

**HERE
AND
NOW**

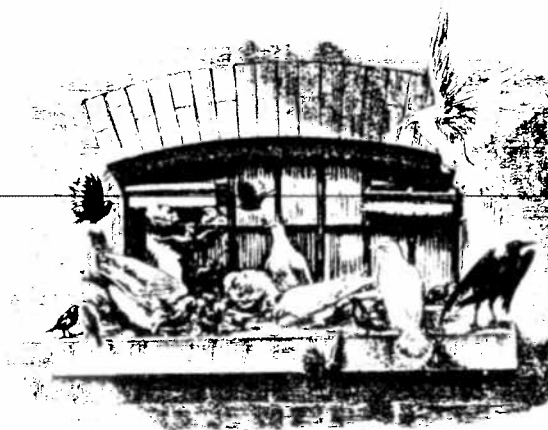


**LIFE IS
TOO SHORT**

**No. 18
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Emote Control

A new kind of society is being born, but nobody yet knows what sort of monster it will be. Those looking forward with most confidence understand least about the strange birth they are witnessing.

New institutions and rituals are coming into being. New nations, new professions. New commodities, new consumers. New identities, new roles. New rules, new choices. New catch phrases... new baloney. To say that some of these things are genuinely new is, given the stupidity of social commentary today, tantamount to legitimising them. This kind of irrationality is unprecedented.

The habit of challenging what is already safely dead has long been the custom in these islands. Radicals today pretend to be revolutionary, while enforcing the rule of a capitalism which really is revolutionary.

A new society means much more than a change of government, but the new regime clearly intends to govern *differently*, and this must be understood. Control of the national economy has been formally handed over to the fiscal bureaucracy of the Bank of England, as the prelude to eventual assimilation into a centralised European Finance Capital from which even the last indirect vestiges of electoral representation have been removed. This, after all, was New Labour's mandate from capital. This essentially completes the work of Thatcher in freeing the movement of money-capital from 'political' hazard by removing exchange controls. The difficulties faced by British capital in Europeanising its historically global and Atlantic anatomy should not be underestimated, but whatever 'integration' between financial and industrial interests is achieved, no conceivable capitalist consensus can offer any difference of prospect for the rest of the population. The Big Issue of British politics boils down to the fact that the proprietors of the Tory press are against a European currency. This is of absolutely no significance to us; it certainly shouldn't lead us to support one, since the rest of the capitalist class is in favour of it.

With government now removed from economic management, what remains to it is administration of the moral life of the population. This is good news for all those 'socialists' who have been itching to get involved in managing everyone else's lives, peddling their commodified wares of health, safety and security, whether anyone wants them or not.

Therapy has now become an instrument of governance, and this reflects a gradual replacement of political by therapeutic discourse underway for at least the last decade. Glib clichés about 'healing' and 'feeling' drip from the mouths of pundits who are trying to implement a new religious climate within the economic parameters of a thoroughly 'rationalised' order. This is the historic moment for the modern methodologists of sensitivity. The State itself now speaks psychobabble and demands that the people weep in public, light candles, wear ribbons, take two minutes silence and reveal their innermost feelings. The social virtue of 'expressing' emotion is an unquestioned tenet of the new orthodoxy. Under capitalist management it can only be an injunction to deliver even more of one's potential. For fifty years employers complained about workers 'withholding effort'. Nowadays one cannot even keep one's own *feelings* to oneself; everything must be disclosed. This new expressivism harnesses and standardises feelings along the 'emotionally correct' lines.

But the inability to distinguish truth and lies makes these official humanistic pieties downright lethal. Witch-hunts are now cynically routinised with the coldness of charity guilt-trips and 'awareness' campaigns. And the refusal to grasp the difference between personal grief and profligate emoting for the sake of camera-crews with audience-ratings uppermost in their minds condemns the whole pseudo-culture of sentiment to banality or obscenity or both.

Education has, to all intents and purposes, been abolished (at least for the overwhelming majority of students) by those to whom this function was entrusted after the crisis of the 1970s. Universities, like schools, always had what was called by critics a *hidden curriculum*; behind the stuff you were tested on lay the subtle latent messages which the *social organisation* of schooling actually instructed. Before the 1970s this hidden curriculum included such dicta as 'only what goes on in college is what counts as knowledge'. Today what is learnt amounts to a *contempt* for knowledge. Students learn this well, because, as everyone knows, nobody is allowed to fail. But there is nothing radical about the collapse of education, unless it portends the rise of knowledge *outside* of its institutionalisation, and there are few signs of this yet.

In any sane society, there would be a widespread grassroots campaign for the abolition of all educational qualifications. Instead they persist and grow every more extensively and are imposed as a blatant mechanism for arbitrarily sifting and layering the surplus population into degrees of employability.

History has had to be repressed. Everywhere the past - that which is really different from the present - is obsessively rebranded to fit prevailing fads. Whenever the past fails to serve the purposes of the present it is subject to a massive denial. People used to have dreams of a future beyond their own times. This is quite intolerable to the professional pharisees, postmodern sophists, and all those 'contemporaries' who are proud to display the scars of their imagination-bypass operations. The fashion for mocking 'truth' (in scare quotes held like tweezers) is the last refuge of liars.

Language has been enclosed and commodified. What once was part of the commons - the shared stock on which the social depended - has now been appropriated as a means of appropriating energies from those dispossessed.

As language is bled dry and articulacy is sucked out of the masses leaving them literally stupefied - the experts regurgitate the detritus as their professional gibberish. All public speech is now instrumentalised as the discourse of advertising and public relations, where calculations of *effect* displace semantic content.

No better illustration of this can be found than Blairism: the perfect linguistic expression of the death of politics. Every word or phrase has been passed through committees and focus groups, bleached of the hazard of meaning anything, and tested on samples for its emotive resonance.

Zero Tolerance is at the heart of this strategy. It combines absolutist fanaticism with absence of any awkward ideal; just 'even more of the same, only better managed'. Dissent is silenced with an infinite intolerance, claiming that it could 'create a climate' for paedophilia, drug-dealing, or fascism - deviances designed by committee: who else *could* find fault with this perfect world? Such horrors cannot hide the perfect emptiness of the present age.

EXHIBIT



ROYAL ARMOURIES

THE WATERFRONT, LEEDS.

I'd give my right arm



**for a day out at the Leeds
Armouries Museum!**

Watching Birds

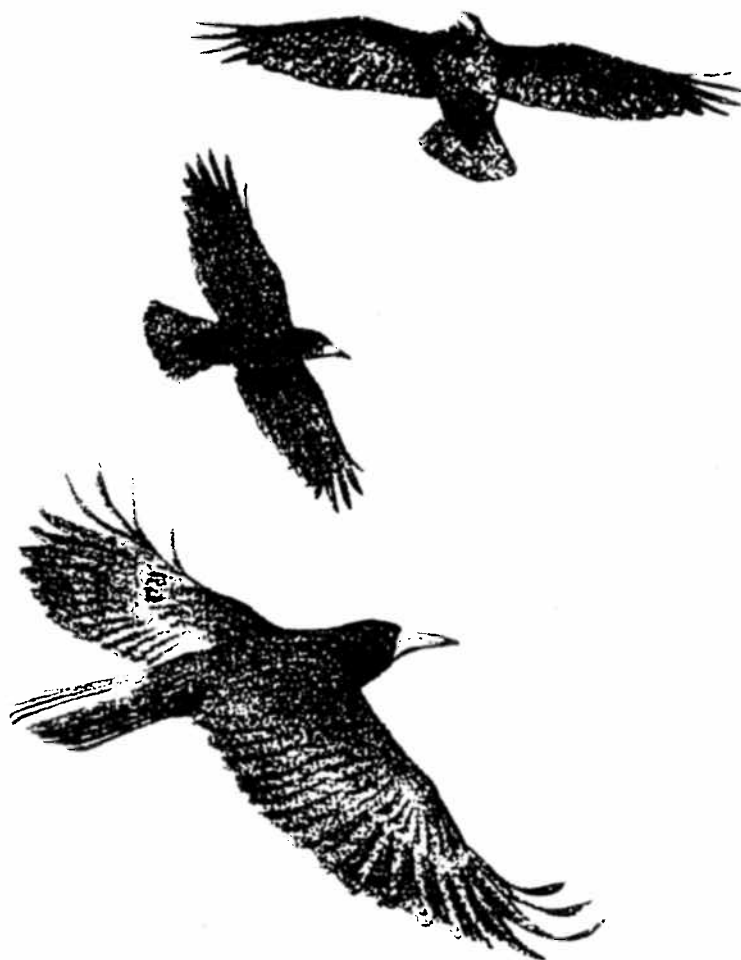
Peter Porcupine wonders why birds have so much fun

Looking out of my window, or taking another break from digging the allotment, birds are always visible. The thing about birds is that they seem to have a lot of free time. Crows in particular, hang about the air, indulge in delinquent acrobatics, make a lot of noise and rarely seem to spend much time ensuring their preservation. Similarly round about the evening a hedge sparrow will start a piercing and delightful song and its persistence will invite the human-all too human question - 'What's it for?' Well what is it for? Why do we catch birds doing so much that just makes no sense in evolutionary, preservational or reproductive terms? The hedge sparrow which bursts into song does so long after the chicks have fledged, at a time of ridiculous abundance on the plot, such that fruit rots on the branches when not harvested by humans and bugs and grubs enjoy an exuberant proliferation. The crows are quite visibly playing, there is no other word for it. I've seen other bird species do the same, lapwings flying upside down, eagles faking a stoop, tits so engrossed in an argument that they have come tumbling to my feet oblivious of any danger.

And yet when I turn to a birdwatchers' textbook, or visit an R.S.P.B. visitors' centre, bird behaviour is explained primarily, if not exclusively in survivalist terms. They do X in order to secure Y advantages in the struggle for survival. Watch any of the fascinating nature programmes on the box and you can guarantee that the life of the animal is explained entirely in terms of survival mechanisms. It doesn't matter whether the underlying ideology of the programme is promoting the selfish gene, evolutionary psychology or even, I have observed, cost-benefit analysis, animal lives are routinely reduced to function. Everything is given a reason and that reason ultimately comes down to a utilitarian interpretation - each manifestation of the form of a living creature can be explained in terms of its function. Hedge sparrows sing in order to delineate territory (despite the fact that no territorial imperative pertains), crows play in order to hone their hunting skills (when did you last see a crow kill anything?), lapwings fly upside down in order to scare off potential predators (what predator is alarmed by something as un-gainly and misdirected as an upside down bird?). The explanation pales in the face of the activity it purports to describe. Science brings a spanner and wrench view to actions which in their particular nature defy functional analysis.

Of course science is not wrong. Or rather it is only as wrong as the medical textbook which describes the human act of

love as the behaviour necessary for the perpetuation of the species homo sapiens. It is just inadequate. Fixated by the big picture it obscures the detail in the little ones which make everyday life everyday living. Anyone who bothers to watch anything alive will be struck chiefly by one thing. That is its incredible exuberance. I took my ten month old daughter to Bempton Cliffs near Flamborough Head in Yorkshire, near the end of the breeding season when seabirds are just putting the finishing touches to their terrestrial existence before embarking on the long winter sojourn at sea, and she couldn't contain her delight at the furious activity going on beneath her. As far as I know she had little idea about what she was looking at and listening to but her response was immediate, happy and untutored. She knew exuberance when she came across it. At her birth some friends sent us a quote: "Man is born to live, not to prepare for life" (Boris Pasternak). If contemporary naturalists were to be believed present life is only a preparation for the future, and every individual only a cipher for forces and imperatives whose connection with the individual is practically arbitrary.



Why is any of this important? Well one thing that is disturbing about the plethora of nature interest programmes is the relentless imperative to fit nature into human systems of thinking. Thus some ecological thinking veers dangerously close to imposing economics on life. Everything is seen in terms of input/output equations, almost as if an animal were the quintessence of the enlightened self-interested individual.



Nature ends up purely as a zone of scarcity requiring astute management of its resources. But perhaps what I find most worrying is the vogue for evolutionary psychology as a means to explain human as well as animal life. It is almost as if we are softened up for this (not so) new explanation of our crises and problems, by the vigorous promotion of the idea of the animal as essentially a set of adaptive functions. Now that anthropocentrism is so out of fashion it is an easy step to start to explain human activity through the science which claims to explain animal life, or as it would say, behaviour. Not wanting to claim any special theological place for human beings, we are exhorted to view ourselves through the lens of the zoologist. That lens leads us down the path of accepting that all characteristics are the result of evolutionary adaptation. The animal or the plant, or the bacteria is completely explained by the interaction between genes and environment. No principle of self-organisation or self-expression is accepted. There is no sense that evolution exerts an influence upon a subject - everything is merely an object of forces whose time-span alone renders it impervious to individual influence. This scientific monomania is bad enough when applied to animals - it simply fails to register either their freedom or their playfulness - but becomes distinctly sinister when it turns its attention to human beings and becomes a plank of state social policy.

A number of groups have become excited by evolutionary psychology. It panders to their own adaptation to the market and the state, by asserting an iron law of evolutionary determination of life itself. With the exception of certain maverick minority publications it is impossible to escape the monotonous mantra that political action or social change can only occur within the limits set by the global market, welfare state, resources available etc. In the forefront of this adaptive behaviour from leftists is *Demos*, who recently held a conference announcing evolutionary psychology as a breakthrough in understanding human behaviour - a breakthrough which happily gelled with their own abject surrender to what seems most powerful in society (currently, the market, whatever that is) thereby confirming Orwell's charge against the real treason of the intellectuals. Evolutionary psychology is nothing more than Darwinism applied to the human personality and therefore presents human beings as a 'fait accompli' that can only be managed or 'worked with'. True to their Stalinist roots the idea of freedom is foreign to them. Like any nineteenth century gentleman naturalist they toil over their taxonomy of exhibits, only this time it is human beings who are to be collected into the various types, identities, genders or categories that currently appear to present the most exhaustive picture. No wonder the present government likes them so much. They have provided it with the justification for the maximum meddling with the added advantage of a fail-safe excuse for failure. More surveillance is absolutely necessary, but if that doesn't manage to improve people's lives then it is entirely as a result of certain intractable evolutionary characteristics.

If people thought it was bad enough when architecture embraced the formula: 'Form follows function' which managed to banish the playful and ornamental from most modern housing estates, how much worse will it be to live under a state for whom this watchword is foundation of its reason to be. Adaptation being perhaps the most unequivocal achievement of New Labour there is no surprise in its willingness to subject the rest of us to adaptation to whatever is already most powerful.

I, however, remain away with the birds. Just as the variety of birdsong within species has no evolutionary function (in fact could be described as being counter-evolutionary) so I plump for self-representation before function, life before its desiccation into little parcels of useful attributes. To those who think I am putting the spirit of things before the matter of them, I would ask them to reverse their priorities. To be oneself is the most materialist position to take - to rewrite oneself as an assembly of evolutionary and economic functions is the triumph of the spirit, albeit a very cynical one, as far as I can see. When crows play they take it very seriously but it is still play. A dog would have great difficulty with the concept 'It's only a game.' The playful is the most important, and only the pressure of managed lives could have led us to impose our own miserable conception of life on what is so stunningly and blatantly without purpose.

Truly, Madly, Appropriately

The following is a transcript of the minutes recording a meeting of six self-styled 'care workers', discussing how best to supervise, manage, control (and otherwise interfere with and mess up) an on-going romance between two lovers. All the names have been changed, but the words are reproduced intact. (**Note**: The two lovers are officially classified as having 'learning difficulties')

Meeting regarding Romeo and Juliet

Date: 30/2/97

Venue: Lilliput Employment Skills Centre

Attended: Emma South & Gemma West (Depth Manor)
Gilly & Billy (Lilliput)
Lucretia Hindley, Myra Batty (Maximally Managed Team Homes)
Dilly Barker (Student)

Issues identified at meeting between Depth Manor staff and MMTH on 0/1/97 presented so everyone was brought up to date with event.

1. It is still unclear if Romeo burnt Juliet's finger with his cigarette. Gilly and Billy were unaware of this issue but have not noted any incidents or occurrences regarding Juliet and cigarette burns

Action - Gemma to investigate if a member of hostel staff who has now left may have actually seen Romeo burn Juliet.

When Romeo visits he gives his cigarettes in at the office at Depth Manor (as he is doing at present) to avoid potential incident. When he is at his home with Juliet he will keep his own cigarettes as usual (See point 4 action).

2. Juliet persists in visiting Romeo at Desolation Row at inappropriate times, despite meetings with Romeo being pre-arranged:

Mondays	Juliet to tea at Desolation Row
Tuesdays	Romeo to tea at Depth manor
Weekends	Romeo & Juliet to choose what they want to do

This situation is causing stress to both Romeo and the people he lives with and distress to Juliet.

Action - When Juliet calls at Desolation Row, staff to tell Juliet to go home.
- If Juliet refuses Depth Manor staff to collect Juliet
- If Depth Manor staff cannot collect Juliet and/or she becomes verbally and physically abusive, staff at Desolation Row to call police and have Juliet removed. Depth Manor to be informed of action.

3. When at Lilliput, Romeo and Juliet are becoming inseparable, which is affecting their skills development as they are not pursuing their time tables.

Action - To encourage Romeo and Juliet to pursue their development, it was felt they needed more time apart so:

Thursdays Juliet will have a training day at Depth Manor

Fridays Romeo will go directly to Samuel Smiles College,
Roundabout Road, 10.00 a.m. - 3.00 p.m.

Wednesdays Romeo does not go to work until 12.00 a.m.

It is acknowledged that Juliet will find this arrangement difficult to come to terms with, but it was agreed both people need more time alone. It is also a concern that Romeo may be finding it difficult to cope with the constant demands placed on him by Juliet.

4. Juliet's behaviour is becoming increasingly violent, especially if she is put under pressure or does not get her own way, which directly affects Romeo and staff who are in contact with her.

Action - Gemma to devise a care plan for coping with Juliet's behaviour and articulate it to Depth manor staff, Lilliput and MMTH to ensure a continuous approach to care is given.

It was felt that Juliet would benefit from the input of a psychiatrist (Gemma to refer) and a psychologist (Gemma and Lucretia to refer to a Behaviour Clinic at GBH) regarding aggressive and abusive behaviour e.g. if Juliet has been abused as a child she may be taking on abusive adult relationship i.e. cigarette burns. It was decided that Romeo and Juliet would be referred to psychology as a couple so their intense and obsessive relationship could also be addressed, as well as Juliet's other problems.

5. Romeo finds it difficult to be assertive, which places him in awkward and upsetting situations with Juliet and staff.

Action - Myra to work with Romeo to help develop assertiveness.

6. Juliet and Romeo's relationship has developed sexually. At times they indulge in heavy petting in public which is inappropriate. Sexual education has been given to Romeo and Juliet in the past, but so far it has not been acted upon by Romeo and Juliet.

Action - Everyone to encourage appropriate sexual behaviour with the couple e.g. No heavy petting in public.

Emma and Gemma to take Juliet for contraceptive injection. If she refuses to go (as she will not spend time away from Romeo) then it is to be discussed whether Romeo would accompany her.

- To be noted in referral to psychologist

- Myra is prepared to work with couple on sex and sexuality if and when appropriate.

It was discussed that by actioning the outcomes of the meeting, the situation may worsen (especially Juliet's behaviour) before it improves, but long term to lessen the intensity of the relationship would be positive for both Romeo and Juliet.

MYRA BATTY

cc Depth Manor
Lilliput Resource Centre
101 Desolation Row

The Obstinate Lamp

An exchange of letters regarding shadows



Dear Leeds City Council Highways Dept.,

I am writing to enquire whether it really is necessary for our small street to be continually illuminated by a street lamp. Not only does the thing waste energy by burning away ineffectually during the day, at night its sickly greenish glow invades bedrooms and has given me many a restless night.

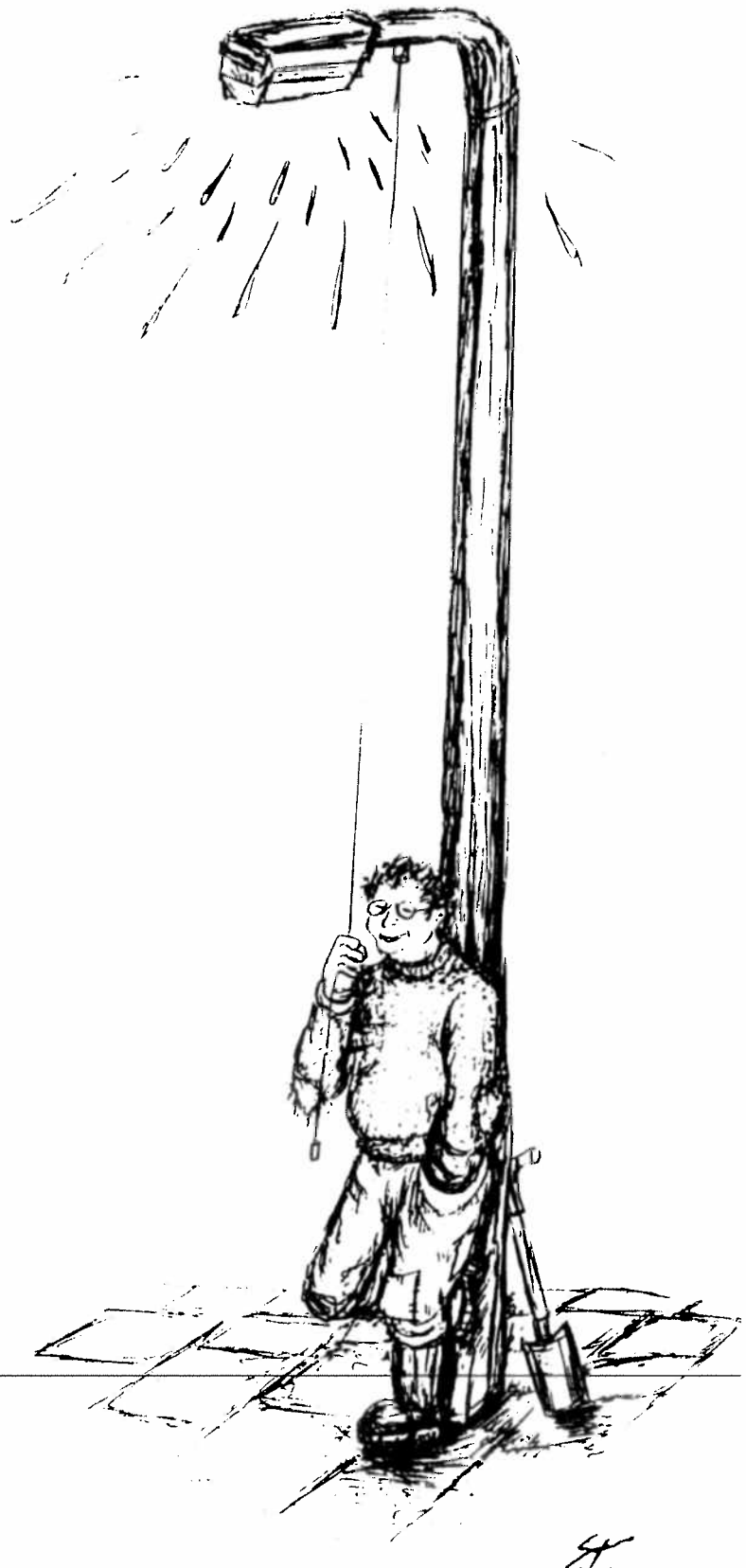
I am aware that the Council considers itself responsible for the safety of its citizens but it could be said that the light, in revealing our street, only serves to obscure the park beyond, rendering that area safe only for those with big dogs or big hearts. Furthermore I have a solution to the safety aspect of the problem which I will mention below. My main concern is that the light conceals the beauty of the night sky for the inhabitants of our street, as well as denying us the opportunity to appreciate the evening colours and night wildlife activity in [REDACTED] Park. I could also mention that pale green does nothing to enhance the character of [REDACTED] Crescent after dark.

