

# **The Rationales of New Labour's Cultural Policy 1997-2001**

by

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## Abstract

The cultural policies of New Labour, devised by the first British government department of "culture", the DCMS, have been noted for their conceptual inconsistencies and unsupportable claims, yet the rationales behind them have never been adequately explained. This thesis argues that, when seen from an historical perspective, the intentions of the Secretary of State, Chris Smith, and the DCMS in fact followed a consistent logic by which cultural policy was re-conceptualised to take DCMS into the heart of government where social and economic concerns dominated. Building on the principle of cross-government policy and the "pillars" of excellence, access, education, and the creative economy, DCMS claimed a foundational role for culture in propagating the roots of economic growth formed around theories of social capital. In doing so, it shifted the traditional balance between the public and private realms, compromised traditions of *laissez-faire*, instituted new mechanisms of governance, and marginalised the arts. The thesis concludes that Chris Smith and the DCMS sought power by arguing a role for culture in social and economic policy initiatives; an ambition that could not be achieved with policies for culture in its traditional meaning. The conceptual incoherence that resulted was ignored as insignificant to its purposes.

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### **Abbreviations used in the text**

ACGB	The Arts Council of Great Britain
ACE	Arts Council England
CBSO	City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra
CEMA	Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts
CMS	Culture, Media and Sport [Select Committee]
CO	Cabinet Office
CSR	Comprehensive Spending Review
DCMS	The Department of Culture, Media and Sport
DNH	The Department of National Heritage
EGT	Endogenous Growth Theory
FOI	Freedom of Information Request
NA	National Archives
NDPB	Non-departmental Public Body
NPM	New Public Management
PAT	Policy Action Team
PSA	Public Service Agreement
Quango	Quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation
QUEST	Quality, Efficiency and Standards Team

Note that Cultural Studies is capitalised when referring to the specific theoretical approach.

# Introduction

## The Research Question

The rationales of New Labour's cultural policies have never been adequately explained. They referred extensively to the importance of culture yet appeared primarily interested in matters that had never before been formally considered by governments as cultural. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport claimed a central role for cultural policy in realising New Labour's social and economic objectives, yet it attempted to do so with policies well beyond the remit of any previous arts or implicitly cultural department.

New Labour made large claims for the potency of its cultural policies, despite criticisms of their "conceptual inconsistencies" (Selwood, 2006: 36). Many were founded on unproven assertions with few precedents and little supporting evidence. Some seemed even to defy basic common sense: "Culture" it was argued, could "make a valuable contribution to delivering key outcomes of lower long-term unemployment, less crime, better health and better qualifications" (DCMS, 1999b: 2). These claims were not limited to Westminster. The Scottish Cultural Commission of the Labour-led Scottish Parliament asserted that culture could "...make a difference to our success in tackling poverty, it can make Scotland a healthier place and it has a significant contribution to make towards our economy" (Scottish Cultural Commission, 2005). The sociologist Perri 6 summed up the government's position, arguing that "Culture is now the centre of the agenda for government reform, because we now know from findings from a wide range of research that culture is perhaps the most important determinant of a combination of long-run economic success and social cohesion" (6, 1997: 272). Yet that evidence is elusive, even argued by many to be non-existent.



These claims assumed a notion of culture that was essentially anthropological: a reified concept of society and its constitutive relations in which the arts were but one manifestation. These are not questions of individual policies, each of which had its own formative context, but of the whole of which those policies were a part. For DCMS that whole was definitively "culture", which by praxis meant participation in policies of work skills, education, information technology, technical innovation, and the workings of government (its roles in ten of the Social Exclusion Unit's Policy Action Teams), framed by the promotion of access, excellence, creativity, and embedded in what became known as the creative industries (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998: 58-59). What, in all this, had become of the traditional idea of culture as the arts, heritage and intellectual works?

One explanation given by cultural policy theorists is that arts policies were strengthened by being attached to other more politically powerful policies (Gray, 2002: 88; Gray and Wingfield, 2011: 590; Gray, 2008: 217). There is some good evidence for this (as discussed later), but it looks less convincing when seen in the context of DCMS's comparative disinterest in the arts. A more common argument is "instrumentalism"; *viz*, using the arts as instruments for the delivery of other policies. But that description is wholly inadequate, most obviously as it fails to explain why a department of culture promoted its ultimate purposes as those of other areas of government. It further presumes that the arts could be effective as instruments of policy, yet researchers have hunted in vain for strong supporting evidence. A report commissioned by DCMS in 1999 stated: "it remains a fact that relative to the volume of arts activity taking place in the country's poorest neighbourhoods, the evidence of the contribution it makes to neighbourhood renewal is paltry" (DCMS, 1999b: 6). Van Puffelen, writing on the validity of arts "impact studies" referred to the claims made for cultural policy as founded on "basic fallacies" (Puffelen, 1996: 252). Graeme Evans, also reporting to DCMS on the state of research into this topic, concluded: "Methodologies which bring together approaches across anthropology, cultural and urban studies/sociology ... which can measure social, economic and physical change, are yet to be developed...". And with

respect to the type of evidence that was then being produced, he said: "... standardised performance indicators and quantitative benchmarks are neither desirable nor useful measures..." (Evans, 2005: 973). Even as DCMS policy was in formation, a supportive paper by François Matarasso, said to have "... played an important role in establishing a near-consensus in Britain among cultural policy-makers" (Merli, 2002: 107), had been forcefully attacked on the basis that it "... does not produce a well-founded understanding of the social impact of the arts. The research design is flawed, research methods are not applied in a rigorous way and the conceptual bases are questionable" (2002: 114). In other words, neither the data nor a methodology for its collection existed to support policy claims, or at least in any robust form. Eleonora Belfiore, in one of a number of studies she and Oliver Bennett made into the social impacts of the arts and culture, summed-up the position succinctly, in effect accusing New Labour of pursuing cultural policies that were founded on "mindlessness" and "bullshit" (Belfiore, 2009: 343) .

A conundrum here is that policy-makers were aware of the unsupported nature of their claims, being advised by reports they themselves commissioned, yet appeared to pursue and promote their policies with utter certainty for their effectiveness. The contradicting arguments were hardly contested but, rather, appear to have been largely ignored. Chris Smith, the newly ensconced Secretary of State for DCMS, had made his interests immediately clear in stating that the Department placed them "at the centre of the country's economic life and regeneration" (C. Smith, 1997a). The CMS Select Committee later concurred, saying: "The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is avowedly an economic Department" (DCMS, 1998a). But even if this was a legitimate aim for a department of culture, how could it be achieved by a small department and the 54 independent NDPBs it funded (accounting for "about 95% of the department's programme" (DCMS Select Committee, 1999a: v))?

These were the motivating questions for this research, prompting a search for rationales that would explain the incongruities and inconsistencies of New Labour's cultural policies, their internal conceptual conflicts, and make sense of the

ostensibly absurd contentions for the power of culture. They opened areas of inquiry in political theory and practice, economics, the administration of government, and the traditions of cultural interventions by governments contained within five underlying questions:

- How did New Labour understand and use its concept of “culture”?
- Can the "conceptual inconsistencies" and incongruities of policy be explained?
- To what extent did the policies of DCMS arise from British traditions, and to what extent did they break from them?
- What mechanisms did DCMS employ to realise its stated ambitions?
- If cultural policies deserved to be at the centre of government, as Chris Smith, suggested, what concept of the state and of national governance did that imply?

While these questions widened the field of research, they were brought together under one central question: what were the rationales for the cultural policies of New Labour? As each was explored, a model appeared of how the rhetoric, policies and actions of DCMS might unite to structure a society for economic effect. Shorn of its focus as merely a distributor of funds to NDPBs, the apparent inconsistencies of DCMS policies can be explained by its employment of a reified form of culture in which networks of economically active and self-determining citizens operated. This research has shown that the cultural policies of New Labour were, in fact, economic policies constructed by Chris Smith and the DCMS to take them from a department at the periphery of government right to its centre.

## The Importance of the Research

The single most important outcome of this research is to propose cogent and interlinked rationales for the cultural policies of the DCMS. It explains the disparities within policy and the seemingly exaggerated claims for their power, and it shows why and how Chris Smith reformed a government department for the arts and heritage into one he perceived as central to the New Labour mission. It presents a comprehensive, compelling hypothesis that can elucidate the motives behind the full breadth of DCMS's policy and the "pillars" on which they were constructed: "excellence, access, education and the creative economy" (C. Smith, 1998: 2; 2009).

The literature on New Labour's cultural policy does not explain nor, in many cases, even recognise DCMS's break with the traditions of earlier departments for the arts, nor its comparative disinterest in the aesthetics of artistic accomplishments and their replacement by an intense focus on social and economic policy. Aspects of its policies have been observed, praised, criticised or castigated to varying degrees by different authors depending on their analytical approach. The arts community contorted in an uncomfortable double face, expressing disdain for New Labour's rhetoric (which, nevertheless, it often adopted) and bewilderment at the DCMS's reluctance to increase arts grants-in-aid. Yet many remained loyal to New Labour for what was presumed to be its left-leaning credentials (for example, see Glaister, 1998: 8). Sociologists hardly noticed the absence of a traditional arts policy, while some Cultural Studies theorists thought they found New Labour societal arguments in keeping with their particular form of realism. The influence of Cultural Studies has been strong though, redefining the arts as "the domain of consciously crafted symbolic works" (Ahearne, 2009: 142), thus more semiotic than transcendental and more an aggregated social mechanism than autonomous artistic expression. But the theories arising from all these approaches are partial, tending to see policies in isolation and never adequately describing their underlying and consolidated political logic.

The omissions in the literature arise in part from the composite nature of the subject matter. Cultural theorists tend not to deal in quotidian political practise, while very few political theorists concern themselves with cultural policy. There are notable exceptions, as will be referenced, but they are few in number. This thesis goes some way towards correcting this admission, opening areas of debate and providing new sources of evidence that will be of value both to government and the academy.

Some elements of the arguments that follow are not new, but their synthesis into a single theory for political action is substantially original. As will be shown, DCMS policy resulted directly from Chris Smith's ambition to place the department at the centre of government, but his ideas can be seen most clearly when placed in an historical context. Strands of centuries-old attitudes and practices can be found in DCMS policy, embedded even now in norms and values of society but sometimes in an uncomfortable accommodation between classical liberalism and New Labour's ideological tendency for social engineering. At a purely political level, so too can be observed the specific rejection of the policies of Labour's past electoral failures in favour of "modernisation" and an embrace with what was perceived as the most potent features of entrepreneurial capitalism. Its cultural policies demonstrated all of these traits, while being politically motivated by a single set of interrelated rationales.

The new material applied in this research begins with a review and taxonomy of cultural meanings, further clarifying their different uses by governments and theorists since the mid-18th century. Appropriation Accounts, published annually from 1861 to 2002, were used to trace institutional change (or its absence) and provided evidence not previously analysed<sup>1</sup>. In a case study of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, unpublished interviews with Chris Smith, Alan Davey, the Arts Council, and Birmingham City Council were especially illuminating

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<sup>1</sup> Peacock and Godfrey refer to their use in assessing financial receipts by national museums and galleries, but not for tracing the development of government policy more generally: originally published in *Social Trends*, November 1973, pp 61-5, republished in PEACOCK, A. T. & GODFREY, C. 1976. *Cultural Accounting*. In: BLAUG, M. (ed.) *The Economics of the Arts*. London: Martin Robertson.

when exploring what the Audit Commission referred to as the policy “Delivery Chain”. Some commonly over-simplified axioms of political theory have been challenged in the process, demonstrating how they were adjusted rather than abandoned or rejected by changing political ideologies. The concepts of *laissez-faire*, the place of the arts in a market economy, and *l'art pour l'art* fit this description, each of which to varying degrees has often been misrepresented not only in public debate but even in academic literature on cultural policy.

These matters are discussed in the process of constructing a hypothesis for the rationales of cultural policy under New Labour, but they have since also been normalised and globalised. In a speech at the 2012 *Edinburgh International Culture Summit*, Lord Wilson of Tillyorn, speaking for the British Council, declared:

Culture ... can help to solve intractable social and economic problems; to raise understanding between people and nations; and to encourage solutions to some of the major international challenges we all face (Edinburgh International Culture Summit, 2012).

This simple text embeds assumptions that half a century ago might have seemed absurd or at least nonsensical. Now they go almost unchallenged. But the ideas that lie behind them are similar to those developed and employed under the New Labour government a decade and a half earlier. It now appears that the importance of the questions this thesis addresses goes well beyond New Labour, their time in office and their constituency; they address a transformation in both governmental and public understanding of cultural policy.

## **A Typological Review of Literature and Sources**

The research for this thesis has located and defined the logic with which New Labour constructed and implemented its particularly form of cultural policy; its constitutive history, its innovations, and its purposes. As noted, this has not been a subject of great interest to cultural theorists and even less to those working in the field of politics. The former have failed to produce a comprehensive argument that can explain the full breadth of DCMS policies, tending instead to treat them as individually incoherent within the collective whole, while the latter have largely missed their significance in Third Way ideology and, empirically, within political practice. As a result, across the spectrum of political and cultural studies the analyses of cultural policy can be characterised by the large variety of theoretical approaches. In the typological review that follows, these approaches have been divided into eight categories: (i) journals and institutions; (ii) Cultural Studies; (iii) definitions of "culture"; (iv) the historical perspective; (v) instrumentalism; (vi) culture in economics; and (vii) culture as governance. A final section on sources then follows. The characteristics of each are briefly discussed with respect to their ability to answer the questions to which this thesis is directed. The intention is not to provide exhaustive lists of individual writers, critics and theorists but more to orientate the various approaches within the arguments that follow.

### **Journals and Institutions**

If the culture in cultural policy means the arts and intellectual works, then its literature is vast in size and history. Significantly, though, the changing nature of cultural *policy* and its ever-extending reach into social and economic matters is reflected only in a small and neoteric literature that began to appear late in the last century. The advent of journals on cultural policy has been concomitant with its purported importance within government. The first peer-reviewed journal published on the specific topic, the *European Journal of Cultural Policy*, was launched just nineteen years ago, in 1994. Responding to the increasing globalisation of its subject,

it was then renamed the *International Journal of Cultural Policy* in 1997 - the year New Labour took office. There had been earlier journals with an interest in culture: *Media, Culture & Society*, essentially concerned with media studies, was launched in 1979, then *Cultural Studies* was "introduced" in 1987 "when no one quite knew what it [Cultural Studies] was" (Grossberg, 2006). The website of *Cultural Studies* explains that the journal "explores the relation between cultural practices, everyday life, material, economic, political, geographical and historical contexts". The *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, organisationally unrelated to *Cultural Studies*, followed in 1998. Statistical analyses of cultural activities (broadly defined) were the original focus of *Cultural Trends*, first published in 1989. In its early days, its subjects typically addressed finance, employment, audience numbers and types, "industry" data, and the evidence (or its absence) claimed by governments for their policies. In more recent years it has also become embroiled with the Cultural Studies agenda and broadened its articles to include the "cultural industries", theorising cultural values, and concepts of creativity.

In some respects the statistics and data published in *Cultural Trends* has fed the work of "cultural economics" analysts, a subject that would seem central to any analyses of New Labour's cultural policies. Although a journal specifically on that subject, the *Journal of Cultural Economics*, was first published much earlier in 1973, *Cultural Trends* remains the only journal in the field but has also shown some interest in questioning the concept of cultural policy. *Rethinking Marxism* (published since 1988) does carry the sub-title of *A Journal of Economics, Culture & Society* but its concern is quite specifically for Marxist theory - a theoretical underpinning specifically rejected by Tony Blair (Blair, 1996: 59). Another similar title, the *Journal of Cultural Economy* was launched in 2008 as part of "the publishing programme of the ESRC Centre for Research on Socio Cultural Change". Its interests, though, are more aligned with the anthropological aspects of Cultural Studies than with the classical economics of the *Journal of Cultural Economics*, both subjects quite remote from the rationales of policy.



A broad intellectual approach to cultural controversies and trends was taken-up by *Cultural Critique* in 1985, and a much more recent title, *Journal for the Study of British Cultures*, dates from 1994. While both take a social, anthropological, understanding of culture, only the former has more than a tangential interest in politics or political theory. In complete contrast, the *Journal of Cultural Management and Policy*, first published in 2011, is concerned with the practical issues of management of cultural operations and the application of cultural policy. In most articles it assumes, unlike the Cultural Studies literature, that "culture" refers solely to the arts although with a broad understanding of what the arts include - its meaning having been extended in recent decades both by the relativism of postmodern thought and under the influence of Cultural Studies.

### **Cultural Studies**

Of all these journals, only the *International Journal of Cultural Policy* has a primary concern with governmental policies. But, as with *Cultural Trends*, the vast majority of its articles are concerned with the analysis and implications of policy and less with political processes; its authors tending to approach their subject from the viewpoint of cultural and social theory rather than political practice. This further differentiates their conceptual understanding of culture from the Cultural Studies authors who seek meaning in the signs and symbols attributed to all human works with which they read power relations within a socially stratified society. Culture by this understanding becomes "signifying practices or symbolic goods" (Bennett, 2004: 237) and its products the "texts" with which they are read (Hesmondhalgh, 2002: 2, passim). Through the symbolic nature of creative works and the "semiotic interactions" between people, proponents claim, can be perceived the real nature of the world; a structure of relations between people, their environment, their temporal and physical locus, and their perceived history (Shapiro, 2004: xiv). Using this "theory of culture", Cultural Studies is professed to be a critical tool with which to illuminate humanity's social, historical, material and political context (Eagleton, 2012).

Cultural Studies has its origins in a post-Marxist construction found in the works of the Frankfurt School and its later French cognates (most importantly Michael Foucault). As Toby Miller and George Yúdice expressed it: "Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality<sup>1</sup> is key to the actions and claims of Western states in the cultural domain, both historically and today" (T. Miller and Yúdice, 2002: 3). This Foucauldian approach is now contested by scholars preferring Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony but both positions occupy the same analytical arena (Gray, 2010). In its British manifestation, it was largely built on the work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham (CCCS). Founded in 1964 by the University's Professor of English, Richard Hoggart, it was said to be "a brave intervention in established literary and social science orthodoxies"; the term Cultural Studies being "a convenient shorthand for work that treats film, the arts, media and communications, as well as lived, everyday cultures and is driven by the major strands of neo-Marxist, structuralist, post-structuralist and postmodern thought" (Cunningham, 1993: 306). Since its inception, Cultural Studies has covered a vast field: "sociological, organisational, behavioural, and anthropological" (Thompson, Ellis *et al.*, 1990: 97). Its subjects of study can be as abstruse as Barthes *Rhetorique de l'image* (Barthes, 1964), insightful as Baudrillard's *Simulcra and Simulation* (Baudrillard, 2006), or as seemingly facile as analyses of TV soap operas (Geraghty, 2005). Robert Hewison explains its history in some detail, while quoting Hall's intentions that it be a subject "at the point of intersection between a number of disciplines" (Hewison, 1995: 186). Its influence has since been profound, even among those who would not accept the ideological tenets that still linger from its Marxist origins.

Within the considerable literature on the subject, Jim McGuigan is one of its most trenchant contemporary theorists and one who elaborates its characteristic critique of neo-liberalism with force and clarity, regarding cultural policy as "... a manifestation of the pervasive dominance of economic reasons today: to put it

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<sup>1</sup> "governmentality" is said to be an expression coined by Roland Barthes: BARTHES, R. 1989. *Mythologies*. New York, Noonday Press.).

bluntly, naked capitalism" (McGuigan, 2004: 1; see also McGuigan, 1996; 2005; and Cunningham, 1993). McGuigan's views are challenged by many (Swingewood, 1977; Cowen, 1988 are strong examples), not least of which are the historians of the arts and social economics (Macfarlane, 1979; Davis, 2000), but his approach is common within Cultural Studies, if not always so well expressed. It challenges rather than explains the principles on which Tony Blair *et al* constructed the "New" Labour party in the 1990s. As a result, despite the considerable intellectual merits of Cultural Studies it is a subject that obfuscates the characteristics of New Labour's cultural policies. Although its sociologically critical constructions can appear complicit in their formation, its socialist origins cloud New Labour's economic rationales and, thus, any convincing explanation for their cultural policies.

### **Analytical Approaches**

These different approaches to the study of cultural policy are more than schismatic, being built on quite different intellectual foundations. In an expression borrowed from philosophy, they have been referred to as "ontological" positions. As used by political theorists, the term refers to: "a view about the nature of social existence and social beings" (Marsh and Stoker, 1995: 13) or, as Colin Hay put it: "... the nature of social and political reality to be investigated" (Hay, 2002: 61). This is not simply a reference to an epistemological gulf between Cultural Studies and an empirical approach to cultural policy studies (described by Oliver Bennett as "The Torn Halves of Cultural Policy Research" (Bennett, 2004)), but more pertinently to different ideas on what culture and cultural policy actually are and what purposes policy serves. As a result, analysing the arguments around the cultural policy literature requires the researcher to understand the "ontological" positions adopted.

Different approaches do not, though, always appear coherently as rigid demarcations. University departments and their research centres, for example, show biases in their work but a great deal of cross-over between approaches. Glasgow's Centre for Cultural Policy Research claims the "media and communications industries" as the focus of its work which accords with Cultural Studies approach,

whereas the Centre for Cultural Policy Studies at Warwick University seeks a much broader "engagement with both the practical realities of working in the cultural and media industries and with theoretical questions around the conditions of contemporary culture". Its research subjects reflect this, covering cultural "impacts" (in the current rhetorical metaphor), heritage, religion, management, and critical philosophical reflection on concepts of culture. Both contrast with the Centre for Cultural Policy and Management at City University, London, which reports its interests as being: "Developing critical skills for a professional cultural sector", viz, those who work within the "industry". But the fluidity with which these intellectual approaches are often mixed can lead to incoherence and "a great deal of analytical confusion" (Bennett, 2004: 238); a significant point considering that New Labour's cultural policies have themselves been criticised as containing paradoxes and "conceptual inconsistencies" (Selwood, 2006: 36). However, the assumption that this incoherence was innate in DCMS policy may mistake confusions resulting from diverse analytical approaches with those of political intentions.

### **"Culture"**

This word is a definitional Hydra, impossible to define or pin-down. Many authors have noted it as a "slippery, even a chaotic, concept" (M. J. Smith, 2000: 4), and most concur with Raymond Williams's comment that it is "... one of the two or three most complicated words in the English Language" (Williams, 1976): 76). The problem that all analysts face is that culture is, in W.B. Gallie's term, an "essentially contested concept" that no amount of definition, categorisation or elucidation can entirely resolve (Gallie, 1956). Nevertheless, the literature on culture can be taxonomically ordered. Four categories of meaning are discussed in the following chapter, each with its own literature:

- (i) Culture in scientific anthropology;
- (ii) Culture in social anthropology;
- (iii) Culture as cultivation; and
- (iv) Culture as the arts, intellectual and aesthetic works.

These categories are important if usage of the term and its functions within government are to be understood. There needs to be differentiation between the study of culture and its associated approaches to research and interpretation, and the concepts of culture employed in government policy. Gray's 2010 paper "Analysing cultural policy" is unusual for taking on this complex topic but, for the purposes of this thesis, does not make this differentiation sufficiently clear (Gray, 2010). In 1995 Oliver Bennett published an article in *European Journal of Cultural Policy* which implied these differences when categorising the key points of historic "government interventions in culture" as Royal patronage, censorship, support for the arts, the growth of subsidy, and the post-1945 developments (a period which includes the formation of the Arts Council) that "parallel" the Welfare State (O. Bennett, 1995: 201). He then identified the "rationales for government support of culture" in a list of "recurring themes": "*laissez faire*; national prestige; economic importance; the civilising mission; correcting the market; post-war reconstruction, and the Welfare State" (1995: 203). That article predated the New Labour government by two years so could not address its particular policies and their motivations, but his analysis is nevertheless valuable for its succinct summary of what was then a common view.

