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variant

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The Tainted Word

William Clark

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

(Luke chapter 7)

Ian Christie

Tales from the script

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

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

Reality fabrication had also been the purpose of Christie's talk, "A New Agenda for the Arts" which was also slyly pushed around the SAC by 'colleagues' who followed the lead and felt the need to be seen to be urging others towards Christie's big idea. This is the brainless fraud that there is no need to form an arts policy distinct from that dictated in London. Christie even offers the golden promise that if "autonomous Scotland" were to follow the government line we would be the "envy and fascination" of the rest of the country.

The problem is the Scottish electorate voted for less dictatorship from London, not more. People want something different for the future not more of the same old shite. But there arts policy has remained despite the wheeling in and switching on of a couple of new appointees.

Tacking on the word 'Scottish' did not disguise the obvious difficulty with Christie's little talk: that it is propaganda, that he is working for the government and that he is bullshitting people. The tone is of an Oxford graduate on the lowest rung of the Civil service, perhaps in a propaganda department for some colonial enterprise. His statements such as "policy debate about 'the arts' is one of the most dispiriting areas of stand-offs and entrenched interests in our intellectual life", don't make much sense in Scotland—what policy debate?

Christie was employed to discern the future environment for the arts for the Scottish, Welsh and English Arts Councils in 1996. So this was money for old rope, ignominiously flogged yet again in the SAC Annual Report of 1999 which cites Christie's talk as the sole example of its organisation of arts policy debate. An example of nihilistic apathy.

Christie even points to "policy debate" as a key problem, but what he really seems to mean is any independent thought and free discussion not to the government's liking and eh...actual culture, art. What is dispiriting is that his Pol Pot equation aims to exclude first *all* the arts administrators including *all* partnerships with private business and secondly *any* artist who has expressed dissatisfaction:

"...the arts establishment is split on tediously familiar lines. On the one hand, the official arts world is preoccupied with the economics of cultural policy—subsidy, value for money, partnership with business and a goal of reaching new mass audiences ('art for all'). Ranged against it are members of an establishment of discontented *artistes* - including those who have recently announced that they were forming an 'alternative arts council' to seek more resources for their favoured forms of high culture. Arts Council chairman Gerry Robinson confronts Harold Pinter: it is yet another showdown between the men in grey suits and the men in black polo necks."

Leaving aside that this has nothing much to do with Scotland or reality; Christie inferiorises contemporary discussion on art and arts policy to undermine both arts funders and artists from any expectation of autonomy of purpose (which for some is actually the attraction). In fact Christie further engenders the bad faith that only authentic and open debate could possibly counter.

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

Arts administrators need to be primarliy aware of the debates within the arts so as to be able to respond. What the government wants has to be counter balanced by what artists want. Or are we to be forever puppets? Administrators should not be led into nor encouraged—as they were with this event—to try to influence and pre-determine debate by political funding exclusions. Their positions are predicated on an independence from government. Traditionally 'think tanks' have played a role in poisoning and tainting this independence. How they fit into power structures must be openly analysed: and bear in mind a conflict of interest is also a *potential* conflict of interest.

The carrot and stick (the arse and the lick) approach is a sadistic pleasure of control for the psychologically damaged. With the Lottery there is an inordinate surplus of funding available: some £4.4bn which remains unallocated. That this has been atrociously handled (and largely embezzled by government) is one reason why distrust *legitimately* exists between artists and administrators: the artists know the criteria which is used to exclude them is politically motivated and biased towards spurious government endeavours and incoherent and coercive marketing theories. This is destroying our culture not sustaining it.

Putting every egg in the basket Christie maintains that cultural policy needs to be first joined to government policies (the "modernisation of the fabric of the UK" no less) and then armed with the marketing spin of ever shifting concepts of 'Audience Development', which I imagine will be provided by think tanks and consultants ("policy entrepreneurs") thus creating the Catch-22 loop. This will simplify everything: the "nature of the artistic experience on offer" is inconsequential. Art has no place except as predetermined sanitised "forms of arts enterprise which combine civic spirit with entrepreneurial skills..." We are all welcome to "join up".

The 'evidence' he presents to justify the idea that everything must follow government policy is one source: Geoff Mulgan. A Cabinet Office news release of 1/9/00 announced the appointment of Mulgan as Director of the slightly Orwellian 'Performance and Innovation Unit' (PIU): "The PIU's aim is to improve the capacity of Government to address strategic, cross-cutting issues and to promote innovation in the development and delivery of policy and in the delivery of the Government's objectives. The Unit reports direct to the Prime Minister through Sir Richard Wilson." Previously, the report continued, "Mulgan has worked since 1997 as a Special Adviser to the Prime Minister on social policy issues...responsible for social exclusion, welfare to work, family, urban, voluntary sector and other issues... He was previously the founder and Director of Demos, the independent think tank."

Theodore Zeldin

Hey Ian, isn't that where you work? Even a fool would need a bit more than that to take Christie seriously but all he provides is an obscure concluding phrase that "we need a Zeldinist Manifesto."[1] This is a reference to Theodore Zeldin a slightly bonkers Oxford academic who writes:

"I see humanity as a family that has hardly met. I see the meeting of people, bodies, thoughts, emotions or actions as the start of most change. Each link created by a meeting is like a filament, which, if they were all visible, would make the world look as though it is covered with gossamer. Every individual is connected to others, loosely or closely, by a unique combination of filaments, which stretch across the frontiers of space and time."[2]

That's straight out of Private Eye's 'Pseud's Corner (and I don't like his Open University hair style either), but the 'gossamer filaments' of Christie and Demos' connections are certainly in need of investigation. As with Mulgan's book 'Connexity,' the Amazing Zeldin has found a small niche market with a handful of corporate PR managers on the verge of a nervous breakdown. They use it to justify 'Sustainable Development,' (a propaganda exercise funded by Big Business and government) as a 'Third Way' distraction from the ecological ravages of their Global empires. Aan what do you know, Zeldin is along with Christie and Mulgan, also a core member of Demos.

Christie currently works for the Cabinet Office with Mulgan. For nine years a Fellow of the Policy Studies Institute and the Henley Centre: he's a think tanker's think tanker. He also has his own little organisation 'Green Alliance' (GA). A typical GA pamphlet, by Christie, argues the political case for sustainable development as a rationale for the EU. GA organised the second annual Rio Tinto Environmental and Social Forum, where RTZ company representatives outlined what Rio Tinto has achieved, described a range of initiatives underway and promised to continue constructive engagement in the future. Then presumably went back to dynamiting the rain forest.

GA ran a seminar for William Hague and his environment spokesman Damian Green, on what line they should be punting, then went round the country performing with John Prescott and Micheal Meacher who both spoke at their annual meeting. Not everyone can make money out of turning politics into a middle-man's melange, not everyone sees political commitment and belief as such an opportunity for prostitution.[3]

Think Tanks such as Demos also pander to the strategies, structures and operating processes of major corporations which are complicit factors in the reduction in the political and economic power of nations. A corollary to this is the ever decreasing ability of governments to meet the needs and

expectations of their constituents. The ulterior motive of 'corporate community engagement' is to pirate money from government social management infrastructures which will in the long term eventually abrogates responsibility for social policy to large financial concerns.[4] A great deal of this has been rationalised by think tanks as part of a 'Third way' approach. As we will see later the people who run them are becoming adept at obtaining government money through phoney cultural projects.

The Sadistic Statistic

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

Tony Blair[5]

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

Christie also writes for *Prospect*—a small magazine desperately pushing the 'Third Way' which aspires to the role played by *Encounter* in the late 50s. In 'Return to Sociology,' adopting a manner not unlike Senator Joe McCarthy, Christie blames the "1968 generation" for unspecified crimes against sociology.[6]

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

In Bradbury's novel the History Man is not Howard Kirk (the character played by Anthony Sher in the 82 TV adaptation) but an unseen shadowy figure; but you know what he means. This is after all just more propaganda. The point is to create the illusion that Marxism achieved a monopoly in the sociology curriculum.

Here again he relies on reductive, crude characterisations of the left (while ignoring the right—yes what is right-wing sociology?). The article is a perverse attempt to erase Marxist and left-wing influences (like the Stalinists air-brushing their former comrades out of the picture). He cuts the history of sociology at 1961 and starts it again in 1997 with Demos. The unwanted material is then discarded as he settles down to relentlessly promote his own work and elevate the role of Demos and allied think tanks and consultancies because of their closeness to government. He then depicts them as the logical successor of British Empiricists Lord Young and Peter Willmott, the nice 'establishment' sociologists. The guys who get funding.

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

Giddens' ideas such as the 'responsible risk taker' grew out of conversations with Mulgan. Together they concocted ill-thought-out concepts for social experimentation on the poor as if they were a bunch of lab rats. What they derived was 'embedded' in the Government's Social Exclusion

Anthony Sher as Howard Kirk

Unit. Now with the Performance and Innovation Unit there is the development of a desperate propaganda aspect to Mulgan's activities, and as ever it is blowing back in his face.

In 1998 at the direction of the Government, an 'on-line think tank' called *Nexus* initiated (within 'on-side' academic circles) a series of debates on the Third way, involving Anthony Giddens; David Marquand, Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford (also Demos); Julian Le Grand, Professor of Social Policy at the LSE; and the Directors of the Institute for Public Policy Research and the Fabian Society. The whole sad little gang: *but no academic backing was given to the practical meaning or legitimacy of the Third Way*.

Nexus was held up as providing a "tested model of how intellectuals, academics, social entrepreneurs and policy experts would assist the development of the public policy of centre-left governments". It soon deteriorated to extinction. One more confirmation of the vacuum in Third Way thinking, and the inability of its proponents to apply its ideas to concrete social realities. [7]

But not everyone can make money out of the discussion of poverty. As Christie accidentally admits: "The reform of local government and the welfare state is creating a large demand for information about the preferences of the consumers of public services."[8] One of the most blatant hypocritical examples of this 'internal market' being the ERSC/government funded Research Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE). In its second year in '99 they managed to spend £764,000 on themselves, only producing a couple of books and reports which are overwhelmingly influenced by the work of the Director, John Hills who writes with Geoff Mulgan. The whole point of CASE seems to be to report to Mulgan and tell him what he already knows.[9]

An accurate picture would be against the national interest old bean

Central to the gang's ideas is the portrayal of both 'Old Left' and 'New Right' as coherent, monotheist political ideologies, this is a convenient myth—but a misleading form of product differentiation. Whether elaborated by Blair, Giddens, Mulgan or Christie, the Third Way is always in search of meaning, presenting concepts awaiting precise definition. But does political expediency actually need or desire intellectual and moral justification? If the Third Way remains a fuzzy undefined concept, there can be no political accountability.

Which is handy because there is no political accountability. The establishment position can't really account for its complicity in the suppression and repression which was targeted at the left in those years Christie wants to so conveniently avoid—none of it is in the history books or the official accounts, most of the relevant information is a secret we are told. The prevailing illusion is that this only happened during the 'Cold War' and that everything now is open. This has gone on so long that a great deal of that suppression and covert compliance with government (and the market ideology) has become internalised and institutionalised within what is passed off as intellectual culture. This is a major problem. A fundamental cultural insecurity.

In the Thatcher years and before, many independent journalists took the influence of think tanks to be a malignant and covert right-wing influence in politics. They realised certain organisations were providing doubtful research to reinforce government/intelligence service's propaganda. Overall this was rarely acknowledged in academia and the papers and TV who were themselves manipulated. In some cases contrary evidence was vociferously kept out of debate by those within institutions who were connected and/or sympathetic in recruiting and training within academia. Paul Wilkinson up in St. Andrews University immediately comes to mind; and he is still providing a service to the budgets of MI5 with his sinister input into loathsome legislation such as the recent 'Terrorism Bill'.

These previous Marxists: Giddens, Mulgan, Demos, despise political activism because they—the 'policy entrepreneurs' as they call themselves—want to dictate policy: why else would they do what they do if they didn't. The 'Third Way' mirrors their own personal sell-outs and biddable political conscience. Put it this way 'Policy entrepreneurs' could easily become Cockney rhyming slang for 'agent-provocateurs'. As we shall see below, they have found a place as agents of influence, joining up with what Anthony Verrier called the 'permanent government.'

Happy ever after in the market place

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

http://archive.briefing.org.uk/1997/december/news2.html

Yes times have been good for Demos, it has increased its staff and moved to new offices in Waterloo (let's hope that's ironic) sharing with the MI6 connected Foreign Policy Centre, among others[10]. Tom Bentley (a former advisor to David Blunkett on education) is now the Director with Beth Egan (advisor to Gordon Brown) as Deputy Director. They still maintain that they are independent from government.

Their web site promotes links to several right-wing think tanks and war mongering arms of the cold war including: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, The RAND Corporation, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Hudson Institute (founded by Herman Khan the model for Kubrick's Dr Strangelove), The Heritage Foundation, The Centre for Policy Studies, The Institute of Economic Affairs, The Aspen Institute, The Adam Smith Institute and so on...

Demos trustees bring together mind benders Sir Douglas Hague (former adviser to Margaret Thatcher), Jan Hall (Chief Executive of the advertising agency Gold Greenlees Trott), Martin Jacques (Co-founder of Demos, former editor of *Marxism Today*, the curiously anti-socialist journal) and Julia Middleton (Chief Executive of Common Purpose).

Geoff Mulgan now chairs the Advisory Council alongside Martin Taylor, who just happens to be a steering group member of the Bilderberg group (a notoriously secretive elite gathering). After his disastrous time at Barclays Bank, Taylor received a £2.5 million payoff (in addition his shares would be worth £3.2 million). A leading member of Labour's taskforce on welfare reform, he is one of the party's prominent supporters in the City. The millionaire immediately targeted the poorest people in the UK with a focus on 'welfare dependency'. Taylor argued that in order to reduce the growing number of workless households, both partners in an unemployed childless couple

Anthony Giddens

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

Ian Christie is still on the Advisory Council which also has: Matthew D'Ancona (Deputy Editor, The Sunday Telegraph), Terry Leahy (Chief Executive, Tesco plc), Mark Leonard (Director, Foreign Policy Centre), David Marquand (Principal, Mansfield College, Oxford), Anita Roddick (Body Shop plc) and the curiously named 'Perri 6' who is researching into us all being taken over by robots. He has also done extensive research into mind-altering drugs.

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

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

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

Gillian Ashmore (Cabinet Office), Sir Jeremy Beecham (Association of Metropolitan Authorities), David Bell (Financial Times), Dr Andrew Bird (Zeneca), Dr Kevin Bond (Yorkshire Water), Jeremy Hall (Dean Clough Ltd), Richard Hatfield (Ministry of Defence), John Lee (Halifax plc), Ruth MacKenzie (ex-Scottish Opera), Vincent McGinlay (Marks & Spencer plc), Baroness Genista McIntosh (Royal National Theatre), Tim Melville-Ross (Institute of Directors), Sir Alastair Morton (Shadow Strategic Railway Authority and British Railways Board), Sir Herman Ouseley (Commission for Racial Equality), Janet Paraskeva (National Lottery Charities Board), Graham Prentice (Nestlé UK Ltd), John Rivers (Rolls-Royce plc), Gerry Robinson (Arts Council of England), Richard Sambrook (BBC), Barry Shaw (Cleveland Constabulary), Jan Shawe (Prudential Corporation plc), Vivien Stern (The International Centre for Prison Studies), Peter Stoddart (Nissan UK Ltd), Paul Whitehouse (Sussex Police), Ken Williams (Norfolk Constabulary), Ruth Wishart (Freelance Journalist).

Gillian Ashmore meets Glenda Jackson *"My God! That journey felt like a Ken Russell movie!"*

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

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

"Gillian Ashmore is currently on secondment from the Department of Transport to the British Railways Board working on railway privatisation. She joined the Civil Service in 1971 and has worked variously in the Departments of the Environment, Transport, Employment and Trade and Industry. On the Transport side, she has worked mainly in the public transport field. In the latter two Departments she was Deputy Director of the Enterprise and Deregulation Unit. Mrs. Ashmore has also been a non-executive director of P & O European Transport." [11]

Incredibly with a line up like that the CP constitution has the cheek to say the organisation:

"is diverse and non-aligned. It draws on the widest possible variety of sectors, areas, and social groups and recognises only peer level and geographical boundaries as common factors to each group. It is always independent, always balanced and owes no historical or other allegiance to any other organisation. Common Purpose works for the benefit of society as a whole..." [12]

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

Funded by big business and public bodies (everyone from Arms companies, Banks to curiously the Scottish Arts Council—probably through Ruth Wishart's connection) they operate for *their* benefit while their constitution lies that they seek "the advancement of education for the public benefit... to educate men and women from a broad range of geographical, political, ethnic, institutional, social and economic backgrounds."

We have mourned and you have not wept

With Trustees such as Gerry Robinson, the ex-Coca Cola salesman who is now chairman of the Arts Council of England and Janet Paraskeva, the director of the National Lotteries Charities Board (the 'independent organisation' which distributes National Lottery money supposedly to charities and community groups')[13] CP has specialised in channelling money away from genuine charitable causes. Demos is also partially funded directly via the Arts Council/Lottery 'New Opportunities Fund'.

The illusion of independence from funders and government was abandoned with CP's biggest project, 'Citizen's Connection'. Tony Blair's old flat mate Lord Falconer's New Millennium Experience Company (NMEC) said that: "Camelot, NMEC and Common Purpose created...Citizens Connection."[14]

But the legal position of the Camelot Group plc is that as the operator of the UK National Lottery it is supposed to be "not responsible for the allocation of funds raised". Except when it is.

The NMEC was (is?) an extraordinary concoction. According to their press release the 'NMEC is a non-Departmental Public Body and a company, independent from government with one shareholder, Lord Falconer'. This makes it an *Anstalt* a finacial vehicle more commonly associated with Swiss Bank accounts and money laundering. The 'off-shore account' was pioneered by the Mafia: their Lotteries ('the numbers racket') were deemed illegal because of the evidence that they preyed upon the poor—the National Lottery magically does the reverse.

NMEC is funded by the National Lottery via the Millennium Commission (who tried to be independent from government but were threatened with a judicial review). NMEC ran the Dome and a National Programme of events across the UK. It is misleading to gather all this up as the problem with 'the Dome'. For instance, Labour MP Robert Marshall-Andrews tabled a Commons question on numerous secret contracts worth some £450 million—awarded by the NMEC, 'a company with no direct lines of information or accountability'.

But with millions pouring down the drain (well into a few people's pockets) an attempted diamond heist and daily financial craziness at the Dome, no one really noticed anything unusual when Camelot, whoever runs Common Purpose and Lord Falconer gave £2 million to Common Purpose to run a web site which links to the governments' sites, which is all Citizen's Connection is.

Amusingly an exactly similar organisation to 'Citizen's Connection' already existed with Lord Young's School for Social Entrepreneurs, which is funded by HSBC, the National Lottery and a peculiar 'charity' the Esmee Fairbairn Charitable Trust, run by the wife of the former chairman of the SAC, Magnus Linklater.

People have to pay to join up for any CP programme, so who is this money going to? Just about all of CP projects are extensions of PR exercises run by big companies, such as the 'Your Turn' project, which was directly run by BT's PR consultants, so effectively these are being underwritten. Yet—even while CP got millions for their web site—'Your Turn' was specifically given *additional* funding by the National Lottery Charities Board, which as we have seen with CP board member, Janet Paraskeva has a conflict of interest, which she regards as a common purpose and her turn for some money.

Manufactured, twisted...ever more tenuous

"We now live in a world in which fantasy and reality are hard if not impossible to distinguish. Information is the raw material of both fact and fantasy, and has been so industrialised that its origins are rarely visible. Now it can be manufactured, twisted, multiplied and disseminated almost without limit. Assisted by the power of computing, it can be created as if from nothing: tailor made to cognitive needs, put together as pastiche or copy. It needs only minimal reference points. The links between it and an objective reality—the claim of positivism and enlightenment—are ever more tenuous. As a result for the receiver there are few grounds for judgement, apart from received authority or limited experience." [15]

This con artist's confession was written by Geoff Mulgan a few years ago, when he was em...a lefty Sociology lecturer in Sheffield University. You can just smell the post-modernism: confusing fantasy with reality, providing text by the yard. There was only one place for the young Geoff to go: Think Tank Land—the Thought Police—the place where the government pay you to fuck with people's minds. From there Geoff's 'limited experience' (and how he limits others), and his strange fantasies became confused with reality, in first the Social Exclusion Unit, then enforcing these policies in the Performance & Innovation Unit. Mulgan's desk is where all this bureaucracy begins which we see filtering into arts policy (Ian Christie's work) and the administration of the poor.

The type of post-modernist theory expressed by entrepreneurial proponents of the Third Way such as Mulgan, has its roots in the work of Martin Jacques, the founder of Demos who recruited Mulgan.

Jaques pushed the importance of interpreting ideology as no more than the job of gaining the consent of the dominant class. The relations of production, exploitation and the desire for power, impunity and privilege at the heart of the system were overlooked. The market (and its effects) as a structured system of relationships and values escaped their critique. This delineated only free relations of 'exchange' between individuals in the market as consumers.

The early 80s attack of the new conservatives and monetarists on social democratic capitalism together with the collapse of the soviet system gave the market and its values a new prominence for Jacques. Together with the sociologist Stuart Hall they produced political critiques—particularly in the journal 'New Times'—of the new right and are associated with coining the phrase

'Thatcherism'. Critics believe these overestimated its ideological and political coherence and its success in reforming the machinery of state and in capturing public opinion:

"Because Thatcherism had a 'project', it was concluded that the left needed one too. This, it was argued meant a long and difficult reform of the left on the 'hard road to renewal'. But the results of this in 'New Times' and 'post-fordism' involved the jettisoning of many of the critical analyses of left thought."[16]

So with the pseudo-sociology of the 'policy entrepreneur', with this wilful ignorance in exchange for money, we have a social thought which has moved far away from examining the actual conditions of the society in which we live:

"...at a time of widespread disenchantment or retreat on the intellectual left when theory itself had abandoned the ground of oppositional critique and assumed the role of a legitimising discourse with every motive for dissimulating its own material interests and conditions of emergence. In which case we would do better to drop all the glitzy self-promoting talk of 'post-modernism', 'New Times' etc., talk whose sole function—whether wittingly or not—is to offer an escape-route or convenient alibi for thinkers with a large (if unacknowledged) stake in the 'cultural logic of late capitalism.'"[17]

It is impossible now with Demos—employed by New Labour in much the same capacity as the Thatcher government employed the Adam Smith Institute and the IEA—to believe that they are unwitting. The connections and services to organisations such as the Bilderberg, Ditchley, Royal Institute for International Affairs etc. represents their connivance with elite gatherings of business interests unfettered by the democratic process. They are part of the laissez passer in the laissez faire.[18]

Its no go the Demos Man...

