

cross currents in culture ●●

variant

number 27 winter 2006 free



Colin Clark Challenging the Happiness Industry

Alex Law Telling the Truth About Neo-liberalism

Des Fernandes Turkey's US-backed War On Terror

Yassamine Mather Ahmadinejad: Myth and Reality

John Beagles Putting Dada Flesh on the Bone

Stephen Dawber Blairism on the walls at Kelvingrove

Variant, number 27 Winter 2006

ISSN 0954-8815

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

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

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

Opinions expressed in Variant are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the editors or Variant. All material is copyright (unless stated otherwise) the authors or Variant.

Variant
1/2, 189b Maryhill Road, Glasgow, G20 7XJ
t +44 (0)141 333 9522
email variantmag@btinternet.com
www.variant.org.uk

Editorial Contact: Daniel Jewesbury, Leigh French

Advertising & Distribution Contact: Paula Larkin

Design: Kevin Hobbs

We would like to thank everyone involved in all aspects of supporting Variant, especially:

Peter McCluskey, Andrew Murray, Luke Colins, Factotum Distribution Services, Alison Stirling, Tom Jennings, Jonny Gailey, Anna McClaughlin, Ann McCluskey.

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



All articles from Variant are archived and available free at: www.variant.org.uk

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

To receive an e-mail informing you of these posts and to join the on-line forum send a blank e-mail to: variantforum-subscribe@topica.com

Subscribe

Receive a three issue (one year) subscription to Variant magazine for:

Institutions: UK & EC £15, Elsewhere £20.00

Individuals: UK £7.50, EC £9.50, Elsewhere £15.00

Subscribe online at:

www.symbioticstore.com/variant/

Libraries can also receive a complete set of back issues of Variant vol.2. Rates are available on request.

Donate: we need your support

'VARIANT' account details:

Lloyds TSB Scotland plc
St. Vincent Street, Glasgow
Scotland, UK

Sort code: 87-37-99

Account Number: 81142360

IBAN: GB06TSBS 873799 81142360

BIC Code: TSBS GB21210

If you wish to support Variant financially, Variant can now also receive monetary donations in the form of "Gift Aid". For details please see: www.variant.org.uk/donate.html

Variant Scotland is a registered Scottish Charity, Number SC 032063

Contents

Putting Dada Flesh on the Bone 4
John Beagles

Get a Fucking Job: The Truth about Begging 8
New Social Art School

Chemical-Cocktail-Fruit 12
Jan Nimmo

Rose Coloured Spectacles 10
Tom Jennings

Competing Narratives Exposed 15
Rena Bivens

Blairism on the walls at Kelvingrove 18
Stephen Dawber

Academies, Religion and Private Philanthropy 21
Peter Vlachos

Louis – The Round The World Rug Race 21
Metaphrog

Rebel Alliances 23
Interview with Ben Franks

Ahmadinejad: Myth and Reality 25
Yassamine Mather

**From Self to Structure:
Challenging the 'Happiness Industry'** 27
Colin Clark

Telling the Truth About Neo-liberalism 30
Alex Law

**Turkey's US-backed War On Terror:
A Cause For Concern** 33
Desmond Fernandes

**The Chinese Challenge:
Hallucinations for Other Futures**
Think Art Lab

Putting Dada Flesh John Beagles on the Bone

'Don't forget that polemics always played a big part in Dada'

The signs of Dada and Surrealism's resurgence are manifold. Quirky, playful juxtapositions of incongruous elements fill many a contemporary gallery.² A belief that an absurdist, irrational, anarchic spirit of Dadaist and Surrealist revolt can be conjured up as a potent form of resistance to the venal tendencies of administered culture, is one source for this infatuation. Meanwhile an all more predictable and professional reason lurks; some of this has the desiccated³ flavour of Ikea Dada and Surrealism – studied, polite, saleable drawing room madness for urbane sophisticates. Either way, historical Dada and Surrealism has found itself reassessed, revised and repackaged in numerous recent exhibitions (*Undercover Surrealism* at the Hayward Gallery, London being the most obvious), while the popularity of a litany of artists referencing, name checking and stealing from both movements is undeniable.

I'm not especially interested in the plurality of reasons for this rediscovered artistic fascination, more the manner in which artists and ideas, especially from Dada, have been institutionally and academically re-appraised. Specifically, how the anti-art impulse or the "desire for art to have an operation" (founding Dada poet and essayist Tristan Tzara's remark) has been managed or neutered. The contrasting aims of two recent projects to revise accepted ideas about the nature and legacy of New York Dada – Amelia Jones' book *Irrational Modernism: A Neurasthenic History of New York Dada*, and David Hopkins' publication and exhibition at Edinburgh's Fruitmarket Gallery *Dada's Boys*, are revealing in this respect. Both represent absorbing, subtly distinct reassessments of this era, offering cogent reasons for the period's ongoing influence within contemporary culture. The differing methodologies of the two projects are equally illuminating. Jones' combines exhaustive scholarly research with a 'hot', personal, subjective voice, which guiltlessly reveals its

partisan connection with the subject – "sometimes reading about the Baroness [...] I feel attached to [her] by a hot, electrified wire of neurosis across the decades".⁴ Her intention in doing this is for the "lines between fact and fiction, between art history and storytelling, between biography and autobiography"⁵ to be blurred in such a way as to expose the interestedness of all history writing. This kind of passion and connection perhaps underpinned Hopkins' *Dada's Boys*, but his catalogue and exhibition was far cooler, more Duchampian in its suppression of subjectivity and its sublimation of heat.

Dada Woman

As noted, of the two, Jones' work is the lengthier, more evolved and scholarly,⁶ offering as it does a convincing revisionist, unashamedly feminist reappraisal of the neglected role of Dada provocateur Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. Within the New York art world of European émigrés, sitting out the First World War in narcotic intoxication⁷ brought on by the psychological trauma of the war (hence her use of the early psychiatry term neurasthenia⁸), the Baroness was, even by the standards of this most self-consciously arch-wild avant garde, excessive and eccentric. As Jones remarks, "there was something unnerving, otherworldly, irrational about the Baroness, even in the context of the supposedly radical Bohemian and avant garde circles of the day".⁹ The artist George Biddle's description of the Baroness gives a brief idea of how her revolt superficially manifested itself:

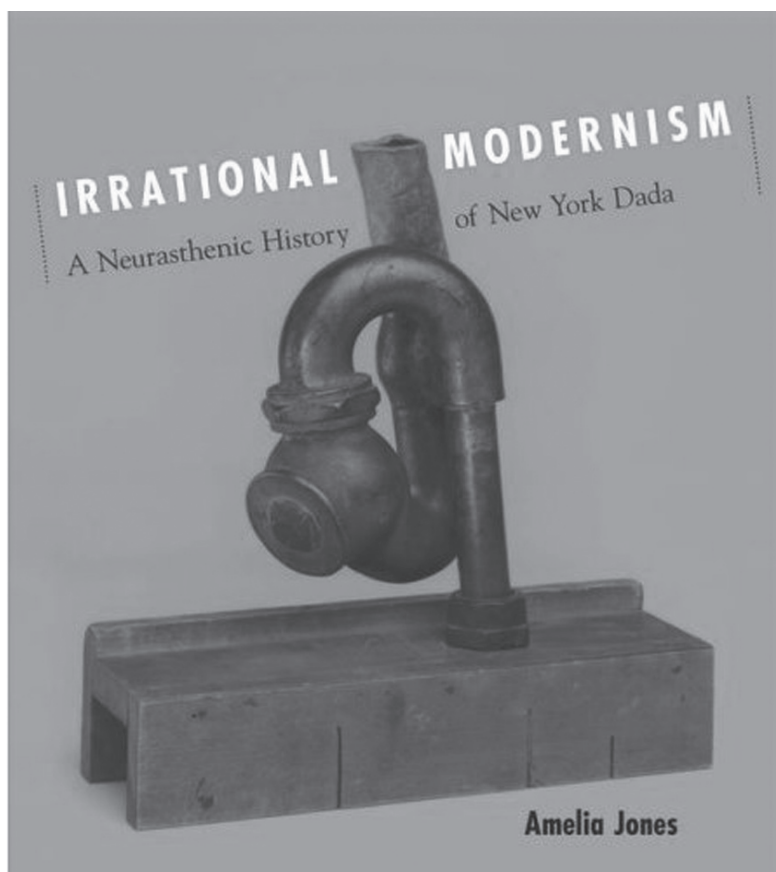
She stood before me quite naked – or nearly so. Over the nipples of her breasts were two tinned tomato cans, fastened with a green string around her back. Between the tomato cans hung a very small birdcage and within it a crestfallen canary. One arm was covered from wrist to shoulder with celluloid curtain rings, which she later admitted to have pilfered from a furniture display in Wanamakers. She removed her hat, which had been trimmed with carrots, beets, and other vegetables. Her hair was close cropped and dyed vermilion¹⁰.

As New York's premier kleptomaniac, part time poet, professional scavenger, unofficial performance artist, polemicist,¹¹ sexual predator, lesbian icon and all round transgressor, this Teutonic force of nature cut a startlingly irregular shape within the modernist grid of New York City. Part of Jones' project is then to delineate how the Baroness' unbound, visceral embodiment of Dada ("She is the only one living anywhere who dresses dada, loves dada, lives dada."¹²) was a challenge to the avant garde men of the New York scene. As Jones highlights, the treatment she received at the hands of many male artists (the poet William Carlos Williams, whom she sexually intimidated, called her a "dirty old bitch") pointed to the gap between the rhetoric and reality – "She was thus a figure who pointed to the limitations of avant gardism."¹³ Recounting an inability and resistance amongst some, though not all, of the Dada Boys¹⁴ to cope with the Baroness' sexual appetite and absence of "respectable avant garde behavior"¹⁵, is then one counter-intuitive aspect of the book. As Jones recounts, the Baroness shamelessly "performed herself in dramatically unglued personifications [that] unhinged the European masculinity [of the New York Dada Boys club, revealing] men whose aesthetic radicality was often mitigated by their conservatism in the face

of actual gender or social excess."¹⁶ The picture that emerges of New York Dada in the book is then one where the established secure identities of many leading Dadaists somewhat disintegrate. Characters such as Duchamp, Picabia, Man Ray and the poet William Carlos Williams, patently damaged by the psychological impact of the First World War, are revealed to be more complex, flawed 'avant gardists' than the popular mythology. There's certainly a sense of them being respectable bourgeois men playing at being transgressors. The Baroness' curt remark about William Carlos, "he only attacks art – when he has the time", and her complaints about the manner in which Duchamp "prostitutes himself" are astute in this context. No doubt Jones' exhaustive recounting of this 'gap' between the talk and the action, and the numerous revelations of misogyny, will resonant for some contemporary women artists similarly surrounded by professional 'bad boys'.

The other more pointed aspect is a critique of art historical institutions and their similar inability and resistance to locating the Baroness within the canon of Dada. Along with Arthur Craven – another figure who until recently was critically marginalised – the Baroness has largely been historically invisible because of an inability to successfully classify her. While her gender was the primary reason for this 'oversight', an important dimension of her neglect, like Craven's, was her relative 'failure' to produce autonomous art objects.¹⁷ As noted she "lived avant gardism", embodying and personifying Dada 'revolt' through her actions and on her body. Her eccentric street attire of scavenged junk, stolen trinkets and vermilion scalp, was as potent a 'popular' act of cultural and social insurrection as the pantomime of a Dada ball.

Within art movements exclusively concerned with the production of autonomous objects it's common to find figures who spark aesthetic insurrections, but who themselves fail to realize the potential of their iconic rupturing of practice, ultimately becoming mere footnotes in history. Indeed, David Hopkins in his otherwise excellent 'A Very Short Introduction to Dada and Surrealism', frames his mention of the Baroness precisely within these terms (she gets a paragraph and one further brief mention). In his book Hopkins describes her, instructively, as a Dada mascot, whose artworks (classified and understood solely as objects) were relatively minor. Marginalisation of these iconoclasts or mascots, who could be credited with embodying a spirit or operating as a 'muse' is common within more conventional, aesthetic, 'formal' movements is perhaps 'acceptable'. However within the context of Dada, a movement rhetorically concerned with anti-art, where testing the ontological securities of cultural, social, sexual categories and borders was everything, it's a substantial historical flaw. In this movement all actions, ephemeral or permanent, official or unofficial, art or non-art are as essential as historical 'matter'. The Baroness, like Arthur Craven, may have been an insubstantial or minor contribution to Dada objects, but as instigators of a revolution of the mind and body, they were as effective as many. Such an historical and institutional sleight of hand which demotes this kind of 'influence' to the margins, by virtue of the difficulties of picturing it within the gallery or museum (a challenge which should perhaps be faced rather than conveniently ignored), is as problematic with Dada as it has been with the



repackaging and managing of conceptualism – another rupture that sought to give art and operation.

Jones' book is then a timely focus on a figure who in her actions offers a much needed corrective to the lop-sided representation of the history of Dada. All too often Dada and Surrealism returns as a skeletal disembodiment: something the recent *Undercover Surrealism* show was guilty of in its rather too desiccated presentation of Bataille and his followers. An inability to bring back to life the more vulgar, excessive, irrational, anti-aesthetic moments in Dada is then firstly a misrepresentation of history. After all, the importance of figures like Craven and the Baroness on the Dada 'scene' was well documented at the time. As Hans Richter noted, "Craven was greatly admired, because he succeeded in tearing Bourgeois existence apart at the seams. He carried out to the letter all the deeds of anarchy he promised in his writings."¹⁸ Jones' reprinting of a hilarious extract from the Baroness' diary, detailing her inability to hold in a fart while attempting to seduce a young man and the frosty response her flatulence receives, strangely says as much about the 'air' of rebellion in New York Dada as any readymade.

Consequently, treating the performances, actions and opinions of an historical figure as culturally significant as the 'left-behind' artifacts is important. Jones' book is then in its concentration on the Baroness, a principled commitment to not siding with one of the winners of art history. She makes this explicit in an edited version of her text, reprinted in the recent 'Dada Seminars' publication:

There's a tendency in art history to privilege the cultural victors and those artists whose reputation has already been solidified or whose work in one way or another serves the purposes of the discourse that comprise the discipline and its institutional support structures.¹⁹

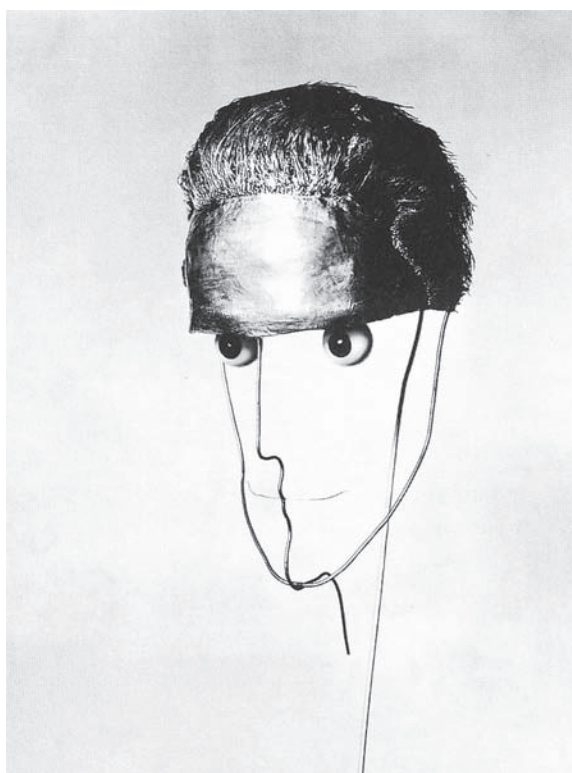
The obvious example of the victor in the story of New York Dada is Duchamp. Despite being a self confessed 'fan' of Duchamp, Jones' book unavoidably questions, both implicitly and explicitly the mythology and centrality of Duchamp and co. in the official story of Dada. As such, it is a timely and welcome puncturing of the sacred cult of Marcel – especially as an unquestioning acceptance of Duchamp's 'genius' and 'radicalism' has become rather too entrenched and academic.²⁰ There is something patently absurd in the institutional and critical lionizing of Duchamp as the arch-strategist who debunked institutional authorial power – as Jones calls it, the "oxymoronic codification [of] the Duchampian 'tradition'."²¹ Increasingly in Jones' narrative the picture of Duchamp that emerges, while suitably intriguing, does highlight how it's perhaps more useful to think of him as representing what Hans Richter called a "sublime compromise" as opposed to 'successful' subversion. While not believing that the Baroness represents some romantic outsider example of 'liberation' (she died in abject poverty, alone and forgotten), such a reading does muddy the waters regarding Duchamp's centrality in the story of Dada and by extension art history. Perhaps as T.J. Clark remarked, "Duchamp is the figure of what our century has allowed in the way of radical critique."²² The emphasis on 'allowed' is obviously significant.

Irrational Modernism, is then, a timely reassessment of this entrenched approach to Dada and attending ideas about the nature of the avant-garde. As Jones' writes:

In art history we are far too attached to a simplistic notion of the avant garde as a group of heroic (almost always white male) individuals fighting unequivocally against the evils of capitalism and the dumbed down values of its mass bourgeois culture.

The book does an excellent job of revealing how historical denial of inconvenient figures like the Baroness in the history of Dada has resulted in this streamlined mono-history. Contrary to such a methodology, Jones' argument

for a model that is equally critical, but that functions by returning the skull to life – giving it flesh – through the very identificatory processes that art history has long labored to suppress in order to sustain its illusion of objectivity.²³



succeeds in bringing history into close proximity as well as challenging the (fictional) coherence of much art historical writing on the period. Just as she highlights how the Baroness represented an irrational, bodily subjectivity that polluted stable categories, so Jones similarly offers an infestation of the 'neutral' position of the professional art historian. Dispensing with the fiction of objectivity she aims

to promote a kind of neurasthenic art history – one that acknowledges rather than suppresses the confusing projections and identifications through which we art historians give meaning to works of art, movements, and the artists who make and sustain them both.²⁴

Dada's Boys

Curated by art historian David Hopkins, *Dada's Boys* was an intelligent and timely exhibition which, as with Jones' book, aimed to take as its original focus the fecund world of New York Dada. However, while Jones' subject was the proto-feminist provocateur the Baroness, Hopkins' exhibition and book was concerned with evoking "Dada's [...] paternalistic role for a lineage of predominantly male artists concerned with developing themes of male identity."

Hopkins' shift of attention towards the reverberations of Dada's interrogation of masculinity appeared to be an astute curatorial means of avoiding the difficulties of trying to represent and re-animate the stereotypical mythic notion of Dada. Those expecting to be assaulted by a Dada riot would have been disappointed; *Dada's Boys* functioned as a soberly constructed, formally balanced exhibition and an accessible, engaging catalogue and text. However, the extent to which the air of sobriety in the Fruitmarket Gallery was maintained was a point of contention.

On one level, the switch of interpretation towards Dada's picturing of a poetics of masculinity, and its echoes in contemporary practice, was a judicious act of Dada revisionism that corrected an evident lag between curatorial and institutional analysis and artistic practice. As was borne out by the show, numerous artists in the last thirty years have acknowledged a debt to Dada's examination of the exploded "hole at the center of masculinity."²⁵ While some critics have picked up on the continuing influence of Dada, few have offered as comprehensive an overview as *Dada's Boys*. Uncovering this hidden tradition, Hopkins' aim then was to counter the standard readings of key artists such as Jeff Koons, Martin Kippenberger and Paul McCarthy.

Alongside this desire to correct an art historical blind spot, *Dada's Boys*, as the catalogue revealed, was also driven by a sense of underlying frustration on Hopkins' part with a perceived absence of a broader critical examination of heterosexual male identity. However Hopkins, unlike Jones, was more typically 'masculine' in not acknowledging his personal investment and motivation for this project. A perhaps well grounded fear that it would jeopardise his credentials as a 'professional' art historian prompted his relative invisibility in the text. This resistance to 'voicing' his involvement was slightly amusing considering the topic.

In his catalogue essay Hopkins remarked that "the literature on heterosexual masculinity is formidably large, but frustratingly repetitive."²⁶ Part of his argument was that the arena of male subjectivity has been somewhat colonized by psychological, queer and feminist theory. For Hopkins, the need for a contemporary reassessment of Dada and its historical reverberations resides in precisely how it offers a corrective to the absence in theoretical texts of heterosexual masculinity; of any substantive discussion of how masculinity is lived and experienced on a daily basis. Discussing the dominant theories of masculinity, he noted a lack of understanding of "patterns of friendship, the dynamics of group identification and loyalty, structures of humour and self reflexivity",²⁷ which has resulted in the standard assessment being somewhat superficial (though he is slightly vague about who he means in this context). Consequently for Hopkins, the tendency towards deconstructing and dissecting the heterosexual male through feminist and queer lenses has reduced him to a state of self-abnegation. As a result there has been a notable failure to grapple with the complexities of heterosexual masculinity, especially those darker more uncomfortable areas of what Homi Bhabha called masculinity's "prosthetic reality". There was then, within this art historical illumination of a largely ignored facet of Dada, also a programmatic attempt to inject some self-confidence to the beleaguered male.

Top: Portrait by Man Ray of Duchamp transformed through shaving cream.

Middle: Jean Crotti "Portrait of Marcel Duchamp" 1915 photograph of work now lost.

Bottom: Photograph by Man Ray: 'Marcel Duchamp as Rose Sélavy'.

While there was a whiff of an anti-PC backlash in this, Hopkins patently grasped the paradoxes of the situation. After all, (heterosexual) “men may be the threatened sex but they are also still the threatening sex.” Theoretically the show’s and the catalogue’s ground was clearly laid out, however how it manifested itself aesthetically in the Fruitmarket space was a source of critical tension.

The Sublime Compromise

Because he is so frightfully cold. You see all his heat flows into his art.²⁸

On entering the Fruitmarket space, Duchamp, the fount of Hopkins’ theses, was represented by familiar images as ‘Rose Sélavy’, and a more surprising photograph by Man Ray of Duchamp covered in shaving foam. Nearby, Picabia’s schematic parodies of mechanized femininity sat vitrine-entombed next to his heretical bodily spurt of ‘La Sainte Vierge’. For Hopkins, both artists bonded through their contempt for the dominant male stereotypes of the time (the stereotypes who were being slaughtered in the trenches, while they drank cocktails in Manhattan), as well a more anxious sense of their own passive, feminized self. Experiencing gender vertigo, they embraced a fluid sense of self and used an adolescent form of humour to bullishly protect themselves. The aim for Hopkins the curator was to illuminate how their complex, paradoxical grasp of the ‘troubled’ self has been mirrored in more recent work.

The selection of international artists following in Duchamp’s and Picabia’s tracks, in this Scottish context, represented something of a welcome coup, but was still slightly hampered by precisely the kind of fondness for the ‘victors’ that Jones had remarked upon.²⁹ The presence of Matthew Barney was perhaps the most obvious example of this tendency. Canonised on the international art circuit, with *Cremaster* globally colonising every space the Guggenheim can muscle in on, his appearance was unnecessary. It also offered a reminder of how the kind of programmatic surrealism favoured by Breton (for that is surely what Barney’s work really retails as) emptied the anti-art out of Dada.

This aside, Hopkins’ interest in Dada’s neglected examination of the “poetics of masculinity” seemed to result in a certain partitioning or removal of an integral aspect of the ethos of the Dada Boys. In concentrating on illuminating the poetics he neglected the anti-art polemics, as well as shying away from the more confrontational and ambiguous aspects of heterosexual male identity. In the catalogue essay Hopkins referred to the Boys as an “unruly group of male artists who have little truck with the conformism of Mammy’s boys”,³⁰ and who delve into the murkier areas of male subjectivity. Unfortunately the signs of this weren’t always there, instead there was a sense of bringing the Dada Boys into proportion. This was odd, as Dada, and many of the artists following in the bastardised parental lineage, often deliberately failed or were strategically incompetent in ‘properly’ sublimating irrational desires into art and culture. Letting irrational desires out, letting the work slip and slide and operate in flux was a recurring aspect of Dada and its followers. Nowhere is this clearer than in the base, excessive work Paul McCarthy has produced for the last thirty years. In this context McCarthy could have delivered a more excessive performance of the “hole at the centre of masculinity”, but the chosen exhibition work (‘Cultural Soup’) was an atypical, minor piece, far more in the intellectually respectable mould of Mike Kelley and his sociological uncovering of power.

This absence of precisely the kind of evidence of the irrational, unclassifiable, and visceral body embodied by the Baroness was significant. As it was, there was a nagging sense of aesthetic propriety, somewhat out of keeping with the subject and the catalogue’s claims (as noted, on the whole the signs of aesthetic transgression, of snubbing decorum, were mild). I’m not arguing here for a raucous, tokenistic, cacophony of ‘noise’, the now conventional, superficial, formal signs of white cube rebranding, rather evidence of a



Baroness
Elsa Freytag-
Loringhoven

more substantive rethinking of the cognitive and aesthetic base of artistic communication. While Keith Farquhar’s installation and painting did at least reference the Dada tendency to tartly bite the hand that feeds, the exhibition as a whole was largely devoid of this kind of questioning of the aesthetics of gallery spectatorship, and the unraveling of the category ‘artist’ that was central to Dada.

There was a real opportunity to reveal this with the inclusion of Jeff Koons. Koons is admittedly one of the ‘victors’ in recent art history, but I’m inclined to argue the grounds for his ‘victory’ are erroneous. Unfortunately the choice of one of Koons’ basketballs squarely and safely placed him in the “oxymoronic Duchampian tradition” of producing readymade sculptures that are institutionally lauded as exposing institutions’ power to confer value. Contrary to this, it could be argued that Koons’ more substantial, ‘troubling’ challenge to the authority of art institutions lay not with the Duchamp influenced, respectable ready-mades,³¹ but the overtly sexualized sculptures, performances and photographs he lovingly produced (partly with Cicolina – a reincarnated Baroness?) and exhibited in the late 1980s and early ‘90s.

Koons is perhaps one artist who, at least then, walked in the tracks of his Dada precursors – albeit in a perverse tangential, pseudo evangelical manner. The work he produced between 1988-1992 definitively infected the sphere of art with illegitimate ‘responses’ (affection for trash, seduction), tested its ontological boundaries, and troubled the foundations of gallery spectatorship. This assault on the dominant aesthetics of art consumption went alongside, as Hopkins rightly discusses, an overlooked complex, ambiguous grasp of the intersections of class, sexuality and gender that deserves greater critical attention. However these were not distinct aspects of his practice; form and content were intimately linked.

Increasingly, however, the reading of Koons, as with the Dadaists, has focused on the formal category status of his objects (trinkets from the world of low-end consumerism). I’d argue that what was really subversive about his work was not the tired ‘trafficking’ of exotic objects into art (a standard ruse to liven up the ‘academy’ with some ‘rough’), but his transportation of cognitive forms of attention from outside art (his love for these objects being the most pronounced subversion of critical distance). In this way he questioned the ontological securities of art consumption and spectatorship just as the Dadaists had some 70 years before. One of Jones’ remarks regarding the Baroness and Duchamp seems applicable in this context:

I argue that these artists’ confusion of gender and overt sexualisations of the artist/ viewer relationship challenged post-Enlightenment subjectivity and aesthetics far more pointedly than did Dadaist paintings and drawings, which only partially addressed the divisions that privileged art as separate from life.³²

Footnotes

- 1 Recounted in Richter’s book (*Dada: Art and Anti-Art*, Thames and Hudson, 1978, p.7) when he visits Tristan Tzara – it’s Tzara’s parting shot.
- 2 Too numerous to mention, but especially hot in Scotland – wander into anyone of the Glasgow’s contemporary galleries right now and you’re likely to find outsized mundane objects, heads with chair legs.
- 3 I am indebted to Graham Ramsay for informing me of the writer Robert Garnet’s liberal use of this word in relation to some members of the art community.
- 4 Jones, A, *Irrational Modernism: A Neurasthenic History of New York Dada* (MIT Press 2004) p. 28.
- 5 Ibid. p. 25
- 6 I think this is mainly due to the differing nature of the two publications, as opposed to any failing on Hopkins part. His book and exhibition is obviously aimed at a pseudo-populist gallery clientele, while Jones’ book is squarely aimed at the university.
- 7 Jones’ book features a fantastic photography of Duchamp, not looking his ‘normal’ composed self, but resolutely ‘bombed’, slumped in a bathroom overtaken by booze and chemicals
- 8 *Neurasthenia* described a collection of psychological and physical symptoms including chronic fatigue. Initially associated with the stresses of urbanization on the intellectual class, it was an increasingly common War diagnosis.
- 9 Jones, A, *Irrational Modernism*, p. 5
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Her polemics could often be anti-Semitic, something Jones doesn’t dodge.
- 12 John Rodker’s remark in the *Little Review* quoted in Naumann, F. M. *New York Dada 1915-23* (Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Jan 1998), p. 168.
- 13 Jones, A, *Irrational Modernism*, p.
- 14 The Baroness’ relationship with Duchamp is especially intriguing. Jones teasingly hints at the Baroness’ possible authorship of Duchamp’s urinal.
- 15 Jones, A, *Irrational Modernism*, pg.10
- 16 Jones, A, *The Dada Seminars*, (volume of 12 essays published by The National Gallery of Art, Washington) pg 160.
- 17 This is not to say she didn’t, just that few of them have survived or become ‘official’ Dada art.
- 18 Richter, H, *Dada, Art and Anti-Art*, p. 85.
- 19 The October group infatuation with all things Duchampian is rather worryingly revealed in *The Duchamp Effect* edited by Martha Buskirk and Mignon Nixon (MIT 1996). Reading it I was reminded of the exasperated tone of Terry Atkinson in his 1980’s Open University television program, where he took one of the early pot-shots at the Duchampian myth – “too sophisticated a bourgeois mind not to sense the grip which modern art’s ideologies had on him, instead of finding an alternative he extended the limits of what he was seemingly trying to get away from – so for all its assumed intellectual rigour and order *Étant donné* is for me the ultimate act of incoherence. Duchamp’s last bourgeois, hollow smile...and his reputation rolls on endlessly...”
- 20 Jones, A, *The Dada Seminars*
- 21 Jones, A, *Irrational Modernism*, pg.22
- 22 Clark, T.J., ‘All the things I said about Duchamp: A response to Benjamin Buchloh’, in *The Duchamp Effect* edited by Martha Buskirk and Mignon Nixon (MIT 1996)pg -
- 23 Jones, A, *Irrational Modernism*, p. 239
- 24 Ibid. p. 172
- 25 Ibid. p. 44
- 26 Hopkins, D, *Dada’s Boys* (Fruitmarket 2006), p. 16
- 27 Ibid., p. 18
- 28 The Baroness on Duchamp. She goes on, “For that reasons, although he loves me, he would never even touch the hem of my red oilskin slicker. Something of his dynamic warmth – electrically – would be dissipated by the contact.” Quoted in Jones, A, *Irrational Modernism*, p. 102
- 29 Paul McCarthy, John Bock, Keith Farquhar, Sarah Lucas, Jeff Koons, Roderick Buchanan, Knut Asdam, Martin Kippenberger, Richard Prince, Francis Picabia, Damien Hirst, Angus Fairhurst, Man Ray, Marcel Duchamp, Lee Miller, Douglas Gordon and Matthew Barney.
- 30 Hopkins, D, *Dada’s Boys*, p. 15
- 31 There is a well documented snob value in professing an admiration for Duchamp – after all.
- 32 Jones, A, *Eros, That’s Life, or the Baroness’ Penis in making Mischief: Dada invades New York* (Whitney Museum of American Art 1996) pp. 23

Get a Fucking Job

The Truth about Begging

A critical, but solidary review
by a member of New Social Art School

Aberdeen is one of the wealthiest cities in Scotland with an average income 5% above the national.¹ This however hides the greater disparity in income and circumstances on the ground – a happy few are better off than a large number can even begin to imagine. Conversely, some are more destitute than we like to acknowledge. According to the same data, provided on the Aberdeen City Council homepage from a survey of 2005, 18% of households are living below the poverty line.² Investigating the situation of beggars in the city, Danish artist Eva Merz's book 'Get a Fucking Job' explores the lives of some of those on the have-not side of this great divide.

Ban the Beggars

The result of a year-long, slow and considered approach to many of the people on the streets, the book 'Get a Fucking Job: The Truth About Begging' consists of a collection of conversations with 13 beggars, former beggars, relatives and support workers. The starting point for the project was a campaign carried predominantly by the region's two main newspapers, *The Aberdeen Press & Journal* and the *Evening Express*, calling for a ban of begging in late 2004 – about a year after begging had become an offence in England. While the media purported to speak for Aberdeen citizens, their outcry supported ongoing ambitions within Aberdeen City Council. In September 2004 at the City's Community Services Committee a report on Street Begging by the Council's Safer Aberdeen task group recommended, among other measures to be undertaken in a 12-month pilot scheme, the introduction of a byelaw which would make street begging unlawful in the city. This was a response to a "perceived increase in the levels of overall street begging and aggressive begging".³

Following the launch of this pilot a 'Safer

Aberdeen Sub-group on Street Begging' was formed. The group is made up of staff from various Social Works departments of the City Council, the local voluntary organisation Aberdeen Cyrenians, Grampian Police, and NHS Grampian. In a progress report on the Pilot Street Begging Initiative in January 2006, after the scheme had run for 12 months, an extension of 6 months was recommended. The overarching goal of these measures is the absence of any beggars in the streets, although it is acknowledged that "there is evidence to suggest that where individuals give up street begging, others will take their place." The group's own report goes on to acknowledge that there is a lack of resources both to administrate the scheme and to provide support to beggars. The report also returns to the proposed byelaw and the negative response from the Scottish Executive in June 2005, which recommends the use of existing legal force in the form of Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBOS). Interestingly, the restated need for the byelaw in the 2006 report, responding to the Executive, now argues for the need to make begging unlawful in the following terms:

The reason for seeking approval for the Byelaw was to establish a means that could be used as an added incentive for people who have complex needs, who tend not to engage in aggressive begging and who are unwilling to engage with support services.⁴

The definition of aggressive begging given later in the report includes activities such as sitting in the proximity of a cash dispenser while asking for money. As Aberdeen City Councillor Neil Fletcher clarified in comments to the BBC: "We think a by-law is the only way we can remove these people from the centre of town."⁵

In contrast with the above-mentioned 'perceived increase' cited as the justification for criminalising begging, Grampian Police, as mentioned in the

January 2006 report itself, estimate, based on CCTV footage, that a relatively constant number of about 25 people beg in the city, mainly on the main shopping street and in its immediate vicinity. In the months following this progress report by the Council, the Scottish Executive has agreed to reconsider the proposed byelaw.

Speaking for Themselves

When confronted with the demands for a 'begging ban' in the local press in autumn 2004, Merz decided to investigate the issue in an art project that clearly came down on the side of the beggars, and in particular countered claims made regarding their perceived wealth. As stated in the book's introduction, she wanted to find out what was really going on from the beggars' position and at the same time to allow them to speak for themselves. Merz founded The New Social Art School in 2004 as a framework for her work with others who then become 'members'. The 'school' is conceived as an open group for collective, informal learning through communication in various artistic projects focused on social issues. In this project Merz collaborated with Bob Steadman, an artist who had experienced homelessness himself. Interviews with both Merz and Steadman by Alejandra Rodriguez-Remedi aim to make the positions and relationships of the authors clear. In addition to Steadman's support, initial contact with beggars was provided through the voluntary organisation Aberdeen Cyrenians. Merz also approached beggars directly in the street, and went on to develop further contacts through them. The main underlying motive in the work emerges as that of understanding their perspective through an exploration of their position as they tell and live it. The appeal to the reader is that they develop their position, as it were, in retracing the experience of the artist into increasing understanding of the beggars' positions. The underlying aim of the project is to create empathy. Based on Merz's own identification with the viewpoints and experiences of those she speaks to, the reader is encouraged to feel what it is like to be a beggar.