If the Council feels that it could not relax its vigilance for our security by turning the light off once and for all, perhaps I might propose a solution which could satisfy all parties. The light could be fitted with a pull-cord, rather like the ones that adorn most modern bathrooms. This would enable the residents of the street to turn the light on when they are searching for their door keys, or putting out the rubbish, but which could be turned off in order to return the street to the quiet repose of darkness. Or perhaps in this age of high technology, each resident could be provided with a remote control (like the ones which come with new television sets) with which they could gain control of the illumination of their street. Perhaps they could be issued with extra ones to distribute to regular visitors. I am sure this would calm most of the fears people have acquired regarding street safety.

I do hope the powers-that-be in the Council who deal with street lighting policy will give my proposal some consideration. The disadvantages as far as I can see are trivial, the advantages in terms of revealing the beauties of the natural and man-made world to the city-dweller would be immeasurable.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]



Dear Mr [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter dated 1 October 1996 regarding the public lighting in your street. You have raised a number of issues and my responses follow.

The existing light unit should not be lit during the day. I expect the photo-electric switch has failed as these units are designed to fail safe and remain on when a fault occurs. Instructions have been issued to the maintenance contractor to investigate and replace the faulty component.

The spill of light on to adjacent property in many cases helps with the security of the property. In some instances there is an unwelcome intrusion of light into various rooms within a house. This situation can be dealt with by the house holder by, for example, using heavier curtains or by the Local Authority in obscuring the back of the street lighting luminaires outer cover.

The current guidelines used in the design of street lighting promotes the use of luminaires which maximises the emission of light below the horizontal. In doing so this also reduces the amount of waste light straying upwards. Unfortunately some of the older luminaires, produced over twenty years ago, do not have as good an optical control and up to 15% of the light output can be above the horizontal. The light source is the very efficient 35 watt pressure sodium lamp and it produces a mono-chromatic emission, characterised by its orange appearance. It has no colour rendering properties and any direct or reflected light reaching the atmosphere can be seen as an orange glow. This can affect astronomical observations if the waste light interacts with water vapour, dust particles or other pollutants in the atmosphere. However if a telescope is used then a very precise filter can be employed which can remove the sodium 'D' lines from the spectrum.

The provision of lighting to residential areas is generally accepted as a community benefit in providing security for pedestrians, vehicle users, residents and visitors. Local control, as you described, is not practical with the type of lamp in use and system of energy purchase. The characteristics of a gas discharge tube are such that a period of around eight minutes are required from switching on to reaching full output.

Further problems can arise with the payment of energy costs. The present agreement with the Regional Electricity Company is based upon a known power consumption for a declared number of annual burning hours. The hours are determined by the known performance, and type, of the photo cell. There is no way to accurately predict the effect of local control and the lighting columns base compartments are too small for the installation of electricity meters.

On balance the dusk to dawn lighting regime, coupled with the use of an energy efficient lamp, provides the most reliable protection to the users of the city's streets at night. I cannot see any significant alternatives being available in the near future but the lighting industry is extremely competitive and is technology sensitive. Any suggested changes in equipment or techniques will be assessed by my Principal Lighting Engineer and, if appropriate, evaluated for its benefit to the community.

I hope you find the above information of interest.

Yours sincerely,

P E Dickinson
Assistant Director
Highway Maintenance

Technology and Capital combine to negate the 'freedom' of the free market. Modern technology demands centralised regulation, and despite the rhetoric of flexibility, escapes individual human control for the sake of economies of scale. Mass production nullifies the possibility of local control from the start. Lights come with built-in municipal dominance as a non-optional extra. Capital rigs the market to ensure a guaranteed return on its investment. Compulsory consumption gives the lie to the myth of individual 'free choice'. And, in the end, who can be blamed? The administrator in the municipal office is merely explaining the laws of contemporary production like a biologist explains the laws of nature - as immutable facts, beyond the exercise of free will. Against this reality the babble of self-empowerment is nothing but consolation for fools who profess to love their slavery because they believe they chose it.

Something Nasty in the Basement

Douglas Campbell recounts an old tale of management at work.

The following narrative came to me while brooding about the internet just before sleep one night. Having written it down, it seems oddly familiar. It's certainly an old, old story. I pass it on as a folk tale, making no particular claims to originality:

An employee in an enormous business complex moves purposefully through the corridors, bearing an imposing empty file. He is about the deadly serious business of work evasion. On impulse, he goes through a fire door and follows the steps down to their limit. Suddenly he finds himself in a vast, empty cellar. A rough earth floor covers the entire basement of the building. Other staircases are dotted around, receding to vanishing point in all directions. He sits on the lower step, and starts to think. On subsequent days, he returns to relax whenever the opportunity arises. Gradually, he starts to share the secret with friends. A small group begins to gather regularly at the foot of the staircases to gossip, smoke and argue. Word spreads, first through the lower echelons of the organisation, then to similar levels in the many other organisations within the complex. Soon people are mingling in a freewheeling, continuous party. Office stores and canteens are looted to make the space more comfortable. Power and water supplies are illicitly diverted. Contraband of all kind is freely passed around. A few adventurous individuals start to explore the offices of other organisations out of hours.

At around this time, a number of significant developments take place in the basement. Money changes hands for the first time. Scarce contraband is bought and sold. A primitive economy starts to develop. Stalls are set up. At the same time, hip young junior managers realise they can make valuable efficiency savings by routing messengers and deliveries through the basement rather than the labyrinthine official corridors above.

A little later, senior management starts to become aware of the situation. There are rumours of theft, drugs, illicit sex and sedition. The more authoritarian managers panic. Some suggest dynamiting the basement. This notion is reluctantly dismissed as architecturally ill advised. Some companies attempt to seal off all entries to the area. This strategy meets with some success, but a few employees always manage to find their way through. A relatively liberal management faction suggests that, with appropriate regulation, the basement is a valuable resource to be taken advantage of. This view gathers converts. Presentations are delivered, focus groups are convened, policy documents circulated.

In five years, the basement becomes an air conditioned shopping mall. No smoking. Glittering company shops and Cafes are open during prescribed leisure hours. The management reserves the right to refuse admission. During the working day, couriers hurry past. No loitering. Armed police patrol the broad avenues, which

are continuously surveyed by security cameras. It is forbidden to discard gum, or to wear stiletto heels, on the shiny new hygienic floor coverings.

The basement is entirely contained within the business complex, and at no point offers any escape route from it. It is simply a space where, for a while, things may happen that would not otherwise happen. As soon as management becomes aware of its existence, it starts to resemble all other areas of the complex.

This was written as a response to a request from Leeds Surrealist Group on the internet.

I have a mission statement...

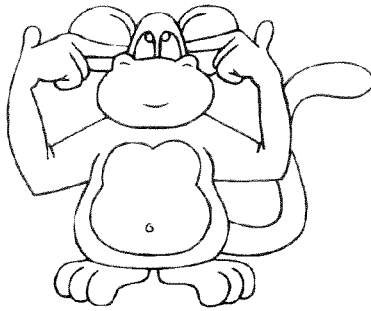
"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character... I have a dream today...

I have a dream that one day little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers... And when this happens we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, 'Free at last, free at last. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last.'"

Translation:

The agency has a vision according to which young people today will in future not be assessed according to rigid criteria of race but rather according to criteria which address their specific needs and abilities with respect to gender, disability, sexual orientation, age and ethnicity.... The agency now has a training package.... It has a positive skills development programme... for children under five of diverse ethnic origins to be able to engage in appropriate and mutually supportive recreational activities... And at that future point in time... it will be feasible to implement the achievement of those targets whereby individuals from a variety of cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds will have the positive self-esteem and confidence to communicate effectively the formula. "Empowered at last, empowered at last. With the assistance of our funding bodies and Senior Management Team we are empowered at last."

Three Monkeys of the Apocalypse



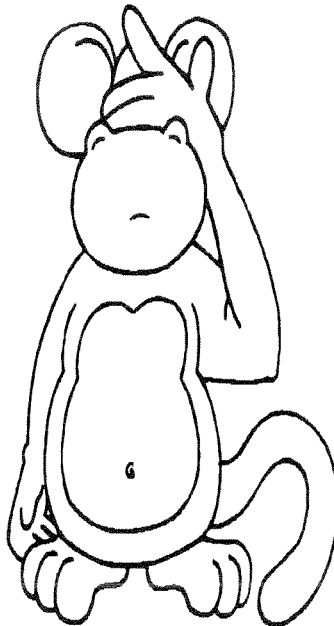
**THE
SCIENTIFIC-MATERIALIST
MONKEY**

Holds to the dogma that Religion and Magic are nonsense because they are *not scientific*. Science (by which he means whatever nonsense anyone called a 'scientist' happens to believe) is the *only* valid form of knowledge.

Currently involved in a crusade (led by fanatics like Lewis Wolpert and Richard Dawkins) against similar fanatics who subscribe to rival dogmas.

Opposes bigotry with an unreflective bigotry of his own. When asked what it is that makes 'science' superior to any other kind of knowledge, says it is because it is 'hard work' and that it contradicts 'common sense'. Never ever asks *who* science is working for (i.e. capitalist corporations who determine what questions are asked and what count as answers). And is notoriously fond of describing nature in the most banal commonplaces of financial Darwinism (the 'strategies of the genes' turn out to be identical to those of successful capitalists; the history of science turns out to be a 'natural selection' of the truth, etc.) - so much for contradicting 'common sense'. Science only provides the most pernicious vindications of what passes for the 'common sense' of any epoch, because it never applies its own critical scrutiny to itself.

Wants greater 'public understanding of science' but will fight to the death to prevent public ownership of science, or even any wider involvement in its priorities, because then the research funds might dry up. Science is obviously too important for anyone outside the club to have a say.



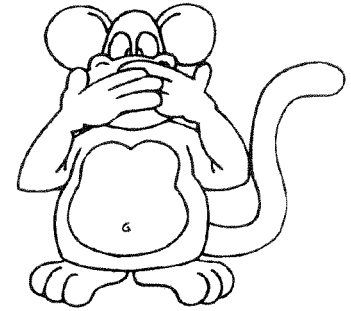
**THE
FUNDAMENTALIST-
EVANGELICAL
MONKEY**

Doesn't want to know anything about the world because his Holy Book tells him all he needs to know. Fond of demanding his right to 'freedom of expression' - an idea wholly alien to his religion (and nowhere in any of his scriptures) and refuses to face the fact that his main reason for existence is to *extinguish* opposing views.

Convinced his own soul is saved, it's *your* soul he's after, and he'll stop at nothing to save it for you, and has proved over and over again he's prepared to burn you at the stake to save it. It is, after all, *your* soul that's important, not your body.

Currently enjoying a revival, with thousands of new recruits being churned off the assembly-lines. Criticising him is bound to be construed as 'offensive' -and by now probably illegal - and he cannot take a joke, so satire is a waste of time.

This creature is particularly dangerous because his God is his conscience, which enables him to commit any imaginable atrocity without restraint.



**THE
PAGAN-SPIRITUALIST
MONKEY**

He claims to believe in *mysteries*, but already has all the answers. Collects an assortment of superstitions from every part of the world, from ancient Egypt to Tibet, without regard to the cultures they come from.

Attracts misguided sympathy from the 'open-minded' but he is gullible only for demonstrably *false* ideas. His is a cheapo, off-the-shelf mysticism, that would never dream of offending the peer-group of fellow gullibles. There's money in this racket nowadays, from the X-files to Mystic Meg, and he's happy to sneer at mass-market mediums as long as they keep the market viable.

Scorns 'science' but laps up any proof with the trappings of scientificity about it. What he's really afraid of is realising that his Tarot cards are stacked and that the 'knowledge' he gets from his formulas is simply a portentous restatement of what he already knows but is too daft to see where it's really coming from.

More a symptom of the intellectual decadence of our times than a threat to anything. The fact that so many young people fail to get bored with this stuff after a few days is, however, a disturbing indictment of the decline of intelligence today.

Don't waste your time arguing with these people because they are incapable of joined-up thinking, and will persist in treating you as a spoilsport. They talk 'pagan' but they live pretty nondescript lives, not having the *imagination* to invent their *own* philosophies.

'The Assurance of Sleepwalkers'

THE POLITICS OF MEMORY AND THE MEMORY OF POLITICS

Frank Dexter and John Barrett look into the accounts of the therapy business

Back in 1991 we wrote an article in *Here and Now 11* about the 'Satanic Child Abuse' mania then raging in the media. The issue then was how the profession of social work - hitherto associated with a kind of well-meaning 'leftishness' - had come to be taken over by increasingly histrionic fantasies about a secret international cult of satanists preying on children's minds and bodies. It is worth reporting on how the configuration of forces has developed since then.

With the complete demise of Leftist social radicalism today, no social worker any longer bothers to pretend to any *social* values or any vision of right or wrong. An earlier generation may have entered this business inspired by a sense of social or sexual injustice, or simply a desire to mitigate suffering, but now it is just an enterprise like any other. And social control is the business of all enterprises these days.

In a 1994 survey of the the British Psychological Society 97% of those asked said they believed in the essential accuracy of recovered memories, and the same overwhelming majority validated reports of satanic ritual abuse.

The only legitimate object of criticism now acceptable in the public sphere is the category of the 'human'. No longer can a *society* be indicted, but only certain types of people (white, male, etc.) or certain determinate characteristics of the human (individuality, subjecthood etc.). As expert 'qualifications' have exploded to include everything from aromatherapists to astrologers, every quack has now learnt to govern the human soul, and the only universally recognised 'evil' is the untutored, unlicensed attempt by human beings to control their own fate. The culture wars are now essentially a battle over what is to count as the 'knowledge' appropriate to exploit this humanity. After thirty years of sustained academic struggle, 'common sense' has finally been abolished.

There have been three main developments out of the Satanic Child Abuse Mania (SCAM):

1. The 'inner child' movement
2. 'Multiple Personality Disorder' (MPD) - now apparently renamed Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID)
3. RMS or 'Recovered Memory Syndrome' - alternatively called, by its critics, False Memory Syndrome (FMS)

These can be singled out from the ever-growing morass of semi-clinical and pseudo-clinical categories, such as MSP (Munchhausen Syndrome by Proxy), CFS (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, formerly 'M.E.'), and so forth.



What this alphabet soup of labels does is to create spuriously 'technical' problematizations for what used to be called either sickness or sin. They reduce by not one jot the totality of human suffering or stupidity but rather they *exploit* it commercially to the benefit of pseudo-experts. Worse, they create a kind of 'knowledge' which is tantamount to a neo-superstition - without any of the social logic of genuine folklore.

The significance of these phenomena, we contend, is the following:

1. The concept of the 'inner child' is a deliberate project of infantilization - or more precisely of 'infantification' (i.e. *making* people into 'infants'). This consists of a web of discourses and practices designed to encourage people to think and act in the manner of a 'child', according to prevailing cultural typifications of 'childishness': e.g. relying on short-term memory, emotional associations, dependency, irrationality etc. This kind of 'therapy' explicitly urges its customers to behave after the fashion of children - to weep, throw tantrums, shriek, be exclusively self-centred, irresponsible and so forth. This may, accordingly be said to constitute a kind of 'self-incurred tutelage' (Kant).

An illustration of what we mean can be found in the 'child's bill of personal safety rights' (from Flora Colao & Tamar Hosansky *Your Children Should Know* (1987) reproduced in Bass & Davis p. 283, which includes, alongside interesting proposals like: "5. The right to lie and not answer questions", such items as: "7. The right to be rude or unhelpful", "8. The right to run, scream, and make a scene" and "9. The right to bite, hit or kick."

2. The MPD theory actually promotes the dissociation of personal identity by inducing people to postulate themselves as being different 'persons' in different situations. This orchestration of a pretty ordinary part of normal fantasy-life (by which people daydream themselves as 'being' various fictional characters) rests on a theory of foundational trauma. In saying this syndrome is 'promoted', I am simply pointing out the practical consequence of the theoretical investment in the idea of 'splitting': if psychiatrists suggest that people who have suffered traumatic abuse as children form different 'selves', then they acquire a vested interest in producing living evidence of this: they have of course both the incentive and the means to *make* their patients behave this way.

A man in Devon, accused of satanic sexual abuse by his daughter had his office raided by police investigating the allegations. Acknowledging his innocence, the police suggested he asked his daughter to have a medical examination. With her agreement the examination found her to have been a virgin and she is now back with the family, although she has not yet retracted her allegations.

3. FMS is apparently all about the 'rediscovery' of events in the past. These memories are invariably induced, often under hypnosis. But by whatever means such 'memories' are produced, people are led, like sleepwalkers, into a web of increasing dependency. In practice the preoccupation is with eliciting claims of abuse by parents. From the point of view of the therapists involved, of course, this is a highly lucrative business (when an accusation is tantamount to a blackmail demand against the parent for the therapy fees).

Depending on which newspapers they read, most people will have heard about the claims and counter-claims about 'recovered' or 'false' memory. Most people will probably be confused or sceptical in varying degrees. The issue is quite stark: either one believes the claims being made that vast numbers of children have been sexually molested or raped by their fathers and apparently *forgotten* all about it for years, or else one is forced to dispute what is now a professional orthodoxy, a self-evident scientifically-established 'truth'. Readers should know in advance that in what follows, it is our rejection of what currently counts in professional circles as 'truth' and 'evidence' that leads us to doubt many of the claims made on behalf of those having 'recovered' long-lost memories of such abuse. We have no doubt whatsoever that sexual abuse of children takes place - contrary to the ignorant slogans of the recently converted, it has always taken place and it has *always been known about* - not often *spoken about*, but *known about* (not at all the same thing as the so-called 'denial').

Everyone *knows* memories can be false. Those who claim the opposite obviously contradict themselves when they say those who do *not* remember being abused are suffering 'false' memories i.e. they are *not* remembering properly. For what is really at issue is not the falsehood or veracity of memory as such, but the status of so-called 'recovered' memory, or to call it by its proper

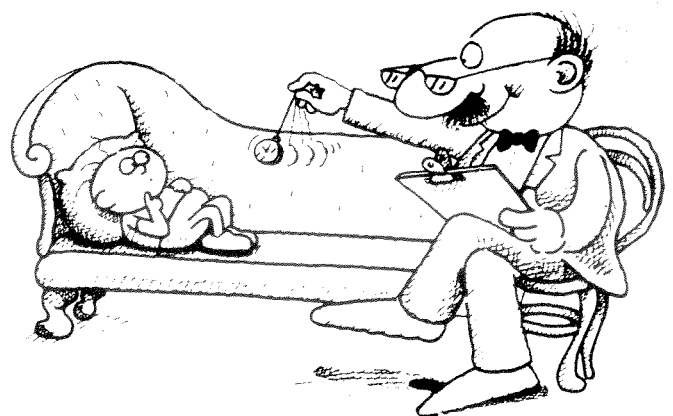
name, therapeutically *assisted* memory. This is what needs emphasising: it is the claim of therapists to be free from the burdens of proof to which everyone else is routinely subject.

Whoever controls the Past...

The controversy over 'Recovered' or 'False' Memory is more than another stage in the psychotherapeutic implosion of the 'social'. It reveals a burgeoning crisis in the relation between our social conditions of existence and the passage of time itself. For what is at stake is how individuals relate to their past and therefore to their future.

The production of assisted memory is easier to understand than it might seem. We can see it happening every day in the society at large, in the so-called 'heritage' industry, in schools and colleges, where our collective past is rewritten for us by those who know no better than the rest of us what really happened. Only some cultural memories are deemed worthy of 'recovery'. Others are consigned to oblivion. Contrary to self-serving Leftist pretence, this is by no means confined to a chocolate-box conservatism of 'nostalgia', but extends to stories of past abuse and atrocity. Irish and Scottish dispossessions by landlordism, for example, the Highland Clearances, are acceptable because they support current political ambitions. The no-less brutal, but longer, dispossession of the English poor through enclosures, is less so, because that would serve not the nationalist agenda but rather a class agenda which might call capitalism itself into question. Whenever history is subordinated to the interests of the present, it is those who control the present who ultimately prevail.

To some extent, the same motive is at work as that underlying claims of abuse. If you can attract attention to yourself by dramatising horrific cruelties inflicted on your forebears you can secure a competitive advantage in a climate where there is an enforced market for 'care and concern'. This is false memory by proxy.