The SAC may still promote the mad logic that we will gain independence by abdicating it: but you will only hear this sort of thing from people who are paid to say it or who want to be: paid by government as part of the exercise of control, not public service. However you define Scottish culture it is dangerously destructive to see it as a process of enforcing a diseased mentality contracted from a Downing Street 'policy entrepreneur'.

This is ignored, but Scottish culture is self-determined here in Scotland and it will always seek freedom. Part of actually realising that freedom will be a redress of balance, an acknowledgement of the areas of culture which are ignored and suppressed, deemed 'too political,' because they challenge the assumptions of the power structure which presently has control of the financial resources. The present power structure maintains class hierarchies whereby selected members of the middle class once suitably 'educated' into appreciating and administering 'high culture', then become eradicators of certain forms of culture, denigrating the nascent and indigenous culture.

Everyone's had enough of it. It simply doesn't work.

Many of those in our areas of higher education, mainstream media, those administrating culture and the majority of artists will have to make themselves aware about what really happened in Scottish culture in the last 20 years because there is no real record. The level of cultural debate is atrociously non-existent—the example the SAC set with Ian Christie is a disgrace, really quite repulsive. It puts us back to the position of intellectual openness of Czechoslovakia in the 1960s—instead of tanks rolling in it is think tanks. It makes no difference to me if I am considered a dissident for saying so.

Where are arts and cultural policy analysed intelligently? Why was Ian Christie paid to perpetuate this stage managed fraud by the two Stepford Wives of the SAC and Glasgow City Council?

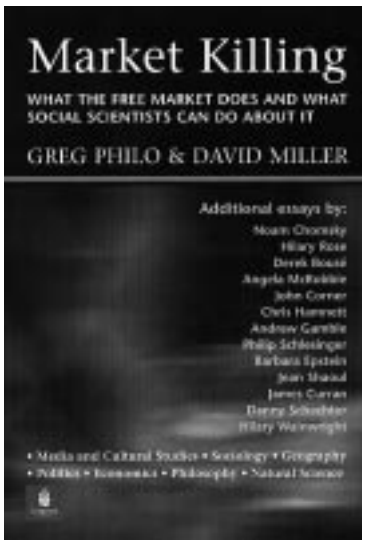
Centralised devolution for all is now on offer

across the country. A national network of Commisars. But the fact is that the Arts Council are losing the support of even their own committee members. Those with any integrity are blackmailed or put into corners, doubling up on their jobs, shortening their lives with the stress of competing in this phoney market place. The internal market becomes internalised market values—pretend partnerships where the mentor becomes the tormentor. There will never be a shortage of money for government stooges like Ian Christie and his like, those who advocate that we maintain in ignorance of the relevance of our own culture. I'd love to sell my soul myself, but they think I'm the Devil.

notes

1. Zeldin is studying 'Happiness' at the moment in Oxford.
2. (Quoted from Zeldin's 'An Intimate History of Humanity' from a review by Sean McWilliams)
3. http://www.green-alliance.org.uk/Documents/Newsletters/InsideTrack_Highlights_Autumn1999.pdf. GA together with the Fabian Society and the Royal Institute for International Affairs published Peter Hain's 'The End of Foreign Policy.' Mulgan and Christie are also involved in Green Futures magazine.
4. A New Model for "Corporate Philanthropy" by Ron Burke, General Manager, Global Corporate Relations, National Australia Bank, First published Family Matters, No. 51 Spring/Summer 1998 sets out Zeldin's influence.
5. Quoted from http://www.prospect.org/print-friendly/print/V10/45/klein-r.html
6. Prospect, January 1999 http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/highlights/return_sociology/index.html. Prospect is modelled on the American prospect founded by Daniel Bell in the USA. The Prospect editor, David Goodhart is an ardent admirer. Laughably it presents Demos, (Mulgan, Martin Jaques) as the opponents of the government.
7. Geoff Andrews 'Technocrats or Intellectuals?' http://www.signsofthetimes.org.uk/pamphlet1/techno.html
   Third Way Debate Summary can be found at http://www.netnexus.org/library/papers/3way.html. Their own figures say that it got 140 postings by 45 people.
8. Quote from Christie *Prospect* op cit.
9. http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/casepdfs/casereports/CASEreport6.pdf. See also the Bob Holman interview in this issue. "CASE subsumes the former LSE Welfare State program" with additional support coming from "the Suntory and Toyota International Centres for economics and Related Disciplines, including for the Centre's Toyota Research Officer."
10. Together with the Foriegn Policy Centre, Demos shares its address: The Mezzanine, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London SE1 7NQ, with a number of organisations which grew out of it or are government fronts or who are funded to run Mulgan's Social Exclusion policies: The Family Education Trust, 'TS2k', CIVITAS (a former IEA venture), the Community Action Network (funded by BNFL and Coca Cola and the Home Office, a revolting cocktail), the Carnegie Young People Initiative, Timebank, UNLTD, the Foundation for Social Entrepreneurs and the Policy Network. These organisations mostly form a stable of *volunteer* organisations who provide individuals to (domestic and foreign) NGOs under the same roof as an MI6 front and Mulgan and Taylor's operation for the Cabinet Office.
11. (http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm199394/cmhansrd/1994-02-08/Writtens-4.html)
12. http://www.commonpurpose.org.uk/Public/jobs/pforum.htm. Barclays also sponsored Common Purpose's Alchemist Awards to various friends including the Founders of Jubilee 2000 which aims to ask the banks to abandon third world debts.
13. Which recently shiftily changed its name to the 'Community Fund'. Monopoly anyone?
14. http://www.camelotplc.com/press/archive/pressreleases/presszclaunc.asp
15. http://www.shef.ac.uk/~perc/Polpaps/MULGAN.pdf.
16. Greg Philo & David Miller, Cultural Compliance , Glasgow Media Group Glasgow June 1998. I would also recommend their 'Market Killing', pictured opposite.
17. C. Norris Reclaiming the Truth: Contribution to a Critique of Cultural Relativism, London Lawrence & Wishart. Quoted from the above.
18. Mulgan gave a briefing to the Ditchley Foundation in Florence on 19-21 November 1999 on the 'Third Way.' The Director of Communications of the Council on Foreign Relations was also in attendance together with various 'diplomats' and Sir Samuel Brittan Principal economics commentator, The Financial Times.


Lord Young



The Iron Chancellor

Robin Ramsay

New Labour leaders think of themselves as pragmatists though they don't use the word: within Labour Party discourse it is contaminated by its association with Harold Wilson. 'We are interested in whatever works', says Tony Blair, 'We are beyond ideology'. And a tiny sliver of the British left wonders if Blair knows that 'beyond ideology' was one of the key slogans in the CIA's psychological warfare efforts to prevent socialism in Europe after WW2.

In the 1950s the appeal of the theory behind 'beyond ideology' was obvious. Europe had been wrecked by the war; the US was producing about half the world's GDP in 1950. How wonderful the East Coast of the US must have seemed to the streams of Labour politicians taking the American government-funded trips across the Atlantic then! And everywhere they went they heard the same message: it is the end of ideology. Capitalism—American production methods—had cracked it. Redistribution—fuddy-duddy old socialism—would not be necessary to solve the problems of the world. No more class struggle. No more conflict. A rising tide floats all the boats.

Now we are being governed by another group of America fans. Some of them, Blair and Brown for example, have been on the US freebie and bought the story—no-one more enthusiastically than Gordon Brown who has been visiting nice, white, civilised New England—home of Yale and Harvard—since he was in opposition. He had his honeymoon there in a cottage at Nantucket.

It is one of the clichés of the age that New Labour are the masters of spin. Gordon Brown is rarely mentioned in the tales of spin doctors. The self-styled 'iron chancellor', restoring prudence to the finances of the country, Brown is presented as above that petty political stuff. But if anyone can claim to be the master of spin it is Brown. For despite a decade of first espousing and then implementing the age-old economic policies of the banking world at home, and more recently striding the world stage as the advocate of the virtues of American-style capitalism (aka globalisation), Brown is still perceived by many as somehow a more left-wing figure than Blair.

This perception is extremely odd for Brown's career in opposition as Shadow Chancellor was a long courtship of multi-national capital and, advised by figures from the City, the ditching of 'old Labour' national economy and manufacturing-oriented, policies.

Of course Brown wouldn't see it this way. He would see his intellectual trajectory since the late 1980s as simply facing up to the reality of the power of the markets and the impotence of the nation state before them. And if asked for an example Brown, I'm sure, would quote the event which really got Labour elected in 1997—Black Wednesday, the ERM fiasco of 1992 which destroyed the Conservative Party's claim to be the party of economic competence.

But Brown learned the wrong lesson from those events. What being forced out of the ERM showed was that it was impossible to sustain an overvalued currency. Nothing new here; the only difference between this and other sterling crises before it was the scale of speculative onslaught and the speed with which events unfolded. No matter: like John Smith, Brown drew the conclusion that to get elected Labour had to do the bidding of multinational capital—'the markets'.

By the time Labour took office Brown and Blair had promised to toe the conservative (and Conservative) line on economic policy: no income tax rises, no increased public spending, no attempts to use government to direct the economy; and no renationalisation. They had learned the mantra: private good, public bad.

Taking office in 1997, there was only one tool left in the new Chancellor's hands but it was the critical one: the control of interest rates. Interest rates influence the domestic economy directly—think of Mrs Thatcher's great recession of 1980-83 caused by high interest rates—and via their impact on the exchange rate: high pound, imports cost less; exports cost more. This last, essential lever, was duly surrendered to the Bank of England on Brown's first day in office. He couldn't wait to show willing. And so—absurdly, incredibly—Labour set out, like Mrs Thatcher in the early 1980s, to run the British economy with neither an interest rate policy nor an exchange rate policy: these would be left to the Bank of England who would use interest rates solely to control inflation. Cue an over-valued pound and another wave of manufacturing closures.

Brown was carefully shepherded into the views he now holds. In the decade before becoming Chancellor, his personal office was managed by Sue Nye , the wife of Gavyn Davies, a partner in the US multi-national bank, Goldman Sachs. The late John Smith, when Labour leader, took him to the heart of the globalising lobby, the secretive Bilderberg group. Unknown to his party, his colleagues, or his biographer, Andy McSmith, John Smith had been on the Bilderberg inner circle, the steering committee. It was thus not surprising that when Brown, qua Shadow Chancellor, chose someone to give him economic advice he picked Ed Balls, leader writer at *The Economist*, the leading British advocate of globalisation. (Two writers at *The Economist* are the so-called rapporteurs—i.e. minute-takers—for Bilderberg.) It was Balls who arranged meetings with government economists in America in 1993 when Brown and Blair visited the Democrats.

'Whatever works' say New Labour; but it's a lie. They are not interested in anything happening on mainland Europe. If they were they would be studying Holland, Denmark, Sweden for social policies; virtually any of the EU countries for how to run a railway; France for its health care system;

Germany for how to be a middle ranking power without much of an army or intelligence service; Portugal, Ireland, Italy or Spain for how to get EU money without implementing its more ridiculous legislation. None of this is happening. 'Whatever works' actually means 'whatever the Americans are doing'. Matthew d'Ancona in the *Sunday Telegraph* reported on January 14: '[Brown's] preoccupation with best practice across the Atlantic is all-consuming: one Cabinet minister told me that 'the only sure way to get Gordon to listen to a policy idea is to produce an American who believes in it.'

Brown looks at the vast, mineral-rich, largely empty continent of America and sees things we should copy here on this over-crowded island. He apparently doesn't see the 3 million in jail, the 25,000 gunshot deaths every year, the hundreds of thousands living on the streets, the most obnoxious foreign policy since Joseph Stalin and the most corrupt political system since Britain in the days of the 'rotten boroughs' in the 18th century.

Most of all Gordon Brown is naive. He believes that the multinational drug companies are just itching to sell their products at cost price to the Third World. He believes that the West's bankers are willing to write off the debts owed them by the Third World. He believes that the British bankers feel duty bound to invest in the infrastructure of Britain.

None of these beliefs are true. And in pursuing them Brown looks foolish. He has had it easy so far but the American recession just beginning will create unemployment over here as the multinationals start cutting-back. We may then discover if Gordon Brown is to be remembered as anything more than the last dribble of Thatcherism down the leg of British politics.

Remembrances of things past

Louise Crawford

The hum of super 8mm and 16mm projectors, the bodies and places that populate their images have become ghosts of a nostalgic past, a paradise lost, associated with the birth of photography, photograms and the flickering light burning through last century's celluloid. The baby in the Lumiere Brothers' *Le Petit Gout de Bebe* was the blueprint for all our home movie memories to follow and the leaves rustling in the wind behind the baby which so fascinated Melies would fascinate all potential filmmakers thereafter.

Super 8mm and 16mm have for some time been released of their function, reduced in the broadcast media and advertising world to a marketable and usable style quality where scratches and dust are acceptable as long as they are artificially created and suitably sanitised. Video has now replaced super 8mm in the creation of home movies and popular travelogues. Kodak has now brought onto the market super 8mm negative, not for the reason of making several copies from a master negative—the super 8mm enthusiasts dream—but in order to transfer direct onto video for home editing on the computer.

Super 8mm home movies are now in the public domain, their time honoured function is up and they now are material for artists, TV and music companies to exploit. The developments in video, new media and digital technology now liberate traditional forms from their functionality and industry-orientated constraints.

For many of us super 8mm was the first step in representing the moving image, its versatility and simplicity captured the imagination of many art students, experimental and independent filmmakers and film groups. With the advent of television and mass media in the 1960s and 70s artists discovered anew (after the experimentation of the 20s and 30s) the plasticity and possibilities of film. Then in the 80s, 16mm film was relieved of its educational and 'light industrial' function, helping it achieve its fully 'liberated position' as a creative art form. But now the post-production processes are disappearing, 16mm editing tables gather dust in workshops, television studios and schools and 16mm labs are closing down. The creation and post-production process that began with the birth of cinema itself, marking the beginning of experimental film history in the 20s and 30s has been undergoing a gradual change. Cutting of film is rapidly becoming a thing of the past as celluloid is now transcribed and digitised, becoming numbered data interchangeable with sound and text that ultimately influences the editing process. 16mm film is a dinosaur in its last death throws, on the verge of extinction and obsolescence, the specificity of its medium threatened.

So why is there so much film work present in galleries and museums?

Those who continue with super 8 and 16mm film will be the experimental and independent filmmakers who see themselves within a specific historical lineage and artists who are always reinventing new ways of seeing. Abel Gance brought us multi-screen projection too early, too ahead of its time. Out of the birth of cinema grew an experimental form of cinema. The birth of video also temporarily gave us new forms of experimentation with the medium. It is these high points of experimentation which are being rediscovered and reconsidered today. Those who choose to work with 16mm film will persist with Steenbecks at home: self-sufficient filmmakers who retain control over their material, those who want to continue to work with the tactile nature of film and with those who want to continue to sculpt in time.

Filmmaking that exists on the margins retains a kind of constant marginality, a stability on the edge. It finds itself a position of opposition and learns how to operate from this position of survival. This nucleus of activity sometimes moves closer to and sometimes farther away from the activity of its parallel universe and at times the paths of players from each side cross over into the other camp. The border-line between what constitutes art and what constitutes film is being broken down partly due to the prevalence of video/moving image present in gallery spaces.

With these thoughts in mind I would like to discuss four exhibitions I have seen this year. The first: an exhibition where an artist working with film has made inroads into the gallery system and art world. The other three are filmmakers associated with more marginal and experimental practices showing their work in gallery spaces.

In spring of this year Tacita Dean presented seven film installations in her solo exhibition at the Tate Gallery in London. All of the them had their own sound-proofed spaces and all worked with a straight forward, classical frontal projection. In six of the spaces a loop system was set up for continuous viewing. Dean's installations are minimal in the way they intervene with the space. The film is projected onto a wall, at times filling the full wall, at times occupying a centre space. The spectator can either stand or sit according to whether a bench is available. The arrangement of these varying viewing spaces where one can pass from one film into another make the spectator the interactive component in a medium that does not normally lend itself to interruption, repetition or spectator control. As well as making us aware of the gallery context, this passing from one space into another helps us relate one film to another, giving us an enhanced understanding of the artist's approach. Dean's images are well composed and considered, with their own sense of pace and rhythm. Her images and subject matter paired down to a minimum giving the work clarity and simplicity. Her approach is akin to that of documentary in the treatment and research into her subject matter but unlike most documentaries is devoid of commentary, voice-over or text. The images speak for themselves.

The documentary genre is becoming increasingly popular as it crosses over into fine art territory with artists producing experimental documentaries and approaching documentary in unconventional ways. Galleries and museums appear to be willing to accommodate such work because it deals with recognisable subject matter that is accessible and understandable for the viewer while still retaining a bold artist's signature.

Matthias Müller is a well-known filmmaker on the independent/experimental film scene. His work is toured internationally by the Goethe Institute. Müller's former work borrowed from, analyses and deconstructs Hollywood narrative structures. It is beautifully shot and well constructed. In *Home Stories*, an early film work, Müller, sampled scenes from typical melodramas. Varying scenes from films showing women entering and leaving rooms, switching on and off lamps, anxiety, fear and apprehension on their faces were edited together, exposing and in so doing, deconstructing the repetitive formula of Hollywood narrative structures.

Müller's most recent film *Vacancy* was shown at an exhibition at the Royal College of Art in London *playing amongst the ruins*, organised by the students of the RCA curating course. Vacany was filmed in Brasilia, Oscar Niemeyer & Lucio Costa's utopian city built from scratch in 1961, the year of Müller's birth. Mixing his own images of the city with found footage and archive material, he unearths a strong poetic portrait of the hopes and subsequent demise of a utopian dream and the ruination and degradation of a modern utopia. Historical images of the pristine city dissolve into shots of a crumbling contemporary Brasilia. Present day footage is treated in such a way that the distinction between what is archive footage from the 60s and what is contemporary footage is totally blurred. A voice over accompanies us through these strange and beautifully composed cityscapes with texts from Italo Calvino, Samuel Beckett, David Wojnarowicz and Müller himself. The film moves into documentary territory then pulls out as Müller's subjective poetic vision begins to refer not only to the past and present of a utopian city but to his own life.

This is the first time I have seen Müller's work in a gallery. This film would seem to have been chosen for its suitability to the theme of the exhibition, (other works in this show included Martha Rosler's *How do we know what home looks like* shot in Le Corbusier's *L'Unité d'Habitation* at Firminy-Vert and Sarah Morris' film *Midtown* shot in New York). But Vacancy works well in a gallery space and it is easy to imagine these images in other larger spaces where the spectator can physically engage with the projected images of Brasilia past and present. The spectators' physical presence becomes an architectural component and human reference in Müller's filmic representation of this modern city.

Yann Beauvais has been making experimental films since the 1970s. He is co-founder of Lightcone Distribution Co-operative in Paris (distribution and archive of experimental film) and programmer of *Scratch Projection*, a weekly screening of experimental cinema in Paris. At C.R.E.D.A.C. Centre d'Art contemporain d'Ivry just outside Paris. Beauvais presented a complex and compelling film installation titled 'Des Rives'. Typically French in its play on words, *des rives* meaning river banks and dérives meaning to wander in the city with no particular aim or reason.

Des Rives comprised of two screens set at a 120° angle making the spectator the third point in a three dimensional virtual space. Like a large fan opened out, moving images of New York passed horizontally across vertical strips creating a surface pattern like windscreen wipers moving back and forward across the screen. The panoramic scenes and tracking shots of New York, the layering of images and the slow-moving zoom kept the viewers gaze in motion and unstable, constantly shifting between construction, analysis and collapse. At times our eyes would focus upon one cut-up New York urban landscape before shifting to another urban scene, the foreground becoming the background and vice versa. The image has no centre, no sides, we are neither guided by a linear narrative or chronological editing. As the films

repeat themselves through the use of a loop system we begin to recognise and familiarise ourselves with a taxi, a street scene, a corner but never enough to fully identify with it.

The sound accompanying the installation created by Thomas Köner is not intended to make the images more realistic but to make the space more real. Köner states that it is impossible for sound and image to interact totally because they assume different dimensions. This collaboration created a merging of two different audiences, the experimental film one and the electronic music one. Historically these two fields have much-in-common and it was inspiring to witness their coming together and fusing on equal terms. Beauvais' film installation in a gallery context brought together in a positive way the three different strands of film, art and music and the intertwining of their past histories and present developments.

At the Centre National de la Photographie in Paris were the filmmakers Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, a formidable couple working with 35mm. They have been active since the 60's and were part of the initial energy and vibrancy of the Nouvelle Vague. Refusing to participate in the Algerian war, Straub was treated as a deserter and facing imprisonment in France left for Germany. Current debate in the French press on the use of torture during the Algerian war has revealed Jean-Marie Straub's political position at that time, which was to have a negative effect on his cinema career in France.

The films of Straub and Huillet are rigorous and their continuing vision is exceptional. They fit into no camp, their work is difficult and unique, it demands time, attention, patience and a new way of thinking of cinema, their work is totally unconventional. They challenge and upset cinema, their engagement with it is artistic and political. There is an economy in the organisation of audio and visual space, each scene is rigorously constructed and articulated, each event leaves the spectator free to interpret, to make his/her own decisions. Their films never leave you indifferent. For this very reason, Straub & Huillet are often at their screenings to discuss their work afterwards. Showing their films at the CNP was problematic for two reasons. Ink jet prints of film stills, texts and diagrams occupying the gallery spaces were a superfluous and unnecessary attempt to justify their presence. No justification was needed. Secondly their films, although shown in a cinema-like space with adequate projection and seating facilities lacked the collective cinema experience of being in an audience where the possibility of dialogue afterwards would add to that experience. (This situation did take place over a weekend where screenings were programmed). Art galleries diffuse collective experience emphasising instead our individual responses.

Yann Beauvais and Straub & Huillet's work is a cinema of resistance, a political engagement, a combat. The question of film and cinema is for them an integral part of the work itself. Tacita Dean's uses film as a painter uses paint and Matthias Müller's recent work is fittingly elegiac in spirit.

As we rush headlong into the techno-scientific world of industrial and post-industrial capitalism with its meticulous programming and fabrication of beautiful images perhaps there is a need to re-position ourselves before we take the giant leap forward.