Merz's interviews are interspersed with a series of black and white pencil drawings by Steadman, her collaborator on the project. Steadman's illustrations were made some time before his work with Merz, while living on the streets himself. In addition, he also made one print for the project. As an approach to art practice and in their visual imagery, the drawings are in tension with, while integrated into, the wider project. They represent a nightmarish, emotional and individual vision – fused shapes encompassing faces, figures, body parts. In contrast to the overall dialogic structure and focus on social interaction between people, theirs is an inner, isolated world. His new work for the book, an etching, represents the social world in symbols as a closed, impersonal system. His explanatory text – handwritten, underlining the authentic, personal expressiveness of his work – is a decoding of his personal inner world-view. In the publication, the drawings are also interpreted through an interview with Steadman. Their meaning emerges in their creation by someone who has himself been homeless as embodying his

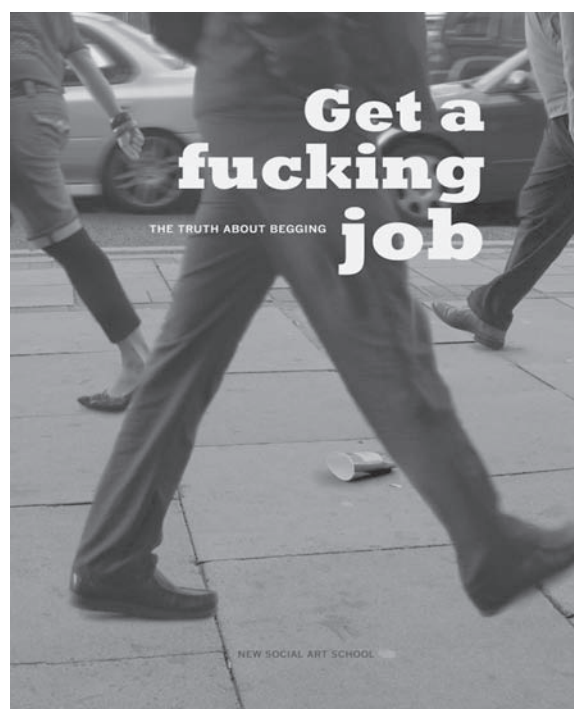


authentic expression and ultimate identity. Unlike her questions to Merz, in her discussion with Steadman, Rodriguez-Remedi remains caught up in a fascination with his background and creative expression is seen exclusively in relation to this. However, in the process of proximity, friendship and collaboration, Steadman's representation is – as far as anyone can be in control of this – based on his own intentions. Within the publication, his drawings stand in conflict with the publication's dominant mode of art practice – the research-based, conceptual work with our attendant aesthetic and ethical expectations. Whereas Merz develops an almost neutral, self-effacing visual presence, yet remains in control with her life beyond the project is not exposed, Steadman's drawings are pushed to represent his 'real' being as a 'street person.' Representing his unmediated, true expression, they also claim to reveal and stand for 'the truth about begging'.

The Truth about Begging

The claim to a truthful portrayal of the authentic experience of the beggars is at the heart of the project. On a very basic level the book gives the beggars a voice to counter the media claims. Contrary to the claims of council and media, the beggars speaking in the book know plenty about support systems and have plenty of reasons why they are not adequate for them. The truth emerging in this respect is one of extremely limited resources offered, and those are in decline. The most salient example is the fate of the homeless shelters in Aberdeen, some of which were closed some years ago, but not replaced with other facilities, a situation that continues. Reprinted clippings from local newspapers and references to a critical report on the shortcomings of housing services in Aberdeen by Communities Scotland⁶ lend further support to the claims of the beggars. The goal of 'Get a Fucking Job' is, however, not primarily the countering of data used by press and council with other facts, but to investigate the meaning of begging and what it is like to beg for those doing it. This is for Merz the truth of the beggars' perspectives, in their differences and individual struggles.

Yet the notion of 'speaking the truth' is obviously complex, as, on a basic level, the conversation develops in relation to the immediate situation, the relationship, including the respective social positions of those involved and their respective goals.⁷ Hence Merz's efforts, to create a more equal situation, to meet the beggars as much as possible in the spaces of their choice and on their terms. In the range of printed interviews – all were agreed with those interviewed before publication – some clearly take pleasure in telling adventures while others are eager to present a 'reformed' identity. Many endeavour to set themselves apart from other beggars in the particularity of their own situation. It seems safe to assume that both Merz's own conjecture – which she attempts to clarify through the interviews and the conversation with Rodriguez-Remedi recounted in the book – and the roles beggars share when undertaking their activity, influenced the truth stated in 'Get a Fucking Job'. Merz's focus on individuals' perspectives produces room for understanding, rather than the focus on immediate solutions that dominate institutional surveys. As pointed out in Pierre Bourdieu's 'La misère du monde' such surveys, commissioned by government and voluntary agencies, fail to account for the complexity of their subjects' lived realities as the questions and manner of enquiry reduce the potential answers.⁸ Their scope of enquiry is based on what is already pre-empted as worth knowing by the commissioning body, thus reducing the existence of the interview subjects as well as the scope for what can be said, and hence recorded and revealed.



Singing with one Voice

The main focus of the interviews is the beggars' present existence. Their histories, as remembered and told by them, are as fragmented and individual as is their daily life and their struggle to get by. As Merz asks questions and enters the sphere of the beggars, her knowledge of their lives increases and similarities emerge between their stories. Rather than being outside of society, 'excluded', they very much play a role, they engage, however different their initial situations, personal tragedies, aspirations, and views are. Begging very much emerges as a job in itself. One of those portrayed, Zoe, significantly, describes the people who give money as "customers". All have a clear notion of the skills, the self-presentation required to attract money from passers-by. Begging clearly is part of public, even economic, life rather than outside of it. In this way, the 'truth' that emerges in their personal, daily experiences, reveals a reality of hard work and relationships with others that are suppressed in the official accounts of street begging as a threatening and alien presence in public space.

The main shopping street of Aberdeen, Union Street, and the adjacent shopping centre, is punctuated with banners spanning the width of the street displaying official images of the city. For the last few months, the message has been "Aberdeen – City and Shire. A Brighter Outlook". This new city brand cost the Council £150,000 from London-based consultant Corporate Edge. Although documents about the branding state its goal is to sell the region to consumers and business elsewhere, the dominating presence of the logo and message in the city centre can only reach local people. As with previous banner series in the same location, the message both labels the surrounding area and the people passing through, prescribing the correct vision of the city. Both this branding exercise and the desire to remove beggars from the streets are highly visible symptoms of the control of public space and the authorities' vision of their ideal city and citizen – Freedom Of Information requests reveal almost £5m over the past three years has been spent by the Council on external consultants. Documents in support of those two ostensibly very different measures both evoke economic benefit and unity amongst (ideal) members of the community.⁹

In his study of contemporary conflicts over urban spaces in the USA, the criminologist Jeff Ferrell describes the underlying issues in such measures:

In such landscapes [the public spaces of contemporary cities]...occupants know each other primarily as threats, understand each other mostly as objects of mutual distrust and surveillance – and so, with the social shut down, the expansion of control, the presence of a protective police state seems a reasonable and necessary option for ensuring 'community'. In such landscapes, the aesthetics of exclusion becomes aesthetics of authority; the policing of public space spawns a parallel policing of perception.¹⁰

Eva Merz's efforts to see her project featured in the local press or commented upon by Councillors

have, so far, met with determined silence. The book, however, has been selling well in local stores. With the imminent review of the begging ban and Merz's continuing relationships with beggars, the project of New Social Art School in Aberdeen is very much ongoing. Their next project, a film about the lives of those Merz and Steadman call the street people of Aberdeen, will aim to shift those limitations that keep us and the beggar in our professional roles by focusing on the imagination, dreams and hopes as well as the daily realities of her subjects, who are also, very often, her friends.

'Get a Fucking Job' by New Social Art School (ISBN 0-9543574-6) is available at various booksellers such as Fop and Waterstone's, Aberdeen; Wordpower, Edinburgh; and online at amazon.co.uk

Footnotes

- 1 'Low Income Households in Aberdeen,' Aberdeen City Council, November 2005 www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/acci/web/files/Stats_Facts/LowIncome_aberdeencity.pdf
While this is obviously a reductive use of data, the scope of this article lies not in the evaluation of statistics, with their differing provenance, aim, methodology and changing criteria.
- 2 'Low Income Households in Aberdeen,' Aberdeen City Council, November 2005 www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/acci/web/files/Stats_Facts/LowIncome_aberdeencity.pdf
- 3 'Pilot Street Begging Initiative – Progress Report', Community Services Committee, Aberdeen City Council, 31 January 2006, www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/acc_data/committee%20reports/cs_com_r8_4_060131.pdf
- 4 See above www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/acc_data/committee%20reports/cs_com_r8_4_060131.pdf
- 5 Aberdeen beg-ban law reconsidered, BBC News, Wednesday, 26 July 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/north_east/5216032.stm
- 6 The report found homelessness provision in the city to be "poor". See 'Communities Scotland Inspection report. Aberdeen City Council. November 2005', Communities Scotland, www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/ripics_011493.pdf
- 7 In 'La misère du monde', Editions du Seuil, Paris 1993, sociologist Pierre Bourdieu sets out a methodology for interview situations based on an awareness of social hierarchies and the preconceptions of those involved, which raise issues relevant to the interview format of 'Get a Fucking Job'.
- 8 Pierre Bourdieu and others, 'La misère du monde', Editions du Seuil, Paris 1993, p. 928
- 9 See 'Why Brand Aberdeen City and Shire?', Aberdeenshire Council, www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/support/city_shire.asp (9 September 2006) and 'Pilot Street Begging Initiative – Progress Report', Community Services Committee, Aberdeen City Council, 31 January 2006, www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/acc_data/committee%20reports/cs_com_r8_4_060131.pdf
- 10 Jeff Ferrell. 'Tearing Down the Streets. Adventures in Urban Anarchy'. Palgrave, New York 2001.p13-14

Chemical-Cocktail-Fruit

Jan Nimmo

A Glasgow-based artist, over the last 20 years I have worked on a wide range of creative projects from printmaking to filmmaking and facilitating for community groups. Since the early 1990s I have been a regular visitor to Latin America, carrying out research into popular arts and establishing links with community organisations.

For almost 10 years I have worked on and off with Banana Link¹, which campaigns on banana trade issues and provides a voice in the UK and Europe for the banana and now pineapple workers' trade unions. For 5 of these years I worked as Banana Link's Scottish Worker, co-ordinating speaker tours with trade unions and campaign groups in Scotland.

My work in Latin America is essentially about the lives that people lead, from earlier projects in Cuba and Mexico to more recent projects in Costa Rica, Panama and Ecuador, where I have been working specifically with banana workers. I have become increasingly involved in labour rights and occupational health issues, through listening to the testimonies of the banana workers and interpreting for Latin American community activists visiting Glasgow. This has brought home to me the parallels with what has happened to workers in Scotland, with the experience of my own family and my father's working life as a miner, shot-firer, driller and road-builder – all jobs which had a serious effect on his health. My father has recently received compensation for the emphysema that he now suffers from, though somehow this does not compensate for the loss of a comfortable retirement after a hard working life.

In all of this I see my role as part of a bigger project – that of building bridges between people and across cultures. To do this I need to keep my work simple, I don't want to bamboozle, and I can't diverge into the abstract and conceptual when I need to communicate with as wide an audience as possible. I see myself as a campaigner as much as an artist – I need to speak directly to get the message across, which may be complex but it cannot be ambiguous.

Trouble in Paradise?

Costa Rica is a country so rich in biodiversity – referred to by some as the Switzerland of Central America; "politically stable", a country with no standing army – that it has been promoted as a destination for eco-tourists, and is widely seen as a tropical paradise in comparison to other Central American countries. But outside the boundaries of the country's national parks there is another Costa Rica, one of cash crop monocultures and multinational fruit companies: here the picture is very different – environmental destruction and the blanket use of pesticides, chronic health problems and the repression of workers rights, suppression of trade unionists and the intimidation of those who speak out.

I first met Carlos Arguedas eight years ago in Glasgow. While I was translating and playing host to him and a fellow trade unionist, I got to understand something about the situation in the banana-growing region of Costa Rica. I kept in touch with Carlos and, over the years, came to learn more about the history of the exploitation of the Atlantic Zone for banana production. This story begins over 100 years ago with the United Fruit Company (now Chiquita) and its domination of the economies of Central America, but through Carlos I learnt more about other struggles and the personal toll these had taken on him and the other people living and working on and around the banana plantations.

In the 1970s, Carlos, like many other workers, was made sterile through exposure to the pesticide Nemagon (DBCP). Nemagon was already banned in the USA. Carlos was 27 years old at the time.

He was imprisoned on numerous occasions for his trade union work and community activism, including land occupation. He also took part in organising action against Dole and Dow Chemicals, the manufacturer of Nemagon. After a two year campaign by the unions Costa Rica banned the use of Nemagon but the companies ignored the new laws and continued to use Nemagon for a further two years.

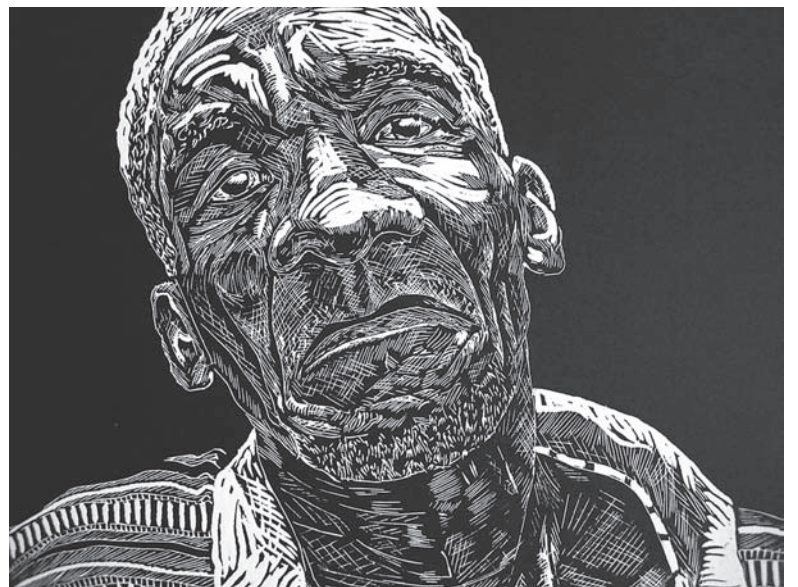
One of the things which for me marks Carlos as someone special within the trade union movement is that as well as campaigning for trade union and labour rights he is also a passionate environmentalist.

Almost half of the material costs on the average plantation are spent on a whole variety of agrochemicals used throughout the growing process. While working as Scottish Co-ordinator for Banana Link I met one of the few scientists prepared to speak out and not toe the company line (and that of the Costa Rican government) on the effects of agrochemicals on human health and on the environment. Dr Caterina Wesseling works for IRET, the department of toxicology at the University in San Jose and is also the Director of Central American occupational health programme, SALTRA. Dr Wesseling has carried out detailed investigations that show the extent to which pesticide and other chemical residues are present in homes and schools in the banana-producing areas. These chemicals come from the plantations and include allergens and carcinogens associated with a wide range of health problems.

Much of the pesticide residue is airborne, coming from the aerial spraying which is carried out routinely but haphazardly, over the plantations and anything else in their proximity. There are various fungicides that are applied aerially, including Chlorothalonil and Mancozeb (both known carcinogens and allergens). The aerial spraying of these chemicals has had a huge impact on workers and communities living around the plantations: I have interviewed people with severe skin allergies and acute bronchial problems. The law in Costa Rica states that workers should be evacuated from the plantations while aerial spraying is taking place, but according to the testimonies of the workers, in reality this doesn't always happen. I have also seen for myself how spraying is carried out and it is clear that there is no protection to the roads and smallholdings around the plantations.

Other chemicals are associated with the bagging of bananas. The blue, Chlorpyrifos impregnated polythene bags are as common a sight as the banana plants themselves and discarded bags make up a significant and very visible proportion of the waste stream of commercial banana production. Most at risk are the baggers themselves (the bags have to be placed over the growing fruit by hand) but the chemical somehow finds its way into the bedrooms, kitchens and classrooms of the local community. Chlorpyrifos is an organophosphate and a neurotoxin – associated with anorexia, suicides and depression (similar problems had been linked to exposure to sheep-dip in Scotland). Chlorpyrifos has already been banned on a number of plantations in Honduras – thanks to the pressure exerted by local trade unions and a study carried out by SALTRA. An international campaign is now building to ban the use of this chemical altogether, however its use remains widespread and global - Chlorpyrifos has even been found in bottled Coca Cola in India.²

We may ask why bananas need such a cocktail of chemicals to grow healthily or to produce an economically viable crop. The Cavendish variety of banana grown universally for the world market is in fact a sterile hybrid, which while producing fruit that conform to the shape and colour the world expects, remains susceptible to disease in



the warm and humid regions where it is grown.

Reliance on chemicals continues in the washing and packing plants, where women workers are more exposed to the chronic effects of the pesticides and disinfectants. Protective gear such as rubber gloves create as many problems as they solve, as contaminated water and disinfectant become trapped inside. The results are clearly visible in the disfigured hands of some of the workers.

I had seen that conditions in the banana industry were bad – but what about the other cash crops grown in the area? Since the market for bananas became saturated with cheap fruit from Ecuador, Costa Rican producers have taken the hint to diversify. Unfortunately this is not as positive as it sounds, as it means the substitution of one monoculture for another. These crops include melons and ornamental plants but the most damaging of all has been the pineapple – the production of which is both environmentally more destructive and more dependent on chemicals than the banana.

Just like bananas, pineapples are grown in intensive conditions with the aid of a cocktail of chemicals. However, the pineapple is a short plant and lacks the ground cover and humus-producing leaves of the banana. The loss of ground cover has resulted in a massive increase in erosion and accelerated the run-off of pesticides into the once pristine lowland river systems. The pineapple plants also play host to a fly, which feeds off the blood of cattle in the neighbouring fields and can cause them each to lose a kilo in weight per day. As a result the cattle farmers are also using more pesticides to tackle the flies. I have spoken to smallholders forced off the land, their livestock poisoned, their livelihoods gone, leaving them with no option but to sell up to the fruit companies. I visited communities that depend on the river as a lifeline and which are now seriously affected by the poisoning of fish and the silting up of waterways. These communities rely on subterranean fresh watercourses as their only source of drinking water but these aquifers have also been affected by pesticides (such as Bromasil) and the wells are now contaminated.

Both the trade unions and Caterina Wesseling are very damning about the certification of fruit production. Some of these framework agreements are voluntary internal standards, which lead us to believe that fruit is produced in a socially and environmentally responsible manner. External monitors do visit the plantations but they only see those workers who have been selected by the company and not the trade union representatives or the scientists involved in monitoring, so they do not get a clear and accurate picture of what happens day-to-day. In fact, many of the workers enjoy the days when inspections take place, since correct working procedures are more likely to be adhered to and they may get the chance to go home early! Dr Wesseling is particularly critical of Rainforest Alliance: “Yes, what a lovely name - it would lead you to believe this was paradise - but as far we are concerned they continue to certify conditions which are unacceptable.”

I also saw that exposure to pesticides is by no means the only threat which the workers have to put up with. They work excessively long hours (12 hour shifts are common, up to 24 hours on pineapple plantations) and have suffered from years of union repression. I wanted to know why the unions hadn't done more to oppose these conditions. From Carlos I learnt about the history of Solidarismo – “yellow unions” set up by the banana companies with the support of the government and the right wing of the Catholic Church, supposedly to represent the workers but with the real intention of making it more difficult for them to form free trade unions of their own.



In reality it is no better than a Christmas club. But the development of free trade unions has not been entirely suppressed by Solidarismo. I know one activist who joined the free trade union when he saw what Solidarismo was about – he has since visited Scotland, representing the banana workers during the G8 protests.

The switch to pineapple production has also brought with it a change towards the “Ecuadorisation” of production. The fruit companies have learnt the lesson from Ecuador and we now see in Costa Rica the increased casualisation of the workforce and the adoption of more “flexible” working practices. This has allowed the situation to arise where workers are exposed to dangerous chemicals for still longer periods, without adequate protection or guidance. There is no possibility of forming trade unions or gaining access to their representatives. The position of women and children has been made more vulnerable, both through poorer working conditions and through the effects on family life of casualisation and a mobile workforce. There are now more single mothers on the plantations, forced to work and with no access to child care. In an environment where sexual harassment by foremen is rife this clearly brings with it other risks to the women workers.

Pura Vida?

The testimonies I have gathered from travelling around Costa Rica with Carlos and other trade unionists form the basis of my latest film, *Pura Vida?*

Pura Vida? exposes the human and environmental damage caused by the expansion of big cash crop plantations and the use of pesticides and other agrochemicals in the Atlantic Zone of Costa Rica. This is an entry level film aimed at raising awareness amongst consumers in the UK of the hidden costs behind the fruit we eat. I feel that this is especially relevant, given the position of

the big supermarkets squeezing the producers in a “race to the bottom” to produce readily available and ever cheaper fruit for our tables. However, the supermarkets still manage to take up to 40% of cost to the consumer as profit, even while the commodity prices are falling. *Pura Vida?* will be premiered in Glasgow at this October's Document 4 Human Rights Film Festival. My first film, *Bonita: Ugly Bananas* was first shown at the same festival two years ago (Document 2).

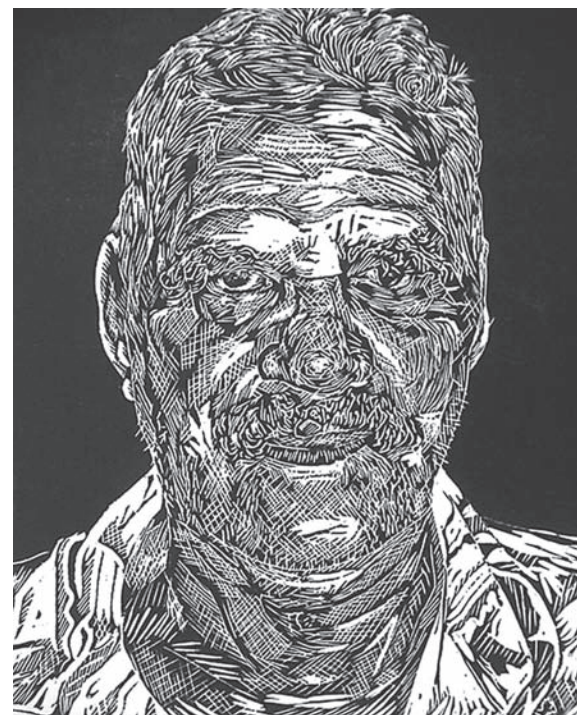
Bonita told the story of the first free trade unions in twenty years to be established on the plantations of Ecuador – and what happened when they decided to go on strike. Those events took place four years ago and I had hoped that conditions would have improved since then – but the latest news from Ecuador is that the company owner who had so violently oppressed the workers has announced his last minute candidacy for the presidency – brandishing a bible and describing himself as a hero of God!

Both *Pura Vida?* and *Bonita* form part of a larger project – Green Gold³ – which has given me the opportunity to use longer editions of the workers' testimonies along with video installation from the plantations and packing plants and woodcut portraits of the workers themselves. *Green Gold* is a travelling exhibition that can be adapted to suit a variety of venues, events and organisations, from arts organisations and festivals to trade unions, shopping centres and community groups. The *Green Gold* website is also a source of information for consumers and campaigners. So please get in touch if you would like to host an event to help build a bridge between banana workers and consumers, to give a human face to their struggle.

Footnotes

- 1 www.bananalink.org.uk
- 2 www.indiaresource.org/news/2006/1084.html
- 3 www.greengold.org.uk

Contact, Jan Nimmo: jan@greengold.org.uk



Rose Coloured Spectacles

Tom Jennings

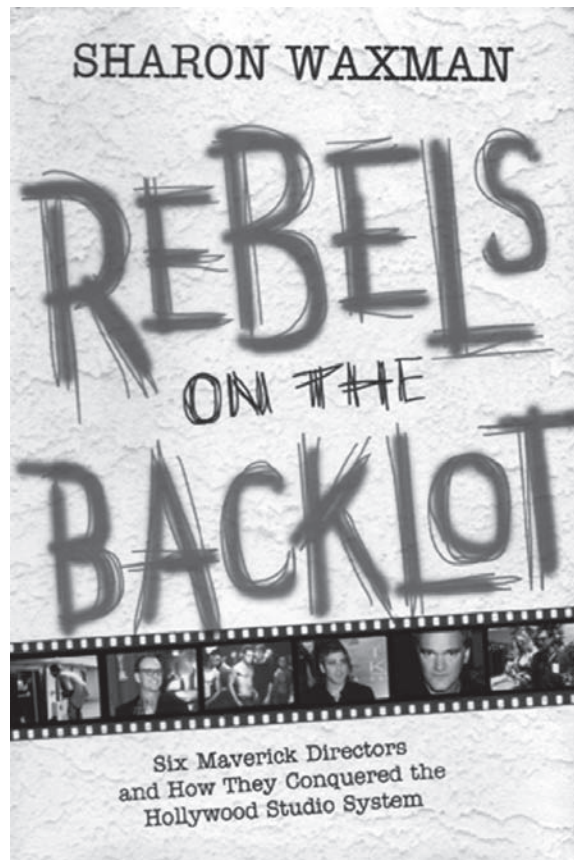
Jonathan Demme's anti-Bush broadside of a film *The Manchurian Candidate* (2004) effectively updates John Frankenheimer's classic 1962 conspiracy thriller – with Iraq rather than Korean War veterans brainwashed into becoming political moles and assassins by corporate, not KGB, agents. Given our familiarity with the amoral criminality of the military-industrial complex and government via mythology, mystification and spin, these revisions seem highly appropriate. The unfolding plot shows Army bureaucrat (Denzel Washington in Frank Sinatra's role) and Vice Presidential candidate (Liev Shrieber for Laurence Harvey) grappling with Gulf War Syndrome zombification amid manipulation by Shreiber's Senator mother (Meryl Streep instead of Angela Lansbury) and sundry electoral, big business and media masterminds, crooks, lobbyists, lackeys and lickspittles.

However, despite a very neat new *denouement*, much of the political sharpness of the source novel by Richard Condon is lost, wherein McCarthyism succeeded thanks to Kremlin plotters finding it thoroughly congenial to their authoritarian aims – a fascinating, if muddled, disentangling of the contradictions of Cold War politics. Unfortunately, the supposedly liberal-left Demme substitutes benign intelligence agencies which only ever use dirty tricks to foil the multinational menace, plus honourable old-school patriotic patricians who have for years fought Party takeover bids by tycoons. In other words, the radical potential of a critique of the interdependency of the state and capitalism is squandered in favour of regressive conservative recuperation – much like, in fact, the 2004 Democratic presidential campaign itself.

The changing contours of cinematic conspiracies can thus be interpreted as adjustments to what filmmakers and studios understand 'politics' to mean to themselves and viewers today – in a trajectory from stark Orwellian paranoia through nihilistic neo-noir to recent efforts such as Demme's glossy pastiche, *Traffic* (dir. Steven Soderbergh, 2001), *The Quiet American* (dir. Philip Noyce, 2002), *Silver City* (dir. John Sayles, 2004), *The Constant Gardener* (dir. Fernando Mereilles, 2005) and *Syriana* (dir. Andrew Gaghan, 2005). Moreover, the last few years have seen a growing tendency for supposedly progressive themes to be tackled in big-budget Hollywood fictions, along with the incorporation of originally marginal-aesthetic choices and strategies in the production of cinematic blockbusters, brands and franchises. This survey describes some of these phenomena and the critical response to them, and discusses their ambivalent implications and limitations.

Shifting Perspective

In their book *A World in Chaos: Social Crisis and the Rise of Postmodern Cinema*, Carl Boggs and Thomas Pollard match recent developments in cinema to the lived experiences of its audiences in the "globalizing, consumer-oriented capitalist order" constituted by "gross material inequalities, social polarization, possessive individualism, civic fragmentation, and impending chaos".¹ Elements of classic Hollywood genres are combined and attenuated in many recent films so that their narratives depict incomprehensible and corrupt worlds where conventional rational understanding, collective organisation and public action have lost the capacity to offer explanations or effect political change – thanks in no small part to the saturation of our psyches with corporate media trivia. And although the book's overly loose definition of postmodernism in films encompasses many long-established forms and styles, its proposition is surely plausible: that earlier representations of brutal, miserable, hopeless and confused lives in specific marginal, urban, criminal and/or nightmare milieux have been increasingly



glossed and generalised to apply to society as a whole.

Other treatments of significant trends in contemporary US films have no patience with such pessimistic and totalising assessments of the sector's long-range value and significance. Bucking the tendency of major studio output in the 1990s to converge towards ever more inflated and repetitious replicas with little more than special effects enhancements and celebrity presence to recommend them, a diverse collection of creative film-making talents instead brought the sensitivities and dynamism of subcultural and cult media and genres to bear. The achievements of some of these in persuading major studios to part with substantial production budgets are celebrated by James Mottram in his study *The Sundance Kids*.² This title furnishes a spurious collectivity – when many, such as Soderbergh and Tarantino, had little or no truck with Robert Redford's nursery and showcase at the Sundance Institute. It also encourages a strained intergenerational comparison with the 1970s New Hollywood of Scorsese, Spielberg and Coppola *et al*, who rose to prominence from the sixties countercultural demolition of outdated industry practices before subsequently finding themselves thoroughly tamed by what replaced them. Sharon Waxman's anecdotal survey *Rebels On The Backlot*³ at least concentrates on detailing insider gossip and dissecting networking patterns in showing how an arbitrary selection of younger independent directors have combined personal entrepreneurial prowess and self-promotion with genuine artistic flair in advancing their careers.

Conversely, rather than translating cinematic texts as sociocultural reflections, and with a much less sanguine approach to cultural commerce, Ben Dickenson's *Hollywood's New Radicalism*⁴, focusing on the efforts of liberals and leftists involved in film production to reflect their social awareness in their work, charts the changing structure of an industry whose consolidation and profit-seeking agendas fluctuate according to wider political and economic trends. Recent generations of independent innovators gained arthouse footholds with regular box-office hits refreshing moribund blockbuster formulae – and now that niche marketing and diversification are prominent megastudio strategies, successful Hollywood progressives can juggle mainstream

fare with personal commitment to lower-budget releases paid for with its proceeds. Moreover, after Clinton's neoliberalism, Seattle's protest revival, and post-9/11 Bush barbarism, many also vociferously criticise orthodox politics, publicly supporting grass-roots campaigns instead. By this account, subversive hope unexpectedly supplants cynical despair.

Focusing on Power

Obvious manifestations of these phenomena may be sought in film treatments of formal political processes themselves. Conventional 1990s satires centralised the network of PR spin and corporate and media influence on dodgy leaders, from the Machiavellian machinations of *Bob Roberts* (dir. Tim Robbins, 1992) to more sympathetic power-seekers led astray both by their own narcissism and the electoral farce. *Primary Colors* (dir. Mike Nichols, 1998) and *Wag the Dog* (dir. Barry Levinson, 1998) were comically pertinent to the Clinton regime's practice, but said nothing about either political consequences or ordinary viewers/voters beyond them being suckered (which might apply more to liberal filmmakers falling for Clinton's progressive rhetoric). Meanwhile the historical revisionism of *JFK* (dir. Oliver Stone, 1991) and *LA Confidential* (dir. Curtis Hanson, 1997) had already applied film noir devices to national and local institutional and governmental structures, implying their utter moral bankruptcy. More complex and less conventional narratives followed suit, exploiting the flexibility of genre-crossover to link the lives of the citizenry into the degradations of politics.

Most trenchantly, elite Democrat Senator *Bulworth* (dir. Warren Beatty, 1999) goes AWOL in South Central LA after a nervous breakdown on the campaign trail, emerging as a champion of the underclasses. Borrowing elements of '90s 'hood film' style works here, thanks to immense respect shown for ghetto philosophy, intelligence and creativity, counterposed by Warren Beatty's hysterical vanity and, crucially, laughably incompetent rapping.⁵ Other recent films also bridge the gap between culture and politics in diverse ways and with varying degrees of success. However, apart from *Bamboozled*'s (dir. Spike Lee, 2001) exposure of corporate media's racism in colonising Black traditions, all invoke heroic individualism to drive history: *Cradle Will Rock* (dir. Tim Robbins, 2000) revisits the political context of the 1930s US Federal Theatre Project in a musical celebration of proletarian art served up by elite intellectuals like Orson Welles and John Housman; *Good Night & Good Luck*'s (dir. George Clooney, 2005) implied critique of modern media requires merely journalistic integrity to scupper McCarthyism; and *8 Mile* (dir. Curtis Hanson, 2003) and *Erin Brockovich* (dir. Steven Soderbergh, 2000) connect uplift from the constraints of working-class culture only with personal success in music and law respectively – reducing those represented (whether in the hip-hop or legal senses) to passivity.

More ambitious is *Silver City*'s bitter denunciation of prevailing power. This crime thriller-cum-political conspiracy follows an excruciating journalist (Danny Huston) grappling with environmental destruction and the exploitation of migrant workers perpetrated by corporate greed – all fronted by cretinous mouthpieces elected through omnipresent soundbites and photo-ops. Although crippled by annoyingly patronising expositions (when the message emerges more effectively from the narrative), the film is effective in critiquing left, right and centre while still hinting at hope. So the right-on countercultural veteran does eventually uncover the 'truth' – but to no effect other than his own satisfaction (signalled by a successful

romantic *denouement*), while his 'concern' for the plight of immigrants doesn't extend to any regard for their welfare as he exploits their goodwill in helping him. The self-obsession of the '60s generation thus neatly trashed, potential is nonetheless glimpsed in the lead character's former associates – still committed, but now engaged in muckraking internet activism.

Treatments of transnational political and corporate conspiracies themselves adopt more complex narratives – *The Quiet American* and *The Constant Gardener* show middle-ranking professional protagonists nudging toward an appreciation of the dirty institutional deeds they're implicated in, and that they've somehow hitherto avoided awareness of – but they are helpless given their isolation. *Traffic* and *Syriana* claim to represent a global range of 'stakeholder' perspectives on the wars on drugs and terror respectively. But although no-one sees the bigger picture, and all subplots end more or less tragically, characters are given more depth the higher their social status – reflecting the possibility of meaningful agency, and hence some kind of redemption if only in noble failure. In the process, hierarchies are meticulously preserved along with the identification with middle class paths required by the stereotypical rendering of everyone else. Even *Lord of War's* (dir. Andrew Niccol, 2005) attempt to stitch together personal deployments of national mythology with the globalising sociopathy of capitalism (via the evils of the international arms trade) only acquires narrative drive – and thus purchase as metaphor – by shadowing Nicolas Cage's crazed Ukrainian-American entrepreneur with Ethan Hawke's ineptly idealistic Interpol authority-figure.

The comforting banality of simple-minded redemptive aesthetics is taken to extremes in the treatment of war itself. Continuing Sam Mendes' generic deconstructions of inadequate US existential masculinity begun in *American Beauty* (2000) and *The Road to Perdition* (2002), *Jarhead* (2005) demonstrates the hysterical convolutions of redundant machismo among marines in the 1991 Gulf War. Unfortunately the film adopts the perspective of Jake Gyllenhaal's pretentious nerd frustrated by the military's failure to resolve his dysfunctional family coming-of-age drama – while most army recruits rationalise their positions after joining up to give their lives income, rather than meaning. At least here the adolescent 'philosophising' is bracketed as a defensive response to insane reality, whereas in Spielberg's odious *Munich* (2006) it is privileged as ideological support for Israeli state terrorism.⁶ Much more interesting is the playfulness of *Three Kings* (dir. David O. Russell, 1998), with the first Iraq war cast as heist movie where heartfelt solidarity

replaces the cynical self-interest of a US platoon once the malevolence of official policy becomes clearer during a surreal excursion in pursuit of buried treasure. *Jarhead* and *Three Kings* are also saturated with reference to cinematic precursors – in style, structure and the social and internal intercourse of their characters – and it's precisely the dissolving of such boundaries that seems to give these films more chance of saying something interesting and original.