A common theme between *individual* 'recovered' memories and the *collective* reconstruction work on the past (which is variously commented on as the heritage/nostalgia boom or as the commercialised 'theatres of memory', etc.) is the shared doctrine that '*experience*' is all important, that experience is the same as

reality, that you can 'relive' it as it actually happened, either in imagination or in some 'Eden Camp' theme-park. This all-encompassing subjectivism is what makes it possible to believe that empirical 'appearances' (which, in the case of the second-world-war reconstructions, apparently includes the smells too) are all that matter.

This dodgy doctrine is pushed at us from all sides, from education, the media, to the culture at large. It is this subjectivist ideology which prevents people being able to think beyond the sanctity of 'experience'.

The politics of false memory involves a distortion of the past by the present: what really happened is covered over with contemporary preoccupations, which means in effect that the obsessions of the present day prevail over the reality of the past.



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Today, one example of this invention of a past to suit particular present interests, is the Afrocentrist reinvention of a hypothetical archaic Afro-Egyptian civilization, satirised by Robert Hughes in his *The Culture of Complaint*. Now, Hughes is not just defending the sanctity of the 'objective' reality of the historical record here, he is also drawing attention to the primacy of the interests of 'therapy' for present-day students. He is pointing to the way this distortion of the past is possible, or is accepted, because it somehow 'makes people feel good about themselves'. But this nonsensical version of 'history' (in which the whole planet was formerly ruled by black men, and Egyptians invented everything from telekinesis to flying saucers before it was all stolen from them by white men) manifestly does *not* make anyone 'feel good about themselves'; what it does is to indulge a very contemporary fantasy of retrospective wish-fulfilment which answers to the needs of *ressentiment*. It makes people feel 'bad towards others': it nurtures hatred towards those who today can be represented as somehow genetically inheritors of, and thus retrospectively responsible for, what *their* supposed 'ancestors' did to *our* ancestors). In other words it is literally racist in constructing an imaginary identification between contemporary Blacks and ancient Egyptians and a similar imaginary projected identification between contemporary whites and the ancient Greeks and Romans, etc.

And the Victims come forward, to claim their fair share of renown...

It is hard not to suspect a similar impulse in the susceptibility of those who have succumbed to therapeutically-assisted memory. It is no surprise that so many turn to therapy for solutions to socially generated misery, since the possibility of radically re-arranging life has been denied by the overwhelming political consensus in favour of a managerialised international capitalism. The failure of vernacular custom and practice, including resistant labour, to comprehend and counteract the virulence of capital created the social vacuum now filled by professionalization. This is a continuation of the long-term evacuation of the public sphere since the second world war. Fulfilment became associated with the satisfaction of private desires within the family. Both advertising and its complementary opposite welfarism operated to achieve this effect. But by the 1970s, disappointment with the suburban 'haven in a heartless world' led, not to a reassertion of life beyond domesticity, but to a ferociously implosive politicisation of the personal which undermined what little security the family could supply. The failure of family life to live up to what the media and the welfare state intended provoked a reaction - almost all the evils of the modern world could be laid at its door. The assault on the idea of the 'private' has now reached the point where social workers and therapists can now wield far more effective authority than any father ever did. In effect the various professional operatives of the 'psy complex' are the brokers of personal suffering in a vastly expanded misery market.

After at least ten years of high-profile publicity for child abuse, it is hardly surprising that thousands of women - and increasingly men too - should want their share of this publicity (and even of the care) by simulating past abuse. They have limitless self-esteem to gain, and a world to blame for their lack of it. If anyone makes a claim that they were sexually abused in childhood, they can guarantee to be believed. This is a complete reversal of the situation a decade ago, when claims of abuse were treated with official silence (by the same experts who now talk about little else).

This, however, can only explain the 'demand' side of the equation. What needs to be explained is how it has come about that an army of therapists exists to solicit and encourage such atrocity stories from their clients.

November 1996. \$1 million awarded in the US against a therapist whose female patient came up with a terrible catalogue of abuse; she was subsequently found to be a virgin.

Fads and Foibles

The concept of 'fad' may seem crude and simplistic, but surely no more so than the notion of 'moral panic', which seems almost inescapable these days. But fads are in fact one of the principal mechanisms of both conformity and change. G. K. Chesterton coined the idea of the fad as a way of understanding the peculiar propensity of the educated middle class towards sudden enthusiasms for all-purpose 'scientific'-seeming explanations for social problems. From eugenics to astrology and from nudism

to health foods, professionals have lurched from one mania to the next with an arbitrary yet sublime confidence, creating havoc in the lives of the working class. Before the first world war, hundreds of thousands of the so-called 'feeble-minded' were incarcerated in institutions to prevent them breeding. Sixty years later they were suddenly decanted into the streets for 'community care' as if nothing had been learnt from yesterday's fad. This faddism was already identified by Cobbett in his critique of the vogue for Malthusian political economy in the early 19th century which similarly defined the unemployed as a 'surplus population'.

It was taken up again by the Russian sociologist Sorokin in the fifties in his classic *Fads and Foibles in Modern Sociology*, and the mania for 'radical new approaches' remains the driving force of the social sciences to this day. Today everyone can (and does) snigger at the fads of modern management theory for 'post-fordism', 'flexibility', 'downsizing' and the like. The radical American sociologist C. Wright Mills took this kind of analysis more deeply in his essay 'The Professional Ideology of Social Pathologists' which noted that the propagators of 'social problems' and 'moral solutions' always emerged as their prime beneficiaries.

Then in the early 1960s Howard Becker proposed the ideas of *moral panic* and *moral enterprise* as a means of explaining the bouts of prohibition - (of alcohol and marijuana for example) - in the USA. It is very interesting that the notion of 'moral panic' caught on, becoming a popular phrase during the 1980s: it had been taken up by Stan Cohen in the early 1970s in his book *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (1971) - a study of media coverage of teenage violence in the 1960s - and subsequently generalised by Stuart Hall and the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in their book about mugging, *Policing the Crisis* (1976), in which the idea formed part of a theory of the drift towards Conservative hegemony in the late 1970s. By the late 1980s everyone in Britain knew this phrase, whether they had ever read a sociology book or not. What is interesting is that the complementary concept of 'moral enterprise' (basically denoting the specific agencies who promote and benefit from such moral panics) did not share this wider popularity, even disappearing from the consciousness of academic sociologists. So, what we now have is a culture in which everyone can agree there are constant 'moral panics' being whipped up and can cite their own examples, but there is complete silence about *who* is promoting and benefiting from them. This indeterminacy about their 'agency' and the consequent vagueness about where they come from or why they occur - make the concept of moral panic by itself of dubious value.

'Moral panic' has become a vacuous phrase just as likely to be used by the perpetrators of one as by those attempting to resist it: for example, social workers claimed that those opposing their 'child-saving' methods were whipping up a 'moral panic' against social workers. It may be that 'fad' is a better notion because it emphasises the arbitrary fashion that determines what 'issues' are considered the most potent in advancing careers.

Birth of the Client

It is becoming clear that the most advanced form of capitalism, embodied by the newly commodified realm of the formerly 'public' services and the sphere of the 'social', has no longer any

need for any concept of freedom beyond the technical and quantitative business of supplying alternative packages.

What was accomplished by the supposed 'rolling back' of the state was simply the transference of the mass of former 'servants' of the state to status of direct servants of capital. No longer does one have to urge upon the state that it deal with some social need, one has to supplicate for funding from various agencies. The old socialist concept of 'need' - which meant the basic requirements of life - has exploded into a cacophony of competing claims unhinged from any criteria for judgement. The idea that there was



only so much 'health' an individual could handle has shrivelled up in the heat generated by a liberated medical and psychic market. Now nobody gets 'healthy' and 'sicknesses' multiply like ideological bacilli.

Far from extending the 'realm of freedom' by creating the conditions in which society could govern itself, commodification of public services is leading to a professionalization of *every* aspect of everyday life, as more and more of what every individual was competent to do became subjected to unstoppable professional scrutiny and deconstruction. Nowadays you can (and need to) gain a GNVQ in folding paper or making a cup of tea. A 'qualification' is permission to do something: it less and less means anyone *can* do it. Soon enough, nobody will be able to tie their own shoelaces without having been 'trained' in college. Middle class faddism recycles more and more of life into administration. Money can be made and careers have to be extended by the discovery of ever more needs that can be shown to be 'unmet'. But while it is the dynamics of a virulent capitalism that underlies this colonisation of life by bogus new 'needs', what prevents any resistance or revolution against it is the complete implosion of the very concept of *freedom*. The opening up of limitless space for the new pioneers of care and control is itself the form in which 'freedom' now appears.

To put it starkly, the logic that drives the increasing subjugation of individuals is represented as the apotheosis of freedom itself, and more and more people are in effect mortgaging their minds and bodies in return for the illusion of becoming somehow more 'free'.

Free from Freedom?

The issue of hypnosis is central to this. The inability of modern culture to find a mode of comprehending what happens during so-called 'hypnotic' states represents a genuine contradiction at the heart of the concept of 'freedom' - the concept around which the very idea of 'modernity' has been constructed. For what is currently debated in academia under the aegis of the category of the 'subject' or the 'individual' is the fate of the concept of *freedom*.



France was seized by enthusiasm for 'animal magnetism' at the very same time that Kant was constructing his philosophy of the free rational subject. This discovery of hypnosis - which first became a publicly recognised phenomenon at the time of the French revolution, in the spectacular career of Anton Mesmer - portended an implicit challenge not only to the idea of the sovereignty of the 'intellect' - or 'Reason' - but also to the very intelligibility of the notion of freedom. To put it crudely, if individuals, even the 'sane adult male' individuals by whom political liberty was then being claimed, can be induced, or seduced, to act through the will of another without conscious, reflective, or rational control, then this undermines the very concept of freedom.

Contrary to vulgar Marxist clichés about freedom being supposedly a 'bourgeois' category, it is, on the contrary, fundamentally an anarchist idea. Freedom, for anarchism, denotes a breaking of the force of coercive power - of which the state is the most obvious (but not the sole) instance. Its role in the works of Godwin and Paine is primarily 'negative', in this sense: freedom means removing the external constraints of government over human society.

The so-called 'positive liberty' (freedom *to*, as against freedom *from*) is in fact, contrary to the liberal reading, the *bourgeois* conception, derived from Kant (as Isaiah Berlin makes clear). This idea that freedom means 'mastery' of one's environment, including oneself, and that freedom is enhanced by acquiring consciousness, reflexivity and 'liberating' oneself from unconscious habits, traditions, repressions, 'engrams', or whatever, is that pernicious puritan dogma that is the real source of the petty professional totalitarianisms of the present age.

Freedom, for Kant, meant the capacity of an individual to understand and actively engage in 'public' affairs - primarily to engage in rational discussion in the public sphere. Kant's defence of public or political freedom stopped short, however, at the 'private' sphere - by which he meant the performance of one's social roles, at work for example. His restriction of private freedom in this sense seems paradoxical today in the light of the mindless assumption that everyone is or should be free in their 'private lives'. Kant said that freedom of thought and speech were only justified for the public sphere - you should be free to think and to say what you like, but in your daily life you must do as you are told.

Today, we have exactly the opposite regime: in private you can think what you like, but in 'public' you must only say what you are told. We have clung to the illusion of a sacred freedom of personal desire and are sacrificing control over our minds and the freedom of our collective life. This is certainly no better than Kant's Prussian liberalism.

Hypnosis travelled underground in the spiritualist milieu during the 19th century, before re-emerging in the occultist revival at the end of the last century. At the same time it made a spectacular appearance in the hysterical theatre of Doctor Charcot, whence it played a part (as 'suggestion') in the genesis of psychoanalysis. Never very easily domesticated in psychology, it has been available as a lay psycho-technology to every huckster whether political (e.g. Hitler) or commercial (e.g. advertising) or religious (e.g. every guru worth his salt uses it). And now we are all subjected to it.

Every therapist promises greater 'freedom', while ensnaring the subject in webs of stilted doctrine and corrosive dependency, because therapy disconnects the subject from all spontaneous collectivity in pursuit of the bogey of the 'Real Self'. Modern management has always found in psychology, psychotherapy, counselling and even psychiatry its favoured discourses for managing human labour. The fake individualism of consumer culture makes people want even more of the same in their 'leisure' time.

For Hegel, following Kant, freedom was to be found in the conscious recognition by individuals of their essentially public destiny as 'citizens'. Marx himself originally took his own positive concept of freedom from Hegel's philosophy, where it represented the very meaning and purpose of history, and made explicit its link with the category of 'labour' - envisaging the history of the human species as a movement in the direction of the 'emancipation' of labour. Basically, this meant that the creative world-changing potential exhibited by 'work' - hitherto conducted under enforced conditions (of slavery, serfdom or instrumental wage-contracts) - could one day become voluntary, determined solely by the unfettered imagination of human beings acting cooperatively. This supposedly 'utopian' vision, grasped by few in the Marxist political tradition, was exhumed and vindicated by scattered elements in the sectors of intellectual and aesthetic production (e.g. the surrealists, situationists like Jorn and Debord, etc.), and today only appears as one aspect in the aleatory ramblings of modernist art - as the mechanism driving the production of novelties (including the fads mentioned earlier). This kind of 'free production' - unconstrained invention and purposeless fabrication - has been disconnected from any vision of, or concern about, its 'product', exactly as Marx thought it would, but not under the kind of conditions he expected.

So, in short, the idea of freedom has moved from a 'negative' meaning (Paine/Godwin/Anarchism) through a 'positive' one (Kant/HegelMarx) to a purely neutral (Art/Commodity) meaning, without any connection with its 'subject' (that which becomes 'free'). From the classical notion of the sane, reflective adult human male (Kant) through the materially-creative, imaginative collectivity (Marx) to the random, disordered and disembodied impulse (Deleuze), that which is 'free' has become the antithesis of the 'human', not 'nature' to be sure, but their infinite 'system of needs'.

It is in *this* context that the current collapse of the individual/social 'subject' as illustrated by the inner child movement, dissociative identity, and therapeutically assisted memory can be seen. This *is* the latest stage of a history of increasing 'emancipation', but at the same time a subtle change in *what* is being emancipated.

'Reflexivity' has become the chimera of these times and the panacea of all the professions who deal in human problems. Originally this was a technical concept in philosophy - it meant the process of turning a concept in upon itself - applying it to itself. In Hegel this was how the mind worked.

As such it was a moment of the dialectical process. Today it has become nothing more than a moral incantation to submit oneself to the judgement of the prevailing norms. There is no 'inner movement of thought' referred to at all, as witnessed by the queues for counselling courses, which is really just vacuous

Anna Hunter, of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne suffered from anorexia and went to a psychiatric hospital where she was encouraged to interpret her condition as the result of paternal sexual abuse. Although she later retracted the allegations against her father, Northumberland Social Services still insisted that "there is a very high probability (but not an absolute certainty) that Anna was the victim of incest" and refused to remove the Hunter family from a register of unproved cases.

chatter in the most restricted code imaginable. Anyone who claims to feel 'better' after counselling is only revealing the impoverishment of their mental life and/or the self-indulgent and imaginary nature of the 'problems' that drove them to it in the first place.

'Reflexivity' now means not intellectual interrogation, but simply waffle in the official jargon. Reflexive 'awareness' means the exact opposite of what it pretends - it means thinking of oneself using the language of some other (e.g. a therapist) better 'qualified' than oneself.

There can be no 'freedom' in increased self-consciousness, because consciousness of 'self' must always, if the word has any substance, be awareness of one's objectification. Real freedom is 'blissful self-forgetfulness', not any reflexive 'awareness'. Reflexivity can only mean making oneself an object. In practice, if the truth be admitted, there is no such thing as 'self-consciousness' - (no 'Real Me') to be 'liberated' by analysis or hypnosis.

Free to Abuse

The liberation of the market has given freedom a bad name. Uncoupled from any human subject, it has simply come to stand for all the evils that beset society, or has become the name for evil as such. Everything from war to sex has been demonised for the absence of regulation - for being unmanageable. Murder, drugs, drink-driving, dangerous dogs, knives, masculinity, youth - all are signifiers of an excessive freedom for which the solution is more intensive management. Belief in the ability of humans to freely choose the good is endlessly ridiculed by the doltish professionals of the capitalist education system, and the good itself is automatically defined and measured by the quantity of regulation ('skills') and temperance ('appropriateness').



And since the ludicrous defenders of an artificial pseudo-freedom play their part in the game by making it synonymous with shock, extremity and outrage, this only keeps up the demand for ever tighter controls and better management, leading to the flood which exceeds even the fears of 19th century radicals. But more alarming for its very subtlety is the creation of law by non-legislators - medics, therapists, social workers, counsellors whose power is in inverse proportion to their accountability and whose vested interest in the perpetual expansion of their business is so blatant it is never mentioned in polite company. These 'specialists without spirit' (Weber) can introduce the most arbitrary new rules and propound as scientific truths the kind of nonsense that would have been thrown out of every court in a less 'enlightened' age. The world is indeed the wrong way up. Having given up on what can and should be subject to human will (labour, what is produced and how) surveillance and control is instead extended into every realm that ought never to be subject to it - the past, the unconscious, and desire itself. The mainsprings of desire will be well unbent.

Beneath the dark fantasies of what will happen if humanity is not more effectively managed, lies a triumphant pessimism ungrounded in any concept of original sin. This is evident in the tiresome response of the so-called 'professionals' to any resistance to the growth of the abuse industry. Like a broken record they repeat their only line: by questioning their work one is accused of creating a favourable 'climate' for the abusers. They really are the fools with only one idea, and the idea is that of the 'market' and

'public image'. Their world is indeed foolish after their own image. Not truth, in the end, matters but the logic of public relations and marketing. This fear of freedom is not the response of an authoritarian personality to the imagined pleasures of the other, it is a dread bureaucratically simulated to expand the terrain of human manageability for its own sake. Along with initiatives from Crimestoppers to Zero Tolerance, the strategy is one of control through systematic *demoralisation*. Whether the perpetrators actually believe their ridiculous hype is ultimately neither here nor there: what matters is to undermine at all costs conviviality, destroy trust, create terror, and discredit the possibility of spontaneous empathy. Only when people can be made to realise how evil and hopeless they really are will they voluntarily accept the necessary measures in store.



Readers' Guide to the Literature

The following books are recommended for anyone trying to make sense of the frauds being peddled by the academy and the therapeutic/social work 'training' industries today.

• Debbie Nathan & Michael Snedeker *Satan's Silence: Ritual Abuse and the Making of a Modern American Witch Hunt* (Basic Books) 1995.

Despite its title, this covers far more than just the 'satanic abuse' mania. It contains, for example, a detailed account of how feminists in America, despite misgivings, were first co-opted during the seventies into a tacit right wing moral alliance with fiscal Conservatives and pro-family Christians. The author was one of the first to expose the blatant frauds involved in the 'abuse' racket in the USA. This is still unavailable in the UK, where we seem to get all these American manias without access to the excellent home-grown antidotes

• Elaine Showalter *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Culture* (Picador) 1997

Regrettably this book relies on a reductionist analysis of the recent moral panics - Satanic child abuse, False Memory, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Multiple Personality, Gulf War Syndrome, Alien Abduction - in that she tries to 'explain' them by the collective psychology which they merely exemplify. It contains useful information, however.

• Ellen Bass & Laura Davis *The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse* (Cedar) 1981 [first published 1988]

This is the 'bible' for all therapeutically-assisted memory-manufacturers. It explains in easy steps, for those who want to identify with real victims, how to define your essential self as a sufferer/

victim/survivor and how to make up 'abuse' stories and browbeat men into believing them. Full of Oprah-style 'testimonies'. The word 'healing' seems to mean exulting in life-long narcissistic co-dependency.

• Mark Pendergrast *Victims of Memory: Sex Abuse Accusations and Shattered Lives* (Upper Access, Vermont) 1996 [expanded second edition]

Essentially a rejoinder to Bass & Davis - a similarly massive (575-page) compilation of horror stories from the 'other side' of the memory war, with some well-researched articles by Pendergrast, a historian who was himself an accused father.

• Elizabeth Loftus & Katherine Ketcham *The Myth of Repressed Memory: False memories and Allegations of Sexual Abuse* (St. Martin's Griffin, N.Y.) 1994

Refreshing critique by a psychologist of the scientific claims made by memory therapists, written in an engaging first-person narrative. Admirably, she tries to get into dialogue with Bass (p. 207ff), but is frustrated by her apparent inability to grasp the concepts of truth and justice. This is probably the most sensible contribution to the whole debate.

• Frederick Crews *The Memory Wars: Freud's Legacy in Dispute* (New York Review Books) 1995.

Blames Freud for the whole business. There is much truth in this, but this makes the intellectual origins of an idea - 'repression' - (which has in fact been distorted and vulgarised beyond recognition by therapists in recent years) - responsible for atrocities which however have a more straightforward social and economic explanation.

• Christina Hoff Sommers *Who Stole Feminism? How Women have betrayed Women* (Touchstone) 1995

A hilarious demolition of the collective nonsense that nowadays gets dignified with the name 'feminism'. Some very good detailed reconstructions of how statistics on rape are produced (think of a number, multiply it by a hundred, stretch the definition of 'rape' beyond recognition, then increase the figure by another hundred, plagiarise your sources, ignore retractions etc.). Leftist responses to this book exemplify perfectly the techniques she enumerates (e.g. rely on second-hand accounts, insinuate that the author is right wing (guilt by association) and therefore not worth reading, etc.)

• Robert Hughes *Culture of Complaint* (OUP) 1993

Entertaining onslaught on the American self-esteem mania and the grotesque self-deceptions involved. Pitched somewhere half-way between Christopher Lasch's *The Minimal Self* and Ben Elton's *Popcorn* - funnier than the former but sharper than the latter.

• Ray Aldridge-Morris *Multiple Personality: An Exercise in Deception* (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates) 1989

Psychologist debunking the MPD stories, and concludes that if it exists at all it is essentially a socio-cultural phenomenon.

• Mary Lefkowitz *Not Out of Africa: How Afrocentrism became an excuse to teach Myth as History* (New Republic) 1996.

Painstaking and somewhat laboured attempt to disprove some of the more absurd claims made by Afrocentrist academics about 'Western' culture being the 'stolen legacy' of Africans. Flawed by the author's right wing bias, which shares too much common ground with those she is criticising: e.g. the belief that historical 'facts' have to have some present moral purpose.