I am not not-innocent

James Kelman

A favourite request from students about my last novel is that I explain how I could write from the perspective of a man who was blind, if I had never been blind myself. I tell them the more difficult task, given I have never been imprisoned, is to convey the central character's past experience of 11 years' confinement. In the novel the prisoner committed the crimes of which he had been convicted and had no particular sense of injustice. If he had been wrongly convicted and imprisoned the novel would have altered significantly. Had the character been "set-up" for murder by the police and with the collusion of other authorities then the experience would have been overwhelming.

How do people cope with that? Not only the victims and their families but the families of the people murdered. This is the situation faced by who knows how many people. The notoriety of certain miscarriages of justice can lead to an association with the place the event occurred; the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four; the Tottenham Three, the Winchester Three, Cardiff Three, Gloucester Three. In any such miscarriage there is the crucial issue of the identity of the true killers. If wrongfully convicted and imprisoned men finally are cleared and released from prison what chance is there of the real murderers ever being found? Why in many cases are the police, prosecution service and Home Office authorities content to allow the real criminals to walk free? With adequate investigation many of these blatant miscarriages of justice cannot help but reveal additional truths.

The recent release of the M25 Three with the disclaimer by the judicial authority that this "was not a finding of innocence, far from it" is reminiscent of the acquittal of the Winchester Three back in 1990 when Lord Denning "stated publicly that [the three men] were released on a legal technicality and implied that they were in fact guilty." Later on Lord Denning withdrew the comment.[1] This has yet to occur in the case of the M25 Three. Until then, if the three men are not-innocent will any attempt be made to discover the actual killer, whoever is not not-innocent but not not-guilty? It so happens that the three men now released from prison are black and, according to one eye-witness, at least two of the three guilty parties were white.

In so many of these cases of racist violence there seems to be a need on the part of the authorities to deny the very possibility of racist motivation. Because of that crimes are said not to be crimes and criminals escape, murderers are free to seek out more victims. A murder itself becomes not a murder, perhaps it was manslaughter, drug and/or alcohol-fuelled, perhaps a robbery gone wrong. Perhaps no third party was involved at all, you never know, maybe it was an unusual form of suicide, or freak accident. One case from October 1997 was that of Lakhvinder Reel "who disappeared for almost a week before his drowned body was found in the River Thames." His death "was quickly described as accidental by local police." Later evidence reveals that the young man "and his friends had been attacked by racists shortly before his disappearance." The last time "he was seen alive" was when he "and his friends ran off in different directions."

In this context also[2] are the deaths of Harold McGowan and six months later his nephew Jason. Both were found hanged. Earlier Harold had been

"pursued around Telford, abused, taunted and threatened by members of a racist gang that has been linked to Combat 18." His family was not satisfied by the outcome of the police investigation and his nephew Jason began making his own investigations. Eventually he "began to receive death threats." Eventually he too was found hanged. Eventually the police also gave a verdict of suicide, given that "the railings were so low [Jason] would have had to kneel to kill himself."

It seems extraordinary that the police can try to get away with making a judgement so devoid of ordinary common sense. But what leads them to try such a thing in the first place? The McGowan family "lodged a complaint with the Police Complaints Authority...claiming that West Mercia police failed to investigate his death adequately because of racism and that they treated the family poorly." The family argued that the police "made an assumption of suicide and failed to investigate the possibility of murder, losing valuable forensic evidence [and] their doubts are supported by [the] independent pathologist" who conducted a post-mortem examination of Jason's body. Following a campaign by the McGowan family, supported by the National Civil Rights Movement, "the head of Scotland Yard's race and violent crimes task force [has] led a new investigation." He has stated publicly that "that the deaths made him 'uneasy, worried and frightened.'"[3]

In November 1999 the inquest was held into the death of Lakhvinder Reel and the jury returned "an open verdict based on a lack of evidence, [which] not only contradicted police claims of an accidental death but also upheld the claims of [his] family and friends on the 'seriously flawed' original police investigation." The London Metropolitan police refused 'to allow a Police Complaints Authority report in evidence which also condemned the first police investigation.'[4] In view of their catalogue of shame in relation to racist violation it is surprising the police are allowed to get away with this sort of move. However, given that individual policemen occasionally get away with murder too much surprise only indicates naivety.

There is also the issue of cash compensation, damages and liability. So long as the judicial authorities deny their innocence the victims of injustice will have an uphill struggle to receive any financial compensation. What do people in the situation of the so-called M25 Three do to establish their right to adequate compensation? Do they have to deny their guilt?

If they are required to demonstrate their innocence must they conduct their own investigation into the crime, establish their whereabouts at the time, and whatever else it takes to rule themselves out of the equation? Of course conducting their own criminal investigation would be consistent with what happens to many black people in crimes where they or their families are the victims of racist violence. This is what happen in campaigns such as that of the Stephen Lawrence family.

One member of the M25 three, Raphael Rowe already has been awarded compensation but for another claim. It was settled a month before the ruling by the European Court of Human Rights that he "and Michael Davis had been denied a fair trial because the prosecution had withheld important evidence under public interest immunity (pii) rules."[5] The "undisclosed damages" were against the Prison Service "in compensation for a brutal assault by prison officers in 1993...after being repeatedly kicked and punched...and called a 'murdering black bastard.'" The violence took place in Wormwood Scrubs, now notorious for its "systematic abuse, frequent racial abuse and intimidation of inmates." "The Inspector of Prisons published a report which condemned the...'evil' and 'rotten' prison" and prison officers have now been charged with "racist abuse and assaulting inmates." Even the female lawyer acting on behalf of some of the prisoners has been harassed by prison officers while engaged in her work inside the prison.

Almost without exception in cases where compensation is paid to victims of police violence liability is never admitted. Between 1986 and 1997 £20 million was paid out by the public on behalf of the Metropolitan Police "in compensation and costs." But the overall 'cost of injustice' to the taxpayer is really colossal. When Winston Silcott, one of the original Tottenham Three, was awarded £50,000 in an "out of court settlement...for his wrongful conviction for the murder of PC Keith Blakelock" another £500,000 went towards legal costs. In addition to that policemen involved in wrongdoing and unlawful activities may "retire on medical grounds to avoid allegations of corruption and malpractice: between 1995-96 more than 70% of Metropolitan police officers under investigation, or facing disciplinary charges, retired on medical grounds...[costing] some £330 million a year."

Winston Silcott's "conviction was quashed" when electrostatic document analysis "tests on his 'admissions' interview had established that pages had been rewritten and that officers, notably Detective Chief Superintendent Melvin, had lied when describing the notes of the interview as 'contemporaenous.'"[6] DCS Melvin was "one of the most senior operational police officers in Britain's largest force during the biggest investigation it has ever carried out..."[7] Later on he and colleague "Detective Inspector Maxwell Dingle were found not guilty...of charges involving conspiracy to pervert the course of justice and perjury.[8]

What must it be like for the families of the dead who have to come to terms with the fact that the real killers are walking free and nobody is doing anything about it? This horrible sense of wrong and injustice came to the fore in a quite sad manner when the family of Keith Blakelock sued Winston Silcott. But after the shocking campaign of vilification and its ill-concealed racism, conducted against Mr Silcott by sections of the

Previous page: The M25 Two

Above Left: The Birmingham Six shortly after their arrest

Below Left: The Birmingham Six just after their release

Bottom: Leaflet for The Tony Poole & Gary Mills Campaign

media it was hardly surprising that people would refuse to accept the possibility that he could be other than not-innocent.

It is sometimes forgotten that the tragic events at Broadwater Farm derived from the death of a black woman, Cynthia Jarret, and the treatment meted out to her family. It began because her son had the cheek to drive a flash car. The police stopped the young man in his BMW. Although they soon discovered that "car and occupant were in order" they managed to find a minor discrepancy that allowed them to arrest him, and they did so, "for theft of a motor vehicle." And while he was locked up they took his keys and used them to enter the family home in search of any kind of evidence that they might use against him, and in the process were responsible for the death of his mother. According to her daughter Patricia, one of the policemen knocked against Cynthia Jarret, causing her to fall, and from that she suffered a fatal heart attack.

Nobody knows how many miscarriages of justice continue to blight the judicial systems of the United Kingdom. Racism is so often at the root but elitism and class prejudice are the primary factors. The three can come together blatantly, as in the attacks on Irish people in such infamous miscarriages as the Guildford Four, the Birmingham Six and the Maguire Family. We know that "the number of life prisoners in England and Wales exceeded 4000...at the end of 1998" which is more than "the combined total for the remainder of western Europe."[9] But how many of these people are serving life sentences for crimes they did not commit?

Three of the four men who "served more than eighteen years in prison on the basis of a confession forged by the police" for the murder of Carl Bridgdewater, a 13 year old schoolboy, were released finally in February 1997. The fourth man died in prison back in 1981. "DC John Perkins who...helped fabricate the evidence...was allegedly involved in at least twenty other cases in which he fabricated evidence," including that of George Lewis who eventually "was awarded £200,000 damages after serving five years in prison as a result of being racially abused, threatened with a syringe and beaten by police who eventually fabricated a confession."[10]

Is anyone campaigning on behalf of these other cases? How many cover-ups continue in operation? How do the victims, their families and friends sustain these long campaigns for justice? How about the families of the dead? Who campaigns on their behalf? How do they all cope? Are there any legal remedies at all? This is good old Britain. What about trying for an Appeal. One campaign did succeed in taking such a miscarriage to a Court of Appeal. That was in 1996 when it was accepted that Police had threatened witnesses, tampered with and fabricated statements, encouraged witnesses to perjure themselves and that officers had lied at the trial [and] at least two officers... had lied at the Court of Appeal. The court also said that... one of only two prosecution eyewitnesses, could not be believed or relied upon. They said that vital statements... were not disclosed to the defence. They said the Police behaviour in this case was reprehensible... and so on. But at the end of "eight weeks deliberation of all the above new evidence and much more for the defence, the Court of Appeal decided that the convictions were safe."[11] This example belongs to the case of Gary Mills and Tony Poole, two young Gloucester men. Or at least they were young when they were first imprisoned.

How long do people have to be incarcerated before the State authorities will confess to their innocence? Gary Mills and Tony Poole are white working class men who have been locked up since 1989 for the murder of Hensley Wiltshire and have no release date. As is the case for people serving life sentences in British Prisons, if they were guilty they would by now have been released on parole. They continue in prison only because they refuse to give in to the authorities, they refuse to deny their innocence. They cannot and will not apply for parole, how can they, not for a crime they did not commit.

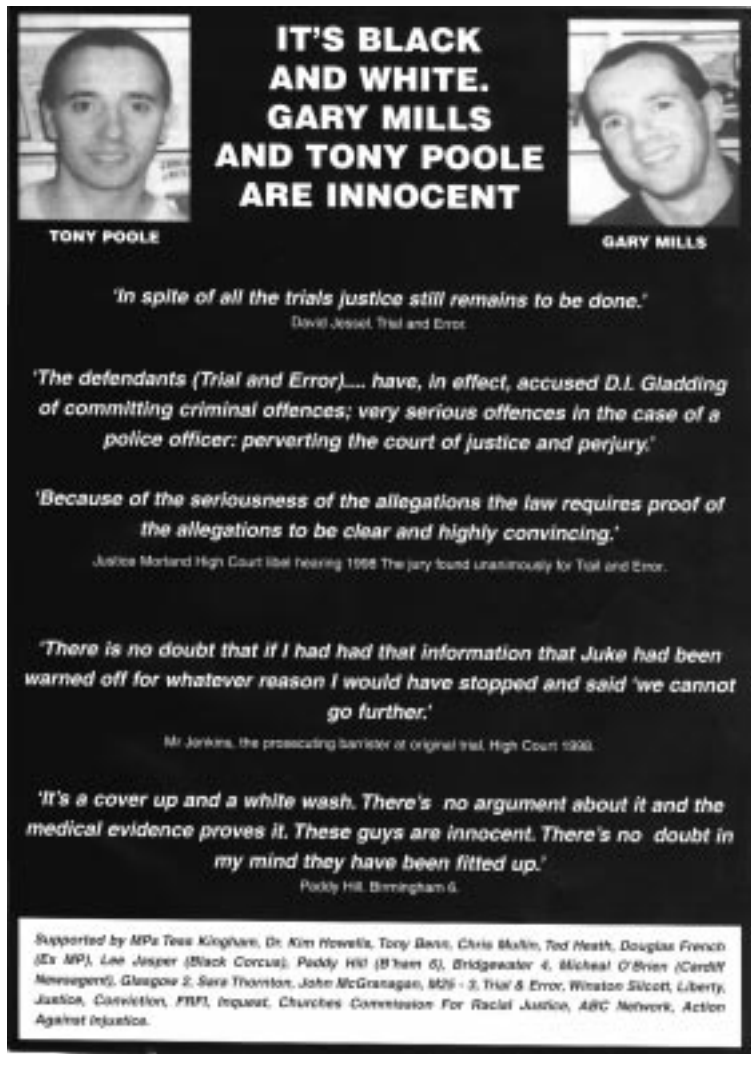
Unfortunately for Gary Mills, Tony Poole and their families, their innocence is another's guilt. Evidence here suggests that to find the identity of the killers any investigating officers need not look beyond the ranks of their own colleagues. It appears Hensley Wiltshire died in a police cell, following a brutal and cowardly attack by Gloucester police officers. The unpalatable truth here is simply one more indictment of the criminal justice system, yet another 'black death in custody,' one more 'unlawful killing", abetted by the shocking neglectful behaviour of staff at the Casualty department of a Birmingham hospital.

Some elements of authority are attempting to move on from the bad old days of the criminalisation of black people. Some elements are not moving on at all, some fight a rearguard action, other authorities are simply marking time. As recently as 1995 Paul Condon saw it appropriate to claim, using applied statistics, that "80% of all street robberies in London are carried out by black men."[12] This was at the height of the Lawrence Family Campaign, and Paul Condon was the head of the investigation into Stephen's murder.

It is surely only a matter of time until Gary Mills and Tony Poole are released from prison. Will a proper investigation then be launched into the last hours of the man they were convicted of murdering? What sort of justice could be offered the family of Hensley Wiltshire? If the police are guilty of the murder of this young black man will they be prosecuted? Or will the judge deny their non-guilt, charging them with not-innocence in the act of releasing them from prison, another shabby attempt to keep the lid on a can of worms.

notes

1. Quote taken from *Statewatch* Number 4 1991.
2. *Statewatch* Vol. 10 no 1, 2000.
3. *Statewatch* Vol. 10 nos 1 and 2, 2000. See *CARF, Race and Class* and other publications where strange suicides or accidental deaths of black people are discussed.
4. See *Statewatch* Vol. 8 no 1, 1998, and Vol. 9 no 6, 1999.
5. *Statewatch* Vol. 10 no 1 Jan-Feb 2000.
6. *Statewatch* Vol. 2 no 1 Jan-Feb 1992.
7. *The Independent on Sunday* 13.5.1990.
8. *Statewatch* Vol. 4 no 5 Sept - Oct 1994.
9. *Statewatch* Vol. 9 nos 3, 4 May-August 1999, quoting from the report entitled "Prisoners' views of the lifer system" by the Prison Reform Trust.
10. The *Guardian* 21, 24 Feb. 1997, quoted in *Statewatch* vol. 7 no 1 1997, Vol. 8 no 2 1998.
11. See "Regina v Mills & Poole", for further information; this is an examination of the case produced by the families and friends of Gary Mills and Tony Poole who formed the Set Up For Life campaign following the jailing of the two men; all these years later the campaign for continues, and can be contacted c/o PO BOX 4739, Birmingham B11 1LG.
12. See *Statewatch* Vol. 5 no. 4 1995.



Ian Brotherhood

Tales of the Great Unwashed

Auld Pishy was sitting on the wall outside the Health Centre. He was crying because he had no money left to buy cider and fags. He wiped his nose on the back of his hand, then wiped the back of his hand on his breeks.

A bus moved by, and Pishy saw a wee girl looking at him as it slowed for the lights. She was about three or four, and had her mouth open, trying to bite the glass. Pishy tried to smile, but the effort went into a sob which caught his breath and started him coughing. He leaned forward, trying to get a proper cough going so he could fetch up some of the rattly catarrh. When he had finished hacking he wiped his eyes, looked up, and the bus was gone.

He spat the result of the cough into the patch of grass behind the wall. When he turned his head, there was a pair of legs in view, and he didn't know who they belonged to.

It's yourself Pishy, said the legs.

Pishy looked up. The sun behind the figure made it hard for him to make out the facial features, but the voice told him it was Mambo.

Ah Mambo, you're out and about already, said Pishy, and Mambo gathered his coat about his arse and shuffled forward to sit beside Pishy on the wall.

Is it the flu on you again ? asked Mambo.

It's not the flu this time, said Pishy, I was just in there seeing your man and he says I'm done for.

You're done for ? said Mambo.

Aye, I'm done for now he told me. If it's not the cancer it'll be the arthritis, or maybe it'll be the sciatica or the rheumatoids that's burrowing into me every fibre.

So they got the tests back then ? said Mambo, and Pishy tried to remember when he had last met Mambo, what he'd already told him.

Sure enough they done the tests and came back to me and says you'll be needing more of them, so they sent me up the town and put wires and all that on me, a whole day I was up there. They had to get the students and them in to have a look cos they says they never saw the likes of it. It's a miracle I've still the power of sight and common sense as well.

Is that what they told you ? said Mambo as Pishy turned to fire another gob into the pale green grass.

They did, and even with the results they've got now they're telling me there's none conclusive or that, the fellas down in London will have to be taking a look as well to make sure before they break the news to me.

So they must have an idea there ?

I think they know more than they tell, but it's the sorting out of all the things that's causing them the difficulty there. Too many ailments in the one body, it's hard to tease them apart if you like.

So that's why you're crying there, said Mambo.

Who said I was crying ? said Pishy, staring up at his larger friend.

I was watching you there before I came across the road. You're an awful man Pishy, an awful man right enough for wearing your heart on the old sleeve.

It's a bit of the hayfever, nothing more, replied Pishy.

Are you sure it's not just cos you've no cash there to buy fags and booze and that ? asked Mambo, and Pishy looked up again, tried to be stern, but the smile was upon him before he knew it and Mambo took the packet of Mayfair from his pocket and flipped open the lid.

Here now, have a fag and we'll talk about it all.

Pishy took out a smoke, let it wobble between his lips as Mambo located his lighter.

The two friends took a couple of puffs each, looked up the road, then down the road, stood up, and started walking towards The Gate. The town clock struck eleven as they reached the door.

So you can't ask her for a tap. Not even a tenner ? said Mambo.

That's right enough said Pishy, she won't talk at all, not to me anyroad. And for all I tried to help the fucker.

Steady now Pishy, that's your beloved there.

I'm not talking about her. The cat. That's the fella caused all the bother in the first place. It's not like I've ever mistreated the thing or grudged it space. I never stopped her having them things, just so long as they're not coming in the bed at night or making a noise I don't much care what they're about.

Was it the expense then ?

Expense of the cat ? I wouldn't know about that. It gets the same to eat as me, maybe a bit more. That's not a bother anyroad, you're as well cooking for three as two I suppose. No, no, it's that carry-on with the rubber band. The cat was out of sorts. Not that I noticed right enough, but she came to me like that last week, she says, Monty's got a problem, I says what's that then, she says I don't know but he's been eating the ends off the curtains and hawking up balls of hair and that. Sure, that's normal for them fellas I says, they're doing that all the time, it's good for them.

That's well known right enough, said Mambo as he beckoned Liz set them up again. We had that one, that Tabby, God rest her, used to leave them behind the back door there, wee balls of wet thread. She thought it was skinned mice and made me clean them away.

That's right, that's the things. Hairballs. Standard issue for the cats. But no, she says, it's not right. He's pining for something. Pining ? I says to her, pining ? What would the cat be pining for. He's in a fine house and he gets the regular grub. That's as much as the likes of him can hope for, what business has a cat pining for more than that ? So anyroad, it was always going to be my fault, I should have known it from the start, and it's when the spare belt for the hoover arrived, that's the start of it all.

That wouldn't be cleaning up the hairy balls then, not when they're wet.

No, the box it came in. It's a big fucking box like that for a wee strip of rubber. There was two of them right enough, but you don't need a box that size for a couple of belts. Anyway, I gets the thing out the cupboard, takes it into the front room, takes the end off it, sets about it, that's fine. Five minute job. I was hardly started and she's in shouting the odds, screaming about Monty eating the band. The belts was there. One in the machine, the other still in the plastic. What bands are you on about ? I says, and it turns out the bastard made off with the rubber band that was about the box, just a big long thin sort of a laccy band. She saw him in the kitchen, he had it at the door and was eating the thing down, hacking and retching and all that but eating it down anyway. Then she made a bid to grab him but he panicked and went up on the drainer. By the time I gets in he's gone away up the stairs, so it was half an hour we were upstairs there, her clicking her fingers and making likes of chicken noises and all that. I says, will you stop with that clicking and clucking you're just scaring the fucker and she starts up then cause I called it a fucker and the two of us were slanging it out there up in the bedroom. Eventually I came like that I says fuck this, I'm off and she's on then about the money and that's for the leccy, and I was all set to go in town and pay the thing anyway, but I'll tell you now Mambo, by the time I got to the bottom of the stairs I came like that I says see that twenty, you're right enough it was for leccy burned, and every intention I had to pay it too, but now with your gob and your panic and your nipping I says, I'm away down there now to buy drink and fags and I'll not be back till it's spent.

Was that the Wednesday then ? asked Mambo

That was the Wednesday right enough. That stramash in the Bolthole. Even if I have to apologise another ten times I'll still know in myself that it would never ever have happened if it wasn't for that bastard cat making off with a laccy band, the greedy stupid fucker.

So she heard what happened then ? said Mambo as the new pints arrived.

In the Bolthole ? Jesus no, least not that she says anyway. It was when I got back that same night, I went to the bog and got sorted out, put a cloth on the lump and that, but when I gets down the stairs there she is, she was just in from the shift at the school, so I came like that I says sorry love, about that carry-on and all that, and she's sort of frowning and not talking and that but I knew it was alright. Pension the morra, that'll be first thing I'll be down there pay that leccy and that's my beer money for the weekend gone, but it's no bother and I'm a fool and I'm sorry. So she's sitting there, still not talking but it was that way you know it's going to be alright, the worst's over. It was that millionaire show on, your lass from Wales was just one away from the quarter million when it happened.

Pishy stopped to draw from his pint. Mambo crashed the last two fags.

