanted to avoid the feeling that dressing up as a school girl was something that I enjoyed, some kind of fetish. It wouldn't have made any sense to dress up in the uniform if the St Aloysius kids weren't around, so a photo of me alone in the uniform didn't make any sense either. Actually I really hated to wear that thing, the three days were a total horror, I couldn't sleep, but it was far too interesting to just stop doing it.

So, I had a diary about what happened, but no images, which felt a bit boring. I tried to keep the writing as short as possible and add images which would help to explain what happened. I realised that the project would seem very critical towards St Aloysius, which I didn't want to stress, so I tried to make the text personal and neutral as much as possible. I also wanted to avoid the impression that my project would be a scientific research trying to prove something, so I ended up somewhere between research and a personal diary. The book actually tells more about me than St. Aloysius.

L. I didn't think that St Aloysius seemed to be shown in a particularly bad perspective, though the details outlined in the school guide about dress are of course rather hilarious, and underscore an idea of scholastic propriety which seems Dickensian in the face of events in continental Europe regarding the wearing of headscarves and other religious symbols. I interpreted that St Aloysius functioned as an institution to mirror the GSA, as a site of freedom *a priori*. It seems relevant at this time to draw attention to the art school's proximity to an elitist private institution – the geographical location is metaphoric in the wider sense. I don't get the impression that you were placing them in opposition to one another, rather, identifying and exploiting something obvious; the assumption that the two schools are symbolic of different worlds and how romantically this is maintained. Your project highlights this with more insight than the standard equation of art with commerce.

In the UK, art students are generally several years younger than their European counterparts and could feasibly go straight from St Aloysius into GSA, crossing the invisible social perimeters you wished to aggravate. Was your project meant to be critical about institutions in general? Or more focused on the notion of borders?

P. It was more about the borders. I've never been very critical about institutions; I guess my experience has been in general good. Of course when it gets as extreme as St Aloysius, I can't help thinking critically about it as well. Mainly I was just amazed to see the green army on Garnethill; I thought it was very beautiful but also weird. I was more curious than critical, there must be good things about these kinds of strict rules, although I wouldn't put my kid in a school like that...

L. It's obvious that a sexual component in the action could be ascertained, because of the contemporary commodification of young women, particularly schoolgirls. Was this central to your experiment?

P. I came to think about how much my project has to do with sexuality after the event, and the

The windows facing my door

3rd January 2004

3.15 pm
My class finishes before theirs, but some boys have gotten out early. One of them passes by as I'm at the corner of Renfrew Street and Scott Street, surrounded by my classmates. I just say, "oh no" and don't move, we look each other in the eye both a bit confused, he double checks my clothing. He keeps staring at me, he even turns around when he's already behind me. I head home to change. The Hill Street classrooms are still full and a girl points her finger at me. She's in the window with somebody. I decide to be more precise about my timing in future; to go out just after they are out of the classrooms, and get back in just before them.

British way of being over protective with children wasn't very clear to me when I started. I was quite confused for a while, trying to think over what the hell was I doing and how to present it. With the issue of sexuality I came to the conclusion that it wasn't my motivation or concern in the first place, it's just something that comes along inevitably and something I didn't want to stress in the final presentation. I actually thought that what I was doing was quite harmless, although I knew it would probably piss St Aloysius off a little. Dressing up in the uniform for me was about crossing a border and trying to communicate over it, to get somewhere in a grey area.

L. Was the British hysterical tendency towards children and sexuality something noticeably alien to you?

P. Yes it was. Things are much more relaxed in Finland in that sense, but of course we haven't had a lot of paedophilia cases to scare people. As a Finn it also feels really weird to make children dress up in these uniforms. It was only afterwards I realized how many issues my project touches and how it could be seen, which was partly because of strong responses to the project from other people.

L. What types of responses did you get from different people? An open letter sent to people in a range of professions requesting a response was included in the book, making it clear that the repercussions and interpretations are an important part of the project.

P. While doing the action schoolmates said that I should be careful; I could get into a lot of trouble, get sued or something. Then afterwards, when GSA got the angry phone call from St Aloysius, I got told that I should never do anything without permission and even if I'm not breaking the law I'm breaking unwritten rules and offending other people; doing things like this is childish and unprofessional and I should be more responsible. I was also explained how much my event had to do with sexuality, even if I didn't want that, and how it seemed just very perverted that somebody adult would want to dress up in a uniform and hang around school kids without a reason. But of course there was also people who thought what I've done is interesting in many ways; some people who knew the school seemed to get pleasure from the fact that somebody did something to challenge St Aloysius (and incidentally the art school). It was also clear that nobody British would have done this and often people started to tell me about their experiences with school uniforms as a kid when they heard what I've done.

As I expected, I didn't get many responses to the letter, but the ones I did get were quite interesting. I had a private detective calling me right when he got the letter and I had a nice conversation with him. When he finally worked out that the event really happened and I told him where, he thought it was super exciting. I also got a nice letter from a sociologist, outlining all the issues my project touches, and I had a conversation with a psychologist as well. Then there was just a couple of no-answers, one from the Supreme Court. I thought all of this was very interesting for me, but too much to include in the book.

L. I find it hard to imagine a native Glaswegian artist making this work. Because sexuality is such an under-explored and under-discussed subject, and because these social borders are just accepted. The site of the Aloysius uniform shop was that of the Women's Library before it moved down to the Trongate, and perhaps in general the area round and context of the art school are just too symbolically loaded. Could this work have been made somewhere else?

P. I'm sure I could have done the same thing somewhere else, but it was luckily quite an extreme and closed community that I found on Garnethill. The same kind of situations exist in many places, but it seemed to be very strong in Glasgow. I haven't had the feeling that I want to do a similar thing somewhere else, since I can't think of a better place.

L. Can you tell me something about your practice and how this project relates or develops from other works?

P. My practise isn't very easy to describe as a whole, there's a lot of different things, which is very normal to a young person I guess, but there's a work I made in 2000, when I was 19, which I think relates to this. It's *Amusementpark*, a one minute video based on a childhood memory, where two kids (girls) are in an amusement park and go to the toilet to touch tongues. You can see stills of this in the frame website: www.frame-fund.fi/aom/takala/index.shtml

Like *Event on Garnethill*, *Amusementpark* was something I could do without being questioned because I am a young woman. It would be a whole different thing or impossible to do for a man. I'm not very good in making links between my works, but at least the using of my gender and age is quite obvious.

L. I had the same experience when I was an art student and was looking at gymnastics as source material for paintings. I would watch the practising children at the sport centre, and enjoyed feeling aware of my status as a young woman, and what this permitted. It seems important in your work to capitalise on these kinds of social assignations, because this is as much about recognising a border and transgressing it as the Garnethill project in entirety. How far were you willing to go with the project?

P. I really didn't know how things would work out, but after the first day in the uniform I thought it could go on for weeks. I had these rules I wanted to follow (which I ended up breaking a bit): not to lie, stay in public areas and not to approach anybody myself, so my idea was to go on as long as I can within the rules. I expected the kids to discover me before the teachers, since I assumed they would eventually ask me who I was. I was interested to know what the kids would do with the fact that I'm an outsider. I could easily guess what the teachers would do and I tried to avoid them. So I guess I was willing to break my rules to keep the project going on, since I entered the private area in order to avoid the teacher. I really don't know how far I would have been willing to go, since this is all that happened. But for example, I didn't dress up in the uniform again after the teacher got me, I could have tried to go on, but I really thought it was enough for the time being.

Event on Garnethill is held in the collection of the British Library, and can be requested from any public library in the UK. The Mitchell Library, Glasgow holds reference copies, and the book is also available for loan from libraries in Finland.

Making Space for Culture(s) in Boomtown

Some Alternative Futures for Development, Ownership and Participation in Leeds City Centre

Paul Chatterton & Rachael Unsworth

Introduction

In attempting to find its feet in the post-industrial world, over the last ten years Leeds has mobilised an extremely positive and upward image for itself, which we summarise through the idea of 'boomtown'. It now styles itself as 'Leeds: the UK's favourite city' (see www.leeds.gov.uk). However, amongst this hubbub of self-congratulation, what we explore here are the less sanguine aspects of attempts to make spaces for cultures in the city's centre (see Hannigan, 1998; Zukin, 1995; Chatterton & Hollands 2003). The context for this discussion, as highlighted in the introduction to this volume, is the two contradictory uses of culture within urban regeneration (Evans & Ford, 2003). The first, which forms the basis of much cultural planning rhetoric is, as Williams (1976) suggested, that 'culture' encompasses intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development as well as works and practices of intellectual and artistic endeavour. Hence, culture is an essential part in everyday life, be it in the home, at work or in the street. The second, which often describes the reality of cultural policy in action, sees culture as an asset or resource that can be harnessed to generate property, income and jobs and promote places. Making spaces for cultures means managing activities that fall into these two definitions. It is for this reason that we focus on the need for *cultures* in the plural, to stress how – left to market forces – mono-dimensional definitions, based upon revenue-generating activity, usually predominate. In this paper, we outline the cultural strategies and activities that have emerged in the urban core of boomtown Leeds.[1] Rather than simply reciting what happened and why, and highlighting problems and pitfalls, here we ask what the barriers are to doing cultures differently. We conclude by asking how harnessing cultures could make a genuine difference to social equality while fostering creative and dissenting interpretations of the ways we live our urban lives. Here, we offer some practical alternatives that could be rolled out to make more spaces for different ideas and practices of cultures in boomtown Leeds.

The Growth of Culture in Boomtown Leeds

Leeds' growth is premised on a desire to move up a league in the national and European urban hierarchy: 'Going up a league as a city making Leeds an internationally competitive city, the best place in the country to live, work and learn, with a high quality of life for everyone' (Leeds Initiative, 2004).

At face value, Leeds has been relatively successful in this. It has been able to weather economic recession and move away from its industrial legacy relatively painlessly. Between 1981 and 1998 over 52,000 jobs were created and the workforce grew by 17% – higher than almost anywhere else in the UK (Leeds City Council, 2002). A boom in high-value residential, office and retail property in the centre continues and investment opportunities have soared. While the number of commercial investment properties in the central area has remained relatively stable, their capital value increased from £17 billion in 1981 to over £102 billion in 2002 (IPD, 2003). Leeds has become Britain's third financial centre after London and Edinburgh and has emerged as one of Britain's 'core cities', which are claimed to be economic drivers behind UK competitiveness (ODPM, 2004; Charles *et al.*, 1999). Clearly, this does not mean that the city has done away with unemployment, social polarisation or physical dereliction. The obvious inner-city deprivation, ringing the prosperous core, is one of the most pressing problems.

Leeds' policy approach, like that of most other big cities, has been to mobilise a new partnership approach to urban governance, create active relationships between the public, private and voluntary sectors, 24 hour activity, vigorous place marketing and a move to more entrepreneurial rather than mere managerial functions (Harvey, 1989; Haughton & Williams, 1996; Heath & Stickland, 1997). The main partnership is the Leeds Initiative, established in 1990 and now acting as the Local Strategic Partnership which all local areas are required to have. This partnership, coupled with a 'moderate' (read business-friendly) political approach, has helped to capture new investments and give Leeds a new look to the outside world.

Culture, the arts and, more broadly, entertainment and nightlife, were all recognised early on as playing key roles in Leeds' post-industrial makeover. Strange (1996) notes that this was done through a pragmatic, business-oriented approach based upon property initiatives, promotional activities and developing established events. Much of this approach was personality driven, through people like Councillor Bernard Atha and Jude Kelly from the West Yorkshire Playhouse. Jon Trickett, council leader between 1989 and 1996, also guided the Council into a proactive (some would say survivalist) approach to the future of the city centre. Hosting the first 24 Hour City Conference in 1993, a vision was articulated for the city around ideas of Europeanness (especially through allusions to being the 'Barcelona of the north'), 24 hour activity, café society and city centre living, many of which are shorthand for an ideal city based on creativity, inclusion and prosperity (Trickett, 1994). A French boules court, along with chess tables, for example, have been built in a new public square in the business district, while the Council has established an annual European Street Market and German/Belgian festival. Interestingly, it was one of the city's few small, independent, rather than corporate, bars who organised the beer festival. Over this period, then, an ambitious 'events strategy', '24 Hour City Initiative', and commitment to animating the city centre emerged. Emphasis was placed on street legibility, improving street furniture, lighting and public transport, although clearly much of this is geared towards consumer spending rather than cultural activity *per se*. Leeds also has a significant creative industries sector comprising those employed in advertising, publishing, media, software, design and crafts.[2]

Compared with other British core cities, Leeds has a fairly small number of cultural and arts facilities and providers, although this stock does continue to grow.[3] Only the West Yorkshire Playhouse has developed a serious commitment to outreach and educational programmes. Throughout the 1990s, Leeds pursued several flagship projects geared to improving the city's external image, many of which resulted from London decentralisation. These included the relocation of part of the Royal Armouries, the attraction of retail giant Harvey Nichols, and the development of Quarry Hill based around the relocation of the NHS Executive. Lottery funding also helped to create a new public square for the Millennium. This £12 million project, funded by the Council and the Millennium Commission, complete with movable stage and underground logistics area, highlights many of the ambiguities regarding the city's approach to culture and public space. Originally, dubbed the 'people's square', the City Council sought to ensure that nobody should be excluded on the basis of price. However, many events are ticketed, and bylaws have been drawn up to restrict certain activities. Some now call it the Council's 'posh patio' (Figure 1). In its favour, it does host a variety of events aimed at a fairly broad section of social groups.[4]

Figure 1. 'The posh patio', a.k.a. The Millennium Square.

- Rhythms of the City, which started 1993 runs for a month in the summer bringing a broad programme of street entertainment
- Hyde Park Unity Day, annually in August which showcases local artists and is focused upon community building
- The annual Chapeltown West Indian Carnival in August based around the city's afro Caribbean cultures.
- The St Valentine's Day Carnival establish in 1992 in the city centre, but now moved out to the inner city.
- The International Film Festival in October.
- FuseLeeds in March 2004, a new biennial music festival based around the growing Quarry Hill cultural quarter, showcasing music from jazz and pop to classical while developing a community education and fringe programme.
- 'Shift: looking beneath the everyday city' event in May 2004, during which a group of artists transformed underused retail space on the fringe of the city centre, provided a programme of events including recipe tours of the city and an investigation into emotional responses to multi-storey car parks.

Figure 2. Cultural events in Leeds.

Figure 3. Vaisakhi, the annual Sikh festival in Leeds.

Figure 4. City Centre living Leeds style. Work hard, play hard, spend hard.

An impressive programme of more populist festivals and street events has been established for several years (see Figures 2 and 3). However, such events often operate outside official policy and in spite of, often restrictive, legislation.

The most noticeable feature of Leeds' cultural coming of age has perhaps been the influx of thousands of high spending, city living professionals who have fuelled a demand for high value added goods and services in the centre (see Figure 4).[5]

Type of outlet	Number 1991	Number 2003
Catering and entertainment in LS1 and LS2		
Restaurants	50	80
Bars and Public Houses	55	110
Cafes	61	110
Hotels	11	17
Night Clubs and Casinos	13	21

Source: Leeds City Council, Environmental Health 2002.

Table 1. Growth of entertainment in Leeds centre

This is perhaps most evident, not in the arts and cultural sector which represents a very small percentage of city centre 'cultural' and entertainment activity (Chesterton, 2003), but in 'informal leisure' in the city centre: the shops and café bars during the daytime,[6] and at night, the bars, nightclubs and restaurants (Chatterton & Hollands, 2003). As Table 1 shows, there has been a huge increase in entertainment facilities. Over the 1990s, Leeds was put on the cultural map, not through high culture but through popular culture, emerging as the UK's Number One clubbing city. The Exchange Quarter acts as the city's coolest entertainment district, and clubs like the Warehouse, Back to Basics and the Mint Club have given Leeds a national reputation for innovation in clubland.

Even with this range of activity in mind, compared with other policy sectors, culture is an area where the city drifted over the 1990s with policy pursued in an opportunistic and piecemeal fashion. Cultural success came more by luck than good judgement, with some notable institutional bickering between the Leeds Initiative and the City Council (Strange, 1996). It was only in December 2002 that a five year Cultural Strategy was published by Leeds Culture, a partnership within the Leeds Initiative (see Leeds Cultural Partnership, 2002). Its opening words, 'culture is what makes cities tick' sets the tone for this ambitious and wide-ranging document. Going on to state that 'no single organisation can develop and implement a cultural strategy', it contends that the overall aim of the strategy is to promote the 'cultural wellbeing of the area'. It adopts a challenging and wide definition of 'culture':

"Culture does not belong to large institutions. Culture exists through people – it is about people and how we choose to express ourselves, interact with each other and communicate with the world."

Leeds Cultural Partnership, 2002, p. 12

Such an ambitious strategy is likely to receive close scrutiny in the coming years. A concern is that the city centre will remain a key area for the development of cultural activity as it is accessible to the maximum number of people, contains the greatest concentration of existing investment and is most appealing to visitors due to its critical mass. Further, one offshoot of the strategy is the 'Cultural Facilities Task Group', which remains embedded in property-based routes to culture. Acting as consultants to undertake a feasibility study into major new cultural facilities, in the words of its chairperson, its role is to 'ensure that we get the right facilities to 'go up a league' otherwise we shall fall behind other cities'.[7] Voicing concerns about such an approach, Peter Connolly, director of Yorkshire Design Group, highlighted that Leeds' renaissance is still about putting up buildings rather than the way the city functions, noting that neither the Council nor the Leeds Initiative is in charge of the processes going on in the city centre (Leeds Civic Trust, 2004).

What are the Barriers to a More Creative Cultural Policy?

Within local authorities there is no shortage of good ideas, good will and genuine commitment to using culture creatively to tackle issues such as social exclusion, accessibility, and meeting what are perceived as local needs. A whole raft of more inclusive rhetoric has filtered into policy documents covering sustainable development, culture, social inclusion and participation. Local authority corporate plans, planning policy guidelines and regional strategies are replete with good intentions and attractive-sounding visions and mission statements. The key question here, then, is not why there is a lack of innovative and creative ideas in the cultural sphere (clearly there is), but why so little of it is translated into practice. Below we examine some of these barriers to putting the creative rhetoric of cultural policy into practice, and from this suggest how localities can proceed to do things differently. Clearly, policy changes are constrained at different levels – by local circumstances and wider political-economic contexts (Chatterton & Bradley, 2000), hence some barriers are more surmountable than others.

First, local authorities work within frameworks of best practice, best value and statutory responsibilities, and even with the best intentions degrees of freedom are severely limited. Local authority restructuring under the Local Government Act 2000 has shifted decision-making away from committee to cabinet-style structures emphasising the role of a few super councillors. Moreover, the emergence of a quango culture and public– private partnerships has made it less clear where executive power really lies. Restructuring of the planning system in the manner proposed by the Government in its 2001 Green Paper 'Planning: delivering a fundamental change' may result in legislation that will further constrain local authorities in addressing traditional notions such as the 'public good'. Urban authorities are also constrained by ongoing funding shortfalls and the struggle to find sufficient funds for public services. Increasingly, funding for specific projects has to be won in competition against bidders from other cities. In such a context, policies will only rise to the surface and be implemented if they are economically viable.

The 'bottom line' profit motives of the development and property market is a second substantial barrier. Only activities that are financially viable and offer stable returns are selected. Within a property market where publicly-quoted companies are limited by fiduciary duty to shareholders, there is little scope for smaller, riskier cultural projects. Competition for scarce centrally located sites usually means that the successful bid will be the one which has the greatest completed value. Developments that emerge are a function of the amount and quality of floorspace in 'use categories' that are perceived to be most in demand, rather than creating a balanced public infrastructure.[8]

Third, the lack of public ownership of physical space in central areas is a major barrier to developing a range of cultural activities. City Councils are under pressure to maximise the income from land disposals and this inevitably means attracting development proposals that will add the most value. With a restricted city centre property portfolio of their own, the Council cannot move beyond issuing 'development briefs' that specify what will be acceptable on each site.

The dominant discourse of the city-region model also throws up particular challenges for doing things differently locally. This model is predicated on an inter-regional hierarchy of functions between specialised tasks. The eight core cities at the top of the urban hierarchy take on high value-added functions, with smaller centres taking on lower level functions (ODPM, 2004). Within this model,

Leeds undertakes high value-added, core functions of a national and regional importance in finance, banking, culture, retail and housing. Undertaking these core functions means that less attention is paid to lower value activities and employment that may cater for lower income groups. It is for localities lower down the city-region hierarchy, or certainly areas beyond the centre, to do these.

At the wider level, local authorities work in a context of inter-urban competition, market-led economics and representative democracy, which present a multitude of limitations to change at the local level. For example, the ability of local authorities to deviate from national guidelines and policy agendas, opt out of competing with other similar urban centres, hand over entire budgets to neighbourhood assemblies, decentralise or renationalise service provision, or pursue non-market forms of growth is restricted, and probably economically suicidal. The reality of contemporary urban governance is that in a highly inter-connected, networked society and economy, there is very little real scope for independent and creative action and policy formation.[9]

From 'Dreaming the Impossible', to 'The Art of the Possible'

Here, taking the current culture offer in Leeds as the starting point, we seriously ask what alternatives can be tabled and achieved? Visioning events and futurology have become common practice for policy-making. Questions are asked such as: where do we want to be in, say, five years time, and what do we need to do to get there? Such processes have gained legitimacy through public consultation and participation. However, such events rarely cast the net wide enough to include the full range of possibilities and scenarios and they draw some potentially specious conclusions (Clarke, 2003). Seldom – despite the efforts of those running consultation exercises – do they include the voices of the most marginal or questioning. Many people-centred ideas or traditions of popular architecture and planning are rarely heard. Moreover, many sacred cows such as profit maximisation, raising production and consumer spending, and wage labour are not up for negotiation. The current practicalities of competitive-oriented, market-led democracies are a sober reminder of what can be achieved.

The questions, then, depend on the balance between radicalism and reformism. Instituting a social and economic climate based upon public ownership of space and resources, active redistribution of wealth, environmental sustainability and promoting use-value rather than profit-based activities would pave the way for many changes, most of which are outside our vision and policy frameworks. Such ideals aside, below are some pointers at what could be achieved within current frameworks.

Like all urban centres, there is a vast array of activity going on in Leeds, which changes across the rhythms of the day and night. Hundreds of groups meet in pubs, churches, schools and halls discussing topics from boat building to ecological direct action. Sub-cultural groups (the goths, the skaters, the kids from the estates, the homeless) use city streets to meet, chat, pose and play out their identities. Bars, restaurants and clubs provide a backdrop for creative encounters for the wealthy and the poor. That said, it is important to note the real narrowing of choice and activity in city centres. This is particularly evident in terms of nightlife. While the first round of developments in new style and café bars and nightclubs was led by individual entrepreneurs, this has since been overtaken by a surge in growth from larger corporate operators. One key issue here is how to stop the corporate carpet-bombing of the night-time economy and maintain mixed-use, small-scale entrepreneurial activity. Hence, a concern

Figure 5.
The Electric Press.
Excite your senses
... if you can afford it.

is that the 'cultural offer' of Leeds is heavily biased towards higher value-added activities that tend towards a more passive, mass cultural experience, which despite efforts to the contrary, remains dominated by alcohol consumption and commercial music in corporate-owned branded bars, highly regulated by price and dress codes (Hollands & Chatterton, 2003). Moreover, the focus on the city centre, geared increasingly towards business and tourist users, has diminished the sense of community involvement in cultural events (Strange, 1996).