Nowt Worth Saying?

Jim McFarlane, one of the founders of Here & Now, stares into the abyss

Hidden in the mists of distant 'time', an ancient copy of *Fifth Estate* raised the spectre haunting social revolutionaries: having nothing to say!

It's not the same as writer's block. It's not a signifier of apathy or total cynicism. It's not a lack of desire to reflect on social change. It may arise out of a disillusion with what change is occurring, and the forces manipulating 'public opinion'. It does usually reflect a change in personal circumstances. It does reflect an doubting mind, not transfixed or seduced by ideological certainties. It may be a passing phase or it may be a passport to theoretical oblivion!

Speaking personally, I earlier tried to 'shake myself' out of this impasse, with a long survey of the first 6 issues of the journal (1). The purpose was to throw up pointers as to where we intended to 'go' in terms of the journal. There was a feeling that, despite an improvement in the look of the journal, that some of the earlier purpose had been misplaced.

I then intended to embark on a review of various controversies in the wonderful world of anarchism, while carefully side-stepping nasty feuds. Instead I suggest that if the reader wants to dip into these - the class war but not Class War as featured in the last Federation paper, the Luther Blisset pamphlet with the elitist title of *Anarchist Integralism: Aesthetics, Politics, and the Apres-Garde* [2], on the nationalist - and in some cases, racist pedigree of the 'founding fathers' of anarchism & the apparently deviant practice of the far east 'anarchist' variant, and the equally blemished Bob Black on disrobing anarchism of its leftist outer garments - seek them out - by your own efforts (2)

But mulling over these writings doesn't scratch the surface of my unease, which may or not be shared by other past *Here & Now* writers, and others who self-identify in this milieu. Of course, needless to say, we are but enlightened amateurs, who don't write to live, achieve status as a writer etc.. Names crop up, such as the fashionable but focussed Sadie Plant (*New Scientist*, 11-9-97), with past *Here & Now* associations, who have departed the shores of the uncelebrated and radical marginalia in favour of academic advancement for their ideas. Few, however, of the original 'round table' of collective members are in this situation or aspire to be so.

Instead there is a process, with the critical edge being numbed by a combination of factors. Chief amongst those is responsibility. The carefree days of less family obligations, and the imperatives of finances wear down on even 'long distance' [theoretical] runners, who always expected change in the long-run! The relevance of pontificating on issues far removed from the immediacy of everyday life steadily diminishes.

One of the most worrying factors is the apparent appeal of 'reactionary' ideas. This comes about, as John Barret explored in issue 15 of *Here & Now*, when the barbarism inherent in what passes for 'society' promotes feelings of intense frustration as we are all 'beaten down' by those who (as we say in Glasgow) would



throw their own granny off a bus, if it suited them. The 'correct' response of the left has become, society is to blame and the perpetrators need liberal incentives to improve their behaviour. Yet it is all too tempting to agree that there is sheer 'wickedness' and badness [linked to that 'modern' phenomenon, 'idle hands' and boredom?], and that change will not come about by ignoring this or far less celebrating it! In terms of writing, such abundance of barbarism, tends to induce a sense of hopelessness, a concentration on the human aspects of life within an cultural oasis within the urban setting [or escape to a less 'contaminated' rural retreat, with or without rowdy interludes]. If life as a whole is proving so bleak, then so it goes, find enough distractions and ways of coping so that you personally can survive, in association with like-minded others.

This is where reductionism comes in. I may be against it - but I do it myself. It has become easier for me to participate within a project which necessarily does not go out of its way to complicate the issues (3). I write short editorials which aspire not be ideological monologues. Length necessarily inhibits often interesting digression, but the final parting shot has to be - no solution without social revolution! We believe it, at least I still do - but it is, especially in the current era, of disarming irrelevance to how people live and how they imagine their place in society. Demystification remains an objective of free broadsheets, and capacious

journals alike. But the reductionism which inhabits news-sheets, tempered as it is to some degree in (3), can become a platform for what I consider the scourge of anarchism and other radical causes alike: leftism.

The *leftism* I mean inflates a sense of panic, and distorts fears of say, a change in Government regulation, so that alarm is encouraged out of all proportion to the actual change (4). In this way, the often creeping and insidious process adopted more commonly by Governments - say in relation to the 'welfare state' is downplayed in any explanation in favour of dramatisation. While this contemporary malaise may not be a barrier to writing as such, it is a block within the culture of radical dissent, which promotes uniform conclusions, short-term politics and 'inevitable' burn-out and disillusion. By railing against such *leftism*, I should clarify that I am wary of some present-day initiatives which seem to synthesise radical and green initiatives with rightist implications (5).

This leads to the specifics of current political 'time': the reinvention of peoples Government with a charismatic leader, able to soft-sell policies at least as disadvantageous for the vast majority as the previous incarnation. However, despite the petty and infuriating aspects of what passes for militant or radical activity - I refuse to

be totally downbeat or negative (6). The backdrop is the distortion of world events central to the media and what was termed the 'spectacle' so that only a small minority can access actual news from around the world and decipher anything significant from the cynical designs of the 'sensational'.

I want to make the effort to draw theoretical conclusions again. I want to engage with others so that we can interpret the world anew as a necessary companion to reinvented 'action'. But I cannot promise it will come about. We have all to re-examine our motives and situation so that we free ourselves sufficiently to engage, in a renewed way!

References

- (1) Send SAE to *Here & Now* c/o Transmission Gallery, 28 King Street, Glasgow, G1 5QP for photocopy.
- (2) See Reviews in this issue.
- (3) Counter Information, see Listings.
- (4) See Dutch translated article in *Here & Now* 10.
- (5) See *Here & Now* 16/17
- (6) The discussion of what constitutes active citizenship, after Bookchin rather than Blair, introduces potential for contesting the 'local' sphere of power/participation.

EXHIBIT



ROYAL ARMOURIES

THE WATERFRONT, LEEDS.

BEFORE



*Washes
Whiter!
Gets rid of even
the most
stubborn
bloodstains!*

AFTER



EXHIBIT

1997 marked the year of Zero Tolerance in Leeds. Massive posters were erected by the City Council denouncing the tendency of males to rape, abuse their daughters and generally intimidate women. Regrettably dissent from this wholesome message seeped out, which we consider necessary to publish in order to document the psychopathology of the times.

**She lives with
a successful businessman, loving father
and respected member of the community.**



Take him for every penny he's got

F

FANATICISM

**EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL, SEXUAL,
BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY**

*Original text: She lives with a successful businessman, loving father and respected member of the community. Last week he hospitalised her.
Zero Tolerance. Emotional, physical, sexual, male abuse of power is a crime.*

EXHIBIT

When they say no, they mean no.



But after therapy, they will change their minds.

M

MINDFUCKING

**WHOEVER, WHATEVER, WHENEVER
WE CAN MAKE YOU BELIEVE IT**

*Original text: When they say no, they mean no. Some men don't listen. Zero Tolerance. Whoever, wherever, whenever.
Male abuse of power is a crime.*

EXHIBIT

By the time they reach eighteen,



one of them will be a therapist

H

HYSTERIA

**FROM COUNSELLORS TO PSYCHOANALYSTS
THEY CAN ALL FUCK YOU UP**

Original text: By the time they reach eighteen, one of them will have subjected to sexual abuse. Zero Tolerance. From flashing to rape. Male abuse of power is a crime.



From three to ninety three
...men are nagged

Y

all men are not criminals and not all criminals are men
female sexist abuse of men is still sexist abuse
the nagging has to stop – stop the nagging – don't nag

Critique of



Instrumental Emotion

Mike Peters gets in touch with his feelings about 'emotional literacy'

The only thing worse than an isolated atomistic egocentric individual is a *mass* of such isolated, atomistic egocentric individuals, artificially united by:

- * fake **grief** (over some celebrity victim)
- * phoney **euphoria** (over a media spectacle), or
- * bogus **rage** (over shortages of Teletubbies in the shops...).

These emotions demonstrate their own shallowness and superficiality by the rapidity with which they can be summoned into existence, displaced onto different objects and transformed one into another. They are subjectively 'real', but only according to the crazy dominant ideology that somehow validates them. In a sane society, people would be *ashamed* to have hit a shop assistant in frustration at the shop not having sufficient supplies of Spice

Girl dolls. In this society people laugh about it. Or maybe in a sane society, there would be no Spice Girls and no such roles as shop assistants or customers. The madder society gets, the more experts in mental disorders there are, and the madder they need to be.

Today the mere fact that an emotion is real somehow insulates it from criticism. It furnishes legitimacy for whatever is done in its name. Should public outrage be unleashed at the release of some criminal, then the poor sod must be kept inside even after the sentence is completed. Such is the 'democracy' of the stage-managed crowd, whose feelings must not be offended, on condition that they are systematically deprived of their *common sense*.

This pandering to public sentiment has grown in step with advances in the techniques for its manipulation, because the state only pays heed to the moods it can control. This parody of popular sovereignty is, however, carefully circumscribed to exclude the public exercise of *reason*. Reason remains the preserve of those with power, for whom it is limited to the calculation of their own advantage. Leave rational thought to us, insist society's ever more irrational rulers, but show us your emotions, so that we may better manage and manipulate you. And it is so much easier to manage people's emotions than their reason, for if the people were ever allowed to reason together, in other words, to exercise their common sense, then power would sooner or later be forced to disclose the real imperatives for its insane behaviour.

Emotion Pictures

The antidote to direct democracy is daytime television. The media feed voraciously on emotions - literally hounding the victims of tragedies, while professionals prey upon personal problems like vultures, picking open every wound. The former promote the latter.

People come along to be in the audience of TV shows and find it impossible to tolerate the expression of opposing views. They are in fact invited in order to interrupt and to *not* listen to anyone else's voice. Their role is solely to express their own emotion in public, and they are silenced if their passion ebbs. Presiding over these televised bear-pits are the ubiquitous experts - the therapists with wares to parade. Oprah, Ricki, Montel, Esther and the slimy Kilroy are just ads for the therapists, who usurp the role of reason, simply because they are passionlessly instrumental. And the more irrational the performing subjects, the more the cool voice of the expertocracy serves to reinforce the protagonists in their collective impotence.

The studio audience is a microcosm of the domesticated 'mass' performing a show which teaches the impossibility of popular democracy - to prove the necessity for the impersonal mediation of expert managers. People are required to tell their personal stories to camera, only on condition some expert is there to have the last word.

Expression Training

Susie Orbach, psychotherapist-in-chief at the court of New Labour, preaches something called 'emotional literacy' through her organisation 'Antidote', promoting the interests of therapy in public life. But it seems that as this 'emotional literacy' spreads, people's ability to speak their minds withers away, and a crude expressivism renders us all more and more inarticulate.

Literacy itself means learning a code, so as to be able to read and write. But can feelings be 'transcribed' like this? What is meant, one presumes, is the ability to de-scribe one's feelings in language. But 'talking about' one's feelings or problems usually means learning by rote the wooden jargon of psychobabble, from which one gains only the need for more therapy.

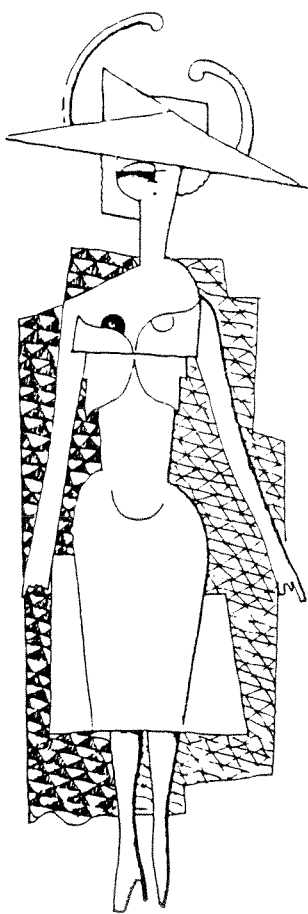
The therapeutic ideology is now the unchallenged orthodoxy of everyday life. Its central tenet is expressivism - the panacea of 'expression'. This holds that emotions must always be 'expressed' like some kind of pus that it is healthy to drain off - better to let the 'stuff' out than keep it in. In fact those who uphold this crude doctrine are invariably scornful of 'literacy' (in the literal sense), always preferring *talk*, or even the non-verbal, to *writing*, which, involving more thought, is more 'inauthentic'. Yet speech is no less coded and conventional.

The trouble with the panacea of 'expressing emotion' is that this is just what causes exactly the kind of deaths and injuries which in turn call forth the 'expressions' of anger and vengeance.

If emotional literacy really meant the ability to recognise *other* people's emotions, then it must be said that the culture today must have a reading age of six, since it increasingly demands a picture-book display of only the strongest emotions, as if people were so insensitive that everything had to be pronounced out loud. You have to weep and wail before anyone can read the signs.

The virtue of 'feeling' in general remains utterly unconvincing. The realm of emotions is inexhaustible. Some feelings are a terrible affliction, while some people never experience other kinds of feelings, and both of these are tragic circumstances. What can 'feeling' in the abstract possibly mean?

Few people seem to have made the connection between the decline of social struggles and the triumph of the therapeutic. Still less has anyone suggested that at the root of the problem might lie the assertion of the chimera of the 'real self'. There are still plenty of people who avoid the limelight, who refuse self-disclosure, distrust therapy, and rely on their friends and neighbours rather than salaried professionals. For them, common sense is far from dead.



Lost Rites

Towards A More Effective Way of Dying

John Barrett exhumes the modern hospice movement.

The Hospice movement began after the Second World War. It is still little known, and inhabits the shadowland where death and other imponderables have been consigned by a triumphant capitalism. The reality of dying - and living - has never been easy to reconcile with the compulsive economic management of existence.

Anyone unlucky enough to fetch up in a hospice would probably expect that here at least they had found a resting place. From here there would be no more referrals, transfers, appointments, assessments or reviews. Away from the tools of medicine a quiet end could be envisaged. Relaxed conviviality and freedom would replace the frenetic interventions of professionals. Even if you were never going to be at peace with the world, here at least there would be a place where you could *be* not at peace.

Unfortunately this generous public perception of the hospice movement is rapidly becoming an anachronism, and the story of the failure of the hospice movement mirrors the fate of many other 'critical' movements in health care.

Hospices are developing away from the original impulse that inspired their existence. Partly as a result of their very success, but more as a result of developments in the NHS and the wider society hospices are losing their marginal status to become reintegrated into the mainstream health care system with predictable and depressing consequences.

The first hospice came about as the result of a protracted conversation between a social worker and a dying hospital patient in an NHS ward. The dying patient had survived the concentration camps of Hitler and he had much to say about death and life. The social worker went on and trained to be a doctor in order to get dying patients out of the hands of her colleagues. In the 1960s and 70s hospices were set up independently of the NHS, relied on voluntary contributions, and possessed a partisan view of death, at odds with the embarrassed indifference that comes from professionals when contemplating their failures. The intention was both practical and idealistic. On the one hand medicine was to be used palliatively rather than curatively: the relief of symptoms took precedence over the search for a cure. On the other the patient was to have control handed back to them: the time, place and manner of their death was to be determined by them. So concurrent with the growth of hospices came the establishment of palliative care nurses outside the institutions, looking after patients in their homes, if that was their wish.

It is fair to say that the hospice movement only scratched the surface. In Britain in the nineties 75% of all deaths still take place

in a medical institution, usually a hospital, and dying usually remains surrounded by the technology of cure. Death remains tucked away behind imposing facades, and life outside goes on without the sight of death to disturb it. Yet the hospice movement did at least draw some attention to this spooky absence. Death, the most common of all experiences, had become the property of professionals, and friends and relatives played bit-parts to the great drama acted out by doctors, nurses and undertakers. In a society dominated by the demands of production and consumption, consciousness of its inevitable cessation by the death of the individual was awkward. The rites of passage and the wakes of the populace in a less commercially driven age were an inconvenient interruption to the rhythm of capitalism. Just as feast-days and holidays had to be rationalised out of existence, so wakes and public scenes of mourning had passed their sell-by date, unless they happened to be for great personages. But in hospices attempts were made to defy this logic of utility. Talking to people who were in at the beginning of the hospice movement, you can get a sense of the significance each death had for the place, the staff and the friends and relatives who participated in it. Meals were taken communally and time was made for stories to be told, arguments and resentments to be aired. The tragedy of death was seen, and its importance was not filed away or skated over by staff who had "seen one, seen 'em all". This disengagement with the trends of the time was reflected in how staff were treated. Dealing so regularly with the deaths of others their own lives had to be valued above and beyond their labour power. It was important to have a life, and not be a flexible resource to be drawn on whenever management required. Hospices appeared as small oases of sociability, it seemed that in death at least it was possible to briefly escape the inhumanity of a work-driven existence.

Nowadays, of course, change is inevitable and the sooner we learn to love it, the better. Two forces, separate but not unconnected, have shattered the calm and conviviality of the hospice, and with it a brave experiment in removing an aspect of existence from the dictates of capitalist society. The first has insinuated itself into hospices as a result of their very success. The NHS having seen beds unprofitably blocked by terminally ill patients with nowhere else to go, sees hospices as handy additions to its productive process. Now that it provides over half of the funding of most hospices, it has gained the right to determine policy and to restructure hospices into something more suitable for its own needs. Furthermore, the new internal market has meant that hospices get paid on a 'per patient' arrangement. As the NHS sees it, hospices could be taking more patients than they do and

'freeing up' bed-space for more cost-effective patients. To continue the delightful language of health economics, patient throughput could be enhanced in order to ensure an equitable and efficient service. What this means is that hospices evolve from their status as sanctuaries into acute units of palliative care, functioning as specialists in symptom control from which patients can be discharged into the community (actually private nursing homes). This means that hospices receive more and more patients, some of whom are often much nearer death than used to be the case. The justification for this 'speed-up' is said to be the need to ration the 'resource' of the hospice in a fair manner so that equal access is achieved for all. In tandem with such an objective comes the need to cost the hospice service more effectively, or in the words of one hospice reformer, to provide 'an agreed and measurable standard of care and support to the individual needs of patients during the changing phases of their illness'. This wakes the beast of 'Audit' - a monster stalking the corridors of all NHS administrations - and which involves the intensified Taylorisation of medical, nursing and ancillary jobs. All this is to the detriment of the workers concerned and to the destruction of the necessary 'slack' upon which the humanity, such as it is, of 'care' depends.

Audit is sold to staff as a means of maintaining and improving 'Quality'. Activity in the hospice is monitored in order to arrive at a standard. This standard has to be recordable in such a way that a judgement can be made as to whether the standard was

research-based data to be published and refereed before admitting an activity into recognised practice. At first sight this seems an improvement upon the routinised way nursing reproduced itself, and in areas such as wound-care, pain relief, and other physical measures has led to definite benefits for patients. However, when this nostrum enters the realm of the social, it is a dangerously circular way of going about things. It requires the care of the individual to be based on what went before - it assumes that essentially each individual is the same, and that personality is predictable and determined. Despite the contradictory ideology of 'respecting the individual' and so forth, reflective practice assumes that individuality can be boiled down to some essential components common to all. But in reality no such assumption is secure. I have looked after people for whom the maintenance of silence is of far greater import to their dignity or 'psychic health' than confession or an open display of grief. Day to day life in a hospice is full of nurses and doctors having their professional prejudice about a 'good death' ripped up in front of their eyes by individuals who choose to go to their deaths in 'denial', in extreme anger, or in resigned despair. None of these deaths remotely conform to a 'standard' or any benchmark of acceptability, and yet only the very foolish, or the wilfully ideological would dare to contradict their decision. The introduction of standards into these personal matters is to infiltrate a subtle moralism into the business of death. Answering the question 'Were the psychosocial needs of the dying patient met?' (which is a standard I have



reached. In the end figures per month per activity will be generated that will show how much or how little the standard was achieved. These figures are then collected for all hospices and an assessment can be made of the strengths and weaknesses of each hospice. The first most obvious response is to say that this is the slippery slope to league tables, a development I would say is inevitable once the NHS contracting leviathan shuffles into action. More disturbing from my perspective is the corrosive effect of measurement itself. Measurement not only disciplines the workforce, but it drives out the immeasurable. The average nurse, weighed down by the knowledge of the standards to be maintained and recorded, is less likely to have the time or feel the freedom to respond spontaneously to a person or an event. Management gets round this objection by roping in more and more actions to be measured - spiritual care of the dying, psychological support for the bereaved, all have their standards... However, measurement not only drives out the immeasurable, it corrupts that which is being measured.

Let me explain. The current fashion in nursing at the moment is 'reflective practice'. This is a term which exhorts the practitioner to continual assessment and consideration of what has been done. It is advanced quite explicitly against the 'intuitive' and calls for

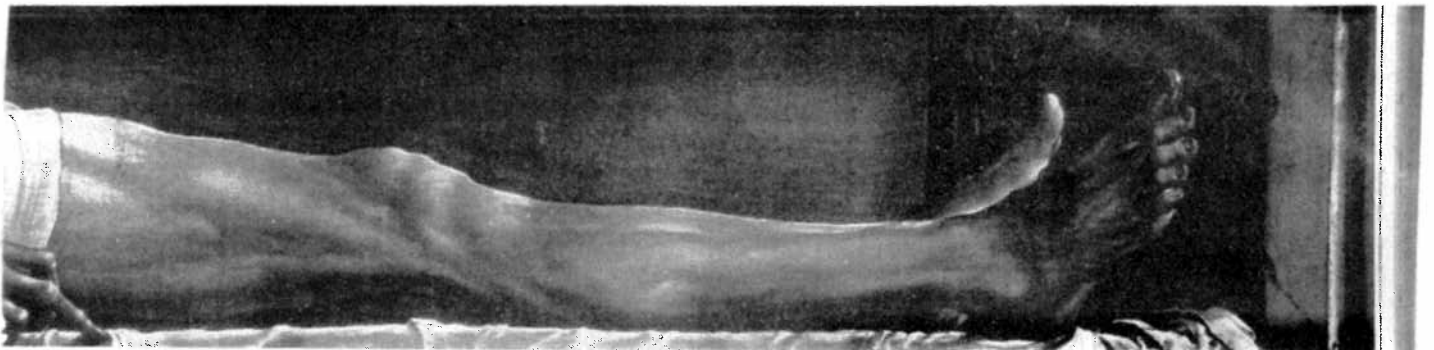
come across), assumes that everyone constitutes themselves in such a way that that segment of their personality can be so identified. While conformity to a religion is now no longer mandatory for a dying person, conformism itself creeps in through the back door under the guise of therapy.