She was calling for the fifty-fifty so she was, she already used up the other two lives there so she did. So, what's your man Al Gore's wife called, is it Flipper or Tipper ? That was it. Then the door squeaks open and in he comes there, Monty, as bold as you like, strides right across the carpet. Fair enough, I'd a bead in me for sure but I knew the peepers wasn't lying. There was the laccy band hanging out the back end of him, trailing along the carpet it was. She was looking down as well, but I don't know if she noticed right away. It was the best thing at the time, that's what I was thinking anyway, this is the answer to the whole thing, if I can save her Monty from further pain and maybe stop him pining at the same time, so I goes off the seat like that, down on the hunkers, right up behind the thing as fast as I could and got a grab on the end of the band.

You must've been awful fast there.

Like a flash it was, I'm down there and I grabs the end of the band, it's looped round my finger like that, and I yanks at it. So the fella gets some fright and he's up like that, up in the air, straight up like he was blown by a force underneath of him, and twisting his body too, like towards the telly. It's like that way when you see an accident coming, it goes slow motion, but I was sure I had the thing, it was a good grip there behind the crooked finger. I was only trying to do it for his own good as well, get the thing out of him and be done with it. But when he lands he's off towards the door, past me again, but I'm forward on the deck with the band under my hand, couldn't let it go even if I wanted, and I did want to what with the noise coming out of him then. I had to twist to get back upright and he's making a terrible noise altogether, even with him almost out the door and the band a good five feet long there. Jean's screaming like it's her getting the treatment the cat's getting, he's got the ears flat and the teeth out and the spit flying so I came like that, I was a bit panicked myself right enough in case he came at me cos he looked awful serious and that, I says

fuck ye then and lets go of the band and he's lying on his back there with the legs akimbo and I swear you could see the eyes focussing on this laccy band heading back for him but it's too late and it's a noise then I never heard the likes of, worse than any banshee it was.

Right on his fellas too that would've been.

Must've been. You pinged him ! that's what she shouts then, you pinged him ! and she was up and off after him but it was too late, he was away out the door and off into the kitchen, out the flap. You could hear it still swinging when we got in there.

So the laccy band never came out then ?

No no, he was away with it. It was the Friday I found it down by the path there, all chewed up and bits of stuff along it, but it was still in the one piece. But he's still not come back either, so she's still not talking.

Aye, he'll be having a think about it all before he comes back.

'Kin right. I went out there on the Sunday, late on it was too, must've been over midnight, putting the bins out for the morning, and it was when I was coming back in right enough, it wasn't even a noise or that. Clear night, the stars was out grand, but I could feel the eyes you know, like burning into the side of the face there, and I turns just at the back door and looks back and there he is, I could see the silhouette against the gable next door there, it was him alright, just the outline of his head and shoulders. He must've been standing on that divider him next door put up. Looking over the wall he was, looking at me, and it was the shivers right enough cos he just stayed there watching. Thanks be to God I couldn't make out the eyes on him, but the shape went down, just like you'd think he was getting lowered by some other creature, the shape went down and the tops of the ears went away. It was him though, no doubts about it. He was checking. Checking on me.

Mambo finished the last of his lager, Pishy his cider. Mambo slapped his pockets, drew out half a dozen coppers, then dropped them into the collection tin chained to the bar. The sound of the clattering coppers drew a smile from Liz. Mambo moved fast.

Liz darling, you couldn't see me right for a half-bottle till the morning ?

Liz puckered and shook her head.

You boys are well stretched as it is, she said, the best I can do you is a two-litre of White Madness.

They left, Mambo with the cider under his overcoat.

Have you any fags in the house ? asked Mambo.

Pishy shook his head.

Right then. That's it. There's only one course left open to us.

Pishy stopped and looked up at his pal.

We'll have to find Monty, get you back in the good books. It's no use a man having no fags and no booze and creeping about the town crying and feeling sorry for his lot.

Mambo strode on, and Pishy followed.

Jean got home from her shift at the school later than usual. She'd got one of the girls in the office to make photocopies of Monty, then made some posters saying 'Lost. Monty. Reward' It was a bad picture, a bit blurry, but it was the last hope. She'd put one in the Post Office, one in the supermarket and one in the charity shop.

Coming up the path, she knew something was wrong. The front door was ajar, and there were wee chunks of tuna all along the garden fence. She dumped the shopping at the step and went inside.

They were in the good room. Mambo was snoring, flat out, the empty plastic bottle beside him. Her man was asleep in his chair. The air stank of rolled-up fags made out of old cigarette butts. The Weakest Link was almost at the end, and the volume was near enough full.

She went back to the front door to get the shopping. She would have to plank the purse before he woke up. He would be after money for fags and cider. There'd be no peace otherwise. She took out a tenner, then hid the purse in the cupboard behind the porridge. They would go out again, she would get to watch her programmes in peace. She made coffee, then put the two cups on a tray with a plate of cheese pieces.

As she was carrying the tray though, Monty walked out from the good room, curling his tail, rubbing his behind against the skirting. He looked happy enough, and was licking his lips.

Mambo stirred when Jean put the tray down on the table.

Ah Jean, it's yourself, he said.

Jean took the tenner from her pocket, dropped it onto Mambo's chest, then fetched up Monty and went to her room.

Being Here

Bob Holman Interview

William Clark

I had not been to Easterhouse for some time. Bob Holman is a busy man, so I started asking him some questions as we walked up the stairs of the converted block of houses that are now their thriving Community Centre. How had it all come about? They had started above a group of delapidated shops...?

Bob Holman Then these shops were taken over by the contractors and of course—they originally said that they valued what we were doing in the area and we could probably have the upper floor of these shops. And when they built them there wasn't an upper floor. So we didn't have anywhere. As a result of that there was a public meeting in 1989 and we just formed this organisation Family Action in Rogerfield and Easterhouse (FARE) and we didn't have any premises...I used to work part time for it, just from my flat...

William Clark Who are the power brokers in Easterhouse, I can't quite work out how it's broken down, OK there's the council...?

BH They've got the Greater Easterhouse Development Corporation, now headed by Cllr. Coleman, he's also deputy leader of the Council...

WC So their work is basically to do with housing policy?

BH No. It's all to do with what's called 'Partnerships'...

WC And 'Social Exclusion'...?

BH 'Social *Inclusion'*, in Scotland: 'SIN'—the 'Social Inclusion Network'. They've pumped a lot of money into the area: football pitches and all that kind of thing. It's a very different approach from our approach which is very much being here. This place is run by local residents. To be on a committee you've got to come to the AGM. The idea of this is that local people know best what an area wants. We're not trying to be a Social Services dept. In terms of things like local services, youth clubs, supporting people—we think we're the people who know best what the area wants, and that's been our emphasis, what you might call a bottom-up approach. That kind of approach doesn't get grants of millions of pounds—it gets chickenfeed.

WC Why do you think it is this way?

BH Well it's a strange thing...the Westminster government when it came into power and started the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) the magic word was 'empowerment': 'we're going to empower local people with the SEU.'

WC As you said:

"The first thing the Social Exclusion Unit did was to define its own membership, its own leading 12 members. And the 12 members include professionals, a highly paid business person, chiefs from the voluntary sector, people who've been to public school and Oxbridge, but nobody who is unemployed, who is poor, who lives in the estates like Easterhouse. So here's a very strange thing, that immediately the Social Exclusion Unit excludes anybody who is excluded."

But fundamentally the SEU and the Performance &Innovation Unit (PIU) are both run by Geoff Mulgan with their 'third way' Demos-type ideas...

BH 'Empowerment' in that kind of context is a nonsense because the decisions are still being made in the same old way by the same people. What the government has done through the SEU and SIN—it's idea of empowerment—is to set up large 'Partnerships': the Housing dept., Health dept., the Police; they're the people on the Partnership, with a few local representatives. It's quite interesting that in this area they advertised the voting: "you can have four representatives". In the end it only got four nominations, so there wasn't in fact an election. Which I think is indicative about what local people thought of it. So it's really about large organisations in partnership. We know very well that for a small organisation entering into partnership means that we are junior partners. A partnership is senior and junior partners and we are the small fry. So we don't get to distribute money, we get 'consulted', but we don't get to actually make decisions. And I think what organisations like FARE—and we're only one, because there are lots of groups—what we are showing are that local people are capable of making decisions, they can run budgets, they're not going to put it in their pockets and run away, they can appoint staff and sack staff.

WC You seem to be indicating that these large associations of government agencies are getting together to maintain the status quo really. They've got other agendas, which concur with the New Labour agenda: Third Way stuff which was thought an electoral expediency with nothing really to it. Their policy is influenced by their 'social research' and here there's been a bit of a rise of interest in sociology in a similar way that the Thatcher government tried with economics. The rhetoric is now 'social' rather than 'economic'. One of the things I wanted to ask you was with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), which is the government funded organisation where they get their information—they set up a particular (dubious) branch of that, the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE), at the LSE with much the same remit as the SEU. Well in their annual report of 1999, they cite you as taking part in their seminars and that they consulted you...

BH I did take part in their seminars...

WC But doesn't that means you're being used to justify their position...?

BH Well I don't know. If you look at the seminar I really made an attack on what they were doing, the kind of things I'm speaking about now. Criticising the government for having a top down approach and completely undervaluing what we're doing at a local level. I never realised I got cited as part of the gang.

WC You're last on the list! Somehow you get the impression they went round genuinely consulting everyone. This organisation spent three quarters of a million pounds in one year, producing a couple of reports—research into poverty! There's something slightly disgusting about that.

BH It's a point I made in the seminar: that the government can give £2m to that unit and nothing to us. They argue it comes from different budgets, but it's still public money. But a lot of the people on this list on these seminars: Bill Jordan, Peter Townsend, would be critical of the work of that unit.

WC I think it is fundamentally dishonest. When you start to look at the names in their report—the director of CASE, John Hills' work is cited 38 times. He also writes with Geoff Mulgan, what are they going to do with all their information—they're going to send it to the SIU, so they get all this money, use their own work and tell Mulgan stuff he already knows, meanwhile he's moved onto another unit pumping all this stuff out as if it was independent.

BH I know. It's a self-perpetuating organisation. When it first came out I did write a piece for the *Guardian*, which they never published, criticising setting it up. I could have made a lot more use of the money. One of the professors was saying "there's no point in giving the poor an extra pound a week, it wouldn't make any difference getting people out of poverty," which is true, but I think people on low income would sooner have an extra pound per week than £2m going to this unit. These people are earning £60, £70,000 a year. One of the small things I can do because I've got a small toe-hold into the academic world is I can convey what happens at places like this...

WC That's how blind and remote these people are, that you are the only link they have with the outside world?

BH Geoff Mulgan came straight from public school and Oxbridge straight into...but one of the few good things we've been doing here is—I encouraged the local people to write (a book called *Faith in the Poor*), six Easterhouse people wrote it—great stuff—about their experiences; which dismisses the myth that people are not articulate here. We had enormous problems getting it published. Penguin told me 'the poor can't write, who wants to read it anyway?' When finally it did get published it sold out.

WC I would have to say that I am a product of Easterhouse but I don't feel overawed by the intellectual weight of these people. There are these prejudices against working class culture in general.

BH I think a lot of that came with Charles Murray and his version of the 'underclass'...

WC Well they don't want to use that phrase now...

BH It still seeps out now and again—Tony Blair uses it now and again—Murray said that Easterhouse was the classic example of underclass society. There are no fathers and the kids run wild...and apparently he based it on a half-day visit here. He's got another book out 'Underclass plus ten', it's been ten years since he wrote that book. Murray's a typical case. He started on the left, Lyndon Johnstone's time, and gradually moved to the right. He is in fact financed by the *Sunday Times:* by Rupert Murdoch and they're the people who pay for him to come over here and finance the books.

WC Well that's interesting. Obviously these people's theories benefit someone. Within a lot of their ideological shift there is this notion of 'globablisation'. For me it is an excuse for the government carrying on letting multi-national companies do what they want. You mentioned big agencies' agendas swamping everyone: development companies have agendas and consultants and the fact is these people are gaining from the private sector. CASE is funded by Toyota, Demos and its spin-offs in 'sustainable development' are paid by and on the side of big business.

BH It's 'partnerships' isn't it?

WC Yeah, the third way. There's nothing to it. The whole 'Nexus' debate, set up by the government, all these Oxbridge academics and there's no academic basis for it. None.

BH I've read the books...I think the problem is it's so nebulous it's actually quite difficult to criticise, because you can't actually see what

they're saying.

WC Which was much the same with monetarist economics, it's got to be slippy. Eventually Thatcher went on TV saying 'well you know I had nothing to do with monetarism.' But you were also mentioned in a magazine article by Ian Christie the deputy director of Demos. He starts with 'the History Man', sociology is tainted by Marx, he tries to erase the last twenty years of what has happened and then lines himself up with British Empiricists Young and Willmot.

BH Michael Young wrote the Labour manifesto in 1945...

WC ...Lord Young.

BH Yes I'm a bit disappointed at that...

WC Well let me read you what Christie wrote:

The example of Bob Holman, former professor of social administration at Bath University who has lived for years on Glasgow's Easterhouse estate as a community worker, rejecting the remoteness of academics from their objects of study, is a counsel of perfection few can follow.

BH I really dislike that sort of thing. There's another chap—Bill Jordan—who's written a little bit about me and he says I'm 'marginalised'. People say these things to put you in a corner so they don't have to accept anything you say—so it is not really relevant. I do find that objectionable. But what it also illustrates is with think tanks people can move into these positions straight from University and they've no real understanding of what life is like for ordinary people. You don't want to give the impression that you've got to be a missionary going into poor areas. But probably because of our own upbringing within working class cultures we've got a greater grasp of what life is like than people who've been brought up by their fathers who're professors and went on from a good school to good universities and then into a think tank. That's a very dangerous mode the government have adopted to get their information.

WC You can say that this is incredibly naive and excuse them, or you can say for example well wait a minute...there's connections here. How come what they're running now within the Labour party mirrors aspects of the process of ideological deception and anti-left propaganda that the US and UK secret services were pushing in the 50s and 60s.

BH I suppose the government gets what it wants. The SEU when it was first set up, with its twelve members—all affluent or business people—there wasn't one member who was unemployed or lived in a deprived area or had any experience at the other end. So it's a very slanted view and also in some ways a very patronising view because the assumption is that powerful people can make the right decisions for people at the bottom end. But in a sense that's a contradiction about what they're saying about empowerment. And that is the fallacy which is behind all the government policy and rhetoric about neighbourhood renewal. Hilary Armstrong is very keen that organisations must belong to local people: but they don't. And that's just what I've been trying to chip away at.

WC But they are trying to suborn Non Governmental Organisations with their policy now. Mulgan's PIU is described as 'exerting pressure' to make sure that people are trapped into conforming. Now that involves psychological pressure, propaganda.

BH Targets. I think a great example of this is the government's SEU document of 'Neighbourhood Renewal'. There's a lot in it about empowerment and local involvement but then it says what the targets are; so the targets already set by government and all local involvement really means is help us to reach these targets we've already set. They've set targets for the reduction of poverty but poverty by their own definition: 'below half average income'. But that is meaningless. Having half average income does not mean that you have got a sufficient income. But in terms of targets what the government *hasn't* said anything about is in terms of *inequality*. You can go through that book issued by Alisdair Darling—which has I don't know how many targets—but nothing about reducing inequality. There's nothing about reducing the gap between the rich and the poor. For New Labour, it is prepared to alleviate poverty by their own definition but it isn't prepared to reduce the gap between those people and those at the top. For instance it will not increase personal taxation. It won't increase inheritance tax. I haven't seen their manifesto yet—but it will probably say the same thing: no increase in personal taxation. Until you do that you can't reduce inequality.

WC You say with the definition of Social Inclusion that it is:

...defined as 'Multiple deprivations resulting from a lack of personal, social, political or financial opportunities.' Now this is incredibly broad and vague, and it includes things like kids deprived of school, truancy, even prostitution, ill health. Now of course one wants to stop that kind of social distress, but the trouble is that they're so multiple, so vague, so general, that you can't really get a measure of social exclusion in itself, and it's noticeable that New Labour refuses now to set a target a) for reducing poverty, or b) for lessening inequality. And I think social exclusion really lets it off the hook.

BH In terms of poverty, what New Labour won't do is to assess how much pounds, shillings and pence you need a week to have a decent life style, to enable you to participate fully in society. It's always going back to half average income. Now the Family Budget Unit of London University has in enormous detail worked out how much money you need for a 'low cost but acceptable income'; and that includes having a weeks holiday—not in Italy but in Blackpool. And it shows from that if you're in receipt of income support you're probably about £39 below a stringent (I think too stringent) amount you need to live on. You see the government just refuses to identify how much money you need and that is why it isn't tackling poverty. If you ever meet a Labour politician ask them that question: they'll never answer it.

WC So they've got all these statistics, all this million of pounds worth of 'research' from CASE but...

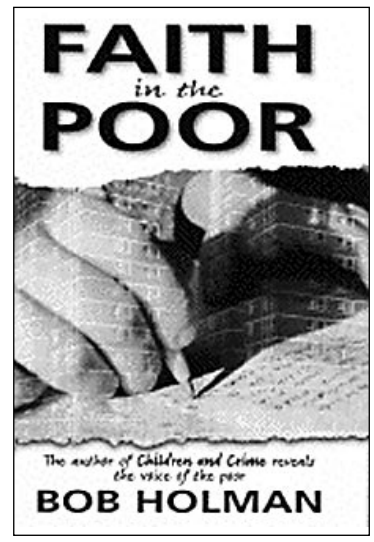
BH If you ask them how much money does a person need—a lone mum with two kids—per week to have a decent life style—they will not answer.

WC There is also the Acheson Report. [The Report on Health Inequalities carried out by the former British Surgeon-General, Sir Donald Acheson] This says it very simply: you've got to give them more money.

BH That committee of enquiry was set up by the Labour party as soon as they came into government. The basic recommendation was that to overcome health inequalities it isn't enough to alleviate poverty, you've got to reduce inequalities. But of course that's been ignored.

WC It is inequality itself that makes people preventably sick.

BH After it's had years in power New Labour will be able to say that the position of the poor has improved in the sense that Child Benefit has gone up, Income Support's gone up, there's a Minimum Wage; but in the sense of inequality their position has actually worsened because the affluent have made gains at a far greater rate. So in terms of old socialistic principles I think it's been a failure and it follows that therefore the gaps in health won't change. This area in particular: Baillieston has a very high infant mortality rate: I mean it's double. I think it's so offensive that kids under the age of one have twice the chance of dying here than they do in Surrey or Norfolk: I mean it's just so inhumane. But New labour won't change that. Even within Glasgow women here die five years younger than women in more affluent parts of Glasgow. How can any socialist defend that.



WC Well they defend it via the Third Way, where they say 'instead of re-distribution of wealth we're re-distributing opportunities.'

BH Well that is it isn't it: it's not a level playing field—it's nonsense. What equality of opportunity is there for youngsters around here. There are teenagers around here that are not even getting the dole. There are people from the age of sixteen to twenty-one who couldn't cope who didn't like the New Deal and dropped out. That's where the dole gets cut off. There's this great thing in Britain where if you're like seventeen to twenty-one you can't be unemployed: that's one of the reasons why the figures have come down. So you have about 300,000 young people who are actually unemployed, but, they're not receiving benefit. And the measurement now is 'unemployed and receiving benefit'. This is one of the spins that get put on figures. There's the election coming up and they're not only choosing not to vote they can't vote because they're not on the list. They've been disenfranchised in our democratic society. In a way you can understand that. They're not going to vote because politics is meaningless. But within that kind of culture of despair in a way, what's going to happen to them? Some young people without the dole are dependent upon parents who are on the dole—so clearly the poverty of that family is multiplied. Others just drift around from bed to bed. The other side of this is it shows how resilient and strong the society is: that people in poverty are willing to take in people who are in poverty.

Outside in the bright May Day sunshine I walked off to get the train. On the way I passed where I used to live. It had been obliterated, completely demolished, I couldn't even configure where anything had been or where the roads were going, it was just too confusing. As I stood there bewildered, Holman came along and gave me a lift to the station in his car. "Keep Struggling" he said with a cheery wave, and drove off to look after his grandchildren.

Concerns about the nature and application of the new Terrorism Act

In his opening remarks Mark Muller, chairing the meeting, said that the discussion had been prompted by the widespread concerns about the nature and application of the new Terrorism Act and especially its implications for long cherished human rights and its impact on minority communities. Parliament's ratification of the proscription of 21 international organisations making it an offence to further their activities in any way fundamentally offended individual human rights. No distinction was drawn between violent and non-violent actions. The Act was a charter for suppressing both ideas and cultural identities and compromised the country's respected tradition of offering sanctuary to political refugees and dissenters.

While it was necessary to combat terrorism and crime, Mr Muller said, the Act added nothing to existing criminal law whose powers were sufficient to deal with the problems. So why was the government acting now? He feared that the implementation of the Act may result in increasing conflict and disorder and cited the experience of the Federal Republic of Germany where similar bans had resulted in conflicts and had merely driven dissent underground. The Act was ill-conceived and came notwithstanding the incorporation of the European Human Rights Act into British law.

Mr Muller then mentioned the case of Kani Yilmaz who gained legal entry into Britain to brief parliamentarians on the PKK's cease-fire, but was later arrested without a warrant on the grounds that he posed a threat to national security. This came under pressure from Turkey. This was all long before the new Terrorism Act, but, he asked, what would be the status of such a meeting in Parliament today? Would it now be deemed an illegal gathering? Mr Muller recalled that 70 MP s signed a letter protesting at Yilmaz's arrest, including current Foreign Secretary Robin Cook. He concluded that the most serious implications for human rights were posed by an Act that made it illegal to hold a peaceful meeting called with the intention of raising a legitimate political issue, like peace between Turkey and the Kurds. Such was the consequences of the failure to distinguish between violent and non-violent offences.

The first speaker, solicitor Gareth Peirce, began by saying that she found the term "terrorist" to be an offensive one because it carried with it a stigma. She was concerned that last year's Act redefined the term very widely to include all protests and any activity that might effect the health and security of any country. Last year the media had reported almost exclusively on the Act's likely effects on road protesters, greens and animals rights activists, but now the reality of its effects were hitting home: it is almost entirely refugee communities who are being targeted with the publication of the 21 proscribed groups.