Aspects of the rationales given by Bennett's "themes" could still be found with DCMS policy, but only residually. Even the claim for economic importance referred more to artistic activities as businesses than to the social concept DCMS had in mind. In other words, they refer to arts policy yet, by the period Bennett was writing, "culture" had come to have a socio-economic meaning in government of which the arts were just one element. He mentions this in his definitions, but the rationales given refer quite specifically to the arts - then still the principle meaning of culture within government.

References to the arts pose a further problem that bedevils discussions of post-1945 cultural policy; one cogently expressed by John Pick when arguing that, since 1945, the arts have come to be defined "as being those things which are in need of subsidy". As he explained: "In Britain virtually all publishing, most of the music

industry, the largest part of theatre, most of the visual arts world, the film industry, most crafts, the majority of the design industry and all that we call entertainment exists commercially" (Pick, 1988ix), yet within government, "the arts" almost always means those activities receiving subsidy. The target of Pick's criticism was the Arts Council rather than government directly, but he is nevertheless unusual among academics in making this point (see also the introduction to (Pick, 1980: 9-19)). Its significance becomes plain when discussing policies of "access" and "excellence" in the arts, given that the vast bulk of artistic output was unsubsidised and market-orientated.

Arguments for the intrinsic value of the arts centre around the idea that they are, as Redcliffe-Maud expressed it, "sheer necessities" (Redcliffe-Maud, 1976: 21); that they are "necessary because of what they are *per se*: the relevant 'first order' value is that the arts are intrinsically good" (Austen-Smith, 1994: 245). This is a dominant view, as will be evidenced in the course of this thesis, but it brings two basic problems.

Firstly, there are strong arguments to question the presumption that the arts are essentially beneficial to the promotion of human values or that they provide social benefit (Belfiore, 2006a; Belfiore and Bennett, 2007b, 2008), and, secondly, the value judgements that underlie this logic are, like so many once comfortable moral ideals, now impaled on the spike of postmodern relativism. The universal and absolute values that are presumed for the arts are selective, and that selection conditionally favours certain genres, artists, and subjective judgements. Matthew Arnold's exhortation to expose all to "the best that has been thought and said in the world" (Arnold, 1932: 6) is founded on a judgement that would now contentiously reject much popular artistic work as intellectually inferior (pop music and TV soap operas, for examples).

Those issues aside, though, Bennett's summary neatly lists the well-argued and established rationales of governmental cultural policies. But when these are compared with New Labour's arguments for cultural policy, they appear to be only

partial, leaving unexplained the conceptual inconsistencies of DCMS policy, its ambitions in economic policy and its comparative disinterest in the arts *per se*.

### **The History Perspective**

Historians of cultural policy are in even shorter supply than theorists, making it difficult, but even more important, to identify the historic strands of governmental interest in cultural policy both to contextualise and contrast with New Labour's policies. Two substantial monographs on the subject are particularly important for their research and rarity: Janet Minihan's *The Nationalisation of Culture*, and Tracey C Davis history of *The Economies of the British Stage 1800-1914* (Minihan, 1977; Davis, 2000). Both are rich sources of information, although neither cover the modern period; Minihan's history of government interventions in culture begins in the early 18th century and ends in 1945, while Davis concludes her study of British theatre in 1914. Together they construct a picture of governmental attitudes and traditions that can still be recognised today. Robert Hewison, in *Culture and Consensus*, addressed the relationships between politics and the arts "since 1940" (ending close to publication date of 1995) but does so through the perspective of social change and the differences in analytical theory over the period (Hewison, 1995). He presumes throughout that culture essentially means the arts, formative of national identity and challenged more by "post-modern anxiety" than the construction of the socio-economic culture then embryonic in New Labour (1995: 312).

A number of scholars from the field of Cultural Studies also refer to the origins of culture policy but their approaches tends towards a history of ideas more than a primary interest in the historical research of political facts. Miller and Yúdice include a chapter on "The History and Theory of Cultural Policy", interrelating those facts with ideational development from a global perspective but, tellingly, they recognise, as did Bewes and Gilbert, that: "...practitioners and theorists of Cultural Studies have rarely, if ever, addressed the precise question of the institutional and intellectual relationship between Cultural Studies and political studies" (Bewes and

Gilbert, 2000: 6). For all its theorising, cultural policy remains "the missing agenda" within Cultural Studies (McRobbie, 1996: 335), perhaps a result of its ontological foundations and critical mission.

### **Instrumentalism and Evidence**

There does appear to be agreement among many authors that New Labour's interventions in the arts were most often for their instrumental value in achieving other ends. The exceptions may superficially appear to relate to arm's-length subsidies for the arts, but even these have been argued as mechanisms of control (Pick, 1988, 1980; Brighton, 1999), or to satisfy vested interests (Witts, 1998; Hutchison, 1982), and always as instruments for the furtherance of social and economic policies (Oakley, 2006; Strom, 2003; Welsh Arts Council, 1998 among numerous others). Consequently, instrumentalism has been a consistent explanation for cultural policy and noted for its implied disregard for the intrinsic values of the arts (for examples see (Gray, 2007; Jermyn, 2001; Sanderson, 2002; Bunting, 2008; Davies, 2008)). Belfiore placed instrumentalism within a long historical context: "We can only come to the conclusion that 'instrumentalism' is in fact 2,500 years old" (Belfiore, 2012: 104), while Clive Gray perceptively reversed the logic of instrumentalism to re-describe it as "attachment"; a device constructed to compensate for the negligible political value of cultural activity (Gray, 2002, 2008). Associating cultural works with issues of health, education, economic expansion, urban regeneration and the Welfare State can, it is argued, bring them back onto the government agenda. Both instrumentalism and attachment presume that the promotion of culture in its more traditional meaning as the arts were the purposes of policy; something this thesis will show was not the case.

The serial logic arising from the instrumentalists' argument focuses attention on the research for evidence that the arts might have some effect on those politically stronger policies. Again, Belfiore's historical research, this time co-authored with Oliver Bennett, shows the long, complex and remarkably mixed attitudes to the social impacts of the arts with many "cons" among the well-rehearsed "pros"



(Belfiore, 2006a; Belfiore and Bennett, 2007b, 2008). As with Bell-Villada's study of "art for art's sake" (Bell-Villada, 1996), monographs like this are rare but important tests of assumptions that lie behind popular notions of the nature and value of the arts.

When it comes to the specific assertions of the beneficial social and economic effects of cultural activity the literature also becomes complicated by the nature and quality of the research itself. The arguments here fall into two related categories: (i) the quality of research, viz, research methodologies and the interpretation of data, and the (ii) the problem of advocacy in research. Bennett and Belfiore once again feature among the most incisive critics, along with Gordon Hughes, Sara Selwood, Paola Merli, Malcolm Miles and Calvin Taylor (Merli, 2002; C. Taylor, 2006; Hughes, 1989; M. Miles, 2005; Selwood, 2002). A problem they identify is that research commissioned by parties interested in a particular result, (eg, DCMS or ACE) can lead to a wilful reading of data and hence weak evidence. When examining evidence for the effectiveness of its policies, it is significant that this weakness is one that New Labour either ignored or felt was insufficiently important to override its underlying motivations. In any case, what is largely absent from the research are convincing arguments for the *rationales* of the policy invented and operationalised by DCMS.

### **The Arts in Economics**

The power of cultural activity to further social and economic ambitions seemed never to have been doubted by DCMS, although there is little evidence that other government departments shared their conviction. Although recognition of the interconnectedness of society and the economy is as old as economic theory itself, with respect to modern cultural policy they became the subject of considerable attention with a much quoted book by John Myerscough: *The Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain* (1988). It followed several years in which the Arts Council had increasingly justified its funding for the arts on economic grounds (Selwood, 2010; Hughes, 1989). Myerscough's argument was different from the longer established economic analyses of artistic activities represented by the work of cultural

economists in the classical tradition such as William Baumol, Marc Blaug, Alan Peacock, David Throsby, Tibor Scitovsky and Ruth Towse (A. Peacock, Rizzo *et al.*, 1994; Blaug, 1976, 2001; Baumol and Bowen, 1966; Throsby, 1994, 2010; Scitovsky, 1983; Towse, 1997, 2006, 2010). Where Myerscough embedded the arts in the economy for their power to stimulate economic activity, even when loss-making in their own right, classical economists continued to measure and quantify artistic activity as businesses under utilitarian principles, taking no account of normative values. The inability of economists to achieve this ambition perfectly was noted by Ruth Towse: "... one of the strongest criticisms of economics is that it does not and cannot succeed in wiping out all value judgements" (Towse, 2010: 8). Given the aesthetic foundations of the arts and the subjective complexity of social relations, this is a devastating criticism. As a result, economists have largely dodged questions of artistic value that lie behind public-benefit justifications for arts subsidies with references to "the market" (A. Peacock, 2000; Baumol and Bowen, 1966; Fullerton, 1991; Scitovsky, 1983; Netzer, 1992). Subsidy itself has been deemed "a consequential act, undertaken for extrinsic or intrinsic reasons" (Austen-Smith, 1994: 240-247) but always based on the functional arguments of "market failure" or/and "market inefficiency".

This idea distorts the place of the arts in the economy by misunderstanding two fundamental points. Firstly, it takes little or no account of the extent to which the arts are actually "supplied" by the unsubsidised, commercial sector (Baumol and Bowen, 1966; Weiss, 1976; Zimmer and Toepler, 1999) despite it being far larger. The arts are not defined nor consistent in their character as the idea of a social or economic good implies. In practice, the subsidised and commercial arts are both a mix of the popular and obscure, the profound and the superficial, without definitional boundaries. Secondly, economic arguments are essentially nomothetic: constantly in search for rules, formal relations, and predictability. Antithetically, the arts are resistant to the aggregated valuations necessary for economic algorithms, most especially in the face of postmodern relativism.

New Labour took a view that rejected (at least in part) both the classical economic model and the aestheticism of the arts, preferring instead the resurgent endogenous growth theory ("EGT"). By his own admission, this was a subject of considerable interest to Gordon Brown and plausibly responsible for much of New Labour's economic theory. The subject is discussed in some detail in chapter 5 but, in essence, EGT contains adjustments to classical economic models in order to account for growth resulting from ideas, knowledge, innovations and entrepreneurship. Its development can be traced from Joseph Schumpeter's concept of "creative destruction" (McCraw, 2007; J. Schumpeter, 1939; J. A. Schumpeter, 1934), but then flows most cogently through Robert Solow and Paul Romer (R. Solow, 1957; R. M. Solow, 1994; P. Romer, 1986, 1990; P. M. Romer, 1994). The most comprehensive treatment of the subject is still Aghion and Howitt's *Endogenous Growth Theory* (Aghion and Howitt, 1999; see also Aghion and Howitt, 1992). This literature has few connections to any traditional understanding of cultural policy and has not appeared in the cultural policy literature at all. Nevertheless, for its coupling with notions of social capital it is argued in the coming chapters to be central to DCMS policy. Whether this was "attachment" or entirely justified by its own theoretical integrity is a matter of argument, but at the time these concepts had considerable significance in the World Bank, the EU and the OECD, thereby seeming to authenticate their role in New Labour's socio-cultural policies (OECD, 2001; Bebbington, Guggenheim *et al.*, 2004; Harriss, 2002; World Bank, 2000). Its principles also share a great deal with social economics more generally (Swedberg, 1991; Hunt, 2005; Staveren and Knorringa, 2007: 113).

Of the three best known proponents of social capital; Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putnam, only Bourdieu developed a theory that did not draw on the rational choice logic that characterises most economic theory (Bourdieu, 1993; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). For Bourdieu, social capital was knowledge directed by "habitus" within a "field" of relations in which individuals compete for power, recognition and cultural capital. Coleman also saw social capital as a description of social relations but one governed by the rationality of self-regarding

individuals (Coleman, 1988, 1986b, a). Robert Putnam's works popularised the concept of social capital among the general public as much as with the polity, but his particular interest in "effective government" gave it a special significance in DCMS policy (R. Putnam, 1995, 2000, 1993; R. D. Putnam, Leonardi *et al.*, 1994). Perhaps his best known work, *Making Democracy Work*, describes how networks of trusting relationships act "horizontally" to create a form of civic engagement with considerable economic power (R. D. Putnam, Leonardi *et al.*, 1994). The same arguments can be found in EGT and are easily connected to cultural policy as social policy (these arguments are also critically elaborated in: (Woolcock, 1998: 15-43; Schuller, Baron *et al.*, 2000: 28; Daly, 2005: 5, 12-14; Field, 2008; Coleman and Fararo, 1992; Levi, 1996)).

The assertion that the arts have considerable economic impact has additionally given them a role in urban regeneration. This topic draws extensively on theories of social and human capital, but also contentiously relates artistic activity with both economic and social amelioration. One outcome has been the development of theories of cultural regeneration and cultural economics as sub-disciplines. Comedia has published extensively on these themes having been formed in 1978 by Charles Landry to study and publish on the interconnectedness of culture, creativity and cities (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993; Bianchini and Landry, 1994; Landry and Bianchini, 1995; Matarasso, 1997; Landry, Greene *et al.*, 1996; Matarasso, 2003). Resulting from this trend, the development of cities is argued to be less geographically dependent (as was theorised by Jane Jacobs (Jacobs, 1970, 1961) but more reliant on people, their knowledge and their activities (an approach found in (P. Hall, 1999)). The arguments were most famously elaborated, extended and popularised by the American geographer Richard Florida in his influential book *The Rise of the Creative Class* (Florida, 2002). By the time New Labour took office, cultural factors in urban regeneration were the subject of numerous government reports, advocacy research, consultants' theories, economic analyses, theoretical arguments, and political statements, as well as within well-founded critical research. Even by 1992, several years before the explosion of this literature in Britain, a report

by Anthony Radich, for the National Endowment for the Arts in the USA, listed some 270 reports and papers on the economic impact of the arts, although most with reference to America (Anthony J Radich, 1992; see also Anthony J. Radich and Schwoch, 1987). Added to that list are studies on the workings of creative individuals within commercial enterprises. In a reversal to the intent of Theodor Adorno's and Max Horkheimer's famous oxymoron "culture industry", these are now mopped-up in a loosely defined concept of the "creative industries" (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979; DCMS, 1998b). A 2007 literature review on the subject, commissioned by ACE, lists some 350 relevant works with only a handful written before the mid-1970s (O'Connor, 2007).

Just why these should be matters for cultural policy is never explained in the literature. But DCMS not only latched onto these arguments but, under Chris Smith's direction, expounding them strongly. Smith's book, *Creative Britain*, attempted to unify the arts with creativity in industry, science and technology, claiming a role for the originality and quality he and others believed they had identified in artistic works. Expressed as "innovation", "excellence", and "regeneration", these were, he wrote, among the principle justifications for "state patronage" of the arts (C. Smith, 1998: 19). These words presaged a work whose author is said to have been one of Tony Blair's favourites (if book-cover blurb is to be believed): Charles Leadbeater. His book, *Living on Thin Air*, was important for how it defined an idea of "the new economy" (its subtitle) as one based on knowledge rather than physical processes. Although observing the "partly malign" prospects of the information age, Leadbeater embraced the social and economic changes of the time for their social and economic potential (Leadbeater, 1999). He defined both an attitude and an optimistic way of seeing the restless reinvention of relationships resulting from technological change. But, for just that reason, the book's content also has more in common with a voguish motivational rhetoric than objective analysis. Critics of the regeneration arguments abound (among them Evans, 2005; Evans and Shaw, 2004; Oakley, 2006, 2004; M. Miles, 2005; S. Miles and Paddison, 2005; Vickery, 2007) with most pointing to the lack of strong evidence or even the

impossibility of finding evidence to support the extensive claims made. Far from dislodging arts-led urban regeneration from economic policy, though, the traction of those arguments pulled along not only government bodies (such as the local urban regeneration companies) but also arts agencies, (and ACE itself) in search of power for their own ends through political relevance. Empirically, it seems that DCMS's efforts for recognition and significance within government had the same effect on its client NDPBs.

### **Culture in Governance**

The shift from arts policy to a cultural policy that could envelop social and economic interests marked a profound change in the relations of the arts to the state. Under DCMS, the arts were generative activities for the national social and economic regeneration with which their work could be legitimated. This shift has been referred to as a "cultural turn" for its new emphasis on the socio-anthropological context of political action (L. Ray and Sayer, 1999; and see Lawson, 2006 for an international view). This brings into relevance literature which analyses the nation state as an outcome of cultural practices, with the direct implication that governance, if not government itself, is dependent on cultural structures - undoubtedly areas of great interest to DCMS. Perri 6 put the point bluntly in 1997, saying: "Culture is now the centre of the agenda for government reform, because we now know from findings from a wide range of research that culture is perhaps the most important determinant of a combination of long-run economic success and social cohesion" (6, 1997: 272). Perri 6 gives no references for these "findings", but William Ray provided the logic without noting the immanent contradictions, saying: "...the idea of 'culture' welds rational autonomy and the expression of individual will to the disclosure and production of a framework of rules, values, beliefs and practices" (L. Ray and Sayer, 1999: 2). Others authors have followed similar reasoning: Mark Smith argued that social interest is defined by culture (M. J. Smith, 2000); Alan Finlayson that government and culture are, like structure and agency, reflective of each other, and that culture is a mode of government (Finlayson, 2000); David Lloyd argued a "convergence" of "theories of the modern state and theories of

culture", as did Timothy Bewes and Jeremy Gilbert (Bewes and Gilbert, 2000: 25); while Larry Ray found the same idea in Gordon Brown's expression: "the power of the community" (Brown, 1994: quoted in; L. Ray and Sayer, 1999: 259).

It should be added that cultural governance indicates a much broader approach to the subject than the debates on governance within political studies as elaborated by Guy Peters, Mark Bevir, R A W Rhodes, Amit Ron and Chris Skelcher; arguments which compete around concepts of the "hollowed-out or "congested" state (for which see (Skelcher, 2000; Bevir and Rhodes, 2006, 2003; Bevir, Rhodes *et al.*, 2003; Bevir and Trentmann, 2007; Rhodes, 1997, 1996, 2012; Ron, 2012; B. G. Peters, 1993). In a literature review for the Cultural Office of the European Commission, Vesna Čopič and Andrej Sraker list works which cover the panoply of topics claimed under the title of cultural governance on the premise that cultural interventions by government effect the norms and practices of everyday life (Čopič and Sraker, 2012). In doing so they find a new relevance for a history of social theory as cultural policy but without any reference to the arts whatsoever.

The influence of cultural governance might also account for changes in the normative balance between the public and private spheres. This line of thought leads to yet another sizable literature, for which the theories are well summarised by Colin Hay *et al* in an edited book on the subject (Hay, Lister *et al.*, 2006). But two authors whose work coincidentally points towards the cultural policy triumvirate of the social, cultural and governmental are David Marquand and John Keane. The former referred to the "neoliberal trend towards populism" in the late 20th century as a source of legitimate power for governments. This argument links cultural shifts to the rise of individualism in the late 20th century that redefine the public domain. Reversing the direction of influence, that link also suggests that political action can change the cultural domains that are defined by the actions of individuals. For example, Marquand quotes Nigel Lawson saying that by selectively removing state controls he could "change the entire culture of a nation" (Marquand, 2004: 104). This tension between the private and the public points to an important paradox noted in

some literature on this topic. As John Keane argued, public domains are actually defined by individuals and it is their norms and practices that collectively constitute "culture"; it can never refer to singular or private actions despite being formed from them (Keane, 1998).

While legislation was one way to influence a national culture (and with it the legitimacy of government actions), education offered a more subtle mechanism for cultural intervention and one that appears to justify DCMS's inclusion of education as one of its four policy themes. David Buckingham and Ken Jones make the point:

"... the educational 'work ethic' of Labour was connected to a view of children less as inhabitants of a complex cultural space than as economic resources to be augmented or as social problems requiring a stronger disciplinary regime; and where culture figured at all, it had less to do with emancipatory possibility than with strengthening established norms of behaviour" (Buckingham and Jones, 2001: 2)

These arguments run close to the logic of New Labour or, at least, DCMS's rationale for their adoption, yet none of their authors demonstrated their use in cultural policy.

### **Government Policies and Data Sources**

The arguments presented in this thesis have drawn on aspects of all these debates but are fundamentally formed from the policies, political statements and legislative actions of government. Chapter 2 begins by describing the historical background to New Labour's cultural policies since the mid-18th century. It relies not just on the literature but extensively on Hansard and the documentation of government business. One particular source has never previously been examined in cultural policy research, or at least not in its entirety (that the author can discover): the Appropriation Accounts, published every year since the originating Bill of 1861. Within them, they show how funds have been allocated to governmental cultural endeavours, providing an institutional narrative that runs alongside the political actions, debates and public statements on policy.



Researching more recent years, particularly since the mid-20th century, the full array of Command Papers, Select Committee reports, policy statements (including party manifestos), and departmental reports have been exhaustively examined. The personal biographies and memoirs of relevant ministers give another perspective to this data, from which those of Jennie Lee, Hugh Jenkins, Roy Shaw (General Secretary of the Arts Council 1975-83), Edward Heath, Peter Mandelson and Tony Blair have been particularly informative (Heath, 1998; Blair, 2010, 1998; Hollis, 1997; R. Shaw, 1987; Mandelson, 2011; Jenkins, 1979). Documents relating to the policies of DCMS are, of course, central to the research and are discussed in chapter 3 together with the critical literature that contributes to an understanding of political motives. Histories of the Arts Council have provided a perspective on these sources as, since 1945, it was the principal organisation for the distribution of government funds for cultural activities. The Council itself published a history in 2004, but others, such as Robert Hutchinson, Richard Witts and Robert Hewison, have offered rather more critical views (Hewison, 1995; Witts, 1998; Hutchinson, 1982).

The above covers a large area of literature. It omits much but nevertheless describes the typological range that has been the subject of study in this research. It also leaves begging an explanation for New Labour's cultural policies. New Labour's indifference to traditional arts policies and their focus on social and economic policy have been noted in some of the literature but under-theorised and never rationalised. These matters cannot be explained through the study of individual policies but require a panoptic analysis in their historical, ideational and institutional context.

## Research Methods

The review of literature and sources indicates the considerable range used in this research, some of which has not previously been referenced in the cultural policy literature. To make sense of this breadth, research conclusions are derived from pragmatic methods and the "consilience" of evidence, in the sense that they are the points where evidence from different data converge (Whewell, 1847: vol2, 681; recently elaborated in E. O. Wilson, 1999). Responding to these multifarious sources, no single theoretical approach has been employed, following Andrew Sayer's argument that: "Theories are selective, one-sided, highlighting particular structures and properties; that is their strength, but also their weakness"; each approach can reveal something but what is revealed may be partial (Sayer, 2010: ix). Norman Denzin made a similar point: "...that multiple methods must be used in every investigation, since no method is ever free of rival causal factors..." (Denzin, 1970: 26). In this respect, consilience is a process similar to "triangulation" (Olsen, 2004; Downward and Mearman, 2007; Vanderstraeten, 2006), allowing "different disciplinary perspectives upon an issue" (Downward and Mearman, 2007: 81). However, that navigational metaphor implies greater precision than is achievable in most sociological research, hence the preference here for Whewell's more negotiated approach.