This leads to the second force corroding the hospice movement. Death and illness have always been feared. Humanity has always wished to avoid the Grim Reaper, and that desire has manifested itself in the religious impulse. The distaste for death and the dying has intensified in modern times thanks to the cult of health and youth. The reasons for this lie not only in the glorification of 'fitness' and beauty, but also in the way capitalism organises work and consumption - the old reside with the old, the sick with the sick, there is little time for authority, especially 'experiential' authority which is perhaps the only one worth hanging onto. The experts who plug the gaps produced by capital's social deficits are all too aware of this, and seek to fill it with professional 'positivism' - an exercise that usually entails the upgrading of the image of old age through a prolonged campaign of 'positive thinking'. However, far from resurrecting a more realistic view of illness, death and dying, current professional preoccupations shield people from the real tragedy of death. The title of a book

in the local library *Death - Final Stage of Growth* gives the game away. Having taken death out of the hands of medicine, the hospice movement has attempted to tame it, by 'normalising' it. By creating the impression that such agonies as grief and loss can be organised according to pseudo-scientific nostrums, such as the 'grieving process', what bereavement counsellors and others are saying is that death, no doubt like life, can be 'managed'. Alex Comfort, an anarchist and proponent of a more 'relaxed' style of sexuality, is one of the many pioneers in this field. "Tragic intensities" he tells us, "produce bad trips" and he calls for a cooling down of our approach to old age and death. But death is tragic, the loss of a person is both a universal loss in the sense that that person can never be reproduced, and a terrible individual loss for those who have loved that person. Managing our emotions or policing our feelings according to the latest 'How to' manual or on the advice of a well-intentioned counsellor, is no solution to the absolute fact of death. Mortality is beyond palliation - all that the living can do in the face of the tragedy of death is try to live better - a fact that can itself be extremely disturbing. Therapy - which one assumes ultimately aims at the relief of suffering - has little or no place in death. Its dogmatic assertion that emotional expression is always a good thing subjects those that withhold it to professional suspicion. It is hard not to escape the conclusion that the presence of counsellors at tragic events is to extract extreme emotions in an instrumental fashion in order to more effectively deal with them.

tolerate a wasted life. Lives must have been productive and satisfactory. Damaged life calls the present system into question. I think it is worth considering that this avoidance of personal catastrophe is the result of living in a society that cannot countenance tragedy, for to do so would be to recognise that this is not the best of all possible worlds. As Tony Watson, managing director of Lowe Direct, an advertising agency which has launched an advertising blitz for Service Corporation International (a modern funeral director) justifying a further commercialisation of funerals, puts it: "Our approach is upbeat and treats funerals like booking a package holiday - once it is done, you can forget about it."

So, in place of anger and despair we have team meetings and multi-disciplinary gatherings, as well as regular visits from psychologists. Instead of reflection about the miserable lives that are lived, we have reflection about nursing practice and quality, and how to achieve 'standards'. And the consequence of the implementation of these managerial fashions have been as follows: all staff now have to work days and nights, more and more spontaneous response to individual persons is monitored and put under scrutiny and the hospice itself is more a place of work, of directed activity, than a place of unpredictability and freedom. Staff are now flexible. This means that pockets of solidarity are dissipated. You are far less likely to work with the same person for any prolonged period of time. Because you no longer work all days or all nights, your relationships with patients are interrupted



The best way to illustrate what I mean is by looking at the reaction of staff (myself included) to the unsatisfactory death. Trained within a culture of success - a culture whose obsession with quality demands 'standards' which can be measured - professionals take upon themselves a responsibility that can never be theirs. By the time a person reaches a hospice they have lived a life with all its mistakes, triumphs, failures and good times already extant. The individual senses far better than any other whether they've had a good life. Some may have lived a contradiction so deeply that the only response is despair, others may see quite clearly why they ruined their own lives, others may be locked into battles unfinished from their own adolescence. These are recognisable summations of a multitude of miseries, most of which cannot be summed up into diagnosable pathologies. But I hope you get the point. A life cannot be turned around at the end so that its whole story can be changed from tragic farce to dignified epic. A lot of lives have been ugly, it is not in the power of the ministry of hospice workers to reverse this. Yet the compulsion remains: for themselves (for ourselves, the gaolers of the house of the dead) a life must be ended like a novel, the story must be resolved. This need for resolution lies not just in the wills of the hospice workers, rather we focus a general will for it to be so. Capitalism cannot

- you no longer have a sense of a person day to day or night to night - your flexibility means in effect that any pattern of getting on with someone is disrupted by night work when they are usually asleep, or if someone becomes more chatty at night, disrupted by being available mainly on days. It all combines to dissolve any established rhythm of friendship. As a result one has less say over the fate of the patient - their destiny is determined more and more by the permanent presence of management on days, who have not extended the principle of total flexibility to themselves. It is tempting to see this as a conscious strategy by management to undermine significant relationships between staff and patients the better to implement the higher turnover strategy favoured by the paymasters of the NHS.

Of course there are limits to these tendencies. I would be loath to say that management attain their will effortlessly. Staff and patients do maintain friendships against the odds, and it is these which keep the whole edifice from sinking into a swamp of cold instrumentality, and which make it a better place to work than the modern NHS. But the imposition of new working norms, and the fact that staff have been sacked for refusing to conform to the new shift patterns, has altered the 'feel' of the place. It is less a community of individuals working for a common end, whose

lives and experiences are valued in themselves, more an adjunct of that medico-industrial complex the hospice movement was supposed to oppose. Flexibility and 'cost-effectiveness', which has resulted in the abolition of bank holiday payments and the reduction of 'unsocial' hours payments, has created a flatter institution: days merge into each other without the necessary differentiation which makes particular days or times of the day significant. The lives of those working the hospice are made more banal by this undifferentiated daily labour. How many good memories will they have to sustain themselves at the their moment of exit?



To conclude, a few predictions estimated on the basis of extrapolating contemporary trends. This is done in the hope that everything which is predicted never happens.

I suspect that hospices as distinct features of the voluntary health care sector will disappear. Palliative care will be absorbed into the NHS as greater emphasis on symptom control for the terminally ill will become part and parcel of hospital doctor and nurse training. Both economies of scale and the turn by health administrators towards equity indicate that this will be the case. In the mind of the average health administrator or 'purchaser', it really does not make economic sense to have institutions separate from hospitals, with their own kitchens, housekeepers, chaplains, and maintenance staff providing intensive medical and nursing services. In comparison with the NHS hospital, hospices still have a good deal of slack. This could be tightened out of existence by the setting up of hospital palliative care wards. The gardens, the volunteers and the nooks and crannies into which patients and their relatives can shelter from the bustle of care are all costs, which an NHS hospital could remove by integrating care of the terminally ill into mainstream health complexes. Furthermore, it is true that there is no equality of access to palliative care. It very much depends upon whether the local people have stumped up funds for a local hospice - many areas have practically no hospice beds and those that do only scratch the surface of the numbers of people dying from an intractable illness. This unevenness of care is widely seen as unfair and administrators justify their intervention into apparently independent health initiatives by pointing to the absence of a universal provision, and manouvre to make independent outfits transparent to public (i.e. their) gaze on the grounds that there should be equality of access to services throughout the country. In effect what will occur will be equality of access to a sub-standard service - a dull reflection of the hospice idea will exist in the palliative care wards, justified on the grounds of equity. Together with this universality of provision will come more hard and fast policies and procedures identifying those deemed worthy of such treatment. At the moment our hospice takes people suffering from neurological diseases, such as Multiple Sclerosis, a very few A.I.D.S. patients as well as people suffering from cancer. There is a debate about whether the

service should be extended to other intractable illnesses, such as liver cirrhosis, severe rheumatoid illnesses etcetera. Patients are accepted on their merits without a hard and fast criterion. NHS hospitals are far more likely to want to make these criteria transparent. Equity will be gained but at the expense of the particular and idiosyncratic from which so much knowledge and skill has been learned. A democratically induced stagnation could be the result. The danger is that the pressure for fairness, filtered through a commercial society will abolish particular good things. If everyone can't have it, then it shall not exist. Thus do utopian ideas destroy all hope of utopia... in an age where it is taken as read that there is a scarcity of resources for health care, condemning something because it is not universally accessible is not necessarily the best way to get a better life - uniformly accessible mediocrity is more likely to occur

So, from the beginning, the Hospice movement was a revolt against the trivialisation of death. It honoured life and underscored the significance of each person, no matter what they had achieved or accomplished in the course of it. This revolt contained an implicit, if incomplete, critique of how people live under capitalism. Human beings would not be just so much human 'resource' to be used up at the wheel of industry, and anonymously despatched to the fridge when all attempts at resuscitation failed.

The wheel, however, has turned full circle and Human Resource Management has regained control of dying. Not only has conviviality been instrumentalised and feeling rationalised and coded by the irrational imperative of measurement, but the mindless invasion of professional counselling has defused the hope that death might ignite a revaluation of life. Having begun by de-professionalising death, the Hospice movement has ended up inviting more and more professionals and specialists into the death-watch. It escaped the impersonal scientific scrutiny of the body, only to fall prey to the even more pointless, intrusive and personal scrutiny of the mind, where life becomes more neatly and 'appropriately' rounded off and rendered 'acceptable'.

In many ways, the Hospice movement prepared itself for its own colonisation. Sidelining its amateurish and voluntary nature, it has made itself into a 'health care delivery system' like any other. As a result, its attempt to fight off its absorption into the medico-industrial complex looks already doomed to failure. Indeed it is hard to find anyone in any position of power who recognises the danger. The onus is on those without power to make a move.

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WARTS & ALL?

Limits of Humans

Responding to *Here & Now* No16/17, *Tom Jennings* disputes the human reality he considers the journal is defending.

The editors justified *Here & Now* 16-17's discussions of post-humanism and anti-humanism ('In Defence of Humans' [IDOH], p3) by asserting that:

...nowadays power has no need of truth, nor even a claim to justice, to underline its right to dominate, simply the ability to do so is enough. Abandoning the human could therefore seem a sensible response to this triumph of power, manipulation and cynicism...

Unfortunately, the articles published and the various replies treat the category 'human' as basically simple, singular and coherent, though the details differ. The results are very interesting and entertaining, but it looks a bit like meetings between closed minds – unusual for *Here & Now*. The rush to write off, for example, radical ecological politics and cyber-futurism is understandable given their more ridiculous manifestations. But ending up seeming to defend classic liberal humanism (even its marxist varieties) is little better. What's going on?



Who Counts As Human?

Post-humanism's main insight is that whenever powerful discourses appeal to universal human interests, it is always *only some humans who are being talked about and can actually benefit*. The functions of Western humanism can be seen in its practical manifestations – liberal democracy, capitalism and colonialism, and modern varieties of totalitarianism. Those left out of the equation of ideal humanness are consistently targeted for devaluation and degradation – a process necessary for the system to work and reproduce itself. On closer examination this

partiality is built into the language with which such philosophies are expressed – so pretending to speak for all humans is as stupid as trying to speak for the planet or for non-'speaking' organisms, and as shallow as imagining you can speak from 'beyond' your own humanity.

The special issue of *Here & Now* on Guy Debord was an appropriate place to bring up these matters because his stance exemplified some aspects of intellectual humanism. Focusing on the rational perfection of ideas by the enlightened individual, implies that if us lesser mortals follow and aspire to this state, it somehow underwrites and correlates with political strategy. Apart from the implicit hierarchy of those knowing and known, such 'truth' often does not help in practice,¹ especially when its pursuit subordinates other activity. Power develops and wields its truth rhetorically, to persuade and energise particular groups of people to act in specific kinds of ways – the net result being what we experience as the status quo or the inexorability of how things change.

So, most importantly, a post-humanist approach brings into question the status and role of rationality in society and history, puncturing many of the bourgeois myths that the great oppositional traditions left intact or couldn't bear to tackle. "Abandoning the human", yes – those pathetic, mean-spirited and self-serving fantasies, presented as the reality of being 'human', by those with powerful vested interests, over a few hundred years. But why try to replace them with a better vision of what *all* humans are? Why should acknowledging diversity and uncertainty usher in the "total and habitual warfare of everyday life"?

If we're looking forward to changing the world, we should talk about *potential*, in us and those we can reach and work with, and not enter into sterile philosophical debate with those whose interests are not ours. IDOH's "one remaining intuitive allegiance" (a sense of common humanity) is not a philosophical or ideological position. Feelings of empathy² don't (yet) suffer from institutional discipline and policing, or the material consequences of the acceptance and sponsorship of official discourse. After all, it never was possible to "speak truth to power" (IDOH) – power has to be countered with power. The political potential we seek in ordinary people's everyday solidarity, conviviality, complexity, passion and imagination may be *alien to* (rather than a neglected part of) the ideal individual human of established knowledge. If so the category of 'alien' might have resonance beyond elitist posing in its relation to humanism.

What Counts As Human?

Fortunately, we are much more than conventional bourgeois philosophy can tolerate; especially in our passions. Humans are *animal* – even if it is fashionable to ignore, deny or deride this.³

Loss of self-control in empathy and intuition, desire, excitement, caring, love, hate, grief, loss of self in social embeddedness, ecstasy, madness and fear: all have to be played down if individual rationality is defined as the crucial 'human' trait. Childishness, changeability, impetuosity and initiative mustn't interfere with the pursuit of truth; likewise brutality, cruelty, exploitation, malice and contempt are just as central to humanity in history as are any 'higher' virtues.

Rooted in biological materiality, our conscious lives are deeply inflected by social and psychological links with flesh and guts – the intractable strength of emotionality and the unconscious, sensuality, physical frailty and mortality. Humans also have considerable, if unstable, flexibility to be rational: to experiment with mind and thought; exercise language, planning and deliberate action; and invent new possibilities. These faculties may once have been infantile epiphenomena helping our ancestors go forth and multiply in some savannah ape fashion. But we are still apes, even if more of the environmental factors to be adapted to are now human-made. Chimps and humans share well over 90% DNA, and chimps too, if messed around enough, produce their own evils. On the other hand, the lifeworld for most of us has been transformed so far beyond its natural limits that our bodies no longer live in the kinds of stable contexts that made evolutionary sense. It is hard to conceptualise, let alone rationalise, the deeper effects of the present scale and pace of change.

Of course attempting to think and speak our animality or emotionality means to rationalise it.⁴ Communication always mingles intimately with feeling grounded in bodily materiality; acting on the material environment implies humanising it. These paradoxes should increase humility regarding how 'knowing' we can expect to be – not a trivial lesson given the arrogance of power. *H&N 16 17*'s comments on deep ecology (p20-22) and social ecology (p47) show that neither their humanism nor post-humanism avoid universalising rhetorics (reforming moralism, or pseudo-scientific mysticism) – blind to the limits of rationality, opinions presented as 'truth'.⁵ But you have to really *want* to believe.

Accepted knowledge as we know it, particularly the instrumental kind called science, is increasingly threadbare as a means of motivating and mobilising populations. Government can no longer justify itself with any truth other than its power to act. It has no choice. IDOH suggests that "nowadays power has no need of truth, nor even a claim to justice, to underline its right to dominate, simply the ability to do so is enough". This is a *crisis* for power, as well as a time of intensifying oppression – globalising force is clearly seen to foster not progress but destruction. If not retreating to liberal clichés about universal truth and essential humanity, worn-out ideologies are often hastily replaced with all-embracing world-views to fit the end-of-the-world mood.⁶ To me it seems more promising to focus on where, within our social, embodied, artificial and reflexive capacities, the resources for political re-vitalisation can be nurtured.⁷

Humanism, Tragedy and Farce

With rhetorics of truth and progress no longer trusted, spiritual ideologies jostle for attention, including those ascribing subjective agency to non-human life, the chemicals in DNA or even the dead matter of technology. However, the strong (if repressed) echoes of classic liberal rationalism and scientific determinism suggest the similarity of much radical environmentalism to

technological futurism – something difficult to appreciate except from a position which questions the transparency of the concept of 'human'.



Animal rights and deep ecology's anti-human guilt reverses the project of biotechnology – to know, control and transcend the mess and dirt of flesh. But not just anybody's flesh. The distinction is superiority: purity of taste and aesthetics, leading to nobility of truth and purpose. Common vulgarity slides into the register of the mob, the sub-human, and a need to dominate the animal other. Whether demarcated by gender, race or class, the ambivalent desire for what is being repressed in oneself returns inverted in the arrogance and viciousness of legitimising political discourses and practices – of the New Age as much as the old.⁸

As Mike Peters shows in *H&N 16 17* ('Cyberdrivel' [CD], p24-7) current cyber-utopianism tends to reproduce the bad conscience of humanism, but with a twist. The postmodern 'new human' will mutate into a qualitatively different form of life, via 'technobiological evolution'. All the hallmarks of futurism are here – wilful ignorance of the role of the past in the present, and of the conditions for production of science or any form of knowledge. So, in 'negative' futurism, a nostalgic recuperation of primitivist lifestyles equates moral-political voluntarism with social change. And just as naive a repetition of liberal idealism sees history driven by technological advance, dependent on individual rational genius superseded by smart machines evolving on their own. Subjectivity and agency, in this future, lie in a *philosophy* of science and technology. As CD stresses, this is hardly fertile ground for radical politics.

The Elite and The Everyday

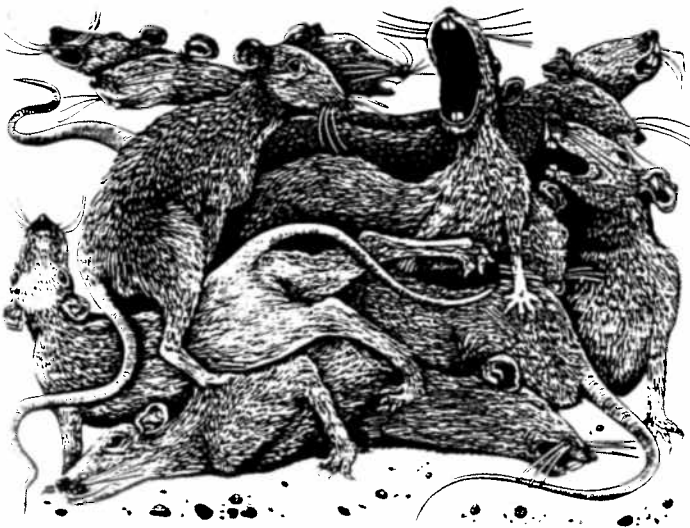
Without pre-existing social activity save for computer consumer cults and industry professionals, cyber-utopianism comes across as a particularly adolescent evangelism, with political motivations related to specific middle class material interests and career aspirations. CD links its malice and self-hatred with a disenchantment with humanity and politics (sensing, I think correctly, a "fascist mentality"). But dazzled by the elitism of cybercultural discourse, CD misses its diversity⁹ especially those strands tackling ordinary immersion in technology and its dystopian, rather than utopian prospects.

The scholarly careerism highlighted in CD is limited by the forms and boundaries of its institutional settings. Academic marxism

and feminism. for example. showed how conformist the results are. and how useless for radical politics, especially in their dislocation from the everyday. So Nick Land hysterically spices up the failed 1980s French philosophy of desire with ecstatic American postmodern literature. Normally, interested and powerful constituencies adapt academic knowledge into their discursive fields – in order to *do* something in the world. Making a living by persuading philosophers of the meaninglessness of philosophy might be a hostile infiltration of academia – but mischievously sitting in the ivory tower hardly interferes with the enemy's discursive resources.¹⁰

Sadie Plant's cyberfeminism is much more interesting.¹¹ By breaking down discourses about the modern interaction of subjectivities, bodies and mediated images, she avoids both the invulnerability of Debord's Spectacle and Baudrillard's reactionary fatalism. Unfortunately the complexities of social conflict in history disappear into an untheorised, monolithic notion of patriarchy – 1970s liberal feminism style.¹²

An analogy between the subordination of technology and of women and nature – all rendered objects so that men's truth and power can work – allows an alliance of computer hardware and upwardly mobile middle class women (those with access to, and capacity for joint enterprise with, machines) to short-circuit the eternal reproduction of masculine power. As CD remarks, there is no challenge here to capitalism, let alone the weight of suffering in the world. But there is yet another sorry mirror image of humanism, this time displaced via a quantum leap of individualist rationality, into cyber-goddesshood.¹³



New Stories For Old

The apocalyptic overtones of cyberspace pundits imagine the innovations of electronic media to represent new frontiers of human life. But if technology is invading the *biological* grounding of experience, why would the subversive effects cluster around such simplistic visual and psychological dimensions? Adopting futurism means not asking how technology has been embedded in people's lives and cultures up till now. Virtual Reality, along with much cyber-hyperreal baggage, seems to function as a fantasy alternative to the struggles and problems of the contemporary world.¹⁴ Fortunately mediated fantasies may be assimilated far more ambivalently by their audiences than critics of VR or 'viewer as couch-potato' accounts recognise.¹⁵

Science fiction speculates on the present through the prism of possibility – rather than annihilating the present in futurism. Cyber-fiction usually complicates its bleak dystopias with germs of hope, rarely fatalistic but not naively optimistic or celebratory either.¹⁶ In this sense there is *nothing new* in cyberculture. Ritual events, myth, religion and folklore have always grappled with the fear and insecurity of life, weaving narrative into practice to negotiate a collective path. The transformative potential of the materials of the lifeworld is always central.

Future (Or) History?

People have always felt altered by their everyday technology. Debord's and Baudrillard's dire warnings about the effects of media simulation of experience wish away the material body – just as digital processing finally achieves the humanist ideal of rational spirit as essence. Whereas the rituals of deliberate shaping and sculpting of bodies, and subjectivities, over human history so far is such a mundane commonplace that it seems unfashionable to mention them in the same breath.