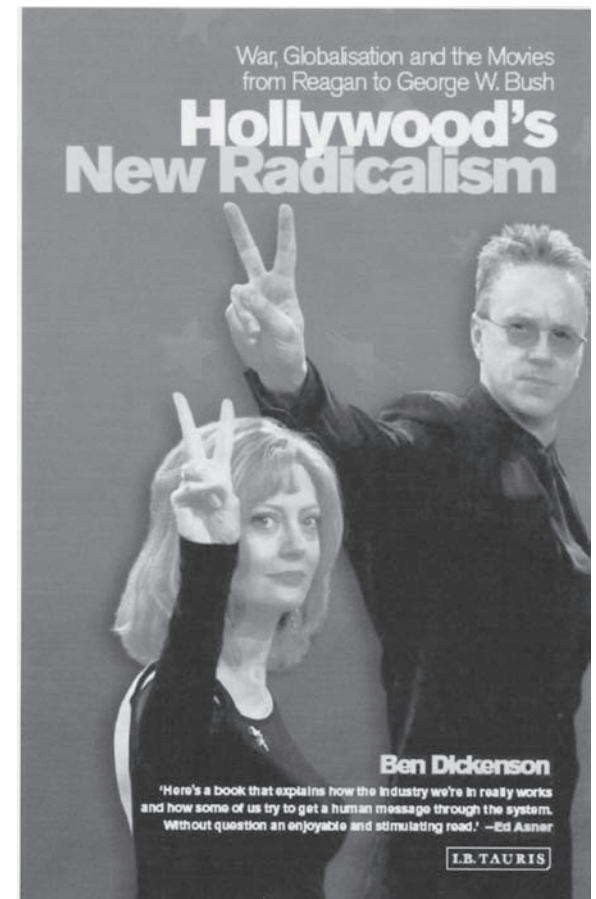
Blurred Vision

The mixing of genres resonates with viewers' media and cultural biography and literacy, while simultaneously questioning the reliability of conventional patterns of knowledge and understanding of our own lives and the world.⁷ The apparently apolitical nihilism of postmodern cinema, especially in its treatment of transgression and excess – violence, crime, sexual and social – began to extend in the '90s away from the virtual solipsism of Lynchian fantasy, yuppie nightmares and neo-noir, as narratives became fractured in time and space as well as according to character psychodynamics. Tarantino's exuberant comic book capers and *Natural Born Killer's* (dir. Oliver Stone, 1994) venom against media opiates reflect the mundane madness and horror visible in contemporary society, finding echoes in later films tackling similar themes in highly original ways. Now it is commonplace for skewed perceptions and private fantasies to overflow and reverberate among participants in social networks, influencing or overdetermining prospects for the future of the self and others.

In particular, the status of the 'reality' presented to viewers is unsettled when visual design and cinematography confuse perspective; with subjective states no longer conveniently tagged as 'flashback', 'daydream', 'nightmare', etc. Together with the unpredictable vicissitudes of the external world, its implacable material force and proclivity for coincidence, this hints at the open-endedness of history rather than closure – modulating the emotional rush traditional *denouements* aim for as 'entertainment'. Then, when the juggling of genres leaves a narrative with no single obvious outcome, dissonant resolutions may be tacked on whatever the thrust of the foregoing would conventionally suggest. You'd think the indie rebels and radical mavericks purportedly populating Hollywood could exploit these profitable fashions as golden opportunities to represent political struggle in their work. But only very few films have shown public, collective action and conflicts of interest – involving varying forms and levels of explicit political ideology and motivation – to be suffused and surrounded with, and energised and confounded by, the misrecognition and desire both practical and cinematic experience suggest are inevitable.

Based on the iconoclastic cult novel by Chuck Palahniuk, David Fincher's *Fight Club* (1999) drips with comic invective concerning the comfortable alienations of commodity fetishism and managed misery. Corporate bureaucrat Jack (Edward Norton) has a solipsistic private life of Ikea catalogue completism, filling the resulting spiritual vacuum with self-pitying voyeurism at self-help groups for cancer sufferers. This pathetic existence is blighted by escalating narcissistic insults and material disasters, until libidinal nihilist Tyler (Brad Pitt) rekindles his anguished masculinity in regular bareknuckle fistfights on city backstreets. Fascinated onlookers from all walks of life join in, mushrooming and coalescing as an underground movement to overthrow consumer society via unspoken male solidarity. Their plan to blow up finance companies' headquarters proves too much for Jack, who shoots himself in the head – merely wounding himself physically but killing Tyler (revealed as schizoid personification of suppressed desire) – and the newly-integrated Jack finds heterosexual love as the bombs detonate.

Even if dismissed as hermetic schoolboy fantasy – or worse, flirting with the fascistic appeal of cult violence powered by psychotic charisma – *Fight Club* at least foregrounds passionate bodily yearning as potential antidote to the poison of capitalism.⁸ David O. Russell's *I [Heart] Huckabees*

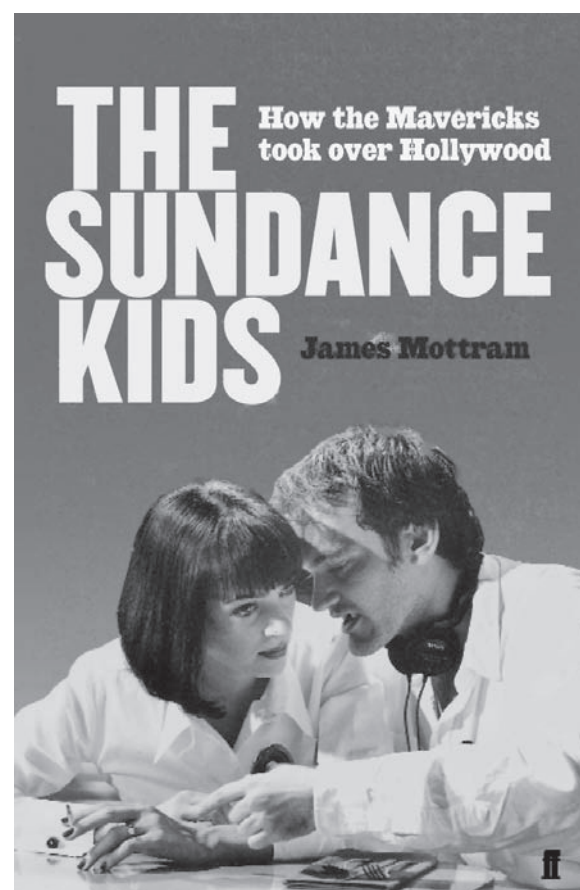


(2005) follows the more unthreatening route of surrealism-lite (as favoured by global brand advertisers), sacrificing the urgency and emotional desperation conjured by Fincher. The gentler, screwball farce comedy is likewise enervating rather than energising – but both choices suit the film's theme of the New Age reduction of politics to personal morality and lifestyle marketing. Here, Jason Schwartzman's earnest environmentalist agonises over the ethics and efficacy of single issue campaign compromises with corporate interests. So troubled that he fears for his sanity, various counsellors and consultants are invited to compete in obsessing over his sense of identity, making suitably shallow interventions in his social and activist circle. 'Finding himself' quickly takes precedence over preserving wilderness – implying that the previous concern for 'real' nature merely externalised anxieties concerning his own self-indulgent whingeing human nature.

Crowd Scenes

Fight Club and *Huckabees* are unquestionably highly original films, with wildly inventive camerawork, editing and plotting, and complex characterisations and cultural reference points. And despite their considerable limitations – for instance depicting political action as, at best, misguided – both complicate the striving for commonality with the difficulties inherent in the uncertain status of knowledge and interpretation experienced by characters and viewers. More conventional ensemble dramas also emphasise the influence of randomness, shared fantasy, flashbacks and alternative versions in shaping local social contexts. The fractured stories and multiple perspectives pioneered by Robert Altman have been very influential among independent filmmakers – though rarely exploited to illuminate political themes.⁹ Moreover, other groundbreaking work – such as the ghettocentric cycle initiated by Spike Lee's *Do The Right Thing* (1990), films directed by Sean Penn (*The Indian Runner*, 1991; *The Crossing Guard*, 1995; *The Pledge*, 2001) and those written by Guillermo Arriaga (*Amores Perros*, 2001; *21 Grams*, 2004; *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*, 2006) – locate agency and potential most firmly within individual protagonists, who are always flawed, damaged and disruptive of simplistic solutions, and the ramifications of their normal or abnormal pathology ripple out into their social environments to highlight collective implications.

Paul Haggis' *Crash* (2005) focuses on the sickness of racism infecting all levels of US society in a tapestry of neatly interlocking and sharply scripted vignettes featuring a dozen-and-a-half characters crossing fractious paths over two days in Los Angeles. Its manipulative conceit is to include only occasions dominated by racialising attributions, with scant contextualisation



in deeper backstories and a fuller range of interactions. Despite consequently actively stereotyping those it accuses, the scenarios frequently overflow this constraint to reveal the bases of conflict in class distinction and economic inequality – with particularly acute detailing of the complicit hypocrisy of liberal elites and the fatal delusions of political correctness. But with the redress to racial prejudice artificially overdetermining the narrative ebbs and flows, acts of humility and humanity on the part of those towards the bottom of the cosmopolitan heap are isolated as exceptions to the rule rather than countervailing force. *Crash* thus embodies and exemplifies the organising power of racism yet, paradoxically, was lauded and awarded best film Oscar for its bravery in exposing it. But the film is much less honest than *Short Cuts* (dir. Robert Altman, 1993) pinpointing of the bitter pressure-points of the city's downwardly-mobile trajectory, ultimately being just as distanced and melancholic as *Magnolia's* (dir. Paul Thomas Anderson, 1999) meandering meditation on the ineffable strangeness of LA life.

Refusing the panoramic omnipotence of such efforts, Kathryn Bigelow's magnificent *Strange Days* (1995) experiments viscerally with the phenomenology of simulation offered by new media, gradually expanding the significance of their alienating distraction for confused thrill-seekers out into the seething public sphere of a chaotic neo-noir 1999 LA under brutal martial law. The troubled pairing of ex-vice squad porn merchant Ralph Fiennes and streetwise action heroine Angela Bassett tangle with corrupt entrepreneurs and lowlives in a decadent cross-fertilising cultural milieu of hip-hop punk, blundering into a conspiracy to assassinate a Black revolutionary leader which threatens to tip the civic millennium festivities over the brink into grass-roots insurrection. Through an unprecedented synthesis of film and psychoanalytic theory, exploitation of cinema traditions and bravura design, editing and photography, it is far more nuanced than *Crash* in tackling the subjective and social significance of race, as well as of gender and class.¹⁰ The film also works hard to specify its historical contingency in the best traditions of science fiction as speculation on the present (for example by Stanislaw Lem, William Burroughs or Philip K. Dick) – rather than hysterical inflation into universal values, or the fashionably subversive adolescent hype which passes for philosophical resonance in the Wachowski brothers-produced *V for Vendetta* (dir. James McTeigue, 2006), as in *The Matrix* (dir. Andy & Larry Wachowski, 1999) series.¹¹ *Strange Days* even excuses its major flaws (such as a deliberately implausible, if arguably utopian, central relationship) by managing to render its politically ultra-conservative resolution as

dystopian recuperation – a final knowing flourish on the role of mass entertainment in taming desire in labyrinths of repressive desublimation.

Changing Lenses

The general timidity of dream factory visionaries in tackling political change may, then, be best conceived in terms of a wider disillusionment among the middle classes with social democracy as the handmaiden of capitalist progress in our strange days, given their failure to predict or comprehend the unravelling liberal consensus. 1980s and '90s neo-noir, postmodern and 'slacker' stories appeal for their thoroughgoing refusal of traditional disciplines and delusions, which is partly also what makes new forms of collective mobilisation such as anti-globalization possible among those growing up without the benefits of 1960s naiveté and aristocratic modernist optimism. However, the recent spate of films translating oppositional attitudes into populist cinema use largely retrograde narrative conventions and characters, without the stylistic and technical experimentation elsewhere employed to reflect underlying malaises in Western society. The most obvious symptoms of war and corporate excess are thus presented as ultimate causes, to be adjusted by enlightened reform. Similarly, whereas the deeper colonisation of intimate life by the instrumental logic of commodification ironically has Hollywood at its vanguard, any cinematic response more robust than trivial lifestyle tinkering leads to shattered identities or social breakdown which only the desperate reassertion of established authority can resolve.

While at least corruption and malpractice by government and business, environmental damage, and the effects of corporate imperialism on the poor at home and abroad are now gratifyingly familiar on the big screen, merely updating clichéd film formulae reproduces traditional resolutions revolving around heroes and leaders. The corresponding notion that suitably nimble strategies among liberal filmmakers guarantees progressive content does justice neither to contemporary political circumstances – where the intentions and interests of professional elites are so widely, thoroughly and understandably distrusted – nor to a media culture in which superficial appearance is fetishised to mask the depressing difficulties of real life. Negotiating prevailing tastes and engaging deeper desires while also offering genuine critique is much trickier than the voluntaristic idealism of celebrities suggests. So radical directors often skilfully portray middle class protagonists striving to maintain their positions entangled in complex local hierarchies and histories, with very mixed consequences for those with less room to manoeuvre. Regrettably, the latter's rich social dynamic is usually homogenised into frozen victimised masses – either destined to be thawed by personal heroics and histrionics, or simply functioning as a reactive backdrop against which the stars shine.

Conspiracy theories have long been fertile territory for cinema, with political thrillers sensing the world's complexity while rendering historical phenomena in simplistically individual terms. Action films hysterically mobilise adolescent masculinist muscle in desperate response and, given that paranoia represents the psychotic underbelly of individualism, parapolitics likewise seductively suggests that humanity's ills result from the hidden agendas of evil elites. Of course the latter exist, and create havoc, but the more difficult truth is that domination is sedimented into the routine material of institutions, discourses, bodies, societies and economies – conditioning the patterns of stratification, distinction and difference which constitute the texture of everyday life irrespective of whose interests can be said to be ultimately served. This is precisely the terrain which postmodern existential nightmares effectively excavate, albeit usually inside single isolated and tortured psyches. Furthermore, expansive dramas of community life are eminently capable of depicting the ways in which the interests, beliefs, actions and affiliations of friends and neighbours, lovers and strangers mingle subjectively and socially. When parallel

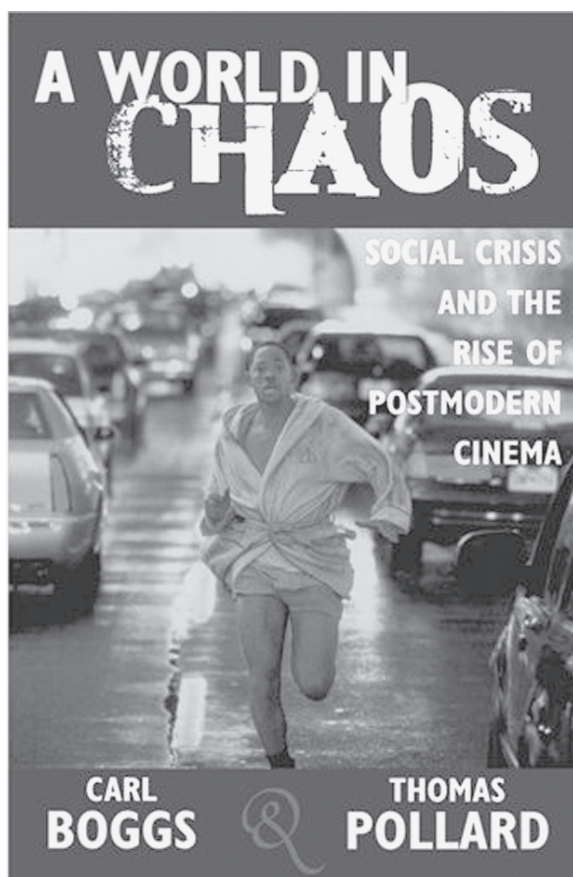
storylines and biographies clash and intersect, this is as likely to yield collective synergy as the familiar cinematic staples of destructive conflict or sterile equilibrium.

These tentative and emergent representational paradigms seem to offer the possibility of providing visions of the grounds for genuine solidarity and the pursuit of shared purpose in circumstances in which business as usual is decisively threatened. However, it would be necessary to acknowledge the central role here of autonomous grass-roots activity or expression outside of the boundaries, preoccupations, conceptual frameworks, guidance and control of middle-class mediators. But this would entail the latter surrendering their recuperative power, and accordingly the privileged positions granted for loyal opposition to the status quo. Even the more challenging of the films referred to above can therefore be interpreted in terms of a reluctance to tackle such suffocating restraints in their makers' own cultural practice – amounting to a wholesale failure of nerve as well as self-censorship. This helps explain why manifestations of conscious struggle, collective public dissent or mass action are so rarely properly explored, and certainly not celebrated – and, especially when their subjects lack social status, hasty negotiation and patronising contempt are the order of the day. Instead a regular refrain of self-important gestures by and about special ones creating history emanates from aspiring or actual cinema industry heavyweights and their (un)critical cheerleaders – whose rose-coloured spectacles conceal an inability to conceive of alternatives to the political coordinates of Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

www.tomjennings.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

Notes

1. Carl Boggs & Thomas Pollard, *A World in Chaos: Social Crisis and the Rise of Postmodern Cinema*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2003, p.249.
2. James Mottram, *The Sundance Kids: How the Mavericks Took Back Hollywood*, Faber & Faber, 2006.
3. Sharon Waxman, *Rebels On The Backlot: Six Maverick Directors and How They Conquered the Hollywood Studio System*, HarperCollins, 2005.
4. Ben Dickenson, *Hollywood's New Radicalism: War, Globalisation and the Movies from Reagan to George W. Bush*, I.B. Tauris, 2006.
5. See Paula J. Masood, 'Ghetto Supastar: Warren Beatty's *Bulworth* and the Politics of Race and Space', *Literature/Film Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No.4, 2002, pp.287-293.
6. The grounds for which, in this case, are presented as neutral historical record rather than falsified propaganda; for a corrective, see As'ad Abu-Khalil, 'Spielberg on Munich: the Humanization of Israeli Killers, and the Dehumanization of Palestinian Civilians', 2005, <http://angryarab.blogspot.com/2005/12/spielberg-on-munich-humanization-of.html>. For a relevant discussion of the deeper relationship between media images and contemporary international government, see: Retort [Iain Boal, T. J. Clark, Joseph Matthews & Michael Watts], *Afflicted Powers: Capital and Spectacle in a New Age of War*, 2nd edition, Verso, 2006.
7. See my 'Class-ifying Contemporary Cinema', *Variant*, No. 10, 2000, pp.16-19.
8. As, in various contexts, Slavoj Žižek concludes re: *Fight Club*: "Liberation Hurts!" (Eric Dean Rasmussen, 2003, www.lacan.com/zizekillinois.htm). See also Žižek: 'I am a Fighting Atheist: Interview with Doug Henwood', *Bad Subjects*, No. 59, 2002, <http://bad.eserver.org> (and in Joel Schalit, ed., *The Anti-Capitalism Reader: Imagining a Geography of Opposition*, Akashic Books, 2002); and 'Art: The Talking Heads', in *Organs Without Bodies: Deleuze and Consequences*, Routledge, 2004. For the director's take on his film, and the controversy it spawned, see: James Swallow, 'Hit Me', in *Dark Eye: The Films of David Fincher*, Reynolds & Hearn, 2003.
9. Significant exceptions being *City of Hope* (dir. John Sayles, 1991), *Lone Star* (dir. John Sayles, 1996) and *Sunshine State* (dir. John Sayles, 2002) – like *Silver City*, financed by John Sayles' journeyman scriptwriting and independently produced and distributed by his and partner Maggie Renzi's company, The Anarchists' Convention.
10. See: Christina Lane, 'The Strange Days of Kathryn Bigelow and James Cameron'; and Steven Shaviro, "'Straight from the Cerebral Cortex": Vision and Affect in *Strange Days*'; both in: Deborah Jermyn & Sean Redmond (eds.) *The Cinema of Kathryn Bigelow: Hollywood Transgressor*, Wallflower Press, 2003.
11. See Robert Allen's and my comments on *V For Vendetta* in *Freedom* magazine, Vol. 67, No. 7, April 2006.



COMPETING NARRATIVES EXPOSED: Did you hear that two Palestinians were captured the day *before* that Israeli soldier was?

Rena Bivens

As it turns out, journalists do not climb to the top of their respective headquarters each day and direct large, all-seeing mirrors towards each region of the globe before effortlessly broadcasting the most compelling images onto your television screen later that evening, complete with straightforward, de-politicized descriptions of their content.

As soon as the newsroom directs its focus towards news items that involve war or conflict, particularly one that is as hotly disputed as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, many more decisions are involved. As it turns out, the news that streams onto your television screens each night is no mirror of the world – it is the result of an actively manufactured version of reality.

Many issues problematize the mainstream media's coverage of conflict. Time constraints in television, word limits in newspapers, ideologically-laden yet politically-endorsed and relatively unquestioned terminology, a seemingly never-ending range of differing historical accounts that no two groups are likely to ever agree upon, and the influence of public relations and intense pressure by well-organised lobby groups are just a few. Still, reporting conflicts is one of the most important tasks of mainstream media, since the majority of the public will only receive information about foreign crises from this coverage. Television remains the main source of world news for the large majority of the UK population.¹ Therefore it is absolutely vital that television reporting of conflicts is analysed and broadcasters are pressured to maintain balance and a high standard of impartiality.

If the news was just a reflection of images caught in a mirror, news agencies like Reuters and Associated Press would cease to exist. These organisations fuel the news that we receive and the consequence of this dependency is a lack of diversity between news outlets and, more crucially, a restricted and politicized information flow. While the domination by only a handful of news agencies can result in a selective representation of the globe and has the potential to advance only certain political and economic interests, news is still largely the result of public relations. It may appear as though news is spontaneous and investigative, but in fact the majority of content on mainstream television broadcasts is planned.² Certain events, like the World Cup and the Queen's birthday are clearly known in advance, but much of the rest of news is a direct result of public relations management. Groups make statements to the media – from governments to corporations to scientists – and each maintain a vital interest in promoting a particular perspective of an event.

Particularly when military conflict is involved, these groups share a fundamental concern that the resulting news coverage will be structured around a narrative that shows their exclusive group in a favourable light – often to the detriment of others. It is also often the case that one group involved in a conflict will be better resourced and therefore have superior public relations

capabilities. With respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, most journalists will acknowledge that Israel has a more efficient public relations machine.³ Therefore Israel's ability to supply journalists with information that supports their favoured narrative is significantly increased. Also, most correspondents live in Israel when covering the conflict and the BBC is the only Western broadcaster that retains a permanent presence within Gaza.⁴ This fact alone disrupts the flow of information. Greg Philo and Mike Berry published a study in 2004 of content, audience reception, and production factors involved in the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict following the outbreak of the Palestinian Intifada or uprising in September 2000. The following quotes are from journalists who have experienced the different nature of each side's public relations management:

Palestinian spokesmen are their own worst enemy. They often come across as boorish, the message is often incoherent. (Interview, June 2002)

Palestinians don't have a clear public relations approach. They [Palestinians] start from a reactive approach. I get 75-100 emails a day from official Israeli sources and organisations which support [Israel] (about 15 per cent from government, the rest lobbyists and supporters). I get perhaps five a week from Palestinian sources. (Interview, June 2002)⁵

These production factors influence the way in which events in the ongoing conflict will be covered – particularly how they will fit into a favourable narrative for one group or the other. The task of mainstream media organisations is to ensure that balance is maintained – that the full range of differing perspectives of events and overall narratives are featured in their reports regardless of any potential inequality on the public relations front.

A brief illustration of US coverage of the 2006 Israeli-Gaza crisis

The famed slogan of the United States' leading news program, Fox News, reminds its audiences: "We Report. You Decide."⁶ Below is one example of their coverage that occurred during the first few weeks of the Israeli assault on the Gaza Strip that began at the end of June 2006:

A Fox correspondent stands in Gaza, describing the empty scene in which Israel has reportedly 'cut Gaza in half,' when shots appear to be flying towards him and he is forced to end the report.

Presenter A: Scary.

Presenter B: But I just don't understand. They have...it says 'press'...that's the colour, that's international...

Presenter A: Bad guys shoot at anything.

Presenter B: Right...but it's Israel.

Presenter C: Uh...but it's also...if, if he's correct and again, we don't know who exactly was shooting at him...but the other guys there are trying to protect themselves-

Presenter A: Completely shifting gears, are you a rotten speller?

(Fox News, 13th July 2006)

Presenter A appears extremely confused and cannot comprehend the events he witnessed. Helpful Presenter B tries to ease his confusion by putting the situation into a dialectic that resembles President Bush's rhetoric of good vs. evil – hence "Bad guys shoot at anything." But this just baffles him even further since "it's Israel" and therefore, it follows, Israel can not possibly be shooting since they are not the "bad guys".

Granted this example is not the result of an in-depth analysis of Fox News' coverage of the most recent incursions into Gaza by the Israelis, nor is it meant to paint a definitive picture of their reporting. Still, it provides a demonstration of the construction of reality that takes place by presenters on behalf of the audience and the danger of neglecting contextualization in favour of what appears to be a preconceived narrative.

UK coverage of the 2006 Israeli-Gaza crisis

While not as explicit as the seemingly impulsive and simplified dialectic applied to coverage of Israel's actions by Fox News, as presented above, coverage within the UK is fraught with a common narrative that is left almost entirely unquestioned.

In every headline, in every teaser, in every opening remark, the 2006 Israeli attack on Gaza was narrated as a response to the captured Israeli soldier, Cpl Gilad Shalit. It is certainly the case that hours after the capture of Cpl Shalit by the military wing of the ruling Palestinian Hamas party, Izzedine al-Qassam, the Popular Resistance Committees (PRC) and the previously unknown Army of Islam, "dozens of Israeli tanks, backed by helicopter gunships, pushed into the Gaza strip" (BBC News online, World Edition, 25th June 2006).⁷ From that point forward the narrative was set: the ensuing conflict between Israel and Gaza began with the June 25th capture of Cpl Shalit by Palestinian militants.

This narrative fits the common stereotypical scenario of action followed by response and retaliation. This scenario is inherently simplistic and lacks context, but more importantly it mimics the narrative pattern that has been consistently found in previous analyses of UK coverage of this conflict: precisely that the Palestinians perform an 'act' of aggression to which the Israeli's must 'respond'.⁸ By selectively concentrating on Palestinian action (here: the capture of Cpl Shalit), even though in this case it directly proceeds Israeli action, a cycle of violence is again solidified in the minds of the audience and blame inevitably falls on the Palestinians without consideration of the context nor any historical conditions. Greg Philo and Mike Berry's audience research demonstrates how this narrative pattern is transferred⁹ to the audience and revealed in focus group discussions such as this conversation with a student group in Glasgow:

Female Speaker: You always think of the Palestinians as being really aggressive because of the stories you hear

on the news. I always put the blame on them in my own head.

Moderator: Is it presented as if the Palestinians somehow start it and then the Israelis follow on?

Female Speaker: Exactly, I always think the Israelis are fighting back against the bombings that have been done to them.

(Philo and Berry 2004:222)

The same narrative is also exposed within a news writing exercise where focus group members were given photographs from TV news coverage and asked to write a news item. Narrative-consistent phrases that continually arose within content analysis of TV coverage (following September 2000) appeared in the output:

“Israeli army retaliates”, “[Israeli] government reaction”, “Israeli army retaliated”, “Israelis responded”, “In response to Palestinian attacks” (2004: 228-229, original italics).

So why did this narrative damage public understanding of the conflict on this occasion? Because the context within which the apparent *beginning* of the conflict (Cpl Shalit’s capture) transpired is extremely relevant to an understanding of the crisis – particularly since significant Israeli actions against the Palestinians in Gaza occurred during the month leading up to Cpl Shalit’s capture. The following are excerpts from BBC News online articles that appeared during the month of June, leading up to Cpl Shalit’s capture on June 25th.

Wanted militant dies in Gaza raid

A senior Palestinian official in the Gaza Strip has died in an Israeli air strike in the town of Rafah.

Samhadana, a senior security chief in the Hamas-led government, was one of four killed in the attack on a training camp, which injured seven others.

He was one of Israel’s most wanted men in Gaza, and was thought to be involved in a 2003 attack on a US convoy.

A spokesman for the PRC vowed to *“open the gates of hell”* in response.

They fired their weapons in the air and *swore that they would strike back at Israel*, our correspondent says.

(BBC News online, World Edition, 8th June 2006, added italics)¹⁰

Palestinians killed on Gaza beach

Seven people, including three children, have been killed by Israeli shells which hit a beach in the northern Gaza Strip, Palestinian officials say.

At least 30 people were wounded in the shelling, they say.

In a statement, the military wing of Hamas *threatened to resume attacks* on Israel in the wake of “massacres”.

The group has been observing a *self-imposed ceasefire* for more than a year.

“What the Israeli occupation forces are doing in the Gaza Strip constitutes a war of extermination and bloody massacres against our people,” Mr Abbas said.

(BBC News online, World Edition, 9th June 2006, added italics and bold)¹¹

Israel captures pair in Gaza raid

Israeli soldiers have *seized two Palestinian men* in an overnight raid into the southern Gaza Strip.

The Israeli military said the two brothers were members of the militant group Hamas and were planning attacks on Israel.

Hamas said they were sons of a member but were not involved in Hamas. It *called the abduction a crime*.

(BBC News online, World Edition, 24th June 2006, added italics and bold)¹²

Before exploring this context, it is critical to note that Israel also has grievances of their own, even though no articles detailing them occurred during the month prior to Cpl Shalit’s capture. While suicide bombings perpetrated by Palestinians are extremely poignant events that should be categorically condemned, Hamas renounced suicide bombing as a strategy of resistance against Israeli occupation and entered into an unofficial ceasefire in the spring of 2005.¹³ But Islamic Jihad rejected



Huda Ghaliya cries beside the body of her father, who was killed in an explosion on a Gaza beach on June 9.

Hamas’ ceasefire and has continued this strategy. Also, Qassam rocket fire has become a mounting concern for the Israelis as this Palestinian militant activity of firing what many media outlets refer to as “crude missiles” began to increase in June 2006. Still, according to Israeli human rights group B’Tselem, 8 Israeli civilians have been killed by Qassam gunfire during a 25 month period of June 2004 to July 2006 while Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) actions within Gaza claiming to be an attempt to stop these Qassam rockets during a much shorter 4 week period of 26th June to 24th July resulted in the deaths of 126 Palestinians.¹⁴

Although a comparison of casualty figures lacks important context, it is still valid to note that according to B’Tselem, between 29th September 2000 and 15th September 2006, 3,824 Palestinians were killed by Israelis while 1011 Israelis were killed by Palestinians. Included in these figures are 764 Palestinian minors and 119 Israeli minors. This is particularly important in light of the general public’s lack of understanding of this conflict, which finds beliefs among many British, German, and American students that more Israelis have been killed than Palestinians or that both sides have suffered equally in terms of casualties.¹⁵ Many more issues are involved in this conflict that are too complex to discuss within the space available here (Israel’s withdrawal from Gaza, water, restrictions on Palestinian movement, residency, destruction of property, detainees and prisoners, east Jerusalem, Israeli settlements, the separation barrier, to name a few).

To explore the missing context that is implied by the inclusion of the above BBC online articles, it is important that UK television news reporting¹⁶ of these events that preceded Cpl Shalit’s capture during the month of June 2006 as well as the coverage of the first few days following his capture is analysed (up to and including 29th June¹⁷).

The first story found on BBC News online regarding the death of senior Palestinian official Jamal Abu Samhadana on 8th June 2006 was not covered except when mentioned the following day in relation to the “Gaza beach violence”. For this report, all news outlets showed the gripping footage of the young girl Huda Ghaliya wailing for her father on the beach as she discovered her dead family members. Of course good pictures are a prerequisite for television news and Huda’s exasperation was highlighted. Blame for Israel appeared to be the running headline but within each report, with the exception of ITV,¹⁸ Israel’s responsibility was questioned in some manner. Since this time the Israeli army’s investigation has unequivocally concluded that they should bear no blame since they did not even fire any shells at the beach that day. Opposing this, Human Rights Watch military expert Mark Garlasco claimed that Israeli shelling was the cause after an examination of forensic evidence at the scene, doctor’s reports, and witness statements which he claims were unavailable for the Israeli investigation.

Also, each station’s coverage is more defiant than

BBC online reports regarding the end of Hamas’ ceasefire.¹⁹ This is significant since the end of Hamas’ self-imposed ceasefire and vows to attack Israel could have later been used as reference points when Cpl Shalit was captured in order for the audience to gain a greater understanding of the context within which this operation occurred. Samhadana’s death is also mentioned²⁰ as well as the deaths of 3 more Palestinians by Israeli air strikes that same day (9th June).²¹ These references create a climate in which the public might expect a “response” by Palestinian militant groups, a “retaliation” against Israeli “actions” – yet references to these events are nearly imperceptible once Cpl Shalit is captured and the crisis appears to, according to the narrative, *officially begin*. Lastly, on the same day of Gaza’s “beach violence”, Jeremy Bowen – the BBC’s Middle East editor whose role was “enhanced”²² in response to the BBC Governors Impartiality Review of BBC Coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, published in April 2006²³ – sat in the BBC studio and rhetorically asked if Israel is acting disproportionately, and if this is the case, accusations of war crimes could occur under international law. He also likened the recent Israeli actions (that day’s killings and Samhadana’s death) to a “particular advantage” for the Palestinians since, for a while at least, “Palestinians internationally will have a sense of being on the moral high ground” (BBC1, evening news, 9th June 2006).

The third story referenced above in the BBC online excerpts regarding the Israeli raid into the Gaza Strip (despite their withdrawal from the region last September 2005²⁴) and the seizure of two brothers on the day before Cpl Shalit’s capture by Palestinian militants was not reported on TV news. MIT Professor Noam Chomsky regards this Israeli action as a more severe issue under international humanitarian law than the Palestinian militants’ capture of Cpl Shalit since these acts took place under the context of a conflict wherein the Palestinian brothers are civilians yet Cpl Shalit is a soldier.²⁵ At the time of the incident Israelis claimed that the two brothers were members of the militant wing of Hamas, as quoted above in the BBC online news source, but no further Israeli comments have yet been found.²⁶

Once Cpl Shalit is captured on 25th June, statements from Hamas regarding reasons for this action appear on BBC News online but are rarely mentioned in any televised coverage.²⁷ The death of Samhadana, recent deaths of civilians, and targeted killings of militant leaders are quoted online as instigators for Hamas’ “response”. What is not revealed to viewers is that the termination of Hamas’ approximately year-long ceasefire in “response” to Israeli “actions” and hence the expectation that a “retaliation” (note the reversal of the traditional mainstream narrative) could occur, which might include this very incident of the capture of an Israeli soldier. The only references to Israeli actions that could have inflamed Palestinian militants are found deep within reports – generally

in terms of “celebrations” inside Gaza following Cpl Shalit’s capture, said to likely be related to the “more than a dozen Palestinian civilians” recently killed by Israeli forces (BBC1, evening news, 26th June 2006). Most of the time the reports begin with descriptions of the continued “hunt for the soldier” – for instance, BBC correspondent James Reynolds says, “Somewhere here in Gaza, amidst the flames and the dark there is a kidnapped Israeli soldier. With bombs and shells Israel is trying to get him back.” (BBC1, evening news, 28th June 2006).