Ms Peirce then drew a comparison with the way that government and police had targeted the Irish community over 25 years when the PTA was in operation. Thousands of Irish people had been effected: she had herself represented dozens of people charged under the PTA and as it turned out wrongly detained and prosecuted. To fall under the PTA was an ordeal for individuals and their families. Travelling from Ireland and Britain was made a hazardous task. The implications for how the new Act would be operated were clear: the PTA targeted indiscriminately people of particular religions and nationalities. The wider scope of the new Act, allowing the law to try cases of people allegedly involved in terrorism abroad, was one terrifying aspect of the Act. She wondered how lawyers in this country would ever be able to reconstruct the specific political circumstances of a country like Algeria, Egypt and Sri Lanka.

Every aspect of the Act raised serious questions: there was the issue of withholding evidence on suspects vital to any defence case, but now restricted on security grounds; the impact on peoples' behaviour by creating a mood of fear and uncertainty with no-one really knowing if what they were doing was illegal. Ms Peirce said that under US law the Act would be voided for its vagueness. The Act set up a tension with the Human Rights Act. It had redefined terrorism and human rights on ideological lines setting up people who deserved to be seen as human by the government. This was only those who subscribed to the UK/US model of democracy as the best in the world, no questioning of it could be admissible. She thought the reasons for the Act now were twofold: there were internal political objectives and the domestic impact in its attack on inalienable rights; it was also intended for export being proposed as a model for Europe and already hailed in the press of foreign governments who saw it as a gift. Blair was clearly trying to take the lead in the process of European harmonisation.

She concluded by stating bluntly that the Act did not deserve to remain on the statute books. It had torn up the lessons of the last century and destroyed the moral standing of the country.

Nicholas Blake QC said that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights allowed for the possibility of rebellion against tyranny and oppression. Where laws do not protect human rights there may be just cause to resort to forms of rebellion. There had been evidence of this in English history and the idea had been the basis for people coming here seeking asylum in the past. Such principles were part of the country's political and legal traditions over some 200 years, and especially in the 19th century. The European rebels who had engaged in the 1848 revolutions, for example, had come to London seeking haven as refugees and at that time the idea of rebelling against oppression was regarded as legitimate. In contrast the new Terrorism Act was an advanced attempt to criminalise the whole of the asylum process. The government that had been losing the debate was now stopping legitimate debate and removing the rights of asylum.

Mr Blake was particularly concerned at the way the Act might have the effect of eliminating the arguments about putting protection of the individual at the centre of the law. It came in the context of a wider criminalisation taking place. It removed the right to claim a political defence against extradition rules. Political suspects could not be extradited, only suspects accused of non-political crimes could be. He said that at the UN, Britain had failed to win the debate in defining terrorism as a non-political offence, but was now changing its own laws. The effects of the new Act meant that it would now be difficult for someone to claim asylum. Indeed what was said in an asylum application could conceivably lead to the same person being prosecuted for terrorism. The implications seen in Algerian and Afghan cases did not bode well for the future. Legal opposition to the new law was very limited. Courts had extremely limited powers to strike down decisions made by the executive. A challenge under judicial review was itself very limited. In cases involving national security there will be a new special immigration appeal body which would be where future challenges would be heard. Finally, Mr Blake warned that the new Act was in danger of short-cutting the country's obligations under existing international legislation.

The playwright Harold Pinter pointed to the prejudiced political calculations behind the Act and the list of proscribed groups. He understood that nowhere was the KLA on the list and suspected that the Nicaraguan Contras would not have been there either. Such groups were both subsidised by the US and seen as "our freedom fighters". He was pleased to be participating in the event but found it depressing that the meeting was taking place after the event. Likewise he found the vote in the Commons where 396 voted in favour of the Act and only 17 against even more depressing. It meant that only 17 people had really subjected the Bill to any detailed critical scrutiny.

The case of Turkey and the PKK was an eloquent example of where Britain stood in relation to human rights across the world and American policy. While Turkey had brutally suppressed the Kurdish people and sought to humiliate them by the arrest of Ocalan, they had failed because of the strength of the Kurdish resistance. Newspaper reports had repeatedly claimed that Ocalan had killed 30, 000 people, when the real facts were ignored which were that most of the deaths were victims of the Turkish military. While this went on Britain was trading with Turkey and energetically supplying the regime with weapons of torture, as had been documented by Amnesty International. There was an obvious discrepancy between government policy and the true facts.

Exposing the absurdity of the situation, Mr Pinter concluded by mentioning the incident when his play "Mountain Language" was performed by a Kurdish theatre group in Hackney. The community centre was raided by the police because someone had reported that the Kurds were carrying weapons, when in fact the play, which was about torture, called for imitation weapons as stage props. The brutal way the Kurds were treated made the Kurds feel that they were back in Turkey. He condemned the new Act as dangerous and pernicious. British law was now quite acceptable to Turkey.

Lord Rea, who participated in the House of Lords debate on the introduction of the proscription order, gave an account of the proceedings. He was concerned that the government spokesman Lord Bassam was unable to give a convincing reason as to why this law was being introduced at this particular time. He had simply mentioned the need for Britain to support other members of the international community in the global fight against terrorism. When the question was asked why these groups had been proscribed, the answer was given that the Home Office had access to additional intelligence which could not be disclosed even when the groups were appealing for deproscription. It will not be available to their barristers either. Only the commission charged with reviewing appeals will be allowed to see it. In effect, Lord Rea said, no-one could know exactly how the Home Office had calculated its decision and proscribed groups will not know the charges laid against them.

Lord Rea felt it was curious that the PKK was being banned over two years after it had declared a cessation of armed activities and had been pursuing peace. Shirley Williams had questioned the government about this, asking how long a period of non-violence was required before the government would be able to lift the proscription.

Lawyer Louise Christian, involved in asylum work since 1988, related the Act to the current attacks on asylum seekers. The Home Office was sending out refusal letters to Kurds and others on the grounds that they were not active members of

One of the terrorist organisations which escaped the ban.

banned parties; they were now being criminalised because they were. The Terrorism Act meant that the UK was repeating the process of persecution that asylum seekers had endured in their home countries. It should also be seen as part of the attack on the principles of the 1951 Geneva Convention.

Ms Christian said that she had long taken a sceptical attitude towards the effectiveness of the Human Rights Act and found her views confirmed by the new Terrorism Act. She was not optimistic that any challenge to the law could be left to legal action alone as judicial review procedure was very limited. The Act was a political issue and demanded a wider campaign. It should be challenged by direct action, she said, giving notice of a protest that was being organised in May. So far the new law had had little media coverage, it had been brought in with force in an undemocratic way. Last year no-one knew who the real targets were; the press reported on animal rights and green activists, but did not consider refugee communities. She said that countries like Turkey and India had been putting pressure on Britain to act against groups like Kashmiris and Kurds.

She went on to condemn the Home Secretary's proposals for revising asylum policy, especially the idea of setting up detention centres on neighbouring countries as an alternative to the present system. This was an alarming development and presented a major assault on the Geneva Convention. She was ashamed to be associated with a country that was advocating such ideas.

Desmond Fernandes, a lecturer from De Montfort University who had written about state security matters and human rights, spoke of the two decade long history of criminalising the Kurdish community by the British police and security services. The Terrorism Act was nothing new for the Kurds, but was more an extension of legislation and actions already taken against them. He feared however that the process would intensify. He set the issue in a far wider context of international alliances. Britain was a NATO ally of Turkey and was pursuing strategic aims against the Kurds and the Turkish left. He alleged that Britain had assisted in the funding and training of Turkish death squads used against political activists and referred to the way HADEP members were habitually refused visas to enter the country. All this was part of the same suppression of dissent. The criminalisation made it easier for the government to repudiate the Kurdish cause and allowed deportations of Kurdish asylum seekers to Turkey. He described the interrogations of visitors at the ports as evidence of the restrictions being put in place on the freedom of movement between European member states. The proscription of the PKK had turned millions of Kurds resident in Europe into terrorist suspects.

He gave several examples of how security services had already been targeting the Kurdish community and how MI5 had been monitoring human rights activists dealing with Turkey. Kurds had been detained under the PTA in 1995. Incidents included phone-tapping, police targeting Kurdish cultural and community events, police warning Kurdish shopkeepers not to sell Kurdish newspapers, individuals being offered bribes to become police informants and even the offer of refugee status for co-operation. All this has occurred before the PKK ban and he warned that this was now likely to intensify. He warned everyone that under the new Act even wearing Kurdish dress could be interpreted as supporting terrorism because the Act refers to items of clothing that arouse suspicion.

The meeting concluded with a determination to support the campaigns and initiatives that were being launched to get the Terrorism Act 2000 repealed and to end the policy of proscribing political groups. One action would be to draw up a public appeal against the legislation to be signed by prominent personalities and lawyers.

Report: David Morgan, 24 April 2001.

For information call Peace in Kurdistan Campaign on 020 7586 5892 or 020 7250 1315

Zine and Comix Review

Mark Pawson

Am I allowed to review Porno Mags in Variant? Well how about Playboys from the 1960s, when grown men could say straight faced that they bought it to read the articles? Unless you're lucky enough to have a complete run of valuable, vintage 1960s Playboys you're unlikely to have seen any of the classic **Little Annie Fanny** comic strips. Harvey Kurtzman who created MAD magazine in the mid 1950's, came up with this satirical strip named after a rather grown-up and generously-proportioned version of L'il Orphan Annie. Playboy owner Hugh Hefner wanted something special for his magazine, and took a personal interest in the strip, going to the extent of approving scripts and suggesting alterations. Hef gave Kurtzman and cartoonist Will Elder a generous budget without the constraints of fixed deadlines, in return Kurtzman and Elder created an innovative strip, lusciously painted in full-colour, which looked completely unlike anything else at the time and where every inch of background space was crammed with sight gags and topical references.

Annie Fanny's adventures take her tripping blissfully through every social event, fad, craze and phenomena of the Swinging Sixties; the Sexual Revolution, Beatlemania, discotheques, Pop Art, Black Power, Psychoanalysis, Civil Rights, the Space Race, Surfing, the Living Theatre, Hippies and Protest Singers are all explored for maximum satirical value. Annie emerges unscathed and inevitably unclothed at the end of each episode. The excellent **Little Annie Fanny** Volume 1 1962-1970 collects these innovative and controversial strips in 220 pages, an annotated guide to the episodes is helpful for those of us who were aged just 5 at the time, and don't quite get all the contemporary references or recognise the personalities of the time.

Usually the comic book comes first and the toys follow later but with **World of Pain** James Jarvis has done things the other way round. Following on from the limited edition action figures of his potato-headed characters for the SILAS clothing label, comes **World of Pain** which constructs the world in which the toy characters live. It's a cheery but authoritarian world, a policeman on the beat keeps a look out for crimes such as untied shoelaces and typeface pollution before confiscating a skateboard and showing the skate dudes a few kick-flip tricks of his own! There's an entire unfolding subplot about the lyrics and mythology of obscure psychedelic rock and heavy metal bands. **World of Pain** is guaranteed to be the only publication reviewed here that is bilingual, in English and Japanese!

Do you remember Senor Sandwich from your childhood, the roll-a-long Salami Sandwich with olive eyes and a gherkin nose? How about the Weiner Works Toy Set 'make your own tasty frankfurters from table scraps'? or Whip-It's, those racing cars powered by whipped cream? Possibly not, but they're all here in the **Gobler Toys 1964 Catalog**, alongside classics such as Darwin the Evolving Chimp, a top-hatted ape who gradually learns to walk upright until he's given a stiff drink and then regresses back to his primal state! and child-sized Play Dead Coffins which come 'with everything you need to fake your own death'. These nutty toys are only slightly more surreal than what is currently on sale in your local branch of Toys'R'Us and Woolworths.

The full colour illustrated **Gobler Toys 1964 Catalog** may just be a fictional spoof, complete with company history, newspaper clippings and biography of founder Ira Gobler, but I'd pay good money for these crazy playthings. The Gobler product line is rounded out with cherry flavoured licorice underarm hair, US Mint Pops that print twenty dollar bills onto your tongue and Senorios the first salami flavoured breakfast cereal. I wouldn't be surprised to hear that the Gobler Toys creators have been fending off phone calls and job offers from toy giants like Mattell, Bandai, Hasbro and Topps.

You must have seen those figures made from old car parts welded together sitting on top of garages or standing outside car mechanics premises, they're usually made from old exhaust pipes with the cylinders forming bodies and heads, pipes as arms and legs. In the US these humanoid auto-junk sculptures are called **Muffler Men** (*Transatlantic translation dept #1:* exhaust pipes = mufflers), and guess what, now there's a book all about them. With plenty of wonderful photos and accompanying text this book approaches its subject from a Folk Art perspective looking at **Muffler Men** as workplace art created by self-taught artists rooted in occupational and ethnic traditions (many are by Latino mechanics). There's maybe a little bit too much analysis, I was longing for an interview with an innocent car mechanic saying; 'Well gee I kinda never really thought about it much, it's just one of those things that auto repairmen do, isn't it?'

The more primitive, goofy **Muffler Men** that reflect the character of independent garages are more interesting than the consciously crafted/designed ones, franchises & corporate-owned auto repair shops either discourage or have bans on muffler men! There's no tips on how or where to get hold of a muffler man of your very own, but its clear that outsider/folk art collectors have already identified and started to move in on these garage mascots.

It was a real surprise to see a copy of **Punk** magazine in the racks of Tower Records, a mere twenty years after the last issue! It says on the cover that it's a 25th Anniversary issue, but there's no further explanation for it's reappearance. Is Punk back again? which revival are we on now? the third or fourth? I've lost count. Maybe it's just that after a lengthy stint at High Times magazine, editor John Holstrom has seen his way out of the dope smoke haze? **Punk** was the original document of the mid to late 1970's New York Punk Scene and this issue faithfully recreates the miscellany of interviews, comics, spoof pieces, rants, reviews and **Punk** 's legendary Top 99 chart, plus there's colour pin-ups of all yer fave punks; The Damned, Blondie, Richard Hell and Johnny Thunders. Pleased as though I was to see this issue I wouldn't have felt the need to buy future issues, but with the recent loss of Joey Ramone, who was a contributor, the next issue is certain to be a Ramones tribute issue, **Punk** is definitely the right magazine to do them justice.

Panik is required reading for Transgressive Culture Vultures everywhere, a magazine for all the misanthropes and miscreants who've been in mourning since Answer Me! fell silent. Inside the Trevor Brown cover we find Jim Goad making good use of his time behind bars by compiling a dictionary of prison slang, there's articles on film-maker Larry Wessel, Japanese Literary Suicides, What's Wrong with Assault Weapons? A Manifesto for Misanthropolo-gists, unpleasant websites, Peter Sotos/Whitehouse, Boyd Rice, the Nietzschean Spirit of Planet of the Apes, Plastination, Videos you won't find at Blockbuster and Adam Parfrey on his Apocalypse Culture 2 book. Basically there's something here to shock, amaze and offend everyone plus plenty of reviews. Tabloid sized **Panik** is easy to conceal in the folds of your floor-length black leather trenchcoat.

Each issue of **Monozine** is a collection of factual stories of sickness, disease, affliction and infection of every possible kind. Straightforwardly written (often hand-written) and plainly presented, without comment or analysis it makes great voyeuristic, gut churning reading. No matter what you've been through one of the **Monozine** contributors has had it worse and of course being American the writers have the biggest and best ailments and most disgusting stories. Other people's suffering is a comedy staple and such subject matter has a universal appeal, would reading a copy of **Monozine** be a cure for hypochondriacs? Each time I read the latest **Monozine** it leaves me feeling healthy and bursting with energy. (*Transatlantic translation dept #2:* mono = mononucleosis = glandular fever) Did I ever tell you about the time I had Kidney Stones?

Below Critical Radar, Fanzines and Alternative Comics from 1976 to Now. Edited by Roger Sabin and Teal Triggs. There have been several American books covering the publishing world of alternative/underground/subculture comics and zines, but until now nothing from the UK. There's definitely a need for a guide to help people find their way into the bewildering world of these strange little publications (after you've read this column of course.) I'd been looking forwards to **Below Critical Radar**, its title indicates the whole area of publishing that exists for its own reasons remaining free of commercial considerations, and the subtitle shows a broad, inclusive approach.

The format which mixes reviews of comics and fanzines representative of specific genres with short essays works well, but only David Kendall's essay on the genre of Horror fanzines and comics stands out, emphasising the overlap between publisher and readers, many of whom are actively, enthusiastically involved in contributing to and shaping these publications. By covering fanzines and alternative comics side by side, the editors fail to make the important distinction that fanzines are entirely self-published and distributed with minimal news-stand distribution, in contrast alternative comics are published by 3-4 alternative publishers, with established distribution networks, and are relatively easily available from specialist comics shops nation-wide.

Fanzines are a lot harder to get hold of than alternative comics, their readers have to make an effort to find out about them in the first place and then send off cheques and S.A.E.'s and wait patiently by the letterbox. On principle zine writers list contact details for publications they review, the editors of this book give us instead a 5 page bibliography, ensuring that the very publications that enabled them to compile their book in

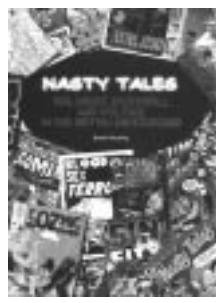
the first place remain **Below Critical Radar**. In his essay David Kendall sums it up;

"Whatever the definitions, it is enthusiasm that is the binding factor. Academic commentators rarely understand this. From what I've seen of academics' (parasitic) relationship to the fanzine culture, what they want to find in zinesters is something like themselves but purer, untainted by nasty commercialism or arts grants/book subsidies/the requirements of tenured posts. The noble savage syndrome."

Below Critical Radar is a good general introduction, but sadly just that and no more, I can't imagine that anyone is going to read this book and get inspired enough to rush out and start their own zine/comic.

Schwing!, most excellent title dude, but I'm not so sure about the magazine. **Schwing! Golf Mag** (that's with a circled anarchist *A*) aims to be a magazine for golfers with attitude from the publishers of Thrasher and Juxtapoz. Both these titles have been formative reading for me at different times, Skatemag Thrasher was considered so controversial in the early 1980s that a rival publication emerged with the declared intention of being a more wholesome skateboard magazine! and despite some patchy recent issues Juxtapoz still manages to find art you'll never see covered anywhere else.

With features like 'America's Worst Golf Courses' **Schwing!** just about retains some of the humour & character of its parent publications, but the celebrity interviews with J. Mascis/ Dinosaur Jr and 'Chart Toppers Incubus' leave much to be desired and the cheesecake'n'golfclubs photos are just plain tacky. Is this a magazine aimed at the influx of young golfers that Tiger Woods has attracted to the sport in the US, or maybe just the result of a calculated decision by surf/skate/snowboard clothing companies to create new clothing lines for golfers. Hopefully it will remain a stateside phenomena, but I'm not a golfer, so what do I know, maybe at this very moment clubhouse committees up and down the country are hotly debating whether to let people with baggy camouflage-patterned trousers and blue hair play on their courses.



Nasty Tales: Sex, Drugs, Rock'n'Roll and Violence in the British Underground David Huxley. Having a small but treasured collection of British Underground Comix I'd been looking forward to this book, but sadly it fails to live up to the promise of the title. As I ploughed through the pages I realised that actually there weren't very many British underground comix and most of them weren't very good! This is a shapeless rambling pub-conversation of a book in desperate need of a good editor, re-presenting the same old tired arguments about sex, drugs, violence and good ol' bad ol' Robert Crumb is pointless. This left me disappointed and yearning for something more substantial, maybe a close textual analysis of Pete Loveday's Big Trip Comics?

Little Annie Fanny Volume 1 1962-1970, $24.95 Dark Horse Comics. www.darkhorse.com

World of Pain £3.00. Magma Bookshop, Earlham Street, Covent Garden, London.

Gobler Toys 1964 Catalog £7.95 inc p+p. available from Disinfotainment, P.O. Box 664, London, E3 4QR. www.goblertoys.com

Muffler Men Timothy Corrigan Correll and Patrick Arthur Polk. $18.00. University Press of Mississippi, 2000. www.upress.state.ms.us

Punk $5.00+p/p. PMB #675, 200 E.10th St, New York, NY 10003. www.punkmagazine.com

Panik $3.00+p/p. 1891 Obispo Ave. Long Beach, CA 90804. bountyhunterinc.com

Monozine $3.00+p/p. P. O. Box 598, Reistertown, MD 21136, U.S.A.. www.monozine.com

Below Critical Radar £10.00+£2.00p+p Slab-o-Concrete, POBox 148, Hove BN3 3DQ. www.slabo-concrete.com

Schwing! $3.99. P.O.Box 8845570, San Francisco, CA 94188-4570, U.S.A..

Nasty Tales £13.95 Headpress, 40 Rossall Avenue, Radcliffe, Manchester, M26 1JD www.headpress.com

New Labour's Arms Trade

Phil England

The UK is the world's second largest exporter of arms after the US, with a record of shame [1] which soared to unparalleled heights when Margaret Thatcher chose to personally champion the cause during her reign in government. The scandals that rocked her leadership [2] led to widespread calls for reform in the approach and handling of the UK's arms exporting policy.

So when Labour came to power in 1997 many had high hopes that Robin Cook's declaration of an "ethical foreign policy" would mean radical reform of the corrupt and bloody arms business. Four years later, with Labour triumphantly in government, has anything of substance actually changed in the UK government's arms exporting policy? And if it were to be shown that Robin Cook has merely acted as a convenient fig leaf for a Blairite policy of business-as-usual with the arms trade, is there still scope for useful change? [3]

The Export Criteria

On May 12th 1997, a few days after New Labour came to office, Robin Cook launched the government's ethical foreign policy with some fanfare and then he reiterated Labour's manifesto pledge that they would not "permit the sale of arms to regimes that might use them for internal repression or international aggression." However when Cook's draft Arms Export Criteria arrived at Downing Street, "John Holmes, Blair's principal private secretary and top civil servant, went through it with officials from Cook's private office for four hours, line by line, telling them to tone down various areas" and "when Cook met Blair to go over it, changes were made." The 'new' export licensing criteria that resulted were sufficiently compromised and flexible to allow for interpretations that would allow business as usual for the arms trade.

The Turnaround

The first test of the government's position in practice was over the sale of Hawk jets to Indonesia. Besides being one of the UK arms industry's biggest customers Indonesia has one of the worst human rights records in the world. In opposition Cook campaigned vigorously against arms sales to the country (writing articles in the New Statesman as far back as 1978, raising regular questions in the Commons, etc.). Yet once in government, a remarkable turnaround occurred and he was reduced to being an apologist for continued sales to Indonesia. The government's policy, he explained, "was to pursue economic co-operation without being silenced on human rights." [4] But the fallacy of this policy of 'constructive engagement' was shockingly demonstrated when militias directed by the British-trained [5] Indonesian army massacred thousands of East Timorese in a brutal response to their UN-approved vote for Independence in September 1999. Despite pleas from independence leaders and human rights groups, the UK continue to remain complicit in Indonesia's human rights abuses as Indonesia represses independence movements in Aceh and West Papua and (despite a short-lived EC embargo on arms sales to Indonesia) the UK continues to be Indonesia's principle military supplier.