Diet, clothing, herb and drug lore, surgery and prosthesis are as diverse as the values, taboos, acceptability and significance ascribed to them.¹⁷

Changes in communicative technology are just as ingrained – presumably from mutations in simian vocal cords onwards. The fertilisation of language and physical tools roots technique in history from fire, hunting, weaving and agriculture through medicine, architecture, transport, weapons, printing and telecommunications – current hardware horizons surely look just as radical. It may be that subjectivity, culture and political agency will be utterly transformed by the 'information revolution'.¹⁸ If so it won't be because the trivia of technique have magically developed into decisive historical forces.¹⁹

Just how recent changes in technology will affect purposive action can't be judged on the basis of their human-centredness in general terms, except to conceal private agendas – because the impact of technologies, like the characteristics of the lives they enter, has never been consistent or straightforward. The complex dynamic of history that cybertheory wants to forget renders the mass of human populations disposable.²⁰ legitimising the process by blaming them for not living up to humanism's shifty prescriptions. The New World Order's exterminism says that those who can't or won't line up as selfish-gene maximising, flexibly slaving, TV democratic consumers *will not be human* (they'll be dead).

Some resist, some go with the (cyber-) flow. Political potential lies as much in what isn't specifically 'human' about us (e.g. animality, technological embodiment) as in what seems to be species-specific but can't be rationally defined as unequivocally positive or healthy. Anti-humanism is not anti-human, and humanism is not pro-human. The desire for a 'better life' may be destined to fail, and can't be understood, but it won't go away.

Notes

(1) Witness Debord's lonely position in *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*. Verso 1990.

See also Sadie Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture: the Situationist International in a Postmodern Age*, Routledge 1992. Many of the contributions to the Debord Supplement show how a taste for certainty, singularity and totality dominated his theory and practice.

(2) Like anthropomorphism and unconscious projection (misperceiving in others one's own feelings or thoughts), empathy frequently blurs boundaries – of species, gender, generation, etc.

(3) A history of scientific and cultural discourse tries to differentiate animal bodies from the individual human mind, revealing wider social and political themes around race, gender and class, which naturalise and justify domination – see e.g. Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions*, Verso 1992.

(4) The capacity of language to represent bodily experience is compromised by the kinds of bias familiar from humanist and idealist discourse, such as assuming integrity, consistency, coherence and intentionality in separate individuals, and the passivity of (one's) nature confronted by (its) culture – see e.g. Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, Routledge 1993; Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex*, Harvard University Press 1990.

(5) A strategy which treats sceptically both the rational claims of science and the fantasies of nature (including human nature) found in political ecology, might get beyond such false choices: see e.g. Andrew Ross, *Strange Weather*, Verso 1991. Avoiding timid reformism of the 'new social movement' kind is another matter.

(6) Sometimes both: Political Correctness enlists deconstructionism in the name of a strategic humanist ethics, but produces instead a reactionary bureaucratic elitism (see e.g. Douglas Spencer, 'Redefining the Radical', *H&N* 14, p23-5); or more speculative forms of middle class ethical vanguardism such as Ken Smith's anti-capitalism (see *H&N* 16/17, p44-46).

(7) While resisting the separation of knowledge from its active foundations and effects. See e.g.

'Corrupting Left Intellectual Culture', *H&N* 15, p22-24; and 'Chomsky, Propaganda and the Politics of Common Sense', *Anarchist Studies* 3, 1995, p121-44.

(8) See e.g. Robert Young, *Colonial Desire*, Routledge 1995; Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women*, Free Associations Books 1991; Anon, *Animal Liberation, Devastate to Liberate?* Pelagian Press 1992.

(9) See e.g. Mike Featherstone & Roger Burrows, *Cyberspace, Cyberbodies, Cyberpunk*, Sage, 1995.

(10) But no doubt scores highly in games of 'Mortal Cognition'. For evidence of Land's inroads into academia, see e.g. review of 'The Thirst for Annihilation', in *Parallax* 1, 1995, p197-200.

(11) See e.g. 'Beyond the Screens: Film, Cyberpunk and Cyberfeminism', *Variation* 14, 1993, p12-17; 'The Future Looms: Weaving Women and Cybernetics', in Featherstone & Burrows, *Cyberspace...*. Incidentally, CD tells us next to nothing about her ideas. Why?

(12) This hampers any subversive designs, although opening up an academic career path. But 'patriarchy' could perhaps be generalised into something like 'organised historical domination', using more nuanced variables of gender and sexuality as well as caste, race and class.

(13) Even in its own terms the argument is in trouble if, for example, men are also feminine. Has the humanism just slid down the signifying chain to an essential femininity?

(14) See e.g. Kevin Robins, 'Cyberspace and the World We Live In', in Featherstone & Burrows, *Cyberspace...*; Julian Stallabrass, 'Empowering Technology: the Exploration of Cyberspace', *New Left Review* 211, 1995, p3-32. CD's invective takes its targets too seriously – criticising *bad science fiction* would be more effective.

(15) As I argued in 'Natural Born Cultures', *H&N* 16/17, p48-51. The propagandists of cyberspace may to some extent be working with this ambivalence. If so, it's very hard to see what their aim might be.

(16) See e.g. Marge Piercy, *Body of Glass*, Penguin 1992; Kathryn Bigelow's 1995 film *Strange Days*; novels by Philip K. Dick, William Gibson & Norman Spinrad – all of which at least try to tackle the social and economic contexts and conflicts inherent in imaginable cyber-societies.

(17) CD's notion of humanity as a "demonstrably non-problematic intellectual category" (my emphasis) is not true unless you 'know', for example, exactly what stage of an embryo's development counts as the start of a new human body, or to what extents genetic manipulation, organ transplants and prostheses and biochemical intervention limit human social potential – or are simply 'unspeakable'.

(18) See e.g. Mark Poster, *The Mode of Information*, Polity 1990; N. Katherine Hayes, 'Virtual Bodies and Flickering Signifiers', *October* 66, 1993, p69-91.

(19) Whether new drugs, cybernetic control systems, and/or the informed choice of the consumer – in Sadie Plant's terms (*Parallax* 1, 1995, p100-1). In *The Future Looms* computer software gains 'autonomy' from men, but not from organised power or capital. But isn't autonomy always relative?

(20) See e.g. Tom Leonard, 'On the Mass Bombing of Iraq and Kuwait', AK Press 1991; Mike Davis, 'Beyond Blade Runner: Urban Control', *Open Magazine*, 1992; Ian Tillium, 'Technological Despotism', *H&N* 15, p11-17; Steve Bushell, introduction to William Cobbett's *Surplus Population*, Pelagian Press 1994; Anon, 'Zone of Shadow', *H&N* 16/17, p59.



Invitation for Nominations and Applications

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* (Piss Off Early, Tomorrow's Saturday)

Moscow Stations

Venedikt Yerofeev (Faber & Faber, 1997)

First published in the Soviet journal *Sobriety and Culture*, *Moscow Stations* is a brilliant attack on all the meddlers of the human soul who don't even have to think about whether their point of view is the right one. Dying of throat cancer is an occupational hazard of a serious drinker and Yerofeev is clearly aware of the risks as the macabre and prescient ending of this tale reveals. Regarded by some as a terrible condemnation of the Brezhnev period of stagnation, it reads more like the howl of the human personality against assimilation, automatism, conformism and ultimate annihilation at the hands of those who have long since forgotten the ecstasy of being alive and kicking. Oh yes, and there's some utopian politics as well:

I tell you, if the whole world, and everybody in it, was as weak and frightened as I am now, and as unsure of everything - unsure of themselves, their place in the scheme of things - it'd be a far better place. No

more enthusiasts, no heroic deeds, no commitment, just general all-round pusillanimity! I'd be content to live on this earth for all eternity, if somebody'd just show me a corner of it where there's not always room for heroics. 'General pusillanimity' - yes, that's our remedy for all ills, our panacea, our guarantee of ultimate perfection!

An antidote to all the antidotes, this poem should be the bedside reading of all who regard with growing unease the banal consensus that physical and psychic health is the be-all and end-all of existence.

P.P.



Guy Debord: Revolutionary

Len Bracken (Feral House, 1997)

This has already attracted predictable flak among inverts of the Sitophile milieu, to which Len Bracken has responded at inordinate length in *Extraphile* #7. The habit of polemic dies hard, even when its critical purpose has been forgotten.

The book itself is, at first sight, a conventional hagiography, redeeming the stature of Debord as a *revolutionary* theorist and writer, against the grain of these times dominated by carping nonentities who wouldn't know what 'revolutionary' means and certainly would run a mile to protect their poxy careers from anything remotely revolutionary. It also has some biographical details to add to what is known by rumour, and gives us the first English translation of Debord's *War Game* (which Len unveiled first at the Hacienda conference last year). But, in amongst the rather breathless and not un-muddled prose, there is an interesting, if implicit, thesis about the predestination of the suicide from the earliest years. The concept of the *passage*

of time remains the key to an understanding of Debord's historic role as reinventor of the theory and practice of revolution.

One is carried along by the author's enthusiasm and shares with him his learning of history (of the seventeenth century Fronde, for example). The depth of Debord's historical erudition constantly disrupts attempts to pigeonhole him as modernist or postmodernist. He was a 'classical' writer - a category quite outside of the present (in today's jargon, its repressed 'Other').

So this is a book from which everyone could learn a few things. When Phil Edwards' book on Debord is published next year, enough facts should be available to assess whether Debord is the last 'Great Writer' or the first of a new species. Meanwhile Len has delivered his *Aphorisms on Work* (see Listings). But what has happened to the Millennium Campaign for the Global Cancellation of Debt?

M.P.

Educating Who About What?

(Black Economy Books, 1996)

There are no class truths, only class lies. This pamphlet assaults single-mindedly, and with no quarter given to the feelings or thoughts of those it attacks, those middle class activists who attempt to give direction and thought to the anarchist milieu. In particular it hits out at their claim to be able to speak for the working class. The middle class has always been tempted to speak for others, this tract just wants to shut them up.

A lot of people are going to be pissed off with this pamphlet. It is so thoroughly infused with hatred for those it reckons have watered down anarchist politics to a form of advanced liberalism, that it has very little positive to say, and no one likes that, because people like to think that somehow their piece of activity or political intervention will in the end make a difference. But it is a sign of the times - a fair reflection of the self-delusions of many activists and anarchist thinkers, and a fair reflection of the frustration of those whose experience of revolutionary politics has been to be patronised and manipulated by managers with a radical mask. But the question posed by this pamphlet goes beyond putting middle class radicals in their place. What is class politics today? For this pamphleteer, it is the rarely heard voice of the poor - the ones who don't have good jobs, or well-off families, or university education (such as it is), against the know-it-alls of professionals, managers and activists.

The pamphlet includes *Here and Now* in this enemy camp as 'academic shit'. Funny enough though, the pamphlet is a howl of rage against much the same targets *Here & Now* more sedately slags off. This tract reminds its readers of just how deep, entrenched and pervasive class divisions in the UK remain, and how little genuine two-way communication goes on between the various strata. Where I differ though is that in throwing out the bathwater of middle class manipulation, *Educating Who About What* is also throwing out the baby of politeness which can be the beginning of a truthful dialogue, but then it's a pamphlet that is being written and the only ones that are any good are the ones that disturb and offend.

J.B.

Taking Liberties With Decadent Action

Deadly Sins, Channel 4, 1997

It was neat, well-delivered, audacious. Even when the credits revealed that the subversive Harriet Harman lookalike had been an actress, the effect did not wear off - immediately.

For those who didn't stumble upon it, *Decadent Action* managed to be signed up to give a 30 minute broadcast, like an extended 'party political', on the Channel 4 7 *Deadly Sins* series. Their film, shown on Monday 20th October 1997, encapsulating the sin of gluttony, was an unrelenting celebration of 'high life' and expensive living. The difference was that it involved those who shouldn't have access to such consumption.

The theory as expounded principally by the aforementioned actress, and supplemented by members of the group, in bit parts, was that credit cards are offered to individuals all the time. Most of them are disregarded, and not applied for. Apply for them all, use them prolifically and spend, spend, spend! So the theory goes, if enough people did this then there would be an explosion of debt and the very fabric of capital would be undermined and threatened with collapse.

Although one scene concocted to show the group in a 'workroom', with clocks showing New York, Frankfurt and other financial time-zones, there was no elaboration as to whether *Decadent Action* had other weapons at their disposal: stock exchange manipulation, embezzlement or whether it was a Neoist live art piece!

What we were treated to, by women, principally was unbridled 'gluttony' as the script no doubt demanded, with designer clothes, upmarket plonk and choes being the main target. At one stage, laden by her purchases, the actress passes a McDonalds and pulls a face. Good taste, the message goes is available to all.

There is some evidence, that young consumers, far down the social scale are followers of such taste, and that some unlikely customers find their way into the Italian designer shops in Glasgow and elsewhere. *Decadent Action*, however, proclaims an anarchist identity, with its name representing a play on *Direct Action*, the usual anarchist fetish, plus the linkage to old revulsion in revolutionary circles against the decadence of capitalism. No

doubt their pedigree is better known in the metropolis, but it seems like the group has developed from being a wind up to the rag tag and bobtail of the anarcho-milieu, into developing a post-situationist development of the emphasis on consumption in everyday life.

Strangely the group acted as if recruitment was important, not just spreading their virus into the modern consumer fads, and influencing a wave of over-consumption. Giving leaflets to bemused crusties and other revellers at an open air festival, many of them seemingly high on various substances, while disdainfully parading their fashion awareness and bemoaning why they bother with such tactics, was curious, culminating, as it purported to show, with



them having a luvvies picnic on their own. Concentrating on the visual, and repetition couldn't suspend the critical faculties, at least of this viewer. For a start, there were no hints given as to how the debt question could be avoided. Simply getting new credit cards all the time wouldn't prevent you from being hounded by the other cards owed large sums. You would have to be extremely mobile, assume other identities etc. to maintain such a lifestyle for any length of time. Millions of consum-

ers post 1987 spent the next 7 years paying for their 'excesses' during the last great boom in credit. You would be blacklisted, possibly sequestered, have bailiffs (sheriffs where I come from) likely to show up at any moment. And without any clear sighted strategy of subtle avoidance, how responsible is the group in proclaiming such unbridled consumption to all who aspire to decadence?

Then there is the 'meaningful' test. Apart from the merits of such action for a few, in the short term, satisfying desires, plus creating their own elite 'anti-elite', how feasible in any way is the undermining scenario? Of course, it's 'mince' as we say up here, even if it's highly spiced mince. If the level of such spending on credit spirals, the financial institutions would be either helpless (!) or forced into draconian counter-measures. It's a lovely (luvvie) theory which would do justice to a comic strip. The numbers participating in such activity, of course, are likely to be boosted by the stunt of having TV espousal of such an attitude, but are still likely to be minuscule. Also, with such a one-dimensional view, unless buttressed by escape hatches, and other 'play' subversive activities, it is unlikely that clone groups of *Decadent Action* will sprout up elsewhere in London or other major cities, never mind 'backwater' towns.

Then there is the question of access. Most of the public haven't formulated a critique of McDonalds and would be found out quickly if trying to pass uncomfortably in high class yuppie consumption patterns. That doesn't mean that credit and debt aren't keystones of everyday survival at the lower end of the scale. People might crave some of the luxury items without wanting to be part of the luxurious set. Many spend their lives ducking and weaving, avoiding debt collectors and other officials, at postal and giro-drop addresses, meanwhile spending beyond their means, but rarely getting a sniff of credit cards, never mind Goldcards etc (where you're supposed to have a minimum income bracket to qualify for). It all seems a world removed from this, although any escape from that approach to debt would be welcome.

Finally, there is the question of ethics. Not, I hasten to add, to the financial institutions or the shops. There is the question, as

previously touched upon, as to how responsible it is to trick people into believing in a simplistic formula, without indicating the pitfalls or subtle ploys necessary to stay one step ahead. The partakers of their anarchism were young, stylish, single - no brats please. Despite its critique of crustie militant direct action (that was the dichotomy offered), it shared an aristocratic anarchist disdain of all the consumption and ways of the lower orders, their subcultures, resistance etc., and celebrated high living uncritically. It revelled in an 'artistic' attitude towards reality, all style, or again in colloquial terms - fur coats with no knickers.

Here we are again, a bunch of pessimistic intellectuals spoiling would-be-fun for those inclined to give decadence a second glance. We are just moralists, puritans, not where it's at and just have no awareness of the importance of fashion. Of course, they are not entirely off-beam, but if politics and action isn't simply a gesture, a wind up, a cocking of the nose before you rejoin normal consumers and future happy families, then more substance is required for any subversive theory of consumer intervention.

Jim McFarlane

Anarchy After Leftism

Bob Black (C.A.L. Press, 1997)

For the pleasure of reading what obviously took pleasure in writing, you can't find better than Bob Black, who has made bile and spleen into art forms. The book is a demolition job on Murray Bookchin. The critique naturally has a 'grain of truth', but is so devoid of understanding for its subject it becomes useless for anyone who might actually be interested in the history of Leftism and how it served the cause of capitalism in the 20th century. Its arguments are easily summarised (and have been in extracts in *Anarchy*, etc.). Basically Bookchin's recent diatribe *Social Anarchism versus Lifestyle Anarchism* is a stalinoid example of the essential Leftism of Bookchin's whole career.

It is said one should not speak ill of the dead - Bookchin will probably be dead by the time you are reading this, and 'Leftism' of the kind Black & co. are so preoccupied with, was dead long ago. A more pertinent subject for a thoroughgoing Blackesque critique would be the radicalism, modernism and progressivism of

which Leftism was simply yesterday's version. In other words, I find it hard to get aroused by the 'issues' that so engage Black in this book.. Bookchin is indeed a veteran Leftist - big deal?

Throughout his (anti-) career, Black has delivered marvelous diatribes, including some of real genius (e.g. 'Why I Hate Survivors' in *Friendly Fire*) but this book studiously avoids the really difficult - and really *contemporary* - targets (like money, measurement, management, professionalism, psychotherapy and 'culture', for example) in favour of rehashing - admittedly very stylish - assaults against the same old suspects (The State, Hierarchy, Labour, Leftism, etc.). And he is not so 'individual' as he likes to pretend: in fact he endorses depressingly fashionable relativist doctrines: denial of 'objective' reality for example. Why so many self-styled radicals feel the need to reproduce the stale 'subjectivist' ideology that is trotted out daily in the academy is a bit of a mystery.

Women and the Common Life

Christopher Lasch (W.W. Norton & Co, 1997)

In 1979 a government came to power which proclaimed a desire to diminish the powers of the state. Yet state control of, and interference in, everyday life blossomed. This year a government succeeded whose 'programme' includes the resurrection of community life. If Christopher Lasch, who died last year, is to be believed the likely consequence will be the further dessication of community. This post-humous work, which is actually a collection of disparate essays brought together and edited by his daughter, traces the lineage of the State's regulation of family life and its effect upon women in particular. Much misunderstood by the Left, which prefers to lump Lasch's critical theory of the State into a rightist framework, Lasch has sought to show how the imperative to control the action of the market in order to prevent social revolution,

undermined the autonomy of individuals, families and communities.

A many-layered book, it includes discussion of Clandestine Marriage in the 18th century, an examination of apparently pro and anti-feminist arguments in the medieval period and an analysis of what arch-feminist Mary Wollstonecraft had in common with the moralist Hannah More. What brings the book out of these apparently academic histories is his account of American feminism in the 60s which he sees as a revolt against the particular conditions of US 1950s/1960s suburbs in which women were incarcerated while their husbands undertook wage labour, rather than a generalised revolt against patriarchy as such. Lasch's dialectical method of reasoning is sometimes hard to unravel on a first reading, and his almost pedantic renditions of the arguments of both

sides can sometimes obscure the force of his own position, but he comes into his own in the final chapters where he manages to summarise his last blast of the trumpet against the monstrous regiment of therapists, social workers and academics whose intrusive and manipulative involvement in family and community life has led to the wastelands of American civic culture. This book offers a challenge for all who associate radicality with novelty and freedom with the absence of social limits. Against the reduction of life to a 'learning experience', Lasch asserts the necessity of useful activity and a transcendent goal as the minimum necessary for a human being to reach that state of blissful "self-forgetfulness" which is the root of all happiness.

S.B.

Bury Me Standing: the gypsies and their journey

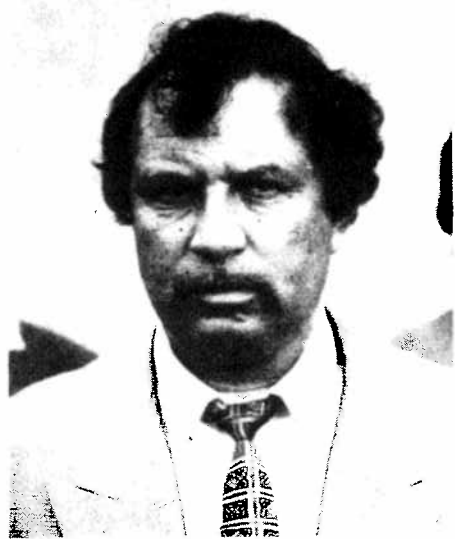
Isabella Fonseca, Vintage, London, 1995.

This book rests self-consciously upon a fascinating paradox. It is a history of a people who have traditionally had no fixed collective identity. Only in the last fifteen years or so have oral testimonies and memories begun to emerge. There are various theories about where the gypsies come from originally and how their languages have evolved, but it is only in the last couple of decades that gypsies have come to see themselves as an ethnic group and to this day there are still many who regard themselves as part of a small tribe of blood relatives unaware of connections in language, superstitions, habits etc. with other tribes. Fonseca's study is partly anthropological then, confirming through many visits to gypsies throughout Eastern Europe in the eighties and nineties such connections which previously had only been noticed piecemeal by academic linguists. But if there are connections then there are also huge differences and Fonseca usually ends up concluding that if anything defines the gypsies it must surely be their persistently self-imposed marginality. Up until recently this has served the gypsies well: to be mysteriously anonymous (if even to themselves), has always generated an essential superstitious fear in the stable non-gypsy communities which has allowed for profitable gain and disallowed assimilation. Survival and identity have depended not on establishing 'roots' but just the very opposite: on living in border areas, moving and adapting; not on strong folklore nor attachment to particular places or modes of making a living.