Channel 4 News offers the most critical coverage by often fiercely questioning guests from both sides of the conflict. Presenter Jon Snow begins to make reference to the hidden context during an interview by mentioning the conditions under which citizens of the Gaza Strip have “not been safe ever since the [Israeli] pullout” since there has been “tremendous military activity above and from the land against them” (Channel 4 News, 26th June 2006). As well, Channel 4 refers to previous prisoner bargains that Israel has partaken in, thereby reflecting upon alternative options that may be available (27th June 2006) and goes so far as to mention that it “seems more like an exercise of retribution rather than a well-planned rescue mission” (28th June 2006). And finally, the most significant contextualization occurs again on Channel 4 when Jon Snow asks an Independent MP in the Palestinian Parliament, Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, if “it wasn’t great timing” for the Palestinian militants to capture Cpl Shilat since a major breakthrough between Hamas and Fatah had just been occurring.²⁸ Dr. Barghouti responds with a list of grievances against Israeli actions that have occurred (air raids, artillery bombardments, large numbers of civilian deaths, etc.) and in so doing provides a context for the operation in which Cpl Shilat was captured that extends the narrative beyond the traditional media interpretation and allows for flexibility in the view that Palestinians have simply “started it again”. While Channel 4 News has provided the most instances of these types of revelations in comparison to the other news outlets examined, they are still buried within interviews and far removed from the headlines, teasers and opening lines that tend to receive the most vociferous attention and thereby are more likely to solidify the traditional stereotypical narrative that often accompanies coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

On a final note, the BBC Governors review of coverage of this conflict recommended that ‘a stronger editorial “Guiding Hand” be provided, which has come in the form of the newly “enhanced” role of BBC Middle East editor Jeremy Bowen, as well as encouragement that the BBC “be more proactive in explaining the complexities of the conflict.” It was suggested that the latter could be fulfilled through “directly linking broadcast programmes to related background available online.”²⁹ As the above analysis of the BBC’s online coverage demonstrates, there is certainly more information online and presenters on the evening news programme have directed viewers to the website on occasion – but the stereotypical narrative still remains. In fact, it is even enhanced when multiple stories are interrupted within the webpage by a “Gaza Crisis Timeline” that unambiguously reaffirms the traditional narrative associated with this conflict in that Palestinian “action” begins a crisis, inevitably to be followed by Israeli “response” and “retaliation”.³⁰ With respect to the former recommendation, Bowen appears regularly on BBC evening news programmes in addition to correspondents and offers deeper analysis of the conflict. While he does mention important issues such as the Geneva Convention which prohibits “attacks on objects indispensable to civilians” and “collective punishment”, they appear dislocated since they are vague references with only implicit reference to Israel (BBC1, evening news, 29th June 2006). If

the intention is to maintain a safe distance from direct accusations against one party in the conflict, including more studio guests, akin to Channel 4, could provide more opportunity for deeper analysis of such issues. On another occasion Bowen gives an emotive, very detailed description of a suicide bombing from 9th August 2001 as a means of clarifying Israel’s stance towards Hamas,³¹ which provides appropriate context but unfortunately neglects to inform viewers – many of whom are already struggling to comprehend the situation – that Hamas has not been involved in suicide bombings since August 2004. However, the same style of emotive, very detailed descriptions of Israeli actions against Palestinians was not included when Bowen shifted his “balance” to the other foot (BBC1, evening news, 28th June 2006).

Final remarks

Even though mainstream media broadcasters assert their commitment to balance, fairness and impartiality, covering conflicts as politicized and hotly contested as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a challenging venture. It involves a difficult process of not only identifying the range of views that are present regardless of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the relative public relations machines involved, and ignoring the external pressure of well-organised lobby groups, but also a concerted attempt to fully represent this range of perspective. Also, since much of the public suffers from a lack of understanding, broadcasters should be encouraged to adopt new strategies to combat this problem in order to provide a more appropriate historical and contextual analysis. Advising viewers to “go to the website” for further information cannot be the only solution – particularly when a personal computer and availability of the internet is not accessible to everyone. Nevertheless, the existing factors that continue to push potentially well-intentioned broadcasters to embrace stereotypical patterns of narratives within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be further explored.

Notes

¹ As of 2005, 72% of people mention television as their main source of world news and 94% believe it is important for TV news to be impartial (compared to 90% for radio and 84% for newspapers). Source: Office of Communications (2006) *The Communications Market 2006*. London: Ofcom.

² Of course accidents, natural disasters, and other such phenomena occur and are likely to be newsworthy enough to be covered. Yet even once they have happened – and the same holds true for an ongoing military conflict – a mainstream news organisation will assign someone to cover it and therefore planning begins immediately and staff will know that news relating to the event will be incorporated into the broadcast for the next few days.

³ The section on production factors within Greg Philo and Mike Berry’s book *Bad News from Israel* (2004) explores this issue. Also, the author’s own ongoing PhD research has also arrived at similar conclusions.

⁴ http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/theeditors/2006/06/gaza_stories.html

⁵ Both quotes are from Philo, G. and Berry, M. (2004) *Bad News from Israel*. London: Pluto Press. See p. 246.

⁶ Within the United States, the median viewership of Fox News has risen steadily since 2001 and registered an increase of 9% between 2004 and 2005. Meanwhile, the other two most popular news stations (CNN and MSNBC) have remained relatively stable over this same time period but show losses of 11% and 2% respectively from 2004 to 2005. Source: Project for Excellence in Journalism analysis of Nielsen Media Research data. For more information see: http://www.stateofthenewsmedia.org/2006/narrative_cabletv_audience.asp?cat=3&media=6

⁷ http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/5114072.stm

⁸ Philo, G. and Berry, M. (2004) *Bad News from Israel*. London: Pluto Press.

⁹ Media messages are not merely transferred, as the ‘hypodermic needle’ theory of audience reception would suggest, but for audience members with a limited understanding of, in this case, the conflict these narrative patterns are more likely to be absorbed without extended deliberation.

¹⁰ http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/5062360.stm

¹¹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/5065008.stm

¹² http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/5112846.stm

¹³ ‘The last Hamas attack was a double suicide bombing on two buses in the southern Israeli town of Beersheba in August 2004 that left 16 dead.’ Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3256858.stm

¹⁴ For more information see: <http://www.btselem.org/English/index.asp>

¹⁵ Here are responses to the question, asked in 2002, ‘Which side has had the most casualties? Is it a lot more Israelis, a few more Israelis, about the same for each, a few more Palestinians or a lot more Palestinians?’: 35% of British students knew Palestinians had a lot more, 43% thought there were more Israelis or that casualties were the same for each; and results showed respectively 24% and 51% for German students, followed by 18% and 47% for US students. Source: Philo, G. and Berry, M. (2004) *Bad News from Israel*. London: Pluto Press. See p. 231.

¹⁶ Programmes considered are BBC1 evening news, BBC2 Newsnight, Channel 4 News, and ITV.

¹⁷ This timeframe was chosen to allow for some coverage of Israeli attacks (for instance on Gaza’s only power station) and responses from the media to these actions.

¹⁸ The only hint of uncertainty is seen with the report claiming it ‘appears’ that Israel is accountable.

¹⁹ According to online reports Hamas ‘threatened’ to resume attacks while televised reports claimed that Hamas’ ‘called off ceasefire,’ will ‘resume attacks on Israel,’ ‘Hamas says its ceasefire is dead too’, and Hamas will ‘renew attacks’ (BBC1, Channel 4, Newsnight, and ITV respectively).

²⁰ His death is mentioned on all stations except ITV.

²¹ ITV News notes that these strikes followed the firing of a rocket into Israel by Palestinian militants.

²² <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/5096050.stm>

²³ Find the full reports here: http://www.bbcgovernors.co.uk/docs/rev_israelipalestinian.html

²⁴ Although Israel still maintained control of Gaza’s borders, air and beaches after the withdrawal.

²⁵ As heard on US radio show Democracy Now on 14th July 2006. Source: <http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=06/07/14/146258>

²⁶ It is not yet known what will happen to these individuals – possible scenarios include their release, charges being placed by Israel, or their status changing to ‘administrative detainees.’

²⁷ ‘A spokesman for Gaza’s Popular Resistance Committee said they carried out the attack on the military post in revenge for the death of their leader, Jamal Abu Samhadana, in an Israeli strike.’ (25th June 2006 - http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/5114072.stm)

‘Hamas said the operation was a response to recent deaths of civilians and the targeted killings of two militant leaders.’ (26th June 2006 - http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/5115890.stm)

²⁸ Relating to the agreement by Hamas and Fatah to a document, developed by Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails, which backed a two-state solution, among other details. However, the question of acknowledging Israel – implicitly or otherwise – remains a major point of contention.

²⁹ http://www.bbcgovernors.co.uk/docs/rev_israelipalestinian.html

³⁰ There are many instances of this, for example see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/5131404.stm> :

Sun 25 June: Cpl Shalit Gilad captured in cross-border attack

Mon 26 June: Palestinian Popular Resistance Committees demand prisoner releases in exchange for Gilad

Tues 27 June: Israel launches air strikes on Gaza, military enters southern strip

Thurs 29 June: Israel detains dozens of Hamas officials

³¹ It should be noted that Hamas is considered a terrorist organisation by Israel, the United States and the European Union.

Blairism on the walls at Kelvingrove

Stephen Dawber

After three years of closure, Glasgow's great Art Gallery and Museum is once again echoing to the footfall of a curious public. Undergoing only piecemeal improvements to its fabric since the Second World War, the total refurbishment of the building promised a heightened mix of individual enchantment and collective spectacle. Such are the sustaining myths of this public space – palace of childhood fantasy on a rainy day, transcendent crucible of an otherwise divided civic culture – that little thought was given to the possibility that the renewal might go wrong. But it has, perhaps disastrously so, and the task now is to begin to explore why, and what it is that might be done.

In the history of Kelvingrove the uses of culture evolved from a patrician Victorian commitment to the value of artistic and industrial display for economic and moral improvement.¹ But more so than any other similar civic project, the pressure of the 'masses' shaped it from the start – the canny first Superintendent of Museums, James Paton, pursued his vision of Kelvingrove as a site of both social reconciliation and popular spectacle. Linked in conception – as well as by a vitalizing umbilical cord of cash – to the hugely successful International Exhibitions of 1888 and 1901, the formation of the museum owed at least something to the logic of commodification, including, perhaps, a desire on the part of the working-class in the second city of the Empire to become more fully part of the world of things. But at the same time, and particularly as the twentieth century wore on, experience of the museum also took on a more complex and potentially resistant form – a space of collective belonging, deeply felt.

This is to begin to explain Kelvingrove's popular appeal, its encompassing emotional scope. It may not actually be the case, but it feels as if I can recall every childhood visit, experiences both bewitching and unsettling as I learned over the years to negotiate the perils and pleasures of viewing. An apparently pristine contact with strange and alluring objects still lives on: the dishevelled bathos of Sir Roger, the famous stuffed elephant; the romance (never quite convincing) of the armour collections; or the almost hypnotic ordering in endless glass cases of seemingly worthless ceramic pots and pottery sherds. All this I can today conceptualise as the experience of enchanted looking, a gradual awakening of reflective judgement held in tension with the

functionality that is so often ascribed by theorists to the public museum.² More so than any other Scottish gallery, Kelvingrove contained something of the promise (now often chastened) of a public identity to come. As a space perhaps relished most by children, Kelvingrove allowed us all to maintain a stake in fantastic dreaming.

At a cost of nearly £28 million, that dreamworld has been radically altered, transformed by shiny new displays, a renovated layout and a good deal of hype. There is even a self-serving theory attached, a 'new epistemology of museums' drafted by Mark O'Neill, Glasgow's Head of Museums and Galleries.³ O'Neill's apparent innovation is to cast out the old Victorian taxonomies, which, he claims, still governed experience of the museum, to replace them with a more egalitarian system of classification based on the telling of stories. A commitment to 'elitist' disciplinary specialism is thus displaced by an orientation towards popular comprehension and 'social justice'. The West and East wings of the building are described by broad general categories – 'Life' and 'Expression' respectively – and (we are told) displays are now structured by over 100 stories selected by the staff. Rooms are therefore ordered thematically under titles such as 'Glasgow Stories', 'Conflict and Consequence' and 'Scottish Identity in Art'. The role of the art collections – one of the richest municipal holdings in Britain – is both reduced in relation to the museum displays and spread throughout the building, challenging a supposed division between the class-bound artwork (previously relegated to the upper galleries) and more accessible functional objects.

There is much to be said for O'Neill's ambition – complex cultural monuments such as Kelvingrove are rarely reordered so extensively – and the explication of his reasoning is part of a welcome trend on the part of British-based museum directors to justify their activities.⁴ His arguments deserve to be dealt with in more detail than I can manage here, although O'Neill's 'epistemology' turns out to be more a medley of received ideas, rather than any worked through method. This is, I think, significant because the schematism of academic injunction is not easily equivalent to adequate museum praxis. When it comes to museology, the quality of embodied comprehension constitutes an important measure of success. Turning to O'Neill's writings after visiting Kelvingrove fairly quickly gives rise to a suspicion: that the gulf between his confident, even bullish 'theorising' and the actual experience of the museum reveals an arch propagandist at work.

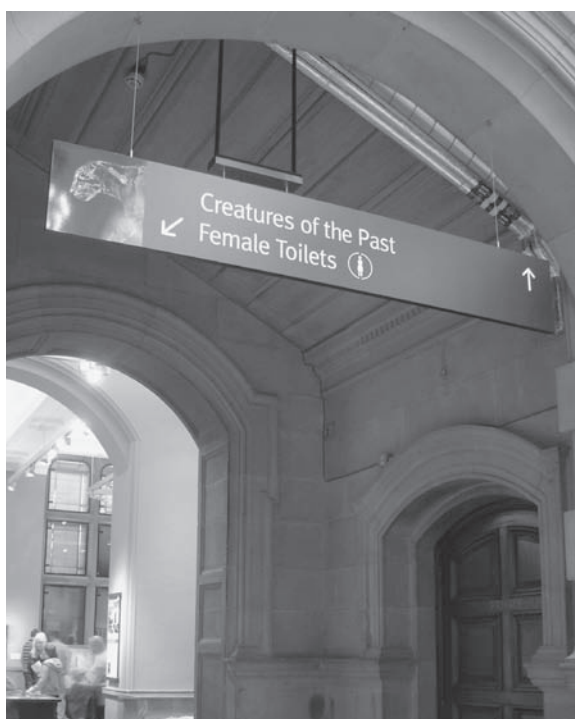
Two problems dominate Kelvingrove, each intimately related to the other: the breakdown in the presentation of the object and the absence of adequate narrative or interpretation. The number of objects on display has been increased from 4,000 to 8,000 – a symptom of the pressures of bureaucratic quantification? – and their accommodation is rarely a success. A busy human thoroughfare is now a disjointed and claustrophobic space as visitors and artefacts jostle up too close to one another, reducing the space necessary for active contemplation and criticism. The integration of museum objects into art displays is sometimes handled so badly as to make paintings unviewable, expressing a profound lack of confidence in the fine art collections. A proliferation of makeshift barriers and signs pleading 'Do not touch' suggests that built-in psychological barriers have failed to work. Some installations are simply crass (the largest object in



a case devoted to Adam Smith is an advertisement for the Thatcherite Adam Smith Institute); whilst others appear already degraded (on one of my visits an interactive installation dedicated to 'Powerful engines' was broken, an unfortunate irony in light of the lack of attention paid to Glasgow's industrial past). The interpretative display – comprising around 10,000 colour images and on average less than 30 words per object – is distracting and often inconsequential (paintings and reproductions of the same image are placed side by side). I could easily go on, but in an important sense Kelvingrove needs to be seen to be believed.

This is not just a result of incompetent design, although it is very much that. It also expresses a marked hesitancy towards the auratic qualities of the museum object and a compensatory anxiety to provide explanation on a grand, if often trivialising, scale. Museum artefacts produce meaning through context, but they also require a sympathetic relationship to what is always an embodied (if necessarily precarious) experience of understanding. For O'Neill, it is overwhelmingly contextual 'resonance' that generates democratising pressures, which accounts for the populist tenor of Kelvingrove's presentation. But a cacophony of signs and objects leaves little room for what I take to be the equally egalitarian possibility of experiencing affective 'wonder'; indeed, it radically negates it.⁵ Mediation triumphs over content in a way that makes the Victorian taxonomy, intellectually opaque as it may be, a far more potent system of visualization.

Much of this would be less worrying if the interpretative schema were not also so inept; again, Kelvingrove needs to be visited to be believed. Victorian taxonomies may be vanquished, but so is chronology, any sense of disciplinary knowledge (particularly problematic for the paintings and ethnographic displays), and much understanding of history, let alone a past active in the present. The work of interpretation manages to be both minimal and intrusive, diminishing context to facile illustration and reducing intellectual access to the same unvariegated voice. This latter is particularly troubling, not least as it refuses the stipulations of the Heritage Lottery Fund (a major public sponsor) that museums should find ways of reaching the interests of *all* their visitors. (The fact that after supposedly thorough scrutiny, Kelvingrove has got away with this confirms what many have long suspected, that the HLF is little more than a political fix.) Some installations (generally more detailed) work better than others – that concerning the optician-artist, James Pringle, for example, or (perhaps inevitably) those covering the history of Kelvingrove. Similarly, the attention paid to children's specialised viewing needs is an example of the curators taking the breadth of their audience's competencies seriously. But, on the whole, the new museum is marked by a persistent evacuation of layered content, a complaint that cannot be dismissed – as O'Neill so often does – as



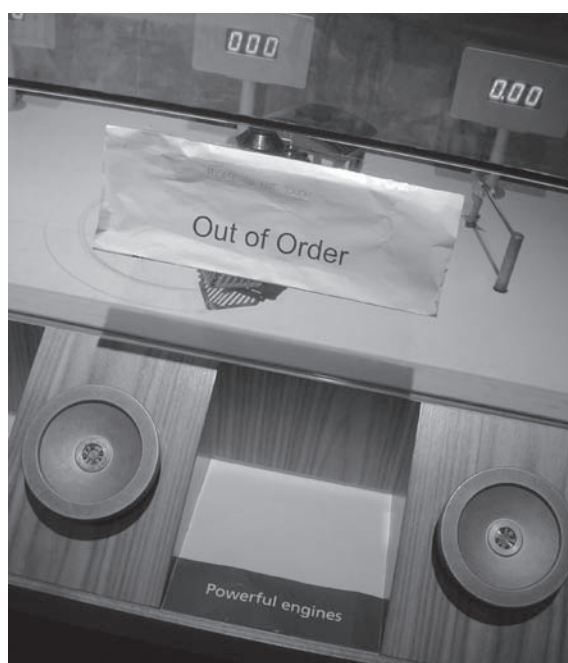
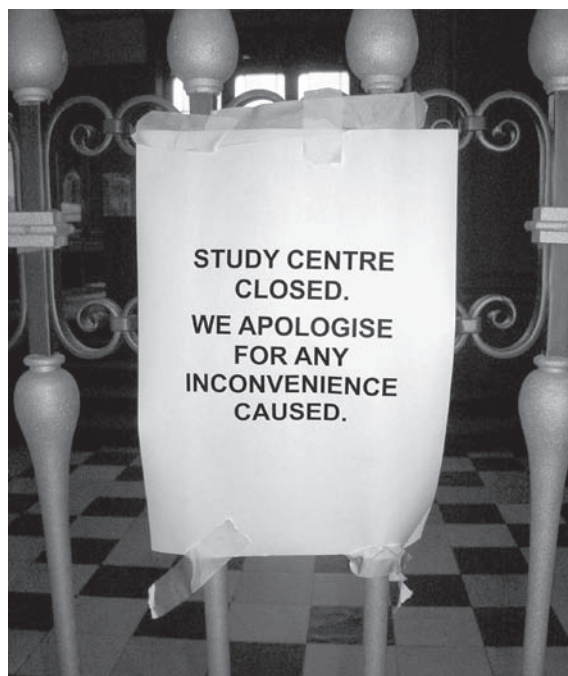
an expression of bourgeois privilege.

This, again, encourages a suspicion: that the bureaucratic mobilisation of superficiality, seemingly well intentioned, might in fact be accompanied by a dubious politics. And, of course, there is a politics active here: “Blairism on the walls” as I overheard one disgruntled visitor describe it. Blair, as we all now know to our cost, is a hollow politician, and by 1997 had put in place a hollowing out of the Labour Party, briskly trampling all opposition to the accommodation of City interests.⁶ In earnest imitation, Blairite apparatchiks have pursued a similar emptying out of our public culture, negating the energy of collective debate, dismissing the intractability of history and blunting all resistance. In England, the shallowness of this assault generated some professional opposition; a propaganda campaign was launched by the government with the support of Demos, a pliant think-tank, to convince cultural workers that New Labour, too, could, after all, sustain a ‘complex culture’.⁷ In Scotland, where arts managers have proved less resistant to politicisation, an axis of inanity now creeps West to East, capturing municipal provision and making inroads on the national institutions. Under the direction of Gordon Rintoul, and backed by the support of Jem Fraser (Mark O’Neill’s partner), it seems the National Museums of Scotland may be next to enjoin this technocratic rush to the bottom.⁸

At the heart of the political process is the programme of social inclusion, a central plank of New Labour social policy since 1997. As the Cultural Policy Collective has recently shown, its ideologues’ great project is to drag the poor into a low wage economy through the instrumentalisation of culture. Social inclusion feigns to stand up for the working class, but is in fact – in its failure to address the causes of inequality – a technocratic fix on the part of bourgeois cultural managers.⁹ The link between public policy and museum practice is not always direct, but in the case of Kelvingrove the bonds cut unusually deep. (For those unaware of the relationships that tie Glasgow’s museum culture to Scotland’s political elite, a nauseating hymn of praise in the catalogue to Bridget McConnell, Glasgow’s Director of Cultural and Leisure Services, provides more than an adequate hint.) Kelvingrove is also social inclusion on the walls and it clearly exposes the destructiveness of its logic to any evolved presentation of culture.

With much complexity denied, content collapses into form and the museum is transformed into a shallow supermarket of objects. It functions less and less as a potential site of self-knowledge or collective belonging. O’Neill has subverted the remnants of an older Victorian taxonomy, only to replace it with another, far lesser form – that shaped by the sensational and flattened rhetoric of mass mediation. This is the governing logic of the new Kelvingrove, one that negates the roles of curators and educators as mediators of a common culture, the resonance of which – perhaps particularly in the case of working-class Glasgow – is a constant embarrassment to the brave new world of neo-liberalism.

This is a profoundly conformist strategy and is very much the containment, rather than exploration, of egalitarian potential through public spectacle.¹⁰ For each and every visitor, being is privileged over self-becoming as content is sensationalised and presented in the same unmodulated tone. Narrative is crucial to human emancipation, but my guess is – and this must now be the focus of rigorous study – that visitors leave with very little sense of meaningful ‘stories’ having been told. A commitment to social justice is barely present; when it is attempted the results tend to be conservative (the privileging of nature conservation over a more radical environmentalism, for example) and never described as open to contest. Finally, and equally tellingly, the museum’s new thematic taxonomy offers virtually nothing to the understanding of historical change. Glasgow’s contradictory and unresolved past – potentially such a challenge



to neo-liberal orthodoxy – is dispelled from the present.¹¹

Deliberately or otherwise, Kelvingrove constitutes yet more evidence of the evacuation of complex meaning from our public culture, a process inimical to the fostering of an informed citizenry.¹² Certainly, there is little chance of achieving any form of substantive equality when cultural leaders end up submitting to the task of political containment convenient to their paymasters (in this case Glasgow City Council, the HLF and Scotland’s ruling neo-liberal elite). O’Neill’s failure also suggests there are a lot of problems to be worked through: rethinking the presentation of contested narratives in public culture; developing a theory of museum praxis that exceeds both the instrumentalism of the technocrats and the functionalism of much museology; and establishing a model of what democratic cultural practice might mean in the context of the museum, to name only a few.

In the shadow of Kelvingrove, and as neo-liberalism (in Blairite guise) sheds any semblance of legitimacy, now would be a good moment for cultural workers to recover their recalcitrance: the babbling of professional discontent heard behind closed doors requires an open airing. But in the end it is a popular movement of opposition that the torpid denizens of Glasgow’s Cultural and Leisure services will fear the most. Public appointees should be held to account and citizens’ committees could be established to monitor their contrition. In this way, museum workers could be compelled to provide their visitors with meaningful content, at once moving and substantive. In the meantime, Glaswegians could do no worse than restore an older form of public display to Kelvingrove Park. They should clamour to see Mark O’Neill’s head on a spike – symbolically speaking, of course.

Stephen Dawber is a freelance arts writer and anti-consultant: stephen_dawber@hotmail.com

Notes

- ¹ There is still no adequate history of Kelvingrove, although an outline is attempted in the new catalogue written by Muriel Gray, *Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum: Glasgow’s Portal to the World*, (Glasgow, 2006). Some insight into its twentieth-century history is offered by T. J. Honeyman’s memoir, *Art and Audacity*, (London, 1971).
- ² For an important critique of museum ‘theoryology’ see Colin Trodd, ‘The discipline of pleasure; or, how art history looks at the art museum’, *Museum and Society*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2003, pp. 17–29, available at www.le.ac.uk/ms/museumsociety.html.
- ³ ‘Essentialism, adaptation and justice: towards a new epistemology of museums’, *Museum Management and Curatorship*, no. 21, 2006, pp. 95–116.
- ⁴ See in particular the writings of Neil MacGregor and Nicholas Serota. O’Neill has recently criticised MacGregor in ‘Enlightenment museums: universal or merely global?’, *Museum and Society*, vol. 2, no. 3, 2004, pp. 190–202, available at www.le.ac.uk/ms/museumsociety.html.
- ⁵ For a discussion of these terms, see Stephen Greenblatt, ‘Resonance and wonder’, reprinted in Bettina Messias Carbonell (ed.), *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*, (Oxford, 2004), pp. 541–55.
- ⁶ One of the best accounts of this process is David Osler, *Labour Party PLC: New Labour as a Party of Business*, (Edinburgh, 2002). For a useful assessment of Blair the politician see Richard Gott, ‘The third crusade’, *New Left Review*, 33, May–June 2005, pp. 149–58, available at www.newleftreview.net/?view=2568.
- ⁷ Tessa Jowell, ‘Government and the value of culture’, May 2004, available at www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Publications/archive_2004/Government_Value_of_Culture.htm.
- ⁸ Jem Fraser was until very recently the Royal Museum Project Director, managing a £44.5 million programme of renovation awarded nearly £17 million by the HLF. She reported ultimately to the current Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland, Sir Angus Grossart. Grossart, a merchant banker, was previously Trustee and Vice Chairman of the National Heritage Memorial Fund and Chairman of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Scotland. His other unpaid interests include Patron of the Governors of the National Galleries of Scotland. His company Noble Grossart Ltd. owns 25% of the auction house Lyon & Turnbull Ltd. and 29% of The Fine Art Society; he is also a Director of the Scottish Daily Record. Grossart is thought to control at least £70 million in personal assets. The extensive links, historical and contemporary, between Scotland’s cultural institutions and business elites have never been adequately investigated. The extent to which cultural leaders are under pressure to make decisions against the public interest can only be a matter of conjecture.
- ⁹ *Beyond Social Inclusion: Towards Cultural Democracy*, (Aberdeen, 2003). One obvious point this pamphlet fails to make is that social inclusion policy very directly serves the economic interests of the higher ranks of cultural managers. In the maintenance of a low wage, low tax economy, in its refusal of redistribution and in its efforts to regulate a compliant workforce, social inclusion policy is very much the workhorse of neo-liberalism. In their desire to maintain existing structural inequalities, it is the social inclusions who are the real ‘elitists’. For a valuable theoretical discussion of this question see Peter Kennedy, ‘Social policy, social exclusion and commodity fetishism’, *Capital and Class*, no. 85, 2005, pp. 91–114.
- ¹⁰ The evacuation of the category of class from Kelvingrove (although not always from the historical narrative provided by the catalogue) is particularly telling. It points to the evasion of a vital question: how in an era of declining welfare provision, growing inequality and environmental crisis is Glasgow’s working class going to respond? One answer is suggested by István Mészáros, ‘The challenge of sustainable development and the culture of substantive equality’, *Monthly Review*, December 2001, available at www.monthlyreview.org/1201meszaros.htm.
- ¹¹ The retreat from exploring historical transition – and its complex cultural phenomena – has become something of a trend in recent years, a museological equivalent to Francis Fukuyama’s ‘The End of History’ (1989). For a related critique of ‘thematic euphoria’ that might usefully be extended see Franco Moretti, ‘MOMA2000: the capitulation’, *New Left Review*, 4, July–August 2000, pp. 98–102, available at www.newleftreview.net/?view=2258. For the political significance of an adequate understanding of historical change, see István Mészáros, ‘The rise and fall of historical temporality’, in T. Brotherstone and G. Pilling (eds.), *History, Economic History and the Future of Marxism*, (London, 1996), pp. 251–92. As Mészáros concludes, ‘the suppression of historical temporality is probably the most powerful methodological device in the arsenal of the ruling ideology’ (p. 284).
- ¹² For a recent discussion of this beyond the realm of museums, see Leo Panitch and Colin Leys (eds.), *Telling the Truth, Socialist Register 2006*, (London: 2006).

Academies, Religion and Private Philanthropy

Peter Vlachos

What are Academies?

According to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), Academies are a new type of school by which the government aims to enhance school leadership through drawing on the skills of sponsors and other supporters. The government claims that this will allow principals and staff new opportunities to develop educational strategies to raise standards and contribute to diversity in areas of disadvantage.

Sponsors provide approximately 10 per cent of capital costs while DfES provides around 90 per cent. Running costs are met in full by the DfES. Despite their relatively small financial commitment, Sponsors are given sweeping powers in the running of the school.

There are currently 27 Academies open. The first three opened in September 2002 and nine in September 2003. Five Academies opened in September 2004 and a further ten in September 2005. A further 49 are in development.

Despite initial support from parents, more recently groups of them have launched legal challenges to the City Academies Programme. The National Union of Teachers (NUT) has opposed the establishment of City Academies as having an undesirable impact on the coherent provision of a comprehensive education service within local education authorities. The NUT also opposes the transfer of publicly provided education assets to the independent sector. They believe that the initiative has the potential to threaten teachers' job security, salaries and conditions of service as well as the role and responsibilities of governing bodies.

Why is the government so keen on them?

The government champions Academies because it believes they will enhance school leadership via the managerial and leadership skills brought in by sponsors. The programme links together various threads of the current government's agenda: the increasing use of faith groups in the delivery of public services, the more direct involvement of private business in the public sector,

'regeneration', the ASBO agenda and the disempowerment of local government.

The Academies programme represents an admission of self-defeat by the government in its inability to provide an effective education system which can produce well-educated, tolerant citizens.

Rather than working towards improving the state education system, the government has decided to abdicate its responsibilities for managing schools, while, rather strangely, continuing to accept the financial burden. The worst of both worlds, in other words.

Who are the Academy sponsors?

In the Home Office report "Working Together: Co-operation between Government and Faith Communities" (February 2004), David Blunkett spoke of "the growing record of partnership between public agencies and faith communities in the delivery of service".

Coupled with New Labour's push for privatisation either through direct sell-offs or by encouraging so-called social entrepreneurship, it is of no surprise therefore that the government welcomes sponsors from business, faith and voluntary groups. Sponsors (who commit £2 million of the £25 million typically needed to build an Academy school and who do not contribute at all to the running costs of the school), include business leaders, religious organisations, corporate companies and even football clubs. Each brings their own agenda and interests, whether that be religious indoctrination or emphasis of particular subjects, in particular business subjects.

The confluence of interests is alarming. The sponsorship of three Academy schools by the strongly religious business entrepreneur Peter Vardy has raised concerns. His foundation, the Emmanuel Schools Foundation, sponsors Emmanuel College in Gateshead, The King's Academy in Middlesbrough, and Trinity Academy in Doncaster. He is also involved in EC Educational Services, which builds the schools.

The National Union of Teachers (NUT) has noted that creating Academies involves the transfer of publicly funded

assets to the control of an unaccountable sponsoring body, set up as a company limited by guarantee. Sponsors receive the entire school budget directly from the Government. Sponsors have responsibility for all aspects of the Academy, including staff appointments, pupil admissions, curriculum and governance arrangements. For a promised £2m stake, sponsors receive enormous benefits, for example school buildings and grounds, Academy supply contracts, advertising,

and the development of the kind of workers they wish.

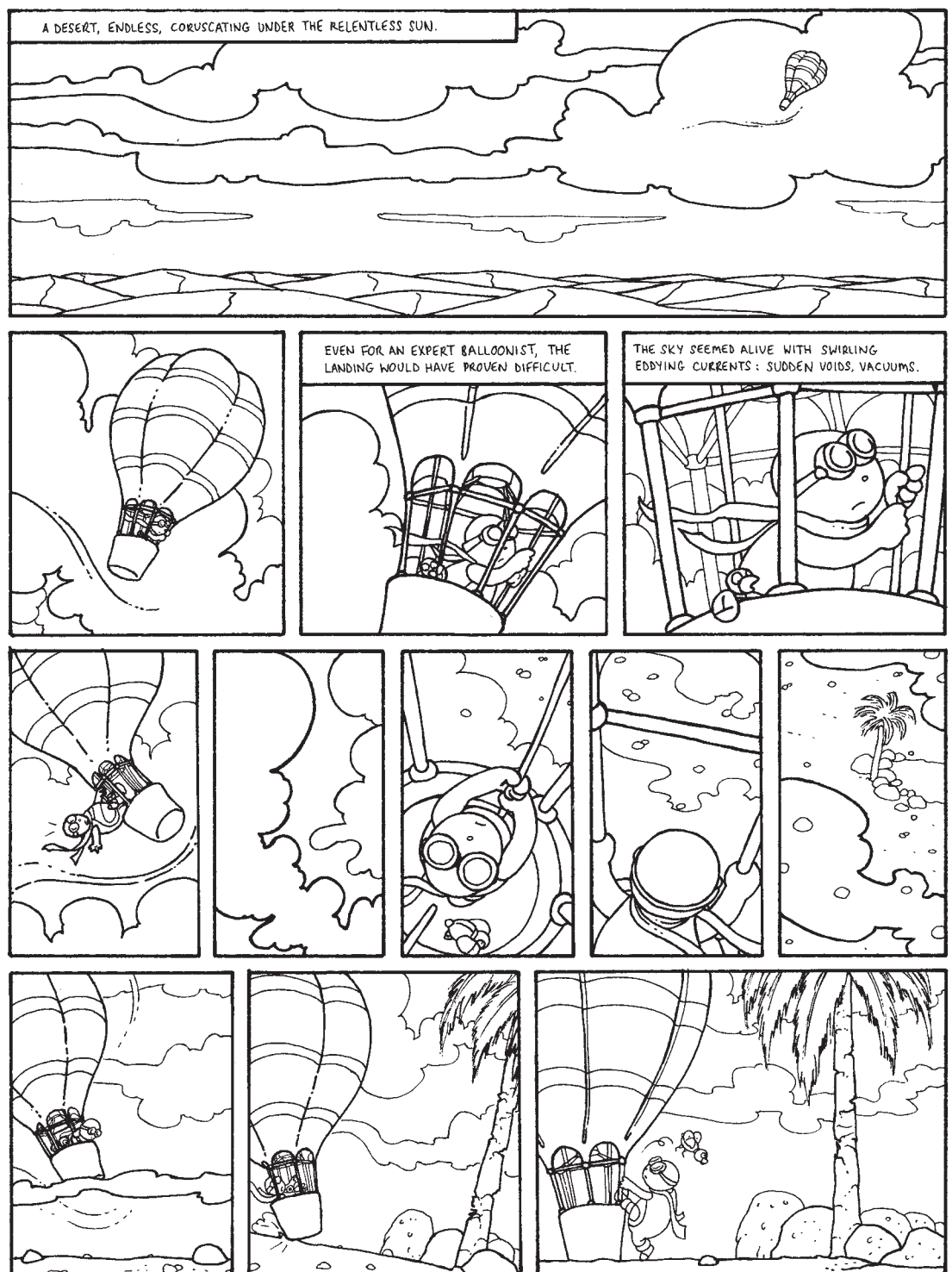
History of Philanthropy and Relationship to Public Services

It's easy to forget that the Welfare State is a relatively recent invention. The Education Act 1870 marked the formal beginnings in England of compulsory state-financed education. (Universal education in Scotland has a much longer history.) Before 1870, education

was largely a private affair, with wealthy parents sending their children to fee-paying schools, and others using whatever local teaching was made available.

For health care, throughout the 19th century, philanthropists and social reformers working alone had tried to provide free medical care for the poor. In 1828 William Marsden, a young surgeon who opened a dispensary for advice and medicines, conceived of a hospital to which the only passport should be poverty

LOUIS - THE ROUND THE WORLD RUG RACE



and disease; where treatment was provided free of charge to any destitute or sick person who asked for it. By 1844 the demand for Marsden's free services was overwhelming and led to the creation of the Royal Free Hospital. As well as the charitable and voluntary hospitals, which tended to deal mainly with serious illnesses, the local authorities of large towns provided municipal hospitals: maternity hospitals, hospitals for infectious diseases like smallpox and tuberculosis, as well as hospitals for the elderly, mentally ill and mentally handicapped.