Arms sales also appear to be continuing unhindered to another country with an appalling human rights record, Turkey. The Council of Europe reported last July that it could see "no significant progress of limiting torture, disappearances and extra-judicial killings" (Study Centre on Turkey 5/1/00). Although the US has a virtual monopoly on this market, millions of pounds of trade in military list goods has been licensed by the UK government which, judging by Turkey's past record, will undoubtedly be used for military aggression and internal repression.

And the pattern seems to be consistent across the board. At the end of Labour's first term in office, Campaign Against The Arms Trade (CAAT)'s Chris Wrigley concluded that "repressive behaviour, denial of human rights and absence of democracy were not accepted as being in themselves reasons for blocking sales. It is clear that intervention against the trade is considered to be marginal and exceptional, and permission is the norm." [6]

The Annual Report, secrecy and parliamentary scrutiny

Monitoring such abuses is difficult because of the secrecy surrounding the arms trade. In their 1997 manifesto Labour pledged to "increase the transparency and accountability of decisions on export licences for arms" and to this end they have instituted the publication of an Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls. Whilst this has been welcomed as a step in the right direction, it has also been criticised for concealing as much as it reveals and for lacking detail. Wrigley, for example, comparing the reports to the government's Defence Statistics publication, suggests that they actually cover "less than a quarter of the real total." [7] The information in the Annual Report comes in retrospect and CAAT are arguing that details of export licences should be published in advance to enable informed public and parliamentary debate.

Strategic Export Controls

The current legislation on regulation of the arms trade dates back to an emergency measure introduced at the start of WWII which gives the Department of Trade the role of granting authorisation of arms exports (though the DTI consults with the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the Department of International Development) and leaves parliament out of the picture. New legislation has been expected for some time but has been delayed by the Blair government. However a draft bill was finally published in March and is now under discussion which would give power back to parliament to enact export controls. [8] This bill has huge potential and charities such as Oxfam, Saferworld and Amnesty International under the umbrella of the UK Working Group on Arms have been making representations to government on how this could be made most useful. The industry lobbyists, of course, are making their own approaches to government and the outcome of the bill and how it is enforced if it becomes law remains to be seen.

Europeanisation and the EC code of conduct

As the arms trade becomes increasingly internationalised and more adept at avoiding local legislation, the need for co-operation to establish controls at the international level increases. Many arms deals now often involve companies from two or more countries coming together to manufacture goods [9] and companies such as BAe Systems [10] have become multinational. Licensed production—with the goods being made in the purchasing country—is on the increase.

Whilst the UK government kept its manifesto pledge and pressed for a European Code of Conduct on arms sales which was agreed by EU foreign ministers in 1998, this too is essentially toothless having been watered down to allow for flexibility of interpretation. To be effective the code needs to be tightened up and be made legally binding (in line with the EU's own internal recommendations). [11] Tellingly, in its present form, the code has not been objected to by the 'defence' industry. [12]

In July 2000 in a disturbing counter move which received comparatively little publicity, the UK government along with France, Germany, Sweden, Spain and Italy signed the cumbersomely entitled Framework Agreement Concerning Measures to Facilitate the Restructuring and Operation of the European Defence Industry. [13] According to Wrigley, this agreement represents a "leap forward" in the "Europeanisation" of the arms industry. "Reducing licensing and obscuring exports from outside scrutiny, the main object of the agreement appears to be to promote the export of European weaponry around the world (in competition with the US) and to keep restrictions to an agreed minimum." The EU assessment of the operation of the EU code also notes concern "at the risk posed by the current process of liberalisation of the European defence industries." [14]

Even if effective controls were to be established by the EU it's possible that the US, Russia or China might step in and pick up the order. So, ultimately, binding global agreements are required. Since the five permanent members of the UN security council—US, UK, France, Russia & China—also happen to be the five largest arms-exporting countries in the world [15] perhaps the UNSC is not the best forum for tackling this issue. The UN itself, is starting to take an interest and is holding a major conference on the critical issue of small arms in New York in July this year. [16]

Land mines and Torture equipment

Early successes claimed by Cook included bans on land mines and torture equipment. On the ban of "the use, production, transfer and stockpiling" of land-mines Wrigley says that "public opinion was strongly in favour of a ban.[17] Moreover, the UK had not been making these weapons for a considerable time. There was thus some military interest to be overridden, but not an industrial one." And according to Pilger, the ban on electric-shock batons, leg-irons and other 'torture equipment' "merely enshrined in law a de facto ban that was already in force". [18]

Government Support for the Arms Trade

The difficulty the government now has in regulating arms exports is due in part to the fact that it has become a central part of UK foreign policy to actively promote them. And this is due substantially to The Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO) which was set up by Harold Wilson's Labour Government in 1966 under pressure from the arms industry and with the specific

Above & next page: Some examples of modern art

brief of ensuring "that, within the limits of government policy, as much British equipment as possible is sold overseas." [19]

From modest beginnings with seven staff, DESO had grown by 1998 to an organisation employing 660 people [20] and maintaining twelve overseas offices. [21] The department provides marketing assistance and military advice to exporters, organises promotional tours and arms exhibitions including the biannual Farnborough air show to which the government invites buyers from over 90 countries. The heads of DESO are seconded from the arms industry—effectively giving the industry a voice in government. [22]

The twin pillar of government support is the Export Credit Guarantee Department (ECGD) part of the Department of Trade and Industry. Because many arms sales are to countries who are too poor and/or too unstable to guarantee payment, many UK arms exports could not take place without the credit facilities and guarantees against default provided by the secretive, unaccountable, and scandal-ridden ECGD. In 1998/99 arms exports accounted for 52% of total ECGD credits, which, as CAAT pointed out, is an extraordinary proportion considering arms exports generally comprise less than 3% of the total visible exports. When a default occurs (not infrequently), the UK taxpayer picks up the bill. [23]

In January 2000 Gordon Brown announced that he was adding 22 additional poor countries to a list of 41 already banned from export credits for arms sales. [24] This has been criticised as tinkering since the majority of arms sales are not to these countries.

CAAT has been campaigning for an end to all Export Credit Guarantees for military purchases and 118 MPs have signed an Early Day Motion which calls on the government "to end export credit guarantees for military equipment and to negotiate a European Union-wide ban on the availability of export credit for military exports."

Regulation of the trade will never be successful when the government's own policy is to promote arms exports and the machinery to do this remains in place. So why does the government continue to promote arms exports?

Knee Deep in Foreign Policy

The fact that the arms exports trade sustains jobs is usually the government's first argument. How important this is to them can be seen from the fact that, since 1980/81, cuts in government defence spending and the policy of opening contracts to international competition has meant that some 320,000 jobs have been lost in the UK 'defence' industry. This is twice the total number of jobs sustained by the exports industry. [25]

The economic arguments given for maintaining an unregulated export trade [26] are also looking to be increasingly bogus. Financial Times journalist Sir Samuel Brittan, for example, has been busy recently exploding these myths. [27] A study produced by the Centre for Defence Economics at University of York has concluded that the benefits to the UK economy from arms sales totalling £203m a year are far outweighed by the subsidies which amount to £431m [28] and Mark Phythian predicts that in the future "ever greater governmental support will be required to maintain a diminishing share of the market." [29] The fact that the unprofitability of the trade has gone unnoticed is due in large part to the massive arms exporting apparatus (principally DESO) now sitting inside the government which dovetails so neatly with the arms industry.

Yet for Blair and his cabinet, like governments before them, there is a much bigger prize. As a characteristically forthright Alan Clark declared in 1997, "the objective of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is that our military capability should carry sufficient weight to merit our place on the Security Council and, deriving from that, our place on the various other bodies that determine world policy, such as the Group of Seven." [30] Or in Phythian's authoritative thesis, "in the post-Cold War world, a healthy arms export industry is still a leading currency of international influence, a passport to a leadership role within NATO, influence over European Union defence and foreign policies, and the route by which the UK seeks to retain global influence." [31]

To some extent this idea is a delusion. "Rather than bringing influence (over purchasing states)," Phythian concludes, "arms sales have made Britain dependent apologists for insecure governments. Britain's most enthusiastic clients are corrupt and/or undemocratic, often with problematic human rights records—which Britain has been constrained from speaking out over because of its stake in the arms sales relationship. All too often (arms sales) have served to diminish its authority internationally and corrode values at home." [32]

This is perhaps the most unprincipled trade of them all—a trade that stimulates demand and thereby increases the likelihood of war and internal repression, that is happy to sell to both sides in a conflict, a trade which uses sanitised language to separate itself from its real-life effects and where bribery and corruption are endemic.

Of all New Labour's Faustian pacts with big business, its warm relationship with the arms trade perhaps represents the greatest threat, and for the government itself, its greatest liability. For the time being little has changed in the grand scheme of things and much greater action is needed to curb this deadly business.

notes

1 Providing the armoured cars that took part in the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa in 1960 and the communications equipment which Ugandan mass murderer Idi Amin used to track down his victims (see John Pilger "Flying the Flag: Arming the World" in Hidden Agendas, Vintage, 1998, p. 124); and supplying torture equipment to the Rwandan Hutu militia that helped them carry out the genocide of 800,000 Tutsi's in 1994 (Guardian 10/2/00), for example.

2 Using up to 50% of the overseas aid budget to secure arms deals—an issue that came to light with the Malaysian Pergau Dam scandal; arming both Iran and Iraq during their decade-long war in the 1980s in which a million people died - even after Iraq's gassing of 5,000 Kurds in Halabja—and lying about this repeatedly in parliament as revealed by the Scott enquiry; the arming of Indonesia and Pinochet's Chile; allegations that Mark Thatcher personally benefited from commissions on arms sales including £12m on the Al-Yamamah arms deal with Saudi Arabia, (Pilger, pp. 131-132).

3 Mark Phythian, "The Politics of British Arms Sales Since 1964", Manchester University Press, 2000, pp. 291-292. In the run up to the election Blair was privately assuring the arms industry that a Labour government would not interfere with its trade—see Pilger, p. 142.

4 Phythian, p. 297.

5 Amnesty International, "Power & Impunity: Human Rights under the New Order", London, 1994.

6 Chris Wrigley, "Labour Pains", CAAT News Apr-May 2001. In 1998 CAAT calculated that "the UK licensed military exports to 30 of the 40 most oppressive regimes in the world. Licenses were granted for arms exports to over three quarters of all war zones and regions of tension."

7 *Ibid.*

8 http://www.dti.gov.uk/export.control/legislation/draftbill.htm

9 See the Western European Industry Ownership Jigsaw at http://defence-data.com/current/pagerip1.htm.

10 BAe Systems are now the largest arms company in the world.

11 See the Report on the Council's Annual Report on the Implementation of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, by rapporteur Gary Titley MEP for the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy, 18/7/00.

12 Phythian, p. 293.

13 http://www.caat.org.uk/lobbying/Framework%20Agreement.htm.

14 See note 12.

15 Pilger, p. 123.

16 See "Running Guns - The Global Black Market in Small Arms", edited by Lora Lumpe, Zed Books, London, 2000 for a definitive analysis of this issue.

17 See note 7.

18 Pilger, p. 146.

19 The department was originally called The Defence Sales Organisation. Its name was changed to DESO in 1985.

20 Defence Select Committee, The Appointment of the New Head of Defence Export Services, Second Report, Session 1998-99, para 13

21 One each in Australia, Brunei, Germany, India, Indonesia, Kuwait, Malaysia, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Thailand and Turkey.

22 In addition to DESO, the government employs 127 military attachés and 239 support staff stationed in 70 embassies and High Commissions around the world at a cost of £30.8 million a year. It is estimated that one third of an attachés time is spent promoting arms sales. An Army Sales Team help show off the goods and oversee the military training of the purchasing country's personnel that frequently comes as part of the UK sales package. Phythian, pp. 75-76.

23 In between 95/96 & 97/98 the ECGD paid out £196 million in claims for defaults on arms exports. "As of February 1999 the ECGD had paid out but failed to recover, the value of arms purchases by a number of leading purchasers: in respect of Indonesia, £11 million; Kenya £16 million; Egypt, £46 million; Algeria, £98 million; Jordan, £253 million. Many of Jordan's purchases, of course, were in reality destined for Iraq. In addition, there is the Iraqi default itself, the total cost of which to the British taxpayer has been estimated at £652 million." Phythian, pp. 78-79.

24 The Guardian, 12/1/00.

25 Phythian, p. 30.

26 The arguments given include: the cost of the government's own arms purchases produced by the extended runs necessary for exports; increased exports help keep up our balance of payments; and the industry is a major driver of high-tech research.

27 Sir Samuel Brittan, "Why arms sales are bad for Britain", New Statesman, 31/1/00. Brittan also gave this year's CAAT Annual Lecture the text of which can be found at http://www.caat.org.uk/research/2001Lecture_Body.html.

28 See note 7.

29 Phythian, p. 322.

30 Quoted in Phythian, pp. 32-33.

31 Phythian, p. 33.

32 Phythian, pp. 323-324.

As it never was

Peter Kravitz

In March 1979 the people of Scotland were asked whether they wanted their own parliament separate from England. The majority said yes. However, a last minute clause added to the bill stated that 40% of the total electorate had to be in favour. This took non-voters to be saying no. Governments get elected on less.

In 1980 I started reading manuscripts for the Edinburgh publisher *Polygon*. The backlist consisted mostly of books about Scottish failures. There was one on the failure of the breakaway Scottish Labour Party, another on the Scottish Daily News—a failed attempt at newspaper publishing. And there were books about failures that failed to appear. Someone was commissioned to write a fan's diary of the Scottish team's failure in the Argentina World Cup of 1978.

Polygon was also due to publish Neal Ascherson's Devolution Diaries written during the referendum debacle, in which he referred to the post-referendum years as 'the hangover of '79'. In some circles it was known as the 'deferendum' due to the lack of nerve exhibited by the electorate. In the end Ascherson decided they were too frank and instead deposited them in the Public Record Office in Edinburgh under a 'Closed' mark.

Around the time I started at Polygon, publishers released a flood of histories, companions, dictionaries and encyclopedias of Scottish literature. In most cultures these reference works might have had quite a long shelf-life, but the publication of work by Alasdair Gray, James Kelman and others in the early 1980s rendered the volumes that had excluded them obsolete almost as soon as they were published. In retrospect they were marking the end of a former era in Scottish literature and the beginning of a new one.

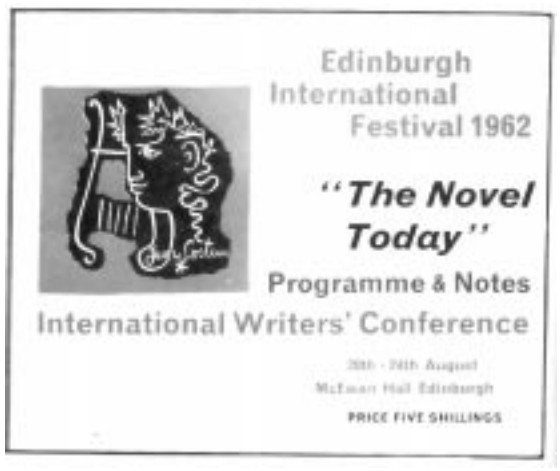
Anyone looking for the country's authors in a Scottish bookshop at that time would have been pointed towards reprints of Neil Gunn and Eric Linklater. Publishers were more interested in resurrecting dead writers as opposed to looking for new ones and grants from the Scottish Arts Council encouraged this. When on behalf of Polygon I sent them Kelman's second novel *A Chancer*, they deemed it unworthy of a grant towards publication costs. They had received a complaint from a Conservative Member of Parliament, Alick Buchanan-Smith; one of his constituents had picked up Kelman's previous novel *The Busconductor Hines*, in an Edinburgh bookshop, and was shocked that taxpayers' money was subsidising such language. Those who claimed to represent culture had lost their collective nerve.

There was the publication of the long-delayed New Testament in Scots in 1982 and the *Concise Scots Dictionary* in 1985. These became surprise (to the bookshops) best-sellers and were products of decades of work W. L. Lorimer's *New Testament in Scots*, like Gray's *Lanark* and Kelman's *Not Not While The Giro* and other stories, were completed long before publication in book form. Lorimer first had the idea of translating it in 1945, began in earnest in 1957 and completed it in 1966. It took until 1983 to raise sufficient interest and funds to secure publication. He uses different forms of Scots to show different authors in the New Testament and when the Old Testament is quoted he uses Old Scots. The book's raciness and hybridity made the attempts by various writers and academics in the decade before to sort out an agreed form of Scots laughable.

Later on in the 1980s books and pamphlets came out glossing Glasgow speech such as Stanley Baxter's *Parliamo Glasgow* and Michael Munro's *The Patter*, which topped the Scottish best-seller charts for months and went into several editions. Words that were being taken out of speech and print in the past couple of centuries were now being put back in (in the case of anglicised Scots), or left in (in the case of others). Derek in Kelman's story 'Events in yer life' says, on turning on the TV one morning, that 'it was only the Scottish accents made it interesting'. Eck in John McRay's play *Dead Dad Dog* has the answer: "It's not ma accent it's your ears." In a nice reversal, Alasdair Gray used a transcription of upper class Oxbridge English for 'The Distant Cousin of the Queen' section in *Something Leather*. Here, your is 'yaw', poor is 'paw', literature is 'litritcha', here is 'hia', nearly is 'nialy' and Shakespeare is 'Shakespia'.

The sudden appearance in print of many of these writers has been called a boom by many commentators. In reality, however, it was more the result of a process: Alasdair Gray, Jeff Torrington, Bill Douglas and James Kelman wrote for more than a decade before being published in book form in Scotland or England. Perhaps it took the failure of the Devolution Bill in 1979 to bring them to a wider public. There is, after all a school of thought that says that when the politics of a country run aground, the people look for self expression in culture. The public acceptance or censorship of vernacular Scots has always been a symptom of political feeling in the country. In reaction to the Act of Union with England in 1707, there was a renewal of interest in the vernacular, followed by a reaction in Edinburgh around the middle of the eighteenth century when a guide book on how to excise Scotticisms from speech became popular amongst the literati. Its stated aim was 'to put young writers and speakers on their guard against Scotch idioms' and its influence is still obvious many generations later in the properly annunciated speech of Miss Jean Brodie. One exception was Robert Burns, whose writing was applauded in the 1780s by the same people who had set about removing Scottish words from their vocabulary.

In Glasgow during 1971 some writers had begun to meet every two weeks in a group co-ordinated by Philip Hobsbaum, a lecturer in the English Department at the university. This was the fourth time he had organised such a group. Besides an earlier one in Glasgow there had been groups in London and in Belfast (to which Seamus Heaney brought his poems) in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Here Gray and Kelman met each other and Tom Leonard and Liz Lochhead for the first time. Other writers at the group included the poets Donald Saunders, Aonghas MacNeacail and Robin Hamilton, and the science-fiction writer Chris Boyce. Each would submit a piece of writing in advance which would then be copied, circulated and read out during the meeting. The value of such encouragement and criticism at an early stage of a writer's career cannot be overemphasized. Leonard's "The Good Thief' had already appeared in the first issue of *Scottish International* back in January 1968. When he had tried to publish poems in *Glasgow University Magazine* the printer declined because of the language. A few years later a typesetter wanted 'foreign language rates' for some of his other Glasgow poems. Leonard was probably the most established writer attending the Hobsbaum group. *Six Glasgow Poems* and *A Priest Came on at Merkland Street* were published to some acclaim in 1969 and 1970. J. B. Caird (one of Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools in Scotland) ended a talk to the Association for Scottish Literary Studies in 1972 with the question: "Is there a possibility in fiction—as has been done in verse by Tom Leonard and others—for the phonetic rendering of Glasgow speech in the way Raymond Queneau has used Parisian speech in 'Zazie dans le Metro?'" Like most people, he was not to know that over in Glasgow James Kelman was doing just this.



When Kelman and Gray first met at Hobsbaum's group they did not particularly like each other's writing, but warmed to each other personally. Gray later acknowledged him for helping the first chapter of Lanark read smoother. He included a drawing of Kelman on the frontispiece of Book One of *Lanark* while printing his story 'Acid' in one of the footnotes to plagiarisms in the novel. Gray had been working on *Lanark* since the 1950s. When he completed one of the four books it comprises he sent it to the literary agent Spencer Curtis Brown, who rejected it in 1963. An editor at Quartet bought an option on *Lanark* for £75 after reading a half-complete version in 1972. When Gray finished his work four years later it was turned down because it was 'too long'. Two other London publishers offered to publish it if he split it into two books. During this time Gray made a meagre living selling plays to television and radio. In between he would go back to painting. He did murals in restaurants and churches, and for more than a decade made portraits of Glasgow citizens for the People's Palace Museum. Finally, he offered *Lanark* to the Edinburgh publisher Canongate in February 1977, who accepted it a year later. They went on to publish it in 1981. Lanark had been twenty-four years in the making.

In 1987 Gray used the advances of two books to organise a touring exhibition of the painters John Connolly, Alan Fletcher, Carole Gibbons and Alasdair Taylor, whose work he felt had been unjustly neglected.

Kelman had been writing since about 1967 and by 1971 had enough stories for a book. Through Hobsbaum he met the American writer Mary Gray Hughes. She got a publisher in Maine interested in the manuscript of *An old pub near the* Angel his first book of stories. It was published in 1973 by Puckerbrush Press and was little noticed in Scotland or England. His work was starting to appear in magazines and occasionally in the *Scottish Short Stories* annual volume. By the mid-1970s Kelman had another collection of stories ready, was completing one novel and was well underway with another.

A good deal of co-operation amongst these writers in the West of Scotland began at this time; writing circulated in manuscript and addresses of

hard-to-come-by literary magazines were exchanged. The best of these was *Scottish International* which lasted from 1968 to 1974. At the beginning of the 1970s it ran extracts from *Lanark* and published Alan Spence's stories. Two poets—Edwin Morgan and Robert Garioch—were on the board of the magazine. Morgan sponsored Alasdair Gray's application to the Scottish Arts Council for money to finish *Lanark* (he received £300 in 1973).