It is disingenuous to say that development in Leeds is accessible and successful just because thousands go to multiplexes, theme bars and fast food restaurants. Stimulating demand for more creative activities depends upon creating policy that will develop options outside the mainstream. Moreover, there are many people who are priced out, policed out or feel out of place, so do not enter the city centre. Certain demographic groups (children, the elderly, poorer people, women, minority ethnic groups) are effectively excluded, or at least, not provided for specifically (Chatterton & Hollands 2003). 'Sub-cultures' – alternatives to the mainstream – are not catered for and are even discouraged. Overall, the Cultural Strategy may talk of a wish to see these groups included, but in reality there is a tension between what is desirable in theory and what emerges through a process of market-led development in practice. It is vital to ask non-participants why they do not come, and if not, what types of culture and entertainment they would like to see. Even asking this type of question to people who live on council estates would be a major step forward for local authorities, the police or developers. While the 'dual city' phenomenon is perhaps too simple to describe a large, complex, multi-speed, urban area like Leeds, it does remain useful to highlight the huge disparities between those who can easily gain access to the city centre – as operators and consumers – and those who are excluded.

Many future plans for redevelopment do little to hide their commercial focus. Current plans to develop a large site to the north and south of Eastgate do include some public open space and links to adjacent inner city areas, but the main elements of the site will be aimed at mainstream Making Space for Culture(s) in Boomtown 371 commercial occupiers and their customers. To date, development briefs have been formulated with a large anchor tenant in mind. Moreover, the cultural quarter on the northern side of the city centre, faced on all sides by corporate bars and restaurants, is committed to externally-focused and high value-added development. On the old Electric Press building, for example, an advertising hoarding proclaiming a 'superb new theatre and conference venue with associated high quality restaurants and offices' sets the tenor for the development, and the drift away from the inclusive rhetoric of the Cultural Strategy (Figure 5).

However, there are spaces that are intended, at least partly, to be used by a range of people. The new Millennium Square is a useful example here. It exists in a difficult intersection between controlled/secure and open/spontaneous. It does not have a fixed meaning, as it is used by various social groups and interests, ranging from commercial to community. There is no defined policy stating what kinds of uses are acceptable or unacceptable, and anyone can use the square for an arts performance or event, within the parameters of Council policy (Sandle, 2001). Of course, there is unlikely to be agreement about the threshold beyond which certain activities become unacceptable, so at the margins, there will be conflict. A key aim for the success of the square is to go beyond officially organised events to give a sense that the space is not just civic controlled but has broad public ownership.

There is an ongoing dispute, for example, between skateboarders, other users and the Council's management. There are those who see the freedom to skateboard as a legitimate and important use of the square and others who view it as a hazard, nuisance, damaging to the environment and an intimidation. As Sandle (2001, p. 12) notes:

"The council itself is uncompromising and has gained a legal injunction to try and stop the skateboarders. The resolution or containment of such conflicts will be an important influence on how the square develops democratically and some issues may require imaginative compromise."

Various mechanisms could be developed here – citizens' panels and user forums that bring together skaters, young people, the council, developers and the police is one example. Finding ways of encouraging and showcasing art forms such as skating and graffiti are other possible solutions. This is part of accepting and understanding various sub-cultural groups and how they could be encouraged alongside accepted ones.

An important caveat is how to support cultural activity on the creative, sub-cultural fringe without restricting it. The key is to create genuinely independent spaces where creativity, dissent and critique can flourish, while letting go of fears associated with the growth of subversive cultures. A wider problem is that of commodification and hence sanitisation of cultural forms into the commercial mainstream (Hannigan, 1998). At some point, we also need to face the difficult issue that whoever is making or influencing policy imposes moral and aesthetic judgements on what should happen in city centres.

An 'art of the possible' generates many new ideas. Pragmatically, revitalising culture in the short-term means working with what there is in terms of spaces, ideas and funding, but aiming to create 'win-win situations'. Here, a series of connections need to be made – between different social groups and ages and between the prosperous centre and poorer outer areas. One of the most important points is that briefs and plans from developers need to take on board seriously the idea of culture as critical engagement and encounter rather than passive consumerism. Through this, priority would be given to spaces for creative engagement, spaces where people can become active participants in the creation of cultures – be it art, music, food, dancing, singing, or debating. Urban space can be used more flexibly, especially throughout the day to maximise activity. For example, bars and nightclubs are not used during the day, while public buildings are not used at night. Local authorities could also play a stronger role. Rather than permitting the assembly of large sites for large developers, smaller-sized property units should be maintained through planning guidelines, to encourage a greater diversity of products and opportunities for small-scale, local entrepreneurs and riskier start-ups. Such property patterns underpin the vitality of European cities, and should be a key focus if Leeds is serious about its 'Europeanness'. However, due to its industrial urban form based upon an urban core, arterial routes and detached residential suburbs, there are serious limits to Europeanising life in Leeds.

One of the sticking points has been generational divides and associated moral panics. Cohorts of young people have always congregated in city centres, but increasingly encounter restrictive policing, surveillance and moral disapproval (Lees, 2003). New legislation such as Anti-Social Behaviour Orders have been used to restrict the movement and activities of certain young people, along with homeless people

Figure 6. A checklist for city centre cultural developments and activities.

- Do developments retain a range of small, cheap units to allow a range of small-scale entrepreneurs and more experimental activity?
- Is there a real commitment to social housing quotas on new developments?
- Is equal weight given to small-scale investors in terms of land acquisitions, legislation, licensing etc.?
- Is there equal commitment to the economic and social elements of development briefs?
- Are non-alcohol-related uses been sought for ground floors of residential buildings?
- Is there provision of quality open spaces within new developments to maximise opportunities for meeting, appreciation of public art, open air events etc?
- Are opening hours of cultural venues being maximised to show commitment to 24 hour activity that is not alcohol related?
- Are informal spaces for art exhibitions and installations being encouraged?
- Is there a commitment to participation rather than policing?
- Are event strategies focused on local as well as national/international performers?
- Are public spaces offered on flexible and cheap terms for non-traditional users?
- Are developments sensitive to human scale? Here 'minor planning' might be as appropriate as 'master planning'.

and beggars, who are seen to be deviant, or simply not consuming.[10] In Leeds, for example, goths and skaters are regularly moved on from the Calls and Corn Exchange areas due to perceived negative impacts on consumers, while in April 2004 the Council gave the Big Issue Magazine one month to stop its sellers begging and aggressively selling, or it would ban them from the city centre.

Much can be done to bring social groups and generations together. Child-friendly areas in bars and night-clubs for teenagers are a start but policy could go much further. Central spaces where the city's young people could represent their own lives, through music or theatre for example, would create bridges between generations and classes. Competitions or festivals that attract and involve local children in creating drama, art, music, sculpture and new media could be developed along with opportunities for showcasing the winners in central public spaces such as Millennium Square. Such activity can increase pride and self-esteem and give young people a greater sense of ownership of, and possibly respect for, of city space.

Spaces that celebrate rather than police and restrict the creativity of young people, and which offer activities away from both consumerism and an alcohol mono-culture, are a real priority. In essence, it is about making time and space for sub-culture, critique and dissent. None of these concern maximising returns on investment, increasing consumer spending or creating an appealing external city image for tourists and business elites, but they are the life-blood of cities and cannot be ignored. The case also has to be made that broadening cultural activity does bring social and economic benefits, albeit tangentially and thus are difficult to measure. In areas such as policing, safety and health there could be lower costs and positive spin-offs from Leeds as a place where there is genuine diversity and tolerance rather than crime and fear.

Much creativity occurs in what Ray Oldenburg (1999) calls 'third places' – the first being the home and the second being work. There is no set format for such places but they often provide space for small-scale, live acts, sell locally produced food and drinks, and offer space for information. Such places should be inexpensive, welcoming, a place of encounter. They are crucial to community life for a number of reasons: they are distinctive informal gathering places, they make the citizen feel at home, they nourish human contact, they help create a sense of place and civic pride, they provide numerous opportunities for serendipity, they allow people to relax and unwind, they encourage sociability instead of isolation, and they enrich public life and democracy. Considering the breadth of these roles, the disappearance of third places like the corner shop and neighbourhood café is unhealthy for our cities. The pub is perhaps the UK's quintessential third place. But many of these are being rationalised, corporatised and sanitised (Chatterton & Hollands 2003) and have really been more about alcohol than community. In Leeds, the development of the city centre has been so much led by a pro-active private sector, that third- and public-spaces have been squeezed out of proposals (Unsworth & Smales, 2004).

In light of the above discussion, a cultural checklist emerges that can be used to gauge the likely effects of developments (Figure 6).

Signs of Change?

There are several signs of change in Leeds in terms of cultural policy making. Whatever the outcome, there is now a cultural strategy in place. The City Centre Management Team is also no longer in charge of Events and Leisure Services now has responsibility for events across the city. The councillor responsible for Leisure Services also has education and youth services within her portfolio. This should make it easier to link communities from the whole city into city centre activities, and already there are plans, for instance, to showcase local groups in central spaces. Further, the new city museum, which is to open in 2007, will be as much for the people of Leeds as for visitors to the city. The layout and content aims to involve as many kinds of people as possible and draw them into further active exploration of their cultural heritage.

As mentioned earlier, the Council, concerned about the negative aspects of the city centre at night, commissioned consultants to suggest ways of achieving a night-time economy that is 'accessible, attractive and safe to use by all' (Chesterton, 2003, p. 3).[11] This amounts to a series of 'containment' policies that should, over time, lead to a city centre less dominated by alcohol-related evening activity. Other recommendations did include giving consideration to independent operators and businesses within the city centre (Chesterton, 2003, p. 77). While there are a few concrete ways of doing this, one tool to achieve this could be stipulations on plot ratios, which would limit the density of development, prevent high rises and keep the overall scale of buildings smaller.

A newly constituted Property Forum is also bringing together a range of people who are charged with the task of thinking innovatively about (amongst other issues) cultural and additional city centre facilities, and quality spaces and places. Membership of the special working groups of the forum is open to any interested people who consider that they have ideas to contribute.

Conclusions

So what kind of space is boomtown Leeds making for cultures? Leeds, like all cities, is walking a difficult path, attempting to mobilise culture to the ends of both economic growth and social inclusion. Clearly it is not going to please everyone. In many areas, Leeds has developed a fairly broad package of events, in which barriers between performer and spectator, producer and consumer have occasionally broken down. However, many gaps remain, especially considering its status at the centre of a major city region. There is no city-centre art house cinema, only one small-scale commercial gallery, little flexible space for artists, the number of independent bars is diminishing, and public and green spaces are few and far between. Gaps in creative and fringe cultural activity are important. As one of Britain's eight core cities, Leeds needs a spread of functions ranging from high value-added to more small-scale, experimental and creative activities. This range of activities makes sense, especially considering it is the transport hub of a large sub-region. But the city has followed a route of encouraging high value-added investment in its ambitions to enter a European super league. In not providing spaces and opportunities for smaller, riskier activity, it has also overlooked the fact that this kind of activity is the lifeblood of today's large vibrant metropolitan areas, especially in continental Europe.

The outcomes of cultural activity, in terms of meeting government social and economic targets, but also in terms of improving people's daily lives, are often contradictory and unpredictable. The yearly Leeds Valentine's fair is a good example. Here, Harcup (2000) asks to what extent can such cultural events actually transform participants' relations with each other and their city? While the city may be alive with activity, to what extent are unscripted spectacles, unlicensed demonstrations or critical interventions permitted in the corporate city and tolerated by new urban residents? Moreover, to what extent has Leeds used culture to harness creativity from the bottom-up, to allow us to step outside our normal lives, turn perceptions on their head and inside out, take a critical look at the city, subvert and transgress our normal social roles, glimpse alternative visions of community life, or encounter people we might not normally meet? Here, many initiatives are unlikely to welcome many youth and subcultures to take a full role within the city centre. They are likely to remain on the social and geographical margins unless those involved with economic and social development of the city are prepared to take some unusual risks.

The answers are probably that much cultural activity continues to create safe spectacles to increase the saleability of the city, rather than critically engaging with people and their problems, helping us to gain a better understanding of our daily lives and the constraints we face. Most culture is also too tied up with the act of consuming and spending, which brings with it a host of problems such as easy debt, but also the lack of environmental sustainability, corporate control of manufacturing, distribution and consumer chains, production outsourcing and sweat shop labour, and long distance transport. Without real commitment, culture usually drifts into the service of place marketing and attracting tourists. Strange (1996) warns us of the dangers here: 'corporate hospitality is not the same as culture'. Moreover, Leeds is likely to embrace the Business Improvement District (BID) model from the USA, which in practice orients public space even more closely to the needs of business users.

The recipes for great cities are widely known, by public officials as much as artists. The problem is that, as we have outlined, there remain certain blocks from property markets, statutory regulations, and law and order agendas that mean they are rarely put into practice. The bottom line is which city authority is prepared to genuinely embrace the real diversity of city life (including poverty, crime, drugs, social anxieties, dissatisfaction, pollution and alienation) within city centre cultural activities? The short answer is none. It is easier and more profitable to ignore it and concentrate culture towards a more sanitised and profitable version of city life. Moreover, a problem is ambiguity in policy-making, or rather only halfhearted commitment to certain sacred principles. For example, diversity is seen as both an obstacle to, and objective of, public policy (Lees, 2003). This is a particular issue in terms of how young people are perceived. But in the spaces which boomtown has not colonised, outlines of very different cultures can be seen; not based on profit, consumerism or maximising investment, but on people, creativity and solidarity. Ambivalence, spontaneity and dissent, on the part of the many different groups who use urban space, are not easily transferred into a cultural or events strategy, nor should they be. But they are the essence of urban cultures. This is why it remains so important that city spaces can be used in multiple ways, and not completely restricted by both regulation and the operation of the free market.

Notes

1 Due to space constraints, our focus is on urban core, as it represents the most intensively used and valued part of the city. This is not to deny the importance of cultural activity beyond the urban core, or the relationship between the two.

2 A recent study by Taylor (2003) showed that the creative industries employed just over 12,000 people in Leeds in 2001, the third highest amongst the UK's core cities. This accounts for about 3.2% of the city's workforce, with the biggest subcategories in advertising, architecture and the performing arts. The study also found that 87% of organisations employed less than 10 people but most of the employment was accounted for by a handful of large firms.

3 These include: the performing arts (the West Yorkshire Playhouse, The Grand Theatre, Opera North, the Civic Theatre, the Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Phoenix Dance, and City Varieties), art spaces (the City Art Gallery, Henry Moore Institute, Bruton Gallery), museums (the Royal Armouries which relocated from London was seen as a major coup for the city, and a new City Museum planned for 2007), an International Concert Series, free lunchtime recitals, and a media sector comprising regional headquarters of the BBC and ITV.

4 Recently, these have included a Palm Sunday procession, St Patrick's Day March and events, a Breakthrough Breast Cancer charity roadshow, a Disability Festival Day, a Sikh Festival, community arts events, a Battle of Britain Memorial Day, a Children's beach football and volley ball competition sponsored by Nike, Athletes hospitality for the British Transplant Games, open-air film and video screenings as part of the Leeds International Film Festival, open-air theatre drama presentation, as well as several commercial concerts and trade events (Sandle, 2001).

5 The growth of the city centre economy has far outstripped other parts of the urban area, and is home to 30% of all the jobs in the metropolitan area (Dutton, 2003). By 2003, only 1,805 residential units had been built in the centre, but over 8,000 more are planned, permitted or under construction, mostly along the waterfront. One third of households in the centre have incomes above £55,000 per year, with the modal price between £120,000–145,000 (Fox & Unsworth, 2003). Typically, up to 60% of developments are pre-sold at planning stage to investment consortia, often using bulk discounts, who are keen to maximise rental returns.

6 Shopping is the top reason for people coming to the city centre (Leeds Initiative, 2003).

7 Tom Morton is chair of Cultural Facilities Task Group & President of Leeds Chamber of Commerce, quoted in Leeds Financial Services Initiative Newsletter (Spring 2004, p. 3).

8 A current example in Leeds is illustrative of such tensions over private/public uses of space. Warehouse Hill, on the north bank of the River Aire, is one of the last remaining open sites on the waterfront. When a development company acquired the land, at a high cost, the development proposals consisted of high-density buildings for private occupation. However, the Civic Trust has pointed out repeatedly that granting permission for the scheme precludes the possibility of this space being used by the public. Nevertheless, the development is to go ahead according to the private developer's brief.

9 However, one locality, Hastings, has taken the bold step of prioritising growth based a strong local offer.

10 A recent campaign led by Leeds Community Safety Partnership called 'Change for the better' encourages shoppers not to give money to beggars, but instead put money into boxes which is donated to 'legitimate' charities. While this may placate many fears, such as their donations to beggars being spent on drugs, policies should be more creative than simply reducing contact between groups and making beggars less visible.

11 The recommendations include limiting and spatially concentrating licensed premises, and balancing market forces with public need; balancing the interests of the growing number of residents and revellers; limiting binge drinking; and new policing methods to minimise the disorder caused by bar and club customers.

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The Saints of the Future

Gus Abraham

We have seen men and women born in other lands join the fight for peace.

We have seen some, in their own lands, start building the long bridge that says "You are not alone",

We have seen them take action and cry out their 'Ya Basta'.

First we saw them imagine and put into practice their demands for justice,

Marching like those who sing, writing like those who shout, speaking like those who march.

–Ya basta!

Ceud mile fàilte – a hundred thousand welcomes. That's what Blair and Bush will be getting from the people of Scotland and around the world gathered to oppose their world of war, poverty and exploitation. Welcome to Scotland, the home of golf and the worst poverty rates in Britain. While diners at Andrew Fairlie's restaurant in the Gleneagles Hotel tuck in to "Roast Anjou Squab with Black Truffle Gnocchi", one in three children are born into poverty and a quarter of our senior citizens live below the poverty line. In Glasgow's Shettleston, life expectancy is 63, the same as Iraq.

Welcome to Scotland – home to all of Britain's nuclear weapons at Coulport and the strategic nuclear submarine fleet at Faslane. Our seas are littered with munitions dumps, our soil is scattered with disintegrating military bases and our air is full of the sound of fighter jets training to bomb foreign lands.

In July the leaders of the world's 'most powerful economies' will be gathering in Perthshire. Normally the home to bad-taste golfers in Pringle and check, the elite Gleneagles hotel will instead be brimming with nervous security guards, armed police and the leaders of the Global State.

In the 1970s, with the so-called oil crisis highlighting the increasing interconnectedness of the world's economies, meetings of the 'Library Group' began. Founded by the United States, this group included France, Britian and Germany, who soon invited Japan for these initial 'fireside chats'. The G7 (or Group of Seven Nations) was formed in 1975, with Canada and Italy joining; the EU joined in 1977, although it does not have the same status as national governments. Russia achieved partial membership in the group in 1998, and full membership as of 2003; thus the G7 have become the G8.

The purpose of the G8 and their summits is described as threefold: providing collective management of the world economy; reconciling globalization tensions among G8 members; and generating global political leadership 'where heads of state and government take cooperation further than their officials and ministers can' (Bayne, 2001: 23). That's brilliant isn't it?

Over the last quarter century the G8 has emerged as the central forum for global governance, and until relatively recently they have managed to meet and plan in secrecy, making decisions and controlling the systems that affect all of life on earth. But this time there's a cute twist with Tony pleading that he wants to make "Africa" and "Climate Change" top billing.

"Africa"

This is Tony's Band-Aid moment. In his eyes he's an amalgam of great world leaders and fêted "Good Celebrities" – the Saints of the Future. In Tony's head he's Ghandi (without the loin-cloth), Martin Luther King (minus the morality or the rhetorical skills) and Bono without the shades. All humble Tony has is a cleanly ironed shirt and a team of professional liars.

But, as so often with Tony's dreaming, there's a problem. As Gill Hubbard and David Miller point out in their recent book 'Arguments Against G8', Pluto Press, a collection of analysis of the G8 by leading writers and activists:

"Despite declaring himself the saviour of Africa, weapons are being sold with the blessing of the Labour government on an unprecedented scale. For instance, the government of South Africa is purchasing warships and military aircraft to the value of US $4.8 billion from the UK and other European suppliers. The UK has also sold arms to Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Zambia."

But this record should be added to George Monbiot's documentation of the Labour government's pivotal role in the privatisation of water utilities in South Africa (and especially the role of 'Saint' Clare Short), that...

"according to a study by the Municipal Services Project, [privatisation] led to almost 10 million people having their water cut off, 10 million people having their electricity cut off, and over two million people being evicted from their homes for non-payment of bills."

(http://qsilver.queensu.ca/~mspadmin/pages/Project_Publications/Reports/bell.htm)

So watch the spinning get frantic as they try and square the circle of Tony's emotional hand-wringing and much over-acted sincerity with the rape and carnage their collective policies bestow on the rest of the world. Watch too as Blue Peter politics kick-in big style: Poverty is about dark-skinned people in far-off lands who – some think – deserve our hand-outs. It's not their fault they're in a mess, but it's not ours either. It just sort of happened because, er, it's hot, and they don't have proper vaccinations or something.

As Salih Booker, director of Africa Action, describes the G8:

"Together they have a decisive influence over international financial institutions, including direct control of 46% of the votes in the World Bank and 48% of the votes in the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The G8 members similarly control other powerful international institutions, such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO).... Although their decisions may mean life or death for tens of millions with no seat at this table, there is no global body that can demand accountability from the rich-country leaders."

"Climate Change"

Climate Change might be a bit trickier. The G8's own web site is cute on this, here's an extract:

"The UK Prime Minister sees climate change as 'probably, long-term the single most important issue we face as a global community'. For this reason climate change will be a priority during the UK's G8 Presidency this year, along with Africa."

So what's the plan? Well as they themselves admit, "The G8 accounts for over 65% of global GDP and 47% of global CO^2 emissions" – or put another way, those seated around the table represent little more than one-eighth of the world's 6.2-billion people.

Tony's trouble is not to upset the others who either flatly deny there's really a problem or admit there's sort of a problem but don't want to do anything that would hamper business. So that's why Tony comes up with three great sidesteps. The trick here is to be seen to be doing something, while actually doing nothing. With this in mind his G8 statement reads:

The UK has set out three broad aims for climate change in the G8 in 2005:

• Building a solid foundation on the science. We need to further explore the relationships between greenhouse gas emissions and the associated level of climate change.

[This is a sop to the Americans. It's a duplicitous lie meant to delay action. It's morally indefensible.]

• Reaching agreement on how to speed up the science, development of technology and other measures necessary to meet the threat.

[This focus on technology is pie in the sky. It's yet another 'pipe-end' solution meant to distract from the reality that what is needed is a massive change away from our production and consumption, profit-driven economies.]

• Engage countries outside the G8 who have growing energy needs, such as China and India, both on how these needs can be met sustainably and how they can adapt to the impacts which are unavoidable.

[This is blame-shifting on an enormous scale. Of course it's good to develop and share renewable technologies, but the problem lies in the massive over-consumption of the North, not in the developing countries.]

Of course behind all this is the fact that the world's scientific community has known exactly what the problem is for years. Calling for more science is a boon to the Americans who will come up with a whole heap of horseshite from the Institute of Oil Barons, Texas, or the Research Centre Into How We Can Carry On Making Billions, Illinois.

There's some great links on the official G8 web site (www.g8.gov.uk). Take this one from the American EPA site on global warming:

"What has changed in the last few hundred years is the additional release of carbon dioxide by human activities. Fossil fuels burned to run cars and trucks, heat homes and businesses, and power factories are responsible for about 98% of U.S. carbon dioxide emissions, 24% of methane emissions, and 18% of nitrous oxide emissions. Increased agriculture, deforestation, landfills, industrial production, and mining also contribute a significant share of emissions. In 1997, the United States emitted about one-fifth of total global greenhouse gases."

In another bit on the official G8 site, they ask:

'What are the world's governments doing to tackle climate change?'

"Climate change is a global problem and requires a global solution. In 1992, the world's governments adopted an international agreement to tackle climate change, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Convention enjoys almost near universal membership with 189 countries (including all the G8 countries) having ratified it. This was followed in 1997 by the Kyoto Protocol which sets out more specific, legally-binding commitments to levels of greenhouse gas emissions. Currently, this has been ratified by 128 countries and is due to come into force on 16th February 2005."

Well, that's sort of true isn't it? Blair making the ecological crisis a centre point of this summit is a sick joke. It's like tobacco companies holding a bring-and-buy sale for cancer research.