The research plan was organised into two sections: (i) the historical context from which DCMS policies arose, and (ii) an examination and critical review of those policies. The latter include the specific research for the case study of the CBSO. Research methods have been similar in each, but the sources of data have varied in their availability and variety.

### **1. The Historical Context**

The small amount of historical literature on the UK's cultural policies results in part from their nominative absence before DCMS. Except by implication, there were no

cultural policies before 1997. Arts policy (that is to say, continuous and planned support for the arts as a policy of government) developed from the work of CEMA in 1939. Before the financing of CEMA and the subsequent creation of the ACGB concerns for the arts were manifested mostly in negative controls; for example, in censorship and licensing, rather than in their promotion. Nevertheless, several concepts important to an understanding of New Labour's cultural policy were formed in the 18th and 19th centuries: notably among them the principles of the market economy, *laissez-faire*, policy instrumentalism, perceptions of public and private values, and notions of *l'art pour l'art*. Institutions, attitudes and practices were also formed in earlier times and carried through to become a part of New Labour's inheritance. The diachronic study of these origins has provided an illuminating historic context for the arguments that follow.

That history has been researched through documents. In addition to tracing and expanding on cited sources within the literature, considerable use has been made of Hansard (while always conscious of its own methodological development over the period), Command Papers, Bills and other parliamentary papers and reports. Most were accessed online but several sessions at the Parliamentary Archive were necessary for sight of records still to be digitised or to trace others that had been incorrectly catalogued.

Paper copies of the complete series of annual Appropriation Accounts, from their originating Act of 1861 to 2001, were acquired by library searches, with the remainder downloaded from the online Parliamentary Archives. These provided a great deal of detail on both the development of institutions and of particular events, complementing published written histories and, in the process, often revealing differences of factual reporting or secondary source interpretations. They proved particularly useful as another source with which to view the passage of parliamentary decisions as they evolved into administrative actions. Events discussed in the literature and statements in Hansard could often be substantiated with the accounts, while providing insights into events not otherwise explained

(reasons for delays in implementing policies, for example, were sometimes annotated in the accounts). Most importantly, they provided much detailed information necessary for process-tracing through an audit of institutional development. These accounts are rarely cited in the literature and no author has previously claimed to have followed the institutional narrative they provide.

Archived material was researched on a number of occasions in order to trace important ideas back to their original intentions or, at least, to understand how and why they developed. The records of the Pilgrim Trust were inspected at the London Metropolitan Archive, rare books and pamphlets were obtained through the online archives at the University of Liège, Project Gutenberg, and the American Libraries Internet Archive. The V&A and the British Library online catalogues provided information on publishers and editions. Some publications were subsequently read at the British Library and the Bodleian Library (for example, Eduard Bernstein's monograph on Ferdinand Lassalle), and the Cadbury Research Library was the source of John Bowring's 1839 edition of Jeremy Bentham's letters. The National Archives were searched on several occasions for government records but in all cases the information sought was not available, either because it had not yet been catalogued or remained "closed" as an exception under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI Requests are discussed below). Political party manifestos are available from several online sources, but samples were checked for accuracy with paper copies sourced in libraries.

## **2. New Labour's cultural policies**

Research for recent history, particularly since the mid-20th century, used the same sources as above but with three additions: the texts of public speeches, interviews, and Freedom of Information Requests.

### **i) Speeches.**

The website [www.BritishPoliticalSpeech.org](http://www.BritishPoliticalSpeech.org) was a useful source for Tony Blair's speeches, as it was for those of earlier Prime Ministers (very little of which had any

relevance, as it turned out). With few exceptions, Chris Smith's early speeches (before 2001) had to be taken from newspaper reports and the revised versions published in *Creative Britain*. The exceptions were reports in Hansard and his representations published in Select Committee reports. The sources of quotations from the speeches of early ministers for the arts are all taken from similar secondary sources, as referenced in the text.

ii) Interviews:

Semi-structured interviews were recorded with Chris Smith (Minister of State for Culture Media and Sport from 2nd May 1997 to 8th June 2001, now Baron Smith of Finsbury), Alan Davey (who was then Director of Arts and Culture for DCMS and is now Chief Executive of the Arts Council), Michael Lyons (then an Advisor to the Treasury, author of the Lyons Report on local government, a past Chairman of the BBC and Chairman of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra - the subject of a case study in this research), Helen Flack (then Director of Corporate Programmes for the Arts Council), Jill Robinson (then Director of the Regional, European and International Division of Birmingham City Council), and three interviews with Stephen Maddock (Chief Executive of the CBSO). The structured elements differed for each interviewee according to their position and their particular role in the formation and application of cultural policy. All, though, were targetted firstly at identifying how interviewees perceived the logic and the effectiveness of New Labour's cultural policies, and secondly how those policies related to their work. The interviews were recorded and notes taken, but only Chris Smith's was transcribed in order to enable some discourse analysis.

iii) Freedom of Information Requests:

FOI requests were made to the Cabinet Office, to DCMS and to HM Treasury. The CO were asked six questions about the minutes and other records of meetings concerning the DCMS, and for any unpublished reports relating to "the creation, naming, formation and funding of DCMS". They confirmed they held information relating to these questions but denied access on the grounds that they contained

"information relating to the formation of policy" and "ministerial communication". In other words, exactly the information sought was refused on the grounds of its nature. This response was appealed but to little effect. However, one important outcome from the ensuing correspondence was a statement that the Cabinet had not discussed the naming nor the responsibilities of DCMS. Comparing this fact with Tony Blair's statement in 2007 indicated a line of questioning that proved important: "Years ago", Blair stated, "... I said that we would make the arts and culture part of our 'core script'. In other words, it was no longer to be on the periphery, an add-on ... but rather it was to be central, an essential part of the narrative about the character of a new, different, changed Britain" (Blair, 2007). Given DCMS's strenuous efforts to make cultural policy a central concern of government, the admission by the CO implied it may have been a departmental ambition rather than one of concern to the Cabinet, despite Blair's statement.

The requests made to DCMS covered the same ground. More extensive replies were received, each falling into one of three categories: those referencing published documents (all of which had already been acquired), those stating that relevant documents were no longer held by DCMS, and restatements of material already available on the DCMS website. The documents no longer held were said to be with the National Archives. However, in email correspondence an NA archivist claimed no knowledge of the records and assumed they were still in transit or awaiting cataloguing.

Questions to HM Treasury were no more successful. They replied asking for the questions to be "narrowed", before claiming (on 17th November 2008), that answering the questions "would exceed the appropriate time limit specified in the regulations for central government and set at £600". On appeal, they suggested I name specific documents before they could respond further.

Despite being largely fruitless in revealing new information (the exception being confirmation that the naming and brief for DCMS were not discussed at Cabinet),

the FOI process has been mentioned here as a method of discovery employed in the research.

### **Interpretation**

New Labour's cultural policies were often publicly predicated on deterministic arguments and on a reified concept of culture; culture as an object with definition and boundaries; as a thing with material characteristics and agential powers in its own right. In this sense, their use of the term "culture" is characteristic of the scientism behind other explanatory expressions ("nature" for example) used to imply that constructed concepts can have self-directing capabilities. Jack McConnell's statement that "culture ... can make Scotland a healthier place ..." typifies that tendency (Scottish Cultural Commission, 2005). It is one of the fundamental problems of analysing cultural policy documents that the deductive proofs DCMS sought for its cultural policies are ontologically impossible; that a "thing" called culture simply does not exist. It is not surprising then that the logic claimed for the policy rationales and the justifications set-out in government documents often lacked the deductive rigor necessary to support their claims. Theories of cultural and human capital, regeneration strategies, and claims for the economic power of the creative industries, all of which are now made by cultural agencies internationally, often fall into this category.

These are clearly not nomothetic issues. This is one of the most complex factors to consider in interpreting the government documents about cultural policy. Without a viable and consistent definition of culture, identifying the real targets of policies within, say, the quantitatively defined PSAs between the Treasury and DCMS, is problematic. This also affects critical reviews of some of the reports and research studies commissioned by DCMS, many of which are formed on unquestioned assumptions of what "culture" actual means and, thereby, the effectiveness of cultural policies.

Extracting the logic of DCMS policy though the evidence of texts is further confused by the authorship of the documents themselves. Like nearly all government documents, they are the result of processes by several politicians or bureaucrats, each with their own, perhaps differing, responsibilities towards the published text and each dependent on the work of the others. Even a cursory analysis of Tony Blair's one-and-only speech on the arts (Blair, 2007 - referred to above) suggests it was written by DCMS; its arguments and phrasing unique to the Department's literature and never previously uttered by Blair. Like so much of the content of media comment and public debate, speeches can be second or third-order interpretations in themselves. At the same time, those media commentators and political adversaries that dispute the veracity or validity of ministerial rationales have their own motivations derived from multiple layers of interpretations.

A defence by the authors of cultural policy could be made that it is the outcomes of particular actions or policies that concern the government; the possible meanings of its terms merely a squabble among academics. If this defence were made, it would be rejected. The relationship between nomenclature and policy can hardly be an accidental or insignificant matter. It is the very fact that certain policies are explicitly justified as "cultural" that raises the most basic questions. The evidence available for the analysis of those questions is inextricably embedded within the very statements and, thereby, the policies, that are in question.

The thesis proceeds by first discussing matters of definition and interpretation before introducing an historical perspective which contextualises New Labour's cultural policies. "Culture" then becomes further defined by its use in practice. This methodology builds on narrative, but also provides a background against which the rationales of New Labour's cultural policies stand in plain silhouette. Other readings of the same material might arguably produce different conclusions, although the coherence of the arguments presented here and their consistency with the available evidence does give the author confidence that they are essentially sound.



# Chapter One

## Conceptualising Cultural Policy

### "Culture": concepts and usage

The Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) was the first government department in Britain to include the word “culture” in its title. A number of sources, including DCMS (DCMS, 2008) and Chris Smith himself (C. Smith, 2009) have said this was no more than the preceding Department of National Heritage renamed. “Culture” for New Labour and the DCMS might, then, reasonably be taken to have a synonymic relationship with the core responsibilities of that preceding department. The Third Report of the National Heritage Committee, 1996, included a statement by John Major, the Prime Minister at the time, that summarised the aims of DNH; notably the word “culture” was not used:

I strongly believe that man cannot live by GDP alone. A rounded life involves much more than economic security. A country can only be strong, healthy and contented if it burnishes its heritage, encourages its citizens to pursue excellence in sport, and cultivates widespread appreciation of the arts. I would like to see everyone in the country share in the opportunities that were once available to the privileged few.... It was in that spirit that I set up the Department of National Heritage. Its creation was a sign that Government should take such activities seriously. For millions of people, they are not optional extras: they are worth valuing in their own right” (National Heritage Committee, 1996: v).

David Mellor, the first Secretary of State for DNH, added to Major's statement “that cultural values matter ... the cultural values of a nation are what endures” [sic] (National Heritage Committee, 1996: v). The innovative inclusion of sport had the effect of broadening the Department's work, but did not otherwise weaken the meaning of culture as being the arts. Discussing the traditions of cultural policy in the United Kingdom, Oliver Bennett gave a straightforward definition for this usage:

“Culture is used to describe the product of intellectual, and particularly, artistic activity. It thus refers to music, drama, dance, painting, sculpture, literature, film and so in. The list may never be exhaustive” (O. Bennett, 1995: 201). That had been the meaning employed by the DNH. Writing at the time, two years before the New Labour administration, Bennett noted that cultural policy in Britain “relates primarily to culture ... as an aesthetic or intellectual product” (O. Bennett, 1995).

Intuitively, the public voice of the arts and heritage community that supported the Labour Party in the 1997 General Election (if the lobbying of the arts community and the output of left-leaning press was representative of that community) believed that New Labour would follow or strengthen policies in support of the arts. In fact, and to the dismay of many, central government funding for the arts initially decreased under New Labour, only to rise above the DNH awards in 1999/2000, leading a puzzled arts lobby to complain vociferously. An earlier Minister of State for the Arts, Grey Gowrie (1983 – 1985) summed-up the mood, calling Labour’s funding “niggardly and atavistic” (Gowrie, 1998), while Sir Peter Hall claimed a number of leading figures as members of his “Shadow Arts Council”- in effect an opposition lobby for more arts funding. Among them were Sir Tom Stoppard, Harrison Birtwistle, Julian Lloyd Webber, Harold Pinter, Sir Simon Rattle and Sir Richard Eyre (Sylvester, 1999; Glaister, 1999; HL Hansard, 1999a: cols 141-3). They felt misled, it was claimed, having expected the continuation of Labour’s historically strong inclination to support their arguments. After all, the 1997 Labour Manifesto had declared:

[The millennium] also provides a natural opportunity to celebrate and improve the contribution made by the arts, culture and sport to our nation ... The Department of National Heritage will develop a strategic vision that matches the real power and energy of British arts, media and cultural industries (Labour Party, 1997)

In this extract, Labour appeared to share this tradition of culture as the arts, albeit with an interest in their economic potential. It was an understanding more than a century old and, as John Major’s statement attests, it was one generally shared across the political spectrum.

What New Labour meant by “culture” was, though, an alternative reading of this text in which the arts were an instrumental part of a much broader concept of culture. It was reinforced in other sections of their 1997 Manifesto:

The arts, culture and sport are central to the task of recreating the sense of community, identity and civic pride that should define our country. Yet we consistently undervalue the role of the arts and culture in helping to create a civic society - from amateur theatre to our art galleries.

Art, sport and leisure are vital to our quality of life and the renewal of our economy. They are significant earners for Britain. They employ hundreds of thousands of people. They bring millions of tourists to Britain every year... .

Culture here was to be promoted for its functional values to social and economic change, not for its intrinsic qualities. New Labour’s proposals appeared to be an amalgam of the mercantilism of the previous Conservative government with a new socio-economic instrumentalism directed towards the formation of a cohesive society in which citizens share common economic interests. As its policies hardened in government, Labour would come to have an ever greater emphasis on these ambitions and take on a moral mission for the formation of the citizen within society; in Tony Blair’s words, “a new contract between citizen and state” (Dept of Social Security, 1997-8: v). This most significant statement is one that goes to the heart of the reinterpretation of culture under New Labour, integral with their concept of a “Third Way” and its manifestations in governance strategies. The targets of cultural policy were then no longer centred on the arts but rather on how culture might be used to reform the structures and norms of a particularly kind of economic society. In this reading culture was society and society formed the economy. In Fukuyama's words, "... [society] cannot be divorced from culture" (Fukuyama, 1995b: 13), but by the same logic he might have added that culture cannot be divorced from the economy.

At the time, these appeared as small differences of interpretation, almost lost in the overgrowth of political rhetoric. Any macroeconomic function for cultural policy was little noticed outside of the general observation of an obvious instrumentalism,

particularly in social policy (defined by McGuigan as "cultural ventures and cultural investments as a means to attain goals in other than cultural areas" ((McGuigan, 2004: 134-5), but see also (Mirza, 2006; Gray, 2007; Vickery, 2007)). This is not altogether surprising given that "culture" had been understood differently by governments, scholars, and in general usage for centuries. Its polysemic nature obfuscates meaning and, consequently, the rationales of policy. "Culture" then has to be understood by its history, context and its usage. As Fred Inglis put it, "[meaning] must rest, not on an imaginary distillation of a supposedly incontestable meaning but upon usage" (Inglis, 2004: 6). It is this last point that makes definition a central issue in investigating the rationales of New Labour's cultural policies. How policy used reified forms of culture, and how that usage was understood by others, forms the groundwork upon which rationales can then be extricated from the rhetoric. These ideas will be explored in the sections below beginning with a description of the roots and the usage of this most difficult word.

### **The Problem of Definition**

"Culture" intrigues and taunts scholars, but still defies attempts to pin down its meaning. It is not that a definition cannot be found for any particular circumstance, but that a single definition across all its uses is so elusory. The challenge here is to discern typological differences in the use of the term by British governments, but these must necessarily be drawn from wider conceptual approaches. In various ways, "culture", the word and the subject, has been of considerable academic interest in recent decades (Gray, 2010), but is also said to be found in the history of ideas stretching as far back as ancient Greece (Lawson, 2006; Belfiore, 2006b). The "cultural turn" of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century claims many *post hoc* cognates for what now has been variously characterised as a post-structuralist, contextualist and antipositivist concept. Among the contributors to this lineage, Stephanie Lawson lists Vico, Herder, Dilthey and Gadamer, but she might equally have added Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* or Hume's *A Treatise on Human Nature*, Weber's interpretive sociology, Wittgenstein's revelations on role of language, or the flood of works

arising from Tocqueville's tour of 19th century America. The list is now vast; impressive for its size and depth, yet still without settling on any fixed meaning for the concept of culture but, rather, establishing its complexity.

Raymond Williams famously claimed “Culture” as “... one of the two or three most complicated words in the English Language”, noting its use “in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought” (Williams, 1976: 7), and justifying the assertion that it is “...commonly awarded the accolade of being the most complex [word] of all” (Eagleton, 2000: 1). But this view was far from new; Johann Gottfried Herder said much the same thing 150 years earlier: “Nothing is more indeterminate than this word [culture], and nothing more deceptive than its application to all nations and periods” (Quoted in Barnard, 1969: 24). Writing a brief history of culture, Fred Inglis summarised its meanings since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, noting its continuing semantic indistinction: “culture [then] became what it remains: protean, enormous, inclusive, bloodily disputed” (Inglis, 2004: 29). Meanings vary also with different methodological and theoretical approaches. The works of early ethnographers bear little comparison with the Marxist cultural analyses of Theodor Adorno or Walter Benjamin, while the theories of those engaged in contemporary Cultural Studies can be difficult to reconcile with Friedrich Schiller's aestheticism. William Ray's comment, that “It takes a certain amount of foolhardiness even to use the word...” is undoubtedly good advice for the unwary (W. Ray, 2001: ix).

Raymond Williams' etymological study of the word is an often quoted source of cultural definitions. Dismissing dictionary definitions as unable to help with words “which involve ideas and values”, Williams introduced a root meaning that preceded its use as 19th Century metaphor:

“Before this period, it had meant, primarily, the ‘tending of natural growth’, and then, by analogy, a process of human training. But this latter usage, which had usually been a culture *of* something, was changed, in the nineteenth century, to *culture* as such, a thing in itself. It came to mean, first, ‘a general state or habit of the mind’, having close relations with the idea of

human perfection. Second, it came to mean ‘the general state of intellectual development, in a society as a whole’. Third, it came to mean ‘the general body of the arts’. Fourth, later in the century, it came to mean ‘a whole way of life’, material intellectual and spiritual”. (Williams, 1960: xvi, his italics).

Even a cursory examination of that summary shows its great breath and variety of meaning. It can never be reduced to “brute facts” (C. L. Becker, 1932: 9), but arises out of “shared mental modes” belonging to the ideas of a particular time and place (Denzau and North, 1994). Like all ideas, and the institutions that arise from them, those concepts also persist over time, adjusted and revised according to contingent circumstances. This results from their reflective nature, defining as well as defined by a “climate of opinion” (Whitehead, 1927: 3): “ ‘those instinctively held preconceptions in the broad sense, that *Weltanschuuang* or world pattern’, that characterises a particular time and place” (C. L. Becker, 1932: 5; quoted in Ritter, 1986: 459). Recent decades have seen a change that is now persistent and dominating: the shift of meaning from its origins as an active process of cultivation to a noun, reified and objectified into “a thing in itself” with immanent powers - the “culture can ... ” assertions noted in the opening paragraphs of this thesis. That change alone has multiplied both meaning and usage of “culture”, invalidating any single etymological genealogy with differences in meaning that cannot be fully reconciled but only noted, and its uses qualified.

The definitions that follow attempt to identify, explain and exemplify those aspects of its meanings necessary to provide a vocabulary with which to construct arguments about New Labour’s cultural policies. As a consequence, only a few essential factors are discussed within each category of meaning. Cultural theorists may find much omitted in the history of ideas and in the scholarship they feel important for a complete understanding of their subject. Any criticism on this basis would, though, only be valid if any omission was essential to understanding culture in the *political* context of the New Labour government of 1997 as it is discussed in this thesis.

## Approaches to Definition

The approach taken here is to argue that it is possible to corral the polysemic aspects of cultural concepts into four categories:

- (i) Culture in scientific anthropology;
- (ii) Culture in social anthropology;
- (iii) Culture as cultivation;
- (iv) Culture as the arts.

A number of cultural theorists have simplified definitional differences even further by pointing to just two basic senses, separating those that refer to the arts from those that have, as Oliver Bennett notes, essentially “an anthropological meaning”; where it “refers to a whole way of life – as in Japanese culture, American culture, Black culture, youth culture and so on” (O. Bennett, 1995: 201). However, there are profound differences in the way in which anthropologists approach their work, characterised at the extremes by the positivism of scientific methodologies and those that are essentially interpretive and hermeneutic. Bennett's dualism also omits a whole area of meaning in which culture has a role in cultivation through pedagogy and self-enlightenment, relating culture atomistically to the individual. Culture can also be synonymous with civilisation but as this relates to all five definitional categories, it is not discussed separately.

### (i) Culture in Scientific Anthropology

The first edition of Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) was published at a time of considerable social and economic change in Britain (Arnold, 1932). The struggles of many (Carlyle, Morris, and Coleridge significant among them) to find beauty and security in the social upheavals of industrialising Victorian England and its “vast residuum” were provoked by the increasing pace of scientific thought and discovery (1932: xxiv). Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* had the unintended effect of further strengthening ideas of social determinism argued by Henri Saint-Simon and his student Auguste Comte, affecting, too, J.S Mill's more developed theories of the

utilitarian social and moral philosophy of Jeremy Bentham and Mill's father, James. By the ideas of this new scientism, the underlying nature of human societies were argued to be universally consistent, predictably hierarchical and progressive. The culture of any society or group could be assessed and located accurately on a developmental graph of the progression of civilisation. In Morgan's words: "It can now be asserted upon convincing evidence that savagery preceded barbarism in all the tribes of mankind, as barbarism is known to have preceded civilization. The history of the human race is one in source, one in experience, and one in progress" (L. H. Morgan, 2005 [1877]: v-vi). The eminent anthropologist Edward Tylor was equally adamant: "[Evolution] is the great principle which every scholar must lay firm hold of if he intends to understand either the world he lives in or the history of the past" (Edward Burnett Tylor, 1881: 20). His belief was that "a general law can be inferred" from the observable facts of human behaviour and that those "facts collected seem to favour the view that the wide difference in the civilization and mental state of the various races of mankind are rather differences of development than origin" (Edward Burnett Tylor, 1878 [1965]: 3, 372).

In a more recent study of the "Evolution of Culture" (1959), the anthropologist Leslie White argued his support for the evolutionary approach, saying it had been "so fundamental in the biological sciences, so fruitful in the physical sciences, where it is coming to be used more and more in astronomy and physics, and in the many social sciences" it would be "incomprehensible" if it "should not find a place in cultural anthropology" (L. A. White, 1959: viii-ix). The individual was, then, an atom of society whose aggregate behaviour could be understood and predicted with unalterable natural laws, whether those of the scientific materialism of Karl Marx, or through the self-interested individualism of utilitarianism, or other mechanisms still to be revealed by scientific investigation. In the possibility that human beings were just complex machines, if reflexive and thereby self-learning, lay the foundations for a new understanding of culture to be defined by the analysis of behaviour.