The history of publicly funded, universal education and health care is relatively short and therefore more fragile than we might want to imagine. Perhaps we, the second, third and fourth generation beneficiaries, take for granted the extent of the transformation which post-WWII New Deal policies had. The old system of philanthropy – and it still exists to a large extent in places like the USA – rests on the assumption that a gulf between rich and poor is inevitable and

that, at best, society needs to rely on the goodwill of the rich to provide for the provision of basic social needs.

The reappearance of private sponsorship, therefore, is a huge step backwards for a modern state like Britain.

And yet the government sees an ever-expanding role for private philanthropy. Earlier this year, the Home Office awarded key, strategic multi-year funding to Philanthropy UK, a consortium of organisations geared towards building the relationship between government, donors and their professional advisers. Decisions on funding social welfare projects will increasingly be taken behind closed doors, with less and less public dialogue and public scrutiny.

This approach is a step further towards the 'Americanisation' of our state institutions. But why should we follow the US model and not the Scandinavian, Canadian or French models of education? The latter provide excellent standards of education in largely secular surroundings and produce by-and-large well-adjusted, tolerant citizens.

Academies: The mid-term report card. A failure in the making?

In its third, government-commissioned annual review of Academies published earlier this year, PricewaterhouseCoopers presented a mixed picture. Although the overall trends in pupil performance in Academies are positive, it is not universally the case that improvements are being made, and some Academies have been performing less well than the national average and other similar schools. The problems which these Academies faced were typical ones of any school: disruption due to delays in moving into the new schools; inadequate lead-in time the principal and staff, changes in senior staff, problems with project managing the building, concern whether school buildings are fit for purpose.

PWC found evidence to suggest that managing pupil behaviour remains a challenge. Even Academy schools are finding it difficult to link good behaviour to achievement and

aspirations.

A report published in April this year by New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) – an independent, non-profit-making organisation which advises donors on how to give more effectively to charities – is even more critical.

NPC has suggested that while private money can transform the opportunities for children in state education, funding academies may not be the best option:

"There simply isn't enough evidence to make a conclusive assessment on whether academies are a good investment for donors. Academies show mixed results for their pupils. But there is enough evidence to raise doubts about their cost effectiveness."

NPC says the £25m price tag on a new academy – of which £2m is paid by the sponsor – is very expensive, particularly given the lack of a strong relationship between school performance and investment in buildings. According to DfES figures, it is also significantly more than the cost of building a conventional state school, which is typically £16m to £17m. "Perhaps the most powerful criticism of academies is the £8m difference between the cost of building an academy and the cost of building a conventional school," the report says.

Meanwhile, opposition to Academies continues to grow and problems continue. Last year at least one Academy school was failed by OFSTED and put into "special measures". A private education company pulled out of a £4m scheme to sponsor two City Academies, following a parents' revolt at a nearby independent school it owns (BBC, 14 June 2005). Members of Parliament have been vocal in their concerns over the lack of a coherent strategy in rolling out Academies and their escalating costs. School governors have said that the City Academies programme should be suspended amid "unsavoury information" about funding. The call, by the National Governors' Association, came after allegations that Academy sponsors could receive honours in exchange for donations.

Conclusions

While the government continues with full force to develop Academies the debilitating long-term impact on our education system, if left to continue, will take years if not decades to undo.

What we are now seeing is a return to pre-welfare state economics. An attempt by government to disengage itself from the delivery of key social services like education. First PFI, now Academies – decentralisation and privatisation by yet another name.

Academies are proving to be a very expensive way of bringing in 'management expertise', even then the results have been mixed at best. If a lack of managerial freedom and leadership qualities are the missing ingredients, why

does the government not invest in revitalising existing schools rather than pumping upwards of £5 billion into new projects?

The government makes no secret that they welcome religious organisations as sponsors despite the problems caused by religiously-segregated schools. Is this a back-door way of funding the expansion of further religious, albeit non-Christian, schools?

The emphasis on business skills is a further nail in the coffin of liberal arts education. It is bad enough that universities are being dumbed-down to provide more and more vocational training, now the idea is pushing its way down into the younger levels of students. If it doesn't help an ASBO-laden teenager to land a career in retail, it can't possibly be worth teaching.

What can we do about it?

The National Secular Society campaigns tirelessly for the end of religious privilege. A cornerstone of the NSS's platform is the secularisation of schools and the disestablishment of the Church of England. These two aims are crucial if we are to transform the current divisive situation.

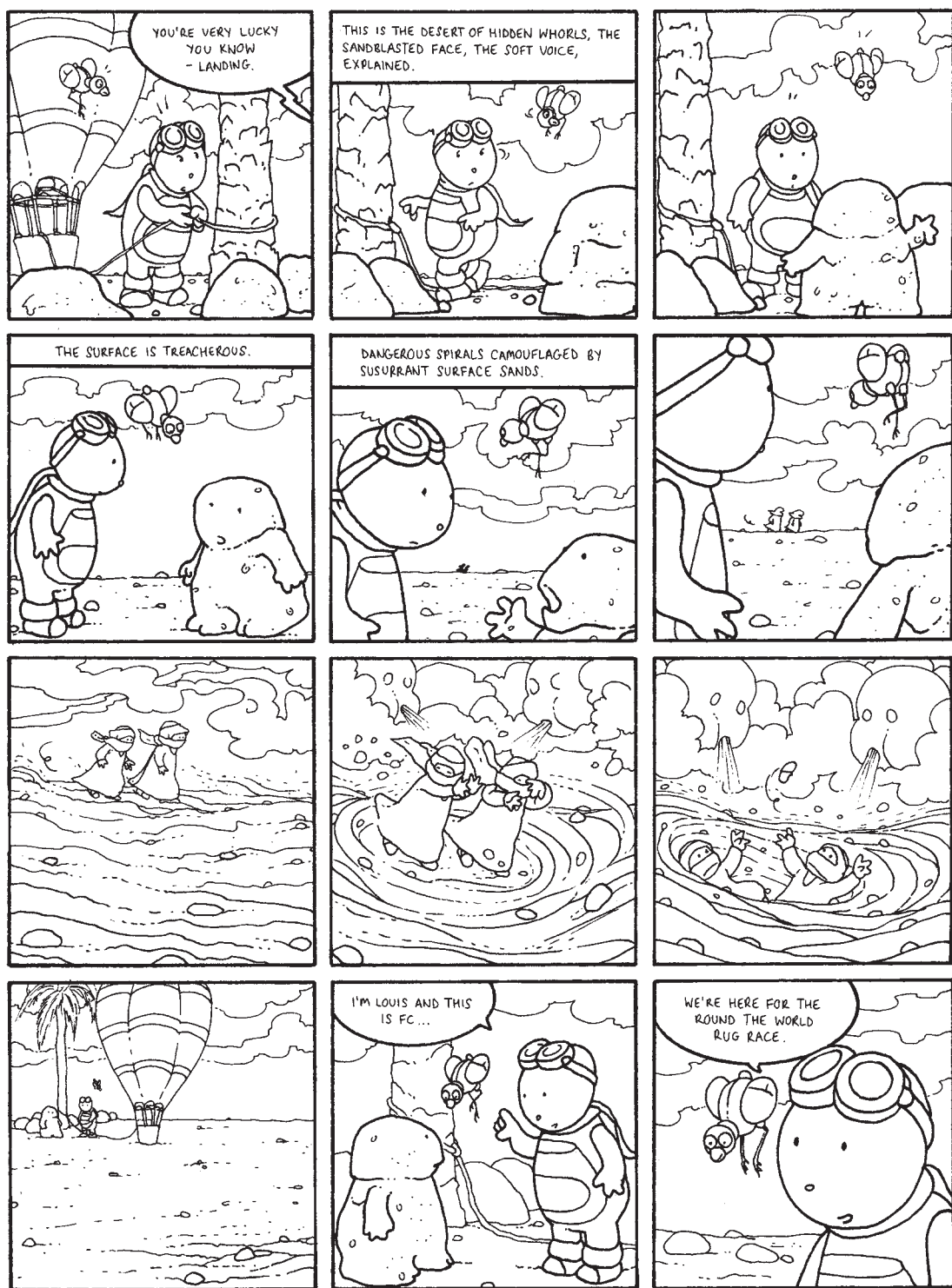
Academy schools will lead to more, not fewer, religious schools, and will correspondingly increase the fragmentary divisions between young people and whole societies.

Responding to the speech launching the Commission on Integration and Cohesion by Ruth Kelly (24th August 2006), Terry Sanderson, vice-president of the National Secular Society, commented that:

"The refusal by the Government to allow its new commission to even consider that faith schools are part of the problem with integration is sheer madness. It seems clear to almost everyone except the vested religious interests that separating children on the basis of their parents' religion is divisive in the extreme. Instead of breaking down barriers, as the Government says it wants, the continued expansion of single faith schools will exacerbate the problem."

We need more integration of students, not less. We need more support for state schools, not to wash our hands of the problems and invite private companies to run the show.

Peter Vlachos is Manager of Conway Hall, London; Council Member, National Secular Society; and Visiting Lecturer, Department of Arts Policy and Management, City University London.



Rebel Alliances

Rebel Alliances

AK Press / Dark Star
paperback
ISBN: 1904859702
£15.00

British Anarchism (whatever that is) has been characterised by its idiocy, spontaneity and ability to re-create itself. The journal *Aufheben* famously diagnosed *Class War's* "retarding influence" and a queue of theorists have described anarchism in the UK as dynamic, provocative, but ultimately politically unimportant. Benjamin Franks's *Rebel Alliances* throws a chair through the shop window festooned with the bawdy dummies of such dodgy arguments. From the turn of the century and before, Franks outlines anarchism's rise to pre-eminence as the means and ends to our future society: From Dan Chatterton's post-Chartist *The Atheist Scorchers* (1884) and of course Kropotkin's *Freedom* (1886 on and on) in a detailed analysis of propaganda, deeds, actions and movements right bang-up until Mayday 2000 when Churchill sported a turf Mohican (and beyond).

It's an appropriately epic sweep taking in Punk and DIY culture, ethics, Gorz, class and non-class, ethnicity, sexuality, and everything from 'the Spectacle' to Test Card F and everything in-between, if indeed there is anything 'in-between'.

If Britishness is a concept wilting on the cleft-stick of Brown-Blair absurdism, Franks is quick to defend his terms. This is a geographical not a cultural definition. Second, as Franks points out, among the earliest anarchist groups in Britain in the modern era were *Der Arbeiter Frint* (The Workers' Friend), Jewish refugees from Tsarist Russia, closely followed (in terms of impact) by such as the Spanish and Italian anarchist influence from the 1920s on. Finally Franks defends the inclusion of, for example, the 26 County WSM (Workers Solidarity Movement) on the grounds that English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish anarchist histories are intimately linked: "Oppression is understood to be contextual and based on opposing dominating forces as they affect that locality, rather than a single universal form of domination that determines all hierarchies."

The writing is inclusive but not vague, rigorous and scholarly but not up its own arse. He takes a reassuring sideswipe at David Miller [Professor of Political Theory at Nuffield College Oxford, author of 'Anarchism', J M Dent & Sons, 1984, and *not* the co-editor of 'Arguments against G8' and *Spinwatch* as appended in the print issue of *Variant* - please accept our apologies] who managed to write a whole book on anarchism whilst denying it had any identifiable core assumptions and could scarcely be called a political ideology. But if the book has a subtext it

is that as anarchism has grown to dominate the anti-capitalist movement this has not come about overnight or without repercussion. Franks contrasts the rise of the anarchist ethos and practice with the collapse of Leninist and Trotskyist left. If New Labour is the "last dribble of Thatcherism" perhaps Sheridan's *Solidarity* (sic) etc. is the final speck of Trotskyist dilettantism?

Franks knows his onions and as we (this it the Republican 'we') are troubled by, well virtually everything about the contemporary world, we asked him a series of less than searching questions and he coughed up a host of illuminating, bordering on entertaining replies.

Variant: Can anarchists operate in academia? There's the strangely sombre Anarchist Studies and a few people at Goldsmiths and Lancashire University but it's all a bit marginal and half-hearted. Is this a good thing? Or are there other ways that an 'anarchist ethos' has infiltrated and influenced?

Ben Franks: Whilst I write on anarchism, and have a great interest in, and sympathy with, many features of anarchism, I should stress I rarely, if ever, think of myself as 'an anarchist', and certainly don't speak on behalf of anarchists in (or out of) academia. Indeed, as the libertarian-aligned *Dissent!* rightly points, out "anyone who claims to be speaking on our behalf is lying."

I'm tempted to answer your question with another one - can anarchists operate anywhere? Not that I am suggesting that anarchists are somehow bumbling incompetents, but that there is a contradiction in performing certain roles within capitalism and being an anarchist. An anarchist selling his or her labour as a shopworker, is in a sense withholding commodities from those who cannot afford them. The radical sales assistant may subvert this from time to time, turning a 'blind-eye' to a needy-looking shoplifter for instance, but if they were to live up to their principles *in toto* and, say, give all the goods away all the time to anyone who desired them, then they would be out of a job fairly quickly and without much chance of a decent reference. This is not to criticise subversive shopworkers, but this fine strategy is only feasible if you have something to fall back on or if everyone else simultaneously follows the same tactic (i.e. we had already reached a post-capitalist society).

There are parallels between the shopworker and the person employed in academia (someone selling their labour time to the university). There are certain functions that are antipathetic

to anarchist principles, for instance: awarding grades to students which privileges one group against another in the labour market, or maintaining property-rights by policing plagiarism. But like the shop assistant there are certain functions which are compatible with anarchist principles. Whilst the shop assistant might give helpful advice on the use-values of goods, an academic is helping to reduce the hierarchy of knowledge by sharing, hopefully freely and as widely as possible with others.

Similarly, just as there is room for some subversion of managerial authority and imposition of the law of exchange-value in retail, for instance sales assistants organising to challenge the bosses through strike action, or more subversively, by creating

greater autonomy through covering for each other to create extended break-times ("Oh yes boss, Jane is back from lunch but she's directing a customer to our other branch"), so too there are possibilities for subversions in academia. However as my boss(es) may be reading this, I'll say nothing more in order to avoid self-incrimination.

Some of the groupings you raise, are not overtly 'anarchist'. For instance, some academics have a purely scholastic interest in anarchism, studying it perhaps as a historical fragment of particular interest in a curious European setting, in the same way that sometimes you will find researchers who study Fascism or Environmental Ethics without having a strong proclivity towards one or the other. Others you mention, in different ways might be seeking



to create greater freedoms for themselves and colleagues to pursue research interests, or provide a resource for activists. Whilst there is much to admire in this strategy - academia has often been used as resource - there are substantial risks too. In some instances, too close an association with elite institutions like universities can lead to a domestication of radical thinking. If most anarchist research, writing and theorising emanates from the academy, it can dominate the discourse, making anarchism appear to be a privileged discourse. A parallel with Marxism in the 1970s and '80s is possible here. As Terry Eagleton noted, Marxism ceased to be based around the radical movements of industrial workers



in their struggle against capital, but with academics discussing literary texts or education policy. Whilst anarchism (and indeed Marxism) can provide useful techniques for academic study, it would be a huge disservice if the limited practices of academia dominated – and thus alienated oppressed peoples from engaging, adopting and modifying anarchist principles, methods and ethos in their, often more important, day-to-day struggles.

Variant: You mention in your book what your working definition of anarchism is and how you use it. Can you say something about this? I know there's sometimes a tendency for writers to identify anyone who's a bit mad or a bit wacky as 'anarchist' throughout history and then retrospectively gloss in their 'credentials'.

BF: You are right. Of course anyone who appears to challenge bourgeois rationality can appear 'mad'. Any form of opposition,

whether anti-hierarchical or promoting an alternative hierarchy to the *status quo*, is associated with stigmatised concepts, e.g. "mad Mullahs" or "loony-lefty", so the association of anarchism with insanity is by no means surprising or unusual. What is perhaps distinctive in anarchism has been a willingness to appear eccentric; this may be partly as a result of de-stigmatising mental illness, exposing how it is constructed to police and maintain social order (the influence of Michel Foucault might be relevant here).

Alternatively it could be an acknowledgement that for liberal theorists, such as Max Weber, alternatives will always appear outside of accepted 'rational' discourse: the recent Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (CIRCA) at anti-capitalist/anti-globalisation demonstrations is a self-conscious acknowledgement of the way dominant ideologies portray creative dissent as 'ridiculous' and 'comical'.

The anarchism, of say, Emma Goldman and Peter Kropotkin (and maybe we can squeeze in Charles Fourier here too), whilst having its origins in the Enlightenment, and recognising the liberatory potential of reason to transcend the limits of power based on traditional authorities and superstition, nonetheless had some appreciation of the limits of pure reason. Humans may be rational beings, but they are not solely rational beings – they have other drives and desires too. The interest shown in Nietzsche by anarchists is pertinent here. Sean Sheehan stresses the debt contemporary anarchists pay to Nietzsche in his introduction to anarchism, as does the edited collection by John Moore, *I Am Not a Man, I Am Dynamite!*

A more worrying trend, though, has been for some theorists to adopt a wide variety of writers and thinkers into anarchism. Partly this is to shore-up anarchisms' academic accreditations. So whilst Peter



Marshall's book *Demanding the Impossible* is impressive on a number of grounds, one of the weaknesses is that he includes as 'forerunners' or 'great libertarians' an extensive menagerie of thinkers – the conservative theorist and MP Edmund Burke, the statist Tom Paine, the 'constitutional liberal' John Stuart Mill, and even the Christian messiah (for a movement usually identified by its reaction to 'God and the state'). Such accounts blur to the point of distortion anarchism as a revolutionary, anti-state, egalitarian movement. It also assumes that anarchism's actual traditions are so weak it requires reinforcement from outside. Further, it also raises the questions: why anarchism should feel the need to become academically respectable? Who is it out to impress?

Variant: You commented about how publishers locked-on to your work as the anti-capitalist movement kicked in and your efforts to try and explain that it wasn't all about panning in McDonalds' windows. But how do anarchists escape this stereotyping, and isn't some of it their/our own fault? Maybe you can say something about the most creative interventions you have come across that don't operate in this way but that have some real impact on 'everyday life', real communities, ordinary people etc.?

BF: I am not certain what a 'real' community or an 'ordinary' person is, as distinct from an unreal or 'extraordinary' person, but this is me being pedantic. I guess your point here is the highly pertinent one of how can anarchist principles and tactics be incorporated into everyday life?

I should stress that I am not a pacifist. There are times when panning in the windows of McDonalds' is not just excusable but is highly justified; the problem is in being stuck with one particular tactic (smashing windows) or one particular identity (the black-masked vandal) to deal with the myriad, ever-adapting modes of oppression. Dominant powers want to fix the range of responses, as that way we become more predictable and controllable – as a result actions become less threatening, less radical. Certainly it would not be in the commercial media's interests to portray anarchists in a favourable light, so latching onto, universalising and

thereby de-contextualising the 'hooligan' version of anarchism is hardly a surprising strategy: dominant powers constructed the stereotype of the black-coated, bearded bomb-thrower in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the ineffectual, effete 'hippy anarchist' in the '70s and early '80s.

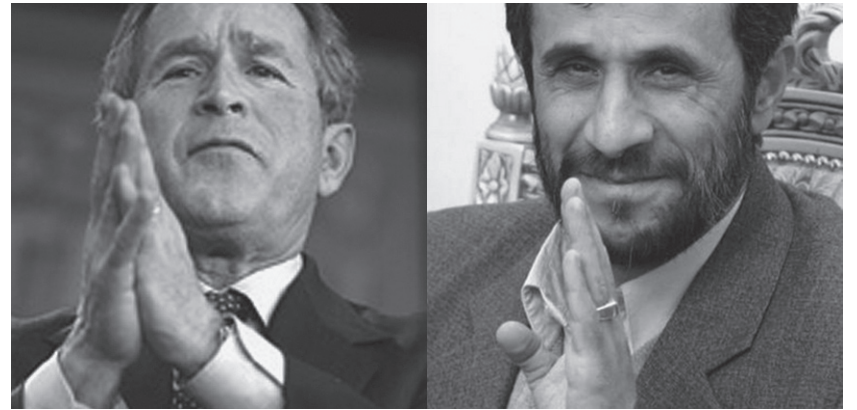
To pick out just a couple of tactics risks prioritising them and thus creating a prescriptive taxonomy of responses. Nonetheless, to select a few provisional examples of some of the most creative interventions, these tend to be those which include those principles most consistent with a defensible form of capitalism: rejection of hierarchies, whether based on state, capital or other dominating structure; a repudiation of mediation and thus a renunciation of tactics based on vanguards and prioritising prefigurative methods, in which the means used have to reflect the values of the desired goals. Of course, these principles are adhered to by individuals and groups who do not necessarily adopt the 'anarchist' label. These radical moments hold out the possibility for even greater experiment and adventure and create new links of solidarity. So there are the practical steps like opening and maintaining social centres – from London's Jubilee Street Club of the late 1890s, or the more recent ones such as the Autonomous Centre in Edinburgh, 1 in 12 in Bradford, Sumac in Nottingham or RampART and London Action Resource Centre in the South East. These are broadly run on non-coercive principles, and these venues open up opportunities for collaborations on a range of cultural and (anti)political actions. There are the workplace structures, such as the Solidarity Federation and the syndicalist IWW, which although in the UK are still tiny, nonetheless still provide useful advice, confidence and support to those resisting managerial authority.

No single struggle takes universal priority over all others. For instance, the fight against patriarchy is not necessarily going to eradicate racism, although it might help (and vice-versa). In certain contexts one type of resistance to oppression is, however, more critical than another. Similarly, no single tactic is sufficient, although in a given context one type of tactic might be more apt than others in resisting heteronomous power in a life-enhancing, liberatory fashion.



Yassamine Mather

Ahmadinejad: Myth and Reality



Over the last few months, as the threat of sanctions and military intervention against Iran has increased, sections of the anti-war movement outside Iran have launched a concerted effort in support of the Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. However, inside the country the new government's failure to deliver any of its promises of economic prosperity for the majority of the population has brought nothing more than increased poverty and repression for the working class, women, youth and minorities. Workers face job casualisation and unemployment as the gap between the rich and poor is widening while the government's unprecedented programme of privatisation, accompanied by the systematic non-payment of workers' wages, creates unparalleled levels of poverty and destitution.

Of course Iran's current political strength in the region is a direct consequence of the US/UK invasion of Iraq and the coming to power of a Shia pro-Iran government in Baghdad soon after the 'overthrow' of Iran's other foe, the Taliban in Afghanistan. However, most Iranians do not care about the geo-political manoeuvres of the Islamic regime as their main concerns remain the economic issues inside of the country.

According to the Islamic government's own statistics, 7,467,000 Iranians live below the poverty line, with the poorest sections of the population in the countryside where 9.2% lived with incomes well below the poverty line in the Iranian year 1385 (March 2005-6). In the same year the income of the top 10% earners of the population was 17 times that of the bottom 10%.

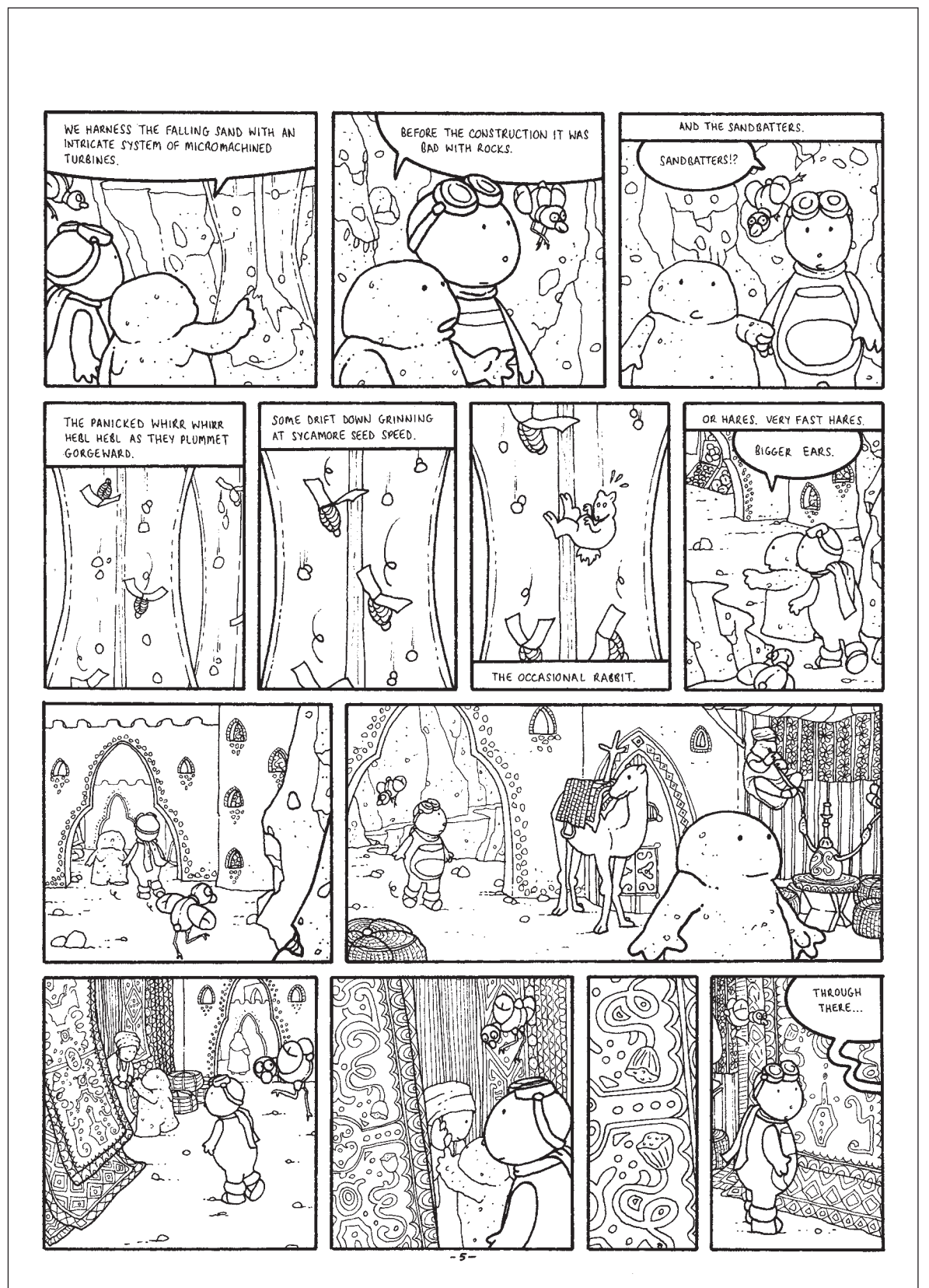
Despite populist promises, such as the fair distribution of the oil income, the current Iranian president has presided over one of the most pro-capitalist governments Iran has seen since the launch of the era of 'reconstruction' in 1988, when Iran first accepted IMF loans. Every spring the IMF sends a commission to Tehran to verify the country's compliance with global capital's requirements and every year by mid-summer the Central Bank and the government propose further privatisation in the industrial, banking and service sectors – bringing further misery to tens of thousands of workers, the victims of the subsequent job losses and casualisation. However, the level and scope of privatisation approved this July was so serious that Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, had to 're-interpret' Article 4 of the Islamic republic's constitution. The government's plans to sell off 80% of its stake in a range of state-run industrial companies in the banking, media, transportation and mineral sectors were so far-reaching they amounted to a reversal of one of its own economic 'principles' as declared in the Iranian constitution.

In a country where Islam has been in power for 27 years – where the 'morality police' arrest women for showing a bit of their fringe – prostitution, drug addiction and Aids are widespread. The double standards and hypocrisy on 'moral issues' reminds many Iranians of the opportunist posturing of the regime on the International scene. Iran's Islamic regime whole-heartedly supported the US/UK

military aggression in the area, indeed it benefited considerably from the coming to power of its Shia protégés in the occupation government of Iraq. Furthermore, after all its protestations over the 'right of Iran to develop nuclear technology', the Ahmadinejad government did everything in its power during August-September 2006 to improve its economic and therefore political relations with

International Capital.

However, the nuclear crisis has added a new dimension to the internal conflicts within the various factions of the regime, and there are signs that this conflict is moving in a dangerous direction. Iran's Islamic Republic has always been a regime of permanent crises that every now and then lead to an explosive situation, but the current





structural crisis is threatening the very existence of the regime: internally it has lost both legitimacy and support amongst its own ranks, and on the international scene it is facing the possibility of sanctions and military threats.

From the day it came to power the regime's many U-turns have revealed a thoroughly-conceived plan of organisational restructuring and policy reversal. However, faced with the current crisis it appears that sections of the regime favour even more strategic solutions.

During the eight years of the previous Khatami presidency the plan to 'reform and liberalise' the powerstructures within the government quite clearly failed, and today many in Iran believe that the regime is left with only one solution, a move from clerical dictatorship to direct religious-military rule. This will accordingly involve restructuring the organs of power by replacing the current ideological forces of repression (Bassij militia, Iranian Hezbollah...) with military and

police forces. In addition, the regime will present new definitions regarding the role and the position of senior clerics, where they would become servants of the military apparatus as opposed to its leaders.

The recent trend of relying on a policy of open aggression is a sign that the Iranian regime is retreating to the barracks in order to survive. It reflects how the balance of force within the regime is changing as all policy decisions are subjugated to the power of the conservative elements as they consolidate their leading position.

An open militarisation of all aspects of the political and economical arenas are part of this plan, and Ahmadinejad's budget for March 2006-7

shows clearly the economic implications of this policy. All public and semi-public resources will be redistributed through privatisation. Which plays a crucial role in this plan as it will allow the Passdaran (religious military force) to control all aspects of the country's economy through a network of private companies and institutions associated with those in charge of each section.

It is important to remember that the Passdaran leaders who benefit from unlimited state resources have bought privatised firms in Tehran's bourse (stock exchange) and control the most important sections of the country's industry and import/exports, as well as the communication and information sector, state contractors, town planning projects and so on.

The unprecedented privatisations planned for the next two years should be evaluated in the light of the current dominance of the Passdaran over the most profitable sections of the economy, as they herald a transfer of power from an executive bureaucracy to a military bureaucracy. Inevitably all this will have serious consequences for Iran.

Over the last few years, every day – and at times more than once a day – workers in Iranian cities and towns have protested not only against the non-payment of wages, but against unemployment, job insecurity and low wages. For most Iranians, Shia Islam in power has become synonymous with corruption, greed and clerics gathering huge fortunes. In Iran they are called the 'Mercedes-driven mullahs', who accumulate huge wealth at the expense of the masses.

Of course the Left inside and outside Iran should oppose any sanctions – as well as limited or protracted war – not only because it is the imperialist countries who call for such measures, but because the main victims of any such action, whether sanctions or war, will be the ordinary people in Iran, most of whom are opposed to the current regime and many of whom have been involved in social and political movements against it. The anti-war movement should also emphasise that inside Iran sanctions will make the rich clerics richer and the poor populace poorer.

Some of the worst periods of repression and mass execution of socialists and communists in Iran took place during the Iran-Iraq war, as the Islamic regime used the conflict as an excuse to unleash terror on its own civilians. However, as we oppose any military action against Iran, we must emphasise we are not therefore supporting the current regime. Our actions must clearly be in defence of ordinary Iranians, and in particular focused on avoiding another period of mass murder by the Shia state of its internal opposition.

The practical solidarity of the anti-war movement should be directed primarily towards the Iranian people and in support of the daily struggles of Iranian workers for the right to survive.



From self to structure: challenging the 'happiness industry'

Colin Clark

'The cure for unhappiness is happiness. I don't care what anybody says.' Elizabeth McCracken (2005)

'Happiness is easy.' Mark Hollis (1986)

Despite the words of Mark Hollis, happiness doesn't appear to be easy. Indeed, we are living in an age where achieving a mental state of happiness is not easy at all, if you choose to believe the voices of doom and gloom. In fact, it's a source of great concern and anxiety for most people where states of unhappiness are deemed to be the norm; 'modern life is rubbish' as Blur put it so well. The zeitgeist appears to be one of melancholy, despair, alienation – we are increasingly cogs in late-capitalist machines. But there is a way out. You read. And you read. And then you read some more. From even a casual glance at amazon.co.uk or your nearest High Street bookshop you can tell that the subject of happiness is 'in'. Stuart Jeffries, interviewing the largely humourless psychoanalyst Adam Phillips for *The Guardian* in July (2006), manages – with some ease – to list five books that all came out this year and that, in different ways, attempt to argue the same thing: read this book and it will change your life – happiness is this way, follow the white rabbit... Daniel Gilbert maintains that we are all *Stumbling on happiness* (Gilbert, 2006), Jonathan Haidt argues that it's all about unlocking *The happiness hypothesis* (Haidt, 2006), Richard Schoch informs us that we need to discover *The secrets of happiness* (Schoch, 2006), Darrin McMahon suggests that it's all about *The pursuit of happiness* (McMahon, 2006), and the economist Richard Layard notes that *Happiness: lessons from a new science* (Layard, 2006) can teach us the vital lesson that 'richer' does not equate to 'happier'. You read. You think. You pay your way to happiness.

As I have read my way through the recent spate of popular literature, as well as some of the research evidence from across a range of academic disciplines, it is clear that something is missing. That 'thing' is what sociologists usually refer to as 'structure'.

The obsession of current debates is clearly focused on what psychologists refer to as 'self'. My argument, in simple terms, is that the 'happiness and well being' debate has been hijacked (even framed) by neoliberal and market interests. It is evident that the 'solutions' to unhappiness (however tenuously this might be defined) tend to be corporate and consumerist in nature and such measures are aimed purely at the *individual* – completely ignoring wider *structural/collective* dynamics within broader socially and economically divided society. As it currently plays out, all suggested cures to unhappiness are merely badly placed sticking plasters over the dynamics of late capitalism, that fail to even cover the wounds. Unhappiness is structural and embedded within capitalist systems – it is as central to the system as surplus value. Consumption is presented as the way out of this melancholy, whether this be via books, pills or therapy – the more you spend, the happier you might be.

So, the main questions here are threefold: how do we tend to define and understand 'happiness' (or, rather, what is called 'subjective well being' in certain disciplines); how to critically unpick the 'industry and business' of happiness; and how to situate these concerns within the contemporary debates we are witnessing in Scotland, especially centred around the 'confidence and well-being' agenda and the Scottish Executive drive (and money being spent) in this area?

With regards to defining and understanding happiness it is interesting to note just how rich an area this is for producing memorable quotes across different areas of popular culture. What is even more interesting is the way that popular culture seems to mirror and reflect academic engagement with the question of happiness and its achievement. They range from the humorous, to the thoughtful, to the downright bizarre. Spike Milligan famously quipped that 'Money can't buy you happiness but it does bring you a more pleasant form of

misery'. This, of course, taps into current economic debates, best illustrated by Richard Layard's work (2006), that argues a similar line of thought that a supposedly higher standard of living does not necessarily produce higher states of happiness in and of itself. Perhaps more philosophically, Allan K Chalmers noted

that 'The grand essentials of happiness are something to do, something to love, and something to hope for.' In this quote, Chalmers steps into the same psychological and philosophical terrain as some of the authors noted above, especially Jonathan Haidt (2006) who is something of a leading light in that questionable

'positive psychology' tradition. It's all about 'identity' and 'motivators' that spur us on – to be unhappy is to be 'stationary' in life, to have nothing to aspire to, to have no status or ambition. In other words, under neoliberal conditions, achieving happiness becomes the pursuit of a kind of personal work/play entrepreneurialism, in the



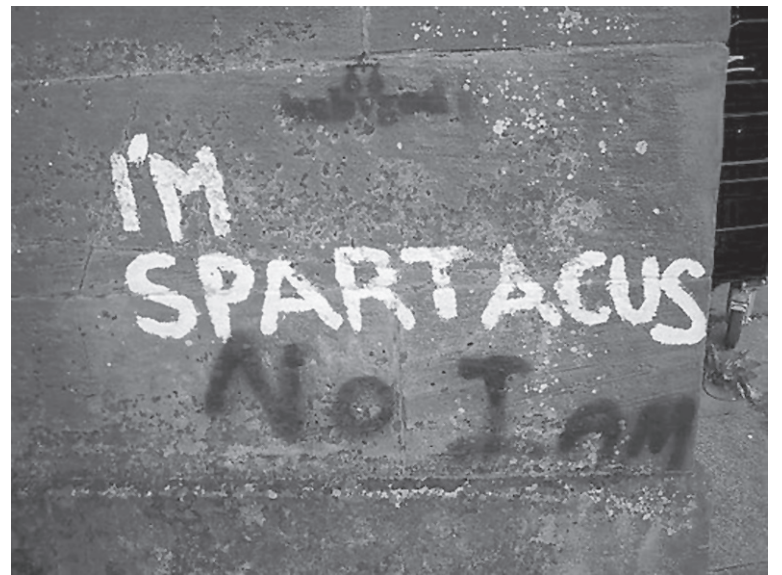
widest meaning of that word. Then we have the bizarre – a memorable headline from *The Daily Record* (1999) indicated that ‘Happiness is the smell of Granny, but the whiff of a young man can make you depressed.’ There is not much more that you can add to this except to say that the source for this wonderful headline was of course an academic study into smells and states of mind – ‘teenage boy smells’ being the ones to stay clear of if you are to avoid depression and unhappiness whilst the smell of Granny takes you back to the comfort of youth giving you a sense of security and belonging (Chen and Haviland-Jones, 1999).