Scientists estimate that a reduction of 70% of greenhouse emissions over this century is necessary to prevent the worst effects of climate change, including flooding, hurricanes and droughts. Yet the Kyoto pact, which is part of the United Nation's framework on climate change, only requires developed countries to reduce greenhouse emissions by 5.2% by 2012. And the United States, which is the world's biggest polluter – spurting out 5,795.6 million metric tons of carbon dioxide per annum – has refused to sign the pact.

Ultimately the British State's role in Scotland, and the Blair Government's attempt to portray themselves as champions of the world's poor, will make Tony the laughing stock of the rational world. The gap between their fantasy of enlightened hope and the reality of the Labour government's role in the New World Order will be exposed.

The G8 are met with massive resistance wherever they meet, here is a partial and incomplete guide to the protests…

Actions/Events Diary

Saturday 2nd July - Make Poverty History March, Edinburgh, from 11am

As the leaders of the world's richest countries gather in Scotland for the G8 summit, join tens of thousands of others in Edinburgh demanding trade justice, debt cancellation, and more and better aid for the world's poorest countries.

The day's events will start from 11am, and will include:

• rallies with international speakers, celebrity supporters and music

• the creation of a giant human white band around Edinburgh city centre, with staggered starts at 12pm, 1pm and 2pm - so no need to rush!

• entertainment, 'market stalls' and activities

• an opportunity for you to send your messages directly to the G8 meeting in Gleneagles

The event will be a family friendly, safe and fun day - so bring as many people as you can!

www.makepovertyhistory.org

Sunday 3rd July - "Ideas to Change the World", G8 Alternatives Summit, Edinburgh

Usher Hall, Queens Hall & Edinburgh University. Will feature prominent speakers from around the world in eight plenary sessions and more than 36 workshop/seminars. The purpose of the Alternatives Summit is to present a serious ideological challenge to the corrupt policies and ideology of the G8.

Plenary Sessions will focus on: War & Imperialism, The Attack on Civil Liberties, Africa, Climate Change, Asylum & Immigration, Nuclearism, Corporate Globalisation & Privatisation, Aid, Trade & Debt

Speakers will include: Mark Curtis, author of Web of Deceit & Unpeople; Susan George, Vice-president ATTAC France; George Monbiot, radical journalist & author; Trevor Ngwane, Anti-Privatisation Forum, South Africa; Dita Sari, President, National Workers' Struggle Indonesia; Scott Ritter, former UN Weapons Inspector; Ken Wiwa - son of Ken Saro Wiwa, executed by Nigerian government; and many others.

For more information including a list of confirmed speakers visit: www.g8alternatives.org.uk

Tickets £10/5

Contact Usher Hall for tickets 0131 228 1155

www.usherhall.co.uk

Monday 4th July - Blockade of Faslane Nuclear Weapons Base, from 7am

Non-violent direct action called by Scottish CND and Trident Ploughshares to disrupt Faslane as much as possible, primarily by blockading the entrances. Faslane is home to all four Trident submarines, Britain's own nuclear WMD Programme.

www.banthebomb.org

www.tridentploughshares.org

www.faslaneg8.com

Tuesday 5th July - "Close Dungavel, No-one is Illegal!", mass protest at Dungavel Detention Centre, Ayrshire

Dungavel is where Scotland imprisons hundreds of people, including families and children who have committed no crime. They have merely crossed borders fleeing persecution and poverty, seeking safety and freedom.

Coaches leave in the morning from Edinburgh. Shuttle-bus service from Glasgow. For more info contact Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees: glascamref@hotmail.com

www.closedungavelnow.com

Wednesday 6th-8th July - "Another World is Possible", convergence on Gleneagles.

Assemble 12noon at Gleneagles Train Station for a march to the gates of the Gleneagles Hotel on the opening day of the G8 Summit. Gleneagles Hotel, Auchterarder, between Perth and Stirling on the A9.

Thurs 7th July - Climate Justice Alarm, 13.45

A one off event organised by Friends of the Earth Scotland to sound warning bells to try to wake the G8 up to the fact that time is running out to tackle climate injustice. Edinburgh and Everywhere.

www.foe-scotland.org.uk

Saturday 9th July - Alternatives Concert, Gleneagles

Who's Who? An Incomplete Guide to Protesters and Action Groups

Dissent!

Dissent is a largely anarchist-oriented network planning a rural convergence somewhere near Gleneagles... In their own words:

"The Dissent! Network, has formed to provide a networking tool to co-ordinate radical resistance to the Summit. The network was formed in the autumn of 2003 by a group of people who have previously been involved in radical ecological direct action, Peoples' Global Action, the anti-war movement and the global anti-capitalist movement which has emerged around meetings of those that rule over us.

The Network has no central office, no spokespeople, no membership list and no paid staff. It's a mechanism for communication and co-ordination between local groups and working groups involved in building resistance to the G8, and capitalism in general. It hopes to exist long after the world leaders have returned home in the early summer of 2005.

Dissent! is open to anybody willing to work within the Hallmarks of Peoples' Global Action (PGA).

PGA was founded in February 1998 by hundreds of people from social movements as diverse as the Brazilian landless peasants movement (MST), Reclaim the Streets in the UK, the Zapatistas in Mexico, radical ecologists from the Ukraine, Maori from New Zealand and squatters from across Europe, all of whom had gathered in Geneva for the founding conference. The PGA Network was created as a tool for co-ordination and communication between groups, movements and individuals wanting to organise global anti-capitalist resistance, particularly to international organisations such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and to draw attention to the possibility of alternative forms of social organisation..."

Note: An intervention was made, commenting that the PGA Hallmarks do not cover everything and do not, in themselves, make a movement. Some found the Hallmarks problematic. Some groups present at the meeting would not join the mobilisation under the Hallmarks, due to the problems they have with them.

www.dissent.org.uk

G8 Alternatives

G8 Alternatives is a coalition of groups led by Socialist and Trotskyist organisations. G8A is a network that enables organisations and individuals from a broad range of social movements to come together to plan for and organise events and activities which offer alternatives to the agenda of the G8, such as mass non-violent peaceful protests, an alternative summit, cultural and creative events, and a convergence space with camping and other amenities to facilitate protest at the Summit. Events facilitated by G8A will be non-violent, non-discriminatory and non-partisan.

The network includes those who oppose the G8 as an institution and also those who wish to press the G8 to adopt different policies.

"What unites us is our belief that 'another world is possible' and that we need to have a massive mobilisation that brings together anti capitalists, international development campaigners, trade unionists, peace activists, environmentalists, human rights campaigners and more to discuss, debate and demonstrate."

G8A welcomes participation from any group or individual committed to social justice, international development, environmental protection, peace and human rights.

www.g8alternatives.org.uk

Make Poverty History

"Every day 30,000 children are dying as a result of extreme poverty. This year we finally have the resources, knowledge and opportunity to end this shameful situation." MPH

"The gap between the world's rich and poor has never been wider. Malnutrition, AIDS, conflict and illiteracy are a daily reality for millions. But it isn't chance or bad luck that keeps people trapped in bitter, unrelenting poverty. It's man made factors like a glaringly unjust global trade system, a debt burden so great that it suffocates any chance of recovery and insufficient and ineffective aid." MPH

MPH is a UK coalition of NGOs (people from Oxfam, local churches and big relief groups) within the Global Call to Action Against Poverty who are focused on issues of debt, trade and aid. This is the official body organising the main march around Edinburgh on Saturday 2nd July. This is sanctioned opposition – Bono, Nelson Mandela, and Bob Geldof. The march will be huge, estimates vary up to 200,000 people.

www.makepovertyhistory.org

Free Party People

The Free Party network will be organising parties around the event and will be working to help make safe the free party at a possible rural convergence space. Crew 2000 have agreed to help out with supplies of fresh water for partying people, advice for party goers and a chill-out/rest area. Also a club night for the MPH demonstration with some top flight DJs and live acts.

People and Planet

The largest leftwing student organisation in Scotland. There will be a P&P G8 Summer festival bookable through the People and Planet website. Ticket price £15 (£12 before the 6th June) includes MPH counter-summit, and festival including campsite space:

http://peopleandplanet.org/g8/

Scottish CND

Scottish CND are aiming to support all the demonstrations, in providing legal support. There is a guide to Scottish law for activists on their website:

www.g8legalsupport.info

S-CND will co-ordinate from an office what arrests are made and where, try and provide transport for those arrested and follow up for those who are, providing liaison with lawyers.

Trident Ploughshares and CND are organising the blockade of Faslane on Monday 4th. They have organised floor space for 1,000 people in Edinburgh and for 500- 1,000 people in Glasgow. Buses are organised from Edinburgh and Glasgow to Faslane. They are supporting the Wednesday convergence on Gleneagles, and the MPH march. There will be an anti-war zone at the rural convergence space.

S-CND are behind the call to blockade the Faslane Nuclear Submarine base on the Clyde, because:

"The G8 depend on their overwhelming military might to defend and extend the globalisation that allows them to exploit and oppress the poor. Nuclear weapons are the ultimate expression of the militarism that makes economic globalisation possible. Military spending drains resources away from health, education and international development. Poverty leads to conflict, and conflict leads to poverty. We cannot make poverty history unless we also make war history."

www.faslaneg8.com

www.banthebomb.org

Friends of the Earth Scotland

FoE's actions will include a Climate Justice Alarm at 1.45pm on Thursday 7th July. There will be individual and collective actions throughout Scotland, the G8 nations, and the world – all sounding a climate alarm at the same time.

FoE are part of G8A and Counter Summit events. WDM, WoW, FoE, FoES have organised an event at the CoS Assembly Hall, Edinburgh on 3rd July on trade justice, debt, aid, corporates and climate: pushing the government to go further towards MPH goals.

FoE London are in the Up in Smoke coalition with Oxfam, People and Planet, WDM etc. There is a report showing that climate change impedes the Millennium Development goals. FoE has organised 'Global Warming 8 conference' with representatives of countries affected by global warming – Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh, 5th July.

FoES's Global communities project is collaborating on cultural events with Ya Basta! – a new Scotland-wide network of cultural activities and action responding to the arrival of the G8 leaders, encompassing a diverse range of performances, gigs, workshops, film screenings and exhibitions, aiming to bring together artists, activists and interested individuals to share ideas on how cultural activities can be used to protest and celebrate.

There is a New Consumer event at the Usher Hall, Edinburgh on 1st July with an evening concert with the Proclaimers and others, and to include a meeting point with an accommodation notice board.

www.yabasta.org.uk

www.newconsumer.org

www.foe-scotland.org.uk

Indymedia

Indymedia is the anti-capitalist movement's online presence, and represents a revolution in media communications. It is an open publishing forum for people to report their own actions. There will be a primary Indymedia centre in Edinburgh above the Forest Cafe and mobile units covering events and actions.

Along with Camcorder Guerillas, Variant are helping to co-ordinate an associated Glasgow media centre, and look out for a Glasgow G8 newsheet.

Indymedia is part of no faction and want everyone to use the sites, go to:

http://scotland.indymedia.org

www.indymedia.org.uk

www.camcorderguerillas.net

The Wombles

The "White Overall Movement" derives from folk on protests padding-up to protect themselves from police assault.

In their own words:

"WOMBLES, despite the media manipulation and hype, has always been an open meeting ground for people struggling for a new world based on the dignity of people to live freely, without coercion, states, private property and exploitation. A world without classes and ethnic, sexual or gender divisions. A world without borders.

A message too to those who think a riot shield or prison sentence will protect them...

The anger doesn't fade believe me, not for a moment, not by a long way. Some of us fight to keep alive, some of us are alive because we fight, either way the battle is one & the same. As one riot cop said in court when justifying the need to get his gun out & start shooting people, "they kept coming, we couldn't stop them". Remind me again why we do this, remind me again why all this is fucking worth it.

The creative urge is an indestructible urge - we know what our anger means.

We are dangerous people not simply because we desire freedom, but because we desire it together. These are the criminal activities of the working class, these are the crimes that we live by. In the words of Bobby TBS "a troublemaker's what you made me" (anything else would be a crime). If we're not causing trouble, we're not doing it right. This is everything we are. This is all we have.

And I'm proud as fuck to be a part of it - the travelling circus, the whispering conspiracies, the deafening global roar, all the chaos & wonder, courage & warmth, never once, in the face of brutality & murder, doubting itself, the madness & togetherness, the desire & danger & damage done. The fearlessness with which we continue to grab at life. When you dare the world to be special, the world will respond... They kept coming, we couldn't stop them. THIS is what our anger means.

Humanity is not the future you try and create, the future is the humanity you refuse to let go of. We hold it all in our hands..."

Paul Robinson, Gothenburg Prisoner

Black Bloc

A message describing the Black Bloc and their tactics is included here, to counter the inevitable propaganda that will be put out by the mainstream and corporate media:

"The Black Bloc is a fairly recent phenomenon, probably first seen in the U.S. in the early '90s and evolving out of protest tactics in Germany in the '80s. The Black Bloc may be in part a response to the large-scale repression of activist groups by the FBI during the '60s, '70s and '80s. It is impossible at this point to form a radical activist group without the fear of infiltration and disruption by the police and. for some, taking militant direct action in the streets with very little planning and working only with small networks of friends are the only meaningful forms of protest available.

Although there is no consensus among us on what we all believe, I think I can safely say that we have a few ideas in common. The first is the basic anarchist philosophy that we do not need or want governments or laws to decide our actions. Instead, we imagine a society where there is true liberty for all, where work and play are shared by everyone and where those in need are taken care of by the voluntary and mutual aid of their communities. Beyond this vision of an ideal society, we believe that public space is for everyone. We have a right to go where we want, when we want and governments should not have the right to control our movements, especially in order to hold secret meetings of groups like the WTO, which make decisions that affect millions.

We believe that destroying the property of oppressive and exploitative corporations like The Gap is an acceptable and useful protest tactic. We believe that we have the right to defend ourselves when we are in physical danger from tear gas, batons, armored personnel carriers and other law enforcement technology. We reject the idea that police should be allowed to control our actions at all. Looking at Rodney King, Amadu Dialo, Abner Ruima, the Ramparts scandal in Los Angeles and the Riders in Oakland, many of us conclude that abuse by the police is not only endemic, it is inherent.

We live in a society that is racist and homophobic and sexist and unless that is taken out of our society, it cannot be taken out of the cops who enforce the rules of our society. In an even larger view, we live in a society that has agreed to give some people the right to control what others do. This creates a power imbalance that cannot be remedied even with reforms of the police. It is not just that police abuse their power, we believe that the existence of police is an abuse of power. Most of us believe that if cops are in the way of where we want to go or what we want to do, we have a right to directly confront them. Some of us extend this idea to include the acceptability of physically attacking cops. I have to emphasize that this is controversial even within the Black Bloc, but also explain that many of us believe in armed revolution, and within that context, attacking the cops doesn't seem out of place.

- from a letter by Mary Black

For more information visit:

Indymedia: www.indymedia.org.uk and www.scotland.indymedia.org

Schnews: www.schnews.org.uk

1820: www.1820.org.uk

Scottish CND: www.banthebomb.org

Dissent: www.dissent.org.uk

G8Alternatives: www.g8alternatives.org.uk

City Strolls: www.citystrolls.com

Freedom from Seizure

Tom Allan

"Dungavel is built as prison system. It is not a detention centre. That is the first thing you should know."

Makielokele Nzelengi Daly

My first impression of Dungavel was one of isolation. The squat, heavy, grey stone building with its Victorian turrets was reminiscent of a miniature castle, but girded by a modern moat – fifteen feet steel fences topped with razor wire and cctv cameras. But its first defence was its remote location in the South Lanarkshire countryside, lost among the fields, difficult to get to and find. It was certainly an impenetrable fortress to the small group that gathered beneath the fence on the 23rd of January to celebrate the birthday of Rabbie Burns and to demand its closure.

As a newcomer, I scanned the windows, hoping to see some of the people inside that we had come to support. The windows were shuttered, I noticed indignantly.

"Do they shut all the windows up so that people can't see out for the protest?" I asked Graeme Cummings, one of the organisers and a member of Friends of Refugees Ayrshire. The group has been campaigning for the centre's closure ever since it was opened in 2000.

"At one point the recreational facilities used to be here," he said, "and they could see us, but they've changed it round. Everyone stays in the inner part of the building."

"Do they know we're coming?" I asked. "You can never tell."

Rosemary Byrne, Scottish Socialist MSP, thinks the move was deliberate. "The first demonstrations we did here, those fences weren't so high. The people could come to the window and wave to us, they could see that we were there. As the demonstrations increased, they started moving them away from the windows."

So, gathered outside, speeches were made, Burns' poetry and songs read, and finally gifts were handed in through the gate for the detainees. What would be a more appropriate name for asylum seekers and refugees that have been locked up without having committed a crime? The "refused?" The "rejected?" Perhaps the silent seekers. They have, after all, no voice; a fact that was painfully illustrated by the small ceremony of presenting gifts. People asked, as they handed over the bags one by one;

"How many children are inside?"
No comment.
"Can you tell me how many children are inside?"
Sorry, no comment.
"How many children do you have in at the moment?"
No comment.

The silence of the guards is enforced by statute:

"No officer shall make, directly or indirectly, any unauthorised communication to a representative of the press or to any other person concerning matters which have become known to him in the course of his duty." ["Detention Centre Rules 2001", p.13]

Not even the manager running the detention centre can speak to the press or public, and all of my enquiries have been redirected to the Home Office. That is because the centre is owned by Serco Group plc, and also run by a private company, Premier Detention Services a subsidiary of Premier Custodial Group, on behalf of central Government. Since asylum and immigration policy is an area "reserved" for Westminster, the Scottish Executive can effectively ignore the issue. The Scottish Green and Socialist parties have campaigned against the centre, as well as a number of other MSPs, and a cross party group visited Dungavel in 2002 condemning it as a prison. But they have no powers to close the centre, and only limited oversight.

Ideally, the Government would like detention centres to be totally sealed institutions; one way staging posts before deportation. They have recently renamed them "removal" centres, a re-branding designed to reflect their hopelessness and to impress this upon the electorate. The stories of the people inside are the last thing they want to get out. The figures one can obtain from the Home Office are not damaging for the Government. They are just anonymous numbers. "92 men, women and children as at 6am, 26th January 2005." [email from the Home Office Press Department] But the people inside have names, faces, stories.

Barriers, every bit as formidable as the steel fencing outside, prevent communication between detainees and the outside world. Language barriers, trust, fear of damaging their cases, and sometimes outright obstruction by staff or management, all reduce contact. Only a quarter of detainees in 2002 had received visits from friends or family. ["An Inspection of Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre", HMIP 2002, p.6] Detainees are entitled to phone cards and stamps, but few know of their entitlement. Visitors' groups, particularly those that are explicitly opposed to the centre such as Friends of Refugees Ayrshire, have been discouraged by the management. They have been turned away for arbitrary reasons, such as misspelling a detainees name. Graeme used to make regular visits. "You go up, you're photographed, and your fingerprints are taken. You're searched." But it's the emotional cost that is most discouraging. "It is quite harrowing," he explained. "A lot of us found it very difficult to sustain that, particularly since the person you're visiting may just disappear, and you don't know where they've gone. You'll never hear from them again."

Photograph by: Miguel Ciriza

Detention

Pastor Makielokele Nzelengi Daly's story is known because with the help of hundred of supporters, politicians and activists, he was released in January. He and his family fled Angola four years ago after he refused to spy on his congregation for the MDLA Government (Democratic Movement for the Liberation of Angola). Along with thousands of other asylum seekers they settled in Glasgow, whose local authority had accepted a deal with central Government to house refugees in their disused, now condemned, high rise buildings.

Makielokele went door to door in the Red Road flats where he lived, building up a thriving Pentecostal church with some two hundred families in the large community of African exiles and refugees. But last December, after four years, he was abruptly informed that his asylum application had been rejected. Without further explanation, he was taken to Dungavel detention centre pending deportation on the 23rd of December 2004.

The picture Daly paints of Dungavel is not one of major abuse, but of powerlessness, of small but degrading humiliations. "Detention is a place where people can get crazy very quickly," he tells me. "It is a place that the Home office uses to torture people, not necessarily in a physical way, but mentally, you are tortured."

There is constant surveillance, constant constraint. Yellow lines show you where you can and cannot walk. On the first day he recalls being told off like a child for crossing the line and unwittingly setting off an alarm. You must obtain permission to go anywhere in the building. You are referred to not by your name, but by your number. Makielokele was number 4707.

"The purpose of detention centres shall be to provide for the secure but humane accommodation of detained persons in a relaxed regime with as much freedom of movement and association as possible... respecting in particular their dignity and the right to individual expression."

Detention Centre Rules 2002

"In our rooms there were peep-holes so they can check on you when you are sleeping – so that they don't have to open the door all the time. At three o'clock in the morning they will come and check on you to see if you are all in your rooms. They will just open the door brutally and bang it, and you have to wake; and then you can't sleep again – because you know they will come again at six."

"And This is every night?" I asked incredulously.

"Oh yes." Pastor Daly laughs. "You don't know Dungavel. Now, imagine if you are feeling safe, with your wife, what will happen then!" and he laughs again.

The visitors' room in Dungavel quietly boasts of the centre's facilities. Each table has a folder describing, in many languages, the restaurant, the gym, and the different classes available – art, music, and the "world computer" course designed to provide detainees with IT skills that can be used "wherever they end up." Internet access is not provided. The room itself is decorated with paintings made by detainees. There are beautiful pictures and portraits, some clearly self portraits. But it is bitterly ironic that they may be the last traces of people who have long since been deported, and worse that they are used to decorate the facility which incarcerated them.

Generally, detainees' material needs are met. But there is no way to ameliorate the basic fact of detention, nor the serious mental impact that it has. Trapped in a monotonous and stressful environment, without access to information about one's case, and surrounded by others in a permanent state of anxiety creates a "pressure cooker effect." ["No Place for a Child: Children in UK Immigration Detention" Save the Children 2005, p.19]

Imagine for a moment that you have been the victim of some terrible abuse. That you have been raped or tortured, or that the lives of your children have been threatened. Now imagine what it must be like to be held in a facility where at any time you could be returned to the scene of your worst fear. You don't know when.

"Information about the progress of their cases, which was of over-riding importance to detainees, was very difficult to obtain and not communicated in their own languages. There was no access to official country information reports on the internet which might have allowed detainees to make their own assessment of the personal risk of return." ["An Inspection of Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre", HMIP 2002, p.16]

In fact, it seems that keeping detainees ignorant and ill advised is a matter of policy, designed to facilitate their removal.

"On-site immigration officers avoided face to face

contact and sometimes withheld removal directions until the last minute from those they feared would resist being removed. There was little information provided about how to access good quality legal advice and to complain if this was not received, and there was some evidence of exploitative and ineffective representation." [ibid]

There were examples of detainees paying for legal representation that should have been free, and suggestions of exploitation. Less than half of those eligible in 2002 were aware that they were entitled to a review of their case.

Throughout the UK detention estate, according to the Refugee Council, the lack of information, good translation services and high quality legal advice means that many detainees are being detained "quite arbitrarily and unnecessarily," and few detainees know that they have a right to a bail hearing. [The Refugee Council, cited in; "Fourth Report of Session 2002-2003, Vol.1 Home Affairs Select Committee," p.25]

The result of placing vulnerable people in such conditions is predictable. In July 2004, a 22-year-old Vietnamese refugee, Tung Wang, killed himself at the centre, and in August the Glasgow *Sunday Herald* revealed that a 27-year-old refugee priest from Nigeria, John Oguchuckwu, had been sent to Greenock prison indefinitely because he became suicidal after spending eight months in Dungavel. Lessons have been learnt though; when a Chinese man attempted to commit suicide in April this year he was quickly isolated from other detainees. No news of that incident reached the press.

Whilst there is provision of some psychiatric treatment in the centre, it favours those who speak English, and official concern has been expressed that it could be used to justify detention when alternatives, such as care in the community, may be more appropriate. ["An Inspection of Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre," HMIP 2002, p.16,] In any case, No Place for a Child suggests that "mental health services are unlikely to be successful in the detention environment because detention is itself a cause of trauma and distress."