Anthropologists made culture an essential part of their lexicon, used as a summary description for traditions and practices and defined by exhaustive lists of the behavioural traits of particular human groups. Leslie White described culture as “an extrasomatic, temporal continuum of things and events dependent upon symboling. Specifically and concretely, culture consists of tools, implements, utensils, clothing, ornaments, customs, institutions, beliefs, rituals, games, clothing, works of art, language, etc” (L. A. White, 1959: 3). The recognition that objects may have symbolic, social, functions does, though, point towards a more interpretive approach. Edward Tylor has been claimed as among the first to seek an all-embracing notion of culture; one that encompassed both these social and physical manifestations. Unqualified, such a claim would, though, be misleading as he consistently preached a strong positivist element in all his work. In this example, from his 1874 book, *Primitive Culture*, Tylor is discussing the origins of one of culture’s claimed founding elements; mythology:

“the study of the savage and barbaric intellect opens to us the study of mythology...With a consistency of action so general as to amount to a mental law, it is proved that among the lower races all over the world the operation of outward events on the inward mind leads not only to statement of fact, but to formation of myth”.(Edward B Tylor, 1874: vi, 446).

Anthropologists’ taxonomic fervour appeared to reach its zenith in the 1937 publication of the *Outline of Culture Materials* by the Cross-Cultural Survey (Murdock, 1961) which sought to classify cultures by seven basic criteria, among 79 major divisions of cultural information and 637 subdivisions. Murdock used this survey in *Social Structure*, a work of “cultural anthropology”, in an attempt to find “natural laws” for the organisation of human society (Murdock, 1965). The American Psychological Association produced an abstract of the work that summed up its intentions:

“It is shown that social organization in our society exhibits the same regularities and conforms to the same scientific principles as do comparable phenomena among other societies. The postulational method has been applied in this analysis and prediction of social phenomena” (PsycINFO Database Record, 2010).

An earlier work (1952) by the American anthropologists Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn's, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*, is even now quoted as a source of cultural definitions, although none of its 164 definitions refer to concepts of culture that relate either to artistic concepts or to self-cultivation (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952).

Even the obvious move to see culture as a description for social norms, structurally reinforced and constantly reproduced through myth, beliefs and values, was insufficiently immutable for the scientists of anthropology. The value of aesthetic creations arising out of artistic autonomy was not denied, but argued merely to represent a cultural form in human progress that could be reduced and explained by cause and effect. "Cultural anthropology is that branch of natural science which deals with matter-and-motion, i.e. energy, phenomena in cultural form, as biology deals with them in cellular, and physics in atomic, form" (L. A. White, 1943: 335).

This had some interesting implications. One that takes the concept of culture even further from notions of the autonomous artist or the self-improving person was the debate on the inclusion of any animal species into cultural definitions, particularly those that fall between primates and australopithecines. Ralf Holloway provoked a small storm of correspondence in *Current Anthropology* when he argued against this prospect, saying: "...that it is possible to give the concept 'culture' some force once again as something unique to man" (Holloway, 1969: 395).

#### (ii) Culture in Social Anthropology

In the development of anthropological concepts of culture, positivism was to prove something of a *cul de sac*. It left two fundamental problems unresolved: firstly, that human behaviour is so complex and so reflexive, changing constantly under endogenous and exogenous influences, that deterministic reasoning on parsimonious principles becomes a reductive, incomplete and artificial synthesis: an inadequate tool for the task. Secondly, that all semantic classifications require a

universalist concept of culture that must necessarily treat idiosyncratic or local behaviour as aberrations or exceptional flaws. The artist flouting convention or the philosopher challenging normative reasoning or the artist satirising their own situation would become oddities, mutations, and as such would appear to be excluded from the culture of which they are so obviously a defining part. An objective taxonomic approach would always be partial and unable to define the rationales and the fine variations in human societies that are inevitably under constantly reconstruction in contingent circumstances. It could never explain the causes and reasoning for the behaviour observed.

The route around this developmental road block was to consider not just the behaviour and practices of human communities, but also the generative and normative influences, expressed in emotions, fears, beliefs and other essentially human motivations, that can then become provocations for the formation of behavioural rationales. The work of Clifford Geertz was a powerful force for this shift; his methodological principle being illuminated in the title of one of his most defining works, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, (Geertz, 1973). In his obituary, the New York Times referred to Geertz as a “cultural anthropologist” (Yarrow, 2006), a term which unfortunately does little to differentiate his interpretivist and hermeneutic approach from the tradition already defined by Tylor, White and others. But it does point to a central theme of “the Geertz formulation”. His obituary explained: “the question to ask about cultural phenomena is not what they do, but what they mean. Mr. Geertz also argued against the idea that one could define the essence of humanity across all cultures”. As Ernest Gellner expressed it, Geertz distinguished “between the ‘structure’ and the ‘culture’ of a society” (Gellner, 1964: 153), “culture being”, he argued “essentially, the manner in which one communicates, in the broadest sense”, and that “its importance resides in the fact that it reinforces structure – the style of being and expression symbolises, underlines the substance, the effective role, activities, relationships” (1964: 155). Then, in a phrase that has much significance for New Labour’s understanding of the word, he added: “In modern societies, culture does not so much underline structure: rather it replaces

it". As will be argued below, under New Labour culture became a description of societal structures as amenable to manipulation as the national economy.

The historic lineage of this interpretive approach to anthropology is commonly traced back to James George Frazier (1854 - 1941) and Frank Boas (1858 - 1942), but its passage through the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, via Alfred Kroeber, Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, Bronislaw Malinowski, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and others, shows a highly complex and varied set of analytical principles. Writing in 1917, Alfred Kroeber expressed the challenge: "The forces and principles of mechanistic science can indeed analyze our civilization; but in so doing they destroy its essence, and leave us without understanding of the very thing which we seek" (Kroeber, 1917: 212). In his Introduction to *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, a defining work for this trend, Malinowski specifically expressed the need for anthropology to "grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realise *his* vision of *his* world" (Malinowski, 1922: 25, original emphasis). In summary: "...the safe havens of more (nowadays) 'respectable' disciplines such as sociology and anthropology and their 'tried and trusted' analyses of culture will get us nowhere at all" (Morley, 1998: 479). The search for human motivations had to be found in *meaning*, whether conscious or subconscious, traditional or newly expressed, which in turn drew into analytical focus symbolism, psychology, philosophy, and the critical interpretation of creative, artistic, works.

Anthropologists' shift towards interpretative and qualitative ethnographic methodologies were, in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, responding not just to wider intellectual movements (most particularly the decentring, fragmenting and relativistic elements of postmodern thought) but also to accusations of a declining relevance of older concepts of culture within traditional anthropological research. Sine Howell, a Professor of "social" anthropology at Oslo University, summed up the argument, saying: "primitive society no longer exists", and "post-industrialisation, postmodernism, consumerism and the capitalist globalisation of culture are rapidly rendering previous anthropological questions, methods and theories void"

(Howell, 1997: 103). Eric Wolf described the change as rooted in a difference between the “materialists and mentalists” (Wolf, 1980) and the “practical reason and value culture” that “stems from the concerns of neo-Kantians in early nineteenth-century Germany, concerns that connect Kroeber and Sorokin with such predecessors as Wilhelm Dilthey, Heinrich Rickert and Max Weber” (Wolf, 1984: 393-4).

In other words, anthropological concepts of culture were changing from a study of observed behaviour in search of “causal-functional integration” (Sorokin, 1967) to theories for constructed ideologies, myth-making, aesthetic and symbolic activities, all of which were thought to be “continuously in construction, deconstruction and reconstruction” (Wolf, 1984: 396). Into this description, the arts, in all their variations, fitted comfortably: "According to this anthropological perspective, high culture, prestigious culture so to speak, is just the fragmentary expression of a much larger cultural entity, comprising eating-habits, clothes, work and entertainment, in sum 'all the habits and competencies learned by man by virtue of his belonging to a particular society'" (Charbonnier, 1961: 180; quoted in Finkelkraut, 1988: 96)<sup>1</sup>. This brought anthropology into territory occupied by sociologists and of interest to New Labour's social engineers.

### (iii) Culture as Cultivation

A quite different view of culture and its part in education relates to the Arnoldian notion of its improving power, morally and epistemically; what Arnold summarised as “sweetness and light”<sup>2</sup>:

Culture is then properly described ... as having its origins in the love of perfection; it is *a study of perfection*. It moves by the force, not merely or

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<sup>1</sup> Finkelkraut gives the reference as Lévi-Strauss, but that is an error.

<sup>2</sup> The term “sweetness and light” appears to originate in Jonathan Swift’s *Battle of the Books*, in which the richness of classical aesthetics is argued by their allegory, the bee: “... whatever we have got has been by infinite labour and search, and ranging through every corner of nature ... we have rather chosen to fill our hives with honey and wax; thus furnishing mankind with the two noblest of things, which are sweetness and light”. Swift’s arguments for the values of classical literature were sure to have found favour with Arnold. See SWIFT, J. 1862. *The selected works of Jonathan Swift*. London, Hector Mclean.

primarily of the scientific passion for pure knowledge, but also of the moral and social passion for doing good (Arnold, 1932: 45, original emphasis).

“Educators and literati of Arnold’s day linked culture to both a process of self-education that culminated in a refined outlook and to literary masterpieces that embodied refinement...” (Kett, 1994: 143). Generating a moral discipline with deep implications for society as a whole, Arnold’s view of culture belonged to a much older tradition which related artistic works, and most particularly poetry and literature, to educational instruction. Belfiore traced this back to the ancient world in which “amusement or instruction” were competing values of artistic works (Belfiore and Bennett, 2008: 114). They were related, Belfiore argues, to the Platonic concept of *paideia*; the education of the young in the heritage of cultural ideals to be found in beauty, morals and the nature of liberty (Belfiore, 2006b: 238; Gablantz, 2005: 45). This argues a developmental path for a "social impact" of culture traceable from ancient Greece through Renaissance Italy and the 18th century German concept of *Bildung*, before reaching the “modern elaborations” of Gramsci, Cassirer, Read, and Spender. While there are undeniably ideas shared between these periods, locations and people, there are also fundamental differences. One is the distinction between civic, outward-looking, societal cultural ideals and those that are concerned with the internal development and self-discipline of the inner person. This gives a notional role for the place and influence of culture as *Bildung* in New Labour's policies for "active welfare" and citizenship (Adler, 2004; Walker and Wiseman, 2003).

More than self-help or instruction, *Bildung* describes the formation or moulding of the person, in which an idea of culture plays a central role. Influenced by his reading of Kant and Schiller, Hegel took culture to mean cultivation as an amalgam of education, taste and judgement that could lead to the harmonisation of the self within society, of the soul and the mind, to form an Enlightened citizen standing “above both the nobility and the bourgeoisie” (Pinkard, 2000: 27 & 50).

"Enlightenment", wrote Hegel to Schelling, "...relates to culture as theory does to praxis, as cognition to ethics" (Hoffmeister, 1952; quoted in Avineri, 1972: 2);

culture here was idealistic and enlightened with a particular relevance to the structure of society in 18th century Germany (Bruford, 1975; Abizadeh, 2005: 340; Pinkard, 2000).

The early development of this ideal is most usually attributed to Wilhelm von Humboldt (Sorkin, 1983). There is, though, a fundamental difference between Humboldt's morally self-centred and aristocratic concept of *bildung* and the nationalistic or, in recent times, social construct expressed in various ways from Plato through Fichte to Matthew Arnold. If *bildung* has a part in the contemporary meaning of culture, it is not in the form practiced by Humboldt, who was "...an individualist of the type so common in the age of German Idealism, self-centred from what seemed to be the highest motives" (Bruford, 1975: 22), and little concerned with, or understanding of, human society at large. If "culture" implies a shared set of values, Humboldt's "... weeding of his mental and emotional garden, the Ciceronian 'cultura animi'" focused on himself alone (1975: 14). In this sense, *bildung* could be argued as anti-social, for example when referring to the "negative connotations" of the "Bildungsbürger" in 19<sup>th</sup> century German society (R. Burns and Will, 2006: 311). What had been so popular in the coming-of-age *bildungsroman* of Johann von Goethe ("The Apprenticeship of Wilhelm Meister" being archetypical) became socially schismatic when associated with a wealthy and aristocratic elite in the context of a modern industrialising economy.

J.S. Mill's essay "On Liberty" was strongly influenced by German *bildung* and by Humboldt in particular. Mill made few references to culture in his early works outside of the literal context of *agriculture*, but by mid-life he began referring to "intellectual and moral culture". It is a point emphasised by, among others, Alexander Brady introducing Volume 18 of Mill's collected works (John Stuart Mill, 1977: Ivi) and in Mill's quoting in *On Liberty* from von Humboldt's *Sphere and Duties of Government*. In fact Mill's epigraph to *On Liberty* is also a quote from von Humboldt (John Stuart Mill, 1995). David Lloyd put it that: "the ideal of the individual for Mill, no less than for Arnold, is that which culture, in the large sense

of ethical and aesthetic development, alone can produce” (Lloyd and Thomas, 1998: 121). In his pamphlets on *Representative Government*, Mill takes this argument further by relating culture as intellectual and moral development and the formation of the individual, to the responsible citizen in a democratic state (J S Mill, 1963).

Matthew Arnold and JS Mill both described the process by which the development of the individual is projected into a moral and political social context through culture. Arnold said of it “...culture works differently” before adding, with a specific reference to Lessing and Herder in Germany, “This is the *social* idea and the men of culture are the true apostles of equality” (Arnold, 1932: 70, original italics). This is *bildung* Anglicized, culture as a social object; reified, universalizing and hegemonic in its presumptions of righteous power of benefit to all society, although still a tool of the autonomous, free-thinking individual of reason. Culture was something to be developed within each person for the benefit of the emerging emancipated community. It was achieved through education and a knowledge, understanding and experience of “...the best that has been thought and known in the world...”, to repeat that telling phrase yet again. It is not anthropological and it is not particularly concerned with the autonomy of the artist, but instead is something available to all if they wish to participate in the process of self-realisation. It has strong relations to *bildung* but, in the minds of Mill and Arnold, culture was ultimately a tool for the formation of a cohesive citizenship.

This argument was most explicitly developed in *Self Help*, Samuel Smiles’s self-published book of 1859 in which he argued the virtues of hard work, training (physical and mental), education, and a constant striving for personal development. Along with the development of museums and art galleries during the nineteenth century (T. Bennett, 1995), it offered a popular message, expressing the *Zeitgeist* of the century. In a reference to the concept of *bildung*, Smiles claimed “the highest and most effective culture of all resolves itself in Self-Culture” (Smiles, 1911 [1859]: 288), which he defined as “the education or training of all parts of a man’s nature; the physical and moral, as well as the intellectual” (1911 [1859]: 275). All this resolved into



“character” – “moral order embodied in the individual” (1911 [1859]: 351). Smiles summarised the rationales of 18th and 19th century political interventions while his arguments set out the logic by which the commerce of industrial Britain related directly to the culture of its citizens. Culture as cultivation had moved swiftly from a private mission to a public moral obligation.

#### (iv) Culture as The Arts

“Culture was thus born of art” said Remy Saisselin (Saisselin, 1970: 217) in a theory that the arts were the “manifestation of the human enterprise upon earth, a positive activity, indeed a new order interposed between the supernatural and natural order” (1970: 200). The arts began, he said, as merely a “divertissement” that became instructive before its elevation in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries into something “... founded upon permanent values such as the true the good and the beautiful” (1970: 210). Saisselin’s words expose a very great difficulty resulting from this definition of culture as it describes its meaning by things indefinable and indescribable. David Best put it that the nature of art cannot be rationalised; that the search for “bedrock propositions [for the “concept of art”] which are unquestionably true” is a “self-defeating quest” (Best, 1985: 2-3). Rather, he argued, the arts arise from and provoke “natural” responses to its aesthetic creations for which rationalisations are then subsequently sought. To treat artistic work as objects with definable characteristics is, by this argument, to miss the very substance that is under investigation. The exchange between Monroe Beardsley and Douglas Morgan on the meaning of art typifies that pointless philosophical dance to which Best alluded (D. Morgan, 1961; Beardsley, 1961). Fortunately, for the purposes of this thesis, the challenge here is not to define the arts or artistic works *per se*, but rather what people mean by culture as a collective word for the arts. Yet because the political need for a definition and for functional justification of art works profoundly conflicts with their nature, the reasons for this conflict do need some explanation. Post war political administrations had struggled with this problem, but DCMS almost entirely ignored it until it was reintroduced in a speech by Tessa Jowell's in 2004 (Jowell, 2004).

The voice of the arts lobby referred to at the beginning of this chapter is, to many people, quite incoherent. It makes passionate claims for the values of art works when they seem optional or, at best, little more than pleasing additions to routine life. Yet, until the New Labour government, ever-larger amounts of public financial support had been given annually to the arts since the formation of the ACGB in 1945. The logic behind this assumed a status for artistic endeavours that allowed them independence from government interference: the so-called “arm's-length principle”. This view is rooted in a belief that the arts have an immanent value beyond any measurable or assessable function that is profoundly important to the spiritual well-being of mankind. Culture in this sense refers to the sublime nature of aesthetic works that are valued entirely and completely for their own sake. Removed from any functional value funding can only be justified in a closed referential system as *l'art pour l'art* – art for art's sake.

Although prefigured by the metaphysics of Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, the origins of *l'art pour l'art* are said to be from Immanuel Kant. As his thoughts were paraphrased, argued and contested in conversations around Europe, Benjamin Constant made the first known written reference to the expression in his diary of 1804, reporting a conversation with Schelling on Kant's idea of, “L'art pour l'art, sans but, car tout but dénature l'art”<sup>1</sup> (Bell-Villada, 1996: 36; Wilcox, 1953; Egan, 1921: 11). Wilcox describes the initial spread of Kant's late ideas on aesthetics as occurring initially through de Stael's book on Germany, *De l'Allemagne*, which then provided easy source material for Victor Cousin's popular lectures in Paris. Egan's research suggests their primary route to England was then via Henry Crabb Robinson: “one of

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<sup>1</sup> The entry in Constant's journal of 10<sup>th</sup> February 1804 reads: “Schiller calls. He is a man of keen mind in his art but almost wholly the poet. It is true that the fugitive poetry of the Germans is of a completely different kind and depth from ours. I have a visit with Robinson, pupil of Schelling's. His work on the *Aesthetics* of Kant has some very forceful ideas. *L'art pour l'art*, without purpose, for all purpose perverts art. But art attains the purpose that it does not have”: MELAGARI, D. 1895. *Journal intime de Benjamin Constant et lettres a sa famille et a ses amis*. Paris, Ollendorff. Quoted in an uncredited English translation in Wilcox, where he adds in a footnote, p363: “A letter from Schiller to Goethe verifies that Schiller dined with de Staël (and Constant) on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 1804” WILCOX, J. 1953. *The Beginnings of l'Art Pour l'Art. The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 11 (4 SI), 360-377.

the first to spread the doctrines of the *Aufklärung* in literary circles” (Egan, 1921: 12), before it passed into the hands of English romanticists and moralists equally appalled by the grim power of industrialisation.

The interpretations of Kant’s conceptions may not have been accurate but even now, in partial and simplified form, they still define the idea so succinctly expressed in *l’art pour l’art*. The crude, popularised notions that give rise to that particular concept of art are mostly contained in the *Critique of Judgement*, a work that Roger Scruton described as “one of the most important works of aesthetics to have been composed in modern times; indeed it could be fairly said that, were it not for this work, aesthetics would not exist in its modern form” (Scruton, 2001: 97-99). It describes the aesthetic sense as something that can only be personal, yet gives rise to an idea of beauty (however that may be judged by the individual) that paradoxically implies a quality objectively and universally valid. The aesthetic experience must necessarily precede and transcend the objective world, yet our response to it is an interaction between the free play of imagination and rationality from which the mind constructs a unity of form and emotion. Separating aesthetic qualities from material form and aesthetic experience from rationality thus demands that art can only be self-referential; the very act of objectively assessing its character removes that character from the object. That in turn frees the artist from the normal strictures of worldly relations: “All *l’art pour l’art* men are to be known by their common aspirations - freedom for the artist, and order and beauty in his creations. Where these conditions exist in combination, true works of art are produced” (Egan, 1921: Pt II, v).

From a political perspective, the idea of *l’art pour l’art* defies the search for a measurable and assessable definition of culture that can nevertheless be built around the aesthetic content of art. The problem has teased and vexed British governments, particularly throughout the latter half of the last century, as they tried to rationalise funding policy for a form of national cultural development that is based on work that is definitionally without function or purpose. Always the search has been for an

additional quality within a work of art that is not present in others. Even art that is of poor quality is defined by the absence of some quality perceived within good art (Ruccio, Graham *et al.*, 1996: 62).

Curiously less concerning has been that essential idea of the autonomous nature of the artist, which defines him or her as independent of all moral and social concerns. In its most positive form, it might be called “artistic liberty”; a subject more of interest to Schiller than it was to Kant. Friedrich Schiller is credited with expounding art as the “domain of the ideal” (Inglis, 2004: 18), specifically in his letters *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*: a work he himself claimed drew strongly from Kant’s philosophical system (Schiller, 1954 [1795]: 24). Schiller promoted a moral idealism that united reason and artistic beauty with individual liberty and the autonomous character of the artist, in whom utility “bends a degraded humanity” for “Art is the daughter of Freedom, and must receive her commission from the needs of spirits, not from the exigency of matter” (1954 [1795]: 26). This liberty allows artists to act beyond political, social or moral direction even if those realms of discourse formed their creative motivations (Crowther, 1981). Although artists may receive both public support and funding, they occupy not democratic social space but “the republic of art” where their freedom of expression is as inviolable as religious belief and their validity is defined by their own constituents (Diffey, 1969; H. Osborne, 1981: 4). This artistic right relates directly to the concept of *l’art pour l’art*: “Freedom for the artists; order and beauty in his creation, effective at one and the same time” (Egan, 1921: 17), or more pithily: “Art is the most intense mode of individualism that the world has ever known” (Wilde, 1912: 17); a characteristic Wilde tellingly praised for its value to anarchism.

### **Concluding Comments**

What has been described are ways of separating and categorising aspects of how the word “culture” is used in a political context. It is not intended to be definitive and can never be complete, but can nevertheless assist in illuminating the tacit and often

unconscious logic of cultural policies, statements and actions across government. Sir Peter Hall and his Shadow Arts Council had in mind a concept born out of *l'art pour l'art*, but his argument was with those in government who saw in culture the social mechanism of “causal-functional integration” found in social anthropology. They were speaking of entirely different things. The historical precedents for these ideas are equally valid and, *pace* Raymond Williams, sometimes ran in parallel, being used in different ways even within the same sentence. Indeed, that is precisely the reason why the descriptions and categorisations above are necessary.

## Explicit and Implicit Cultural Policy

Differing aspects of political interests in culture are often overlapping and, when brought together for comparison, can appear inchoate. As discussed in the previous chapter, this problem arises particularly over definitions of what is cultural. No British government had nominal cultural policies until the formation of DCMS. Nevertheless, related strands of policy found their way across the centuries before finally attaining that label.