What unites gypsies more than any particular tradition is simply the tradition of stubbornly remaining outsiders; being non-gadje. (Gadje is the universal gypsy word for non-gypsy.) This attitude, wonderfully exemplified recently when gypsies burnt their own passports and I.D and refused to speak to German border guards, is an apt reminder to welfare bureaucrats everywhere that despite their best efforts a people still survive who do not opt to have their interests framed within the constraining ideas of 'inclusion' or of nation states.

Traditionally gypsies would always have resented being written down and known about. Fonseca is well aware of this and

begins her book with a sad story of a gypsy singer-poet outlawed and exiled from her own community in 1953 for communicating and inadvertently collaborating with the hostile, (in this case, Polish) outside world (her songs about the trials of life on the road were misrepresented to back up policies of enforcing settlement). Even oral history within gypsy circles has not really existed apart from a few folk tales and ballads; few gypsies know about their families further than living memory and Fonseca found that survivors of Nazi concentration camps had almost always chosen not to recount their experiences and that they had usually kept their descendents ignorant of



their ordeals until very recently. What has enabled Fonseca to write this book at all then is a growing shift towards seeking outside recognition albeit reluctantly, in order to gain protection from pogroms and anti-gypsy measures (such as sterilizing women without consent in Slovakian maternity hospitals) in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The reasons for why these recent hostilities have been so severe are two-fold. On the one hand bitter resentments had built up that gypsies had had preferential treatment under the Soviet regime. This was largely due to housing policies designed to settle gypsies at all costs. Gypsies of course did not welcome being forced into tower blocks but continued to maintain their own way of life, which did not go down well with neighbours; keeping livestock, cooking on open

fires in their apartments and bringing their horses in and out using the elevators etc. On the other hand, as soon as the iron-curtain did tumble down and trading possibilities emerged, (in anything from cigarettes to second hand cars), the ever resourceful and adaptable gypsies tended to be the first to become ostentatiously wealthy, thus provoking jealous fury in the less adventurous who feeling vulnerable and insecure in any case, found easy scapegoats for the ills of capitalism in gypsy neighbours who had got 'greedy' and 'too big for their boots'.

Fonseca thus finds herself cast in the role of 'helpful outsider': somebody given access to closed circles because she can 'speak up for' gypsies in the international 'rights' language of U.N. charters and academia. That she is very uneasy in this role is the book's major strength and she doesn't hide her relief when she finds three absentee gypsy conference panellists reverting to the altogether more honest activity of second hand car dealing:

There [the car park] they were, the mischievous crème of Romanian Gypsies, squealing with delight around a pair of toylike two-door cars - the twin Trabants that they had just picked up for 75 and 150 deutschemarks. [...] They were jubilant after all, this is what most Gypsy migrants were coming to Germany for: to buy cars for resale in the East, at no cost to the German social or welfare system. I asked the [gypsy] MP how they knew where to buy cars, on such short notice, with little German and a great deal of rain. He shrugged and laughed. Stupid question. No, these were not people who needed to be schooled in survival strategies.

This book is immensely rich in learned historical details as well as personal anecdotes and comes with a very useful map at the beginning, some hauntingly beautiful photos and a very comprehensive and detailed bibliography. It is affectionate without ever becoming sentimental and it portrays ambiguities and confusion clearly.

AB

Letters



Here and Now, c/o Transmission Gallery, 28 King St., Glasgow G1 5QP

Here and Now, P.O. Box 109, Leeds LS5 3AA

Dear Here & Now,

A few comments on Fishtoe: 'Machine Music in an Age of Sweat' (H&N 16/17, p. 40-43). The essay succeeds in contextualising cultural activity (in this case 'techno' music) so as to avoid self-satisfied, sub-cultural clichés. Framing the discussion in terms of a progression in technologies - how they create encompass or invade the lifeworld - short-circuits the evangelism that I'm sure we're all weary of (especially since punk).

However, the author has an irritating metaphysical fetish for strong assertions of identity, being and agency. We hear that revolutionaries, thought, belief, information, computers, the internet etc etc are this, that and the other, with neither plausibility nor justification. So techno is defined as a singular entity, with strictly circumscribed, subject-like intentions and motivations that, moreover, the writer claims to know.

You wouldn't think that techno is a genre of contemporary music. Or is it "the transformation of intended purposes through a technique of melting juxtaposition"? Surely then, as musical technique, techno's agency will be shared with those who use it, notwithstanding the determinism of machines.

The electronic sampling and processing of found and generated sounds into ambient aural structure (a post-modern dictionary re-definition of "music"?) is also used by mainstream commercial contemporary and popular music. So, what distinguishes techno? We might suspect that the cultural fields of activity being explored or created are relevant here. The past twenty or so years have seen many innovations where manipulation of melody, beat and rhythm have fed into existing genres. House,

rave, hip-hop, jungle and drum and bass all involve stealing back cultural material from its commodified prisons, and actively mobilising it into more or less underground subcultures.

The distinction may lie in the crossover and sophistication of electronic methods thoroughly integrated into conception and process, rather than just for reproduction. Making music can now bypass conventional hierarchies of aesthetic ability, taste and training that usually bedevil us in searching for the subversive possibilities of culture. Techno methods erode capitalism's monopoly of the means of mass musical production. As with grass-roots computer hacking and networking, commercial strategies lag far behind. But does this imaginative promiscuity show any potential? Beyond, that is, a privileged space for participation and appreciation, even one demanding such respect for blurring boundaries between production and consumption, music and environment, enjoyment and sociality.

Much of the techno phenomenon seems to come from white middle class student sub-cultures, with the usual entrepreneurship and posing in taste and fashion. To that extent it's understandably tempting to mystify the real social dynamics involved into a spurious vision of rave or dance culture, comprising free, anonymous, autonomous, rootless, nomadic "subjects". But who are they? If "dance culture... is entirely celebratory in structure" then its punters' everyday wretchedness must be simply wished away. Easy as that. Or is that the Es talking?

The raving of its adherents, and critics, often does no justice to the magnificent practical efforts of those who *do*, from a techno sensi-

tivity: for example the free festival pioneers, the Exodus collective and the like, or several generations of a fully-fledged US hip-hop culture (from real ghettos, not lifestyle ones). Their immense social creativity in the face of powerful, hostile forces can inspire us not least because the impetus for action comes from everyday, immediate desires - more bodily than philosophical. Refusing conventional artistic criteria, power, commodity and property relations, and technological imperatives - and getting things done in the process - means more to me than any purity of essence ascribed to what can be, after all, sometimes rather boring music.

Fishtoe is most convincing on how domination - implied by the regulative logics of technology - seeps into the shifting patterns of culture. (This might help avoid the tedious debate over subversion/containment that the excellent articles on Ecstasy in *Here & Now 14* couldn't.) Sadly, the rhetoric of the essay parrots those same domineering impulses. Reifying a singular and uniform "techno" - and then interpreting the content and character of the music, rather than what the people involved then do next - legislates far too comprehensively.

Tom Jennings

Dear *There & Then*,

Your Double Issue 16/17 was the first I have bought, and in general I was impressed - until I reached page 58, and the item on "political ribbon development" which not only ridicules "Chronic Fatigue Syndrome" but implies that it is not even a political issue.

Let's just get this straight: thousands of people are getting ill, with wide-ranging neurological and immunological symptoms, but

because their blood does not produce any result in the present range of tests used by the Medical Authorities, they are therefore *not ill at all*. It is the Medical Authorities who decide who is ill, how ill they are, etc. *And this is not political?* I suffered from progressively worsening M.E. for over a decade. I know many other fellow sufferers, one of whom is crippled by it - by which I mean housebound in a wheelchair, in almost constant pain, and very, very weak. She needs 24-hour care. But because the battery of tests presently available to medics do not reveal the cause, therefore *there is no cause*. The hidden premise here, for anyone blind enough to miss it is *our battery of tests is exhaustive* which in turn can only rest on a claim to absolute omniscience.

This dogma has *nothing* to do with empiricism or scientific method: if anything, it rests on the opposite: a quasi-religious faith in present medical doctrine. It is necessary because the near absolute power of the medical profession over the sick can only be justified on the basis of a claim to absolute knowledge. *And this is not political?*

I now enjoy good health, thanks to daily injections of vitamin B12 that hit me with a force that makes the effect of any drug pale into insignificance by comparison. But according to mainstream medical doctrine, it is *inconceivable* that megadosing with any vitamin could have this effect. If you dare to defy medical authority and suffer from an illness that they can't prove they know more about than you, then you can *forget* the NHS. Simply in order to get hold of this *harmless vitamin* in injectable form, I have to get a private medic in "complementary" practice to ask nanny state's permission to please let me *buy* some.

I am now back at work after several years of being laid up. Of course, things aren't quite what they used to be: I used to be a professional engineer, and though several of my former managers wanted to take me on again, my applications were all blocked by the Occupational Health Department: *M.E. does not exist - ergo this man is mad*. I now work elsewhere as a security guard.

Even my attempts to inform fellow sufferers about the possible benefits of B12 (it only works for a minority, but when it works, its dramatic) have been suppressed by those medics who have all but taken control of the two major M.E. charities. *And this is not political?*

The last issue of Here and Now mocked the pointless feuding that blights the anarchist milieu. Our aim was simply to deride the pretensions of those who claim to know everything about everybody, as well as to laugh at the self-importance of the milieu as a whole. As the following letters show, we clearly failed. We have no further response to make.

Post-Modern Lies: a comment on Here & Now issue 16/17

Given that *Here & Now* in earlier issues showed some understanding of my research, it was with shock and growing horror that I read the last issue of the magazine. One or two articles critical of me would be unexceptional - but as many as four indicates I really have rattled some gilded cages ('Feuds Corner' p. 31-33/'What A Tangled Web We Weave' p. 34/'Larry's Game' p. 57-8/'Art Killing Shocks Underground' in the Debord supplement).

The first thing I object to, in some ways the most distasteful, is the casual and derogatory use of 'psychiatric' terminology to encourage readers to dismiss the content of anything I might have to say by labelling. Thus, I am termed as "mad as a hatter", and "by now certifiably paranoid" (p. 31). This theme is echoed by Stewart Home, who in a supplement supposedly devoted to Guy Debord refers to

Incidentally, the umbrella term from 'Chronic Fatigue Syndrome' is the medical establishment's latest attempt to muddy the waters and prevent the physical illness called Myalgic Encephalomyelopathy (M.E.) from being recognised or taken seriously by non-medics. One wonders if it is even necessary, given the success of their media campaign of disinformation. Has anyone *not* heard the vicious lie that M.E. is "feeling tired all the time"? Anyone *not* heard the smear name "Yuppie Flu"? But how many have heard of its prevalence amongst children as young as 5? The reason for the original preponderance of professionals in the M.E. charities

"Dr Lawrence O'Hara. . . Chief political psychiatrist at the Bedlam Institute". Such a glib use of psychiatric terminology is inadvisable on two grounds: if I were indeed "paranoid" it would hardly be helpful to advertise it, I would in fact need serious help. Secondly though, to freely utilise such discredited categories as a means of evading the content of what I have to say smacks of precisely the authoritarianism I fondly imagined *H&N* were opposed to. The management-speak characteristic of the modern NHS (PLC) was further expressed in a letter to me from Mike Peters who stated "I don't regret what we wrote, I do however, regret the way you have taken it": ie printing lies/crap about people is alright as long as they don't demur.

The laughable article supposedly about recent events in Leeds, written by someone bravely called 'Anonymous' is so amusing in places it should perhaps be extended and reissued as a fiction supplement. After lying about my writings on Leeds, Mr 'Anonymous' proffers this gem to readers - "O'Hara refers to things I have had direct involvement in and his conclusions just don't fit in with what actually happened" (p.34). What are these "things"? What did I say happened? What actually did happen? These troublesome empirical details are conspicuously (and suspiciously) absent - leaving a residue that makes even *Searchlight* magazine seem almost

and support groups was solely that we had the confidence to challenge first our G.P.'s, then the whole medical establishment.

The history of the suppression of M.E. over the last 40 years - and the way that so many seriously ill people have been isolated and pilloried all the way to suicide is a nightmare story like no other. Even families and loved ones will often believe an authority figure like a G.P. rather than listen to their nearest and dearest: many M.E. sufferers with crippling debilities are effectively left for dead. *And this is not political?*

I am one of the very, very lucky ones, but my exposure to such is how I came to be exploring publi-

cations like *Here & Now*. Frankly, if this mindlessness is at all typical of the outlook you represent, then I might as well read *The Sun*.

Sincerely,

D. M. Kennedy

Here and Now says..... the offending graphic was not attacking the introduction of ME as a political issue but rather the reduction of politics to the wearing of ribbons, i.e. Chronic Ribbon Fatigue.

factual by comparison! Even more laughably this joker, having asked readers to take on trust the word of an un-named person (themselves) concerning undescribed events as against the word of a named person (me) outlining indisputable events, further insults readers by urging them to "Always tell the truth - its's the easiest thing to remember". This, when he/she/it hasn't even the integrity to disclose their own name: atrocious. The central events in Leeds that interest me: the theft of the *Northern Star* contact address-book by Tony White, which later appeared in *Combat 18* magazines issues 1 & 3, leading to harassment of anti-fascists and subsequently local Labour MPs calling for MI5 to intervene in the political arena: all verifiable, yet none mentioned in the article. Almost laughably, though, the 'Parapoly Board Game' on p.33 has as an MI5 'Smear Card' the suggestion "steal your opponents address book and send it to fascists"! That Tony White, who nobody denies stole the address book, admitted in his own hand-written statement to dealings with Special Branch (another verifiable fact) isn't present in *H&N* either. And yet, it was Mike Peters of *H&N* who suggested to me, back in 1994 and repeated in 1995, that the address-book theft was "dodgy" and he had heard from a number of sources it was an "inside job". I have not referred to this in print (or public) before, because I hadn't wanted to embarrass *H&N*, but

now I don't care. My discontent with *H&N* is based not just on what appeared in print, but that they allowed yet another character who isn't brave enough to admit to a real name, 'Steven Dobson', to use their address to write to me and issue threats. He started off pleasantly enough, sending me an undated letter (postmarked Leeds 7/8/95) asking about events in Leeds, stating my book "raised many interesting issues . . . I have a great deal more faith in your research than I do for fascists". Unfortunately, for the image *H&N* have presented of me as an omniscient and irrational know-all, blinded by my own paranoia (or lead/mercury?). I replied in measured tones, asking 'Dobson' to enquire further locally into the activities of White/the *Northern Star* address-book theft. As I said then, and reiterate, "I am not some kind of latter-day Matthew Hopkins handling down names of assets on tablets of stone: I am an all-to-human (and occasionally fallible) researcher, who relies very much on assistance from people in a position to help, as geographically and politically you appear to be" (letter 14/8/95). 'Dobson' wasn't inclined to reply, so I later sent him/her/it a sharper and more questioning letter to which he eventually replied in another undated letter (postmarked Leeds 3/2/96). Admitting he knew the answers to questions I had raised "but can't be arsed to tell you" this brave soul admitted his name was a pseudo-

nym, and among other things stated that "if you think its okay to publish fascist's rumours with no facts to back them up then you're on a hiding to a lot more than ignored letters Larry". When I raised with *H&N* my objection to an anonymous coward hiding behind their address to issue threats, a member of the collective wrote that they "didn't read it as 'issuing threats' any more than the usual rhetoric rife in the anti-fascist milieu". Really? As for 'Dobsons' assertion that "fascists love you - why's that", such an impression, particularly over my Leeds research, is not the message I got from reading *The Order* (C18/issue 11 1995) *Final Conflict* (ITP/issue 9 1996) *Wild Boar* (Leeds BNP/issue 3 1996) - but there again, what do I know, being a paranoid mad hatter?? Maybe I just *think* these publications describe me as an opponent, or perchance I wrote all the articles myself?? Perhaps Dr Frank Dexter will tell me what I really should be thinking, at this stage of my treatment. . .

Another recurrent theme in the *H&N* treatment of my research last issue is a marked refusal, explicitly stated in places, to concretely evaluate anything that might be seen to constitute *evidence* for my claims. This isn't just present in the fiction on Leeds, but equally in the purported review of my book on MI5, helpfully entitled 'Larry's Game' in order to establish continuity with the Feuds Corner piece, only this time written by somebody with no name at all, not even 'Anonymous'. There is a bold, almost clear start: "this book could be strongly recommended . . . were it not for the fact that the author's reasoning is sometimes narrowly single-minded to the point of myopia" (p. 57). Given my book was actually about one specific institution, MI5, and not (say) knitting in the Outer Hebrides, it is difficult to know what to make of such a comment. The reviewer then become even more opaque - airily stating that "you know the kind of thing - organisation X has served as a conduit for MI5 disinformation, individual Y has worked for organisation X . . . etc", and so on in similar vein - not one identifiable example of my supposed myopia/conspiracy theorising is given. Indeed, the nearest the review gets to details is the remark that "rather than getting involved

with current arguments about the validity of specific claims, I think people involved in these movements would do well to think about what purpose such arguments serve". So, a reviewer warns people against the book, on no grounds other than the imprecise implication I am perhaps putting forward arguments serving (unstated) malign ends. At least the clown who did the hatchet-job on my book for *Black Flag* clearly stated I might well be a secret state asset, although likewise he/she/it (also anonymous) didn't cloud their thought-patterns by reference to evidence either. Ironically, both these reviewers are far more conspiracists than I am: and their peculiar paradigm allows them to dismiss the search for evidence/counter-evidence as itself conspiratorial. Very neat, and mostly unsatisfactory. Rather than slag me off, the real issue *H&N* should address (indeed I used to think this was right up their street), and which worries me greatly, is just why are there so few people doing proper 'parapolitical' research nowadays? Hostility from the unthinking (as I often get) is symptom, not cause. There is a dangerous 'post-modern' tendency to think there is no 'truth' (rather than it being very elusive at times). This is well illustrated by the description of Richard Lawson as only being "an ex-National Party fascist", "according to O'Hara" (p.32). Given I am labelled a certifiably paranoid mad hatter, who readers are directed by symbols not to believe a word of, this is hardly serious comment. A more accurate treatment of Lawson's *Perspectives* magazine is contained on p.57, but that is besides the point.

The final point I would like to mention is the disgraceful *H&N* misrepresentation of the conflict I and other anti-fascists have with disinformation effluent-pipe/fascist admirer Stewart Home. According to 'Frank Dexter', it is quite straightforward: "O'Hara's recent declared intention to 'get' (and I'm quoting) the late Stewart Home has all the hallmarks of the victim-turned-persecutor syndrome" (p31). In actual fact, when I discussed the *Green Anarchist* - Home conflict with Mike Peters in 1995, it was him who informed me that as early as Spring 1994, ie many months before Home en-

tered into public confrontation with *Green Anarchist* (and even more so me). Home met him at a conference in London, and slagged me off in vituperative terms. The reason for this was said by Peters to be Home's objection to me accusing a friend of his of being a fascist who was no longer one. That description, and time-scale, intriguingly enough matches perfectly Richard Lawson of *Perspectives* magazine, with whom I had just had a furious letter exchange, when he objected to me describing the magazine (in 'At War With The Truth') as 'far right' and I responded by explaining exactly why I believed this to be so (Lawson now trades under the flag of convenience *Radical Shift*). Returning to the 1995 conversation with Peters, what a small world it is - and how despicable of Peters/'Dexter' to omit this fact from an article which implies my dispute with Home was/is motiveless (but then, I'm "paranoid" aren't I?). Only *after* Peters told me of Home being, therefore, the instigator of hostilities did I *then* state I was getting fed up with Home, and it was about time he was 'done' analytically, by me. This isn't the slant Peters/'Dexter' gives on the conversation through is it? But perhaps for 'Post-Modern Liars' what actually transpires in discussions is a hindrance to 'Dextrous theorising'. As for Home being a "victim of O'Hara slanders for alleged fascist connections" (p. 32), Home wrote a eulogic introduction as recently as 1994 to the fascist lyrics of ex-NF member Tony Wakeford's band *Sol Invictus*. Far from Home "giving as good as he gets" (paraphrase/p.32), he had to rely on the police ejecting us from the ICA in March 1996 when we sought to call him to account for his lies, and was reduced to stuttering incoherence/cowering behind a black shirted skinhead goon-squad at the Oval in May 1996. Readers interested in further information on the 'Home Front' should send an SAE to BM Box 4769 London WC1N 3XX.

Larry O'Hara

Dear Mike Peters,
I have seen an article in 'Here and Now' entitled 'Feuds Corner', in which you claim I "may well be a [Larry] O'Hara pseudonym". This is not true, and I resent the impli-

cation that what I write is the work of someone else.

Furthermore, your logic is stalinist: you say that I 'may well be' O'Hara" since I support "his line", but you don't say what the 'line' supposed to be 'on'; so I can't really "answer" the charge, can I? If it's OK with you, I'll agree or disagree with whoever I want about whatever I choose.

You can save the apology for your readers, who are owed one for your statement in the article that Richard Lawson is "an ex-National Party fascist" merely "according to O'Hara", as if there were some doubt about whether he was or not. Surely it matters, and surely you could have checked (try Martin Walker's book on the National Front).

It matters because Lawson and his IONA/Scorpion/Transeuropa crowd of Euro-fascist pagan - who base themselves on Julius Evola and his SS-inspired 'Europe of A Hundred Flags' - have become part of the ideological effluence that has been seeping into sections of the 'libertarian' left. You probably know that the Socialist Party of Great Britain, after a hundred years of irrelevance, have finally achieved political notoriety by holding conferences with Transeuropa. In the post-modernist camp, you may even be aware that Stewart Home quoted Transeuropa's racist rag, 'Perspectives' favourably, calling it "maverick". That he later slagged it as "fascist" would have been a touch more impressive if he done so BEFORE O'Hara exposed Lawson's operation for what it is. And what are we to make of Home's introduction to a book of Wotanist/Evolan song lyrics, in which he described the author, a repentant ex-SWP member who is also an UNrepentant founder of IONA and a former NF thug, as a "genius" and a "knight of faith"? Home is entitled to worship who, or what, he pleases, but the fact that he is one of your regular contributors makes YOUR slip-up on Lawson a very bad omen indeed.