"That is why the chapel that I started was very popular within the detention centre," says Pastor Daly. "It was the only place that people could go and have some words of hope, and also some counselling from their own." Even here, facing deportation, he sought to help others with their problems. He laughed when I asked him about the counselling provided by the centre. "The first objective of the Home Office in detaining people is to torture people, so that whenever they go back home, they will never even think about coming back here. In there, you don't have anyone to give you advice. The GP makes you feel unwelcome. The guards tell you they don't care about your immigration issues."

The effects of detention upon vulnerable adults is bad enough. But despite condemnation from Human Rights groups and repeated recommendations by the Chief Inspector of Prisons, Anne Owers, that the detention of children is inappropriate and harmful, children and young people continue to be detained.

A major campaign in 2004 by Scottish refugee support groups and Trades Unions was thought at the time to have cleared the centre of children. [18 detainees (17%) were children in 2002 – "An Inspection of Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre," HMIP 2002, p.11] But the family unit at the centre is again being used, and detention of families has actually increased nationwide. Before 2002 families were only meant to be detained shortly before removal, but a change in Government policy outlined in the White Paper "Secure Borders, Safe Haven" now allows them to be detained "at other times and for longer periods than just prior to removal." [cited; Fourth Report of Session 2002-2003, Vol.1 Home Affairs Select Committee, p.26]

> "No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time."
>
> **Article 37b of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The changed provision made it possible to detain the Ay family for thirteen months from 2002 to 2003, before their appeal was finally rejected. As ethnic Kurds, they feared persecution upon their return to Turkey. Three of the four children required psychiatric treatment after detention, according to Professor Harry Zeitlin, a specialist in child and adolescent psychiatry at University College London. Had they been British children, he added, issues of child protection would have been raised. The family were ultimately deported to Germany, where they were granted asylum. [ZNet Dungavel: Scotland's Asylum Shame, by William MacDougall; September 10, 2003]

Pastor Daly's wife Isabelle, and their four children, Rachel, 16, Josue, 14, Linda, 13, and 11-year-old Isaac, were initially hidden in the local community of African asylum seekers and refugees, to prevent them from being detained. But towards the end of the campaign to release him they were tricked into a meeting and also taken to Dungavel.

"They lied to my children," he tells me angrily. "I saw the children come in, and they embraced me. I asked them, 'What are you doing here?' They said 'Oh, we were told we were coming to visit you.' But I told them 'No, that's not the truth, the truth is you've been arrested with me.' "

"My daughter asked me, 'Why should we be arrested, what did we do? Should we be arrested for nothing?' Those kind of words are very painful to a father."

Again, it is the mental health implications that are most worrying. No Place for a Child gives examples of problems with feeding and sleeping, depression and listlessness, and suggests that children are unable to be taught effectively under such conditions, whatever the standard of the educational facilities.

"I saw another family, with three children between two and five years old," the Pastor continued. "The two year old child was not crying every night, but screaming every night. There was something frustrating that child."

Children can be further disturbed by seeing parents powerlessness and distress, whilst parents feel guilt and hopelessness because they cannot help their children. The Prison Inspection Report concluded that "the welfare and development of children is likely to be compromised by detention, and that it should be an "exceptional measure" lasting only a matter of days. ["An Inspection of Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre", HMIP 2002, p.15-16]

There is still no way to know how many children are being held in detention in the UK, or how long they are held for. The Home Office, despite the recommendation of the Home Affairs Committee, does not publish the total number of asylum seekers detained over a given period, but only gives a snapshot of those detained. Thus we know that on the 25th of December 2004, 1,515 detainees were being held under the Immigration Act, twenty five of which were recorded as being under eighteen years old.

That figure excludes a significant number of "age disputed" asylum seekers, who say they are children but are not believed.

Deportation

Deportation is usually quick and unexpected. Pastor Daly was fetched at 7am, taken to the manager's office and told he was to be deported to Angola the next day. He was refused a phone-call to his supporters or lawyers, and refused a change of clothes. He was wearing only his pyjamas.

Photograph by: Gareth Harper

"I asked him, 'Can I get some clothing here?' It was the 22nd of December, it was very cold out there. But he was adamant, he refused. I told the manager that, 'Ok, those clothes are mine, they are not for the detention centre. Why are you refusing me to protect myself with my own clothes?' "

"The manager told me that 'I am giving the orders here', and 'I am telling you that you are not getting those clothes, and you will travel the way you are.' "

> "All detained persons may wear clothing of their own...all detained persons shall be detained with clothing adequate for warmth and health. A detained person shall be provided with suitable and adequate clothing on his release."
>
> **Detention Centre Rules, 2001.**

It was a freezing twelve hour journey South. The only break was when he was marched through a petrol station, flanked by guards and allowed to use the toilet – but only with the door open, in full view of the public. He was locked up over night in Birmingham. No-one else knew where he was.

"I was then left to tremble all my cold night and morning," he says. Then he was rushed to the airport. "According to the conversation of the policeman driving the car to his colleague, I was supposed to be reunited with my family to be deported together to Luanda."

Not all deportations are from detention centres. Sometimes people are picked up from home, in dawn raids, or from work. Children were sometimes picked up from schools. A Home Office note of March 2004 recognised the difficulties and upset this practice causes to staff and pupils in schools, but there is no acknowledgement of the impacts on the detained children. [No Place for a Child, Save the Children, 2004, p.30-31] Adult detainees rarely have time to put their affairs in order, or contact family or legal advisors. Deportation can also be violent. In 1993 deportation police arrived at the North London home of Jamaican born Joy Gardner.

"In front of her 5-year-old son, they held her down to stop her struggling and placed a body belt around her waist, bound her wrists to handcuffs attached to a belt and tied her thighs and ankles with leather belts. They then wrapped 13 feet of tape around her mouth to stop her screaming. She was taken to hospital in a coma from which she never recovered." [Liz Fekete, "Deaths in Detention," Institute of Race Relations 2003]

Use of gags and adhesive tapes was subsequently banned by the Home Secretary, but a recent report suggests that abuses continue, including the misuse of accepted restraint methods, kicks to the face and head, and racist verbal abuse. These often occurred after the detainee had already been restrained, or after the deportation attempt had been abandoned, inside vans and out of sight. The report recommends that cctv be installed in the vans.

It is difficult to know the scale of the abuse that occurs – because once again, there is no oversight. Only if the deportation is cancelled, or a serious injury or death results, do we hear about it. After all, a deported asylum seeker is unlikely to make a complaint.

Alternatives to Detention

Detention centres are a cornerstone of the Labour Government's immigration and asylum policy – and its election strategy. In "Secure Borders, Safe Haven" it emphasised the key role of detention in its drive to increase removals of failed asylum seekers. [cited, Fourth Report of Session 2002-2003, Vol.1 Home Affairs Select Committee, p.26]

Deportations have dramatically increased since 1999, and plans to build controversial "reception centres" where asylum seekers could be housed throughout their application are still in the pipeline.

The argument is that asylum seekers will automatically abscond once their applications have been rejected. But there is simply no evidence to back this up, since the Home Office does not collect information on the absconding rates. In fact, recent research suggests that asylum seekers rarely go into hiding, and that there are a number of effective alternatives to detention. No Child Left Behind cites the Swedish system as an excellent model, whereby asylum seekers are encouraged to maintain contact with the authorities because they provide excellent support services. An individual support worker ensures that they understand their rights and responsibilities, helps with language and financial assistance, and eases either integration or assisted deportation. Detainees' rates of compliance with deportations, when they are handled in this transparent way, are very high, making detention unnecessary. That may still be a traumatic affair, but it at least avoids the deception, the early morning raid, and the sudden deportation. [No Place for a Child: Children in UK Immigration Detention, Save the Children 2005, p.45]

The simplest solution for the time being would be automatic bail hearings before detention, a course recommended by the Refugee Council, the Immigration Advisory Service, and the Immigration Law Practitioners Association, but it is a recommendation that has so far been ignored by the Government. At present, there is no judicial oversight of the decision to detain, and no explanation of the reasons for detention. When detainees are properly informed of their rights and given effective legal counsel, they are often released. That has been the focus of the successful recent campaigns to free detainees, including two single mothers, Anastasia Ndaya, and Magloire Sanou, and their children. The Daly family were also freed in January, after his congregation raised bail of £4,000.

Is the use of detention really just to effect removals, as the Government claims? It has been argued that detention is instead part of a package of measures designed as a deterrent to future asylum seekers. [Liz Fekete, "Three Faces of British Racism", Institute of Race Relations 2001] Outside detention, asylum seekers are forbidden from working. They have to survive on benefits of as little as £38 per week. A large number were made homeless and destitute by Section 52 of the Nationality, Immigration an Asylum Act, 2002, which withdrew all state support for those who failed to claim asylum within twenty four hours of arrival in the UK, in the erroneous belief that they were not genuine refugees. In fact, the Government's own figures showed that the majority of asylum seekers who ultimately get indefinite leave to remain in the UK claim asylum after entry. The clause was eventually withdrawn after the Court of Appeal ruled that it breached asylum seekers' human rights in May 2004. [Bharti Patel and Saorise Kerrigan, "Hungry and Homeless" The Refugee Council 2003.]

But some asylum seekers whose cases have been rejected, but who cannot be deported, (either because they are awaiting a judicial review, because their home country is too dangerous, or will not accept them,) continue to suffer homelessness and destitution. They are left in a limbo, where they cannot work, cannot receive state support or housing, and cannot leave. In Glasgow, for example, this resulted in evictions of asylum seekers in the winter of 2003.

The Government seem to be recreating the conditions that people fled – arbitrary imprisonment, insecurity, poverty – but in enclaves within our own country. Perhaps, as Pastor Daly said, the Government's hope is that those who have been detained and deported will tell others what they experienced here, and be a deterrent. But the UK is chosen as a refuge for many reasons; historical, economic, and not least because it is thought that we have a commitment to human rights. It seems that the Government are eager to give up that reputation.


Halliburton's Defense Contracts
McPatriot ?
$0
1998
1999
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ENRON
HALLIBURTON
ENRON
EXECUTIVE ORDER 13303


Profiteer
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Year
EXECUTIVE ORDER 13290

Heading in the Wrong Direction

The M74 Northern Extension

The story so far

Glasgow's ruling Labour party are still following motorway plans cemented in the 1960s, despite contemporary critical and political agreement that new roads are only a short-term solution to transport problems. New roads generate more traffic, do not necessarily promote regional development or economic well-being, and lead to environmental damage. Ignoring a wealth of evidence, Glasgow City Council, South Lanarkshire Council and Renfrewshire Council with support from the Scottish Executive are taking forward the M74 Northern Extension – a 6-lane, five miles, elevated motorway through the southern suburbs of Glasgow, from Cambuslang to Kingston. This will mean the demolition of historic buildings, homes and 100 businesses, while creating more traffic noise disturbance for hundreds of homes in Rutherglen, Oatlands, Gorbals, Govanhill and Eglinton Toll.

In November 1999, the Scottish Executive told Glasgow City Council that it should "review alternative transport solutions for the [Glasgow] area" because of the "substantial volumes of car commuting" that would be encouraged by the M74.

But after a year of relentless lobbying from business groups, the Executive agreed in 2001 to pay £214 million toward the M74 – before any study of alternatives had been carried out. In 2003, it was announced that the motorway would in fact cost anywhere between £375 and £500 million, making it by far Scotland's largest single transport project. Then in January 2004 it emerged that the M74 could cost anywhere between £750 million and £1 billion if built through the Private Finance Initiative (PFI).

From December 2003 to March 2004, a Public Local Inquiry[1] was carried out. Joint Action against the M74 (JAM74) – a coalition of community, environmental and sustainable transport groups – lead the opposition against the mighty juggernaut of big business groups, the Scottish Executive as well as entrenched local councils. The report from the inquiry was complete in July 2004 but was withheld until March 2005 when a Freedom of Information request forced the Scottish Ministers to reveal the inquiry recommendation that the M74 "should not be authorised".

The inquiry cost £750,000 and comprehensively trashed the idea of the M74. Now Transport Minister Nicol Stephen has embarrassed Scotland by ignoring the inquiry's conclusions and committing us to an outdated, expensive and ineffective means of tackling road congestion. But it doesn't end here, Glasgow City Council has bid to build yet another road from the 1960's plan – ironically called the "East End Regeneration Route".

Bad news for our city

The council says the motorway will be good for Glasgow. Why should we object?

The M74 will do nothing to help the majority of Glasgow households (59%) that have no access to a car. The project will soak up money that could be used to improve public transport, and assist the least well-off who need better trains and buses to get to jobs, education and recreation.

The conclusions of the public local inquiry stated: "[T]he new road would be of little assistance to those suffering exclusion, and would be likely to worsen travel opportunities for this section of the population by undermining progress towards major public transport improvements. The presence of the new road, largely elevated on embankments and viaducts, would increase community severance for those living along the route. [11.88]

Policies for environmental protection and improvement would be breached along various sections of the route, where some adjacent and nearby areas would be affected by increased noise, visual intrusion, and airborne emissions, and severe noise and disruption during construction . . . There would be some offsetting benefits elsewhere, due to reduced traffic levels, although these would be thinly spread and generally not discernible." [11.89]

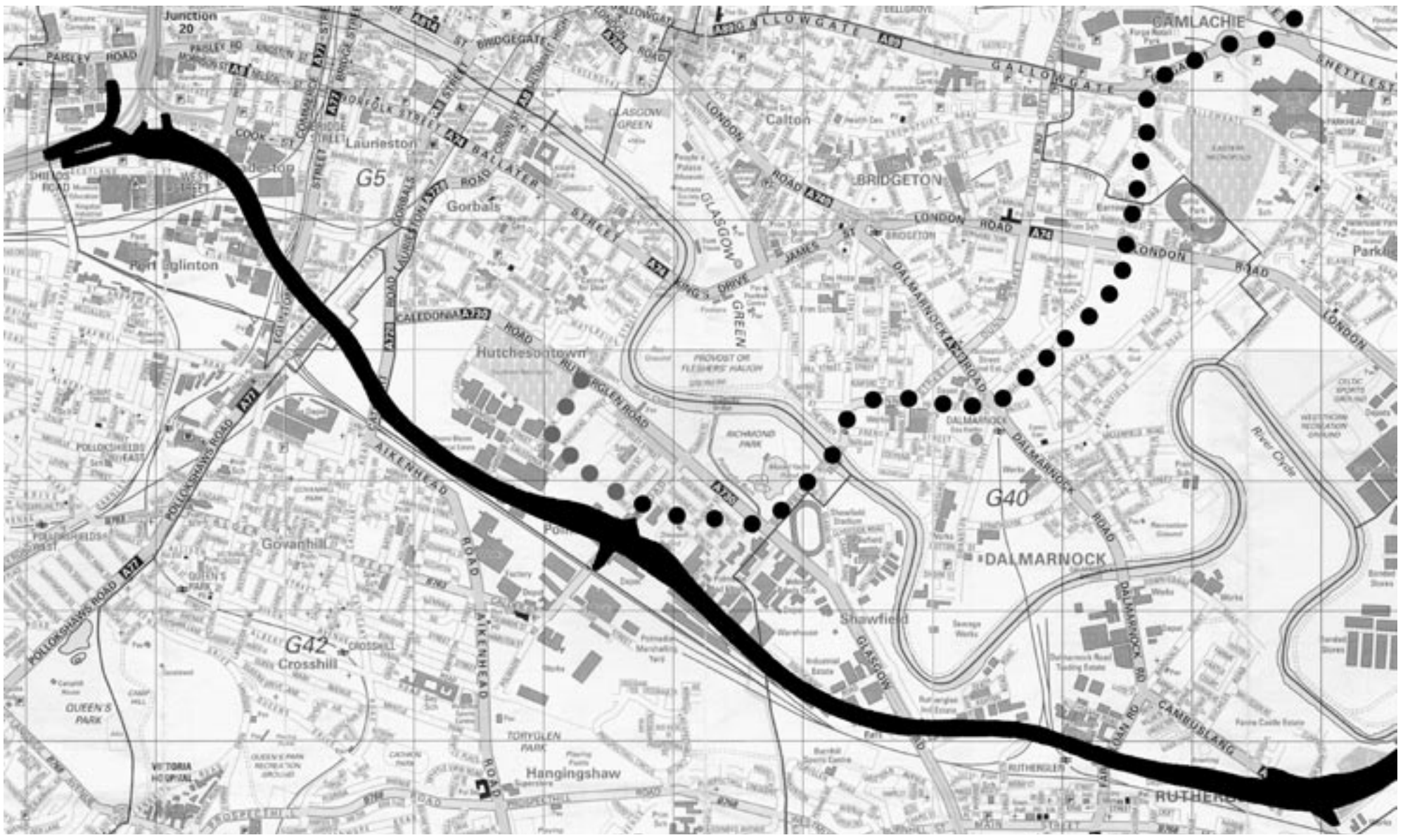
Therefore "those living along the route would suffer from the adverse environmental impacts, with little benefit, while the main advantages of the new road would accrue to non-resident vehicle users passing along the new motorway, and to businesses located mainly outwith the area." [11.90]

The road will be hugely damaging:

- London's M25 demonstrates that building urban motorways generates even more traffic.
- Traffic will rise on feeder roads. That means more pollution, more road crashes and more noise – in Rutherglen, Oatlands, Govanhill, Eglinton Toll and beyond.
- Cancer-causing chromium waste litters the route, and disturbing it will send clouds of contaminants into the air and the river Clyde during construction.
- Pollution will affect everyone – already 2,000 people a year die in Scotland from air pollution related illnesses. Ozone from pollution is strongly linked to asthma, which affects one in seven children.
- Glasgow City Council is closing swimming pools and pursuing cut backs to other services such as parks, playgrounds and social services. Where do you think its contribution (between £33.4 - £44.5 million) to this road is coming from?

Glasgow has next to no public support for its road building:

- only 36% of people would prioritise road building over public transport.



• 80% see traffic noise and pollution as significant problems.
• 65% believe public transport should receive priority over cars.
• 56% want traffic reduced on main roads.
(source: Glasgow City Council survey, 2000)

Bad news for Scotland

What's so bad about one more urban motorway?
Imagine Glasgow in 20 years time with 40% more cars and lorries on the roads. The M74 will carry an estimated 110,000 vehicles per day. If only a third of this traffic comes off the M74, that means almost 40,000 more cars on Glasgow's roads every day. The M74 will lead to more congestion and more air pollution.

The public inquiry revealed the amount of traffic the road will generate was significantly greater than the proponents had previously stated. Leading the report from the inquiry to conclude: "[t]he benefits of the new road would be progressively eroded by the continuing traffic growth which would be facilitated and induced by the new road." [11.83]

The proponents also admitted that no funds had been set aside to tackle such huge volumes of congestion and that plans for improvements to Glasgow's public transport were only "aspirations".

Labour was elected on a platform of cutting car traffic and its transport policy requires Councils to: "demonstrate that they have looked at alternative or complementary solutions, such as public transport improvements and traffic management measures." (Scottish Executive Guidance on Local Transport Strategies, 2000)

The M74 makes a mockery of that policy, because the alternatives have never been investigated. As a result, Scotland is being left behind the rest of Britain and Europe. Scotland is one of the few places in Western Europe still bulldozing urban motorways through its cities.

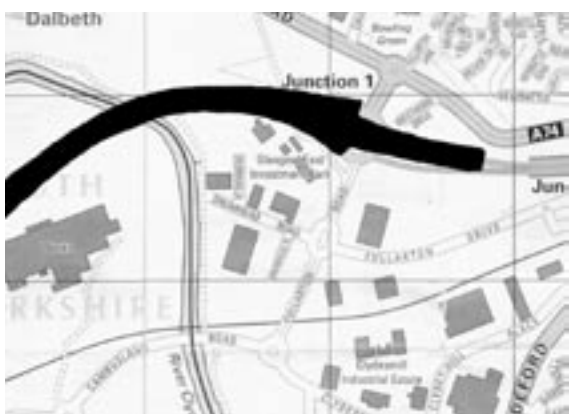
Won't the motorway free up traffic elsewhere?
Not in the long term. Motorways fill up fast. The M77, built in 1996, already has commuter traffic jams. The M74 will be no different.

An independent study commissioned by the Scottish Executive concluded that the M74 will worsen congestion and environmental conditions in Glasgow. It concluded that in 2010 with the M74 built there would be a "network which is more congested (even with the additional capacity provided by the M74) than in 2000." (Central Scotland Transport Corridor Study, Final Report on M74 Corridor, pages 35-48 and Figures 5.5-5.17)

But the M8 is gridlocked at the Kingston Bridge during the rush hour...
So let's find ways to reduce congestion – 47% of Scottish car users say they could make their journeys by public transport. The problem is that buses and trains are not clean or attractive enough and are too expensive. If even a quarter of car users switched to public transport, the existing motorway through the city could cope.

What are the alternatives?
Instead of wasting money on the M74, serious investment is needed cleaning up public transport, improving rail lines, creating new stations and boosting rail freight.

The cost of just 1.5 miles of a £500 million extension would fund safe routes for walking and cycling to every one of Scotland's 3,000 schools. The cost of the other 3.5 miles could fund 2,000 'Home Zones', reclaiming urban space for people, transforming quality of life and saving thousands of injuries and deaths.



Bad news for jobs

But we'll benefit from new jobs surely?
What jobs? The Government's own expert advisors say the economic benefits from road-building are uncertain. During the Inquiry it became clear that the claims of anything up to 44,000 jobs could not be substantiated. What is likely to be relocation of jobs has been presented as new employment. Most of the predicted job creation would be drawn from other neighbourhoods, many of which are areas of deprivation that have already been given European money to encourage industry.

The inquiry highlighted this uncertainty and "the weak link between transport improvements and economic growth when dealing with a mature economy with well developed transport systems (which clearly applies to Glasgow) and the 2 way road effect." [11.58]

This motorway could easily suck jobs out of the areas along the route, as more people commute into the city or shop at Braehead.

What is certain is the "risk that a significant number of jobs (possibly about 750) would be permanently lost to the Glasgow area, and possibly to Scotland, if the scheme proceeds." The public inquiry report stated, "[t]hese potential job losses should perhaps carry more weight (job for job) than the uncertain prospects of attracting new jobs to the Glasgow area from other parts of Scotland." [11.60]

The M8 has not brought prosperity to the East End of Glasgow, and the M77 has done nothing for Pollok. The M74 would also sink the Councils' own plans for a 'green corridor' along the Clyde, plans that could make the derelict industrial land along the river more attractive and lead to more regeneration than just a few warehouse retailers in tin sheds.

(See the JAM74 briefing paper 'A Route to Prosperity?' debunking the myth that this motorway will bring thousands of jobs.)

Bad news for the planet

One more road isn't going to cause climate change, is it?
Scotland is already falling behind in cutting the CO^2 emissions that contribute to climate change. Between 1990 and 1999, Scotland's CO^2 emissions fell by only 3.5% while England's fell by 11.5%.

Climate change is real. Recent reports from the Met Office and others show that, unless emissions are reduced, the impact on Britain could be severe. Already we have seen coastal erosion, extreme weather, flooding and the loss of some bird species. Over one in twelve of Scotland's residential properties are in danger of flooding. Yet this is also an international social justice issue. The poorest countries least able to cope with environmental change will be worst affected, and up to 20 million people could be made refugees.

The Public Local Inquiry found, "the [M74] is predicted to increase [carbon dioxide] emissions by about 135,000 tonnes a year (an increase of 5.7% in the study area), compared with the Do Minimum case, for the year 2020. This would be a significant setback to the achievement of the Government's commitment to reduce greenhouse gases." [11.91]

Scotland's First Minister, Jack McConnell has recognised that "[w]e must all be prepared to change the way we lead our lives" and to take issues like climate change seriously. We have been encouraged to "do a little, change a lot"; drive a bit less, walk and cycle more, don't fill the kettle too full, switch off the odd light. In contrast the Executive is steamrollering through one of Europe's largest, most regressive and expensive civil engineering projects.