Not that I’d wish to disagree with John Lennon, but clearly happiness is more than a warm gun. So how do we get to this mythical summit of true happiness? Do we even know it when we arrive there? Can it be *felt* and *experienced* in the here and now? Is happiness best found not in the moment but by looking back? Do we *reflect* on

happiness? Is it, by definition, nostalgic? Or is happiness best captured in the future – is it about having something to look forward to, something that ‘motivates’ us and ‘drives’ us forward, keeping us from going under? Does happiness have a ‘baseline’? To what extent does national culture, age, gender, neuroscience impact on the levels of happiness you can experience? The questions are many – this is an area of academic inquiry that raises many more questions than it can ever hope to answer, despite having its own journal to tease out answers to these questions (the *Journal of Happiness Studies* is published by Springer in the Netherlands).

From all the research I have reviewed in the last few months there appear to be some constants. There seems to be several indicators that ‘work’ in keeping us happy, or at least content. A wide range of active social networks, deep and meaningful personal relationships and a close family

are all cited as instrumental in keeping us connected to each other and ourselves (Kahneman, Diener and Schwarz, 1999). But these elements are all then taken to the base root of the *individual*: networks, relationships and family are seen as an instrumental means to an end (the end being individual ‘inner peace’ and feelings of having a ‘contented life’ etc.). In other words, all structure is stripped away and regarded as elements that help us, as isolated particles, to find our own way to happiness via a map that only we can follow as individuals. It is a one-person path, ultimately. Most of the books cited above also suggest that having a (paid or unpaid) job, maintaining good health and ‘performing roles, achieving goals’ are key features to being happy. Again, *motivation* appears to be key here – having a feeling that life is not something ‘passing us by’ but rather we are connected to and have a stake in. But, if true, what happens to those people who feel they have no stake or



connection with wider society? In policy terms, those deemed to be ‘socially excluded’? Essentially, thinking about Chalmers words above, this is largely about ‘purpose’ and the sense that via learning, leisure, religion – whatever fetish that might get you up in the morning – we need to have a purpose and a ‘mission’, if you like. We are here for a reason – we are not just ‘a virus with shoes’ as Bill Hicks famously put it.

It’s been suggested, by Layard (2006) and other commentators, that the equation ‘money equals happiness’ is without foundation and fails to add up. For the majority of us, perhaps, we might welcome the opportunity to test out this equation for ourselves. But evidence seems to indicate that as a population in Britain we are getting richer in terms of Gross Domestic Product yet we are not any happier for this. Why is this the case? One reason appears to be rooted in what has been termed the ‘Hedonic treadmill’ (Michael Eysenck in Wade, 2005) – we can compare the pursuit of happiness to a person running on a treadmill whereby we need to keep working just to stay in the same place. The (psychological) theory here is that people tend to react and adapt quickly to ‘good things’ in life by eventually taking them for granted. This is hardly a great revelation but, for example, the more consumer durables we have in our homes and the more medals we pin to our chests, the more we need to boost our levels of happiness to sustain the same levels of satisfaction we derive from those possessions and achievements. Evolution, it’s suggested by evolutionary biologists, leads us to strive for ‘continual betterment’. A good example here is the research conducted by Gardener and Oswald (2006). This research examined the nature of lottery wins and it demonstrated perfectly that money does not appear to add much to happiness. In tests specifically designed to measure happiness, it was found that winners, within a year of their lucky strike, usually returned to their former levels of happiness. Recent suggestions have been made that governments should not measure GDP (Gross Domestic Product) but something called GDH (Gross Domestic Happiness) (Kahneman, Diener and

Schwarz, 1999). Work proceeds on a happiness index/audit but agreeing on the units of measurement, amongst many other variables and issues, seems to be a major sticking point. What variables are included and excluded? Although a lot of the economics on happiness is being developed and pushed forward in the USA, in May 2006, David Cameron stepped into this debate in Britain and offered his ideas on ‘making people happier’, suggesting that a ‘modern vision of ethical work’ and accounting for ‘General Well-Being’ (rather than just GDP) was essential in modern Britain, with future government policies being judged by how much happiness they produced and delivered rather than just standard cost/benefit analyses (BBC News, 2006).

And what about unhappiness? The British Household Panel Survey tends to bear out the statement made by Oswald and Powdthavee (2006) that when plotted ‘Happiness is smile shaped’: that recorded levels of average life satisfaction ‘dips’ during your 30s and 40s. Seemingly just being this age is a major source of unhappiness, whether you have pets, a ‘purpose’ or good social networks. Unhappiness also has real health impacts, as noted by Blanchflower and Bell (2004). Being unhappy kills you and will easily subtract nine years from your Average Life Expectancy. Of course, the obvious question mark on this is how is unhappiness measured and recorded? What variables are used in such studies? How are they inter-related? Key trigger moments seem to matter most for researchers on unhappiness: it’s the loss of a spouse or losing your paid employment that begins a downward spiral into unhappiness and depression. From this, and other life events, isolation, fear and anxiety take you to the very bottom of the smile.

The situation in Scotland, in material terms, fits in with the way the agenda has been set by the economists and psychologists. Evidence from a recent study (by Blanchflower and Bell, 2004) illustrates clearly that Scotland’s economic and health status renders us much more likely to be unhappy. In simple terms, unemployment equals unhappiness and this



unhappiness, whether caused by unemployment or other connected factors, leads Scots to have very high suicide rates (especially amongst young men, as shown by Christie, 2001) and anti-depressant use (especially amongst women, as shown by NHS, 2006) when compared to other parts of the UK. Although Richard Holloway has boldly argued that the arts are a potential cure for all this unhappiness (bear in mind he is currently Chair of the Scottish Arts Council) it is difficult to see how cultural pursuits such as subsidised opera might deal with suicides and depression (Holloway, 2005).

With regards to Scotland and its state of happiness and unhappiness the agenda has been set out clearly in the last couple of years and it's been dominated by populist, pseudo-psychological thinking that has led to the reification of both Scotland and Scots. As a nation, and as individuals, we are, it seems, suffering from 'a crisis of confidence' (Craig, 2003). We talk ourselves down, we are too hard on ourselves. We criticise success and people rising 'above their station'. And, importantly for Craig, we are not all venture capitalists or members of the petit-bourgeoisie. Herewith we have seen the birth of a new 'industry' – not an industry of poverty but an industry of happiness and 'well-being'. Despite the shouting from the roof tops I would argue that 'positive psychology' has its limits and that being labelled as 'dour', 'pessimistic' and 'lacking self-worth' (all expressions taken from Craig's book) is not a helpful way forward in tackling serious social and economic disadvantage. It strikes me, in part, as being the latest reincarnation of Charles Murray's 'Underclass' thesis (Murray, 1990) and the neo-liberal agenda for 'blaming the victim' for their own (as is seen) 'impoverished' position and status in life (that is, their unhappiness in this context). And the solutions to such unhappiness lie with money – as Furedi (1993) has pointed out, the therapy, drugs and self-help culture has given rise to a global corporate business. Solutions do not seem to be pitched at the community or political level – it's all about the personal, the individual, the 'self'.

It is worth bearing in mind Jeremy Bentham's words – leaning on Joseph Priestly's writings – about 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'. At a deep level, and to slightly mix up my leading thinkers, this is a phrase that reminds us that unhappiness is a Beveridge type 'giant' that demands a solution rising above the personal and the individual. It is a 'giant' best tackled at the community, collective level that aims to tackle the structural problems we have in our society caused by neo-liberal economics and a capitalist system that

has lost all sight of where the brakes might be – all the worse when one looks at the environmental meltdown we are currently staring in the face. When it comes to happiness and unhappiness we need to be far less self-indulgent than we usually are – we need to care far less about 'self' and much more about structure and challenging an ideology, such as neo-liberalism, that aims to construct boundaries of 'self' around everything we say, do and think. We need to recognise that although there is money to be made in unhappiness, that money is much better spent trying to make good the crass and destructive levels of inequalities in our society. On the question of the choices we face, Polly Toynbee, perhaps surprisingly, puts it usefully:

'Well being depends on co-operation and the public good – not personal enrichment.' (Toynbee, 2003)

Dr. Colin Clark is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Strathclyde. Despite his obsession with Joy Division and related bands he is usually quite happy. He can be contacted via: c.r.clark@strath.ac.uk

This article is based on a presentation that was given at the conference 'Neo-Liberal Scotland Rethinking Scotland in the Global Context' that was held at the University of Strathclyde, 19th -21st May 2006. An edited book based on key papers given at the conference will be published in summer 2007.

References

BBC News (2006) 'Make people happier, says Cameron', BBC News Online. May 22 2006.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/5003314.stm (Accessed May 2006)

Bell, D. and Blanchflower, D. G. (2004) *The Scots may be brave but they are neither healthy nor happy* Scotecon. net
[http://www.scotecon.net/publications/Scots%20Neither%20Happy%20Nor%20Healthy.pdf#search=%22\(Blanchflower%20and%20Bell%2C%20004\)%22](http://www.scotecon.net/publications/Scots%20Neither%20Happy%20Nor%20Healthy.pdf#search=%22(Blanchflower%20and%20Bell%2C%20004)%22) (Accessed April 2006)

British Household Panel Survey (2006) *Living in Scotland survey* (ESRC and University of Essex)
<http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/tulsc/bhps/> (Accessed August 2006)

Chen, D. and Haviland-Jones, J. (1999). 'Rapid mood change and human odors', *Physiology and Behaviour*, 68 (1-2), 241-250.

Christie, B. (2001) 'Suicide rate in young men in Scotland is twice that in England and Wales', *British Medical Journal*, October 20, 323(7318): 888.
<http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/323/7318/888/d> (Accessed April 2006)

Craig, C. (2003) *The Scot's crisis of confidence*, Big Thinking: Edinburgh.

Daily Record, The. (1999) 'Happiness is the smell of Granny, but the whiff of a young man can make you depressed.' *The Daily Record*, July 1 1999.

Furedi, F. (2003) *Therapy culture: cultivating vulnerability in an uncertain age*, London: Routledge.

Gardner, J. and Oswald, A. J. (2006) 'Money and mental wellbeing: a longitudinal study of lottery wins' (*Warwick Economic Research Papers* No. 754 & also forthcoming in the

Journal of Health Economics)
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/economics/research/papers/twerp_754.pdf (Accessed June 2006)

Gilbert, D. (2006) *Stumbling on happiness*, London: HarperCollins

Haidt, J. (2006) *The happiness hypothesis: putting ancient wisdom to the test of modern science*, London: William Heinemann.

Holloway, R. (2005) 'It is all about happiness, stupid', *The Sunday Herald* 18 December 2005.
<http://www.sundayherald.com/53315> (Accessed April 2006)

Jeffries, S. (2006) 'Happiness is always a delusion', *The Guardian*, 19th July 2006.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/g2/story/0,,1823663,00.html> (Accessed July 2006)

Journal of Happiness Studies (2006)
<http://www.springer.com/east/home?SGWID=5-102-70-35677942-0&changeHeader=true&SHORTCUT=www.springer.com/10902> (Accessed April 2006)

Kahneman, D., Diener, E. and Schwarz, E. (eds.) (1999) *Well-being, The foundations of hedonic psychology*, Russell Sage Foundation: New York.

NHS National Services Scotland (2006) *Scottish health statistics – Antidepressants*
<http://www.isdscotland.org/isd/info3>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,909025,00.html> (Accessed April 2006)

Wade, D. (2005) 'So what do you have to do to find happiness?' *The Times*, October 2 2005.
http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2099-1793873_1,00.html (Accessed May 2006).

jsp?pContentID=3671&p_applic=CC&p_service=Content.show& (Accessed August 2006)

Layard, R. (2006) *Happiness: lessons from a new science*, London: Penguin.

McCracken, E. (2005) *Niagara falls all over again*, New York: Dial Press.

McMahon, D. M. (2006) *The pursuit of happiness: a history from the Greeks to the present*, London: Allen Lane.

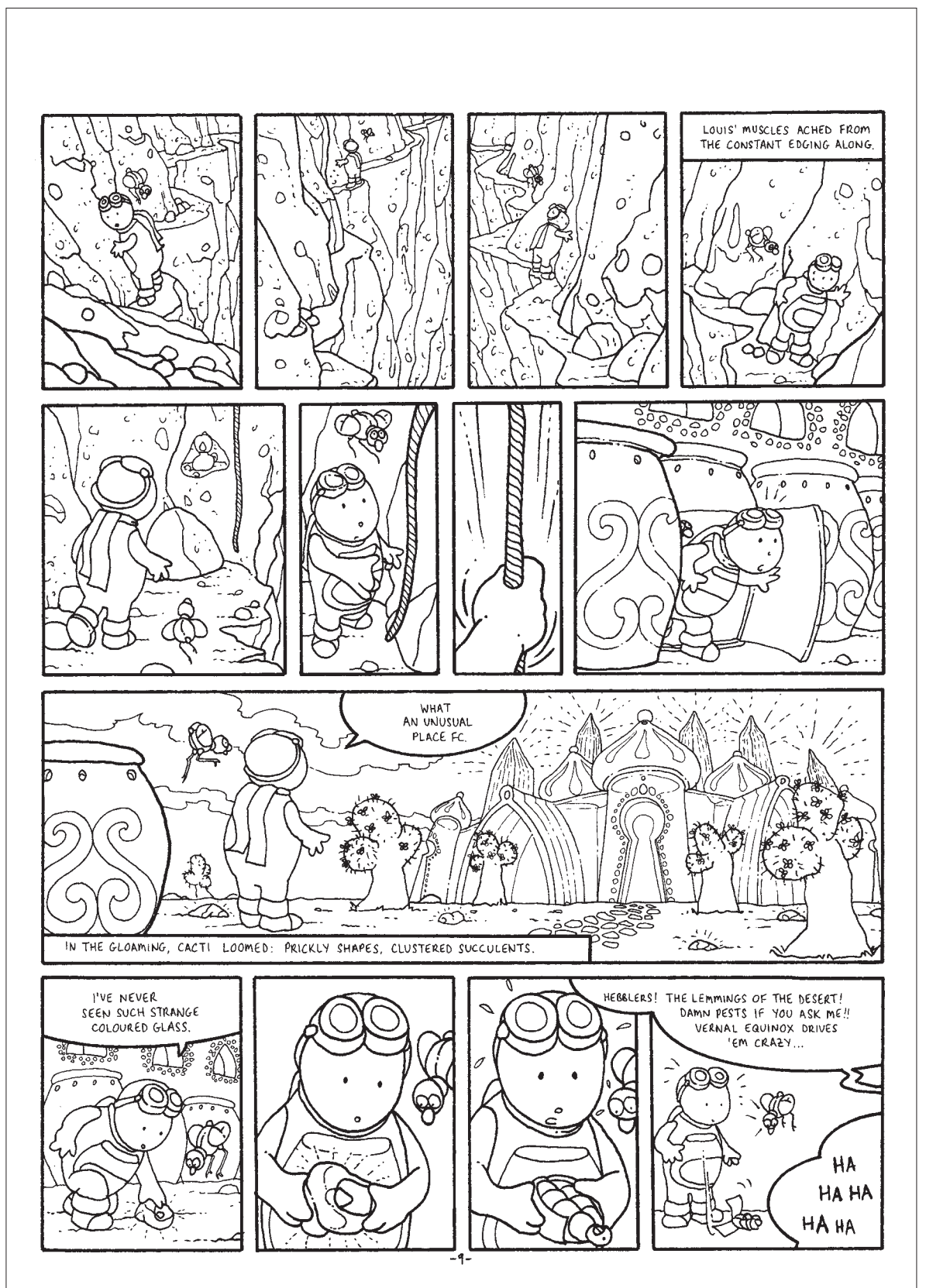
Murray, C. (1990) *The emerging British Underclass*, London: Institute for Economic Affairs.

Oswald, A. J. and Powdthavee, N. (2006) 'Does happiness adapt? A longitudinal study of disability with implications for economists and judges', IZA Discussion Papers No. 2208, Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA).
<http://ideas.repec.org/p/iza/izadps/dp2208.html> (Accessed July 2006)

Rose, D. (2005) 'This happy breed, unless they are living in Wales', *The Times*, October 5 2005.
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2-1811170,00.html> (Accessed April 2006)

Schoch, R. (2006) *The secrets of happiness: three thousand years of searching for the good life*, London: Profile Books Ltd.

Toynbee, P. (2003) 'Money and happiness' *The Guardian*, March 7 2003.



Telling the Truth About Neo-liberalism

Alex Law

Telling the Truth:
The 2006 Socialist Register

Edited by Leo Panitch and Colin Leys
December 2005, ISBN: 1-58367-137-4

A Fairy-Tale Ending

In a world where appearances can be deceptive and what appears to be blindingly obvious is cynically misrepresented, the idea that the truth can be uncovered as something readily to hand becomes a monstrous lie. These things are not separable: deceptive appearances and conscious manipulation are connected.

Once upon a time a fairy

tale was widely entertained that every decent, law-abiding citizen was devoted to 'the truth'. In this distant land, it was believed that such a thing as a liberal 'public sphere' existed, or something approximate to it, where free and democratic dialogue and exchange could take place without fear or favour. Out of this ideal state of affairs a competition of ideas would take place, with the most rational, rigorous and persuasive versions of what constituted truth winning out in the end. Or at least a new compromise might be formulated out of the various claims to a community of truth.

In this communitarian utopia, the public interest would be faithfully serviced by an intellectual caste devoted to a sober diagnosis of the predicaments and problems facing society. On this basis they would make a disinterested prognosis for social improvement. Telling the truth about the powerful and the powerless would in this way be considered a valuable public service on the road to an enlightened civil society.

Not any longer. On waking from this dream, it was found that the ideal community of truth-seekers, if it ever

existed anywhere, had been subordinated by a globally dominant state of Un-truth. This is the overwhelming message claimed by the 2006 volume of the *Socialist Register*, titled 'Telling the Truth'.¹ It is summed up in the opening line of the book: 'A generalized pathology of chronic mendacity seems to be a structural condition of global capitalism at the beginning of the 21st century' (p. vii). It is not just that lies are being told as the occupational hazard of politicians and their media courtesans, but rather that lying and hypocrisy have become an endemic condition of the neo-liberal world order.

George Orwell's prophecy about congenital authoritarianism in his 1984 horrorshow was wrong only insofar as he got the dates mixed up. His other mistake was, or as was popularly (and wrongly) believed, that he was describing Stalinism in the USSR. Big Brother is not simply the ironic name for a Reality TV show; it is the hegemonic mindset demanded by Empire and Market that Orwell tried to warn of. War is Peace. Hate is Love. Friends of Freedom are Enemies of Freedom, and vice versa. Truth is contingent on the immediate needs of the Now. In this world, even very limited deviations from neo-liberal orthodoxy are hailed as radical developments despite their compatibility with the governing institutions of neo-liberal capitalism.

Homo Economicus

This is readily apparent in the case of someone like Joseph Stiglitz, who as Chief Economist at the World Bank in the 1990s and in his subsequent book, *Globalization and Its Discontents*, recognized market and institutional imperfections and the crucial role played in actual economic processes by social capital, culture and networks. Ben Fine and Elisa Van Waeyenberge in their chapter note that Stiglitz's deviation from orthodoxy is highly limited by his own Keynesian assumptions. It has also had the unfortunate effect of allowing narrow economic assumptions to determine other discourses about social relations, culture, politics and even ethics. At the same time, as Sanjay G. Reddy reminds us, the World Bank faced severe censure from right-wing commentators for accurately trying to gauge the full extent of acute world

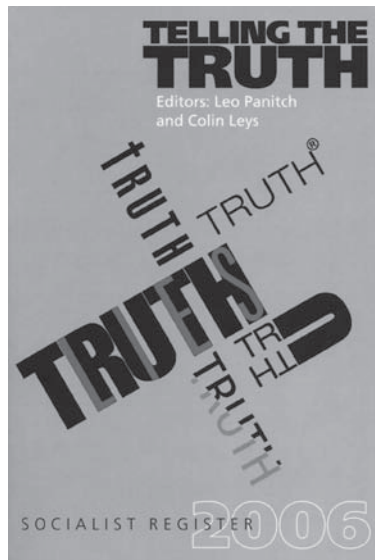
poverty. This had the desired effect. Attacks on competing economic methodologies make it difficult for the lay public, that were mobilised in their millions in 2005 to Make Poverty History, from making an informed judgement about which 'truth' to believe.

In one sense there is not really anything new about governments telling lies to their electors. It is just that governments have become more routinely cynical about it. When Empire demands a new figure of hate to replace the Reds, yesterday's tyrannical ally will do. When finite raw materials are coveted, this is done in the name of the universal interest in 'democracy' and the 'rule of law'. When the War on Terror demands it, a hydra-headed enemy is conjured up, which, as A. Sivanandan told a conference in Glasgow, 'cannot tell a settler from an immigrant, an immigrant from an asylum seeker, an asylum seeker from a Muslim, a Muslim from a terrorist'.²

In a chapter on The Cynical State, Colin Leys charts the decline of the public service ethos governing professional conduct in the welfarist British state to its destruction, sorry I meant to say 'modernization', through Thatcher, Major and Blair. As the British Civil Service was restructured on more business-friendly lines and the public sector marketised, so more power was arbitrarily centralised in the very person of the Premier. Advice from impartial civil servants, balancing the public interest, has been replaced by think tanks and coteries pushing headline-grabbing policies, allowing PR, pollsters and spin-meisters to continually adapt policies to suit the 'needs of the market'.

In the US, as Doug Henwood argues in 'The Business Community', government and state have become akin to front-offices for the gigantic corporations that dominate so much of the world economy. Here, as in the UK, the image of the ruling class has changed, with paternalistic northeastern WASP elites being supplanted by more thoroughly rightwing oil barons from the West and the South, typified by the 'good ol' boy' antics of George W. Bush. Short-term returns on revenue, tax cuts, and deregulation are frenetically pursued by traditional and nouveau elites at the same time as social programmes are savaged. As Henwood notes: 'the distinction





between the American ruling class and its business community – with the ruling class presumably operating on a time scale of decades rather than quarters – has largely collapsed’ (p. 73).

While he warns against foreseeing a scary, catastrophic collapse of debt-ridden US capital and state, few seem prepared to squarely face the truth that an austerity programme may be just round the corner, perhaps to be launched by former corporate lawyer and former Wal-Mart director, President Hilary Clinton. Indeed, the attack on social and welfare programmes for marginalised groups is seen by Frances Fox Piven and Barbara Ehrenreich in their chapter on welfare reform in the US as a foil by the ruling elite for a much wider attack on ‘expensive’ programmes like Medicaid and unemployment insurance. In the process, they seek to unravel further the gains made by the poor through the New Deal settlement and the political obligations of the Great Society ethos. No one but the very rich will benefit from further incursions on welfare, something that is barely disguised by populist appeals of the religious right.

Debased Punditry

In the world of neo-liberal disguises and subterfuges corporate PR is pervasive. The idea of the press as the guarantor of an uncorrupted public sphere that holds the powerful to account is looking threadbare. Robert W. McChesney for the US news media and David Miller for the UK media show, in their respective chapters, that the media have become an extension of the military-entertainment complex. All this has been too painfully evident in the propaganda roll-out for the Iraq War and the subsequent occupation. As for news journalists, with few notable exceptions, their blind patriotism knows no bounds. Their slavish dependence on official sources, that is to say, the interests of the powerful, is rarely questioned. McChesney’s belief in the possibilities for critical journalism pulls its punches: ‘Embedded reporting in combination with full throttle jingoism on US television news made it difficult for journalists to do critical work’ (p. 126).

Miller sees UK news journalism in thrall to the rise of the PR industry and resurgent state propaganda. A profound change separates the social democratic media of the post-war period, which Miller dates from 1945 to 1979, from the neo-liberal media of the past quarter century. In the former period, when labour and capital

embraced in a corporatist compact there was less need to systematically misrepresent reality. Today, when the gap between the narrow pecuniary self-interest of ruling elites in the go-for-broke miasma of the market and the ‘general interest’ in secure forms of social reproduction has widened dramatically. Unlike media conspiracy theorists, Miller’s contribution has the great merit of situating the giant Un-truth of neo-liberal media in material reality.

Into this web of Un-truth are pulled academics, intellectuals and research departments. They usefully provide ‘evidence’ in the form of carefully-designed data, buffed-up positively to support government policies. Where they are critical of government or their research findings flies in the face of neo-liberal assumptions, researchers run the risk of being ‘cut out of the loop’ – that is, the academic-policy network where research funding (and academic careers) is secured. While this has not gone as far in the UK as the situation in the US, it has led, for instance, to a deep-seated de-politicisation of the critical social sciences, which have might been expected to show some fidelity to speaking the truth about the state of British society. For those with insecure prospects, playing the part of the public intellectual in the UK as, for instance, the late sociologist Pierre Bourdieu had done in France in challenging the vicissitudes of neo-liberal dogma, is particularly unappetizing.

This clears the field for unadulterated pro-Blair punditry. It has also led, for example, to Britain’s best known sociologist, Anthony Giddens, recently playing the part of intellectual emissary for the Third Way. Giddens is helping the Libyan dictator Gaddafi, whose son studied at the LSE where Giddens is based, to be rehabilitated back into the orbit of Western acceptability. Meanwhile, in the background, all hell had broken out in the Middle East.³

Ideological Clutter

It is not just careerism that leads to intellectual quietism in academia. It is also the debilitating political role that postmodernism has played for the past three decades.

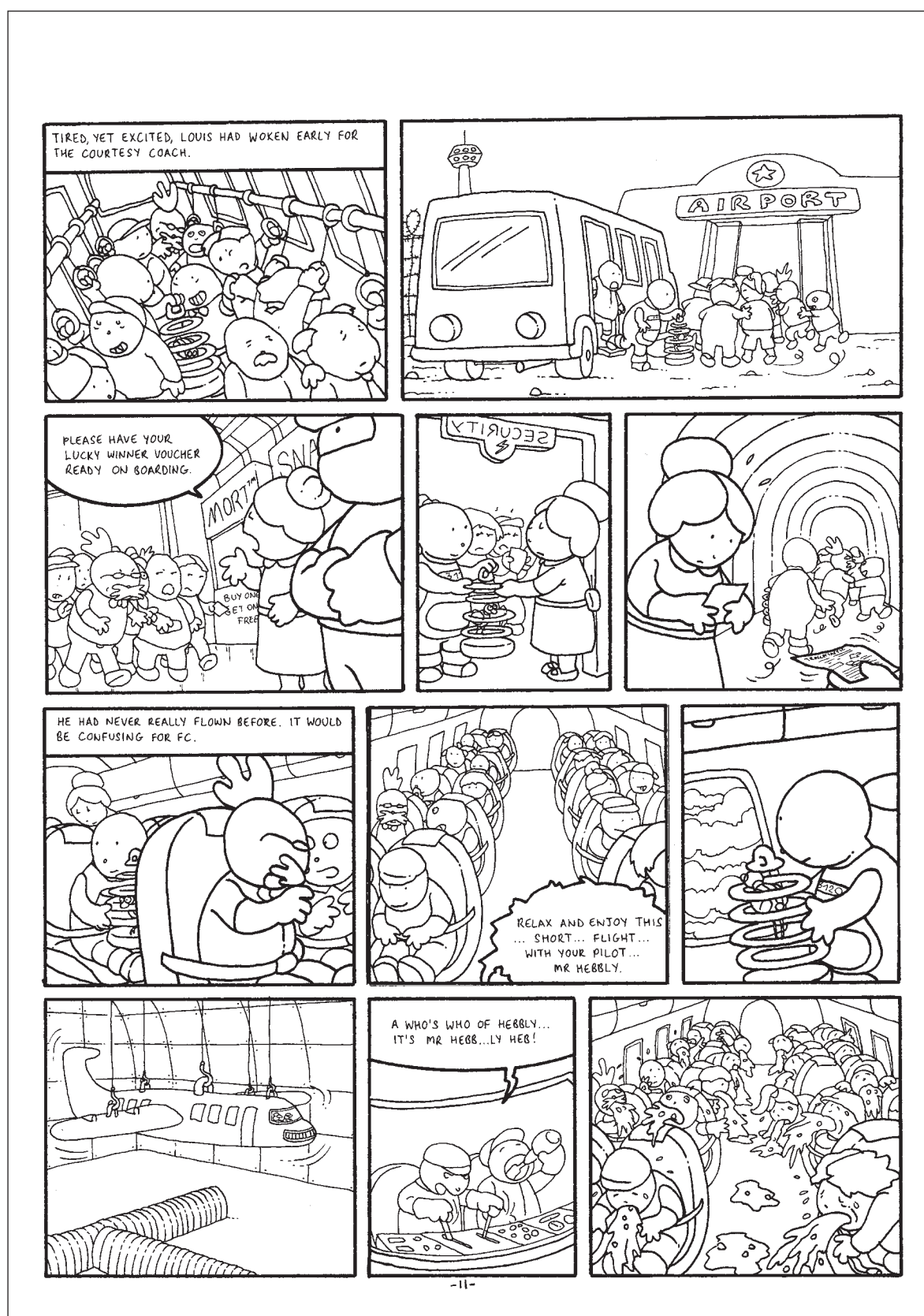
Once seen as radical and daring, subversive even, John Sanbonmatsu rehearses how the postmodern assault on the very idea of ‘truth’ evacuated any ground from where the powerful might be challenged. Well, maybe there was a bit more to it than that. After the failure of the radical upturn of the 1960s and 1970s the single Holy and Apostolic defence of The Truth needed to be re-examined. Science and humanism remain embedded within the very class society that gave rise to them.

Does truth entail a direct correspondence with real objects? If so, what if the real objects, say commodities alienated from social labour by capital, are hypocritical liars? During the catastrophe of the Holocaust, Adorno included in his inventory of complicity with growing barbarism naïve beliefs in free access to the truth: ‘Since, however, free and

honest exchange is itself a lie, to deny it is at the same time to speak for truth: in the face of the lie of the commodity world, even the lie that denounces it becomes a corrective’.⁴ Adorno thought that art would provide a refuge for critique. Michael Kustow claims in his chapter that theatre should provide a bulwark for telling the truth. In the immediacy of stage and audience contact, falsity and manipulation are readily exposed. That is perhaps why the truth about the Iraq occupation is more evident in Gregory Burke’s play ‘Black Watch’ than in the pages of the *Guardian*. But even here the prospects are being narrowed by pseudo-market thinking and the political bad faith that underlies arts funding cutbacks.

Getting at the truth is a messy and far from settled affair, as Terry Eagleton argues in his chapter. If truth is seen

as a process, then many of the judgements we are compelled to make need to be considered provisional even though we strongly adhere to them until their falsity can be adequately demonstrated. But what counts as adequacy? Our structure of thinking can protect even the most glaring illusion, for instance that the USSR was a socialist society, from exposure to other truth claims, that the USSR was the antithesis of socialism. The truth is often an unpleasant journey for leftwing radicals. As Eagleton put it: ‘Leftists tend to practice a hermeneutic of suspicion: the truth, they believe, is usually uglier and more discreditable than the general consensus imagines. The truth may be precious, but it is not on the whole congenial’ (p. 283). In social and political struggles of every kind, both sides seek to conceal their weakness through



subterfuge and deception and exaggerate their strengths. In the course of an industrial dispute, for instance, a worker who admitted the whole truth about strike tactics to management would severely endanger the objective efficacy of the action.

Some kind of standpoint needs to be taken up, one that cuts through readymade platitudes but is also undogmatically alive to changing conditions and self-criticism. If the truth is 'generally rebarbative', as Eagleton would have it, then 'it also involves honesty, courage and a readiness to break ranks' (p. 284). If the 'hermeneutic of suspicion' means that a gap opens up between virtue and truth, a virtuous standpoint may necessitate a break from the absolutist dogmas of truth-seekers. In a society founded on lies about integrity and moral conduct, it may therefore

become necessary to appeal to deeper virtues based on justice and solidarity. An obsession with The Truth, Nietzsche argued, represents a kind of madness. It also surrenders the game to those adepts of systematic lying like the tabloid press. 'An appeal to truth', to call on Adorno again, 'is scarcely the prerogative of a society which dragoons its members to own up the better to hunt them down'.⁵

Infinite indulgence and zero tolerance

What Loic Wacquant calls the new 'scholarly myths' attempt to create an infinite indulgence towards the market and the security forces, on the one hand, but an unflinching 'zero tolerance' that criminalises recalcitrant sections of society, especially the young, impoverished, black, urban working class. Such 'scholarly myths' depend on the appeal

of scientific coherence and a mythical structure. What 'everyone already knows' to be already the case is thus validated by scientific rhetoric and authority. This includes the US export of supposedly scientific theories of criminality like the celebrated 'broken windows theory' which has been credited with 'cleaning-up' New York's streets. Severe punishment for the slightest indiscretion will, according to this scholarly myth, prevent misdemeanours from escalating, say from vandalism to homicide.

Something like the 'broken windows' paradigm has already made deep inroads into British criminal justice, policing and social work functions. ASBOs anyone? But, as Wacquant concludes, such US-derived scholarly myths are wholly devoid of scientific validity. Instead, they 'function as a planetary launching pad for an intellectual hoax and an exercise

in political legerdemain which, by giving a pseudo-academic warrant to sweeping police activism, contribute powerfully to legitimating the shift towards the penal management of social insecurity that is everywhere being generated by the social and economic disengagement of the state' (p. 109).

The neo-liberal submergence of the very conditions where truth might become a possibility is not confined to the US and the UK (the so-called 'anglo-american bloc'). Atilla A. Boron identifies a 'crisis of democracy' in Latin America where the struggles for democracy have been paid for with an enormous cost in human suffering, mass murder and state-sponsored torture. Boron is pessimistic about the possibilities for democratic truth in Latin America. Even the winning of this level of democratic rights is tempered by the incipient authoritarianism of neo-liberal capitalism where the market always attempts to exercise despotic power over wage labour. Here the Market and Democracy are incompatible:

'Market-driven politics cannot be democratic politics. These policies have caused progressive exhaustion of the democratic regimes established at a very high cost in terms of human suffering and human lives, making them revert to a pure formality deprived of all meaningful content, a periodical simulacrum of the democratic ideal while social life regresses to a quasi-Hobbesian war of all against all ...' (p. 55).

Class and Resistance

If contributors to this anthology sometimes recall the social democratic welfare state with an over-fondness, at times bordering on a rather nostalgic 'world we have lost' image, it only adds to the seeming catastrophic loss of the conditions where the truth about our current predicament might be voiced. Instead of an accent on proof and veracity, public discourse is degraded into emotivism and sincerity appeals, of the Blair-corporate 'trust me, you guys' variety, a point pithily made by Deborah Cameron some years ago:

'The problem with today's public language, however, is not so much that it represents reality inaccurately or dishonestly, but that it does not set out to be a representation of anything at all. When organisations proclaim they are "pursuing excellence", or when they write scripts for their employees to parrot, they want us not to believe the words, but to applaud the sentiments behind them. Their claims are not primarily "veracity claims" ("what I am telling you is a fact"), but "sincerity claims" ("what I am telling you comes from the heart").'⁶

How is this endemic condition of Un-truth and faux-sincerity to

be countered? *Socialist Register* has a long tradition in its annual anthologies of addressing the urgent issues of the day from a broadly socialist approach. In its early days EP Thompson appealed to 'the people' as a source of resistance to the self-interested power of the rulers.