Yours sincerely,

David Black

Dear Here & Now,
A shame most of the humour in *Feuds Corner* was unintended. Someone that thinks *ex-Planet*

News editor Dave Black doesn't exist, that *GA*'s address is still in Oxford over nine months after we moved to BCM 1715, and that Stewart 'Truth Is The Enemy' Home is a "reliable" source can't expect to be taken seriously.

There's nothing "alleged" about Home's fascist connections. He boasted about associating with Skrewdriver "back when I was a punk" and even that he was "at school" with them until we bought this to the attention of the *Independent's* editor. Enough have heard this to decide whether Home's current denials are "reliable" or not. Nor did Home's association with the far Right music scene end there. He claimed to have broken with Tony Wakeford "when he joined the NF" until we turned up Wakeford's lyric book, *Above Us The Sun*, which Home wrote his fawning introduction to only two years ago. He now claims Wakeford's "ended these political involvements" with the far Right - odd, when blackshirted ex-Iona Collective member Wakeford sings about swastikas, runes, 'Long Live Death' &c and gets glowing reviews from the TransEuropa Collective's *Perspectives* as well as Home. Odd, too, how Home's *Indie* article trashing Anarchy In The UK implied Richard Hunt (not our "founder") was still involved in *GA* when *GA36*, sold at the festival, first exposed Hunt's involvement with *Perspectives*...

The *Indie* article, written in October 1994, marked the start of Home's dispute with us. Larry O'Hara's involvement has been limited to one short piece published over eight months later in *GA38*, *Encounters With The Insignificant*, describing Home's unprovoked and ill-considered confrontation with him. The Info about Home's fascist connections didn't come from Larry and the only "slanders" have been Home's ("Nazis without swastikas" &c). If Home "gave as good as he got" with his shrill, self-contradictory *Thin Veneer*, then Larry's contribution was indeed insignificant. However, everyone knows what a craven little maggot Home is and so can judge whether his account of the Housmans incident or Larry's is more "reliable".

You all too revealingly titled *What A Tangled Web We Weave* lays bare why you're so keen to dis-

credit O'Hara. Perhaps Home is your shining example of veracity, integrity and courage? Its incredible to any informed observer that your article mentions Tony White only once and *Searchlight*, the *Northern Star* address book and C18 not at all! So much for "always tell the truth". Nowhere has Larry "alleg[ed]... there is an MI5 agent in Leeds AFA and Leeds Class War", although the 'official' version typified by the *Bosnia of Trivia* leaflet circulated at the 1995 Anarchist Bookfair sets up this 'straw man'. Even Gable isn't an MI5 "agent"! What's alleged is that the individual concerned is a *Searchlight* mouthpiece, which he admitted to London CW and, in response to a question from a London CW member at the Bookfair, also admitted White's role as Leeds AFA and Special Branch informant and as a *provocateur* circulating hit lists to both fascists and anti-fascists. The last admission is enough to vindicate Larry's central argument in *Turning Up The Heat* (published six months before *White Lies!*) And his *GA38* article, *This Is A Genuine Security Alert*, that the street war in Leeds was to some extent State-manufactured - and to call into question the intelligence and/or independence of the anti-fascist individual concerned. We appreciate his fan club won't accept even admissions from his own mouth and the peer pressure *Here & Now* is under from this sort in Leeds but this reflects badly on their credibility and yours, not Larry's. But, then, you and they are going to have to live with the consequences, not him.

Yours, for peoples power and personal autonomy,
Oxford GA's
BCM 1715, London, WC1N 3XX.

Editors' Note

Green Anarchist editors and a member of the ALF Supporters Group have just been sent to prison for a year for 'incitement' - a case of being punished not for what you do but for the possible effects of what you say. Readers can get more information, and may wish to send donations to:

*Gandalf Defendants
Campaign, PO Box 66,
Stevenage SG1 2TR.*

Dear Here & Now

I must protest at being called a 'fascist', 'deadly' and 'don't believe a word of it'. I'm sure you don't mean it maliciously, but you have made a terrible mistake.

I have bent over backwards to be honest in the mag. 'Alternative Green'. If I have had embarrassing letters, I have printed them. I have made as clear as I possibly can where I stand on each issue and I've got into big trouble for it. The one thing you can't accuse me of is dishonesty. Surely you have to have very hard evidence before you accuse anyone, in print, of dishonesty. What is your evidence?

By saying difficult and unfashionable thing[s] in *Green Anarchist*, I created its reputation for honesty. (It is that reputation that P.N. Rogers is now exploiting and destroying.)

Why do you think that Housman's and the Inner Bookshop in Oxford stock *Alternative Green*? It is because they have both known me for many years and discount all the lies that *GA* is telling about me.

You, yourselves, are going to have to stop being paranoid and take magazines at their face value. There is no subtext in A.G. Or *Perspectives* (now *Radical Shift*). We say what we mean.

I never answer P.N. Rogers. He is such a liar it is a waste of time. But I come down hard on anyone I hear who repeats his lies. You will notice that none of our previous accusers have even attempted to substantiate their accusations. They've all gone dishonourably silent. They know they are wrong but won't admit it.

You can justifiably accuse me of not being left wing. You can accuse me of talking to the decentralist right. What you cannot accuse me of is dishonesty.

Yours sincerely,
Richard Hunt

P.S. I will publish this letter unless I get a satisfactory response and apology.

For your further information: Since I have no desire to be associated with fascists I wrote to Robin Ramsay who had told the SPGB that Richard Lawson was a fascist. It emerged that he had read absolutely nothing by Richard Lawson and had no evidence that he was fascist (although he stuck by his

opinion). Since Lawson supports autonomous self-sufficient villages and my economic theory, as does *GA*, it would be quite impossible for him to be a fascist, by definition. Do you have any further evidence that he is a fascist. Otherwise you owe him a grovelling apology.

As far as I can gather the NF was composed of racists, fascists and also nationalists. Being in the NF did not necessarily mean they were fascist. Richard Lawson now calls himself a nationalist syndicalist. I don't know anything about Derek Holland, but he's nothing to do with *Perspectives* or *Radical Shift* as P.N. Rogers says.

R.11.



Dear Here and Now,

Yes, someone from the Transeuropa team was reading your review (issue 16/17) of our former journal *Perspectives*, now replaced by *Radical Shift*.

What do we mean by capitalism? Pretty much the same as you do. I should think - wage slavery, exploitation, plutocracy, all that sort of stuff.

But why ask the question anyway? It seems that your reviewer has decided we are a "far right" outfit and has therefore projected on to us the sort of anti-capitalism that he expects to find in that neck of the political woods ("vague anti-finance rhetoric").

And why does he consider that we are promoting a "far right" (or "green fascist") agenda? Because there's anything remotely "racist" or "fascist" or in any way right-wing in our journals? No, its because we dare to talk about collective human identities.

Is that all that "the far right" or "fascism" is, then? Are we proven "guilty" on this one point alone? Is a concern for identities incompatible with a genuine (as opposed to

rhetorical) anti-capitalism? Or could these identities in fact act as a bulwark against the cultural domination of capitalist consumer society?

This is one of the key areas we have been approaching in our publications and we have tried to demonstrate that our position in this respect is close to that of early anarchists (like Proudhon or Bakunin) and socialists (like Blatchford or Morris).

The prejudices of today's left are the result of 100 years of develop-

ment in a liberal rather than radical direction. It could have been very different (perhaps if fascism had not emerged and led to the enduring association of the values of rootedness with genocidal totalitarianism - they don't have to go together).

Here and Now may have "polemicised for the last 10 years" against the idea of identities, *Here and Now* is doubtless anti-capitalist, but it is not a logical progression to conclude that because Transeuropa promotes the idea of

identities we are therefore not really anti-capitalist.

Your reviewer suggests the left/right divide should be assessed by considering "real political forces and what they are actually doing". In our case maybe he would do us the favour of taking a look at what we are actually saying, rather than avoiding the questions we ask by reassuringly proving to himself that we are on "the other side".

In the long term that is the only way that an anti-capitalism of any significance can emerge from un-

derneath the fraudulent "abstract metaphysical geometry" that places someone like Tony Blair on the "left" and someone like myself on the "right".

Thanks for reviewing us, anyway.

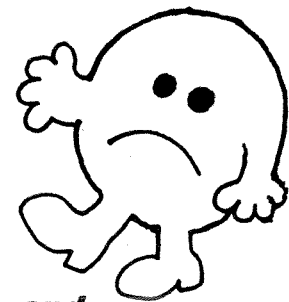
Yours sincerely,

Peter Drew

Transeuropa, BM-6682, London,
WC1N 3XX



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A Seven Step programme for

• Making yourself SICK,

• Getting your sickness publicly VALIDATED, and

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4. Raise **AWARENESS**: Create some news event or get a celebrity case to Publicise the illness. All publicity is good publicity. Make common cause with other illnesses.
5. Commission a novel, movie or TV drama to advertise it to a mass audience. Contact the script committee for a popular Soap to have a character become a sufferer.
6. Start a high-profile Campaign, with a **HELPLINE** to elicit lots of cases: Remember - cases mean statistics, and statistics mean Funding.
7. Get on a **TALK SHOW**. Talk Shows provide rituals bringing together therapists and sufferers with big daytime audiences of lonely people...

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Listings

Adbusters No. 19 Autumn 1997. Another bumper issue, complete with stylish subvertisements and anti-consumerist articles. \$5.75 from The Media Foundation, 1243 West 7th Ave., Vancouver, BC V6H 1B7, Canada. <http://www.adbusters.org>

Alternative Press Review Spring/Summer 1997 Includes Post-Urban, Post-Industrial but not Post-Elite. \$24 annual subscription from CAL Press, POB 1446, Columbia, MO 65205-1446, USA.

AK Distribution Catalogue 1998. Thousands of books, zines and other commodities (e.g. Toxiclothes - shock-horror T shirts) to distinguish yourself from the crowd. PO Box 12766, Edinburgh EH8 9YE.

Anarchist Integralism Aesthetics, Politics and the Apres-Garde by Luther Blisset. £3 from Sabotage Editions, BM Senior, London WC1N 3XX

Anarchy: the Journal of Desire Armed No.43 John Zerzan running on emptiness and Black booting Bookchin. Best obtained from CAL Press (see 'Alternative Press Review' above) or from AK Distribution.

Aphorisms Against Work by Len Bracken. POB 5585, Arlington, VA 22205, USA.

Armed Joy by Alfredo Bonnano. First English edition of the 1977 pamphlet banned in Italy for incitement. £1.10 from BM Elephant, London WC1N 3XX

Aufheben No.5 What was the USSR? (*What that? Ed*). Plus an interesting review of Class War, and anonymous (and well-informed) review article on the Situationists. £5 for 3 issues, from Prior House, Tilbury Place, Brighton BN2 2GY.

Autotoxicity, Third Assault, Summer 1997. From the Communist Headache stable to Memetic CJD, this is a fascinating, if migraine-inducing, work of graphic art pursuing subversive theorising wherever it might lead.

Interesting Bioautography (self-interview), Travelling Innerspace, Ontology of Anti-Structure, the Realisation and Suppression of Techno, and lots more.

Samples from Issue 2 include: Psychogeography of the M1, Prisons, Cross Fade Enter Tainment, Grooves vs Striations (on Deleuze & Guattari), Information War Documents, etc. £4 from ATX PO Box 298, Sheffield S10 1 YU.

Ballad against Work. As the spectacle of industrial capitalism surges in Asia as a constant threat to workers in Europe and North America to work ever harder, here at last comes an antidote to Western pessimism. This informative compendium of resistance, with an imaginative rethinking of Marxist categories, comes as a blast of fresh air from India. Contrary to those seeking ethnic exotica, we recognise here our fellow spirits for whom liberation means the same everywhere. Work anathematised as you've never seen it before. 62 pages - Free - from Majdoor Library, Autopin Jhuggi, N.I.T., Faridabad, 121001, India.

Also from the same stable **Reflections on Marx's Critique of Political Economy** outlining the salient fact that 94% of the total produce of humanity goes on the maintenance and perpetuation of hierarchies and includes a potted history of the Kamunist Kranti group which beats most group self reflections for its frankness.

Beyond Kronstadt A reassessment of events 76 years ago from Escape, c/o POB 2474, London N8 0HW.

Class War 29 The 'final' edition of the anarchist tabloid, containing some thoughtful reflections on the failure of the revolutionary movement in the UK. PO Box 467, London E8 3QX.

Collective Action Notes, No 13. Jam-packed with news from the world over this journal has taken off from its Baltimore birthplace to become one of the best newsletters of worker's resistance to capitalism worldwide. Liverpool dockers, India, France, Sweden, and more are covered from the perspective of a rejection of state or markets, or any dalliance with the brokers of human beings, the trades unions. Includes debates between groups of revolutionaries, which does not necessarily improve the journal's appeal. POB 22962 Balto., MD 21203, USA.

Communism No. 10 Mouthpiece of the ICG, including a Dresden retrospective, repression in Italy and working time reduction. £2 from BP54-1060 Brussels 31, Belgium.

Community Action Newsletter of the Haringey Solidarity Group (who distribute 12,000 of the newsletters in one London borough!). Available from PO Box 2474, London N8.

ContraFLOW. Activist magazine from the metropolis. December '95 issue has revealing comment on activism and burn-out, worth a look by anyone who feels the flame is flickering. Debate continues in

the following issues. Latest issue No 23 has stuff on anti-Jobs Summit, Germany and lots more. Free (or donation) from 56a Infoshop, 56 Crompton St. LONDON SE17 UK.

Counter Information No. 49 Combining editorial comment from Di to devolution, coverage of struggles from the Liverpool Dockers to Encuentros. Send an SAE (plus donation) to C.I. c/o Transmission, 28 King St., Glasgow G1 5QP.

Direct Action Summer 97. Surveillance, genetics, anarchy FAQs. £1.50 from POB 1095, Sheffield S2 4YR.

Discussion Bulletin. Nos 84, 85 & 86. Bob Black controversy. De Leonist microprogrammes, debate on Kamunist Kranti, 'Global Economy Confirms Marx's Analysis of Capitalism'. Eclectic journal which sometimes has fascinating articles, like the exposition of Joseph Dietzgen's philosophy in No. 75. Discussion Bulletin, P.O.Box 1564, Grand Rapids MI 49501.

Do or Die Issue 6. Impressive Earth First magazine with articles analysing strengths and weaknesses of recent campaigns. Few anarcho-ecology activists want to think about the meaning of their actions so this is interesting. Maybe the majority are "intent to remain a small band of young, noisy, white, middle class, physically able extremists" (page 18). A thought provoking issue. £7 for 4 issues from DTP Collective, c/o South Downs EF, Prior House, Tilbury Place, Brighton BN2 2GY.

Earth for Sale Reclaiming Ecology in the Age of Corporate Greenwash by Brian Tokar of the Institute for Social Ecology. A fact-based analysis exposing recuperation and the stifling of US environmentalism. Available from AK Distribution, PO Box 12766, Edinburgh EH8 9YE.

Echanges 80/81 Reflecting on 'post-fordism', US 80s labour struggles, Spain, India and a Norwegian assessment of nuclear disarmament. £7 for 4 issues from BP241 75866 Paris Cedex 18, France.

The Eclipse and Re-Emergence of the Communist Movement: Gilles Dauve and Francois Martin. Antagonism Press. Reprint of the classic text that re-introduced communist theory to a world worn down by the Leninist corruption of the original. With a new introduction bringing the communist perspective into the present. 3.00 c/o BM Makhno, London WC1N 3XX, Britain.

Engrosing Love. The life and work of Judith (tongue in) Cheeks. From The Creative Collective, 264 Broad Lane, Bramley, Leeds LS13 2LA. (*Artists, doncha just love 'em*).

Fifth Estate. Sub. \$8 from FE, 4632, Second Ave., Detroit, MI 48201, USA.

5th of May Group. Turkish and Kurdish anarchists who live in Britain. Call for an anarchist conference to give direction to the drift of anarchist politics in Britain at present. Contact Ilakan Calbayram, William Morris Tower 10 13, The University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, CO4 3SQ.

The Friends of Durruti Group: 1937-1939: Augustin Guillamon. Meticulously researched account of the anarchist group that most directly confronted the CNT's participation in the Spanish Republican government during the Spanish Civil War. AK Press, P.O.Box 12766, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH8 9YE

Green Perspectives. Murray Bookchin mouthpiece. Recent issues carry critique of David Icke. Analysis of political developments in Russia highlighting alliances between the old CP, national religious groupings, workers organisations and more or less fascist groups to produce a National Bolshevik bloc - what such a tendency lacks is the crucial modernist yeast which allows such dough to rise. No.36 carries a journalistic account of po-mo culture 'Terror Reigns in Manhattan' which sneers at the right faces without understanding that post-modernism continues the project of modernity which Bookchin would like to realise. P.O.Box 111, Burlington, VT 05402 USA.

The Heart of the Matter: Diana, democracy and popular culture by Stefan Szczelkun. If you can get past the first sentence of this tribute to the people who engaged in public grieving for Lady Di, then you might find it of interest as indicating where taking popular culture too seriously can get you. If Stefan's thesis is right, then the transformation of the working class has gone beyond the dissolution of the patriarchal towards the embrace of the therapeutic, and according to him it's all for the good...I hope he is wrong. From Working Press WP@ 54 SE17 3TN, UK.

Living Marxism. Despite its origin as the journal of the Revolutionary Communist Party and its uncritical adherence to modernity and progress - a position which could only be consistent with es-

pousing a conservatism the magazine resolutely avoids, this journal regularly hits the right targets from Blairist new authoritarianism, to therapeutic totalitarianism, slipping a good few knives on the way into 'moral' journalism, modern education, safety scares and other lubricants of the economic machine. Currently being sued for libel by ITN for daring to question their partisan reportage of the Bosnian war, it deserves to survive as a constant irritant to all the smelly little orthodoxies that dominate the public sphere. A fine example of something getting better as it gets older. BM JP Graphics, London WC1N 3XX.

Manticore 2: Leeds Surrealist Group. Poetical political broadsheet including excellent article by Czech film maker Jan Svankmajer renouncing civilisation. Subscriptions for 4 issues. £4 from 6 Aberdeen Grove, Leeds LS12 3QY.

Meltzer and Solanas, Tales from the Clit, eds Matrix, Cherie/Feminists Against Censorship, AK Press. True stories by pro-sex feminists - more illumination on the shadow. AK Press PO Box 12766, Edinburgh EH8 9YE.

Neither Work Nor Leisure. A curious mixture of anti-work hippyism and futurist-fatalism. Read it and make your own mind up. From The Unlimited Dream Company, PO Box HP94, Leeds LS6 1YG.

Revolutionary Socialist Network News. First time we've seen this journal of the RS network. Coming from a 'Hard Left' or Trotskyist background this journal seems to have taken a more libertarian turn, including amongst other things a bitter critique of Che Guevara (long overdue) and intervention from Ken Smith (see *H&N* passim) on the potential of DIY culture. c/o 180 Mansfield Road, Nottingham. NG1 3HH.

September Commando: Gestures Gallery of the usual suspects. AK Press PO Box 12766, Edinburgh EH8 9YE.

Seven Stories: James Kelman. A selection of his finest stories. "A sparkling slice of working class life." AK Press 33 Tower St. Edinburgh EH6 7BN.

Some thought on violence on demos. Intelligent manual on how to do it (and how not to do it) from The Hungry Brigade - Escape, c/o PO Box 2474, London, N8 OHW.

Subversion. Carries well-informed articles on the Liverpool Dockers Dispute, Job Seekers Alliance struggles, and interesting debate on N. Ireland between themselves and an individual from Class

War, who clearly and convincingly affirms immediate political reality against Subversion's universalist theory, but fails to refute Subversion's critique of nationalism. Free or donations to: Dept. 10, 1 Newton Street, Manchester, M1 1HW.

Towards 2012. Part III. Culture & Language. On the crest of the wave of the McKenna-Zeitgeist (ho-hum). Only 15 years to go before we dis-evolve into something completely different. Assorted articles from Hakim Bey, Genesis P. Orridge, etc. Proto-historic Roots of the Network Self, Rave Culture Means the End of the World as we Know it, Astrologikal Perspectives, etc. Loads of information and addresses herein. From The Unlimited Dream Company, PO Box HP94, Leeds LS6 1YG.

'Uncontrollables' Dossier. Documents about the current frameup of 68 anarchists in Italy. From BM Ignition, London WC1N 3XX

Victimhood - A look at the sexual abuse industry. Provocative and well-researched inquiry into the who and the how of the child sexual abuse lobby, from ultra-feminists like Bea Campbell to fanatical therapists like Valerie Sinason, all united in having their snouts in the same trough of extracting more public funds in order to finance their crusade. From its beginnings as a tiny wing of the US feminist movement the sexual abuse movement is taking up mainstream career positions in the health and social service business with predictable results. 'Written in the political spirit of the former Solidarity group' the pamphlet examines the rise of therapy and the decline in politics which has made the whole debacle possible. From 123 Lathom Road, East Ham, London E6 2EA.

Zimbabwe Labour Party: 'formed by workers, peasants, students and the poor in 1995 after realising that the so-called independence achieved by nationalists in 1980... , after a long and bitter war, was an empty victory for the working class of Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe government and the World Bank are imposing economic policies which literally kill the working class poor. Consequently we appeal ... for the practical solidarity to enable us to build our organisation to become a fighting working class alternative.' Langton G. Machoko, P.O.Box BE814, Belvedere, Harare, Zimbabwe.

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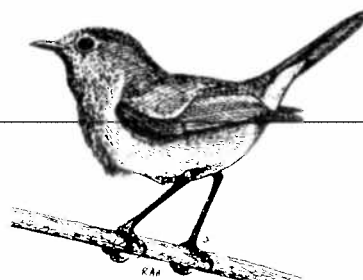
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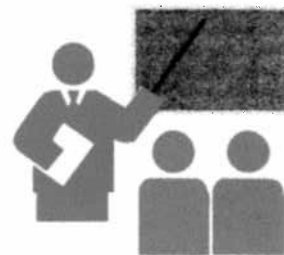
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