Many of the new writers from the West of Scotland found Morgan's poetry an inspiration as it took in urban life (especially Glasgow) and embraced the new. These were themes not often found in combination at that time. *Scottish International* was strange for a Scottish cultural magazine in several respects. Guided by its editor Bob Tait, it treated Hugh MacDiannid as a poet amongst equals instead of installing him high on a throne. It also tried to cover Glasgow comprehensively for the first time.

In 1970, the *Glasgow Herald* did two features on Thomas Healy entitled 'From the Pick to the Pen' and 'Labourer Who Writes Stories'. They reported that Healy 'whose most recent story—The Traveler—reflects his experiences as a navvy on a hydro-electric site in the Highlands, has won at the age of 28, a Scottish Arts Council bursary of £500.' This allowed him to work on a novel of Glasgow in the 1950s. Some stories appeared in an anthology of new writers put out by Faber, who took an option on the novel but never published it. Nothing more appeared in book form. Until in 1988, maybe aware of the work we were publishing, he sent Polygon his novel *It Might Have Been Jerusalem*. He had been writing for more than twenty years without having a book accepted. In his second book, *Rolling*, his hero has a love affair with a schoolboy in Glasgow, gets dysentery in Madrid and ends up, via Germany and Australia, in a marriage of sorts. After publication, Healy was berated for creating a character who made everything secondary to drink. Many Scottish reviewers appear to seek redemption from books by Scottish writers. They approach them with different critical apparatus to that which they might bring to, say, an American writer. Like the councillors of Glasgow they prefer happy endings to hard-won self-determination.

In 1974, Bill Douglas wrote the novel *My Childhood* to raise money to allow him to complete his trilogy of films *My Childhood/ My Ain Folk / My Way Home*, but it never found a publisher. The manuscript resurfaced nearly twenty years later. In 1975 William Mcllvanney, after winning the Whitbread Prize for *Docherty*, said he wanted 'to write a book that would create a kind of literary genealogy for the people I came from.' Meanwhile, Kelman was doing exactly this and getting rejection slips from London publishers who slammed the door on Scottish writers of fiction just as quickly as they had opened it. Not being published in book form, whether in Edinburgh or London, meant they had to build their own links with readers and other writers to avoid complete neglect.

If publishers in Edinburgh and London had their blinkers on when it came to manuscripts from new Scottish writers, the work was not sitting in drawers. Magazines and small presses evolved to plug the gap and they had an influence disproportionate to their size. For a couple of years from 1978 Kelman, Gray, Leonard, Lochhead, Spence and others distributed booklets of their work as the Glasgow Print Studio Co-operative with the help of its director Calum Mackenzie. In 1979 Kelman began the first of two periods as Writer-in-Residence for Renfrewshire District Libraries. In an interview with the *Glasgow Herald* at the time Kelman said "I wanted to help ordinary people to become aware that books and writers are not sacred and unapproachable. Most people have something in them worth writing about if only they realised it, and I intend to have workshops in every local community to encourage people to both read and write." In May of that year, five days after Margaret Thatcher's first election victory, Kelman put on—in his words to a reporter at the time—'the first poetry reading to take place at Paisley Town Hall since W. B. Yeats in 1924'. Among those on the bill were Sorley MacLean, Iain Crichton Smith and Aonghas MacNeacail.

In the absence of interest from publishers or agents, authors in the west of Scotland continued to link up. More and more readings were organised. Here Kelman met Jeff Torrington, who had been a shop steward at the former Talbot/Chrysler car plant at Linwood. Torrington was in the middle of writing *Swing Hammer Swing*, part of which Kelman passed to me in 1983. It led to several Torrington stories appearing in *Edinburgh Review*. Torrington told me that when he first attended one of Kelman's writing groups in Paisley Kelman suggested that he knock all the stained glass windows out of his prose, referring to the adjectives and adverbs. But Torrington's favourite writers include Vladimir Nabokov and Ray Bradbury and as he enjoyed using these words they remained. When Liz Lochhead ran a writing group in Alexandria, north of Glasgow, she met Agnes Owens who gave her the story 'Arabella'. Lochhead showed it to Gray and Kelman who loved it and soon became friends with the author. Several years on, in 1982, Gray passed me the typescript of the novel *Gentlemen of the West* by Agnes Owens, which was published at Polygon.

I also heard about Janice Galloway from Kelman. He had been judging a short story competition and photocopied some of her entry for me. I went on to publish several stories in *Edinburgh Review* and her novel *The Trick is To Keep Breathing* at Polygon. Later, Kelman was to bring Torrington and McLean to the attention of his publisher at Secker & Warburg. Galloway published the first work by *Irvine Welsh* as one of the editors of *New Writing Scotland*. He went on to be published by The Clocktower Press and then in Kevin Williamson's *Rebel Inc*. McLean suggested Welsh and later Alan Warner to the same editor at Secker & Warburg. There is a common strand here of writers using their own reputations to bring to people's attention the work of other writers. Just look at the cover puffs and you'll see how one writer praises another who in turn introduces another new writer's work. In his 'diplags' and 'implags' in the margins of Lanark, Gray uses a satire on academic footnotes to admit he has plagiarised sentences or parts of sentences from the work of Kelman, Lochhead, Leonard, Spence and McCabe. This was an unselfish support network proving the validity of Ezra Pound's comment that *no single work of art excludes another work of art*. Tom Leonard made a huge magic marker banner of this phrase and put it along one wall of the room where his writing groups met in Paisley.

Scotland will be free when the last Church of Scotland minister is strangled by the last copy of the Sunday Post

Tom Nairn (1970)

When I see one of these Free Church ministers on the street in Lewis, I feel like walking across the road and hitting him in the face.

Iain Crichton Smith (1989)

Most of the themes in these works—the art of keeping a fragile hold on sanity, struggles against moral intolerance and the causes and effects of drinking too much—would have made sense to another Glasgow writer, R D. Laing. His work has been an influence on some of the writers refered to here. What many of them have in common with him is rage, intelligence, humour and a curiosity and frustration about the central role of guilt in the Scottish psyche. Laing's first book *The Divided Self* published in London in 1959 after he left Glasgow, is a psychological look at the everyday occurrence of split personality. He felt that guilt develops when anger is not expressed but sent inward and two selves are created. Scotland can lay some claim to being one of the best purveyors in world literature of the doppelgänger or double. Since James Hogg's *Confessions of A Justified Sinner* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* many Scottish writers have explored this theme. Yet, what is remarkable about so much Scottish writing of the past fifteen years is how the double has disappeared. There is very little splitting. Some of the characters may be struggling to recover from damage but they are whole. They may be alienated from the values of society, but they are not alienated from themselves. They may be angry, but this comes out as rage and is not left buried to form cycles of bitterness and depression. They fight madness and avoid suicide: Patrick Doyle in Kelman's *A Disaffection*; Roy Strang in Welsh's *Marabou Stork Nightmares*; Jock McLeish in Gray's *1982, Janine*; Joy Stone in Galloway's *The Trick is To Keep Breathing*; Helen Brindle in AL Kennedy's *Original Bliss* and Ralph in Iain Crichton Smith's *In The Middle of The Wood*. For these characters sanity is not given, but won. Then they are whole, not split people.

For his *Radical Renfrew* anthology Tom Leonard compiled a thematic list of contents which could be a thumbnail history of Scotland. The first five of the sixteen sections are religion, alcohol, emigration, employment and unemployment. Institutionalised religion still has a powerful hold on Scotland. Monty Python's *Life of Brian* is still banned from every cinema in Glasgow and in the early 1980s Glasgow University Union denied students permission to form a Gay Society. In Alan Sharp's *A Green Tree in Gedde*, Moseby began to understand what being West Coast Scottish meant, with its preoccupations with guilt and sex and sin. Twenty-five years later, in *The Trick Is To Keep Breathing*, Janice Galloway sums up the prevailing ethos of Scottish schooling: 'apportion blame that ye have not blame apportioned unto you.'

There are more antecedents of these themes in the work of Glasgow writer Ivor Cutler. In *Life In A Scotch Sitting Room Vol 2* his mother smells burning:

"Who's been playing with the matches? asked Mother, looking into the box and shaking the contents. I looked through a hole in my plate.

You could have boiled a kettle on my cheek ALL the children were busy looking guilty. It was our custom."

Not that long ago children in Scottish schools were still being punished by the tawse. *The Concise Scots Dictionary* defines it as

"a whip with tads; the lash for a whipping top; a leather punishment strap with thongs (since 1983 rarely and only in certain regions); also a child's word for penis."

Schools can oppress their teachers as much as their pupils. Teachers appear in contemporary Scottish fiction as people for whom sanity is no longer a given. Ralph in Iain Crichton Smith's *In The Middle of The Wood*, Joy Stone in *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, Patrick Doyle in *A Disaffection* ("He just wanted something different. To not be a teacher perhaps") are all burdened with the pressures put on the country's educational system. Whether because of Calvinism or Catholicism, Scotland has had hangups in abundance—especially around sex and drink. Then there is anger. Then there is guilt about this anger. Then the depression that follows when anger is internalised. Nowhere is this clearer than in the rage of Scottish men. A good deal of contemporary Scottish fiction shows the pressure put on Scots men to be real hard men. In *Marabou Stork Nightmares*, in my opinion Irvine Welsh's best book so far, Roy Strang is abused by his racist uncle. A few years later he helps commit a gang rape. Strang has been 'running away from sensitivity: a fucking schemie, a nobody, shouldnae have these feelings because there's fucking naewhair for them tae go.'

In the 1970s two plays dealt with this theme overtly. Tom McGrath wrote *The Hard Man* about convicted murderer Jimmy Boyle and Bill Bryden's play *Benny Lynch* tells the story of the Glasgow boxer who lost it all to drink William McIlvanney's novel *The Big Man* traces the life of a man who loses his job in contemporary Ayrshire and turns to bare-knuckle fighting to earn a living. Even the title of his collection of short stories—*Walking Wounded*—tells us that we are entering the arena where damaged men do damage to each other and have damage done to them. It is as if only a decade, not centuries, has elapsed since the wars with England. The word 'manliness' occurs very regularly in Thomas Healy's fiction and it is not surprising that his most recent book *A Hurting Business*, is a memoir of being a lifelong boxing fan in Glasgow. In the novel *Gentlemen of the West* by Agnes Owens:

"Proctor's answer was to hurl a glass through the mirror behind the bar. My mother gave a moan of fear. This excited Paddy's chivalrous instincts. He hurried up to Proctor and smashed a lemonade bottle on the counter over his head."

The main character of the book, Mac, describes the scars on his face, saying 'they were status for me'. Owens presents violence as a straightforward fact of everyday life, with little comment or judgement. Violence and anger (and fondness, which can sometimes make the switch hilarious) come out in language too. Most violence between people never results in a fight but remains in language. Kelman has given the example of writing about a few men in a pub. You can either write using the dialogue that they might actually use or you can write using language they wouldn't use. If you do the latter then you end up censoring their whole existence. A writer has to make other decisions, such as: Does the narrator use the same language as the characters? In the prose of some writers mentioned here, there is no such split. In 1988 a magazine for English teachers in Scottish schools printed a review of *Gentlemen of the* West which concluded that the book's "usefulness as a school text is unfortunately limited by the realistic inclusion in the dialogue, of language associated with 'bouts of drinking and occasional houghmagandie'". The reviewer finished by warning teachers that 'the parents of your average S grade candidate would certainly be moved to protest.'

Censorship can take many different forms. I came across a peculiarly misguided example when I was editing *Towards The End*, a novel by the Glasgow writer Joseph Mills published in I989 by Polygon. The job of an editor is to understand the author's intention and play devil's advocate to both the writer and to his or her own instinctive response. Although I didn't like some of Mills's florid metaphors, what made the book compelling was its attention to detail, its focus on the particular lived moments of the protagonist's life. Yet, whenever the character moved about the city, the Glasgow place and street names had been tippexed out on the manuscript.

"I'd like you to think about reinstating these names.'

'Are you sure?"

'Yes.'

'It's just that the publisher in London that almost took the book said if I took them out it would have more universal appeal.'

Needless to say he was delighted to reinstate them.

In December l990, the *Scots Magazine*—a favourite read among Scots abroad—published an article by Maurice Fleming entitled 'Scotland the Depraved'. In it he called for a return to the values of the comic classics of Compton Mackenzie and more publicity for writers who could celebrate Scotland as opposed to those he labels 'the terrible twosome': Kelman and Welsh, joined by Duncan McLean. He describes his targets as 'desperate to plumb even deeper depths of depravity'. These writers, he said, 'appear to view Scotland with undisguised and malicious disgust [portraying the place as] a nation of drunks, drug addicts and dropouts.'

In 1992 the *Daily Record* printed the headline:

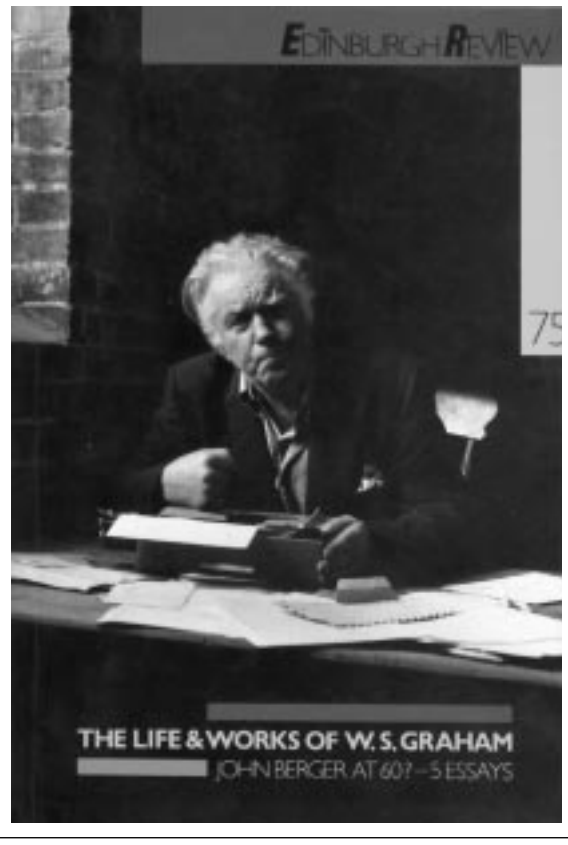
SEX SHOCKERS ON SCHOOL'S READING LIST

and continued with reference to 'dirty books' and 'classroom porn shockers'. In response to the action of a retired chemistry teacher on the Johnstone High School board five books were removed from the library's shelves for sixteen- to eighteen-year-olds. The books were *A Chancer* and *Greyhound for Breakfast* by James Kelman; *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker; *The Cider House Rules* by John Irving and *Perfume* by Patrick Suskind. The reason given was that they contained obscene language and/or depictions of rape and/or child abuse and/or violence. As a follow-up the paper had sent copies of pages from these books to the Strathclyde Region's Director of Education who commented I am shocked and appalled... and taking urgent steps to ensure that they are not available to children anywhere in the region.'

The next day, under the headline

CLEAN UP AT PORN SCHOOL

The director of education commented: "It was utterly unacceptable that such filth should ever have become available in the first place." Subsequently, Robert Gould, the Leader of Strathclyde Region, told the school to take all post-1970 grown-up fiction off the shelves to be vetted. He was later quoted in a paper as saying "I'm not much of a reader. No one talks like that, f-ing and blinding all over the place. You can't use language like that in public; if I spoke like that I'd be f-ing hounded out of office.'



This is not that different from those who only want a rosy image of their city written or painted or filmed. A standard criticism from this direction in Scotland was trotted out during the 1990 Year of Culture and then for the film of *Trainspotting* and goes something like this: 'Yes I'm sure the book/film accurately represents life as it is lived for a proportion of the population, but to put this out as art or entertainment makes me feel uneasy. The book/film seems to condone all that is bad about our society. He needn't have written it because we see it every day in our streets and estates'.

Many newspapers still put in asterisks or dashes or blanks when they take exception to what is simply language. The *Glasgow Herald* would print stories in censored versions—removing the words from view and leaving nothing in their place—even after guarantees to the author. These writers were too important for the paper to be seen to be ignoring them but that didn't stop them doctoring the language. Several anthologies published with the school market in mind have obviously gone out of their way to pick a Kelman story or a Leonard poem with no language they don't like in it. The radio stations in Scotland still omit words without bleeping them: "Well,' they seem to be saying, 'would you prefer not to have your story broadcast at all?'

The *Scots Magazine* got one thing right and that is the connection between the so-called culprits. Duncan McLean has said, only half jokingly, that he sees himself as the missing link between Lewis Grassic Gibbon and Kelman. McLean may come from rural Aberdeenshire but he has written about life in and around Edinburgh in a way that would simply not have happened unless he had come across Kelman's *Not Not While The Giro* and *The Busconductor Hines*. Some Scots do not believe a book is worth reading unless it has been praised in London. It often has to be published there as well. Bill Forsyth said his film *Gregory's Girl* was not given a proper cinema release in Scotland until it had the seal of approval from London. Many journalists, broadcasters and academics north of the border poured scorn on Kelman's experimentation and use of language until *A Disaffection* was shortlisted for the Booker Prize.

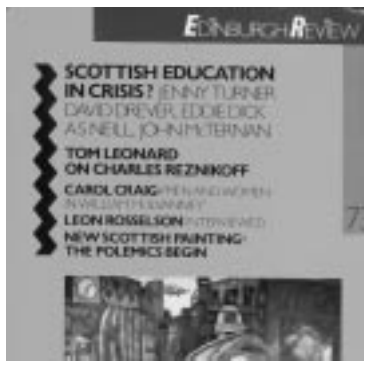
Whereas Kelman looked to America and Europe for a literary tradition, McLean, together with Gordon Legge, Alan Warner and Irvine Welsh and to a lesser extent Janice Galloway and A. L Kennedy—have been influenced by Kelman and Gray, in part for their tenacity and in part for formal and technical breakthroughs in their use of language. McLean says, "When *The Busconductor Hines* came out in 1984 it just blew my mind. It was the voice. For the first time I was reading a book about the world I lived in. I didn't know literature could do that." Welsh also credits Kelman with "setting the whole thing out so that people like myself can have more fun." A. L Kennedy has said that people like John Byrne, Tom Leonard and James Kelman "made my generation of writers possible ... gave us permission to speak ... made us more ourselves—gave us the reality, life and dignity that art can at a time when anything other than standard English and standard address was frowned upon."

The Busconductor Hines, Kelman's first published novel did not reach the Booker Prize shortlist. However, Richard Cobb (the chairman of the judges), did express his shock that 'one of the novels seemed to be written entirely in Glaswegian' as if that was enough to pass judgement on it. Anne Smith, editor of the (then Edinburgh-based) *Literary Review* said of it, 'Who wants to read 300 pages about the life of a busconductor where nothing much happens anyway?' When Kelman won the Booker Prize for *How Late It Was, How Late*, Simon Jenkins of *The Times* said the Booker Prize judges were glorifying a noble savage, a glib and conde-

scending way of sidelining work that disturbs.

The *Edinburgh Magazine* once described Burns as 'a striking example of native genius bursting through the obscurity of poverty and the obstructions of laborious life.' The same sentiments in more modern language greeted many of these writers on their first publication. More than a few of them have been described in profiles as coming from non-literary backgrounds, using Leith or Grangemouth or Gorbals or whatever argot, dialect, patois or demotic. Most critics go to extraordinary lengths to avoid using the word 'language'. The result is that writers are marginalised outside a constructed literary canon, built by those who think middle class people in the English home counties have no accent whatsoever. Similarly, when Alasdair Gray gets described as 'eccentric' critic and reader can collude in not taking his political or historical arguments seriously.

In 1985, Douglas Dunn concluded his *Glasgow Herald* review of Kelman's *A Chancer* with a plea for a good middle class novel set in the west of Scotland. Things have come a long way from the day when Neil Gunn, writing in the same newspaper nearly fifty years before, wrote that 'Glasgow needs a working class novel written from the inside'. Elsewhere, in his *Oxford Book of Scottish Short Stories*, Dunn talks of the 'bruising candour' of Kelman and McLean. His argument is that just as in the nineteenth century many Scottish writers escaped into writing kailyard (cabbage patch) stories of rural idylls, so now unfortunately, the emphasis on urban working-class stories can appear to be as exaggerated as the agrarian stresses of the past.' He goes on to refer to Alasdair Gray's "eccentric, astonishing intelligence" ... "the politicised demotic challenge of James Kelman" and "feminist purposes of Janice Galloway."



These are writers from a country where more people leave or die than stay or arrive. Scotland's biggest export in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been people. The net emigration that has been happening for most of this century stopped abruptly at the end of the 1980s. Now less Scots are leaving and more are coming back. The Public Record Office in Edinburgh has so many archives and exhibitions on the theme of emigration that it should consider changing its name to The Museum of Those That Went Away. Jim Sillars, the main force behind the breakaway nationalist Scottish Labour Party in the late 1970s, has made the point that "going to Canada or Australia or Rhodesia or into the armed forces was an accepted fact of life. If you wanted to get on then you had to get out."

The Scots, like the Jews and the Irish, are a small nation dispersed all over the world. They form a higher-than-average proportion of Interpreters, mediators, football managers, athletics coaches and translators. Great writing was found at the margins amongst Scottish translators like Willa and Edwin Muir (Kafka), C. K. Scott-Moncrieff (Proust), Alastair Reid (Borges), Hamish Henderson (Holderlin and Gramsci), Stuart Hood (Pasolini, Buzzati and Busi) and Edwin Morgan (just about everyone).

Emigration is a theme that appears in the fiction of many contemporary Scottish writers. In Thomas Healy's *It Might have been Jerusalem*, Rab is looking for somewhere to live and a job and the conversation turns inevitably to where to go to achieve his aim: 'tae London,' he tells his friend. Renton in *Trainspotting* says: 'Ah huv tae get oot ay Leith, oot ay Scotland. For good. Right away, no jist doon tae London fir six months.' The impossibility of staying and the difficulty of leaving is a constant refrain in Kelman's fiction. In *A Chancer* John asks Tammas:

Ever thought about emigrating?

Emigrating? Course.

Whereabouts?

Any fucking place!

And in *How Late It Was, How late*, Sammy Samuels tells his son Peter:

I'm thinking of heading.

Aw da.

Back to England

Da.

Trying to get a job and that ye know?