But won't the road regenerate areas of contaminated land?
Much of the land the motorway will cut through is contaminated with toxic waste, the legacy of Glasgow's industrial past. The M74's proponents have always said that building the road would be an efficient way of dealing with this waste. From the Inquiry we found out that only the land directly underneath the road will be 'treated' and this land would be covered in concrete, not decontaminated.

There are no plans to treat the land adjacent to the M74, and as local authorities are financially constrained, site restoration will be left to developers. It is questionable whether developers would choose a highly toxic site to regenerate without more money from the taxpayer.

The route has been "safeguarded" for the motorway extension since 1988, and therefore Glasgow City Council would not give planning permission for building around this area. The Council is systematically killing the site, made worse by the Scottish Executive's pre-emptive purchases of land and businesses prior to the public inquiry recommendation that the M74 "should not be authorized".

More cost-effective and sustainable alternatives – all ignored

No-car lanes on the M8
Peak-hour congestion on the Kingston Bridge, which delays commuter buses and lorries carrying exports from Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and West Dunbartonshire, is primarily caused by cars. The most obvious early solution to congestion on the M8 – particularly as the urban M74 could not be opened for several years – is to introduce lanes giving priority to lorries and buses rather than single-person occupant cars.

Glasgow Crossrail
At present there are no cross-Glasgow rail services from Edinburgh or Lanarkshire to Renfrewshire, Inverclyde or Ayrshire – one of the key traffic flows that the motorway would carry. The Glasgow Crossrail scheme is a practical alternative which, although talked about for years, should be implemented before money is wasted on damaging road-building.

Rail electrification
The electrification of Glasgow-Edinburgh rail lines would further transform the speed and quality of train links from the west of Scotland to the east of the country.

Glasgow Airport rail link
Glasgow Airport is the largest in Britain (and one of the largest in Europe) without a passenger rail link. Passenger trains direct from Edinburgh, Lanarkshire and Glasgow would remove one of the main arguments for the new motorway.

The rail freight bypass
Feeder rail freight services from Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and West Dunbartonshire to the Scottish freight hubs at Coatbridge and Mossend would allow export containers to bypass completely the Kingston Bridge and M8 congestion, and bring environmental benefits to both Glasgow and Lanarkshire.

Road pricing
A controversial option, but after London's overwhelming success, many cities are realising that closing roads or congestion charging may be the only rational way to deal with traffic congestion. There are also realistic proposals for UK wide road pricing; motorists would be charged by the amount of distance they drive, in the same way that we pay for electricity or gas – definitely fairer than having a single yearly payment of car vehicle excise duty.

Get involved

JAM74 is a coalition of community, environmental and sustainable transport groups. Member organisations include: Terrace Community Council, Pollokshields Community Council, Residents Against the M74, Friends of the Earth Glasgow, Go Bike! Strathclyde Cycle Campaign, Railfuture, Scottish Association for Public Transport, the Scottish Green Party, the Scottish Socialist Party & TRANSform Scotland.

Contact

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Note

1. *Read the full report from the Public Local Inquiry at: www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/transport/m74r-00.asp*

B+B Meeting Points

Sarah Carrington and Sophie Hope

B+B is the curatorial partnership between Sarah Carrington and Sophie Hope. Founded in 2000, our practice emerged in a critical response to the shift in cultural policy under New Labour who promoted the idea that art should and could have tangible social benefits. Through a practice that encompasses exhibition making, event hosting, evaluations, research and workshops, we have been investigating the underlying neoliberal agenda within contemporary cultural production. Our projects create spaces to question the artists' role in society and the political motivations behind specific projects.

Early on in our practice, we recognised a resistance to a critical discourse on socially engaged art practice in the UK. We would argue that this is a result of the oppressive political agenda from central government that influences perceptions of art. We have always been determined to create more productive dialogues that move beyond understandings of socially engaged art practice as worthy and policy driven. One of the ways we have sought to understand better our own context is through looking outside of the UK to learn from other independent artists and curators about how they are negotiating their own political and social landscapes. Through a series of projects and events over the last few years (*B+B at Home* and *Trading Places*, for example) we have presented the work and strategies of artists from South East and Central Europe to UK audiences. Our new project entitled Reunion will bring together artists from the UK and South East Europe through a fictional Union and series of exchanges to generate links between diverse approaches to a socially engaged art practice.

- looking elsewhere

From March to September 2003 we were hosts at the Austrian Cultural Forum in London. Our six-month programme was called *B+B at Home* and followed on from a programme of residencies organised by Anthony Auerbach which included Roman Vasseur's *Office of Anti-Matter* (2001) and visits by Klub Zwei (2001), *Museum in Progress* and *Dezentrale Medien* (2002). In March 2003, we were invited by Anthony Auerbach to programme the gallery space and decided to make ourselves at home there and invite artists and curators from Central Europe to take part in an informal programme of residencies, exhibitions, public interventions and discussions.

In hosting *B+B at Home*, we wanted to test the possibilities of transporting context-specific strategies and processes from one place to another. How do we communicate a political and social reality dealt with in a project if it is unfamiliar and distant from our own? What would our role be as translators? Ideally, the position of the translator is one of distanced neutrality, serving as a conductor, transmitting knowledge and communication. This ideal is rarely realised however, as there is an abiding imbalance of power between those describing and those described. Through *B+B at Home*, we presented approaches that attempted to break down this distorting power relation and create a space of self-conscious translation in which a critical awareness of positions and perspectives are integral.

- supporting processes and building networks: B+B at Home

At *B+B at Home* we wanted to provide a stopping-off point for ongoing projects and practices. It was important for us to develop our earlier approach to supporting socially-engaged practices through revealing and opening up the structure of the residency whilst continuing to question what it means to transport a context-specific practice from one place to another. In developing the programme, we undertook research trips to Austria, Hungary, Slovenia and the Czech Republic. We also visited cultural centres in London to understand more about the role and function of a diplomatic cultural office.

One of the artists taking part in a *B+B at Home* residency was Tadej Pogacar (also known as the P.A.R.A.S.I.T.E. Museum of Contemporary Art). During his stay, Tadej continued research into 'Constructed Cities', his investigation of socialist town planning and 'Code: Red', his ongoing exploration of the global sex trade. 'Code: Red' exposes and recharges the global patterns of self-organised sex worker's groups by arranging meeting points for discussion, exchange and activism. The project has so far taken place in Venice (2001) in collaboration with Comitato per il Diritti Civilli delle Prostitute, and New York (2002) with Bayswan, an organization providing information on sex workers' rights. Through public actions and interventions, artists, activists and protagonists discuss issues such as the impact of globalization and new technologies on sex work, control of the public body, parallel economies and marginal communities. These discussions have created an informal network for further group actions and interventions in the cities participating.

'Code:Red' also urges us to examine our prejudices, misunderstandings and current systems of control and suppression by providing extra platforms for communication and awareness. The project is reliant on existing networks of sex workers' rights organisations and has to feed back into them in order to progress and develop. Rather than acting as a 'parasite' feeding on the network, the P.A.R.A.S.I.T.E. Museum tries to strengthen existing lines of communication. 'Code:Red' opens up issues of sex-work and migration to diverse publics, encouraging understanding and enabling action.

- focus on strategies for change: Trading Places

B+B at Home generated a broad network of artists and organisations in the UK and Central Europe. Our interest in translating practices had been tested with *B+B at Home* but we felt a need to develop it much further by focusing on a specific issue or way of working. This emerged through *Trading Places*, an exhibition we developed at the Pump House Gallery in Battersea Park that dealt with migration, collaboration, activism and

contemporary art. During an early research trip to Vienna, we were struck by the amount of artists we encountered who described their practice as 'working with refugees' or 'giving voice to migrant communities'. We were keen to understand this further and set it against the growing theoretical and aesthetic explorations of the border, the like of which dominated Documenta 11. We wanted to investigate where these two approaches meet and collide? What are the consequences? Where does the power relation lie in a process of representation of an 'other'?

Trading Places was also developed in response to the significant lack of debate on art and migration in London. Issues of asylum and immigration gain widespread media attention in this country, however there are few opportunities for constructive dialogue on prejudices and representation. Trading Places coincided with the expansion of the EU and offered a platform to discuss Britain's relationship to Europe and its borders with projects that investigate, map and report experiences of migration.

We wanted to reflect the contradictions between multifarious approaches and raise issues of responsibility, after-effect and the power relation through the structure of the exhibition. As in B+B at Home, we worked with design duo OFFMO to devise a system of display throughout the exhibition. On the ground floor of the gallery we introduced visitors to issues of representation with Lisl Ponger's photograph and Asla Isanovic's powerful film expressing the frustrations of an artist labelled 'Balkan' whose work is constantly aligned with war and conflict. Again, like *B+B at Home*, we moved into the gallery and turned the first floor of the Pump House into our office and archive space. It was crucial that we had a presence in the exhibition in order to generate conversation around works and to introduce audiences to project folders that were presented of collaborative or ongoing projects, such as Wochenklausur's intervention into labour laws of migrants living in Graz as well as documentation of 'Code: Red' by Tadej Pogacar.

Moving upstairs again, the second floor displayed *Delivery 2*, a large commissioned work by Phil Collins in which he worked closely with a family from Kosovo living in London. Collins hand-delivers portraits of asylum-seekers in the UK back to relatives in their country of origin, returning with a newly taken picture of each, examining the importance of photography in specific situations, and the common misconceptions surrounding refugees and asylum-seekers. Alongside *Delivery 2*, a series of video works by Ursula Biemann, Esra Ersen and Marko Raat were presented, each conveying differing experiences of migration. The floor above presented *City Views*, an ongoing project by Austrian artist Martin Krenn who

photographs European cities from the perspective of politically active migrants he encounters in each place, as well as a new work by Zeigam Azizov.

On the final weekend of the exhibition, we worked with Susan Kelly (Goldsmiths University) and John Nassari (University of East London) to devise an afternoon workshop that focused on strategies of representation or action. It was crucial that everyone attending was able to bring their own questions and responses to the work and issues presented. We set up small break out groups to take forward specific issues, such as notions of change and the responsibility of art to take on political and social topics. We discussed the different motivations of activists and artists and the 'effectiveness' of different strategies and positions one takes in order to highlight issues, try and change things or merely critique the institutions and individuals who assume they have a right to effect change. There was an emphasis on whether it is better to reject the 'system' entirely to avoid becoming its social conscience or whether the strategy should be to negotiate in order to work towards change through communication.

The afternoon was hardly concluded however and many questions were left hanging in the air. We were determined not to let this be the final space for discussion and looked for opportunities to attach ourselves to debates in the future. The exhibition raised a lot of press interest locally, and was even covered by CNN. The tag-line that 'art helps refugees to communicate' seemed appealing to media keen to appear as liberal. We wanted to take this further and to continue to unravel the notion of the artist as a channel for communication, looking at who the communication satisfies.

We took these questions to a workshop at the European Social Forum in October 2004. It was useful for us to be working outside of an art context and to bring together a network of interested participants from the worlds of activism, art and social practice. We developed the workshop with John Nassari and Margareta Kern and created a scenario for a role-play in which we directly addressed how and why artists are working with migrant communities. The scenario offered was; a commissioning agency is attempting to set up a project in a detention centre for unaccompanied minors and young refugees. The question we asked was whether it should go ahead, and if so, on what terms? We divided the group into detention centre managers, funding bodies, local anti-migrant residents, local migrant-rights groups, asylum seekers and artists. The resulting discussions allowed the participants to address the multiple agendas and politics at play in a project that aims to 'use' art to give voice and the inherent ironies this implies.

- building a long-term support structure: Reunion

B+B at Home set out to translate and support context specific practices from Central Europe in London. *Trading Places* sought to bring together critical socially engaged practices from the UK

and Central and South East Europe. The workshop at the European Social Forum was looking specifically at how and why artists are working with a social focus in the context of UK neo-liberal cultural policy. We are now in the process of pooling our research and interests in continuing a dialogue between UK and Central and South East Europe. Our research coincides with an interest more widely within the UK art world with artists from 'new Europe'. Through our research and conversations with artists and organisations from post-socialist, pre/new-EU Europe, we have heard a lot of resentment and frustration at this geographical determinism of practices. We have also found increasing points of connection between the approaches and political positions of independent organisations based in Central and South East Europe and our own.

In an attempt to overcome geographical stereotyping of practices, and to start first with points of connection and support strategies, we are developing *Reunion*, a long-term action research project. *Reunion* is motivated by our interest in finding a reciprocal model to support and exchange approaches, as well as investigating how a support structure for developing practices could be sustained by multiple partners. It was crucial that we began this process slowly without imposing a structure prematurely. We undertook research trips to the former Yugoslavia (in March 2005) and attended events led by the networking organisations such as the Middle South East Meeting run by <Rotor> in Graz (November 2004). Our research method is based on informal conversations and the exchange of ideas and experiences of working in relation to the politics of place. We want to find out what our common interests might be and how we can develop ways of learning more from each other through practice. We would like to move forward with the project through the establishment of a fictional Union of practitioners from the UK and Central and South East Europe. This Union would create a space to find out what it is that we are fighting for as cultural producers and to look at how and why it might make sense for us to try and gain power as a trans-national group in order to support independent practices for the future.

Throughout this initial phase, it has been important for us to continually question our role in the process. We have been on our trips, but why it is that we are interested in 'the region'? What's our political position? And what do we hope to achieve? We have attempted to define it by proposing *Reunion* as an open research process that investigates how and where there is a space for socialist thought and potential within contemporary art practice in the light of the current neo-liberal system in the UK, and in the increasingly privatised economies of post-socialist countries. Through the establishment of a fictional union of cultural producers and a series of public meetings, residencies and events *Reunion* will ask: What can we learn from one another? Is there the need for a 'new left' politics within socially engaged art practice? How can we articulate our roles and positions from specific contexts and histories?

Based on our work and research into the region since 2002 and conversations with groups and organisations in the former Yugoslavia this year, we have identified a number of key themes or issues to take forward to the second phase of *Reunion,* which will be the development of a series of projects and exchanges. The Union will run alongside this programme as a critical support structure, helping to translate contexts and address issues emerging.

We set out with a primary focus on policy and were struck by the impact of the work of external agencies such as the Soros Foundation in the former Socialist Europe through the establishment of Contemporary Art Centres in many major cities. Since Soros withdrew this type of funding from the region in 1999, the infrastructure has remained in place in some locations but activities are much reduced. It has on the whole been replaced by a lack of strategic thinking on culture from state departments, and with international agencies taking a local 'regional' focus (for instance Pro Helvetia and the British Council are both directing funds to local 'networking' programmes in the Former Yugoslavia). We have also heard a lot of resentment about cultural 'networks' as a tool to generate 'regional' identity for practice and have discovered energetic and critical responses within practice through groups such as *Drugo More* and *WHW* in Croatia, and kuda.org in Serbia.

What is the potential of a socialist art practice in Europe today? How can we reposition and politicise socially engaged practice collectively, beyond the confines of our own social and cultural contexts? Would this enable us to resist (or at least maintain a healthy and productive critical distance from) our inevitable transformation into an ideal neo liberal immaterial workforce? *Reunion* will begin by considering how art is employed in public and social contexts, and how art and culture is perceived in 'bridge-building'. We will work with groups engaged in projects that attempt to engage communities in processes of change, and will create meeting points for sharing strategies and ideologies between contemporary cultural producers in Europe today.

If you would like to find out more about Reunion, contact B+B through their website: www.welcomebb.org.uk

LINKS

Leave to Remain: www.leavetoremain.org

Photoinsight: www.photoinsight.org.uk

PARASITE Museum: www.parasite-pogacar.si

Wochenklausur: http://wochenklausur.to.or.at

Austrian Cultural Forum London: www.austria.org.uk/culture

Pump House Gallery: www.wandsworth.gov.uk/gallery/

Bayswan: www.bayswan.org

Comitato per il Diritti Civilli delle Prostitute: www.luccioleonline.org

Martin Krenn: www.martinkrenn.net

Zeigam Azizov: www.iniva.org/archive/person/423

<Rotor>: http://rotor.mur.at

WHW: www.mi2.hr/whw/

Drugo More: www.drugo-more.hr

http://kuda.org/

Same Difference?

Tom Jennings

"The media and politicians don't talk about Christian extremism, fundamentalism or terrorism – but everyone who considers themselves a Muslim feels tainted due to the propaganda use of 9/11."[1]

Paul Laverty

Adding to the abiding casual cruelty of skin prejudice, people of Asian descent in Britain have faced a panoply of extra pressures in the last three years, a result of government panic about threats of international (unofficial) terror. Handily projected into the 'strangeness' of diasporic Islamic culture, this, along with displacing onto migrants and refugees the blame for the withdrawal of welfare, has instead de-emphasised the government's need to feed the greed of corporate gangmasters.

However, from recent current affairs and documentary exposure of the dishonesty and duplicity of mainstream institutional and megabusiness interests,[2] it is becoming more widely understood how political ideology in the age of hyper-real spin routinely manufactures history in ways fictional genres hitherto scarcely imagined. Narrative construction and the use of contemporary visual technologies to elaborate fantasy clearly resonate with media-saturated publics, and at levels of effectivity different from the more traditional reliance on dispassionate journalism and intellectual integrity. In any case, given the age-old capacity of stories to appeal to our deepest feelings and to change perceptions and behaviour, fiction may also have a role in subverting the patterns of domination in late capitalist governance – just as the hidden transcripts of folk culture and common vernacular have always sustained the oppressed and confounded power.

This article reviews two high profile fictional film representations of the lives of British Muslim people. Their production was motivated by a wish on the part of non-Muslims to set the record straight with realistic portrayals of men, women, families and social networks just as complex and multilayered in morality, ethics, problems and behaviour as any other groups within a modern multiracial, multicultural society. Readings of these films are then set against a work of European cinema released at the same time to similar levels of acclaim but with no such issue-led *raison d'être* – but whose subject matter might offer comparable, if contrasting, depth in this respect. The closing section assesses the significance of these and other popular cultural representations of Asian or Muslim Westerners, attempting to sketch out the grounds upon which a recognition can be nurtured of the presence of conflictual diversity in us all, acknowledging how differences between us necessarily and irrevocably cohabit and mingle with our similarities.

Family Matters

1. Home and the Broken-Hearted

Director Ken Loach and scriptwriter Paul Laverty changed tack for *Ae Fond Kiss* (2004) – their third collaboration set in the West of Scotland following *My Name Is Joe* (1998) and *Sweet Sixteen* (2002) – in response to the dehumanising vilification of Muslims whipped up by the UK media and politicians since 9/11, and the consequently heightened everyday hostility experienced by British Asians. Laverty felt obliged to "do a story that saw Muslim people as rounded human beings; and family life as family life is everywhere, with its tensions and jealousies and guilts and the rest of it." Similarly, to Loach: "Families are families; the surface details change but the emotional blackmail is the same ... and there's always rebellion."[3]

Ae Fond Kiss sees the comfortable Khans from Glasgow's Southside arrange a marriage between a distant cousin from Pakistan and their only son Casim (Atta Yaqub). He intervenes in a fracas between his sister Tahara (Shabana Bakhsh) and classmates when meeting her from her Catholic school, and a mutual attraction with Irish music teacher Roisin (Eva Birthistle)[4] leads to them becoming lovers, taking a short break in Spain. Casim and Roisin split over his impending marriage but reconcile when he comes clean with his parents. Then she is sacked because her priest (Gerard Kelly) denounces her for living in sin with a Muslim. His older sister Rukhsana (Ghizala Avan) plots to wreck the relationship to save her own marriage plans, and parents Tariq (Ahmad Riaz) and Sadia (Shamshad Akhatar) plead with Casim for family honour, offering as collateral the house extension built for him. His friend Hammid (Shy Ramzan) lives with a white woman but keeps it secret, and advises against sacrificing the entire family for a girl.[5] Their final ploy involves flying in prospective bride Jasmine (Sunna Mirza) plus family behind Casim's back, contriving Roisin to witness the scene. She storms off but when Tahara tells him all, he rushes to Roisin's side...

The narrative arc of the story depends on Tariq's insistence on ruling the Khan roost. Starting as effective comedy,[6] this increasingly turns to pathos and farce as he refuses to acknowledge the limits of his power, culminating in hysterically smashing up the extension. Unfortunately his tragic experiences during the 1947 post-imperial partition of India[7] are declaimed like a sermon halfway through the film rather than being woven into the story, which short-circuits any audience sympathy won by Riaz's ebullient performance. Similarly, in the early sequence where Casim and Roisin first meet, Tahara makes a political speech listing her many conflicting loyalties and identifications.[8] But while her intelligence and determination are heartening, we can't appreciate the context of her (or her siblings') development in and outside the family. Unexplained individual traits are forced to extremes in recognisably Loachian melodramatic fashion, and the chances of resonance among those whose families are 'the same everywhere' correspondingly recede.

Variously lined up in traditional family structure positions – a device to represent diversity among UK Muslims – scant depth is shown in the Khans' personal relationships, and we struggle to sense their feelings for each other. Worse, Roisin's biography (including a failed marriage) is only mentioned in passing, so no parallels can be imagined between the lovers in terms of the demands of the past, the development of self in the family or its influence on present orientations and decisions. Birthistle is a strong and convincing actress playing a resolute character, whereas Casim's dissembling makes him a rather unconvincing lover for her – seeming morally cowardly in concealing his concerns. But Yaqub is a novice actor and fails to convey ambivalence – unfairly matching the disproportionate pressures forming Casim's character against Roisin's scripted mystery and fortitude – and we are further unable to interpret her surprise at the trouble their relationship causes among his family.9 Roisin's apparent lack of connection to her 'roots' may indicate a decline of family values compared

Notes

1. Interviewd by Demetrios Matheou, *Sunday Herald*, August 2004.
2. In particular Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* and Adam Curtis' groundbreaking BBC 2 series *The Power of Nightmares* (both 2004) – see my reviews respectively in: 'Extracting the Michael', *Variant*, No. 21, and 'A Pair of Right Scares', *Freedom* magazine, Vol. 65, No. 22 (<www.tomjennings.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk>).
3. James Mottram, 'In the Mood For Love', *Sight & Sound*, March 2004, p.23.
4. Roisin was scripted as Scottish, but Birthistle was a Catholic girl at Protestant school in the north of Ireland. Preferring actor proximity to role, Loach points out that, "then the question is: who's the immigrant?". Laverty: "When Catholics first came to Scotland 150 years ago they were seen as aliens with a loyalty to something foreign to the indigenous population … And now we're demonising asylum seekers" (Mottram, note 3).
5. Atta Yaqub had kept a white girlfriend secret from his family/community, again facilitating role immersion (Diane Taylor, 'Up Close and Personal', *The Independent*, 6th August 2004).
6. The *Daily Record* billboard headline outside his shop reads: 'Church tells Celtic fans no nookie in Seville'. One dog too many urinates on it, so Mr Khan wires it up and the next dog gets a nasty shock.
7. Loach: "He isn't just a repressive father. His own history has been traumatic, and he has to live with it every day. That's why he's so keen to keep hold of Casim"; Laverty: "Partition left a shadow of massive suffering. It's sectarianism, in another continent and in another time, but it still has a deep resonance in the personality of the children's father today" (Sukhdev Sandhu, 'When Sex Meets Sectarianism', *The Telegraph*, 17th September 2004).
8. "I am a Glaswegian Pakistani teenage woman of Muslim descent who supports Glasgow Rangers in a Catholic school …" Another Laverty and Loach teenage encyclopedia instructed Robert Carlyle on Nicaragua in *Carla's Song* (1996).
9. Or the pedagogical clumsiness using Billie Holiday's 'Strange Fruit' soundtrack to a slide show of racist lynchings – ringing true as vacuous multiculturalism, but hardly connecting with her or her pupils' daily lives.
10. To Loach this is "a situation where the circumstances are evolving … Essentially there will be a good outcome. The people of Casim's generation are integrating into the rest of society, however it's defined, and bigotry and intolerance, particularly on the Christian side, will fade … people will assimilate and learn to live together well … We are who we are now, but God knows what we will be like in 30 years' time. The film challenges the whole idea of monogamy, of permament marriage that is either arranged or a love match" (Taylor, see note 5). The title's more melancholy origin – Robert Burns' poem, 'Ae Fond Kiss And Then We Sever' (1791) – includes the lines: "Had we never lov'd sae kindly / Had we never lov'd sae blindly / Never met or never parted / We had ne'er been broken-hearted".
11. Loach: "The young protagonists are all graduates and they're not from broken families. But for reasons of culture, language and religion there are fetters on their choices" (Mottram, p.22, see note 3).
12. Not surprising, despite Ken Loach's track record, given his membership of the National Council of the Respect Coalition, whose electoral novelty – cosying up to 'community leaders' – resembles police tactics when legitimising 'race relations' PC/PR. Those at the sharp end may by default defer to conservative patriarchs or arrogant careerists of respectable church, business and local government agencies when busy defending themselves against outbreaks of the persistent UK anti-Asian prejudice (see, for example, succinct commentary on the pre-9/11 Bradford 'race riots' in <www.muslimnews.co.uk> 27th July 2001, or the recent Birmingham Sikh controversy), but surely no one imagines they represent any community's multiply conflicting interests. This Left pandering to elites combines a Stalinist disposition and Leninist opportunism, with predictably alienating effects at all grassroots levels (as in the SWP's regularly discredited fronts and u-turns, from Anti-Nazi League days through to recent anti-globalisation incarnations – see coverage of the European Social Forum, London, October 2004: <www.enrager.net/features/esf/> or SchNEWS, no. 470).
13. *Yasmin* (2004) screened on Channel 4, 13th January 2005. Quotations are from the production notes <www.yasminthemovie.co.uk /iframes/synopsis.php> and Alan Docherty, February 2005 <www.culturewars.org.uk> respectively. Glenaan also made Gas Attack (2001, an even more sensationalist 'docufiction' about Kurdish asylum seekers in Glasgow) and the forthcoming Ducane's Boys (about neo-colonial exploitation in contemporary football).