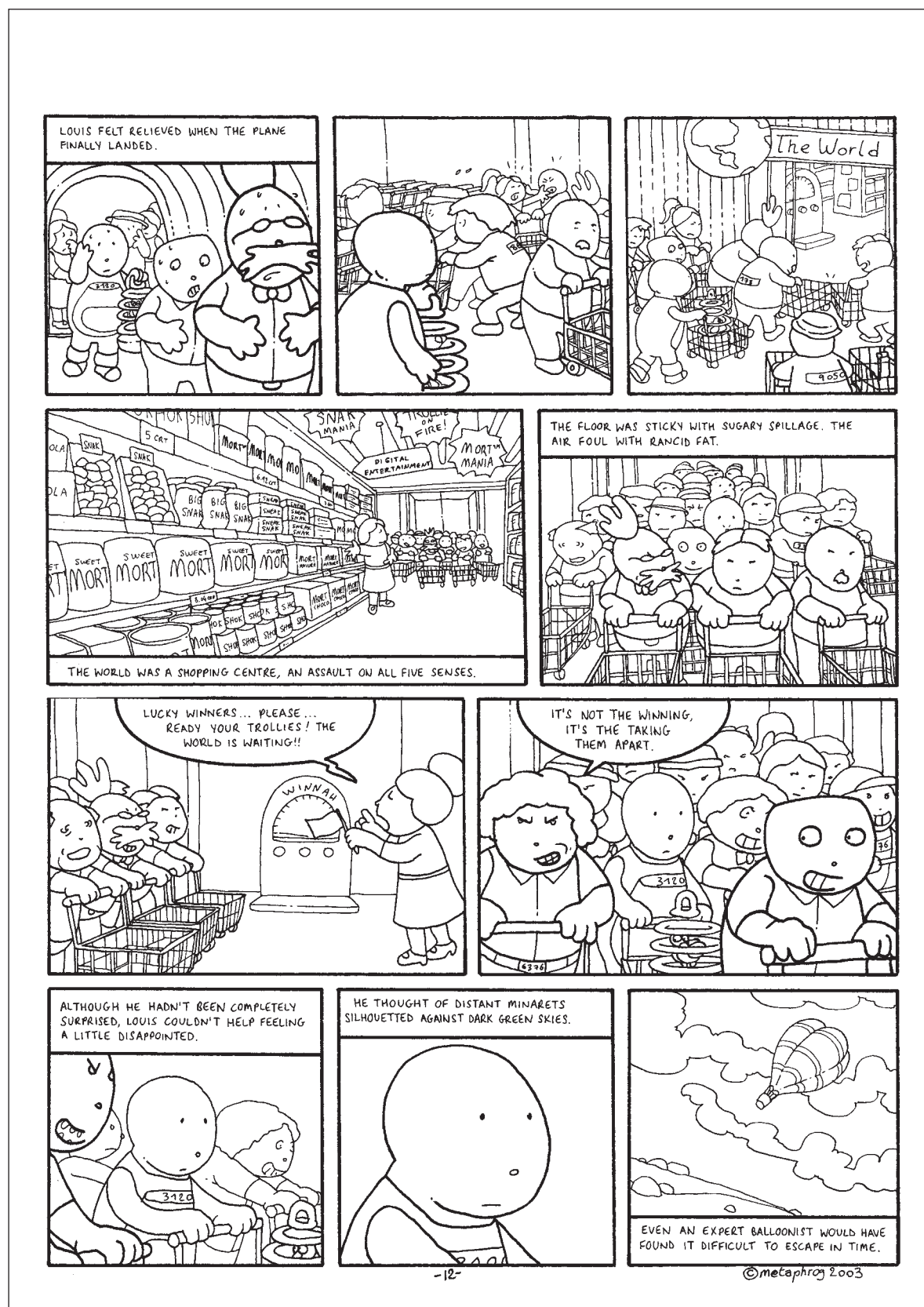
While acknowledging the importance of Thompson for British radicalism, G.M. Tamas sees this emphasis on 'the people' as an unspecified aggregate of plebeian decency as less than useful for critical forms of resistance. On the way, however, Tamas conflates class with 'caste' and, from the point of view of effecting class-based resistance to Un-truth, ends up in a right old muddle. His problem is that he bends the stick away from the humanism of *Socialist Register* favourites like Thompson and Raymond Williams to divorce class from how everyday life is actually lived under capitalism. For Tamas a 'way of life' is not about class but about 'caste'. 'Class', in fact, exists only as 'economic reality' but is 'cultural and politically extinct' (p. 255). Class is reduced by Tamas to a dead abstraction that provides no way out of the morass. At least Thompson and Williams, despite their affirmation of 'the people' and plebeian cultures, presented some resources for hope, even if they need to be tempered with self-critical activity. *Socialist Register* is required reading on its publication every year. This volume continues that tradition as, surely, will next year's anthology. It may even attempt to reconnect the distorted truths of class society with their counter-point in communities of resistance.

Endnotes

- 1 *Telling the Truth: Socialist Register 2006*, edited by Leo Panitch and Colin Leys
- 2 Quoted by James Hamilton, 'UK response to terrorism 'has resurrected primitive racism'', *Sunday Herald*, 17 September 2006, p. 27.
- 3 Anthony Giddens, 'The colonel and the Third Way', *New Statesman*, 28 August 2006.
- 4 Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life*, London: Verso, 2005, p. 44.
- 5 Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, p. 30.
- 6 Deborah Cameron, 'The Tyranny of Nicepeak', *New Statesman*, 5 November 2001.

Telling the Truth: The 2006 Socialist Register

How to order:
Socialist Register
The Merlin Press Ltd.
Suite 4, 96 Monnow Street,
Monmouth, NP25 3EQ, Wales.
Tel/ Fax +44 1600 775 663
For all enquiries you can email:
orders@merlinpress.co.uk



Turkey's US-backed War On Terror: A Cause For Concern?

Desmond Fernandes

With the US government stating its aim to vigorously assist the Turkish state in hunting down and eradicating the so-called "rebel" Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), many human rights organisations, Kurdish and Turkish civilians, peace campaigners and public interest groups fear a return to the genocidal practices and chilling psychological warfare that went on in the region during the 1990s.² It is important to appreciate why there is concern over a resurgence of intensive US-backed support for the Turkish state's *War on Terror*. During the 1990s, when such support was last provided, Noam Chomsky observes: "there was no 'looking away' in the case of Turkey and the Kurds: Washington 'looked right there', as did its allies, saw what was happening, and acted decisively to intensify the atrocities, particularly during the Clinton years. The US did not 'fail to protect the Kurds' or 'tolerate' the abuses they suffered any more than Russia 'fails to protect' the people of Grozny or 'tolerates' their suffering. The new generation [of western leaders] drew the line by consciously putting as many guns as possible into the hands of the killers and torturers [...] sometimes in secret, because arms were sent in violation of congressional legislation. At no point was there any defensive purpose, nor any relation to the Cold War [...] In the case of the Kurds, helping them would interfere with US power interests. Accordingly, we cannot help them but must rather join in perpetrating atrocities against them".³

US-backed Counter-Terrorism/Counter-Guerrilla Offensive of the 1990s

During the major US-backed Turkish counter-terrorism/counter-guerrilla offensive, supposedly directed only against the "terrorist" PKK and its members, thousands of Kurdish civilians were tortured and extra-judicially executed by state-linked paramilitary forces. Many women were raped by Turkish state linked forces. "Turkish counter-guerrillas would commit crimes and blame them on opposition groups"⁴ in what are known as "false flag" operations. "Often, they disguised themselves as PKK guerrillas and went to villages to torment and kill people, burning houses, crops and animals, then blaming it on the PKK".⁵ False flag operations were all in keeping with advice imparted by US training manuals which had been supplied to the Turkish state for years: "On some 140 pages the manual offers, in non-euphemistic clear-cut language, advice for activities in the fields of sabotage, bombing, killing, torture, terror and fake elections. As maybe its most sensitive advice, FM 30-31 instructs [...] secret soldiers to carry out acts of violence in times of peace and then blame them on the Communist enemy in order to create a situation of fear and alertness".⁶

Reports in *The Turkish Daily News* (13 July 1994) confirmed that Turkish military officials, commanders and chiefs of staff were being briefed and advised by US Pentagon staff,⁷ high-ranking members of the US armed forces and psychological warfare organisations such as Special Operations Command. They were even being pinned with Legion of Merit medals. Between 3 and 5 million Kurds were forcibly displaced, Kurdish forests were set alight and between 3500 and 4000 villages and hamlets were evacuated and bombed in the Kurdish south east by Turkish state forces, creating devastation on a horrific scale. Atrocities were also committed by the Turkish state against Kurdish civilians during anti-PKK incursions into what was supposed to be a US- and UK-protected safe haven in northern Iraq during this period, without formal complaints being issued by the US or UK governments. Indeed, President Clinton is known to have given permission for a major Turkish incursion into northern Iraq in 1995. Hartung confirms that, with Clinton's clearance for the 1995 incursion, "Turkish troops did plenty of things in Northern Iraq, including a number of documented cases of killings and displacement of Kurdish civilians".⁸ And as John Deere noted: "Were this Kosovo, we would be hearing words like 'genocide' and 'ethnic cleansing.' You see, to kill Kurds all you need is the proper hunting license. In this case that license is a perk of NATO membership".⁹

According to Chalmers Johnson, we need to be aware

of the effect of a law passed by congress in 1991 which authorised the Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) programme. "This allowed the Department of Defence to send special operations forces on overseas exercises with military units of other countries. The various special forces interpreted this law as an informal invitation to train foreign military forces in numerous lethal skills [...] Stripped of its euphemistic language [it] amount[ed] to little more than instruction in state terrorism".¹⁰ Ted Galen Carpenter has revealed that, as part of this programme, "in 1997, the US European Command's special operations branch conducted joint training exercises with Turkey's mountain commandos, a unit whose principal mission is to eliminate Kurdish guerrillas. That unit had been responsible for atrocities against Kurdish civilians and the razing of Kurdish villages".¹¹

Ward Churchill has concluded that, "both US and British pilots [were] assigned to provide air support to Turkish military forces conducting a large-scale counterinsurgency campaign in northern Iraq against Kurdish guerrillas seeking to establish an independent state. With regard to air support missions flown in support of the Turks, violations of the 1923 Hague Rules of Aerial Combat, the 1949 Geneva Convention IV and Additional Protocol 1, UNGA Res. 2444, and the 1978 Red Cross Fundamental Rules of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts are apparent. In view of the non-self-governing status accorded the Kurds by both Turkey and Iraq, violation of UNGA Res. 1514 (XV) – the 1960 Declaration of the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples – is also at issue".¹²

The US administration and intelligence agencies were also actively involved in facilitating the illegal capture and abduction of Abdullah Ocalan, chairman of the PKK, in Kenya in 1999.¹³ It has also been established that Huseyin Kocadag, Chief of the Special Forces in Hakkari and Deputy Chief of Police in Diyarbakir, who has been identified as "one of the most bloody enemies of the people who organised the units of the 'head-hunters' in Kurdistan [...] was trained at a CIA school in the US".¹⁴

The Human Rights Watch Arms Project has additionally exposed the way in which, "US troops, aircraft and intelligence personnel [...] remained at their posts throughout Turkey, mingling with Turkish counterinsurgency troops and aircrews in southeastern bases such as Incirlik and Diyarbakir [...] throughout Turkey's wide-ranging scorched earth campaign" against Kurdish civilian settlements and PKK hideouts and encampments.¹⁵ This campaign, in the view of many peoples and organisations, was clearly genocidal in nature: In 1997, the human rights campaigning group, Article 19, stated that it believed there was "ample evidence to indict the Turkish government of gross violations of human rights which constitute infringements of [...] the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, among other treaties to which Turkey is a party".¹⁶ The UK Parliamentary Human Rights Group, after field visits to the region and detailed analyses concluded that, "the depopulation of the Kurdish region is, we believe, part of a deliberate strategy aimed not merely at eliminating a few thousand guerrillas, but to extinguish the separate identity of the Kurdish people".¹⁷ In Britain, as elsewhere, the question of Turkish Kurdistan is often presented as one of a reasonably democratic government seeking to cope with an intractable problem of terrorism. We believe that the reality is one of military terrorists aiming to extinguish the identity of a people, and we were much alarmed by the parallel drawn with the Armenian holocaust of 1915-1916. The PKK, like some Armenians during the First World War, took to arms because they could see no prospect of gaining their legitimate political objectives by peaceful means. The response of the Turkish state, as in 1915 and earlier with the Armenians, was to use conciliatory language for external consumption, while unleashing huge military force against the virtually defenceless civilian population. To characterise the revolt of a subject people against their oppressors as 'terrorism' is a woeful misunderstanding which could only arise from ignorance of facts and history".¹⁸

1 Desmond Fernandes is the author of *The Kurdish Genocide in Turkey* (2007, Apoc Press, Stockholm, forthcoming), *Colonial Genocides in Turkey, Kenya and Goa* (2006, Apoc Press, Stockholm, forthcoming) and co-author of *US, UK, German and NATO 'Inspired' Psychological Warfare Operations Against The Kurdish 'Communist' Threat in Turkey and Northern Iraq* (2006, Apoc Press, Stockholm). He has written a number of articles on genocide, Turkish state terror, tourism and the 'Kurdish Question', and was a Senior Lecturer in Human Geography at De Montfort University, Bedford (1994-2006). This article is dedicated to Iskender Ozden, Musa Anter, Ismail Besikci, Anthony Tingle, Ray Sibbald, E. Francis, Florence, Yasser Salihee and Ayse Nur Zarakolu.

2 For a detailed insight into the whole 'genocide' issue, and the applicability of the term to the Kurdish situation in Turkey (using definitions provided by the United Nations' 1948 Genocide Convention and other bodies and academics), refer to: Fernandes, D. (1998) 'The Kurdish Genocide in Turkey, 1924-98', *Armenian Forum*, Vol. 1 (4), p. 56-107; Fernandes, D. (2001) 'Postscriptum: A Propos De La "Petite Question" Du Genocide Kurde En Turquie, 1924-2001', *L'Appel du Kurdistan*, Number 28, October 2001, p. 45-60; Fernandes, D. (2006) *Colonial Genocides in Turkey, Kenya and Goa* (Apoc Press, Stockholm) and Fernandes, D. (2007) *The Kurdish Genocide in Turkey*. Apoc Press, Stockholm.

3 Chomsky, N. (2000) *A New Generation Draws The Line: Kosovo, East Timor and the Standards of the West*. Verso, London and New York, p. 12-14.

4 Hakki Hayri (2001) 'A Foot in Australia, Three Souls in Kurdistan: Interviews with Ayce Akturk, Hakki Hayri and Ahmed Tigran', in *Fire, Snow and Honey - Voices from Kurdistan*, edited by Gina Lennox. Halstead Press, New South Wales, Australia. p. 485.

5 Hakki Hayri (2001) 'A Foot in Australia, Three Souls in Kurdistan', p. 485.

6 Ganser, G. (2005) *NATO's Secret Armies: Operation Gladio and Terrorism in Western Europe*, Frank Cass, London and New York, p. 234-235.

7 The *Turkish Daily News* (13th July 1994 edition) reported that "Karadayi, Commander of the Turkish land forces [who was to become Turkey's Chief of Staff] was officially invited to receive the US Legion of Merit medal at a ceremony held at the Pentagon".

8 Hartung, W. (1995) *Arms Trade Resource Center Reports - Weapons at War*. A World Policy Institute Issue Brief (<http://www.worldpolicy.org/projects/arms/reports/wawrep.html#weapons>)

9 Deere, J. (2000) 'A License to kill Kurds', *Antiwar.com*, 28 August 2000 (<http://www.antiwar.com/orig/deere1.html>).

10 Johnson, C. (2000) *The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*, p. 72-74.

11 Carpenter, T. G. (1999) 'U.S. Policy toward Turkey: A Study in Double Standards', *The HR-Net Forum*, January 1999 (<http://www.hri.org/forum/intpol/carpenter.html>). Carpenter cites the following as his source: Dana Priest, 'Free of Oversight, U.S. Military Trains Foreign Troops', *Washington Post*, July 12, 1998, p. A1. See also: Human Rights Watch Arms Project (1995) *Weapons Transfers and Violations of the Laws of War in Turkey*. New York, Human Rights Watch, and 'Turkey and the Charge of Genocide - A Submission to the Independent Commission for International War Crimes Tribunal', *Fashion Institute of Technology*, New York, July 31, 1999 (as reproduced in: <http://www.kurdistanica.com/english/humright/articles/hum-article-01.html>).

12 Churchill, W. (2003) 'A Government of Laws?', in *On The Justice of Roosting Chickens: Reflections On The Consequences of US Imperial Arrogance and Criminality*. AK Press, Oakland and Edinburgh, p. 209-210.

13 Refer to Fernandes and Ozden, US, UK, German and NATO 'Inspired' Psychological Warfare Operations Against The Kurdish 'Communist' Threat in Turkey and Northern Iraq and Clark, W. 'Byzantine Politics: The abduction and trial of Abdullah Ocalan', *Variant*, No. 8 (www.ndirect.co.uk/~variant).

14 Devrimci Sol (1997) 'Who Are Guilty?', *Devrimci Sol*, January 1997, p. 31.

15 Human Rights Watch Arms Project, *Weapons Transfers and Violations of the Laws of War in Turkey*, p. 4.

16 Article 19 (1997) *Letter to the Secretary General, The Council of Europe*, dated 8th September 1997, p. 1.

17 UK Parliamentary Human Rights Group (1994) *The Kurdish Region in Turkey: The Most Destructive Conflict in the Northern Hemisphere*. Kurdistan Solidarity Committee/ Kurdistan Information Centre, London, p. 10.

18 UK Parliamentary Human Rights Group (1993) *A Desolation Called Peace: Report by the Parliamentary*

- Human Rights Group On A Mission To Turkish Kurdistan, 12-17 October 1993. Kurdish Information Centre, London, November 1993, p. 28.
- 19 As quoted in Fernandes, D. (1996) *Beyond the Paradise of Infinite Colours: Turkish State Terror, Tourism and the Kurdish Question*. R&B Bookshop, Bangalore, India.
- 20 As interviewed by Temel Demirer in 'Impression', Kurdistan Report, No. 25, p. 11.
- 21 Ozgur Gundem (2005) 'US threatens Kurds', Ozgur Gundem, 12 September 2005.
- 22 PSK (2001) 'If You Listen to Turkish Politicians...', PSK Bulletin, 2001.
- 23 BIA News Center (2004) 'IHD: Who Is Responsible for Perincek's Death?', BIA News Center, 17 June 2004, as reproduced in InfoTurk, No. 310, June 2004.
- 24 BIA News Center (2004) 'IHD: S. Perincek was Executed Without Trial', BIA News Center, 8 June 2004, as reproduced in InfoTurk, No. 310, June 2004.
- 25 Peace in Kurdistan (2006) 'Time for Justice: The Case of Ocalan and the PKK - End the Criminalization of the Kurds in Turkey and Europe: Notification of a Meeting at Committee Room 20, House of Commons, Westminster, Tuesday, 18 July, 7pm', Peace in Kurdistan Campaign, London, p.1.
- 26 Korkut, T. (2006) 'Security forces authorized: "Bury Where You Kill"', BIA News Center, April 18, 2006, as reproduced in Info-Turk, May 2006, No. 333 (<http://www.info-turk.be/index.html#Activists>).
- 27 Hurriyet (2002) '27 Children Brought Before Diyarbakir's State Security Court', Hurriyet, 11 June 2002, as reproduced by IMK Weekly Information Service, 17 June - 28 June 2002, No. 160 (<http://www.kurds.dk/english/2000/news107.html>).
- 28 Aram (2002) *Conspiracy and Crisis: Turkey and the Kurdish Question: From the Nineties to the Present Day* - Written by a collective of journalists and researchers on behalf of Aram Publisher. Aram, Istanbul, January, 2002 (<http://www.zmag.org/content/ForeignPolicy/aram0122.cfm>).
- 29 Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2002) 'Linguistic Human Rights in Education and Turkey - Some International Comparisons', An invited plenary paper at the International Conference on Kurds, the European Union and Turkey, Copenhagen, Denmark, 14th October 2002.
- 30 See: Associated Press (2000) 'Kurdish students struggle with Turkish language', March 16, 2000, as cited in Info-Turk, No. 259, March 2000.
- 31 Socialist Party of Kurdistan - PSK (2002) 'Report of the Socialist Party of Kurdistan On the Relationship Between the EU and Turkey And the EU-Accession of Turkey', PSK, September 2002.
- 32 Ronayne also mentions 'globalisation'. Source: Ronayne, M. (2006) 'Invest in Caring Not Killing: Women's Opposition to Dams and War', Ulkede Ozgur Gundem, 29 July 2006 (<http://www.globalwomenstrike.net/Turkish/WomensOppositionToDams.htm>).
- 33 Ronayne, M. (2006) 'Invest in Caring Not Killing: Women's Opposition to Dams and War', Ulkede Ozgur Gundem, 29 July 2006 (<http://www.globalwomenstrike.net/Turkish/WomensOppositionToDams.htm>).
- 34 Ronayne, M. and Ascherson, N. (2006) 'Opposition to Turkey's Ilisu Dam rises again: Turkey has revived plans for the vast Ilisu Dam. Maggie Ronayne explains why she's still fighting construction on cultural and environmental grounds, while Neal Ascherson outlines the bitter dispute', September 1, 2006 (<http://www.chinadialogue.net/article/summary/336-Opposition-to-Turkey-s>).
- 35 Yedinci Gundem (2002) 'Kurdish Tuition as Grounds for Torture', Yedinci Gundem, 12 May 2002, as reproduced in IMK Weekly Information Service, No. 156, 13 May - 24 May 2002 (<http://www.kurds.dk/english/2000/news102.html>).
- 36 As quoted by Wilgenburg, V. V. (2006) 'Belgium seeks clarification on Turkish death squad operation', KurdishMedia.com, 6 March 2006 (<http://www.kurdmedia.com/articles.asp?id=11572>).
- 37 Human Rights Watch (2006) 'Reuters Alerts, Turkey: Anti-Terror Law Used Against Peaceful Activists', Human Rights Watch, 7 June 2006.
- 38 CILDEKT (2002) 'OSCE Report Refers to Kurdish Question', CILDEKT, 16 July 2002, as quoted in IMK Weekly Information Service, No. 162, 16 July - 27 July 2002 (<http://www.kurds.dk/english/2000/news109.html>).
- 39 Yildiz, K and Muller, M. (2005) 'The EU, Turkey and the Kurds', in Muller, M., Brigham, C., Westheim, K. and Yildiz, K. (eds.) *EU Turkey Civic Commission: International Conference on Turkey, the Kurds and the EU*, European Parliament, Brussels, 22-23 November 2004 - Conference Papers, KHRP, GB, p. 48.
- 40 The New Anatolian (2006) 'Turkey shrugs off PKK's offer of conditional cease-fire', The New Anatolian, 25 August 2006 (<http://www.turkishweekly.net/news.php?id=37395>).
- 41 Dicle, H. (2005) Statement made on 19 September 2005 at the Second EUTCC International Conference on 'EU Turkey and the Kurds', in the EU Parliament, 19 - 21 September 2005 (<http://www.eutcc.org/articles/8/20/document212.ehtml>). An ANF - Firat News Agency report, dated 30th August 2006, also stated that a "written statement of Kongra Gel indicated that 'Koma Komalen Kurdistan (KKK, Confederalism of Kurdistan, Kongra Gel is the Assembly) made a peace declaration declared on 23 August, 2006, and they supported this. They also indicated that they were in search of peaceful solution without violence for the resolution of the Kurdish question and they are expecting a response" from the Turkish state "on this regard" ("Kongra Gel condemns bomb attacks", ANF
- To Fevzi Veznedaroglu, chairperson of the Turkish Human Rights Association (IHD) in Diyarbakir, "especially since 1991, the counter-insurgency forces targeted the leaders of the democratic struggle. The aim [was] to target a wider group of people. [It was] not only Kurdish intellectuals and leaders [who were] targeted, but villagers, women and students have been murdered. These human rights violations [were] not just aimed at fundamental rights, at the right to life [but were] aimed at reducing the Kurdish people to refugees in their country. The torture chambers [were] kept busy [in] a dirty war against the whole population".¹⁹ A disturbing testimony from a death squad killer named Murat Ipek, if true, further suggests that US forces were directly implicated in the training and co-ordination of the genocidal death squads: "An American [...] controlled and instructed the contra-teams".²⁰
- ### The Nature of the US-backed War on Terror in Turkey, Post-9/11 – A Cause for Concern?
- There has been no attempt by the US government to take responsibility for its past actions or to guarantee that there will be no repeat of such criminal and deeply unethical behaviour. Indeed, there are now suggestions that the US government, in the name of the ongoing post-9/11 *War on Terror*, is increasingly supporting the Turkish state once again in its offensive against Kurdish civilians, human rights activists, peace campaigners and PKK militants in the region.
- US special forces and intelligence agencies, it needs to be recognised, are extensively liaising with their Turkish counterparts in publicly unaccountable anti-PKK targeting and "internal defence" actions that deploy covert psychological warfare methods. The Turkish state in recent months appears to have been re-issued with the hunting licence that seemingly enables it to intensify its violence against suspected Kurdish terrorists and target civilian communities in northern Iraq (south Kurdistan) and south east Turkey (north west Kurdistan), now that the PKK and Ocalan have been compared by US administration officials to Osama Bin Laden and al-Qaeda. Post 9/11, a US administration official in September 2005 stated the absurdity that she viewed the PKK threat as being as grave as that of al-Qaeda: "Nancy McEldowley, representing the US embassy at an 11th September commemoration service in Ankara, said in a speech that there was no difference between al-Qaeda and the PKK or between Abdullah Ocalan and Osama Bin Laden."²¹
- But as the Socialist Party of Kurdistan has noted with alarm, in the post-9/11 period, "what is clear is that Turkish politicians and the Turkish media don't just mean the PKK when they speak of 'terrorists' but all Kurdish organisations, Kurdish associations and even the Kurds themselves".²² The following examples of who is targeted as supposed terrorists makes for disturbing reading:
- At Adana, on May 28th 2004, "Siyar Perincek [...] who is the Human Rights Association's (IHD's) representative for eastern and southeastern Anatolia, was killed in front of the IHD building.²³ According to the BIA News Centre, "the IHD announced that the police in Adana murdered Siyar Perincek [...] During a press conference in the IHD Istanbul office, it was announced that police fired at Siyar Perincek [...] as he was driving a motorcycle in Adana. Police then stepped on his back when he fell off from the motorcycle and killed him with a bullet to his back. IHD said there were witnesses who saw the incident. 'Executions without trials are continuing [...] The murderers are free among us,' said the IHD press statement."²⁴
 - Twelve-year-old Kurdish Ugur Kaymaz and his father, Ahmet, were killed in November 2005 in the south-eastern town of Kiziltepe in what officials said was an operation against "armed terrorists". Preliminary investigations, including one by parliament's human rights committee, concluded that the two were unarmed and may have been innocent civilians. Media reported that Ugur Kaymaz was hit by 13 bullets, and that his family said he was helping his father, a truck driver, to prepare for a trip to Iraq.
 - In terms of proposed anti-terrorist actions, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared that the Turkish "security forces will intervene against the pawns of terrorism, even if they are children or women."²⁵
 - Just as troublingly, "Turkish Human Rights Chairman Alatas recalled on his part that there were numerous allegations related to the killing of PKK militants in the recent months. 'There are claims that the bodies are being mutilated, that their organs are being cut off, that even if they are caught alive, they are tortured and killed as well as allegations that chemical weapons are being used. How are these going to be investigated?' he asked".²⁶
 - In the US-backed *War on Terror*, schoolchildren, students, poets, musicians, writers, publishers, human rights campaigners, academics, lawyers and artists are all
- being targeted. Moreover, "according to a report in the Turkish newspaper *Hürriyet* a case has begun before the state security court in Diyarbakir against 27 children aged between 11 and 18, because they had demanded the right to native [Kurdish] language tuition [...] the state prosecutor [...] accused the children and adolescents of 'aiding a terrorist organisation' through their demands, and has called for prison terms of 3 years and 9 months".²⁷ In 2002, students' petitions calling for the right to merely receive some optional instruction in the Kurdish language, were incriminated "on grounds of being instrumental to the PKK's efforts to establish itself as a political organisation. State Prosecutors were briefed by the Ministry of the Interior in January, 2002, to bring charges of 'membership in a terrorist organisation' punishable with 12 years imprisonment against any students or parents who lodge petitions demanding optional Kurdish lessons. By 23rd January 2002, a total of 85 students and more than 30 parents ha[d] been imprisoned and over 1,000 people (among them some juveniles) detained [for] having demanded optional first language education in Kurdish".²⁸
- The Turkish government is also guilty, according to the academic Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and other respected analysts, of "linguistic genocide" against Kurds and of additionally being in breach of two articles of the United Nations Genocide Convention: "In fact, education of Kurds in Turkey, both today and after the [proposed 'reform'] law package is being implemented, is genocidal. It still fits two of the definitions of genocide in the UN International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (E793, 1948) [...] Turkey tries to forcibly make Turks of Kurdish children through education, i.e. Turkey tries to transfer the children linguistically and culturally to another group. This is genocide, according to the UN definition."²⁹
- Even today, for instance, as Turkey is engaged in the EU accession process, programmes in Kurdish for children on radio or TV remain prohibited. To merely peacefully and non-violently protest against the state's ongoing genocidal policies, or to advocate the basic cultural right of Kurds (who represent between 20-25% of the population in Turkey) to be educated in their mother tongue is, in the eyes of the Turkish state, to act in support of PKK terrorism.³⁰
- We also need to be aware of a wider destructive plan around which the US backed Turkish state's 'War on Terror' is taking place: In September 2002, the Socialist Party of Kurdistan (PSK) drew attention to a "Secret Plan of Action", masterminded by members of the Turkish 'deep state'. According to the PSK: "The main aim of this plan is to make Kurdistan Kurd-free, to eradicate the Kurdish language and culture and thereby dispose of the Kurdish question. Dam projects which will flood historical towns of Kurdistan, flood the fertile agricultural land of the region and flood the valleys of incomparable natural beauty are part of this plan".³¹ Whilst a local Kurdish, national and international initiative aimed at halting one such dam in the area – Ilisu – succeeded in halting one consortium from proceeding with the project in 2002, another consortium seems to have taken its place and been supported by the Turkish government. Despite substantive local Kurdish and national/international opposition to the project, the Turkish prime minister, on August 5th 2006, provocatively laid the foundational stone for this vast dam.
- Maggie Ronayne's findings are worth reflecting upon at this point: "The US-led war against the world is not only waged by military means [...] but [also] by development projects.³² [...] These very profitable projects [can] displace large numbers of people and have devastating cultural and environmental impacts. The GAP development project [in south-eastern Turkey, which includes the Ilisu dam], in which US and European companies and governments are involved is a prime example of all this.³³ The action of the Prime Minister [in laying the foundational stone of the Ilisu dam] appears designed to put pressure on the affected communities and on European governments. The project would flood over 300 square kilometres in the Kurdish region [...] displacing up to 78,000 villagers. Local people would receive little or no benefit from the project. On the contrary, impacts of the dam would include more severe poverty, health problems, break-up of families and communities, environmental pollution [...] and wide-ranging cultural destruction. [...] The dam threatens to destroy thousands of years of culture and heritage and its survival into the future – first of all by targeting women and all in their care. It highlights women's opposition to cultural destruction by dams and war. Targeting women like this threatens the cultural destruction of the entire community. Indeed, the very area where [the] Prime Minister laid the foundation stone has not been surveyed at all, and it is therefore a breach of international law, including European Union directives, to proceed with any construction in the absence of archaeological survey and testing."³⁴

The Targeting of School Teachers, Parents, Schoolchildren, Students, Political Prisoners and Academics

Within the context of a US- and UK-supported *War on Terror* pro-Kurdish teachers who have sought to simply learn the Kurdish language in preparation for a time when they might be allowed to teach it in schools, have also been targeted by the “Anti-Terror Police” and tortured. Yendinci Gundem reports that “12 people, of whom 11 were teachers, were allegedly tortured while being detained by police after having been arrested in Kiziltepe for learning Kurdish together. The 12 people, 11 of whom were members of the teachers trade union Egitim-Sen, were arrested in an apartment [...] in Mardin on May 7th. A magistrate had issued warrants for their arrest. The Mardin branch of Egitim-Sen said in a written statement that: ‘Our colleagues were subjected to various methods of torture; they were sprayed with high-pressure water, they had plastic bags pulled over their heads, they were forced to sing marching songs and to do the goose-step, they were brutally beaten, left for 3 days without food or water, they were stripped naked, and had their testicles crushed’.”³⁵

Parents have been murdered in the *War on Terror* simply because their children have been involved in legal pro-Kurdish cultural and political activities overseas. As Derwich Ferho, the chairman of the Kurdish Institute in Brussels has noted, his parents – who were in their 80s – were murdered by state-linked contra-guerrilla death squads in south-eastern Turkey in March 2006 because of his work and that of his brother (who works for the Kurdish satellite Roj TV station, also in Belgium): “They were killed in a horrible way in their village. Earlier they were threatened, because of the activities of my brother and me in Belgium [...] My father was sick and bedridden [...] He was killed in his bed and his ribs were broken. My mother must have resisted, because her throat was cut and she had many wounds inflicted by stabbing. My parents were threatened several times last month. People were saying: your sons must be wiser.”³⁶

Charges are also levelled at peace campaigners in the name of the *War on Terror*. Most recently, in June 2006, three “Kurdish activists” were placed on trial “on anti-terrorism charges after they attempted to stage a peaceful protest near the Iraq border [...] They were arrested on May 2nd as they prepared to walk to the border of Iraq to peacefully protest the recent killings of civilians by security forces in south-eastern Turkey [...] All three are officials of Kurt-Der, a Kurdish association that Turkish authorities closed last month for conducting its internal business in the Kurdish language.”³⁷

A report by Sevend J. Robinson on behalf of the Commission for Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues, which was accepted by the annual OSCE Assembly in July 2002, additionally confirmed that, “in Turkey, [pro-Kurdish party] HADEP mayors are continually persecuted. For example, the mayor of Hakkari was prosecuted for issuing a calendar in the Kurdish and English languages – because it was a risk to the state [...] The Kurdish language continues to be banned in education and in the media [...] In Van, security forces have detained 500 students because of a petition in which they requested the right to Kurdish language tuition.”³⁸

Kerim Yildiz (Executive Director of the Kurdish Human Rights Project) and Mark Muller (as barrister and Vice President of the UK Bar Human Rights Committee), in 2005, observed that Turkey was, indeed, refusing “even to concede that the armed conflict in the [Kurdish] south-east is symptomatic of the broader issue of her subjugation of the Kurds, defining the situation purely in terms of security and/or terrorism and refusing to become involved in bilateral negotiations with the Kurds”³⁹ On 25th August 2006, for example, “Turkish officials dismissed [an] offer from the terrorist PKK for a conditional cease-fire. The PKK’s second in command, Murat Karayilan, proposed a conditional cease-fire to the Turkish government, saying, ‘We are ready to observe a cease-fire on September 1st, coinciding with World Peace Day, and opt for a peaceful and democratic settlement to the Kurdish issue in Turkey’. He requested Turkey put forward a ‘political project’ that will meet their demands [...] Karayilan also made a similar offer last June, saying, ‘We appeal to the Turkish government, asking it to end military operations in order to open the path for dialogue, and we are ready, on our side, to declare a cease-fire’.”⁴⁰ Kongra-Gel had also “appealed its armed forces to take a decision of ‘No Action’ between 20th August and 20th September 2005”.⁴¹ Mustafa Karahan, the head of DEHAP – the pro-Kurdish Democratic People’s Party – in Diyarbakir, described the way in which his party was even being restricted in its dialogue with the press, let alone the deep state: “The pressure faced by DEHAP is very obvious. When we want to say something to the press, our members get arrested. Many members of DEHAP are now arrested and in prison.”⁴²

Meanwhile, the official view of the Kurds in Turkey, in writer Mehmed Uzun’s opinion, remains “one of deep hatred. The phobia of Kurds is evident; ultra Turkish nationalism is nurtured by their abhorrence of Kurds”.⁴³ Mark Thomas, in April 2006, observed the marked “failure of the Turkish state to work with the Kurds to take advantage of the PKK ceasefire. Ankara has refused to negotiate. ‘We will not talk to terrorists,’ the Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, declares. And he has done so with the backing of the EU. Instead of urging dialogue, the EU has followed the UK and the United States in proscribing the PKK, even though it announced a ceasefire and formally renounced violence. Just about every attempt by grass-roots Kurdish groups to form inclusive democratic movements has been regarded by the EU and the UK as merely another group to add to the list of terrorist organisations”.⁴⁴

Behic Asci, a member of the Turkish Association of Progressive Lawyers⁴⁵ has sought to alert people to the repercussions of these policies on political prisoners: “The Turkish legal system provides no protection for [...] political prisoners held in isolation. In one instance, when a guard demanded one of Asci’s clients stand up for a prisoner count, she responded that given [that] she was in an isolation cell, there was no need for her to stand to be counted. Enraged at this small show of defiance, the guard attacked the prisoner, crushing her skull against the cell wall. When Asci appealed to the court to protest his client’s mistreatment, his suit was rejected on the grounds that it was part of a “terrorist campaign” against F-type isolation prisons.”⁴⁶

The Nature of US Psychological Warfare Assistance

We need to recognise and confront the fact that there does not appear to be any effective public oversight into the nature of accountability of these deep political US-Turkish arrangements and operations. Key questions arise: will US special forces continue to provide JCET training or assistance to Turkey’s notorious mountain commandos? As Chalmers Johnson has noted: “Republican representative Christopher Smith, chairman of the House of Representatives Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, says: ‘Our joint exercises and training of military units – that have been charged over and over again with the gravest kind of crimes against humanity, including torture and murder – cry out for explanation’. But the US Secretary of Defence seems to be unconcerned”.⁴⁷

There is certainly concern that the US state will choose to maintain collaboration with Turkey’s notorious mountain commando brigades and other special military/paramilitary/police forces. In recent months it has been announced that, “after completing a six-month intensive training course, 242 [Turkish] special forces personnel have been appointed to posts in the [Kurdish] east and southeast [of Turkey]. Reports say that with the newly appointed personnel, there are now 3500 members of the Special Forces in Hakkari, Sirnak, Tunceli and Bingol”.⁴⁸ An April 2006 report in The Turkish Weekly suggests that Turkish special forces have, indeed, been given the green light by the US to intensify the basis of their offensive psychological warfare operations against the PKK in northern Iraq: “Turkish armed forces, using infra-red cameras, spotted PKK terrorists crossing the border near Cukurca town, after which a special force team of around 100 soldiers proceeded to cross the border into Iraqi territory. The go-ahead to send in the special forces team was reportedly given from Ankara over the weekend. Recent meetings between Turkish and US officials have indicated that the US has given the nod to Turkish action on this front”.⁴⁹

US operational support for psychological warfare which targets PKK leaders in northern Iraq – as recently as July 2005 – has also been confirmed from a leading Turkish military source: “The Turkish army said Tuesday the United States had ordered the capture of commanders of the rebel Kurdistan Workers’ Party in Iraq [...] The United States ‘have issued a direct order for the capture of the leaders’ of the PKK, General Ilker Basbug, the army number two, told a group of journalists”.⁵⁰ According to a 21st April 2006 report by the Cihan News Agency, “The Turkish NTV news channel report[ed] [...] that the US has been providing intelligence to Turkish security forces carrying out anti-terror operations in southeast Turkey near the Iraqi border. NTV claims that the CIA and US army intelligence have tipped off the Turkish security forces during operations in which a total of 31 PKK terrorists were killed in two separate areas.”⁵¹

We also know that US International Military Education Training (IMET) courses were conducted with Turkish forces in 2001, 2002 and were requested for 2003.⁵² This programme has been “harshly criticized in Congress for having trained soldiers in Colombia and Indonesia who went on to commit human rights violations”.⁵³ We also know that the US Congress approved IMET training with Turkish forces for 2005 and President Bush requested further IMET funding

- Firat News Agency, Accessed at: <http://www.kurdmedia.com/news.asp?id=13122>.