These chronological difficulties are managed here in an exercise of retrospective reclassification. Following an idea of Jeremy Ahearne, the term “implicit cultural policy” is anachronistically applied to all those that lie at the historic roots of DCMS policy. Ahearne suggested a differentiation between “explicit or nominal” and “implicit or effective” cultural policies. The former, he argued, “is any cultural policy that a government labels as such”, whereas the latter “is any political strategy that looks to work on the culture of the territory over which it presides” (Ahearne, 2004: 114). A similar approach taken in the same year by Jim McGuigan when arguing that “Cultural policy ‘proper’ is rationalized explicitly, whereas the rationale for cultural policy as display [e.g. as a symbol of status or national identity] is most likely to be implicit instead of explicit” (McGuigan, 2004: 64). David Throsby recognised the underlying complexity covered by these simple definitions, but essentially followed the same idea, saying: “An explicit cultural policy is one that deals directly with culture, whether culture is defined functionally (as the arts) or in a constituent sense (as traditions, values and ways of living together)”, whereas:

An implicit cultural policy on the other hand is one that influences culture only indirectly, the overt intention of the policy being directed elsewhere. Almost by definition, implicit cultural policy is *not* delivered by culture ministries but arises as a result of action in other policy areas – it is focused on a non-cultural purpose but counts as cultural policy because it has some non-trivial cultural effect (Throsby, 2009: 179).

Ahearne was actually discussing French cultural policy in the 1950s when he gave his definitions but, in a later paper, he too gave them "wider uses" in the analysis of aspects of British cultural policy (Ahearne, 2009). By further extending their use to embrace the policies of the British government since 1753 the retrospective classification of past policy becomes a legitimate methodology for the inclusion of policies regardless of their nominal status.

A related problem can be directed at defining the responsibilities of DCMS in the enlarged department. It raises the question of which policies were intended to fall within a definition of culture and which were not. Does the Department's title imply that culture is separate from media and sport or does it include them all within the same cultural concept (and more, given that arts, tourism, heritage, crafts, film, and the National Lottery were all among its responsibilities)? Chris Smith gave the answer unambiguously in *A New Cultural Framework* in which the conclusions to an earlier consultation document, *A New Approach to Investment in Culture*, were published following the department's Comprehensive Spending Review in 1997 (DCMS, 1997, 1998c). The body of the report opens with the statement: "DCMS is at the centre of a complex structure which delivers money and supports activity in a range of sectors, all of which fall within the broad definition of 'culture'" (1998: 2), later referred to as a "family" of activity" (DCMS, 1999a: 8). Chris Smith's foreword offered a rationale for adopting this approach:

The activities that we sponsor and support as a Department have a fundamental impact on the quality of life for all our citizens. They provide enjoyment and inspiration. They help to foster individual fulfilment and well-being. They help to bind us together as a community. They are important for the quality of education. They assist with the work of social regeneration. And in themselves, and with the allied importance of tourism, they form a crucial part of our nation's economy. (1998: 1)

In a less all-encompassing statement, the question of what was included in Smith's cultural definition was also addressed briefly but distinctly in his speech to the Royal Television Society Biennial Convention in 1997. The department's title "... is not meant to convey any contradiction between culture and the media. I certainly regard

television as a *key* element - if not the key element - in our national culture" (C. Smith, 1998: 91, original emphasis).

Two examples may help further clarify the question of explicit and implicit cultural policy in the context of this thesis. Government interest in the teaching of fine art in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was aimed at improving the design of manufactured products but that was not then considered an arts policy. Fine art and product design both still fit comfortably into New Labour's cultural policy, justifying its classification as cultural for the whole period of this study. A second example concerns the technology for wireless telephony. Within a few decades the technology in wires, valves and circuits of early radio transceivers led to national broadcasting and the creation of the BBC, both of which are now concerns of DCMS - and thereby matters for this thesis.



## Culture, the Market Economy and *Laissez-faire*

Any review of governmental relations to the arts over the last three centuries has to recognise that British society was, and still is, characteristically formed around libertarian principles, free markets, forms of *laissez-faire*, and a capitalist system of ownership and finance. While some think this undesirable (McGuigan, for example), it is argued here to be the unavoidable context in which cultural policy has developed in Britain and in which it has to be understood.

Underlying the history of British cultural policy, implicit and explicit, is Britain's uniquely long social history of free-market capitalism. Alan MacFarlane's review of the historic research on this subject (Macfarlane, 1979) challenges aspects of the common orthodoxy of the "Great Transformation" in 17th to 19th century Britain (Polanyi, 2001 [1944]); one argued to mark the dramatic and socially transformative shift from an agrarian peasant society to one socially and economically constructed around capital and markets. In Polanyi's words: "the proposition holds that all economic systems known to us up to the end of feudalism in Western Europe were organized either on the principle of reciprocity or redistribution, or house holding, or some combination of the three" (Polanyi, 2001 [1944]: 57). Instead, MacFarlane contends:

England was as 'capitalist' in 1250 as it was in 1550 or 1750. That is to say, there was already a developed market, mobility of labor, land was treated as a commodity and full private ownership was established, there was very considerable geographical and social mobility, a complete distinction between farm and family existed, and rational accounting and the profit motive were widespread (Macfarlane, 1978: 268).

To differing extents, Marxist and neo-Marxist debates have taken the origins of capitalism to be derived from either Malthusian arguments or changes in power relations within agrarian economies (Aston and Philpin, 1987; Brenner, 1976; Katz, 1993). These arguments have been contested, though, on the grounds of historical

inaccuracies and for an inappropriate selection of trans-European sources (Croot and Parker, 1987: 79-90; Macfarlane, 1978, 1979). In support of this, a recent biography of Karl Marx places his work and his theories as more relevant to early 19th century Britain than to any time earlier or later, which in turn suggests Brenner's well-known struggle to construct a trans-historical argument was misleading (Sperber, 2013; Aston and Philpin, 1987; Brenner, 1976). The point made here is that free-trade and mercantilism have a long tradition in Britain that preceded, and now succeeds, contesting ideologies. Unlike in much of continental Europe, what we now call the arts and culture were as embroiled in that tradition as any other goods. It can be seen, for example, in the development of British theatres from the profits of music, dance, opera, drama, music hall and “variety”<sup>1</sup> (Davis, 2000; Minihan, 1977). By this view, the creators and the buyers of artistic works have been individuals in a free market since at least the 13<sup>th</sup> Century (Fukuyama, 2011: 230-33). From libraries to opera, from painting to music hall, they existed less in a world of government patronage than one of private business. Even Shakespeare's theatre career was largely commercial and stylistically owed a great deal to those demands. Parliament's earliest debates on Britain's cultural infrastructure demonstrate this point repeatedly, their default position being that theatre and music in all their forms were private matters in which government had no business to interfere. This norm expresses the universalism of the liberal state in its relationship with the individual within civil society which has now become characterised as *laissez-faire*. This idea was to become a significant factor in rationalising cultural policy after 1945 under the “arm's-length” principle.

### **Laissez-faire**

The expression *laissez-faire* has contested origins but is generally said have been coined in France by the merchant, M. Le Gendre, in response to a question from the

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<sup>1</sup> Most London theatres and many through the British regions owe their existence to commercial investment. There are presently 51 theatres in London's West End of which only 4 are subsidised. Another 56 theatres can be found around the capital, and a further 28 have been “lost” over the last 100 years or so (on the latter point, see (MANDER, R. & MITCHENSON, J. 1968. *The Lost Theatres of London*. London, Rupert Hart-Davis.))

famously *dirigiste* minister of finance under Louis XIV, Jean-Baptiste Colbert. "Que faut-il faire pour vous aider?" he asked, only to receive the blunt response, "laissez-nous faire" (Franklin, 2012 [1836]: 401; Handman, Usher *et al.*, 1931: 3; Kennedy, 2008-9). Its English form and use appears then to have been imported by George Whatley (a friend of Benjamin Franklin), or Jeremy Bentham (Kennedy, 2008: 249) in the late 18th century. While the original phrase implied a defence from government interference, *laissez-faire* has ironically come to mean a policy of government rather than the absence of one. In any event, it is generally seen as integral with the neoliberal economic paradigm; one that proposes "...human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual human entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (Harvey, 2005: 2).

For its asserted prioritising of the individual over the state<sup>1</sup>, *laissez-faire* has often featured as an accusation with critical intent; as a symptom of neo-liberal policy extremes. Within the arts, any market-based policies were, and often still are, seen as an attack on artistic integrity, countering the presumed intrinsic value of artistic activity as well as its social and community (i.e. public) benefits. This view is, though, essentially contradictory, seeming to argue for the preservation of individual artistic autonomy for the benefit of the national community, while suggesting this cannot be achieved within an economic paradigm that seeks to minimise state interference in favour of the individual. In consequence, *laissez-faire* has also become a phrase that obfuscates the rationales of the cultural policies. In part, this arises from a failure to separate individuals acting freely within restrictive structures defined by laws, rules or even inducements, and those of unrestrained rational maximisers where any interference from the state is perceived as an offense against libertarian principles. *Laissez-faire* can be said to exist in both, but in practice there is no option for unrestrained action within a society that operates by virtue of a

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<sup>1</sup> Notably, GWF Hegel applied the principle, although not the term, when arguing for the separation and roles of civil society (the individual) and the state (the universal). The subject is discussed lucidly in AVINERI, S. 1972. *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

social contract if the basic rights of citizens are to be maintained equally. Indeed, some restrictive measures will inevitably be required just to maintain the principles of *laissez-faire* itself, among them the use of subsidies for selected artistic and cultural forms in order to maintain a measure of autonomy for their creators.

John Maynard Keynes' starkly and unambiguously entitled a short book based on his 1924 Sidney Ball lecture: *The End of Laissez Faire* (J. M. Keynes, 1926). That title, at least, gives some support for Janet Minihan's assertion that "By the turn of the [19th] century, the heyday of laissez-faire economic and social theories had unmistakably passed" (Minihan, 1977: 138). There are two particular problems with this: the first is that the justification for the claim rather depends on the characteristics thought to define *laissez-faire*, and the second that it can be read to imply that social policy is objectively separate from economic policy, so each can be electively pursued independently of the other. Both can be contested. Even in its extremes, as in the early Physiocrats view that the state was parasitical on society, or in the arguments of Friedrich Hayek that integrated the concept with foundational principles of liberty and the incompetence of the state as economic governor, *laissez-faire* was never a single, defined concept but an approach to policy that gave guiding arguments for presumptions and priorities. More commonly, even its early advocates proposed only a general principle that "government should leave things alone unless by exception special reasons existed why it should intervene" (Viner, 1960: 56). The notion that the "allied and seemingly indomitable intellectual forces ... [of] individualistic, anti-statist Benthamite Utilitarians", together with the "rigidly free market economics of the Classical School" (Paul, 1980: 1) produced an era characterised by *laissez-faire* was, in J. Bartlet Brebner's words, "conceivably ... a myth" (Brebner, 1948: 60). The free market regulated by an "invisible hand" (A. Smith, 1991: 399) was always operationally dependent on an arm of state to intervene for the maintenance of law, security, currency, the prevention of monopolies, and even for the preservation of non-profitable enterprises that are thought to have special public value.

Jeremy Bentham, an arch proselyte for *laissez-faire*, insisted that government had a duty to intervene in many areas of social and economic life, categorising "agenda" and "non-agenda" actions into "classes" (Bentham, 1839 [1789]: 35). Falling into the government agenda he argued to be those factors:

... which are conducive either to the increase of the national stock of the matter of wealth, or to the application of it in the most efficient mode, to any of its three uses, viz subsistence, security [under which he included defence] and enjoyment; and which ... are not to be expected to be performed by the spontaneous exertions of the individual" [or "sponte acta", as he named them] (1839 [1789]: 41).

"[T]he most efficient mode" of the free market, Bentham believed, had to be managed to ensure it could function effectively in finding the "natural" and "just" price of commodities, which critically included labour. This was to be achieved commutatively through the balance of supply and demand; accordingly: "not human beings and natural resources only, but also the organisation of capitalistic production itself had to be sheltered from the devastating effects of a self-regulating market" (Polanyi, 2001 [1944]: 138). This is not just a reference to social concerns though; monopolies, contractual abuses, unstable currency and other market distortions have to be managed positively in order for the marketplace to work effectively. In Alvin Hansen's words:

a free market presupposes contracts and the authority of the state to enforce these contracts. And contracts cannot be entered into and enforced without definitely regulated measuring rods. There must be a legally established yardstick, pound, gallon, etc. There must also be a legally established unit of value. And ideally a free market presupposes that the unit of value must be stabilized just as are the units of measurement (Handman, Usher *et al.*, 1931: 8).

Keynes's reflections on *laissez faire* make divisions comparable to those of Bentham, separating "technically social" government services from those that were "technically individual", justifying the former as those which were not already being fulfilled by private individuals but instead "fall outside the sphere of the individual" and are made by "*no one* if the State does not make them" (J. M. Keynes, 1926: 46, original

emphasis). This creates what Polanyi called "the double movement" of "two organisational principles": one that supports economic liberalism and free, self-regulating markets, and the other "social protection" aimed at "the conservation of man and nature as well as productive organization" (Polanyi, 2001 [1944]: 138). These are not contrary or independent movements but are causally related, articulated, arising from the social nature of economics and the need for a healthy, legal, secure, structured society in which individual transactions constitute a thriving free market.

Despite the uncompromising title of Keynes small book, he too accepted this double movement, albeit differently balanced between social and market forces: "For my part, I think Capitalism, wisely managed, can probably be made more efficient for attaining economic ends than any alternative system yet in sight... Our problem is to work out a social organisation which shall be as efficient as possible without offending our notions of a satisfactory way of life" (J. M. Keynes, 1926: 52-53). The principles of the right of individual ownership and its disposal that predicate the existence of a free market require governments to default to legislative quietism, stepping in only to maintain its mechanisms and to offset any offending consequences. This is a presumption for *laissez-faire* which exists now as it has since at least the days of Adam Smith, David Ricardo and Jeremy Bentham. It is also one that can be applied to the excesses of social policy as much as economics. In writing about the comparatively ungoverned world of labour relations in the 1960s, Edward Heath took exactly this view, calling it "collectivist laissez-faire" (Heath, 1998: 327),

As will be argued below, the "double movement" can also be seen in governmental treatment of the arts throughout the second half of the 20th century, its two forces strengthening and weakening along with broader social change and dominant political philosophies. Always, though, was the normative presumption among governments (differentiated from the views of individual politicians) that the British economy must always operate within global, capitalist, free markets, however the effects of those markets might be adjusted and compensated nationally. The "arm's-length" relationship of the Arts Council from government was itself an outcome of

the principal of free markets and *laissez-faire* policy. It has been confirmed as sacrosanct by every government since the Council's formation in 1945. In opening the first debate on "The Needs of the Arts" after the formation of the Arts Council, Peter Thomas, MP (Conway), exemplified this by moving: "That this House welcomes the increasing interest of the people of Great Britain in the arts; endorses the principle that artistic policy should be free from Government control or direction..." (HC Hansard, 1959: Col 559).

To avoid directly interfering in the judgements by which financial support for the arts are allocated, government has supported legally independent organisations to fulfil its policy interests. Oliver Bennett's comment that "...key elements of the *laissez-faire* approach persisted into the twentieth century, and right up until our own time" (O. Bennett, 1995: 203), and a page later that "The 'arm's length' principle, as it came to be known, persists as a potent symbol of *laissez-faire* traditions" are uncommon perceptions of this structural foundation in a literature dominated by socialist idealism.

The grants made to the Arts Council by the government can in themselves be seen as one of the compensating mechanisms of *laissez-faire*. In the Arts Council's Annual Report of 1952/3, its Chairman, Sir Ernest Pooley, expressed the view that: "If the arts are to survive somebody must pay for them, and if the burden of subsidy, purchase or guarantee has become too heavy for the private patron it must be shouldered by the public". He then went on to compare the obligation of the taxpayer "to contribute to the upkeep of the necessities and amenities of the Welfare State" to the need for them also to support the arts (Blaug, 1976: 108). It was a view repeated in Parliament a few years later, when Ronald Bell, MP (Buckinghamshire South) seconded a motion supporting the "Needs of the Arts":

when the arts depended upon private patronage, this problem did not exist, because there was such a multiplicity of patrons, even though some of them might be small, that there was no danger of any attempt to control or to canalise the artistic expression of a country. Nowadays, when high taxation

has almost, though not quite, destroyed private patronage, we have nothing with which to replace it without exposing ourselves to the risk of control of the arts, which has been such a terrible feature of the first part of the twentieth century. (HC Hansard, 1959: col 567)

This argument misses the historic dominance of private enterprise but, with respect to the need for government to correct market imbalances, it was later reinforced by Lord Goodman in his introduction to the 1966/7 Arts Council Report: "The fiscal policies of every government in our memory have contributed to a situation where private bounty or investment is now totally inadequate to sustain a civilised ration of music and theatre, of poetry and picture" (quoted in Blaug, 1976: 109). His words argue with clarity a preference for private patronage of the arts now made impossible by the taxes levied to support the Welfare State. In other words "the Arts Council exists to give back what the Inland Revenue has taken away" (1976: 109), making arts subsidies, by this argument anyway, an unintended consequence of welfare policy although not of the Welfare State.

In the inaugural paper for the Social Market Foundation, which rather weakly describes itself as "pro-market" as distinct from "free-market", Robert Skildelsky discussed the position of the state in a market economy:

... the state is, for practical purposes, a necessary condition for a market system. Only the state can guarantee a non-coercive environment for market exchange. However, the state is also the greatest danger to the market system. Hence the constitutional order must be such as to limit the coercive power of the state ... . The market economy thus depends on a general environment of freedom, which it reinforces. (Skildelsky, 1989: 10, original emphasis).

Neelands *et al*, after Nancy Fraser, added to this argument by referring to market corrections as "affirmative" actions, differentiated from "transformative" action that would require more profound structural change along Marxist lines (Fraser, 1995: 87; Neelands, Freakley *et al.*, 2006: 94); an approach more akin to Alan Peacock's analysis of the "market failure" argument (A. Peacock, 2000). This kind of "social market formation" is concerned more with social justice than either "the centralising economics of socialism" or the "free market economics associated with neo-



liberalism", but relates more to the particular "species" (Neelands, Freakley *et al.*, 2006: 95) of social democratic thought associated with the Giddens/Blair working of the "3rd Way" concept (Blair, 1998; Giddens, 1998, 2000). Alex Callinicos argued forcefully that the Blair government was as determined as his conservative predecessors to maintain and enlarge internationally the dominance of capitalist markets, quoting one of the Third Way's most powerful advocates, Bill Clinton, as saying : "I think we have to reaffirm unambiguously that open markets and rules-based trade are the best engine we know of to lift living standards, reduce environmental destruction and build shared prosperity" (Callinicos, 2001: 105). Open markets were then the necessary condition for the innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship exhorted by Chris Smith as intrinsic to cultural activity (C. Smith, 1998; Leadbeater, 1999). This was exactly Jeremy Bentham's argument for *laissez-faire* made 250 years earlier in his letter to Adam Smith entitled *Defense of Usury* in which he defended the principles of self-determination and the rights of "projectors" not to be restricted by the interventions of the state. Bentham's "projectors" were "all such persons as, in the pursuit of wealth, strike out in any new channel, and more especially into any channel of invention (Bentham, 1839 [1787]: 20-21). In New Labour's terms, these are the people with the ability "to innovate, to think anew, to be creative" (Blair, 2007), and were highly prized by the New Labour government as the source of economic growth. It was this connection that Chris Smith used to construct a cultural policy for economic effect.

## Chapter 2

### Historical Context

#### 1753-1939: The Origins of Cultural Policy

A study of the history of governmental relations with culture, implicit and explicit, reveals the origins of institutions, traditions and attitudes that have endured. At the same time, it exposes clearly the shifting ground between the public and private spheres and, thereby, what are perceived as falling within the responsibilities of government. New Labour's policies cannot be fully explained without recognising the norms developed and demonstrated by this history.

The discussion that follows is in two parts. In the period from 1753 to 1939 governments moved from almost complete disinterest in cultural matters, creating practices and institutions that then continued through the centuries. Action was, though, *ad hoc*; formed in response to specific concerns. After 1939 a consistent and developing policy for the arts was established with the formation of CEMA and then the Arts Council of Great Britain. The New Labour government inherited responsibility for all the resulting institutions, supportive structures, and normative viewpoints. Some were then rejected, others sustained, while many were reformed for different purposes.

#### **Arts, “manufactures”, and the ideal citizen**

Before 1753 Parliament had almost no interest in cultural matters. Artistic works were principally commissioned by private individuals, the church or the monarch. The concept of national cultural institutions open for public benefit at the cost of the tax payer was unknown. The significant policy precedent that set a path that future governments were (eventually) to follow resulted in cultural structures that have since endured. It arose from the Last Will and Testament of Sir Hans Sloane, written in 1739

and effective on his death on January 11<sup>th</sup> 1753. In it he asked that his vast collection of objects be offered to “the King for the nation” for the sum of £20,000. According to Edmund Howard, Sloane’s “gardener and general factotum”, it was said to contain 40,000 books, 50,000 volumes in folio, 32,000 shells, 2,275 metals and mineral ores, and thousands of other miscellaneous items (E. Miller, 1973: 39-40; Home Department, 1928: 12). George II’s response, given on his behalf by the Earl of Macclesfield (later to become President of the Royal Society) to Sloane’s dutiful trustees was to the point: “he [the King] doubted if there was money sufficient in the Exchequer” (E. Miller, 1973: 43). Undeterred, a petition was then made to Parliament on March 6<sup>th</sup> 1753 (HC Journals, 1753: 647). Despite Henry Pelham’s<sup>1</sup> dismissive comment that “there was little money available to spend on such ‘knick knackeries’”, the ensuing debates inside and outside the “parsimonious House” (E. Miller, 1973: 43, 45) ended with the purchase of the collection, and with it the amalgamation of several great but neglected libraries<sup>2</sup>. Altogether they came to form the British Museum and the British Library. The committee appointed by the House of Commons to decide the matter had resolved: “That the museum of Sir Hans Sloane, by him bequeathed to the publick, is of much greater intrinsick value than the sum of twenty thousand pounds by him required to be paid for the same” (HC Journals, 1753: 747). The implication that the decision rested not on a broader concern for social, intellectual or cultural benefit but on its low price - on a good deal - reinforces the impression of, at best, reluctance on the part of Parliament to award financial support for any purpose that could not be reasoned commercially. Even so, the money eventually came not from the Treasury but from a national lottery formed for the purpose and which raised £95,194-8s-2d to buy both the collection and Montague House. That figure was well below the £300,000 actually raised as a result of a fraud by the organiser, Peter Leherpe (Ashton, 1893: 69-70).

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<sup>1</sup> Then Chancellor of the Exchequer.

<sup>2</sup> Principally the libraries of Sir Robert Cotton, Edward Harley and the Royal Libraries (MILLER, E. 1973. *The Noble Cabinet: A History of the British Museum*. London, Andre Deutsch. pp 28-36) and HOME DEPARTMENT 1928. *Royal Commission on National Museums & Galleries, Interim Report*. Cmd 3192 HMSO p 11. See also MARTIN, P. 2008. *Samuel Johnson: A Biography*. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson. p185.

Sixty three years later, the debate over the acquisition of the “Elgin Marbles” contained more considered and complex arguments, but the underlying rationales had hardly changed. The speech by the writer and politician, John Wilson Croker, then Conservative MP for Downpatrick and in the middle of an illustrious career, gave a concise summary of arguments:

It was singular that when 2,500 years ago, Pericles was adorning Athens with those very works, some of which we are now about to acquire, the same cry of economy was raised against him, and the same answer that he then gave might be repeated now, that it was money spent for the use of the people, for the encouragement of arts, the increase of manufactures, the prosperity of trades, and the encouragement of industry; not merely to please the eye of the man of taste, but to create, to stimulate, to guide the exertions of the artist, the mechanic, and even the labourer, and to spread through all the branches of society a spirit of improvement, and the means of a sober and industrious affluence (HC Hansard, 1816: cols 1019-1040).