14. Also rushed onto television after European cinema success and acclaim, when UK cinema distribution and exhibition faced years of market-cowardice delay – see Stuart Jeffries, *The Guardian*, 13th January 2005.
15. One of two such unscripted moments where passersby were unaware that a shoot was underway (see Jeffries, note 14).
16. Comprehensively nailed by Munira Mirza in <www.culturewars.org.uk>
17. Including a proclivity for class/caste-based racial insult. Darcus Howe's *Who You Calling a Nigger?* (Channel 4, 2004) gave rare public insight into this subject. Conversely, the film's most moving moment comes at the end – encapsulating its heroine's ultimate dignity, integrity and humanity with a close-up of Panjabi's face as Yasmin comforts the husband she's previously so maligned.
18. The script was written by Simon Beaufoy (*The Full Monty*) after exhaustive research and workshops with Northern Muslim groups, drug rehabilitation programmes, university lecturers and many others.
19. Just as in the rest of us, showing the inadequacy of conflating disparate generations – for example my own industrial working class 'English' family has ancestry from Wales, Ireland and Southern and Northern France (just to start with), and as little as two generations ago included itinerant agricultural workers roaming against destitution.
20. For comprehensive discussions of hybridity and diaspora, see Barnor Hesse (ed.) *Un/Settled Multiculturalisms*, Zed Press, 2000. Incidentally, both *Ae Fond Kiss* and *Yasmin* are interesting, enjoyable and/or affecting on many levels; not least in their different fusions of generic realism, naturalism and fiction, and some outstanding cinematic and acting skills on show. For the purposes of this essay, though, it's mainly in struggling to meeting their predetermined artificially partial and formulaic aims that they get messed up.
21. Left over from the issue-shopping concept (scuppered by 9/11) of Glenaan and producer Sally Hibbin (who previously worked with Ken Loach on *Riff-Raff, Raining Stones*, etc) of a young Yorkshire suicide-bomber (production notes, see note 18).
22. Though Yasmin tells him "I preferred you as a drug dealer".
23. Taking a lead from Kilroy-Silk, BNP fuhrer Nick Griffin publicly characterised Islam as a "vicious wicked faith" before proclaiming his parliamentary candidature in Keighley. Note, though, that the far and libertarian Left fare little better in terms of "universal bigotry towards Muslims" and the ambivalently progressive potential of religious culture in general – see Adam K's scattershot 'Anarchist Orientalism and the Muslim Community in the UK', and Ernesto Aguilar's wise US perspective in 'Winning the Grandmas, Winning the War: Anarchists of Color, Religion and Liberation' (both 2004) at <www.illegalvoices.org/knowledge>.
24. See for example: S. Sayyid, 'Beyond Westphalia: Nations and Diasporas, the Case of the Muslim *Umma'* (in Hesse, see note 20).
25. Contemporary 'urban' music features increasing numbers of Asian performers and producers (see *Dis-Orienting Rhythms: The Politics of the New Asian Dance Music*, Sanjay Sharma, John Hutnyk & Ashwani Sharma (eds.), Zed Press 1996). Since the 1980s bhangra renaissance working class Asian youth have also been staunch supporters of local R&B club scenes (racist door policies and clienteles permitting), rather than the more upmarket trendy student-yuppie venues Ae Fond Kiss' Casim probably envisages. On the marketing of UK Asian culture, see also Kaleem Aftab, 'Brown: the New Black! Bollywood in Britain', Critical Quarterly, Vol. 44, No. 3, 2002, pp.88-98.
26. *Gegen die Wand* translates as 'Against the Wall' (UK release as *Head-On*, 2005). Akin has also directed *Short, Sharp, Shock* (*Kurz und Schmerzlos*, 1998; lauded as the German *Mean Streets*), the road movie *In July* (*Im Juli*, 2000), and *Solino* (2002). *Head-On* has won innumerable film festival Audience Awards and was voted the European Film Academy's Best Film of the Year 2004 (ahead of *Ae Fond Kiss*, Mike Leigh's *Vera Drake*, Pedro Almodovar's *Bad Education* and Theo Angelopoulos' *The Weeping Meadow*, among many others).
27. Quoted in Kaleem Aftab, 11th February 2005 <www.bbc.net.uk/dna/collective/>
28. Famous for militant anti-racist SHARP skinheads and a radically community-oriented professional football team. Akin – a dual-national child of Turkish immigrants – hails from Hamburg's Altona district, and is a veteran anti-fascist, former DJ (hence the outstanding soundtrack which accounted for much of *Head-On's* budget) and hip-hop MC (he gave up the latter to attend film school). With Germany's drift rightwards nationality by blood is now increasingly reasserted, and dual status is no longer available to the progeny of *gastarbeiter* ('guest workers') – noted in *Head-On's* Istanbul taxi driver deported as a teenager for a petty drugs offence to a country he'd never seen whose language he didn't speak.
29. Cast from an encounter at a supermarket checkout; and giving a superbly nuanced performance. Her only prior acting experience had been in a couple of gonzo pornos – allowing the tabloids to controversialise *Head-On* preceding Kekilli's disowning by her Turkish family (see Ahmet Gormez' solidaristic celebration: 'We Love You Sibel Kekilli', 8th March 2004 <www.counterpoint-online.org/>). This prurient bad faith is itself mirrored within the film text in Yilmaz' invitation to Cahit (which he declines) to join the men of Sibel's family in a brothel

to their importance among those of Pakistani descent, but the erasure of her backstory makes it impossible to compare strategies of negotiation under varying terms of parental control. Plus, if the filmmakers' preferred culture clash was in fact regressive conservatism versus secular modernism (in Islam/Rome disguise), then equity would surely require showing the kinship of both.

Seen as an unremarkable classic romance, *Ae Fond Kiss* unbalances the middle class aimlessness of its personable lovers with Casim's 'issues', rather than critically examining these.[10] Their future indeed seems full of hope; however, we learn nothing either about Roisin's or the Khans' class backgrounds. The nearest we get to economic threat is her priest's "Tom, Dick or Mohammed" prejudice complicating Roisin's career, while the Khan seniors' intransigence revolves around social, cultural and economic capital – Casim's accountancy degree and college DJ-ing coalesce in entrepreneurial nightclub ambitions, Rukhsana aims to maintain family integrity and achieve happiness in her arranged marriage into higher social status, and Tahara intends to escape to train in journalism. However, in lower class contexts family honour may be felt as a more desperate matter – where, given the prevailing institutional and everyday white racisms, the status at stake is that of survival and acceptance as part of society/humanity rather than stratifying economic superiority. Poorer young British Asians who find economic autonomy more problematic thus face different "fetters on their choices"[11] in responding to generational and official control. Perhaps *Yasmin* (2004), grounded in West Yorkshire's more downmarket provincialism, could contemplate some of the commonplace socio-economic realities that *Ae Fond Kiss* ignores.[12]

Archie Panjabi as Yasmin

2. Marriage of Inconvenience

Yasmin was developed by director Kenny Glenaan because "there's an invisible war happening in Britain which British Caucasians may or may not see, but for the Muslims of our country, it's similar to being Irish in the '70s and '80s – guilty until proven innocent"; with the intention of giving "a positive portrayal of British Muslim experience, post 9/11, as a way of almost putting your fist through this notion of Islamophobia that's grown up since".[13] The eponymous local authority care worker (Archie Panjabi) drives from a terraced house on a Keighley estate in traditional Muslim hijab, en route changing into casual Western gear for work and pub sessions with colleagues – including John (Steve Jackson), with whom friendship may develop into intimacy (though she confides nothing of her home life). She then reverts to dutiful unpaid caregiving for her strict father (Renu Setna) and teenage brother Nasir (Syed Ahmed) – who also defers to custom in morning prayer duties at the mosque, but otherwise indulges in petty drug dealing and consorting with local girls.

Yasmin's respect (though not, perhaps, 'love') for and loyalty to her father has even stretched to agreeing to unconsummated marriage to rural Pakistani goat herd Faysal (Shahid Ahmed) until his UK citizenship is assured, but she barely tolerates his presence or parental authority – and her increasingly caustic tongue suggests she's marking time. After September 11th, the uneasy local equilibrium goes sour, with increasing hostility at work, abuse in public, and a complex range of fear, confusion and anger on the home front. Faysal's regular international phone calls to relatives lead to armed-police teams swooping on him, Yasmin and John; but rather than seize the chance to get shot of her spouse she stands vigil until he's finally released and falls into her arms. Meanwhile Nasir's seduction by recruiting jihadis sees him preparing to leave for training in Afghanistan.

Yasmin may capture the outrageously arbitrariness of Blunkett *et al's* bungling sweep through Muslim neighbourhoods. But, shoehorning in so many urgent domestic ramifications of the War on Terror means the thoroughness required to portray a detailed development of Yasmin's personal situation gets squeezed into perfunctory, signposted moments and backstory references, to make time for a menacing armed-police thriller farce.[14] At least the denouement is left open when she visibly begins to reorient to her marriage and the place of Muslim customs in her life. *Ae Fond Kiss* also refused to foreclose on any options, though in woolly optimism compared to the resignation here. But, again, what is sacrificed is the emotional ebb and flow of individual growth amidst the seductions of Western lifestyle and consumerist fulfilment, as against submersion in or submission to whatever illusory or real comfort and security home and community can promise. The former offer little beyond her second-hand cabriolet, given Yasmin's white Keighleyites' implausibly unanimous cruel indifference shading into violent hatred – apart from one elderly shopper chastising youths throwing milk over Muslim women in the street.[15] Before and after being banged up, John also far too easily succumbs to basic prejudice for Yasmin ever to have taken him seriously.

In fact all her work, family and neighbourhood relationships are rendered in cursory cartoonish sketches.[16] Yet it is precisely the fine-grain of these that would have encouraged genuine understanding of and empathy with her choices (such as they are) – especially when both script and Panjabi's superb acting illuminate a forceful, imaginative and highly intelligent, as well as believably impatient, ambivalent and troubled personality.[17] Not that weak, boring, stupid simpletons like Faysal deserve their fate either, but the unintentionally victimological nature of *Yasmin's* diagnosis squashes any agency for local British Muslims beyond surrender to the righteous proponents of violent jihad parachuting in to regiment their confusion. Its most effective exaggerations reflect the shifting local tectonics after 9/11, whereupon everyone's complacencies are shaken – but the orchestration of collective neurosis in the background hum of Bush/Blair's banal 'peace and freedom' bullshit are mirrored in the film's subsequent lazy hyperbole. Notwithstanding the alibi that "everything in the script actually happened",[18] the question of what might happen next eludes active viewer involvement almost as much as the cast's heavily circumscribed capabilities.

Furthermore, both *Yasmin* and *Ae Fond Kiss* unnecessarily situate their young protagonists' dilemmas predominantly against the stark demands of first-generation immigrant parents trying to sustain dignity in the face of massive dislocations in their lives, translated into a determination to bequeath to their children the emotional and cultural resources that have kept them going. Obviously this has been a central, unifying dynamic in most British Asian family histories; but its defensive, backward-looking construals have for at least two decades been overlain with the desire and practical orientation to explore the fullest range of possibilities available in UK society. Put briefly, second, third and fourth generations increasingly grow up with a phenomenological 'knowledge' of being British – blurring into an immense diversity of other entangled individual and social identifications.[19] Regrettably, the structural imperative in these two films to instruct ignorant white viewers of the historical underpinnings of Asian traditionalism leads to over simplistic opposition rather than complex interaction – implying that acknowledgement and incorporation of Asian-ness inevitably compromises Britishness and vice versa.[20]

This crude dichotomising of lived spectra extends most damagingly in *Yasmin* to Nasir's unlikely lurch from general Western adolescent decadence into Al-Qaeda training[21] – when lifestyle, cultural, economic and political developments are infinitely richer, even in the grimmest parts of West Yorks.[22] Yet again, the material expressions of the white liberal imagination show accidental affinity with explicit far-right racism in reducing their subjects to

cardboard stereotypes.[23] In the process, centuries of radical humanist and internationalist Islamic philosophy and practice[24] – as well as recent British Asian mobilisation in grassroots labour militancy, Black anti-racist politics, and contemporary multicultural interplay[25] – all disappear into the medievalist fundament. But surely, even if casualties of integration and assimilation must be seen at the purely individual level beloved of UK social realism, their putative tragedy should still be capable of imaginative moulding into some manner of positive potential without disavowing the potency of poisonous circumstances. The German film *Gegen die Wand* relishes this task and tackles it head-on.

3. DIY Arrangements

Although chronicling the self-arranged marriage, separation and love of two Turkish-German misfits and family exiles via a variety of traumatic vicissitudes, *Head-On's* writer and director Fatih Akin[26] had no intention of engaging in social critique: "I never thought much about the cultural environment; that's really from my subconscious ... The media focused on the background; the audience beyond the media see the love story and not the culture clash."[27] Like the two UK films, *Head-On* hysterically ratchets up the melodramatic excess arising here from the psychically fragile main characters' self-destructiveness. Thus no one could mistake them as representative of anything other than human distress in extremis – so if their struggles to live and love are to be interpreted in terms of social, cultural and political reality, this will have to be a deliberate conscious exercise rather than any spoon-fed pat contrivance.

Starting in the working class Hamburg district of St Pauli,[28] young Sibel Güner (Sibel Kekilli29) notices middle-aged postman loser Cahit Tomruk (Birol Ünel) at a psychiatric hospital, after he drove into a wall when debilitating depression overtook the palliative of drink and drugs. She has slit her wrists (again) to escape the traditional family suffocation ordered by father Yunus (Demir Gokgol) and violently enforced by brother Yilmaz (Cem Akin) – while her mother Birsen (Aysel Iscan) is sympathetic but helpless. Intrigued by Sibel's spirit and passion for sensation, Cahit agrees to her proposal of sham marriage, and his old friend Seref (Güven Kiraç) helps fool the folks.[30] After the wedding he gradually falls for her despite her reckless promiscuity, and gets her a hairdressing job with occasional girlfriend Maren (Catrin Striebeck). But when he's jailed for the manslaughter of one of her more misogynist flings, her furious family patriarchs rumble the deception thanks to the media coverage. Fearing for her safety she flees to yuppie cousin Selma (Meltem Cumbul) in Istanbul after pledging to wait for him.

Crop-haired, devoid of ornamentation and drained of zest, she confides in a letter to Cahit that she is "the only lifeless thing in this city". Abandoning drudge work as a chambermaid at Selma's hotel, she roams the streets in a chemical haze and is raped by a barman at a disreputable club. Her downward spiral culminates in trumping the insults of three thugs with florid speculation about them, their wives and mothers, and she is found in the gutter beaten to a pulp and apparently fatally stabbed. On leaving jail, Cahit borrows Seref's savings to reach Istanbul and patiently seeks to link up with her. Eventually she comes to him and they make love for the only time. Though now living with her taxi driver saviour and their son, she agrees to consider starting afresh with Cahit in his ancestral family village. However, she doesn't turn up at the bus station rendezvous, so Cahit embarks alone...

The film segments are separated by scenes of a traditional Turkish band playing gorgeously haunting love songs to camera on the shore of the Golden Horn (the Asian side of the Bosphorus) with Istanbul's St Sophia over the water. This foregrounding of Turkish cultural aesthetics grows in satisfying effect, while recalling Rainer Werner Fassbinder's Brechtian use of narrative dislocation to enhance emotional intensity.[31] Conversely, Cahit's somewhat naff (despite Ünel's valiant efforts) punk posing is reminiscent of the *amour fou* of the fashionable French *cinema du look*. If yet another influence was the uncompromising grit of (the far from black and white) *La Haine* – itself referencing *nouvelle vague* and new African American cinema – and the ghettocentric *cinema du banlieue* cycle that film inaugurated,[32] the sense grows of a postmodern existentialism where many popular and artfilm roads cross.

Head-On's unique and truly innovative cinematic culture crash envisages the past, present and future – as well as ethnic identification, pride and straitjacketing – as utterly and intrinsically inseparable. Each tangle layers, filters and deepens the significance of events; in the process rendering as redundant all simple or absolute moral judgements. Generational and gender conflict, the exigencies of class and social status and tragic romance also blend, but in this film conventional characterisations are utterly upturned while the chances of personal redemption depend on the sharing of love, pain and hope between men and women in social networks they shape according to their own biographical (family, friendship and cultural) accidents. These chime inwards and outwards and can be mobilised – in turns or simultaneously – for narcissistic, cathartic, affectionate, defensive or altruistic purposes. Choices made are provisional and ambiguous – including the ending, where the utopia of love fails to transpire; but hope is not lost.

Sibel Kekilli in *Head-On*

The prodigious volume of violence, blood and darkness on show (though annoying most critics) refers steadfastly to all the mortifying wounds both of history and of the spirit – representing social-psychosomatic resources which belong to the protagonists to deploy on their own account, whether purposively or on autopilot. When Cahit muses, "Without her, I could not have survived", this could refer to all the poignant, magical and dangerous uncertainties in life, including the cultural materials available for reclamation by personal and collective selves. Similarly there is absolutely no hypocrisy in Sibel resisting male street hassle by declaiming her protected status as a married Turkish woman. The performative subversion of identity in the languages of institutional discourse and discipline allows liberation to be conceivable if the future is destabilised – or it can be fixed in reactionary stasis.[33] Even the major structural lacuna in the final cut – Sibel's uncharted conversion to loyal partner and mother – can be interpreted as Akin's respectful bow to the 'unknown continent' of femininity; or as an acknowledgement of the limited capacity of Eurocentric knowledge, Occidental genre or liberal capitalism.

Collisions, Collusions, Conclusions

British cinema-goers now have twenty-years of cross-cultural romance under their belts since director Stephen Frears and writer Hanif Kureishi started the ball rolling with *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985) and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (1987) – and their detailed imbrications of class, race, gender and sexual orientation in dynamic domestic political contexts continued with Isaac Julien's *Young Soul Rebels* (1991).[34] However, it wasn't until Gurinder Chadha's marvellous *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993) that a British film could treat these themes by adopting a perspective wholly within the social network of a specific 'ethnic minority' community – whose characters, furthermore, weren't primarily concerned with the condescending vagaries of either upper

session.

30. Such DIY arrangements are not uncommon, according to Akin: "A Turkish girl once asked me to marry her ... A lot of Turks marry very early, just to get away from their families and have legal sex". Perhaps surprisingly, Akin receives more criticism from younger (rather than older) generations of Turkish Germans for the film's sex, nudity and drugs: "It is a mirror of their own double morality and they don't like what they see" (interviewed in Sheila Johnston, *The Telegraph*, 11th February 2005).
31. Thereby connecting with his landmark anti-racist tragedy *Fear Eats the Soul* (W. Germany, 1973) with its middle aged German woman and young Moroccan lovers (see Asuman Suner, 'Dark Passion', *Sight & Sound*, March 2005, pp.18-21).
32. *La Haine* was written and directed by Matthew Kassovitz (France 1995). The first *cinema du banlieue* flush included *Raï* (Thomas Gilou, 1995), *État des Lieux* (Jean-François Richet, 1995) and *Bye Bye* (Karim Dridi, 1996).
33. And, quoting a 96-year old German reminiscing on his resistance against the Nazis ("It's our duty every day to change the world"), Akin concludes: "I want to do that with my life, too" (Sheila Johnston, note 30).
34. Frears has recently turned in an equally nuanced response to contemporary UK immigrant life in *Dirty Pretty Things* (2002; written by Steven Knight). *Young Soul Rebels* was written by Paul Hallam, Derrick Saldaan McClintock & Isaac Julien (see Isaac Julien & Colin McCabe, *Diary of a Young Soul Rebel*, BFI, 1991).
35. Chadha has since embarked on a fascinating populist trajectory, progressively weaving in various aspects of the scramble for cultural capital on the part of those whose background lacks it, in *Bend It Like Beckham* (1999) and *Bride and Prejudice* (2004) – the latter a Hollywood/Bollywood hybrid drawing "parallels between the class differences of Jane Austen and the cultural divisions of India, which are fuelled not just by caste difference, but by the globalisation caused by air travel [among Non Resident Indians]" (Kaleem Aftab, 'A Marriage of Two Minds', *Independent on Sunday*, 8th October 2004).
36. For example in *Brothers in Trouble* (dir. Udayan Prasad, 1995; written by Robert Buckler); *My Son the Fanatic* (dir. Udayan Prasad, 1997; written by Hanif Kureishi), and *East Is East* (dir. Damian O'Donnell, 2001; written by Ayub Khan Din).
37. Of the latter, the Kumars' sitting room chat show format stands out. Both series were conceived by Anil Gupta, screening between 1998-2001 and 2001-03 respectively.
38. The new Lancashire-set film comedy *Chicken Tikka Masala* (dir. Harmage Singh Kalirai, 2004; written by Roopesh Parekh) also ticks many pop-cultural crossover boxes – culture-clash, arranged marriage, North v. South, gay v. straight, *Carry-On*-style soap opera farce, trendily inept DV DIY aesthetics – and has promptly been critically savaged as more of an all-round turkey on the basis of its cretinous reproduction of stock characters complete with thoroughly regressive connotations. For another European corrective, see *Only Human*, dir. Teresa de Pelegri/Dominic Harari, Spain/United Kingdom/Argentina/Portugal 2004 – a Jewish/Palestinian family farce with a "tragi-comic final row in which the lovers blame each other not just for the events of the night but for the whole history of the Promised Land" (Liese Spencer, *Sight & Sound*, May 2005, p69). Or, for more sophisticated postmodern and Islamic ironic referentiality, see Kamal Tabrizi's Lizard (Iran, 2004) – poking fun at clerical government and breaking box-office records in Iran before being banned – with its escaped con disguised as a mullah, and describing Quentin Tarantino as "The great Christian film-maker" tackling "salvation in ultimate darkness" (John Wrathall, *Sight & Sound*, May 2005, p.65).
39. For meticulous analyses respectively of the white working class masculine habitus and the political effectivity of conjoining gender and racial discourses, see: Simon J. Charlesworth, *The Phenomenology of Working Class Experience*, Cambridge University Press, 2000; and Claire Alexander, '(Dis)Entangling the 'Asian Gang', 2000 (in: Hesse, see note 20).
40. See the writing of bell hooks for comprehensive discussions in the context of African America (for example: *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics*, Turnaround Press, 1991; *Black Looks: Race and Representation*, Turnaround Press, 1992; *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations*, Routledge, 1995; *Killing Rage, Ending Racism*, Routledge, 1996). Note also the contradictory US emergence of modern ethnic cultural distinctions at around the same time as racial identification and skin privilege – for example, in that the first waves of Swedish immigrants were not included in the category 'white' (see Noel Ignatiev & John Garvey (eds.), *Race Traitor*, Routledge, 1994; then fast-forward to 1950s Little England guesthouse signage ('No Blacks, No Irish').
41. Actually bothering to ask those who wear it about the hijab's significance tells as many different stories as there are respondents. See, for example: for the UK, photographer Clement Cooper's *Sisters* (The Gallery Oldham 2004/5; also published in book + CD form); or the BBC2 documentary about the French government's school ban on veils, *The Headmaster and the Headscarves* (written and directed by Elizabeth C. Jones, 2005).
42. Here, the experience of mixed-race love relationships can illuminate the dense co-entanglements of class and gender within and between individuals and families. For deep reflections from divergent positions on these matters, including the implications for practical negotiations around racism and societal meetings of

cultures generally, see: Timothy Malinquin Simone, *About Face: Race in Postmodern America*, New York, Autonomedia, 1989; and Yasmin Alibhai Brown, *Mixed Feelings: The Complex Lives of Mixed-Race Britons*, Women's Press, 2001.