In 1983 a book was published in France entitled *L'Ecosse: une nation sans stat*. A year later, *Invisible Country* by James Campbell was published in London. He visits his native Scotland to discover why he had left the place a couple of years before. He gave it that title—which infuriated reviewers in Edinburgh and Glasgow at the time—because he felt that at the heart of the place was a political void. These were the years immediately after the 'failure' of the referendum on devolution. Campbell wrote that 'in this queer stagnation, prospects for a thriving modern literature are pretty dismal'. Allan Massie's novel, *One Night in Winter*, came out in the same year as Campbell's travel book. In it, Ebenezer exclaims that Scotland is a 'withered culture'. He says, 'Let Scotland be as independent as they wish, it will not alter the fact that there's little ... to keep talent here. Of course a political framework would retain a few—but how many?'

Both echo the 1936 essay 'Scott and Scotland', where Edwin Muir argued that the writer who wants to stay in Scotland and add to the culture 'Will find there, no matter how long he may search neither an organic community to round off his conceptions nor a literary tradition to support him! Any writer working in Scotland today certainly has the community and tradition to draw on for support. Alasdair Gray has said that during the 1950s and most of the 1960s the only writers living in Glasgow he knew were Joan Ure and Archie Hind. In the years that have passed a lot has changed. An outsider reading some of the new writing coming out of Scotland could be forgiven for thinking that independence had already come. Cultural self-determination is assumed like never before in the nation's history.

Maybe it's because of size that Scotland works well as a literary centre. People can meet face to face relatively easily. Through the Hobsbaum group, the Print Studio Press, readings at the Third Eye Centre, and the small magazines, writers met one another frequently for mutual support and disagreement. This happened more in Glasgow than in Edinburgh. Some hostility between the two cities remains even though they are only 45 minutes apart by train. Glasgow is a large city, but at any one time there tended to be half a dozen pubs where people connected with literature could meet for a chat. This helped to create a context outside the institutions of higher education and away from the distractions of London, where writing could be talked about in full seriousness.

"There is very little written, acted, composed, surmised and demanded in Scotland which does not in some strand descend from the new beginning he made."

Leader, *The Scotsman*, 9th September 1978, after the death of Hugh MacDairmid

Scottish writers often employed an alias. Hugh MacDiarmid was born Christopher Murray Grieve, George Douglas published as George Douglas Brown. James Leslie Mitchell used the pen-name Lewis Grassic Gibbon. Robert Sutherland called himself Robert Garioch. Thomas Douglas Macdonald wrote as Fionn MacColIa and Morris Blythman as Thurso Berwick. If such a distancing mechanism was necessary for them to write in a free way, others sought geographical space. There was Alexander Trocchi (who had written *Young Adam* and some hack pornography under the pseudonym *Frances Lengel*) in Paris and New York, W. S. Graham in Cornwall. Muriel Spark in New York and Rome, Alastair Reid in New York and the Dominican Republic and Alan Sharp in Los Angeles and then New Zealand.

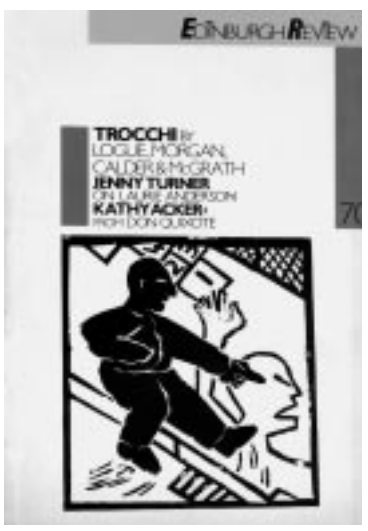
MacDiarmid had a memorable face off with Alexander Trocchi during the International Writer's Conference at the 1962 Edinburgh Festival. This was organised by the publisher John Calder who invited seventy writers from twenty countries. Trocchi had lived outside Scotland for many years and was familiar to the authors attending from France and America but was little known in the country of his birth. The debate came to an operatic climax when he said that anything that had any merit in the Scottish Literature of the preceding twenty years had been written by him. MacDiarmid countered by calling him 'cosmopolitan scum'. Trocchi replied, 'I am only interested in lesbianism and sodomy'.

Americans, including William Burroughs and Henry Miller, lined up in support of Trocchi and East European Communist Party writers backed MacDiarmid. On the surface this could be read as Trocchi the internationalist versus MacDiarmid the nationalist, or modernist versus traditionalist. Yet MacDiarmid had experimented with language in his poetry and drawn on sources from all over the world. Maybe their differences were more cultural and generational: beatnik and bard, heroin and malt whisky, black polo-neck and tweed tie. Thirty-five years on the division seems to endure with Irvine Welsh calling Trocchi 'a Scottish George Best of literature' and MacDiarmid 'a symbol of all that's perfectly hideous about Scotland.' The problem may lie not so much with MacDairmid as with those that cling only to his aura.

For most of the twentieth century, there was such a lack of debate in Scottish letters that MacDiarmid would start arguments with himself changing his mind from month to month as if only to open up areas to debate. In making all this noise he was being more deliberate than most thought. He once wrote that what Scottish literature needed most was bulk. MacDiarmid spoke at times as if he was the country personified, the embodiment of the spirit of Scotland. At the age of seventy-two he told his friend George Bruce that he felt his job had always been

'to erupt like a volcano emitting not only a flame but a lot of rubbish'

He certainly kept his foot in the door when those outside were trying to slam it shut.



A by-product of this massive effort to hold Scottish literary culture up and protect it from all comers was firstly to prioritise poetry at the cost of fiction, and secondly, to prioritise MacDiarmid in front of everybody else. After his death it was not always easy to get close to his work. MacDairmid's own words about Burns in 'A Drunk Man Looks At the Thistle' could well be applied to himself:

'Mair nonsense has been uttered in his name

Than in ony's barrin liberty and Christ'.

Young male disciples and sycophants created an aura around his life and work which meant you inevitably came to it with massive preconceptions either in favour or against. A cultural magazine—Cencrastus—was named after one of his poems and a book of tributes was published called, not surprisingly, *The Age of MacDiarmid*. For writers interviewed in the early 1980s an early question would be, 'What do you think of MacDiarmid's poem about or essay on... ?' Especially after the 'failure' of the devolution referendum his legacy was a lifeboat for young men. Now, his halo has receded and it is possible to appreciate his writing free from encumbrances. It is hard to exaggerate the influence of his personality on those around him. At his funeral Norman MacCaig said that MacDiarmid would walk into his mind 'as if it were a town and he a torchlight procession of one.' Seven years later when signing a copy of his own collected poems he at first wrote 'Hugh MacDiarmid', crossing it out just before he reached the end of the surname. He was a standing stone that cast a large shadow. For several decades Scottish literature appeared to the world as a group of male poets sitting round a table covered in malt whiskies in The Abbotsford Bar in Edinburgh. A writer only got admitted if one of them died. And if you weren't a poet you might as well wait at the door. For three decades or more Scottish Literature was Scottish Poetry, and Scottish poetry was claimed by Edinburgh. The poets met in Edinburgh in one of three literary bars after a reading. The atmosphere is best captured in a classic, often reproduced, photograph of Hugh MacDiarmid, Sydney Goodsir Smith, Norman MacCaig and Douglas Young, cigarette in one hand, malt in the other. The scene has become something of an archetype—also appearing in a novel, a painting and being echoed by more recent photographs of writers. In Alasdair Gray's 1982 Janine Jock McLeish goes into a basement bar in Hanover Street for a pie and a pint:

'The bar was crowded except where three men stood in a small open space created by the attention of the other customers. One had a sombre pouchy face and upstanding hair which seemed too like thistledown to be natural, one looked like a tall sarcastic lizard, one like a small sly shy bear. "Our three best since Burns," a bystander informed me, "barring Sorley of course."

I nodded as if I knew what he meant then went out and bought a picturecard view of the castle.'

In his painting *Poet's Pub* (also the title of an Eric Linklater novel) Alexander Moffat merged three drinking places—Milo's Bar, The Abbotsford and the Cafe Royal—into one. It formed the centrepiece of the 1981 exhibition 'Seven Poets' and he put MacDiarmid in the middle of a single canvas with lain Crichton Smith, George Mackay Brown, Edwin Morgan, Sorley MacLean, Norman MacCaig and Robert Garioch. In hindsight this mythic combination marked the end of an era where poetry eclipsed prose, Edinburgh lorded it over Glasgow and women were left outside the pub of Scottish literature. The idea that you could fit Scotland's best writers round one table is inconceivable now. Yet a sincere attempt was made in 1995 when the New Yorker sent Richard Avedon to Glasgow to capture Scotland's best in a single posed team shot at the Clutha Vaults, a pub in the East End of Glasgow. In the sixteen years between Moffat's painting and Avedon's photograph the public landscape of Scottish writing has changed beyond recognition.

A few months later the *New York Times* magazine had a reporter set up a similar scene in Robbie's Bar in Leith. The piece appeared with the headline 'the Beats of Edinburgh' and the subheadline 'from the margins of Scottish society comes a new, beer-soaked, drug-filled, profanity-laced, violently funny literature.'

Scotland doesnae mean much tae Glesca folk

Robert McLeish, The Gorbals Story (1948)

There was no feeling of being Scots. I was from Greenock and that was different even from being from the Port or Greenock or Glasgow.

Bill Bryden (1977)

James Kelman's autobiographical note to the Three Glasgow Writers anthology (published by Molendinar Press in 1976) reads:

I was born and bred in Glasgow

I have lived most of my life in Glasgow

It is the place I know best

My language is English

I write

In my writings the accent is in Glasgow

I am always from Glasgow and I speak English always

Always with this Glasgow accent

This is right enough

In 1982 his story 'Not Not While the Giro' was published in Penguin's first *Firebird* anthology. Contributors provided sixty- or seventy-word author biographies. He wrote:

James Kelman is a citizen of Glasgow. In the pages that follow about a third of the writers are from Glasgow. When my first issue as editor of Edinburgh Review came out at the end of 1984, the reviewer in the Times Literary Supplement said that there were so many writers from the west of Scotland it should be renamed the Glasgow Review. If there was a scepticism of centralised power in London, there was barely less suspicion of the power that Edinburgh presumed itself to have. To much of the outside world Glasgow was still a city of murderers and drunks.

This image had started to change through new representations of the place by writers and artists. The city fathers sought to accelerate the process by paying public relations experts vast amounts of money to dream up rapturous tautologies like 'Glasgow's Glasgow' and 'Glasgow European City of Culture' and 'What's Glasgowing On' and 'Glasgow's Miles Better'. The latter was trying to point out that Glasgow was smiling again (the decline of heavy industry made for cleaner air but massive unemployment) and that it was miles better than Edinburgh. When the slogan was booked by an ad agency for the side of Edinburgh's maroon buses, the capital's politicians refused permission at the last minute.

While many Glasgow writers see themselves as natives of that city first and of Scotland second, the city's burghers have been far from happy to take them on board. A member of the Festivals Office during Glasgow's year as European City of Culture was asked by a journalist why so few writers were involved. He told him that:

'The writers were too difficult to work with'.

A piece in the *New York Review of Books* by expatriate historian Gordon Craig took the side of the writers. This was followed swiftly by a long letter from Glasgow City Council leader Pat Lally rubbishing his argument. When the city fathers have included them it has been in a belittling fashion. In 1995 Glasgow's Department of Performing Arts distributed a lavish colour brochure consisting of folding out posters in four languages. I picked up my copy on the Gourock ferry. The section entitled 'Glasgow People' is so awful it is worth reproducing in its entirety:

Glaswegians prefer life lived on the verge of the surreal. Theirs is a gallows humour - exuberant, extravagant, grotesque but sparkling like the sun on frosty glass. As Ken Dodd put it 'the trouble with Sigmund Freud was that he never had to play the Glasgow Empire on a Saturday night' It could have changed history.

Look at some of the people GLASGOW has produced.

James Watt

Lord Lister Lord Kelvin Tobias Smollett James Bridle

James Kelman Jimmy Maxton Billy Connolly

Liz Lochhead Charles Rennie Mackintosh

Peter Howson

SOME TEAM! as Glaswegians might say! But Glaswegians are prone to talk about themselves in a language that could bamboozle visitors.

During this promotional hubbub Edwin Morgan commented that 'it's much harder to write about central Glasgow today, which has had its face lifted—this doesn't give rise to feelings from which poems come.' A lifetime of being ignored, spoken for, used and abused and patronised would be hard enough for one person to bear. The city of Glasgow was done in by England and Scotland... and by the burghers of Glasgow.

On the frontispiece of Book One of *Lanark*, Alasdair Gray rewrote the Glasgow city motto. Instead of

'Let Glasgow flourish by preaching the word'

it reads

'Let Glasgow flourish by telling the truth.'

The truth about Glasgow is that it has the highest density of lung cancer, heart problems, suicides and alcohol use in western Europe. In Jeff Torrington's story 'The Sink" Brogan tells Jordan that his neighbour has been sent home from hospital as incurable: 'Liver's like a chunk of cardboard. An alky. Telling you, if they cremate him he'll burn for a fortnight!' In Torrington's novel *Swing Hammer Swing* Burnett suggests to Clay that a Gorbals House of History should be erected. Clay muses to himself that 'at Sales Points patrons would be able to purchase wee model slums that tinkled "I Belong Tae Glesca" when their roofs were raised.'

Fuckin failures in a country of failures. It's nae good blamin it oan the English for colonising us. Ah don't hate the English. They're just wankers. We are colonised by wankers. We can't even pick a decent, vibrant, healthy culture to be colonised by. No. We're ruled by effete arseholes. What does that make us? The lowest of the

fuckin low, the scum of the earth. The most wretched, servile, miserable, pathetic trash that was ever shat intae creation. Ah don't hate the English. They just git oan wi the shite thuv goat.

Ah hate the Scots.

from Irvine Welsh's Trainspotting (1993)

The Scottish National Party used this monologue by Renton for a recruitment form in September 1996. The Commission for Racial Equality received a complaint about it from a Labour Member of Parliament and it was referred to a lawyer who said that they might be in contravention of the Malicious Publications Act. The editor of *Chapman*, one of Scotland's literary periodicals that comes out most in favour of devolution and independence, has said,

'I'm not a patriot, Scotland's a rotten country.'

This berating of Scotland from within shows a new self-confidence. Scottish writers are more comfortable criticising their own country than ever before. This can only come from a degree of cultural security, moving beyond the see-saw of self-love (in the form of blind patriotism) and self-loathing. This was not the case twenty years ago.

During 1995, Mainstream Publishing had a runaway success with the guidebook *Scotland the Best*. A year later Canongate, another Edinburgh publisher, released its sequel *Scotland the Worst*, a clear sign of cultural health. Frank Kuppner sent a cycle of poems called 'Albanian Folk Songs' to the London Review of Books. The Scots-born editor asked why he was writing about a distant south-eastern European country and he had to point out that Alba was the Gaelic for Scotland. An interviewer once asked him, 'Kuppner—that's not exactly a Scottish name is it?' To which he replied, 'Well, it is now.'

Muriel Gray in her speech on being elected Rector of Edinburgh University said: 'I am no staunch defender of the couthy heedrum hodrum brand of marketable mock Scottishness.' She called her production company Gallus Besom. There used to be another called Big Star in a Wee Picture. When Duncan McLean was part of the Merry Mac Fun Co theatre company in the mid 1980s they wrote plays with titles like *Macattack* and *Psychoskanter*.

In the Highlands on the road to Fort Augustus there is a grey concrete litter bin on which someone has written in huge black letters the words TARTAN TOURS BOX OFFICE'. Football fans, rugby fans and pipers busking on Princes Street in Edinburgh or Sauchiehall Street in Glasgow now paint the Braveheart-trademark St Andrew's Cross on their faces as a humorous and powerful rather than nationally obedient gesture. 'Roam the globe, not the glens' screamed a recent advert for the newspaper *Scotland on Sunday*.

In 1981 Barbara and Murray Grigor organised an exhibition called Scotch Myths. They gathered ephemera—from shortbread tins to whisky bottles—which showed the whole range of representations of Scottish-ness. A recent promotional postcard from the British winemerchants Oddbins would have fitted nicely into their polemic. It highlights a range of rare malt whiskies 'bottled from precious and dwindling collections, each has been nurtured to perfection and carefully selected. Most are unlikely to be seen again.' This combines the two recurrent myths of visitors to rural Scotland. On the one hand it has some of the last stretches of wilderness left in Europe and somehow by peat bog through highland spring water we can sample this purity through a malt. On the other hand with more tourism and development you are less likely to be alone, or in the words of the Oddbins promo 'So small is each bottling that this may represent your first and last chance to see, let alone taste, them.' The reverse of the postcard has a Ralph Steadman drawing of three men with red hooked noses and beards leaning over a malt potstill, with the faces of two more like them wafting ghostlike into the air above the boiling pot.

For an insight into the competing myths that part of Scotland claims as its own, buy copies of *The Field* and *Country Life* in the month of August (the month the shooting season begins). Then look at the *Scots Magazine* with its ads for Burns paperweights, cassettes of music with titles like 'Blood in the Heart' and, understandably for a country that so many people leave, articles on tracing your Scottish ancestry by CDROM. They make odd bedfellows. What they have in common is a desire to keep Scotland as it was. Or as it never was.

As a nation we have what the Germans call eine unbewaltigte Vergangenheit—a past with which we haven't completely come to terms. (In this we are quite unlike the English, who have come to terms with their history so well that they have largely forgotten it.)

Hamish Henderson in the Scotsman (1966)

We have to become independent so that we become more Scottish and less anti-English.

Dick Gaughan (1995)

England player: You Scotch are just a shower of bloody animals. Scotland player: Aye, and don't you bloody well forget it.

(conversation reported between players at a Rugby international)

Scotland continues its fight for statehood in an era where nations are breaking up into ethnicities, satellite broadcasting and internet communication mock national boundaries, and individuals are united more by their enthusiasms than by the colour of their passports. Yet its intellectuals are broadening their parameters to cope with this. The historian Angus Calder says that you can be counted as Scots if you support one of the country's sporting teams. What nationality does that make a Chicago Bulls fan in Aberdeen (or Moscow for that matter)?

In 1994 a new cultural journal was launched called *Scotlands*. Its editorial foreword described the magazine as an atlas to the plural identities that form contemporary Scotland. When Alan Warner was interviewed in the style magazine *I-D* in a feature on young talent to watch for in 1995 he said, 'There are many Scotlands within Scotland. I wanted to capture the strangeness of the one I know.' This embracing of the plurality that is Scotland is a characteristic of the new writing coming from the country which goes way beyond a table in The Abbotsford Bar.

The relationship between Scotland and England is still commemorated from Jedburgh to Orkney in the annual 'Ba Game'. In a cross between the running with the bulls in Pamplona and the Eton wall game, a leather ball is moved through the streets. The 'ba' is said to represent an Englishman's head. Football matches between Scotland and England at Wembley were war by another name. Major pitch invasions followed the Scottish victories of 1967 and 1977. The Scottish National Party wanted to use footage of these in a political broadcast but were refused permission.

Scottish business embraced the Union because it offered access to riches to be mined, picked and exploited in the foreign lands throughout the British empire. The Scots were the empire's most loyal administrators, engineers, teachers, doctors and key missionaries, like David Livingstone. The image and reality of the Scot as the trusted subaltern lives on in characters like Scottie, the loyal servant in Star Trek As the empire began to decline, the English aristocracy, accelerating a process that began with Queen Victoria building Balmoral, turned ever larger parts of rural Scotland into the huge sporting estates which still constitute a third of the country's landmass. People were evicted from their homes for the sake of sheep and sport. What would the population of Scotland be now if the Highland Clearances had never happened?

While travelling around Scotland in 1995, the journalist George Rosie had a chance meeting with a senior English civil servant from Whitehall. As they sat in a hotel overlooking Ben Loyal and the hills of Sutherland, Rosie asked him why English governments have been so unwilling to hand Scotland back to the Scots. The official ticked the reasons off on his fingers:

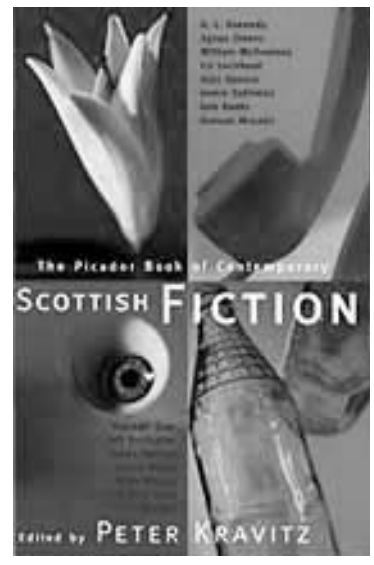
'One, oil. Two, gas. Three, fish. Four, water. Five, land. The oil and gas are self-explanatory, even now. Fish might not mean much to the British but it is a superb bargaining counter in Europe. Water will be important one day. I suspect. And as for all this [gesturing to the hills] well, this is our, how shall I say it, breathing space. That bit of elbow room that every country should have.'

There were clearances of another sort in the 1960s when planners and developers bulldozed tenements and sent the people up into modern but damp flats or to the new towns like Cumbernauld, Glenrothes or East Kilbride. In *Swing Hammer Swing* Jeff Torrington writes that:

'Whole tribes of Tenementers had gone off to the Reservations of Castlemilk and Toryglen or, like the bulk of those who remained, had ascended into Basil Spence's "Big Stone Wigwam in the Sky"'.

This was a time when—in the words of Burns Singer—Glasgow felt it was too big for its own boots and set about shaving down its foot to fit.

Scotland missed out on the great nation-building of the nineteenth century because the middle classes had such a good economic deal out of being England's junior partners in the empire. As the empire fell apart and former colonies won their independence, the Scots lost the foundation of their British identity. This led to the first real electoral impact of Scottish Nationalism in the late 1960s. Scotland would have been given back to the Scots by now had it not been for the discovery of North Sea oil. As the oil depletes, so does Scotland's chance of self-government increase. There is a strange dynamic at work here, though. The Scots have Scottish nationalism, the Welsh have Welsh nationalism, but English nationalism is about being British.



Scotland entered the Union with England in 1707 as some people enter an arranged marriage—without enthusiasm. David Black has said that

'She recognised in her partner qualities she needed to develop in herself, qualities of stability and tolerance.'

Now it may be too late for marriage guidance. As this relationship nears its end, the two countries require a course of separation counselling. The place can no longer be described, in the words of one Scot who edited an anthology in the early 1980s, as 'a nation which has lost much of its original culture and invented or romanticised more.' For the first time in centuries of insecurity and strife, Scotland has begun to stop defining itself by what it is not—England—and is with good humour facing up to what it is, both bad and good. Future generations will applaud the contribution which the writers played in this process.

A version of this text appears in the introduction to the Picador Book of Contemporary Scottish Fiction