All three of the rationales posited for political interventions into cultural concerns can be found in that speech, even an intimation of *l’art pour l’art* that was only to grow in importance in the latter part of the century. Significantly, though, the differences appear elided, such that each element was just a part of a single, if somewhat meandering argument that embraced art and artists, economics, manufacturing, education, international glory, and what we might now call entrepreneurship.

Much the same reluctance was evident in appeals for a national public art gallery. More than fifty years passed from John Wilkes’ demands that Sir Robert Walpole’s art collection be purchased for the nation as the founding collection for a national gallery before Parliament finally agreed, in 1824, to allocate £60,000 for the purchase and display of the pictures of the late John Julius Angerstein. Even then, this was initially to be a responsibility of the British Museum rather than of an independent organisation. As the MP for Middlesex, Joseph Hume, expressed it, the vote rescued the country “from a disgrace which the want of such an establishment had long entailed upon it” (quoted in Minihan, 1977: ref 19-25). Comparison with the galleries of continental neighbours and notions of the civilizing effect of the classical arts had

also been part of the debates on both the British Museum and the National Gallery, even if they were not registered so strongly in Parliament's final decisions. Croker's speech in the House in 1824, for example, argued the "works of art were especially calculated to civilize and humanize the public at large" (HC Hansard, 1824: col 1474). Minihan summed up the point succinctly: "In an age that relished cock fighting, bear baiting, and public executions, the arts stood for manners, grace, refinement and humaneness – in short, for civilization" (Minihan, 1977: 26). In their ancient classic petrified beauty, the Elgin Marbles epitomised a patrician ideal of civilisation.

Nevertheless, the perceived benefits to manufacturing remained the dominating rationale. Hansard (still then using secondary sources) reported the speech by Angar Ellis <sup>1</sup> :

He trusted that the present would form a new era in the history of the arts in this country, and that the advantage which was now given to our own school of painting, by placing before it first-rate models, would tend to advance its character and renown. If there were any gentlemen in that House who disapproved of the expense to which these pictures were putting the country, he would ask them, whether they might not be productive of emolument to the nation, even in a pecuniary point of view?..." (HC Hansard, 1825: cols 96-146).

Following this logic, "Arts and Manufactures" became a common expression across Government, one that served to summarise the breadth of trade and manufacturing businesses across the nation. It was not surprising, therefore, that this was the name given to the 1835 and 1836 Select Committees reporting on "the Arts and their Connexion with Manufactures". Its purpose was:

... to inquire into the best means of extending a knowledge of the Arts and of the Principles of Design among the People (especially the manufacturing Population) of the Country; and also to inquire into the constitution, management and effects of the Institutions connected with the Arts" (Arts Select Committee, 1836: iii).

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<sup>1</sup> An elected Fellow of both the Society of Antiquarians and of the Royal Society who, at the time, was the MP for Seaford.

The Committee's final report argued strongly for government support for the fine arts for all the reasons given, but the central rationale of improving the quality of manufactured products was still dominant:

“Yet, to us, a peculiarly manufacturing nation, the connexion between art and manufactures is most important; - and for this merely economical reason (were there no higher motive), it equally imports to encourage art in its loftier attributes; since it is admitted that the cultivation of the more exalted branches of design tends to advance the humblest pursuits of industry, while the connexion of art with manufacture has often developed the genius of the greatest masters in design” (Arts Select Committee, 1836: iii).

As the purpose of the Select Committee itself attests, the arguments that now ran freely between the arts as an important part of commerce and education, whilst being also cultivating and civilising, are posited as essentially interrelated. The potential benefits were to be seen, it was argued, in international comparisons:

It appears that the great advantage which foreign manufacturing-artists possess over those of Great Britain consists in the greater extension of art throughout the mass of society abroad (1836: iv).

The committee noted in particular the advantages of the French and Prussians, comparing public accessibility to art works and, in some detail, their systems of art education. Moral concerns were not expressed in the conclusions to final report but occasionally featured in the evidence. George Foggo<sup>1</sup> made a point touched on by several others: “I am also strongly impressed with the notion that they [the fine arts] should tend to a general improvement of the morals of the people as well as of their intellect” (1836: Pt 1, 56-57).

### **Theatre, Music, and Literature**

This admixture of motivations for the encouragement of artistic experience and practice still had no place for the performing arts. As a comparison, while the French National Theatre had its origins in the formation of the Comédie-Française in 1680

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<sup>1</sup> George Foggo (1793-1869), a painter of historical scenes and events, with a particular interest in art education.

by a decree of Louis XIV, and the Deutsche Nationaltheater can trace its history back to 15<sup>th</sup> century Weimar, Britain only formed a “national” company in 1963.

Parliaments throughout the nineteenth century principally considered only fine art skills which could contribute to “manufactures” as justifications for financial support. Even though the intrinsic aesthetic and artistic qualities of sculpture, painting, drawing and design were voiced, usually in service to education and moral improvement, the theatre arts were rarely a part of political considerations outside censorship and copyright. Indeed, to a significant degree they were perceived as the antithesis of fine art; corrupting and degenerate. In a debate on marriage, Lord Auckland expressed his views on those great and historic French and German theatrical traditions:

It had long been the object of French writers, as it is at this day the object of German Theatre, to give fascinating portraits of adultery, in order to corrupt the institution of marriage; to confound all consanguinity, ranks, and descents [sic]; and to destroy that respect for parents which is essential to good education” (HL Debates, 1800: col 617).

This viewpoint was less in evidence during the debates on the Theatres’ Regulation Bill of 1843, short though they were. Although moral standards and public behaviour were important and related issues, the *quality* of theatrical works was the focus of concern. Sir James Graham expressed the view:

... that the bill was brought forward with the intention to improve the dramatic art. He believed, that the best course that could be pursued was to place the power of making regulations for the drama in the hands of one responsible person, and to afford opportunities for having dramatic performances of a respectable character (HC Hansard, 1843: col 232).

The Lords amendment to the Bill gave powers to the Lord Chamberlain whenever “it was necessary for the promotion of good manners and decorum, or the public peace, to forbid the performance of any stage play, farce, etc.” (HL Hansard, 1843: col 690). It formed a legal foundation for a flow of legislation affecting the performing arts, from theatre toilet provision to the censorship of scripts (Davis, 2000).

Parliament also offered no direct support for music composition or performance. Aside from its inclusion in copyright acts, music performances and publishing relied on commercial impresarios and theatre managers for its presentation until the second half of the 20th century. There was some justification for this as music and theatre performances were often profitable. It has already been mentioned that the great majority of London's theatres, and many in regional towns and cities, were mostly built in the 19th and early 20th centuries to meet commercial demand. Even the presentation of what we now refer to as classical music was once largely profitable. For example, the oldest music festival in England, the Birmingham Triennial, was founded in 1768 to raise money for the new General Hospital, and continued to do so successfully for many years, commissioning works from Sullivan, Bruch, Gounod, Dvorak, Mendelssohn, Elgar, and others, in the process (Elliott, 2000). Even in the present day, the majority of music performances do not have, nor require, public financial support.

Literary arts were generally in much the same position. Just as today, a few writers became wealthy from their work; for most it was either a secondary occupation or penury. In a novel that catches the circumstances of the time, George Gissing described London's literary society at the end of the nineteenth century as struggling between artistic integrity and the commercial marketplace (Gissing, 1968 [1891]). As with fine art, Government was only concerned for how objects could be used in the pursuit of their policy objectives. Writers, like artists, were not individually supported but their work was, selectively, perceived as valuable to the civilising mission and to manufacturing design; as for fine art in galleries and museums, so for books in libraries. The development of a policy for public libraries fits into this logic. The background to the creation of public libraries lies in the 1834 Select Committee inquiring into:

...the extent, causes and consequences of the prevailing vice of Intoxication among the labouring classes of the United Kingdom, in order to ascertain whether any legislative measures can be devised to prevent the further spread of so great a national evil (Select Committee, 1834).



Among its twenty three remedies was one that proposed:

The establishment...of district and parish libraries, museums and reading rooms, accessible at the lowest rate of charge; so as to admit of one or the other being visited in any weather, and at any time; with the rigid exclusion of all Intoxicating Drinks of every kind from all such places, whether in the open air or closed (1834: 322).

This was related to another of the Committee's proposals for "A National System of Education" which might instruct "all ranks and classes of the people" as to the "poisonous and invariably deleterious nature of ardent spirits" that destroy or obscures:

that faculty of reasoning, and that consciousness of responsibility, which chiefly distinguish Man from the Brute, and which his Almighty Maker, when He created him in his own image, implanted in the human race to cultivate, to improve, and to refine - and not to corrupt, to brutalize and to destroy (1834: 323).

The religious underpinnings of moral responsibility are specific and precise. The appeal made to Parliament was to a responsibility that transcended the economic philosophy of *laissez-faire* or even prudent financial parsimony, providing it with the power (and the excuse) of agency to fulfil God's will as much as to resolve a serious civic problem. Indeed, not to do so would be an affront to the "Almighty Maker", and if that required the cultivation of Man then the appropriate mechanisms must be provided.

The 1834 Select Committee report led eventually to the Public Libraries Act of 1850. The groundwork for this was laid by another Select Committee, in 1849, formed to propose "the best Means of extending the Establishment of Libraries freely open to the Public, especially in Large Towns, in Great Britain and Ireland." (Select Committee, 1849). The Act, which also replaced the Museums Act of 1845, provided a mechanism for financing the future development of libraries and museums. In boroughs with populations of 10,000 or more local authorities were given the right to

increase the local rates by a maximum of ½d in the pound specifically and solely for these purposes. In doing so it institutionalised the arguments of the many apostles of, and proselytes for, libraries, assuring their future place in British cultural and social life. Libraries had become public goods with their value only partially measured by their contents.

Despite the dominance of commercial arguments for interventions into matters of fine art, museums and libraries, the concerns of parliamentarians were far wider. It is possible to argue that public goods, including art works, were already privately supplied within the marketplace and Government had no need nor, according to the prevalent philosophy of *laissez-faire*, then the “philosophy of the natural order” (Usher, 1931), any right to interfere in those markets. But this was more than just economic policy; it followed the normative principles of “individualism” and “natural liberty” and what Isaiah Berlin later termed “negative liberty” (Berlin, 1969). On the other hand, war, revolutions and public unrest across Europe, pressure from Chartism and the uncertainties of what might result from the outcomes of the Reform Acts of 1832 and 1867 gave a particular urgency to the progress of civil reform. The complex interrelations between the promotion of trade, education, art, and societal restructuring brought cultural and social matters into public and Parliamentary focus. The choice between “Culture and Anarchy” posed by Matthew Arnold could be settled, it was argued, though education and the arts (Arnold, 1932). A conflation of arguments resulted; those that promoted manufacturing competitiveness with those that might aid the cultivation of moral standards and artistic sensibilities, thereby forming an educated and civilised citizenship.

### **Institutionalising Policy**

In the year that Barry’s and Pugin’s new Palace of Westminster opened for business, Queen Victoria’s “most Gracious Speech to both Houses of Parliament” contained a paragraph of seminal importance to the British Government’s interest in cultural matters:

The advancement of the Fine Arts and of Practical Science will be readily recognized by you as worthy of the Attention of a great and enlightened Nation. I have directed that a comprehensive Scheme shall be laid before you, having in view the Promotion of these Objects, towards which I invite your Aid and Co-operation (HL Hansard, 1852: col 19).

Lest this should sound very much like support for “the Fine Arts” for their own sake, in Seconding Lord Lovain’s reply to the Gracious Speech, E C Egerton explained:

Her Majesty calls the attention of the House to the question of extending education by the advancement of the fine arts and of practical science. Sir, it has long been matter of experience, which was fully confirmed by the late Great Exhibition, that, unbounded as is the energy of our manufacturers, and unrivalled as are the productions of our artisans in many cases, yet that in some branches of art, which require mechanical skill and taste, they have been excelled by the artisans of foreign countries, where greater facilities are given for instruction in the more scientific branches of trade. It is to remedy that, to put the Englishman on the same footing with the foreigner, and to give a more enlightened instruction with respect to some branches of trade, that Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to put this paragraph in the Speech (HC Hansard, 1852: cols 67-68).

Nevertheless, the inclusion in the Queens speech was significant. Up to this time Government support for cultural activities and institutions had been largely *ad hoc*, in the form of legislative and financial facilitation for external organisations rather than seeking the direct involvement of Government. This was now to change. As has been noted, Parliamentary debates and the reports of Select Committees and Royal Commissions had noted the potentially self-improving nature of artistic objects, particularly those of classical antiquity, but these were never the dominant arguments nor the decisive factors in achieving Parliamentary support. Always present was a requirement for the training of artists “calculated to make their acquirements useful to the manufactures of the town” (Office of Government Schools of Design, 1851: 23), responding to what became the primary object of the succeeding Department of Practical Art: “General Elementary Instruction in Art, as a branch of national education among all classes of the community, with the view of

laying the foundation for correct judgement, both in the consumer and producer manufactures” (Dept of Practical Art, 1853: 2).

The pace of progress along this path was largely forced by Sir Henry Cole with the powerful support of Albert, the Prince Consort. Cole’s predominant interest was in art education, while the Prince’s wider vision also encompassed the sciences.

Between them they enlarged the 1847 and 1849 industrial exhibitions at the Royal Society of Arts into the Great Exhibition of 1851. In formal terms, it was overseen by a Royal Commission (appointed in January 1849), of which both were commissioners, that was charged to take forward the work of the Royal Society of Art’s work for the “great benefit of Arts, Agriculture, Manufactures, and Commerce” (Commissioners for the Exhibition, 1851: viii). Although a *national* exhibition on the international stage, the Board of Trade was determined that “no public money would be called for” (HC Hansard, 1850: col 780), a view confirmed by the Prime Minister, Lord John Russell<sup>1</sup>, “that it had never been in contemplation to ask for any grant [from the Government] for the purpose of the exhibition” but that it would rely on subscriptions and entrance charges “to pay the expenses” (HC Hansard, 1850: col 782). The Commissioners did a good job as the six million entrance tickets bought over the period of the exhibition (1<sup>st</sup> May to 15<sup>th</sup> October 1851) produced a surplus over expenditure of £168,000.

Seen in retrospect, the Great Exhibition was also a force for extending the ambit of self-help and self-cultivation beyond concerns for manufacturing into a wider interest for the work of intellectuals. Henry Cole and Prince Albert were powerful agents in that process, building institutions and promoting values that established a path that progressively widened and strengthened. It was, though, the profits from the Great Exhibition, rather than any change in Parliament’s view, that enabled this policy to be furthered in the form of a new Government department with its public face in the new museums at South Kensington.

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<sup>1</sup> “Lord” was a courtesy title. As the younger son of the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Bedford, The Right Honourable The Earl Russell was not a peer so entitled to sit in the House of Commons.

That “comprehensive scheme” referred to in the Queens Speech, entailed the formation of the first government department to carry the word “Art” in its title: the Department of Science and Art. Due mostly to the tireless efforts of Henry Cole, it began life in 1853 as a subdivision of the Board of Trade where there was already a department concerned with technology and design. Three years later it moved to the Education Department where it was given considerable autonomy. The availability of profits from the Great Exhibition made possible an equally great ambition for its work. The Exhibition Commissioners “... were of opinion that the best mode of applying the means at our disposal [i.e. those profits] would be by furthering the general objects of the Exhibition those objects having been the advancement of human industry, and the promotion of kindly international feelings”, and that any scheme “ought to be one which in its general character might serve to increase the means of Industrial Education, and extend the influence of Science and Art upon Productive Industry” (Commissioners for the Exhibition, 1852: 9). The Commissioners argued for new and extended museum facilities, pointing to a site “very nearly opposite the site of the Exhibition Building, [that] is best known by the name of the ‘Gore House Estate.’” (1852: 36). Essential support for an additional £150,000 was given by Disraeli’s administration for locating the Science & Art Department and its collections to the new Kensington site. Cole’s creation, the Museum of Manufactures, was eventually to become the Victoria and Albert Museum, sitting alongside what are now the Natural History Museum and the Science Museum. The route from a privately funded venture to a public facility defined an important institutional development in Britain.

To a significant degree, the interests of Government in culture had now become institutionalised into the Department of Science and Art. It was responsible for funding an increasing number of national organisations and, through that mechanism, had a measure of control over a form of national cultural policy. As an institution, its work also became less dependent on its formative agents, but forged a developmental path of its own that was to sustain for a remarkably long time, almost

unchanging under Whig, Liberal and Conservative governments for the remainder of Victoria's reign. Appropriation Accounts for the period show the department's work as divisible into:

- (i) the construction and care of buildings (for example, the British Museum, the Natural History Museum, and the various National Galleries in England, Scotland and Ireland) and national monuments (those of Wellington, Palmerston, Gladstone, and Salisbury among them);
- (ii) support for the activities and acquisitions for those institutions, and providing support for "Learned Societies";
- (iii) grants for individual events and international exhibitions. As part of the Education Department it also had a continuing concern for fine arts training and arts education more generally.

In an example of evolutionary institutional momentum, the department appeared to be oblivious to the artistic agonism of the period, in which artistic ideologies contested social and political thought as much as the value of the art works they produced. One thinks of the contrasting characteristics of the Arts and Crafts movement and impressionism, or how Pre-Raphaelite romanticism ran abrasively alongside neo-classicism and modernism. Whistler's famous legal suit against Ruskin is evidence for exactly these profound conceptual differences<sup>1</sup>. The religious and moral values that formed the substantive certainties of human life were similarly being dislodged by profound intellectual works, most notably those of Charles Darwin, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. But the Department of Science and Art remained unmoved, hardly changing in its responsibilities throughout the century. By 1870 it had awarded general support to five other legally independent cultural institutions: the British Museum, the National Galleries of England and Ireland, the

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<sup>1</sup> Criticising Whistler's *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket* in 1877, Ruskin wrote that "I have seen and heard much of Cockney impudence before now but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face." Whistler sued and won damages of one farthing – then the smallest coin of the realm.

National Portrait Gallery, and five Learned Societies – all of them Royal Societies <sup>1</sup>. By the end of the century, thirty years later, only the National Gallery of Scotland and the Wallace Gallery had been added to the list, although the Learned Societies, now renamed in Appropriation Accounts as “Scientific Investigations, &. (United Kingdom)”, had grown to include seven more organisations <sup>2</sup>.

### **The Pressure for Policy**

In her history of Government and the arts in the UK, Minihan introduced the “changing perspectives” of the new century, the 20th century, with the assertion that “the heyday of laissez-faire economic and social theories had unmistakably passed” (Minihan, 1977: 138). Perhaps; but as far as the arts and culture are concerned the case for this was more in evident in “theories” and public debate than it was in government policy. Nevertheless, it is incontestable that there was a growing concern for the consequences of industrialisation. The irresistible logic for an ever-widening franchise had energised social policy and its accompanying legislation; the introduction of national insurance, old age pensions, a growing concern for the health and well-being of the working population – and other foundations for a new “welfare state”. Pressure came too from the nature of the new electorate; a growing urban proletariat that found a voice through unionism and what was to become the Labour Party. The development of cultural policy in this context has been described as a “a component” of the welfare state (Zimmer and Toepler, 1999: 34) and that it “parallels” its development (O. Bennett, 1995: 203), but the limited extent to which there was an increase in governmental intervention in cultural matters makes uncertain any connections with welfare state rationales and, as will be discussed in the next chapter, even less with the logic of *laissez-faire*.

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<sup>1</sup> The Royal Society, Meteorological Committee of the Royal Society, the Royal Geographic Society, the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and the Royal Academy of Music.

<sup>2</sup> Royal College of Music, Marine Biological Association, Edinburgh Observatory, Scottish Meteorological Society, Royal Irish Academy, Royal Irish Academy of Music and the Royal Zoological Society of Ireland

Voices urging the state to instigate cultural development were certainly heard increasingly in Parliament, but the old arguments and institutions persisted. The Department of Science and Art became fully integrated in the Board of Education in 1899, reaffirming their function as essentially educational, yet its work continued much as before; funding a select group of national institutions and organisations in the sciences and the arts. Nevertheless, pleas for financial support for the creation of a national theatre in some form finally made it to a Motion in the House of Commons in 1913. Moved by Sir Halford John Mackinder, an English academic (a geographer) he begged: “That, in the opinion of this house, there should be established in London a National Theatre, to be vested in trustees and assisted by the State, for the performance of the plays of Shakespeare and other dramas of recognised merit” (HC Hansard, 1913: 453; Minihan, 1977: 142-8). The debate was particularly interesting, firstly because it ranged around reasons to support the performing arts and literature rather than just museums and galleries, and secondly, it was a rare airing of arguments for Government intervention into a specific area of activity that would have been rejected out of hand not many years earlier (albeit that the lobby for a national theatre had been longstanding). Mackinder summed up his arguments in this way:

In conclusion, I believe that a small Grant made by the State would have the effect, in not a long term of years, of stimulating the drama throughout the country by, in the first place, cultivating the public, in the second place, training actors, and in the third place, holding up a high standard. I believe that these are functions in which the State may legitimately take the lead, and with that object I have brought forward the Motion which I now beg to move (1913: 465-6).

Among the more cogent opposing arguments was one from Ellis Ellis-Griffith (later to be knighted, and then MP for Anglesey), who made his own summary of the proposition:

As I understand it, the position put by those who support the Resolution is that the State recognition and endowment of the drama is justified in the same sense as the State recognition and endowment of music, painting, and sculpture in the universities and in other institutions of a similar character.



[...] As I understand it, the national theatre is to produce plays to which, if they were produced by private enterprise, no one would go (1913: 481).

The house was quite well attended. 128 voted - 96 Ayes and 32 Noes but, through a technicality (in the Speaker's words: "because it was not supported by the majority prescribed by Standing Order 27"<sup>1</sup>), the debate stood adjourned; in effect lost through lack of Parliamentary time. Arguments for social, intellectual or economic benefit of a national theatre company were few, although, by implication at least, there was a concern for international prowess judging from the many examples given of national theatres in other European countries. Most thought the whole proposition too expensive for the government and could be provided privately. Arguments in support of learning, moral improvement and personal advancement were all but absent.

Two points of particular interest can be found in the debate. The first is the use of the word "culture" in a phrase used by Ellis-Griffith: "people of culture" (HC Hansard, 1913: 482), clearly meaning people of education with an understanding and appreciation of artistic works. This use of the word was still quite rare (although note Disraeli's use quoted earlier). On the few occasions it had been used, it generally referred to culture as cultivation; the process of personal improvement and specifically to the part that fine art could play in that process, as in Mackinder's words "cultivating the public". Ellis-Griffiths, though, was referring to an already cultivated person; someone deserving of fine things to meet the level of their hard-won sophistication. This accorded with the personal, rather than civic argument; one less concerned with the development of the British citizen, even though that was still given as a rationale for funding museums and galleries. The second point concerns a view expressed by Arthur Ponsonby, MP and Private Secretary to Queen Victoria:

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<sup>1</sup> SO 27 stated that "Questions for the closure of debate or selection of amendments under standing order 'Closure of Debate' shall be decided in the affirmative, if, when a division be taken, it appears by the numbers declared from the chair, that not less than one hundred members voted in the majority in support of the motion": PARLIAMENTARY PAPER 23rd July 1912. HC 276 .