42 As quoted in Yilmaz, A. (2003) ‘Mustafa Karahan: Interview with Mustafa Karahan, the head of DEHAP in Amed’, KurdishMedia.com, 9 January 2004 (<http://www.kurdmedia.com/inter.asp?id=10099>).

43 Uzun, M. (2005) ‘The Dialogue and Liberties of Civilizations’, Presented at the Second EUTCC International Conference on ‘EU Turkey and the Kurds’, in the EU Parliament, 19 - 21 September 2005 (<http://www.eutcc.org/articles/8/20/document217.ehtml>).

44 Thomas, M. (2006) ‘There is one EU problem that is resolutely not going away and will only get worse: that is, Turkey’s membership’, The New Statesman, 24 April 2006 (<http://www.newstatesman.com/200604240014>).

45 According to Simon Cooper and Ruth Riordan, “Asci began the death fast on International Lawyer’s Day, April 5, because, he says, he could no longer sit back and watch his clients die” (‘On the death fast of Lawyer Behic Asci’, Green Left Weekly, 16 August 2006, as reproduced in Info Turk, No. 336 (http://www.info-turk.be/336.htm#Istanbul_).

46 Cooper, S. and Riordan, R. (2006) ‘On the death fast of Lawyer Behic Asci’, Green Left Weekly, 16 August 2006, as reproduced in Info Turk, No. 336 (http://www.info-turk.be/336.htm#Istanbul_).

47 Johnson, C. (2000) The Costs and Consequences of American Empire, p. 72-74.

48 The New Anatolian (2006) ‘Police Send More Special Forces to East, Southeast’, The New Anatolian, 17 August 2006 (<http://www.info-turk.be/336.htm>).

49 Turkish Weekly Net (2006) ‘Turkey and Northern Iraq’, JTW and News Agencies, 30 April 2006 (<http://www.turkishweekly.net/news.php?id=30830>).

50 AFP (2005) ‘Turkey Says US Ordered Arrest of PKK leaders, Threatens Incursion Into Iraq’, AFP, Ankara, 19 July 2005.

51 Cihan News Agency (2006) ‘US intelligence aids Turkish strikes against PKK terror organization’, Cihan News Agency, April 21, 2006, as reported in Info-Turk, No. 333, May 2006 (<http://www.info-turk.be/index.html#Activists>).

52 Foreign Policy in Focus (2002) Special Report, May 2002, Appendix 2: IMET Training And Human Rights Abuse: The Official Record (<http://www.fpif.org/papers/miltrain/app2.html>).

53 Risen, C. (undated) ‘Hot for Teacher’ (<http://www.flakmag.com/opinion/jcet.html>).

54 Berrigan, F. and Hartung, W. D. and Heffel, D. (2005) U.S. Military Aid and Arms Transfers Since September 11: A World Policy Institute Special Report, World Policy Institute (<http://worldpolicy.org/projects/arms/reports/wawjune2005.html#15> and <http://worldpolicy.org/projects/arms/reports/wawjune2005.html#15>).

55 Foreign Policy in Focus (2002) Special Report, May, 2002: Programs and Funding (http://www.fpif.org/papers/miltrain/programs_body.html).

56 Foreign Policy in Focus (2002) Special Report, May, 2002: Programs and Funding (http://www.fpif.org/papers/miltrain/programs_body.html).

57 ‘FBI committed to help Turkey against Kurdish rebels’, 9 December 2005 (<http://www.breitbart.com/news/na/051209170330.w0g64v73.html>).

58 See Fernandes and Ozden, U.S., UK, German and NATO ‘Inspired’ Psychological Warfare Operations Against The Kurdish ‘Communist’ Threat in Turkey and Northern Iraq.

59 Hurriyet (2005) ‘Turkey bargains with CIA over PKK’, Hurriyet, 12 December 2005 (as reproduced in <http://www.kurdmedia.com/news.asp?id=10864>).

60 Darling, D. (2005) ‘Tidbits from Turkey on Iran’, Winds of Change, December 21, 2005 (http://www.windsofchange.net/archives/tidbits_from_turkey_on_iran-print.php).

61 Darling, D. (2005) ‘Tidbits from Turkey on Iran’, Winds of Change, December 21, 2005 (http://www.windsofchange.net/archives/tidbits_from_turkey_on_iran-print.php). Sensing a possible attack by US backed forces and, perhaps, in an endeavour to ‘dissuade’ Turkey from joining in the US plans for an assault of some kind on Iran, it is instructive to note that there has been recent intensified co-operation between Iran and Turkey on the issue of ‘joint operations’ against the PKK and PKK-linked forces.

62 Where Turkey has offered to contribute some ‘peacekeeping troops’, after Israel’s destruction of much of the infrastructure of the region during its recent 2006 offensive there. The US also, importantly, relies on Turkey to provide troops at key moments in its Afghanistan NATO linked ‘War on Terror’ campaign. Chossudovsky also argues that: “There is another dimension which directly relates to the war on Lebanon [...] Israel is slated to play a major strategic role in ‘protecting’ the Eastern Mediterranean transport and pipeline corridors out of [the Turkish linked] Ceyhan [BTC Project] [...] The bombing of Lebanon is part of a carefully planned and coordinated military road map. The extension of the war into Syria and Iran has already been contemplated by US and Israeli military planners. This broader military agenda is intimately related to strategic oil and oil pipelines. It is supported by the Western oil giants which control the pipeline corridors. In the context of the war on Lebanon, it seeks Israeli territorial control over the East Mediterranean coastline [...] Prior to the bombing of Lebanon, Israel and Turkey had announced [...] underwater pipeline routes, which bypassed Syria and Lebanon [...] On the other hand, the development of alternative land based corridors (for oil and water) through Lebanon and Syria would require Israeli-Turkish territorial control over the Eastern Mediterranean coastline through Lebanon and Syria. The implementation of a land-based corridor, as opposed to the underwater pipeline project, would require the militarisation of the East

- Mediterranean coastline [...] Is this not one of the hidden objectives of the war on Lebanon?" - Chossudovsky, M. (2006) 'The War on Lebanon and the Battle for Oil', 26 July 2006 (<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=CHO20060726&articleId=2824>).
- 63 In the short term, it may also be politically inconvenient to endorse an all out Turkish invasion of northern Iraq. The US is critically dependent, for the moment, upon KDP-PUK 'Iraqi' Kurdish support in its 'Iraqi Imperialist Programme'. Consequently, as long as the PUK-KDP agree to assist the Turkish state with its 'anti-PKK' offensive, it is likely that it will ask Turkish forces to desist from overt incursions into the area. It seems likely, though, that several cross-border covert operations will continue to be approved, even as the US may seek to encourage the Israeli state and the PUK-KDP to collaborate with each other in Turkish approved covert operations aimed at further targeting the PKK.
- 64 Korkut, O. (2006) 'Anti-Terror Schemes May Encourage Torture', BIA News Center, 26 April 2006, in Info Turk, No. 333, May 2006 (<http://www.info-turk.be/index.html#Activists>).
- 65 BIA News Center (2006) 'Reaction by NGOs: "New Terror Bill Takes All Citizens Terrorist,"' 28 April 2006, in Info-Turk, No. 333, May 2006 (<http://www.info-turk.be/index.html#Activists>).
- 66 BIA News Center (2006) 'Reaction by NGOs: "New Terror Bill Takes All Citizens Terrorist,"' 28 April 2006, in Info-Turk, No. 333, May 2006 (<http://www.info-turk.be/index.html#Activists>).
- 67 Churchill, W (2003) *Perversions of Justice*, p. 347. For further details on this, also refer to: Fernandes, D. and Ozden, I., US, UK, German and NATO Inspired Psychological Warfare Operations Against the 'Kurdish Communist Threat' in Turkey and Northern Iraq and Fernandes, D. (2006) 'On The Possibilities of Successfully Taking A Case To The International Criminal Court', in 'War and Occupation: Human Rights Abuses, Torture and Disappearances Under Detention', The 5th International Conference Against Disappearances, 16th -20th May 2006, Diyarbakir, Turkey. Organised by The International Committee Against Disappearances (ICAD) and Aiding and Solidarity Association with the Families who lost their Relatives (YAKAY-DER).
- 68 Keen, D. (2006) *Endless War? Hidden Functions of the 'War on Terror'*, 2 p. 77.
- 69 Keen, D. (2006) *Endless War? Hidden Functions of the 'War on Terror'*, p. 77.

Desmond Fernandes and Iskender Ozden's book, *US, UK, German and NATO 'Inspired' Psychological Warfare Operations Against The Kurdish 'Communist' Threat in Turkey and Northern Iraq*, will be released in November 2006. It is published by Apec Press (Stockholm, Sweden) and can be obtained in the UK from Housmans Bookshop (5 Caledonian Road, Kings Cross, London N1 9DX. Tel: 020 7837 4473)

A longer, more detailed version of this article is available on the Variant website: www.variant.org.uk

for the financial year 2006. It is also known that Turkey was the recipient of a US Foreign Military Financing (FMF) programme in 2005, and President Bush, again, requested further FMF for Turkey in 2006.⁵⁴ FMF, it needs to be appreciated, "provides grants for foreign militaries to buy US weapons, services, and training. Although the majority of these funds are used to buy weapons, mobile training teams are often deployed as a facet of weapons sales packages to train the foreign country's forces in the operation and maintenance of the weapon system(s). In other cases, aid recipients use this money to buy training for their soldiers in specific skill areas. In such cases, U.S. mobile training teams, usually made up of Special Operations Forces, are sent to the host country for up to six months".⁵⁵

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) have also provided assistance to Turkish forces involved in the *War on Terror*: "The FBI is [...] involved in training foreign police and paramilitary forces. This training is justified primarily as part of its efforts to counter drug trafficking, terrorism, and organized crime [...] No annual report provides public information on FBI foreign training programs [...] The DEA, also part of the Justice Department, conducts international police training as well [...] The international police training programs of the FBI and the DEA are funded at least in part out of the annual appropriation for Justice Department operations and are, therefore, exempt from the vetting requirements".⁵⁶ FBI director Robert Mueller said: "We are working with our counterparts elsewhere in Europe and in Turkey to address the PKK and work cooperatively, to find and cut off financing to terrorist groups, be it PKK, al-Qaeda."⁵⁷

That the DEA and FBI are providing extensive and ongoing anti-terrorist and anti-narcotics assistance to Turkey's security, military, and paramilitary forces is ironic, given the heavy involvement in organised crime, state terrorism and drugs trade among these sectors.⁵⁸

Confirmation that the FBI and CIA were co-ordinating their anti-PKK initiatives with the Turkish state came in a December 2005 *Hurriyet* report: "Following the visit of FBI director Robert Mueller to Turkey, CIA chief Porter Goss followed in Mueller's footsteps and paid a visit to Ankara for talks with officials from the Turkish General Staff and the intelligence service MIT. The visits have triggered speculations that the US might start a serious initiative for the neutralization of PKK after the Iraqi elections. Turkey will also convey to Goss its concerns about developments that might pave the way for the founding of a Kurdish state in Northern Iraq [...] Turkish Land Forces Commander General Yasar Büyükanit was currently in the US for talks with US officials" over these matters.⁵⁹

A report from the blog group Winds of Change observes that, "the most interesting details of the [December 2005] meeting seem to have appeared in *Cumhuriyet*, which states: 'During his recent visit to Ankara, CIA Director Porter Goss reportedly brought three dossiers on Iran to Ankara. Goss is said to have asked for Turkey's support for Washington's policy against Iran's nuclear activities, charging that Tehran had supported terrorism and taken part in activities against Turkey. Goss also asked Ankara to be ready for a possible US air operation against Iran and Syria'.⁶⁰ The Bush administration's need to secure Turkey's assistance in its joint plans with the Israeli state to restructure the Middle East has probably also meant that it will, in return, have had to commit itself, once again, to aggressively supporting the Turkish state's war against the PKK.

It seems reasonable to conclude that a new intensified phase of joint US-Turkey psychological warfare operations is under way. The US Embassy in Ankara, for instance, recently confirmed that General Joseph W Ralston (USAF, retired) had been appointed as Special Envoy for Countering the PKK with responsibility for coordinating US engagement with the governments of Turkey and Iraq to eliminate the PKK and other terrorist groups operating in northern Iraq and across the Turkey-Iraq border. "This appointment underscores the commitment of the United States to work with Turkey and Iraq to eliminate terrorism in all its forms".⁶¹ For instance, local news sources in northern Iraq (south Kurdistan) reported on August 14, 2006, that "over 100 Turkish MIT (National Intelligence Agency) agents had been permitted to cross over into the region together with members of the Turkish Special Forces".⁶² These cross-border military incursions into the Iraq – supposedly a US protectorate⁶³ – are unlikely to have taken place without a green light from Washington.

If, as we are now informed, the Bush administration, in its wisdom, is committed to destroying the PKK additional questions arise. Will there be, as many Kurdish and human rights analysts contend, a resurgence of false flag operations? Will initiatives that seek to resolve the Kurdish question through military/paramilitary means, rather than through peaceful dialogue, be intensified? Will there be a resurgence of anti-terrorist abductions, disappearances, massacres, and torture sessions for Kurdish civilians, intellectuals,

schoolchildren, students, journalists, politicians, lawyers and other perceived pro-Kurdish supporters in Turkey and northern Iraq?

Concerns Over The New 'Anti-Terrorism Law'

We also need to ask ourselves whether the Bush administration will persist in using a terrorist definition of the PKK which it will have been furnished with by its Turkish counterpart. Certainly, Condoleeza Rice, during her most recent visit to Turkey, did not publicly express any concern over such definitions when she provided assurances that the Bush administration was fully supportive of Turkey's *War on Terror*. The Bush administration appears to be minded to accept the absurd and dangerous definitions that are being provided and used under the new Turkish 'Anti-Terrorism Law' to criminalise individuals and organisations. These definitions have the capacity to criminalise the non-violent activities of many Kurdish and non-Kurdish people.

Concerns over this matter were even recently expressed by the UN Special Rapporteur: "[A] letter, sent on May 21 [2006] to the Parliament Justice Committee by Martin Scheinin, UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism, informed Turkey that the new law fails to meet the requirement of proportionality in the use of force by security forces, introduces 'improper restrictions on freedom of expression' and reflects the danger of punishing civilians not involved in violence. 'This danger is exacerbated by the very broad definition of terrorism and the very long and wide list of terrorist offences'."

According to the lawyer Nalan Erkem, a member of the Izmir Bar Association Prevention of Torture Group (IOG): "The arrangements that the draft makes with regard to access to an attorney take away all of the rights of the defendant [...] While it opens the way for torture and mistreatment, the draft also aims to prevent lawyers from proving their existence". Erkem argued that the draft was in the nature of an insult to lawyers in Turkey, stripping away the defence rights that were enshrined under Turkey's accession plans with the EU.⁶⁴ "Representatives of 17 non-government organisations (NGOs)⁶⁵ read a press statement in front of Istanbul's Sultanahmet Justice Hall [...] where an appeal was made to [...] reject it. The move came after similar appeals from leading Turkish human rights groups including IHD and MAZLUMDER. The country's Human Rights Foundation (TIHV) joined in the criticism and said the law would not only shift Turkey from its previous EU projections but also meant a turn to a 'tolerance policy towards torture'.⁶⁶

Conclusion

In reflecting upon the current situation, it is worth noting that the Bush administration has set in place a series of arrangements that are aimed at securing immunity from prosecution of all US, Turkish and Israeli forces who may be charged with war crimes or genocide crimes. The US government, it seems, has not only been seeking to unethically provide immunity from prosecution of its own military and civil personnel at the International Criminal Court (ICC), but also those of its client states – Israel and Turkey in particular: "Senior (US) officials have stated repeatedly and quite categorically that they will continue to reject any jurisdictional arrangement allowing international prosecution of its own civilian authorities or military personnel for war crimes as 'an infringement upon US national sovereignty'. Objections have also been raised with regard to any curtailment of self-assigned US prerogatives to shield its clients – usually referred to as 'friends' – from prosecution for crimes committed under its sponsorship – e.g. [...] Turkish officials presiding over the ongoing 'pacification' of Kurdistan".⁶⁷

The information gathered in this article shows that "an important part of the political function of the *War on Terror* has been the way it legitimises political intimidation by a range of allies beyond the Bush/Blair/Aznar axis. In effect, the *War on Terror* has given a licence to internal repression in countries supporting this war."⁶⁸ And that includes Turkey, of course. "As in many civil wars, demonising one party has created space for the abuses of others. As Michael Mann observes, labelling opponents as al-Qaeda allows repressive governments to do what they want with limited international criticism".⁶⁹ Not only has the US government's stance allowed the Turkish government to act repressively and ruthlessly with regard to the Kurdish question, it has actively assisted it, as it did throughout the genocidal period of the 1990s, through its ruthless anti-terrorism initiatives. We need to seriously reflect upon these issues and act to expose and end these unacceptable actions and activities.



The Chinese Challenge: Hallucinations for Other Futures What can we learn from China that China is not teaching us?

“Interactivity is all there is to write about: it is the paradox and the horizon of realization.”

It is the paradigm of writing on which main cultures are depending. Their kind of rationality, their efficiency of technology, the way they of organize society and communication, arts and sciences, all are not to separate from their paradigm of writing. How people are involved in writing and scriptural practice is enabling their possibility of thinking and living. Main cultures always depend on their paradigm of writing. Writing in general is the most abstract mechanism and technology of cultural formations.¹

European culture, the first hallucination

European culture depends on alphabetic writing and the Indian concept of Zero² with its mechanism of positionality enabling arithmetic, a rational economy of calculation, formal and programming languages in general.³

Leibniz had a first European hallucination about Chinese writing. He conveyed in his hallucination the idea of a Lingua Universalis as a base of negotational and calculable communication between peoples and nations.⁴ He proposed his idea in analogy to the Chinese hieroglyphs which are mediating between different spoken languages by their scripturality. To realize his dream he invented the binary number system as the most non-redundant concept for number representation and calculation. He speculated it as an European answer to the I Ching.⁵ Consequently, he invented on this base language-independent calculi, logic and a prototype of a mechanical calculator (computer).⁶

Modern European science and technology followed Leibniz' ideas and produced binarism and digitalism in technology which is, today, the basic technological and economic force in the Western, but also in the Asian, world. But the development of technology in Europe stayed regulated and constraint by the framework of Old European theology, metaphysics and ethics.

The US-American dream

In America, European thinking and technology could get rid of its constraining metaphysical roots. Inventing “Ubiquitous Computing”, technically realized as Artificial Intelligence, Artificial Live, Cognitive Systems, Robotics, etc., it was able to realize digitalism without frontiers.⁷ Today, the US-American dream is exhausted.⁸ In its successful realization it has come to a closure. While Old Europe is still occupied with its Greek roots⁹, US-America, who got rid of these European limitations, now, is missing roots as inspirational resources to design its futures. The necessary decline of America is rooted in its lack of roots. The total detachment from Europe, the lack of own grounds, culminated in digitalism and brought it to its extremes. A more radical technical speculation than the reduction of immortality of the human soul on the base of 1 and 0, as conceived in digital metaphysics, seems not to be accessible.¹⁰ All the following future US-American developments will appear as reiterations of its pragmatistic world-view of digitalism.

Thus, the European and US-American dream, based on Greek alphabetism, Indian number theory and Leibniz' hallucination of a European adoption of the Chinese Model of writing has been dreamt out and lost its power to design planetarian futures.

Chinese Model of Writing

China, which didn't develop similar philosophy¹¹, science¹² and technology¹³ because of the hyper-

complexity of her writing, is now adopting the fruits of Western achievements. But China, for the next epoch, has an advantage to the West: it has its scriptural resources not yet exploited. China's writing, which always was the base and guarantee of its culture and politics, is not limited by alphabetic linearism and digitalism. Linearity of Western thinking is easily mapped onto the tabularity of Chinese rationality. The process of mapping linearity onto tabularity is not producing any kind of identity-disturbance for Chinese self-understanding.

The Chinese concept of writing is tabular, multi-dimensional, embodied, open, complex and based on the experiences of the oldest cultural tradition of mankind.¹⁴ These characteristics of Chinese writing are exactly the criteria for a science, capable to deal with the problems of modern society and opening up new futures.

Hence, the challenge of China today is not its new economic power as the West is fearing and economically exploiting¹⁵, but lies in the possibility of a re-discovery of its own rationality as the base of a revolutionary technology for the future. Leaving everything American far behind.

The Chinese Challenge to the West is not economical, political or military. It is not the event of a re-awakening economic and technological China which is the Grand Challenge to the West but the possible re-discovery of the operability of its writing system for the design of new rational formal systems, like new mathematics and new programming languages.¹⁶

Because of its occupation to adapt, at first, to the Western technology and economy, China is not yet, officially, aware about these possibilities of a new main culture for the future. Maybe, the 19th century was European, the 20th US-American, at least the 21st century will be Chinese.

Morphogramatics, the second hallucination

Thus, my thoughts may occur, until now, as a second, post-European hallucination about the paradigm of Chinese writing. What I propose, as a first step, is to study polycontextural logic¹⁷ and morphogramatics¹⁸ as a possible new understanding of notational systems for Chinese rationality and technology emerging beyond exhausted Western paradigms. This, with the knowledge of its risk, is a kind of an experimental hallucination capable of permanent self-deconstruction as a strategy to surpass Western, and Asian, phono-logo-centrism¹⁹ and metaphysical mono-contextualism²⁰ in thinking and technology. Morphogramatics and polycontextuality as including and surpassing the Western design of thinking, computation and programming are satisfying the structural criteria of tabularity²¹ and complexity needed for the operative rationality of a new epoch. Hallucination always had been at the beginning of cultural revolutions. It always has been the job of cultural administration to deny it.

Notes

1. Gotthard Gunther, Villem Flusser, Arnold Gehlen, McLuhan
2. http://saxakali.com/COLOR_ASP/discoverof0.htm <http://www-history.mcs.st-and.ac.uk/HistTopics/Zero.html> <http://home.ubalt.edu/ntsbarsh/zero/ZERO.HTM>
3. http://www.csee.umbc.edu/help/theory/lang_def.shtml,
4. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gottfried_Leibniz
5. <http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/leibnitz.htm>
6. <http://www.idsia.ch/~juergen/leibniz.html>
7. Mark Weiser, <http://www.ubiq.com/hypertext/weiser/acmfuture2endnote.htm>, G. Gunther, Die amerikanische Apokalypse, Kurt Klagenfurt (Ed), München; Wien 2000.
8. <http://www.the-american-interest.com/cms/contents.cfm>,

<http://www.the-american-interest.com/cms/joffe.cfm>, http://www.kath.de/internet/vortrag/mueller_technospiritualitaet_vortrag.pdf http://www.transnational.org/forum/meet/2004/Galtung_USempireFall.html

9. http://www.spiked-online.com/index.php?surveys/2024_article/1310/ http://www.nesc.ac.uk/esi/events/Grand_Challenges/
10. <http://rroundtable.kein.org/node/414>, Moravec, H. (1988), Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence. http://www.metanexus.net/metanexus_online/show_article2.asp?id=9115, http://digitalphilosophy.org/on_the_soul.htm see: Ed Fredkin, Stephen Wolfram, Holtzman
11. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/comparphil-chiwes/#1>
12. <http://www.formalontology.it/chinese-philosophy.htm>, http://saxakali.com/COLOR_ASP/chinamh1.htm
13. <http://hanxianping.blogchina.com/886414.html>
14. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2006-03/28/content_4356764.htm
15. <http://www.thebusinessonline.com>, Andrew Neil, What China can teach the West
16. Han-liang Chang, Hallucinating the Other: Derridean Fantasies of Chinese Script <http://ccms.ntu.edu.tw/~changhl/changhl/hallucinating.pdf>
17. <http://www.thinkartlab.com/pkl/lola/PolyLogics.pdf>
18. <http://www.thinkartlab.com/pkl/tm/MG-Buch.pdf>
19. Archive for Derrida and Deconstructivism, <http://www.hydra.umn.edu/derrida/>
20. http://www.thinkartlab.com/pkl/media/SUSHIS_LOGICS.pdf
21. Gotthard Gunther, <http://www.thinkartlab.com/archive/Cyberphilosophy.pdf>

Dr. Rudolf Kaehr, Glasgow 2006 www.thinkartlab.com, rkaehr@btinternet.com
<http://rudys-chinese-challenge.blogspot.com>

《中国的挑战:一个新猜想》

——对“中国挑战”说的一个注释

作者:Rudolf Kaehr
翻译:韩宪平
来源:思维实验室
网址:www.thinkartlab.com

“我们能从中国人没有教我们的地方学到什么?”——鲁道夫

主流文化依赖于书写模式。民族的理性特质、他们的技术有效性、他们把社会组织起来、交流信息、以及他们的艺术科学等等这一切都跟书写模式分不开;人们在书写和创建自己作为典籍的文化实践中学会思维和生活。主流文化总是依赖于某种书写里包含的理性和技术模式。一般来说,书写是一种文化、政治和技术形成的最抽象的机制和技术(1)。

——欧洲的文化及第一次猜想

欧洲的文化依赖于字母书写和印度的零占位机制(2),这种机制使得算术、计算的经济合理、形式化和编程语言成为可能(3)。莱布尼茨提出第一个关于中国文字的猜想。他设想了一种“通用语言(4)”作为国家和人民之间沟通的可信赖的通信基础。他的这个想法类似于中国的象形文字,中国象形文字通过典籍在不同口头语言之间起着桥梁作用。要实现这一梦想他发明了凝练的数字表示和计算系统,这就是二进制系统,依此作为欧洲对古老的“中国”易经(5)的一个回应,最终他发明了独立于任何民族语言的运算方法和逻辑,还有作为计算机的原型的计算机(6)。现代欧洲科学技术遵循了莱布尼茨的想法,产生了技术上的二进制主义和数字主义,并形成了今天西方——以及亚洲——的基本技术和经济力量。但是,欧洲的技术力量停留在“老欧洲”的意识形态、形而上学和伦理学框架和限制当中。

——美国的美式梦想

在美国,欧洲的思维和形式摆脱了她的形而上学老套子,发明了“无所不在的计算”,实现了人工智能,人工生命,认知系统,机器人等等;实现了无限扩张的数字主义(7)。

今天,美国的美式梦想气数已尽(8)!美式梦想的成功已经接近了尾声;而老欧洲还由她的古希腊起源支配着(9),摆脱了欧洲限制的美式梦想现在迷失了根本,失掉了设计未来的精神源泉。美国的必然衰落是由于“无根”!与欧洲

分道扬镳,成了无本之木无源之水,在数字主义达到了她的颠峰。在沉湎于“数字形而上学”中并归结为0和1的不朽精神世界中,展望更先进的科技发展似乎是不可能的了(10)。全部美国式发展会在“数字实用主义”世界观中固步自封!

所以,基于古希腊字母文字、印度的数论和莱布尼兹采用中国文字模型,这一切作为欧洲和美国的美式梦想失去了设计世界未来发展的力量。

——中国书写模式

中国没有发展出类似的哲学(11)、科学(12)和技术(13),这是因为她的超复杂的书写模式,现在正在采用西方的科学技术成果;但是,中国在下一个时代自有对西方的优势:有没有被开发的丰富典籍资源。中国文字永远是她的文化和政治的基础和保证,没有“字母线性主义”和数字主义的限制。西方思维的线性性质是更容易映射进入中国理性的“表格样式”的。这种映射过程,在中国文字的自明性质方面不会导致任何混乱。

中国文字概念是表格样式的、多维度的、嵌入式的、开放的、复杂的和基于民族最古老文化传统的(14)。而这些特征正符合科学技术在处理现代社会问题和开创新未来的要求的。

因此,为今而言,所谓中国的挑战,不是为西方视为危险的新的经济实力和扩张(15),而是在作为未来技术革命基础的中国理性重新发现的可能性方面。中国理性把任何美国式的东西远远地甩在了后面。中国对西方的挑战不是经济的、也不是政治的或者军事的;苏醒的技术中国和经济中国这个事件并不构成对西方的所谓的“大挑战”,真正的挑战是重新发现她的文字系统,并设计出新的理性形式系统,就像创造新的数学和新的编程语言一样(16);是面对一个崛起的中国我们是否做好了充分的准备。

因为忙于适应西方的技术和经济,中国官方还没有意识到这种形成未来主流文化基础的可能性。可能吧,十九世纪是欧洲世纪,二十世纪是美国世纪,而二十一世纪将是中国世纪。

——形态语法学:第二个猜想

我的想法作为后欧洲的第二个关于中国文字的猜想由此而生。第一步,我提出“多结构逻辑

(Polycontextural Logic)(17)”的研究和“形态语法学(Morphogrammtics)(18)”研究,作为在西方模式走到尽头时,对中国理性和技术的概念系统作的一个可能的、新的理解。这一工作——我知道它的风险——是某种实验性的猜想,具有永恒自解构的能力,超越西方、亚洲在思维和技术方面的“具象中心主义(19)”,形而上学的单一结构主义(20)。

形态语法学和多结构理论包含并且超越西方的思维、计算和编程语言的设计,能够满足新时代对操作理性提出的表格样式(21)的处理和对复杂性处理的要求。

猜想总是文化传统革命的前奏,总是为文化管理者所拒绝。

参考资源

1. Gotthard Gunther, Villem Flusser, Arnold Gehlen, McLuhan
2. http://saxakali.com/COLOR_ASP/discoverof0.htm <http://www-history.mcs.st-and.ac.uk/HistTopics/Zero.html> <http://home.ubalt.edu/ntsbarsh/zero/ZERO.HTM>
3. http://www.csee.umbc.edu/help/theory/lang_def.shtml
4. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gottfried_Leibniz
5. <http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/leibnitz.htm>
6. <http://www.idsia.ch/~juergen/leibniz.html>
7. Mark Weiser, <http://www.ubiq.com/hypertext/weiser/acmfuture2endnote.htm>, G. Gunther, Die amerikanische Apokalypse, Kurt Klagenfurt (Ed), München; Wien 2000.
8. <http://www.the-american-interest.com/cms/contents.cfm>, <http://www.the-american-interest.com/cms/joffe.cfm>, http://www.kath.de/internet/vortrag/mueller_technospiritualitaet_vortrag.pdf http://www.transnational.org/forum/meet/2004/Galtung_USempireFall.html
9. http://www.spiked-online.com/index.php?surveys/2024_article/1310/ http://www.nesc.ac.uk/esi/events/Grand_Challenges/
10. <http://roundtable.kein.org/node/414>, Moravec, H. (1988), Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence. http://www.metanexus.net/metanexus_online/show_article2.asp?id=9115, http://digitalphilosophy.org/on_the_soul.htm see: Ed Fredkin, Stephen Wolfram, Holtzman
11. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/comparphil-chiwes/#1>
12. <http://www.formalontology.it/chinese-philosophy.htm>, http://saxakali.com/COLOR_ASP/chinamh1.htm
13. <http://hanxianping.blogchina.com/886414.html>
14. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2006-03/28/content_4356764.htm
15. <http://www.thebusinessonline.com>, Andrew Neil, What China can teach the West
16. Han-liang Chang, Hallucinating the Other: Derridean Fantasies of Chinese Script <http://ccms.ntu.edu.tw/~changh/changh/hallucinating.pdf>
17. <http://www.thinkartlab.com/pkl/lola/PolyLogics.pdf>
18. <http://www.thinkartlab.com/pkl/tm/MG-Buch.pdf>
19. Archive for Derrida and Deconstructivism, <http://www.hydra.umn.edu/derrida/>
20. www.thinkartlab.com/pkl/media/SUSHIS_LOGICS.pdf
21. Gotthard Gunther, <http://www.thinkartlab.com/archive/Cyberphilosophy.pdf>