43. The conjunction of charity corporations, international aid and humanitarian 'just war' may perhaps be an especially disabling contemporary coalescence complementing the rather straightforward neoimperialism of global capital.

44. Not to mention wider question of Western Europe's cultural, religious and philosophical origins in prior cultures – see the controversies surrounding Martin Bernal's *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilisation*, Vols. 1 & 2, Free Association Books, 1987/1991; and *Black Athena Writes Back: Martin Bernal Responds to his Critics* (ed. David Chioni Moore), Duke University Press, 2001.

45. For some of the ramifications Kelman forges, see 'Oppression and Solidarity' and 'On the Asylum Bill' in Some *Recent Attacks, Essays Cultural and Political*, AK Press, 1992.

46. True, for example, of the police in their modern liberal guises just as much as the old-fashioned fascism – see *The Secret Policemen*'s exposé of police trainee racism (BBC1, October 2003); and Munira Mirza, 'Debating the Future: Living Together', September 2001 <www.culturewars.org.uk>. The same, in principle, can easily apply to the equal opps. agencies and professionals who police us elsewhere in the social fabric.

47. This essay's delineation of the concepts needed to express such a political 'polylectic' are necessarily vague. But the notion of dialectic is also completely inadequate to do justice to human history on God's – or anyone else's – earth; and any sensible deconstruction of Hegelian philosophy (and thus Marxism) will doubtless reveal its core Enlightenment problematic of religion as the Emperor's New Clothes, with scientific materialism as an intelligible (but only provisional) poor man's two-step beyond. So, I console myself with the ancient Eastern saying to the effect that pondering which are the appropriate questions may sometimes be more productive than prospecting for the (politically) correct answers.

middle class sensibilities or lower middle class aspirations.[35] Since then, the range of Asian experiences and contexts depicted comically, melodramatically or tragically has broadened, though problematic and/or forbidden love is still usually a key narrative driver.[36]

The exploration of comic potential has also been exhaustively mined, finding its most effective expression in television comedy's time-honoured antecedents in music hall vulgarity and the deflating of pretensions, and the sitcom preoccupation with class and family respectability. The BBC2 series *Goodness Gracious Me* and *The Kumars at No. 42* partook of both old and new generic markers,[37] and its affectionately exuberant skewering of British Asian stereotypes succeeded in appealing to unprecedentedly large audiences while consistently exploding the one-dimensional attributions that white racism (and 'well-meaning' liberal efforts) typically doles out to British Asian men, women and children.[38] Capturing with such flair the intimate fluctuations of warmth and callousness common to 'quality time' in most families of all backgrounds may have been the crucial stroke of genius here. And whether the viewer's connection to narrative hinges on laughter or pain, it's striking that relationships between the generations provide the most poignant tensions in virtually all of the fictional families so far discussed.

Generational conflict embraces the expectations, hopes and aspirations for children which stem from the parents' own experiences of being parented in specific circumstances, but who are now reversing roles in new contexts, environments and more or less pressurised conditions. The offsprings' responses further vary according to the degree of cognitive, emotional and material autonomy carved out so far, and the relative amenability of parental authority to reinforcement in the extended family, neighbourhood, culture, religion and patterns of government. Economic constraints are, as always, crucial in that the comforts and agonies of home life derive their most powerful significance depending on the choices available or withheld – and the physical, spatial and psychic room there is to come to know about and reflect on these possibilities, as well as in ascribing responsibility for them.

In particular, the interplay of gender and generation inflects responses to masculinism, in British Asian families just as for other groups, despite the massive divergencies of historical and biographical particulars. Gender differences are especially acute in poor areas, where macho orientation and camaraderie provides differential access to the public sphere for men[39] – while also allowing the reproduction of imperious male rule irrespective of religion; whereas middle class education, career and mobility horizons offer a spectrum of escape routes for both sexes. No doubt this helps sustain myths of the passive victimhood of Muslim women, but the arrogant class- and race-blindness of some feminists only adds insult to injury[40] – blaming the primitive sexual politics of medieval cultures which the women in question understand as a defensive haven in a heartless world. Even if the latter is a private hell, blanket condemnation simply reproduces the heartlessness and practically ossifies the isolation. Nowhere is this clearer just now than in the absurd characterisation of the Muslim hijab as symbolic of the fundamentalist crushing of women's individuality – unless miniskirts and makeup as modernist Western female disguise are to be interpreted as the complementary Christian test case.[41]

Nevertheless, many Asian women avoid publicly blaming Asian men or masculinist aspects of their culture or religion for the same reason that many Black and working class white women repudiate feminisms which treat machismo and patriarchy as singular transhistorical law, rather than over-determined symptoms of wider malaises of domination.[42] Once the concept of social class is actively engaged with the cultural diversity we now see clearly all around (and within) us, the political utility of the notion of post-imperial decolonisation thus begins to seem more than a metaphor – and a complex set of dominative dispositions of human resources is glimpsed: by men over women, powerful geographical forces over external populations, and internally in a society via ethnic and economic enslavement.[43]

Be that as it may, 'British' culture has always been decisively hybrid throughout its recorded history and probably before.[44] This should come as no surprise given that even the language is a hopelessly irrational melange – even more mixed when lower class and regional dialects are considered. Ironically, the resulting linguistic flexibility and openness of English is a logical justification for its candidature as 'world language' – rationalism as usual being the handmaiden of imperialism. So it's no accident that James Kelman, for instance, feels little affinity with high-British or Scottish literature, but more between African postcolonial writing and the existential prose materialisation of his own Glasgow vernacular.[45] But in cool Britannia, a national cuisine of chips, curry and pizza, sweatshop-produced sweatsuits, Chinese consumer goods and the melting pot of teenybop pop look like the far horizon of liberal capitalism's capacity to nurture a lasting tolerance of difference that extends further than exchanges of fond kisses.

Multiculturalism in school education can do little more than enumerate and exacerbate the surface diversity of culture, because the liberal consensus requires the playing down of the cruel origins of lived practices (at home, abroad or in diasporas) in situations of oppression and suffering. Neither history curricula nor citizenship classes are likely to honestly assess the past, present and future certainty of dislocation and desperation accompanying the exigencies of colonial, capitalist and globalising economics that the political elites are currently implementing. Similarly, the institutional embrace of equal opportunity excuses for inaction or PR, leads to the invention of oppression everywhere, to vicious victimisation *and* the imposition of victim status on those who otherwise, off their own bat, were getting on with the slow depressing drudge of dealing with and transcending it.[46] This is why portrayals which mention *only* the most unfortunate examples of state- or religion-sponsored racial and cultural terrorism are so spectacularly unhelpful (to say the least).

So, the multicultural recipe-mongering which isolates each ethnicity as a separate entry on a list of oppressions or identities not only cannot avoid but *insists on* the reification of essential otherness to be the root of conflict – rather than the denial of one's own unbearable experiences and conflicts projected into convenient others and misperceived as *their* attributes or responsibility – thus preventing the recognition and acting-upon of affiliation. Fantasies of the heroic progress of civilisation, industry and science likewise feed into a simplistic complacent ideology of transparent social worlds with no room for reflection on shared experiences of suffering across culture, race, geography and history – forcing 'difference' to appear as cause in the defensively monolithic reaction of 'faith schools' and the equally nonsensical religions of rationalist liberal secularism.

The only route to genuine solidarity (if and where required and requested) – and hence to worthwhile political movement with any potential to transcend oppression (including in the politics of identity and representation) – is to take one's cues from those bearing the brunt. Dictating to people how it is they suffer and what they should do about it – whether from abstract principles of law or philosophy, legal or bureaucratic rights or rules of governance, the profitable careers of market commodities and capitals, or the entrenchment interests of academic or professional experts – turns the tactics of freedom on their head into the patronising removal from above of patterns that the victims have had no agency in knowing or defining. This can only ever perpetuate dehumanisation and detract from the social self-determination and liberation from below that is so urgently felt and sought.[47]

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not simply, relations of a man

Colin Graham

When Martin McGuinness warned the sisters and partner of Robert McCartney that they 'would need to be very careful' about the direction of their campaign for justice, he may have believed that he wasn't sounding threatening. It was, he wanted to convey, merely a word to the naïve from the politically wise. McGuinness's concern was that the McCartneys 'don't step over the party political line and allow themselves to be used or manipulated'. With now typical and forceful dignity the McCartneys and Bridgeen Hagans replied that they were not stupid, and that they felt condescended to. They have gently made it clear that several of them have a university education, history and politics being favoured subjects, and thus they feel that they know how politics works in Northern Ireland. Despite this, McGuinness's language, much as he'd deny it, was that of the authoritative, party-political, public man who speaks down to the individual woman, or 'women', here defined primarily as relatives of a man. Whatever strides have been made in Sinn Féin's gender policies (and there were many in the 1980s and '90s), being a republican still demands a loyalty that cannot see how the hypocrisy of partisanship-for-its-own-sake often defines republicanism's, or Sinn Féin's, limits. When men talk to women in the way McGuinness talked to the McCartneys, and when the men are in the public domain, the women emerging from privacy into public grief, the old gender imbalances are reasserted. The stench of political machismo lingers long.

Like many an individual story in Northern Irish politics, the killing of Robert McCartney is a particular horror which is in danger of being lost in the stasis of the Peace Process. The 2005 Parliamentary elections gave McGuinness's words an extra urgency, especially when it seemed that one of the McCartney sisters might stand as an independent candidate, with the potential for embarrassing Sinn Féin. But it is the familiar narrative of women coming into the political arena in the North, only to be silenced and forgotten, which seems a more likely scenario for the McCartneys, as their brother's murder fades from memory and the moment of change which their campaign seemed to signal slips into the past, to be replaced, no doubt, by another 'challenge' to the status quo of the Peace Process.

Gender, and the place of women in the state in more general terms, has always proved an irritation to the onward march of nationalist and unionist ideologies in Ireland, north and south. While nationalist Ireland has its familiar female icons, standing as metaphors for a fantastically unified nation (Mother Ireland; Kathleen Ní Houlihan; the Sean Bhan Bhoct), Northern Ireland came into existence with a unionist equivalent. A well-known poster from 1914 depicts a unionist colleen, shawl and all, in front of a Union Flag, holding a rifle and lamenting her desertion by Britain. The implicit call to her better and stronger male half is the same as republicanism's equally well-known image of the 'Birth of the Irish Republic' in which 'Ireland' is an angel (with a distinctly French lineage) who floats above and guards the rebels of the Rising. Gun in hand or not, Hibernia and her unionist sister have always found themselves eventually kept in the shadows of their menfolk. After a flurry of public activity, it's clear that the banal work of everyday politics has little place for women, and less place for the idea that women might have something different to say.

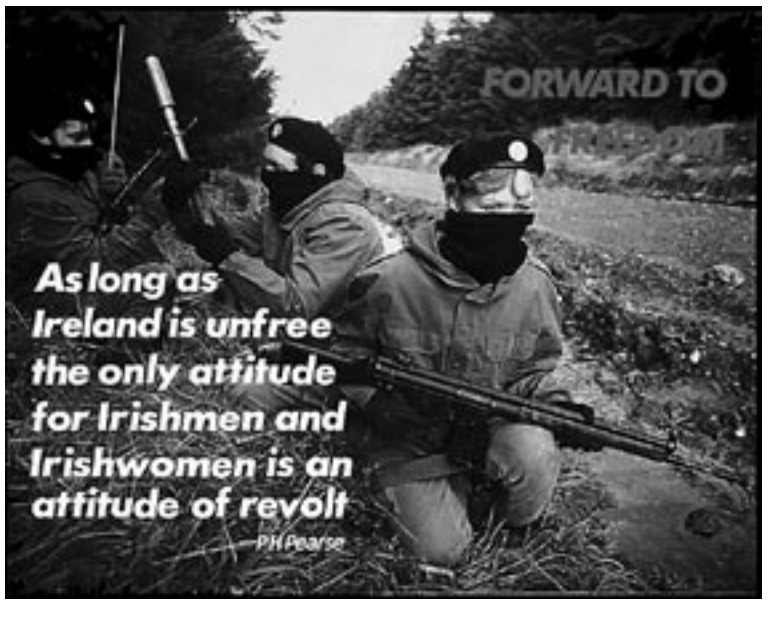
If the imagery of Northern Irish wilting femininity has a long history, so too do the complaints women have made about the deaf ear turned to gender when the national question is being gravely pronounced. In 1909, the feminist Hanna Sheehy Skeffington recognised that 'we all, unionists and nationalists alike, live overmuch on our past in Ireland … This tendency is nowhere more aptly illustrated than with regard to the position of Irish women in the Ireland of to-day. Nowhere in the pitiful tangle of present-day life does the actual more sadly belie the far-off past.' Sheehy Skeffington largely stood outside the national debate and, before the Rising at any rate, tried to keep gender and national issues separate. Meanwhile, even the redoubtable ladies of the Ulster Women's Unionist Council, with a clear political agenda in mind, were capable of straight-talking. In June 1918 a memo from the Council complained to the party hierarchy that 'we have not been treated like comrades'; these, again, were women feeling silenced and betrayed by the political scene in the North, this time at the end of the First World War.

The McCartney sisters are not avowed feminists, like the suffragist Sheehy Skeffington, nor are they politicos, however muted, like the Ulster Women's Unionist Council of 1918, or indeed Bernadette McAliskey (née Devlin), who was so lampooned in the British and unionist press in the early 1970s for her perceived lack of femininity. The McCartneys and Ms Hagans are simply strong women, seeking to break a mould, but only because they have to. There is, in their campaigning, a resonance of an earlier phenomenon of the Troubles – the Peace People. Formed in 1976, after the deaths of several young children who were knocked down by a car in an IRA-British Army chase, the Peace People were organised by Mairead Corrigan, Betty Williams and Ciaran McKeown. Williams and Corrigan were awarded the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize. The Peace People still exist – indeed like many long-standing political and non-political organisations in Northern Ireland, they see the Good Friday Agreement as an outcome and vindication of their position, difficult as it is to reconcile the mixture of paramilitary exhaustion and political cynicism in post-Agreement Northern Ireland with the Ghandianism of the Peace People. The Peace People cite the pacifism of Francis Sheehy Skeffington as an inspiration, rather than the feminism of Hanna. Yet their philosphy has always been somewhat awkwardly caught between their anti-violence stance and their female leadership. When awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, Williams and Corrigan were sure to point to Ciaran McKeown's involvement in the Peace People. And Williams's Nobel acceptance speech effectively disavowed gender politics: 'War has traditionally been a man's work … The voice of women has a special role and a special soul force in the struggle for a non-violent world. We do not wish to replace religious sectarianism or ideological division with sexism or any kind of militant feminism.' Women just are more peaceful, was as forceful as the gender message got for the Peace People. Their political stance was equally, benignly unengaged. The hoary political forces of Northern Ireland eventually consumed them.

For the Peace People and the McCartneys, women calling for peace and justice respectively are in a position potentially nullified from the outset by the perceived liberalism or irrelevance which clings to a 'women's movement'. It is not long, in Northern Ireland, before anything 'new', especially when it involves women, is seen to have a pitiful naïvety about it. If it doesn't disappear quickly from view then suspicion, and eventually conspiracy theories, follow. The effect is to say again and again that women cannot lead political agendas. More profoundly, these stifling forces mean that no grassroots movements are conceivable, other than those variously represented by the established political parties. In the case of the McCartneys, though, there is a stronger and perhaps more resilient driving force. The Peace People failed as a mass movement because they had a notional 'asectarianism' to them. They talked about Northern Ireland's divisions and Troubles only in terms of tragedy, a discourse which falls apart once touched by real politics. Obviously the causes of the Troubles run deeper than the widespread, vague and compromisable desire that no one should die. But the McCartneys are not peace campaigners. Their strength comes from the fact that they confront their own community. The dynamic of their protest is not that of the creation of a 'third space', nor an appeal to some utopian impulse. What really rattles the cages in Northern Ireland are small shifts in the consensus, not well-meaning hand-wringing about the illogicality of sectarianism (illogical and abhorrent as it is). The recent elections, for example, were, like most preceding them, two separate elections in one: nationalists and unionists voting with almost no crossover. It is the structures within and not across these ideologies which matter. And therefore the emergence of a dissenting and impressive set of women's voices from within republicanism, and *de facto* pitted against the new republicanism, upsets the balance. The McCartneys can only fallaciously be seen as crying liberals or the stooges of the forces of oppression. Some will believe this, some have hinted at it over the past months. But it doesn't stick.

In this the McCartneys can take their strength from the individuality of their case, and they have done so by taking their story far and wide. They cause tremors in republicanism because they have the aura of loss and grief, and the authenticity of locality, both of which republicanism itself, especially in Belfast, has relied on. Without this, and their own determination, they would not have made the impact they have.

Women as women are still sidelined in the matrix of class and sectarianism which



IRA poster, date unknown

McCartneys and Bridgeen Hagans

underwrites the politics of Northern Ireland. Evidence of this is the fate of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC), formed in 1996. The NIWC were involved in the negotiations leading to the Good Friday Agreement and subsequently had two Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) in the Northern Ireland Assembly. Their cross-community, non-sectarian policies perhaps challenged the moribund Alliance Party more than any other, though again there were glimmers of a different order in their founding, reflected best in the words of their opponents. David Ervine, for example, leader of the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), also contesting the 1996 elections to the Northern Ireland Forum, said of the NIWC: 'I do have some dubious thoughts about how they as a cross-community group can look at this election and understand why this election is called and then field candidates to actually deal with the problems that undoubtedly beset us.' Ervine himself was leading an emerging party, the energies of which were hardly 'cross-community' but which in a different way might have signalled a new set of formations in the party political system. It was not to be though, either for the PUP or the NIWC. The PUP has only one MLA; the NIWC now have none. Indeed the NIWC has only one elected representative, a local councillor in North Down representing the cosey middle-classness of Ballyholme. The NIWC's focus on women's issues was targeted at a middle-ground – they had more to say on health and children's issues than all the other parties combined. But their collapse was an inevitability of the effective sectarianism of the very Agreement which they helped broker. Despite their disdain for the 'win-lose syndrome' of Northern politics it was that dynamic which was solidified and institutionalised on Good Friday 1998. The result of the Agreement has been the continued rise of Sinn Féin within nationalism and the near-obliteration of the Ulster Unionists Party by the DUP. The liberal middle-ground is saturated by business, financiers and developers, who plough ahead with their transformation of the 'communities' of the North, while socially the province remains as divided as ever, and women's voices have been placed back under the dominion of the ancient ideologies.

Women in Northern Irish politics have a Hobson's choice. Either they can join the political machine and see gender issues, from abortion, to maternity services, to childcare, take second place to the interminable negotiations of identity politics. Or they can join or form another community women's group – a phenomenon with a healthy, but semi-underground energy, stretching back continually through the period of the Troubles. Maybe the McCartney sisters will shift those tectonic plates which are the cause of the rumbling inadequacies of politics in Northern Ireland. If they do, it will be because of their own bravery, and because it seems that solidarity for women is best achieved within their 'community', and by questioning its ethics and masculinity from the inside.

The Conformist Imagination: Think-Tankery Versus Utopian Scotland

Alex Law

G. Hassan, E. Gibb and L. Howland, eds., *Scotland 2020: Hopeful Stories for a Northern Nation*, London: Demos.

Two Wrongs Make a Right

Something is wrong with Scotland. Or, rather, 'Scotlands'. According to Demos there are three of these: 'Traditional Scotland', 'Modernist Scotland' and 'Hopeful Scotland'. Two of these Scotlands, 'Traditional' and 'Modernist', are simply played out. Only 'Hopeful' Scotland can carry the future aspirations of the nation.

Demos's projections in *Scotland 2020* are just the latest entreaties by Approved Thinkers for Scots to get over their outdated 'hopeless' styles and start taking up a style more in keeping with that of a 'hopeful' nation. A whole series of calls have been made recently for Scots to be more positive, happy, playful, optimistic and now hopeful.

Stuart Cosgrove, Channel 4's Director of Nations and Regions and lad's lad, caused a furore when he claimed that Scots love 'failure' and writers like James Kelman and film-makers like Peter Mullan are obsessed by the 'self-loathing' of depressing urban realism: 'They also love the culture of poverty. The rise of the Scottish Socialist Party is a case in point. They don't seem to be able to imagine themselves out of this culture'.[1]

Christopher Harvie, the historian, and the popular writer, Alexander McColl Smith have both criticised the national standing of Irvine Welsh's 'debased' fiction. Harvie is specific about the class-basis of this: 'Welsh's market remains captive: the inarticulate 20-somethings, call-centre folk, cyberserfs, unsmug unmarrieds who infest [city centre] fun palaces. Welsh is to this lot what, in his happier days, Jeffrey Archer was to Mondeo Man: the jammy bastard who did well'.[2]

Meanwhile the former head of literature at the Scottish Arts Council, Jenny Brown, bemoans the absence of commercial, upbeat writing – 'the gorgeous sexy novels' – swamped by dark, Scots miserabilism.[3]

The Fearties of Neo-Liberalism

Fatalism and pessimism are supposedly endemic to the national culture. This has been argued with most crusading zeal by Carol Craig, the Carlifornia-style happiness guru. Craig argues that Scots suffer from a collective psychological crisis of confidence that results in a self-disciplining culture which places a check on personal ambition and market success.[4] What is needed to break from this torpor is the power of positive thinking, happiness and a can-do mentality. So successful has Craig's campaign for positive thinking been that £750,000 of public and private funding has been awarded to set a Centre for Confidence and Wellbeing.

The main assumption behind all this is the assertion that Scotland suffers from an inferiority complex deeply rooted in the 'national psyche'. This is seen as a debilitating, congenital condition afflicting Scotland to the point where the nation constantly under-competes in the world economy. If only our latent pessimism and negativity could be overcome then somehow we might become a great wee country again.

Here can be found echoes of an older argument that Scots are a great disappointment as a nation for failing to live up to their historical mission of achieving full national self-determination. Such claims traditionally came from nationalist intellectuals and politicians frustrated by the lack of political support amongst Scots for the break-up of the UK state.

The moral failing of Scots to develop a fully-fledged national politics and culture reflects their deeply-embedded 'inferiorism' borne out of dependency relations on the metropolitan heartlands of England, where social power really resides.