The day is passed, I think, when the arts are merely looked upon as trivial and frivolous adjuncts of our ordinary life. The arts have come to be part and parcel of our lives, and nobody's education is complete without the arts. It is time in this country that we should have a Minister of Fine Arts who should be responsible for pictorial art, for music, and for the drama (HC Hansard, 1913: 491).

This is the first reference in Parliament to the prospect of a “Minister of Fine Arts”. It was, in fact, only in 1964 when Jennie Lee was appointed Minister for Arts (but without the “Fine”) in Harold Wilson’s Labour Government that the arts had ministerial, although not Cabinet, representation.

The debates around the national theatre confirmed the long-standing view of Parliament that theatre was essentially a private sector concern. Even where it had some interest to contribute financially, it still expected the private sector would contribute a large proportion of the costs. The development of the Old Vic (originally the Royal Victoria Coffee Music Hall), was a case in point. Emma Cons founded the enterprise in the 1880s as “decent amusement for the Lambeth poor”; “an outgrowth of her work for housing and temperance reform” (Minihan, 1977: 150). Its programmes initially featured “decorous family entertainment” (1977: 151) but over decades moved increasingly to include opera and then serious drama. It was quite a successful enterprise although, because of its very low ticket prices, it still needed the support from philanthropists including, by the 1920s, the City Parochial Foundation. In a debate in the House of Commons in 1929, John Scurr, Labour member for London’s Mile End, made a plea for support for the Old Vic with this argument:

Everyone knows the remarkable work which has been done by the Old Vic, and while we may argue with one another about the merits or demerits of a municipal theatre, it is a custom in this country to proceed, in matters like this, by voluntary methods at the beginning. These methods continue until the time comes when it is impossible to raise the necessary means, and when the thing is valuable the community has to step in and take control (HC Hansard, 1929: 1150).

Reluctance to subsidise the theatre arts revolved around their history as private ventures countered by perceptions of their potential for social amelioration. Even the educational rationales behind support for galleries and museums were tempered by the preference of government not to get involved. A Royal Commission examining the role and needs of museums and galleries in 1929 noted the alternative “continental systems” of managing museum and galleries, by which they meant centralised and direct governmental administrations, and advised: “Such a system is alien to the traditions under which our National Institutions have developed. Examined as separate entities, each Institution has abundantly justified its existence and been well served by its governing authority and by its expert advisers” (Home Department, 1929: 69). This reinforced a point made earlier in the report, accepting that:

The Treasury is, in the majority of cases, the only Department with which the authorities of the Institutions have direct relations, and it is certainly not the function of the Treasury to play the part of a benevolent or solicitous parent (1929: 11).

Parliament's preference for the arts to remain private matters became increasingly difficult to maintain in the face of the 20th century's technical, commercial and artistic developments. The advent of a radio, the growth of the film industry, and the creation of the BBC were among the challenges to rationales that separated the public and private realms. Government responded quite differently to each but in doing so still demonstrated characteristics consistent with responses since the petition to Parliament by Hans Sloane's trustees more than a century and a half earlier.

### **Film and Broadcasting**

British film production was initially quite successful even by comparison with its principle competitors in the USA and France. By 1910, British films were popular in the USA, taking 15% of the market (Select Committee on Communications, 2010: 11) and constituted 50-60% of all films shown across in Europe (Bakker, 2000: 29). But just four years later this had dropped dramatically such that, even in the UK, British

films represented something closer to 5% of the market (Bakker, 2008: 188). According to the Labour MP Glenvil Hall, the British film industry was then “practically dead” “at the end of the last war [WW1]” (HC Hansard, 1942: 699; also quoted in Minihan, 1977: 198).

Contrasting governments' attitudes and actions between Britain, France, and the USA is telling. America promoted its new industry strongly, appointing a trade commission in Europe and collecting data on competition through forty-four of its foreign offices and three hundred consulates. Import tariffs were imposed and, in 1926, Congress voted \$15,000 to support the industry through the Department of Commerce. France, like Britain, had little money to support industry after WW1 but, instead, imposed import tariffs and quotas on foreign-made films from 1921 in the proportion of one French film for every seven made elsewhere (Ulf-Moller, 1998). Britain finally imposed initially a 5% quota, later rising to 25% (Bakker, 2008: 245), but not until the Cinematograph Films Act of 1927, by which time the vertically-structured American film industry dominated the market in making, distributing and showing their products. In short, British governments were comparatively slow to act. Despite this, the quota system was quite successful in ensuring the British made “Quota Quickies” (Bakker, 2008: 245); that is to say films cheaply and quickly made to play alongside major, usually Hollywood made films, kept the industry alive and helped develop a considerable technical expertise. In retrospect, many now judge that the system did also produce some good films (Chibnall and MacFarlane, 2007).

The initial approach of Parliament was to see film not as a new industry but as an extension of live theatre and subject to the same system of censorship to be applied by the judgement of the Lord Chancellor. A joint Select Committee (of both Houses) in 1909 reviewed the censorship of stage plays. In giving evidence to the committee, the influential actor-manager and playwright, Granville-Barker, described his thinking:

... I may point out to the Committee, if they will allow me, the case which is now arising of the performances at what are known as cinematograph theatres. Very soon, if it does not take place already, it will be possible to have a play performed by the action being shown on the cinematograph and the dialogue being given by a gramophone. Whether or not that will be a performance of a stage play I do not know, or whether a stage play licence will be required for it, but it is quite certain that we may have over here, very soon, as they have now, I believe, in Germany and the United States, various so-called theatres put up all along the street, at which those performances may take place (Select Committee (joint), 1909: 76).

The commercial value and cultural importance of the industry only became apparent to Parliament over time. Responding to the protectionist policies of the USA in the 1920s, James Seddon MP asked of the President of the Board of Trade, Sir William Mitchell-Thompson:

...whether, in view of the potent influences of the cinema on the commercial, educational, and political life of the people, some means can be found to counteract the threatened Americanisation of the British people which is being brought about by the overwhelming preponderance of American films exhibited in this country (HC Hansard, 1921: cols 679-680).

By this argument, the *laissez-faire* preference was compromised by the realities of international competition and the conviction that the national character required protection. Indeed, national protection was a duty of government that even Bentham noted should take priority over a predisposition for non-intervention.

Although the British Government was slow to recognise the commercial potential for cinematography the same was not true of broadcasting which, right from the start, encompassed the strong commercial interests, the unwelcome prospect of a commercial monopoly, and powerful agents manifested by the combined forces of equipment manufacturers. Wireless telephony in the form of radio broadcasting began to replace wired telegraphy among commercial, military and, unofficially, hobbyists, early in the twentieth century, using equipment based on patents mostly owned by the Marconi Company. As a consequence, the contractual arrangements

between Government, represented by the Post Office, and Marconi set the structure within which wireless services eventually became available to the general public<sup>1</sup>.

During 1903 and 1904 questions increasingly arose in Parliament, both in reports and debates, that pressed for the conclusion of negotiations with Marconi that would allow wireless technology to be used for the benefit of merchant shipping and the Navy (see, for example HC Hansard, 1903: cols 123-271). The result was the Wireless Telegraphy Bill of 1904, the purpose of which was defined in the Bill's explanatory memorandum:

The development of wireless telegraphy during the past few years and the prospect of its further development and extended use in the near future have rendered legislation on the subject essential in the interests of the naval and military requirements of the Empire ... it is essential that the control of this method of communication should be in the hands of the Government (1904: 1).

The Bill itself proposed “for administrative reasons ... that licences [for broadcasting rights] should be granted by the Postmaster-General” (1904: 3), although conditional upon Admiralty, War Office, and Board of Trade consent. Unlike the older wired telegraphy, what could *not* be controlled was who could receive broadcast messages. While a problem for the military, this characteristic offered new commercial prospects for rights holders of the technology, such that, by 1922, the Managing Director of the Marconi Company, Godfrey Isaacs, was arguing for a national public wireless service for which it would “supply instruments to the householder on hire” (quoted in T. Burns, 1977: 3).

This uncomfortable relationship between government and Marconi nevertheless resulted in a system of beneficial control at both ends, *viz*, of the technical transceivers and of the rights to broadcast, thus saving Britain from the mess that uncontrolled broadcasting had created in the USA. It also satisfied Parliament's *laissez-faire* instincts and, indeed, spurred them to seek a greater measure of

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<sup>1</sup> Wired telegraphy was well established though. An estimated 90 million telegrams were sent through the Post Office in 1902 HC HANSARD 1903, 8th June, Series 4, Vol 123: 271

collaboration with commercial manufacturers. Recognising the problems that had arisen in the USA, Frederick Kellaway, then Postmaster-General, addressed the House of Commons, announcing:

I have decided to allow the establishment of a limited number of radio-telephone broadcasting stations ... Permission for these stations will only be granted to British firms who are bonâ fide manufacturers of wireless apparatus ... . What I am doing is to ask all those who apply ... to come together at the Post Office and cooperate so that an efficient service may be rendered and that there may be no danger of [commercial] monopoly and that each service shall not be interfering with the efficient working of the other. ... There will be certain regulations in regard to the character and classes of news which these agencies will be allowed to transmit, but on that head I have not yet come to a final decision (HC Hansard, 1922: col 1601).

That "coming together" took place on May 23<sup>rd</sup> of that year. Present were The "Big Six" manufactures and rights holders<sup>1</sup> (smaller companies were represented by Burndept Ltd). They met again the following day. Despite differences and difficulties, a meeting minute records: "It was decided first to work out a plan on the basis of one Broadcasting Company for the whole country..." (quoted in Briggs, 1985: 31). By the end of the year the British Broadcasting Company (not yet a "Corporation") was formed - not directly by government but by the commercial owners of broadcasting technology. Neither the government nor the commercial owners expressed any cultural or social concerns.

Clearly, Parliament believed sufficient control could be applied over the use of wireless technology through licensing and civil contract. To control what was broadcast (the "content", as it is now called) would require some regulation for "prior restraint". Powers were then given to the Post-Master General who could, and often did, exercise strict controls on BBC programmes, much as did the Lord Chamberlain over the privately operated theatres. Once wireless technology had moved from telegraphy and telephony to public broadcasting, new mechanisms of

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<sup>1</sup> The Marconi Company, Metropolitan-Vickers, the Western Electric Company, the Radio Communication Company, the General Electric Company and the British Thompson-Houston Company.

control were required that allowed opinion, entertainment, and information to be freely available under arrangements that respected traditional liberal values, yet still placed the government's hand on the "off" switch. This was achieved through arrangements of "calculated imprecision" to facilitate the "accommodation politics" (T. Burns, 1977: 9, 20) necessary to permit the BBC to have executive control while, in the background, the Postmaster-General defined a content policy by his approval or rejection (1977: 11-16).

A challenge to this arose briefly in the Report of the 1936 Ullswater Committee reviewing the work of the BBC, reporting just as its initial charter was about to expire. Whilst recommending the continuation of the arrangements under which:

minor issues, measures of domestic policy, and matters of day to day management should be left to the free judgement of the Corporation;

The report further proposed:

That the Minister responsible in respect of broad questions of policy and culture should be a selected Cabinet Minister in the House of Commons, free from the heavy departmental responsibilities and preferably a senior member of the Government ... but that the technical control should remain with the Postmaster General (Postmaster General, 1935: 43-44).

Despite a lengthy intervention by Sir Stafford Cripps in the Parliamentary debate that was strongly critical of the BBC, this recommendation was rejected, leaving BBC programming at arm's-length from direct political control (HC Hansard, 1936: cols 972-981). Cripps was, though, also expressing a view of many who had found John Reith's management of the BBC to be abrasively uncompromising and determined in pursuit of his personal vision. Reith's dedication to the Corporation and constant vigilance on every detail that effected its ability to act with independence was in stark contrast to bodies, such as the Post Office, that more willingly and procedurally incorporated the wishes of Parliament. It was Reith, though, that ensured the cultural status for the BBC that is now profoundly institutionalised (Stuart, 1975; McIntyre, 1993).



## Opera

A quite different pressure for Government support for culture, implying a prior need for policy, concerned appeals for a national opera company. Parliament's long-established disinterest in supporting the performing arts combined with their view that opera and ballet were "thoroughly un-English" (Minihan, 1977: n234) made support unlikely. Nevertheless, some interest was shown in the subject when Parliament asked British Diplomatic and Consular officers to assess the extent of "Financial support given from state or municipal funds to dramatic, operatic, or musical performances in foreign countries" (Miscellaneous No 6, 1904). Responses were listed from twenty-seven countries across Europe, the Middle East, Scandinavia, the Americas, and many cities within each. The picture revealed was quite mixed, as would be expected, but showed the British attitude to subsidy for theatre to be more in line with Argentina, Italy and the USA than with the remaining twenty-three countries investigated, and in quite stark contrast to our near neighbours in France, Germany, Belgium and Spain.

There appears to be no clear explanation as to why Balfour's Government commissioned this report, but perhaps it was in the hope of finding others unwilling to provide supporting funds. In any event it made little or no difference. Opera, like all theatre, remained a private interest, and the difficulties experienced by the National Opera Company, "registered in 1855 and quickly abandoned" (Davis, 2000: 264), the Carl Rosa Opera Company (formed in 1873 and still going), the Moody-Manners Opera Company (formed in 1898, closed 1916 (Oxford Music Online)), Sir Thomas Beecham's Opera Company (formed 1915, bankrupt in 1920 (Reid, 1962)) and its offshoot, the British National Opera Company (bankrupt in 1929 (Minihan, 1977: 193)), all of which staged opera in Britain with varying, but always difficult, financial

results, simply added pressure for Government support<sup>1</sup>. Sir Ellis Hume-Williams (Conservative, Bassetlaw) asked a question that was increasingly being voiced:

I think England is the only country in the world where the opera and State theatres do not receive some kind of subvention. In France, in Germany and other countries dramatic art is looked upon as of such educational importance that State theatres receive a State subvention, and such assistance is accorded to the opera as well. In England there is nothing of the kind (HC Hansard, 1926: 98-99).

Beecham tried again in 1927, forming “The Imperial League of Opera”, which aimed “to build and endow an opera house in London and to assist in the building and endowing of opera houses in some of the leading provincial cities” (The Imperial League of Opera, Undated). It benefitted not just from his own reputation but also those of his fellow trustees and advisors named on its promotional pamphlet<sup>2</sup>, although the initiative failed both to raise the necessary funds or directly change the Government’s views.

Change finally came in 1931 under Ramsey MacDonald’s National Labour Government when financial support was given to “The Grand Opera Syndicate”, an organisation that managed what was to become the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. Yet it did so under arrangements that suggested the Government was still reluctant to set a precedent or to be seen subsidising theatre, particularly during economically difficult times. A Supplemental Agreement between HM Postmaster General and the BBC set-out the mechanism and the contractual terms for this subsidy. In summary, the Postmaster General agreed to “contribute to the cost” of the BBC, supporting the Grand Opera Syndicate to produce opera performances that it, the BBC, could then broadcast (H. M. Postmaster General, 1931). Accordingly, it allowed the Postmaster General to increase its funding to the BBC for a series of

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed summary of attempts in the 19th century to sustain opera in Britain, see DAVIS, T. C. 2000. *The Economics of the British Stage: 1800 - 1914*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. pp 262-267 and passim.

<sup>2</sup> Given as Sir Thomas Beecham Bt (Founder); Sir Ronald Landon (advisor); Frederick Austin (advisor); Sir Eric Hambro KBE (trustee); Lord Islington GCMG GBO DSO PC (trustee); and Sir Vincent Henry Penalver Callard DL (trustee). (Op Cit).

payments over five years starting 1<sup>st</sup> January 1931. As this in turn required Parliament to increase payments to the Post Office, the Government then became a sponsor of national opera.

Against a persistent barrage of criticism in Parliament for this expense, the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave the defence that “it will involve no increase of taxation. It will not add one penny to the burden on the British taxpayer but will bring in a net revenue to the State” (HC Hansard, 1931: col 590). The Sydney Morning Herald summed-up an alternative reading of these events: “If Great Britain subsidises opera, a policy recently announced by Mr Snowden, Chancellor of the Exchequer, this will be the first time in British history that this has been done, though similar subsidies have long been paid on the Continent” (Nolan, 1931). The Agreement was allowed to lapse at the end of its term.

### **Some Conclusions**

Reviewing the rationales expressed within Government for action or, more often, inaction on cultural matters since 1753 exposes some fundamental characteristics:

1. The absence of any overall concept of the arts or culture to which policy should be applied. Each issue was dealt with *ad hoc*. With the exception of initiatives relating to education and cultivation, there was a profound reluctance to engage with broad societal concerns.
2. All governments of the period adopted *laissez-faire* economic principles and a normative inclination for non-intervention, maintaining a clear differentiation between the private and public spheres. Exceptions were argued as matters of national interest (primarily security and international competition) or moral concerns for the well-being of citizens.
3. Institutions at arm's-length from direct government control were formed which then continued, increasing slowly in number and in the range of their interests.

4. The absence of any general concern for artistic or creative works *per se* was notable. The concept of *l'art pour l'art* had been in circulation across Europe since early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but apparently had not yet entered in to the reasoning of British Governments.

## 1939-1997: New Labour's Inheritance

The development of implicit cultural policies from 1939 featured a continuing narrative of institutional expansion, substantial increases in state financial interventions and, in the latter decades, an administrative reorganisation that progressively brought together the increasing breadth of cultural concerns within one ministry. Most importantly, it marked the creation and growth of an explicit government policy for the arts and culture. From the middle of the 20th century the non-partisan belief that the arts should be promoted and supported by the state grew steadily, its course of development remarkably consistent in direction and rationales, even under the polarising Conservative governments under Margaret Thatcher. Indeed, the policies of Conservative and Labour governments before 1997 differed only in their views on the most effective means to achieve the same ends, and this usually came down simply to money distributed under the "arm's-length" principle. This, with the addition of the fine grain of quotidian political events, and the continuous heterogeneous discourse among cultural commentators on the rights and wrongs of arts funding policy (what to subsidise and how to make those judgements), is how the story is usually told; linear, seemingly logical, morally progressive, and with a tacit disregard for, or perhaps disinterest in, earlier 18th and 19th century traditions and norms<sup>1</sup>.

### **New Labour's Inheritance**

On the day that Chris Smith, MP for Islington South and Finsbury, became Secretary of State at the Department of National Heritage he renamed it the Department for Culture Media and Sport. Smith was an intellectual; Cambridge and Harvard educated, with a PhD from research on Coleridge and Wordsworth, and seemed ideally suited to the brief. The Prime Minister announced the Department's new

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<sup>1</sup> Versions of this narrative can be found in the historical summaries of British cultural policy published by Compendium at [www.culturalpolicies.net](http://www.culturalpolicies.net), and by the European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research at [www.ericarts.org](http://www.ericarts.org)

name in the Commons that same afternoon of July 14th 1997 in a written answer to Gerald Kaufman's question: what plans do the Government have for the Department of National Heritage; and will he make a statement? Tony Blair's answer indicated a significant change of policy for the arts and, in its wider socio-economic form, culture:

The Government have decided to refocus the Department of National Heritage to play a major part in the regeneration of our country for the future, working with the cultural industries, local government and the private sector to support creativity and also to create wealth and employment. As an expression of this change, the Department will be renamed the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and its responsibilities widened to include the music industries, which contribute some £2.5 billion to gross domestic product each year. My right hon. Friend, who will be known as the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, will develop a new and dynamic approach to the 'creative industries'. He will carry through the Government's commitment to a strategic vision for the British arts, media and cultural industries that matches their real power and energy (HC Hansard, 1997: col 44).

Heritage was not named in this new policy, despite it taking more than 20% of the department's budget (Department of National Heritage, 1996/7). Instead, its principle objectives were expressed as regeneration, wealth and employment. The arts were now to be subject to a strategy to exploit their "real power and energy". Economic scientism was to be the driving rationale, contributing to McCloskey's well-argued case that, to quote Richard Wilk: "economics has become a cultural artefact of logical positivism" (McCloskey, 1990: 363; Wilk, 1996: 67); but now it was culture itself that was the agar in which economic life could grow. Chris Smith had already written to the "Members and Staff" of his department that morning, informing them not just of the change of name but of his ambitions for the department, saying: "These developments, coming on top of the valuable work we are already carrying out across our sectors - in particular heritage and tourism -

place the Department at the centre of the country's economic life and regeneration" (C. Smith, 1997a)<sup>1</sup>.

The significance of these changes was both confirmed and denied in an interview in 2009 when asked about changing the department's name. Smith gave several answers:

The original Department for National Heritage was formed originally of course by John Major really in order to fit David Mellor's interests. He was a guy who was passionate about music, about the arts and about sport, in particularly football and so the various bits that were put together for what later became DCMS, it was really an *ad hominem* construct when it was first started.

But he then added:

I was determined to do three things. One was to change the name, because heritage is obviously a very important element of what DCMS does, but it's only one element amongst a huge number and the name simply didn't reflect the spread or the modernity of what the department was about ... the things that it was engaged in, television, lottery, the arts, sport and these were all things that mattered hugely to citizens and yet it had been sort of languishing in the doldrums very much at the edge of Government, so I wanted to put it more centre stage. But I also, thirdly, wanted to give it much more of a sense that it was part not just of the aesthetics of society, but of the economy of society, that the importance of the creative industries was something that Government needed to wake up to. Oh, and there was a fourth thing I wanted to do, which was to give it a very clear sense of what it was there for and which is why I developed the four pillars that DCMS was all about - which were excellence, access, education and the creative economy - and those four things I just drummed into the department (C. Smith, 2009).

The process by which the department's remit was reconceived was informal but nevertheless stayed with the tradition asserted in the 1995/6 National Heritage Select Committee in which the responsibilities of the department were said to be "a matter

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<sup>1</sup> The Statutory Instrument (No. 1744) by which the name of the department was formally changed and related documents amended was made on 22nd July 1997, then laid before Parliament on August 1st before coming into force on 22nd August of that year.

for the Prime Minister" (National Heritage Committee, 1995/6: vii and 42). In Chris Smith's words:

I had to get agreement in principle first, to changing the name of the department. I wanted it to be the Department for Culture full stop. The Prime Minister wasn't having that, he thought that sounded too arty farty, insisted on including sport in the title. I thought, well, if we've got culture and we've got sport we might as well just make sure that we hang on very firmly to media, which is how the name emerged (C. Smith, 2009).

In response to the question "Why not also tourism", his reply was a dismissive quip: "But you can't put everything in" (2009). It was the same argument Smith had made to the new department's first Select Committee report, although the Committee took the issue rather more seriously:

In July 1997 it was announced that the Department was to be re-named the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Mr Smith said that the old name was 'backward-looking and did not do justice to the range of work we cover'. The new name was more suited to a 'Department of the future' which was "about creativity, innovation and excitement". He denied that any significance could be attached to the omission of tourism from the title: 'it was not included in the title of the Department simply because we cannot include everything in the title of the Department'. (DCMS Select Committee, 1998b: viii)

This explanation was in part prompted by a view the Committee had expressed earlier in the report:

We are, therefore, deeply concerned that, in policy statements by the Department and in public statements by Ministers, tourism is subordinated in favour of more glamorous and trivial matters. We recommend that the Department's economic objective should be to foster the tourism, creative and sports industries. (1998b: vi)

Later Adding:

Concentration on "creativity" also leads to a perceived undervaluing of tourism. The switch from a symbolic to a descriptive title for the Department, while understandable, has led to the omission of tourism from the title. Although the Department has only recently been re-named, we believe that a



new name should be found for it which combines euphony with a more comprehensive description of its responsibilities. (1998b: ix)

The criticism was clearly driven by a hope for a change in policy more than a concern for the Department's name. The government's 1997-8 Appropriation Accounts, show that just under 5% of DCMS's expenditure had been allocated to tourism (£45,095,000), falling to 4.69% by 2001 (£48,214,000). Significantly, the arts were not considered anywhere in the discussion about the name (Comptroller & Auditor General, 1860 to 2001), yet this was the subject that had been at the heart of cultural policy (excluding *ad hoc* interventions) since the mid-20th century.