This has been largely superseded in the past decade by a new rhetoric of social and cultural exclusion as a way to remoralise despondent social groups in Scotland. A kind of 'Munchhausen effect' is routinely invoked where individuals need to pull themselves and their communities out of the mire by their own efforts.

This chimes especially well with neo-liberalism's drive to create cultures and identities around an entrepreneurial selfhood receptive to the force and needs of capital. As Alan Hogarth for CBI Scotland put it: 'We have to try and get over the cultural problem of still denigrating success and an anti-private sector, anti-profit culture still apparent across Scotland'.[5]

All this has a certain ideological consistency to it. The social source of this in Scotland today is a new power elite whose shared project is to make Scotland a miniaturised version of the global neo-liberal order.

Arguably, this project expresses the revanchism of the new power elite that has increasingly ensnared Scotland since the Parliamentary restoration of a few years ago. For too long the middle class leaders of society – culture experts, union bureaucrats, academics, journalists, political hacks, public servants, non-governmental bodies – suffered the indignities of being treated as irrelevant under Thatcherism and multinational restructuring.[6]

All this time they saw themselves as a new power elite in waiting. Some among them set-up a Constitutional Convention, an undemocratic elite that gathered together to demand democracy on behalf of the rest of the nation.

Having restored a quasi-sovereign Parliament, such elites have glued themselves to the institutions around the 'New Scotland'. They'd like to forget the recent past and their abject failure to protect Scottish society from the ravages of Thatcherism, which, of course, many have since come to see as unassailable common sense.

Given that the present is not all it was once cracked up to be, something for which the elites can no longer be held responsible, they have become heroic defenders of the future. If only the rest of us would snap out of being depressed about past defeats and an unheroic present.

Hopeful Hopelessness

How does the new power elite revanchism express itself? In place of social solidarity rooted in the inequities and antagonisms of adversarial class relations, any sense of the good community depends today on media lifestyle drives and political exhortations to develop our own 'social capital'. Television and the press are unrelenting in their lifestyle campaigns for us to dress better, eat better, cook better, garden better, shop better, even shit better. On the other hand, a conformist sense of community obligation, trust and networks is demanded of those sections of society worst hit by decades of capital restructuring and state reform by joining choirs, painting clubs or the PTA, what is called 'social capital'.[7]

Squeezed between two types of middle class conformism – emanating from the people who as a matter of social distinction always know better about tasteful consumption and responsible morality – the rest suffer their admonitions and are treated as ungrateful supplicants of their beneficence. This may feel like hopelessness most of the time.

But there are also the mad moments of breakout, when subaltern recalcitrance is moved to outright rebellion, for instance to resist the 'modernising' measures of the new power elite in the closure of a local swimming pool in Govanhill,[8] the Stock Housing Transfer in Glasgow or phone masts and GM crop trials in North-East Fife.[9]

Recalcitrance therefore is posed as a problem to be stamped out. A discernible ideological drive is underway in Scotland to see to it that there is less of this defeatist nonsense. It only gets in the way of those selfless creatures that valiantly try to make a difference.

Class conflict and cultures are polarising, adversarial and unpleasant. They divide nations like Scotland that need to be held together to entice capital to settle here, if only for a moment, by cultural pluralism, a pleasant disposition and harmless historical monuments. Otherwise, ferocious global market competition will jeopardise lifestyle, acquisitions and the social cohesion that are enjoyed by affluent sections of society.

In its social and economic structure Scotland has undergone what for some is a profound transformation in just two decades from industrial basket-case to post-industrial powerhouse. Only popular attitudes have been slow to catch-up. Sociologists point to the fact that Scotland is now a more affluent, comfortable and pleasant place to live, although an impoverished minority are being cut out of the good times.[10]

Middle class leaders of society therefore need to become more assertive about the joy of commodities and competition and break from the thrall in which many are supposedly held of

proletarian recalcitrance and its legacies, above all, the welfare state and collectivist values.

Remarkable Thinkers

How is ideological revanchism given shape? New power elite revenge for past humiliations and current banalities takes the form of a plague on both the houses of the left and the right. Abjuring both proletarian recalcitrance and reactionary petit bourgeois traditions, the enlightened elites seek to lead society under the illumination of their own pragmatic vision. An ahistorical, self-contented Third Way, unfettered by the ideological detritus of the past, is to be steered between these unspeakable binaries.

At the helm of the great pragmatic leap forward is think-tankery. Since ideology and class interests are too depressingly backward-looking the vacuum in ideas is filled eclectically by commercial thinkers for hire. Such thinkers hover around the margins of the power elite, hustling for the right rate of exchange for the next Big Idea. Operating beyond the managerialism of conventional academe, think tanks parade the illusion that they are 'independent', free to think radically, outside of the unappetising conventions of peer-reviewed papers and RAEs or party-based research groups.

But, as Walter Benjamin remarked of an earlier faux intelligentsia, they thought that they came to the market to coolly observe but, in reality, they only came to find a buyer. For 'centre-left' think tanks the uncertainty of their own social standing and economic position translates into the ambiguity of their political function.

For instance, after he gave up the security of working as a *Financial Times* journalist to become a thinker of independent means[11], former Blair guru Charles Leadbeater is all wind and thunder about the social, technical and economic revolution of our age in his idealist paean to the weightless 'knowledge economy', *Living on Thin Air*. He makes great play of his own ability to literally live by his wits and find a buyer in the market place. We are all encouraged to emulate such examples of the self-sufficient but networked monad and bring our own carcasses to market willingly.

While the policy-apparatus talks about 'evidence-based' studies and research institutes slowly grind out the findings of longitudinal, representative studies, think tanks need to catch the eye with the newly-minted neologism, the grandiose claim, and the fundamental re-think. Think-tankery demands novel jargon (iconoclastic) to dress up (re-brand) stale ideas (new, radical), outlandish cults (positive thinking), inflated claims (the knowledge economy) or outright banalities (ideas shape society). But always in such a way that no threat might be implied to their existing or potential position in the marketplace for ideas.

And the traffic runs in both directions. So-called action research routinely supplies the buyer with the right tune, one already composed by stringing together over-wrought corporate slogans about flexibility, connectivity, networks, social capital, social inclusion, knowledge, information, and so on.

Think tanks and policy centres revel in 'a vision of progress', 'thinking the unthinkable', 'bringing radical solutions to old problems', finding a 'future that works'.[12] All of which must be heroically undertaken by 'intellectuals, thinkers and ideas-orientated people in the sphere of public policy and politics'.[13] In other words, people just like themselves.

And this is no easy matter. It involves risk-taking and courage 'in a world without the old certainties and easy distinctions of class politics and confrontation'.[14] Commercial thinkers have, not for the first or the last time, done away with all this unpleasant business of class. Good news about the end of class finds an insatiable appetite among elites that always stand above the fray in 'the general interest'.

Demos and Polis

One of the most influential, media-obsessed, anti-class think tanks under New Labour is Demos. They have all the attributes of post-modern think-tankery at its most superficial. As two sober academics put it, Demos show few inhibitions about shunning painstaking, detailed research in favour of 'cursory surveys of focus-group opinion on "life-style" issues such as gender and the environment: like the [Blair-endorsed, right-wing] Adam Smith Institute, it threw out ideas almost at random in the hope that they would be rewarded by a newspaper headline or a semi-humorous item in television bulletins'.[15]

Their own self-image, 'About Demos', says it all: 'Demos is a greenhouse for new ideas', which 'cross-fertilise ideas and experience' of 'people changing politics'. Key to this is something called 'Demos knowledge', which seems to concern 'the way ideas shape society'. Well, yes, and...?

Such vacuous phrase-mongering has its roots in the defeats faced by the organised working class in the 1980s. Demos was set up by two former members of the Communist Party of Great Britain, Martin Jacques and Geoff Mulgan. During the 1980s they increasingly celebrated Thatcherism, the market and consumer capitalism and traduced the labour movement in the Communist Party's own magazine, *Marxism Today*.

Such was their enthusiasm for Thatcherism that key right-wingers like Douglas Hurd and Alfred Sherman supported Demos, despite its stated claim to have moved 'beyond right and left'. Interestingly, neither Sherman nor Hurd relinquished their own class politics on subscribing to Demos.

Since then Blair, an incorrigible think-tanker, has become a Demos enthusiast, adopting their lamentable attempt to 're-brand' antiquated Britain as 'cool Britannia' and preparing the ground for the centrist shibboleths of the Third Way. At least Mulgan found the ultimate buyer for his ideological re-heats when he was recruited as personal adviser to Blair.

A heroic leap into the future

Demos's *Scotland 2020* is the merely the latest (2005) exercise in thinking really deeply about the future. Some of the same characters have been punting the future since the late '90s in collections like *A Different Future: A Moderniser's Guide to Scotland* (1999) and *Tomorrow's Scotland* (2002). In these works the accent was on how the new Parliament would shape up as a 'modernising', that is, centrist institution. While it may still be early days, the results have been disappointing, evidenced by the mass disinterest in the elections to only the second Scottish Parliament.

Scotland 2020 has a bit less to say about politics and the Parliament and a lot more to say about changing the mythical stories that the nation lives by and will adopt in the future. The problem is that the narratives dominant in Scotland are too old-fashionedly collectivist and egalitarian. This has bred a deep-seated pessimism that has degenerated since the Parliamentary restoration into outright 'fatalism'.

Stories are needed that will excite and enthuse Scots to claim their share of the new opportunities being opened-up by neo-liberal capitalism. Key to this is something called 'futures literacy', another fine piece of think-tankery. Here a linear sequence is envisaged 'to move from consideration of a set of possibilities, to agreement on a set of more probable scenarios, to a consensus around a preferable future'.[16]

Were it not so fatuous this might be considered ironic coming, as it does, from a think-tank obsessed with the momentary impression, basking in nothing much deeper than media image and elite-influence in the present.

In Scotland, this simply means that 'people' need to start telling each other stories that are more optimistic and hopeful and stop depressing each other with tales of poverty, urban blight, collectivism and the loss of distinctively Scottish values. But maybe this is too charitable given Demos's own account of 'futures literacy', which I quote in its full evasive and tautological glory:

> A futures literate public would embrace the capacity to think and talk about the future, using a new language and grammar of politics. Developing a futures literate culture would be one that recognised that thinking about the future means embracing a world where there is uncertainty and unpredictability, and where there are many futures and many future Scotlands.[17]

Never mind 'futures literacy'. What about some

basic logical consistency? On the one hand, it is stated that 'people relate national policies to their own experience' but a few lines later we learn that 'it is quite common for people to *never* make the link between their own experience and national policy'.[18]

But hold on. Isn't a future enveloped by neo-liberalism and New Labour as predictable as economic slump follows boom, where poverty and the reserve army of labour is a permanent side-effect of capital accumulation, and where the world system of states guarantee global levels of violence? So long as all this persist, it is certain that there will not be infinitely happy futures to pass through.

The Three Scotland's

Three straw models of Scotland are invented by Demos. First, a *traditional* Scotland from Old Labour to the Catholic church hankers after the 'old certainties' of conservative values as a way to resist 'encroachment of the modern world'. This is given short shrift. Second, a *modernist* Scotland of the official government apparatus evinces a top-down market growth machine, optimistically predicated on a technocratic, soulless, linear vision that ultimately lacks 'hope'. Economic growth alone will bring happiness and contentment.

And then, of course, there is the correct Demos-world of a *hopeful* Scotland based on 'learned optimism'. This has less of the wild optimism than the modernist gung-ho embrace of neo-liberal capitalism. It works with people inside and outside of the growth machine to embrace 'hope, deep change and complexity' to effect systemic transformation.[19]

For all their constant chuntering about 'complexity' Demos issue disclaimers that these vague models are necessary simplifications that merely 'illustrate the key faultlines and tensions in Scotland, its cultures and institutions'. Beyond vague allusions to Old Labour and the Catholic Church, none of these 'faultlines' are delineated with any empirical precision. But that is the beauty of shifting the focus away from the intractable problems of politics and economy to vague narratives of hope, happiness and confidence. You can sound radical and still not offend the future buyers of ideas.

What an edifice of cultural transformation to build on such flimsy foundations! It smacks of putting a human face on neo-liberalism. This is the well-known trick of applying culture to issues that really require critical political economy and the mobilisation of dissent. Instead, a fatalistic culture in the form of story-telling and myth-making is made to blame for obdurate levels of inequality and poverty in Scotland. In the process the structures of capitalism conveniently drop out of the equation.

Declass ed Scotland

That Scottish society has changed fundamentally is becoming something of a mantra where everything is 'new'. A new 'ethic of living' is needed to match the changed reality of a more individualist, plural and complex society. But, the central problem for elites is that despite the 'upward mobility' into professional and managerial 'classes' many Scots identify themselves even more strongly with being working class than they did a quarter of a century ago.

Measuring class is a notoriously flawed business, where the conventional categories often fail to reflect reality. Diverse groups of workers are lumped together as non-manual for instance and then their attributes are read back as somehow less working class than the manual worker ideal.

Much of the change to class structure amounts to a shift to feminised service work instead of male-dominated manufacturing. Yet huge swathes of service work are proletarianised in the double sense of hierarchically-controlled, repetitive operations, typified by fast food joints and call centres, but also by much of the public sector where trade unionism remains entrenched – dismissed by Demos as 'a minority pastime of tenured public sector professionals' – and the low waged nature of such work.

Demos describe the 'profound consequences' of how the lives of Scots have been 'transformed' thus:

> from the social layout and feel of cities, to the way young people think about their aspirations, future prospects and savings patterns, to newspaper supplements and TV programmes on this related domestic revolution, and the number of DIY and garden centres.[20]

Like so much else, for each of these assertions it would be relatively straightforward to draw exactly contrary conclusions.

Cities are being cloned by retail and development capital as city-centres are turned into hostile surveillance zones.[21] Young people are being burdened with record levels of personal debt not savings. Lifestyle cultures are merely the latest form of reproduction that capital takes as a self-expanding system. Capitalism is commodifying the deepest recesses of everyday life.

Even Scotland's poorest city, Dundee, gets the Demos boosterism treatment, particularly interesting for me as someone who lives and works there. This is set in the context of the shift from Fordism to 'mass personalisation' but little detailed analysis of the city or its composition is provided. Instead a recipe is handed to Dundee, with its 'jazz scene' (?) and science research centres, based on rhetoric about attracting and nurturing 'creative talent' appropriate to the 'creative age'. To do this requires 'new forms of social trust' and avoiding copying how other cities promote themselves. The most concrete recommendation made was the following insight: 'The competitive advantage of Dundee could be marshalled around ideas such as "the best place in Scotland to bring up a child", or "a great place for baby boomers to grow old"'.[22]

Happy Stories?

So new positive stories about the New Progressive Scotland are needed for these newly affluent and always more complex times. This story 'emphasises health, well-being, status, self-worth and other subjective indicators'.[23] Again, Demos are keen to shed the attachment of too many Scots to out-dated social democratic values. Here Scots are cast as too consensual, reticent and fearful of dissent, making genuine dialogue particularly difficult. Yet it is Demos themselves that can't make their mind up if dialogue should be consensual or disputatious.

Story-telling is advocated because it creates self-understanding and a 'feeling of belonging and security'.[24] Recent rhetorical psychology has demonstrated that thinking and self-understanding arise dialogically through argument, debate, dispute and dissent rather than agreement, consent, and conformism.[25] Anyway, what happened to the idea that far from being passively conformist Scots tend to be democratically *carnaptious*,[26] always ready for an argument at the drop of a hat? Demos fall into the trap of imputing essential psycho-cultural characteristics to an entire nation. So much for complexity.

Mind Your Language

Perhaps the most insightful part of this collection is the short story section. As with most other non-Demos contributors these do not display the same confidence in Demos's optimism of the intellect. Ken McLeod, the acclaimed writer of anarcho-Trotskyist science fiction, for instance, provides a typically bleak, quasi-Orwellian scenario for Scotland of endless war and environmental catastrophe.

Another novelist, Ruaridh Nicoll, tells a more familiar story about a disability benefit inspector. Nicoll also reported his experience of the actual seminars; Demos's accent on 'hopeful stories' gave a 'slightly rose-tinted view of the proceedings'.[27]

Anne Donovan's short story shows a time when urban Scots is flattened out of existence by Standard English through cultural indifference, highly unlikely but a useful contrast to Demos bland-speak. She points to the wider issue of spoken Scots as a marker of class that, as Tom Leonard among others have shown, is a recalcitrant form of speech which became by default a touchstone of national authenticity under Thatcherism, much to the chagrin of the indistinct vowels of middle class Scotland.[28]

Demos's own use of degraded think-tank jargon and corporate-speak might be taken as a case in point here. Such clichéd language litters the Demos contributions: talk about 'personalisation', 'futures literacy', 'the creative clusters' and so on.

It must be catching. Even non-Demos contributions fall into unthinking Demos-speak, as in the discussion about tourism and history, which reduces notions of 'self-actualistion' and 'authenticity' to simply providing holidays based on the hobbies and interests of visitors, apparently unaware of the tortured careers of such concepts in the Modernist revolt against commodification and alienation.

Entrenched Prospects

And indeed other well-kent contributors brought some sense of perspective to what was being argued, in many ways at odds with the whole thrust of the Demos project. But even here there is a predictable tendency to accept that things have indeed been transformed and that, generally, the future is bright and moving in the right direction.

Tom Devine teaches confidence-guru Carol Craig a history lesson about the elite top-down nature of what Neil Davidson calls Scotland's 'bourgeois revolution'.[29] However, Devine suffers from the fallacy that afflicts some historians of reading contemporary trends in terms of discontinuities at the expense of structural continuities.

In response, Craig states that her missionary work to create an egoistic idea of selfhood is nearly done: 'Part of my mission for Scotland is to contribute to the creation of a cultural environment in which people feel they can be themselves'.[30] But she is compelled by Devine to accept that Scotland has *not* been characterised by cultural or social stagnation as her 'crisis of confidence' thesis predicts. So the wrong, passive and craven attitudes and personality traits are impressionistically imputed by Craig to people who have undergone the deep shifts to socio-economic life wrought by the end of national autarchy and the rise of neo-liberalism.

Christopher Harvie desperately casts around for signs of hopefulness in Scotland's situation

within the world crisis on account of rising oil prices and how Trident nuclear submarines might be used to bargain for Scottish independence. Tom Nairn simply ignores the disinterest in large case Nationalism in Scotland to optimistically stress the prospects for constitutional independence against the neo-liberal enthusiast George Kerevan's support for the British state and global capital.

Utopian Pessimism

It is not at all clear exactly how fatalism comes to be diagnosed nor how the happy prognosis of a positive future is to be conjured up. 'Hope' has been displaced by 'cynicism and critique'.[31] There is some confusion here between cynicism and critique; the former is practised by the power elite as they conduct a campaign of self-interested revanchism, while the latter depends on taking up a critical standpoint in a class-divided society like Scotland.

It might, in fact, be considered the height of cynicism to propose de-classed liberal slogans about hope in the teeth of entrenched class-based material inequalities. All this points to the elite manipulation of masses, 'the people' who need to be 'hopeful', for pre-determined ends.

Anyway, why is 'negativity' seen as 'ignoring the complexity and diversity of any one moment'?[32] Couldn't this be equally viewed as a learned pessimism of the intellect, a necessary blasé attitude appropriate to the disappointed promises of actual social conditions? And, why invest unremitting class oppression and exploitation with positivity?

Recently, Bill Duncan's Anti-Self Help Guide, *The Wee Book of Calvin*, provides an suitable riposte to the Scottish Dr Feelgoods. Duncan emphasises the nature of praxis in the work ethic: 'The work ethic and the inherent sense of unworthiness reject contemplation and stasis, seeking instead self-realization through deed and achievement: DOING and BEING'.[33]

There is a long tradition of adopting recalcitrant pessimism in order to endorse the utopian future immanent to the present, from the Anabaptists to Benjamin and Bloch in the twentieth century. Bloch discerns such praxis in the fragments of an apparently stubborn reality in theological-dialectical terms as, 'an anticipatory illumination that could never be realised in an ideology of the status quo but, rather, has been connected to it like an explosive'.[34]

Recalcitrant pessimism is a condition found among the 'new proletariat' not just in Scotland but elsewhere in the heartlands of capitalism, from France, as recorded in Pierre Bourdieu's study of social suffering, to the US in Barbara Ehrenreich's study of the American working poor. The problem is to make self-emancipation a meaningful goal, not to advance a variation on the old conformism, designed by think tanks for power elites.

Notes

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3. Senay Boztas, ' First it was Scotland's depressing films … now our "grim" books are under fire', *Sunday Herald*, 27 February 2005.
4. Carol Craig, *The Scots Crisis of Confidence,* Big Thinking, 2003.
5. Ian Johnston, 'Scotland 2004: Why we've never had it so good', *The Scotsman*, 15 May 2004.
6. Alex Law, 'Welfare nationalism: Social Justice and/or entrepreneurial Scotland?', Gerry Mooney and Gill Scott, *Exploring Social Policy in the 'New' Scotland*, Polity Press, 2005.
7. Alex Law and Gerry Mooney, 'The missing "capital" in social capital', *Critique* (forthcoming).
8. Govanhill Baths Trust, 'A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk, along the briny beach', *Variant*, 2.21, 2004.
9. Alex Law, 'The Social Geometry of Mobile Telephony', *Razon Y Palabra: Primera Revista Electronica en America Latina Especializada en Topicos de Comunicacion*, 42, 2004/2005, www.razonypalabra.org.mx/anteriores/n42/alaw.html
10. L. Paterson, D. McCrone and F. Bechhofer, *Living in Scotland*, Edinburgh University Press, 2004.
11. Charles Leadbeater, *Living on Thin Air: The New Economy*, Viking, 1999.
12. Such inane clichés can be found, for instance, in the opening pages of Gerry Hassan and Chris Warhurst, *A Moderniser's Guide to Scotland: A Different Future*, Glasgow, 1999.
13. Hassan and Warhurst, 1999, p. 9.
14. Hassan and Warhurst, 1999, p. 2.
15. Andree Denham and Mark Garnett, 'Influence without responsibility? Think-Tanks in Britain', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 52.1, pp. 53-4., 1999.
16. Demos, 2005, p. 54.
17. Demos, 2005, p. 22.
18. Demos, 2005, p. 22.
19. Demos, 2005, p. 16.
20. Demos, 2005, p. 30.
21. Alex Law and Gerry Mooney, 'Urban Landscapes', *International Socialism*, 106, http://www.isj.org.uk/index.php4?id=95&issue=106
22. Demos, 2005, p. 120.
23. Demos, 2005, p. 43.
24. Demos, 2005, p. 36.
25. See Michael Billig, Susan Condor, David Edwards, Mike Gane, David Middleton, and Alan Radley, *Ideological Dilemmas: A Social Psychology of Everyday Thinking*, Sage, 1988. Michael Billig, *Arguing and Thinking: A Rhetorical Approach to Social Psychology*, Cambridge University Press, 1987; Michael Billig, *Ideology and Opinions: Studies in Rhetorical Psychology*, Sage, 1991.
26. Late 19th century Scots word meaning irritable or quarrelsome. *Concise Scots Dictionary,* 1985.
27. Ruaridh Nicoll, 'Retelling the present', *The Observer*, 20 March 2005.
28. Alex Law, 'Language and the Press in Scotland', in , J.M. Kirk and D.P.O Baoill, eds., *Towards Our Goals in Broadcasting, the Press and the Performing Arts*, Queen's University Press, 2004.
29. Neil Davidson, *The Origins of Scottish Nationhood*, Pluto Press, 2000.
30. Demos, 2005, p. 224.
31. Demos, 2005, p. 19.
32. Demos, 2005, p..25.
33. Bill Duncan, *The Wee Book of Calvin: Air-Kissing in the North-East*, Penguin, 2004.
34. Ernst Bloch, *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays*, MIT Press., 1989, p. 41.
35. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*, Polity Press, 1999; Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: Undercover in Low-Waged America*, Granta Books, 2002.