The impression that the renaming of the Department was a relaxed, informal and even little-considered process is how Smith told it in 2009 (C. Smith, 2009); though no doubt revised by memory and the effects of many trying experiences behind him (the Millennium Dome dramas among them). As will be discussed later, a considerable literature had also been published refuting the validity and cogency of a number of the principles on which DCMS founded their policies. Nevertheless, in 1997 DCMS was immediately and integrally involved in the Treasury's theories of social economics and in Tony Blair's desire for a pliable electorate encouraged to abandon the traditional Manichean poles of British politics in favour of a conflated, uncontentious middle: the Third Way.

The radical change in the rationales of policy that came with the change of name has been something largely ignored in political and cultural studies literature and, in effect, denied by government. In response to a Freedom of Information request concerning the method, mechanism and rationales for the change of name, the DCMS merely reported: "It came about as a name change to the Department for National Heritage which was created in 1992" (DCMS, 2008). In the light of the historical developmental path (Mahoney, 1999) of arts and culture within government departments, and particularly during the period since 1939, that contention is one of several disputed by the arguments that follow.

## **Tracing the path (1): Departmental Development**

Neither the Labour nor Conservative administrations developed a policy for the arts before 1945, although funding for national museums, galleries and other cultural institutions was continuous from their first appearances in the 1867/68 Appropriation Accounts until they were incorporated within the responsibilities of the Department of National Heritage. The Appropriation Accounts resulted from a Bill passed on 22nd July 1861: "To Provide for the preparation, Audit, and presentation to Parliament of annual Accounts of the Appropriation of the Moneys voted for Revenue Departments" (Revenue Accounts Department, 22nd July 1861). Some initiatives, like support for the Royal Opera House and later the CEMA (discussed below), are not shown as separate items but these are rare exceptions. Generally the accounts are full of fine detail. They provide a route by which spending can be traced in a way not possible by looking at departmental history or policy narratives, and can provide insights into policy relations, policy development, departmental performance, and the extent of bureaucracy required to administer their programmes. Taking this long view through the accounts is also another way to place the DCMS in a context that, by comparison with preceding policies, distinguishes its paradigms more plainly.

In Table 1 below, funding for the Arts Council (originally the Arts Council of Great Britain, then reformed as the Arts Council of England in 1994) has been used to trace a budget line backwards from its place in the DCMS accounts to its first appearance in the 1938/9 Appropriation Accounts under "Scientific Investigations, &c.". That same account "service", albeit without the inclusion of the Arts Council, then continues backwards to 1869/70 under the similar heading of "Learned Societies & Scientific Investigations". Along the way, its cultural companions in the accounts remained remarkably consistent: among them the National Gallery, Natural History Museum, British Museum, National Gallery, Wallace Gallery, music academies, national libraries, and several other cultural institutions. Notably, they were categorised with science within the "Education" budget class from the earliest entries. Even as late as 1938/9 the accounts show them sharing the service item with various Royal Societies, the Royal

Geographical Societies, the Solar Physics Observatory, the Agricultural Research Council, the North Sea Fisheries Investigation, and the Scott Polar Research Institute.

The parting of the accountancy ways was not until 1984/5 but the arts still remained departmentally linked to libraries, as they had been departmentally since 1975. The creation of government departments with ministers responsible for arts dates only from 1964 with the appointment of Jennie Lee, initially within the Ministry of Public Building and Works within Harold Wilson's Labour Government (Hollis, 1997: 245-58). However, it was the preceding Conservative Government that, in 1962, separated "Museums, Galleries and the Arts" within the accounts. There may well be some significance in this change, but, alas, the research required would be a distraction from this thesis. In any case, this move was then reversed in 1974/5 under Labour when reintroducing an earlier association by placing the arts within the Department of Education and Science. Under the Conservative Government led by John Major, the arts then became a part of the National Heritage accounts before finally being shown separately in 1993/4, although still with their old 19th century cultural companions. Once passed to New Labour in 1997, the account entry simply reads "arts", separate from Museums and Galleries, Libraries and Sport but still associated with budgets of National Heritage through the "Arts Sponsorship Scheme" and with the "Government Arts Collection" which appeared alongside.

From the following table, it is notable that:

- In either the Budget Class or Service Item, the funding of national museums, galleries, libraries and other cultural institutions (under "Arts" since 1970) were categorised with science until 1985;
- Funding for arts and science institutions fell within the general ambit of education policy for 115 years: from 1870 until 1985;
- Although a broad concept of culture was used in political discussion since at least since the 1964 paper *A Policy for the Arts*, the idea or concept of "culture" does not appear anywhere in the Appropriation Accounts until the formation of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

**Table 1: Tracing the Institutional Path**

<b>Years ending</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Budget Class</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Service Item</b>
1870 to 1899	Within the Department of Science and Art	Education, Science & Art		Learned Societies & Scientific Investigations
1900 to 1927	Now under the Board of Education	Education, Science & Art		Scientific Investigation, &c
1928 to 1938		Education		Scientific Investigation, &c
1939 to 1948	For the first time, includes the Arts Council of Great Britain. The Board of Education became the Ministry of Education in 1944/5.	Education & Broadcasting		Scientific Investigation &c
1949 to 1962		Education & Broadcasting		Grants for Science & the Arts
1963 to 1966	The first Minister for the Arts appointed	Museums Galleries & the Arts		Grants for the Arts
1967 to 1974	Direct from the Treasury	Museums Galleries & the Arts		Arts Council & Other Grants for the Arts
1975 to 1980	Under the Department of Education & Science	Education & Science, Arts & Libraries		Arts: Arts Council and Other Grants
1981 to 1984		Education & Science, Arts & Libraries,		Arts, Arts Council & Other Institutions, the National Heritage & Govt Art Collection
1985 to 1988	Now split from Education and Science	Arts & Libraries		Arts, Arts Council & Other Institutions, the National Heritage & Govt Picture Collection
1989 to 1992		Office of Arts & Libraries		Arts & Heritage
1993		National Heritage & Arts & Libraries		Arts
1994 to 1995		National Heritage		DNH: Arts
1996 to 1997		National Heritage	DNH: Prog, Exp & Admin	Promotion of the Arts: Grant in Aid
1998 to 2001		Culture, Media & Sport	CMS Prog, Exp & Admin	Arts

It would be possible to draw too much by implication from the accounts, but it is reasonable to argue that the machinery of government, institutionalised with entrenched civil service practices, will generally respond pragmatically, if not quickly, to the policy changes of elected Parliamentarians. In this way they provide an insight into more deeply rooted trends, smoothing the graph of change such that, whilst no doubt lagging behind shifts in social practises, the direction of change may appear consistent. Change is rarely sudden in the administration of government nor in the society that is its object of concern. Its mechanisms are too complex; social structures, practises, and normative beliefs too strongly reproduced to be cast aside with a statement of policy change or of the government itself. The search for the developments of a cultural policy is then also a search for the "emergent properties" that arise from the "complex interchanges that produce change in a system's given form, structure or state" (Archer, 1982: 458), (see also arguments by P. A. Hall and Taylor, 1998; Archer, 1996; Giddens, 1979; Hay and Wincott, 1998; Jessop, 1996). In the period from 1945, that search for the trends of ideational change in governments' constitutive concepts of culture leads to three developments: (i) the 1964 White Paper *A Policy for the Arts*, (ii) the development of the Arts Council, and (iii) the process of consolidation of government departments into the Department of National Heritage and then, later, to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

[The White Paper: A Policy for the Arts: The First Steps \(Office of Arts & Libraries, 1965\)](#)

Jennie Lee's appointment as a Parliamentary Under Secretary of State with "a loose responsibility for the Arts" within the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works was Harold Wilson's way of moving arts spending out of the Treasury, which should not, he thought, "be a spending department" (Hollis, 1997: 255)<sup>1</sup>. Lee later became a Minister of State for the Arts within the Department of Education and Science in February 1967. The move followed a Labour Party document, *The Quality of Living*,

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<sup>1</sup> Hollis quotes the source of the quotation as "H. Jenkins, contribution to the Revised Policy Statement on the Arts RD561/Nov 1963".

published in May 1964, five months before the General Election, updating its earlier publication *Leisure for Living*, which was said to be "the first major statement ever made by a British political party on the use of leisure and the support for the arts" (Harris, 1970: 153-4). However, Labour Party manifestos, as with those of the other two major parties, actually made only brief references to arts before the late 1980s. Its inclusion was often as part of policies promoting "Quality of Life" (Con 1964), "Amenities" (Lab 1966), or "Leisure" (Lab 1983).

**Table 2 :**

<b>Mentions of "art(s)" and "culture" in party manifestos.</b>							
<b>Gen Election</b>	<b>WIN</b>	<b>Labour</b>		<b>Conservative</b>		<b>Liberal</b>	
<b>Years</b>		<b>"Arts"</b>	<b>"Cult."</b>	<b>"Arts"</b>	<b>"Cult."</b>	<b>"Arts"</b>	<b>"Cult."</b>
1900 - 1935	Con	0	0	0	0	0	0
1945	Lab	0	1	0	0	0	0
1950	Lab	2	1	0	1	0	0
1951	Con	0	0	0	0	0	0
1955	Con	0	1	1	1	0	0
1959	Con	2	0	1	0	1	0
1964	Lab	1	0	4	0	0	0
1966	Lab	7	1	2	1	1	0
1970	Con	5	1	7	0	0	0
Feb 1974	Lab	0	0	4	0	0	0
Oct 1974	Lab	4	0	2	0	0	0
1979	Con	6	0	2	0	0	1
1983	Con	8	0	3	0	1	0
1987	Con	4	1	8	1	10	0
1992	Con	1	0	18	1	16	0
1997	Lab	11	5	7	5	5	3
2001	Lab	18	5	9	6	20	8
<b>Totals</b>		<b>69</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Combined</b>		<b>85</b>		<b>84</b>		<b>66</b>	
NB: This simple table does not define the extent to which subjects are discussed within the manifestos, nor the contexts in which they appear.							

The central rationale of *A Policy for the Arts* is a broad argument, going well beyond earlier ideas of the place of the arts and their relations to "everyday life":

In any civilised community the arts and associated amenities, serious or comic, light or demanding, must occupy a central place. Their enjoyment should not be regarded as something remote from everyday life. The promotion and appreciation of high standards in architecture, in industrial design, in town planning and the preservation of the beauty of the countryside, are all part of it. Beginning in schools, and reaching out into every corner of the nation's life, in city and village, at home, at work, at play, there is an immense amount that could be done to improve the quality for contemporary life (Office of Arts & Libraries, 1964/65: 6).

The themes of commerce, design, and education, then at least a century old, were still there but now amalgamated with a much wider concern "to improve the quality of contemporary life". Lee also made references to the Royal College of Art, echoing of the old Department of Arts and Manufactures, claiming its work had influence "not only on the standards of individual artistic achievement but on the quality of design in commerce, fashion and industry". The White Paper welcomed, too, "the encouragement that the [Council of Industrial Design] are giving to good industrial design in a wide range of products in everyday use at home and at work" (1965: 15). Throughout, it collects a broader range of concerns within the word "culture", used several times, stating that "diffusion of culture is now so much a part of life that there is no precise point at which it stops. Advertisements, buildings, books, motor cars, radio and television, magazines, records, all can carry a cultural aspect and affect our lives for good or ill as a species of 'amenity' " (1965: 15-16). This only needs the addition of sport for it to suggest an early argument for the DCMS. The one major policy proposed was for a substantial increase in the funding of artistic work through the ACGB.

Changes arising (or emerging) from the dialectic between agents and the structures within which they operate are often marked in analytical literature by dates or events, what Barry Buzan called "benchmarks" (Buzan and Lawson, 2013), which punctuate otherwise gradual shifts in normative attitudes (Finlayson, 2007). Lee's White Paper could be categorised in this way, although little changed immediately.

Even Arts Council funding increases of 45% in 1966/67 and a further 26% the following year were modest compared with those in the 1970s. There was a noticeable effect on government policy, demonstrated by the increasing references to the arts in the election manifestos of the three main parties, but it was not immediate and it was not consistent. The ideas expressed in the White Paper are to be found more in changes in the widening public discussions of arts, but it nevertheless "benchmarked" the start of a policy shift in government policy from the arts towards a broader idea of culture.

### **Tracing the Path (2): CEMA and The Arts Council**

The Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) arose out of concerns for the anticipated social consequences of the 1939-45 war. It is often referred to as the predecessor of the ACGB, but in two important respects that is misleading: first, its interest was in community well-being rather than the arts *per se* and, secondly, it was to a significant extent an initiative of the private sector - The Pilgrim Trust. In both respects, CEMA was related more to a late 19th century attitude to the arts as a social palliative to be administered as a civic responsibility.

The Pilgrim Trust was founded by Edward Harkness, an American philanthropist, with an endowment of £2 million. Following a meeting in Claridge's Hotel on May 5th 1930, Lord MacMillan became its first Chairman, with trustees Sir James Irvine (a long-time friend of Harkness) and Lord Tweedsmuir (The Pilgrim Trust, 1939). The minutes of the Trust recorded it as: "a proposal for the encouragement in war-time of amateur music and drama, combined with the assistance of unemployed musicians and producers" (The Pilgrim Trust, Dec 14th 1939). In operation, it would "... help amateurs to carry the best of the arts to the provinces and to Scottish villages, and to Welsh mining districts" (Leventhal, 1990: 292). Its work was carried out through existing voluntary organisations. The Trust's purpose reflected Harkness's "admiration and affection for Great Britain", requiring that his gift be used for "some of her (Great Britain's) more urgent needs", and that "it may assist



not only in tiding over the present time of difficulty but in promoting her future well being" (Quoted in: The Pilgrim Trust, 2011: 6).

Between 1939 and 1942 the Pilgrim Trust granted £25,000 towards the work of the CEMA, an amount then matched by the HM Treasury<sup>1</sup>. The Trust categorised their grants as "Welfare Work for the Civilian Population", part of its "War Services Grants" (The Pilgrim Trust, 27/11/1941). Although its work had a notable impact on British cultural life and was reportedly effective in achieving its aims, it could have remained simply a war-time phenomenon with little relevance to the later life of the nation and of minor importance to the development of cultural policy. In retrospect, though, it provided a pivotal link between past and future rationales for government interventions in cultural matters, and a harbinger of the social aspect of cultural policy that was later to develop. As Leventhal explained: "Until 1939 public expenditure to subsidize the performing arts in Great Britain was widely perceived as objectionable" (Leventhal, 1990: 289). CEMA undoubtedly dislodged that attitude, both within government and among the public.

In 1941, at the Pilgrim Trust meeting on November 27th, Lord Macmillan announced his resignation from CEMA, effective from March 31st 1942, the date on which the Pilgrim Trust's contributions to CEMA ended (The Pilgrim Trust, 27/11/1941: 896). His successor was to be John Maynard Keynes. Keynes was to become the leading protagonist in the formation of the Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB) and, by all accounts, would have been its first Chairman had he not died in April 1946, four months before King George VI granted ACGB its Royal Charter. The core remit for the ACGB was essentially defined by Keynes when Chairman of CEMA, in part justifying the claim that CEMA was the predecessor of the ACGB (Hollis, 1997: 247; Hutchison, 1982: 9, *passim*). This was later confirmed by the ACGB itself when giving

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<sup>1</sup> However, Treasury contributions were initially to remain "largely unofficial" (LEVENTHAL, F. M. 1990. 'The Best for the Most': CEMA and State Sponsorship of the Arts in Wartime, 1939-1945. *Twentieth Century British History*, 1 (3), 289-317.: 292 (quoting his reference as a letter from Lord De La Warr to Dr. Thomas Jones, Secretary to the Pilgrim Trust, on 13.12.1939 - PRO ED 136/188B. Indeed, payments to CEMA do not appear in the Appropriation Accounts from the period.

evidence to the Select Committee on Education, Science and the Arts on May 13th 1981, when they confirmed: "The Arts Council grew out of the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts ..." (Education Science & Arts Committee, 1981-82). Nevertheless, that assertion is misleading.

During the formation of CEMA Lord De La Warr, President of the Board of Education, declared his intention that the government might continue intervention in the arts after the war, an idea later repeated by his successor, R.A.B. Butler, when tempting Keynes into CEMA's Chairmanship, saying "CEMA might evolve into 'something that might occupy a more permanent place in our social organisation'" (Skidelsky, 2000: 286)<sup>1</sup>. Keynes had held strong views on CEMA for some time before becoming its Chairman, both supportive and critical. Two aspects of his philosophy were to be seminal in defining the government's relationship with the arts in Britain. The first was independence from the Treasury, CEMA's only funder after The Pilgrim Trust ended its contributions. CEMA has, Keynes wrote in the Times, "an undefined independence, an anomalous constitution and no fixed rules, and is, therefore, able to do by inadvertence or indiscretion, what obviously no one in his official senses would do on purpose" (L. Keynes, 1943). This distancing from Government suited both Keynes's imperious style and the historic traditions of Government. They were the foundations for what was later defined as an "arm's-length" relationship with the ACGB. The second was Keynes's insistence that he would be, as Sinclair put it, "a patron of the arts rather than a teacher of the masses" (Sinclair, 1995: 38). His aim was to control CEMA centrally from a London office and then to reduce or remove grants to community organisations and amateurs. As early as 1941, Keynes had warned Butler that he had "only limited sympathy with the principles on which it [CEMA.] had been carried on hitherto" (quoted in Skidelsky, 2000: 287)<sup>2</sup>. Mary Glasgow had similar recollections (CEMA's senior executive): "He [Keynes] wanted to know why the Council [CEMA] was wasting so much money on

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<sup>1</sup> Skidelsky's reference for this quote is a letter: "KP:PP/84(1) R.A. Butler to JMK 17 Dec 1941."

<sup>2</sup> Skidelsky gives his reference as GLASGOW, M. 1975. The Concept of the Arts Council. In: KEYNES, W. M. (ed.) *Essays on John Maynard Keynes*. London: Cambridge University Press.: 262.

amateur effort ... It was standards that mattered, and the preservation of serious professional enterprise, not obscure concerts in village halls" (2000: 287). The founding policies of CEMA were quickly abandoned by Keynes and replaced with metropolitan professionalism.

This then became the starting point for the Arts Council: "The Arts Council developed exactly the opposite policy [from CEMA]. It saw itself as promoting excellence, safeguarding standards, especially of the performing arts like opera which could not survive on box-office receipts alone" (Hollis, 1997: 284), see also (Hutchison, 1982). It had become a policy of government (although the Council's own policies were not), joining the illustrious list of beneficiaries of Treasury support entered into the annual Appropriation Accounts and that, as separately incorporated organisations, acted according to will of their boards. At the time, the closest model was the University Grants Committee, established in 1919 as: "... an unelected body of university men, appointed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on whose advice the Government of the day asked Parliament each year to vote money for distribution, without strings, to each university" (Redcliffe-Maud, 1976: 24).

The ACGB appeared to be awarded comparatively large sums as grant-in-aid. As a comparison, in 1945/6 the British Museum received £159,815 compared with the £235,000 granted to the Arts Council; but bearing in mind the latter had clients that included the Royal Opera House its grants were in effect really quite small until much later in the century.

Arising from Keynes's original concept, the ACGB was, right from the start, more like a club of patrician oligarchs interested in promoting their own particular interests than an extension of government bureaucracy. As Robert Hutchison pointed out, the organisations that benefitted most from its grants were governed by the same people who governed the ACGB. As an illustration, the boards of the Royal Opera and the Arts Council had many members in common over many years (Hutchison, 1982: 27). In the same vein, the ACGB also had no interest in "crafts", as they were called, nor

in amateur activities, something emphasised by Lord Goodman (Chairman of the ACGB from 1965-1972) when addressing the House of Lords: "We are concerned with the Arts. This business about amateur theatricals, the crafts and the like, is something about which one needs to be very sceptical indeed" (HL Hansard, 1972: col 728). "I speak for the Arts; I do not speak for amateur theatricals" (1972: 734).

In a detailed and amusing examination of the Arts Council's history, Richard Witts is succinct, referring to the "smug, self-reflective image [that] engaged the Arts Council for forty years", adding: "At root, a record of the personalities that have determined and driven the activities of the Arts Council is a history of the British intellectual, which is truly a scatterbrained and disenchanting saga" (Witts, 1998: 123). The absence of a democratic constitution or any accountability for their decisions; their relative disinterest in most things outside London; and the dominance of policies in support of their own personal artistic preferences were among many aspects of the ACGB that were criticised for decades, with only reluctant adjustments slowly resulting. In concept, legal formation, and operation policy, the ACGB had little in common with CEMA. Rather, it defined a new strand of cultural policy more akin to those of Germany and France in which the high arts were valued as traits of an advanced civilisation. It was modernist and elitist, and a diversion from the traditions of which CEMA and, later, the 1964 White Paper were a part.

### **The Arts and Commerce**

In the formation of the Arts Council, Keynes had deliberately rejected the traditional British relationship between the arts and government. The state was now not only a patron by policy, but, in an echo of Matthew Arnold, a patron of the arts as "the finest achievements of the human spirit in all ages" (Bridges, Annan *et al.*, 1959: 13). Commerce and the amelioration of social problems were not the underlying rationales. AP Herbert had satirised that idea with a verse quoted in the Commons in 1959: "Once people start on all this Art, Goodbye, moralitee!" (Herbert, 1978: 224; HC Hansard, 1959: col 636; Harris, 1970: 157), a view older even than that satirised by

the fictional Sir Humphrey Appleby when insisting "Subsidy is for art, for culture. It is not to be given to what the people want. It is for what the people don't want but ought to have. If they want something, they'll pay for it themselves" (Jay and Lynn, 1983).

The policy appeared to define a point of separation in the trajectory of British political attitudes towards arts funding. But seen retrospectively it is now clear that traditional norms had not been entirely abandoned but, rather, continued weakly, if agonistically, in parallel. These two ideas became increasingly adversarial under the Conservative governments of 1979 to 1997 with their insistence that the arts justify themselves in financial terms and move away from state patronage towards financial independence. The presumption was that money would not be forthcoming from the Treasury unless the arts could prove their value in the manner of commercial investments. Financial support, it was supposed, depended on arguments that were pragmatic, rational and financially justified quantitatively. Writing in the *Observer* in 2003, Nicholas Hytner, then Director of the National Theatre, said of the period: "We tried talking the Thatcher government's own language: it made tremendous economic sense to invest in the arts because it was an enormous invisible earner, pulling in the tourists, regenerating inner cities, earning back a fortune in VAT, the lot" (Hytner, 2003). A quite risible Arts Council Annual Report of 1985 went as far as presenting their case in the style of a business prospectus: "The arts have an excellent sales record, and excellent prospects. Customers are growing in number and, with increased leisure one of the certainties of the future, use of the arts will intensify" (Arts Council of Great Britain, 1985).

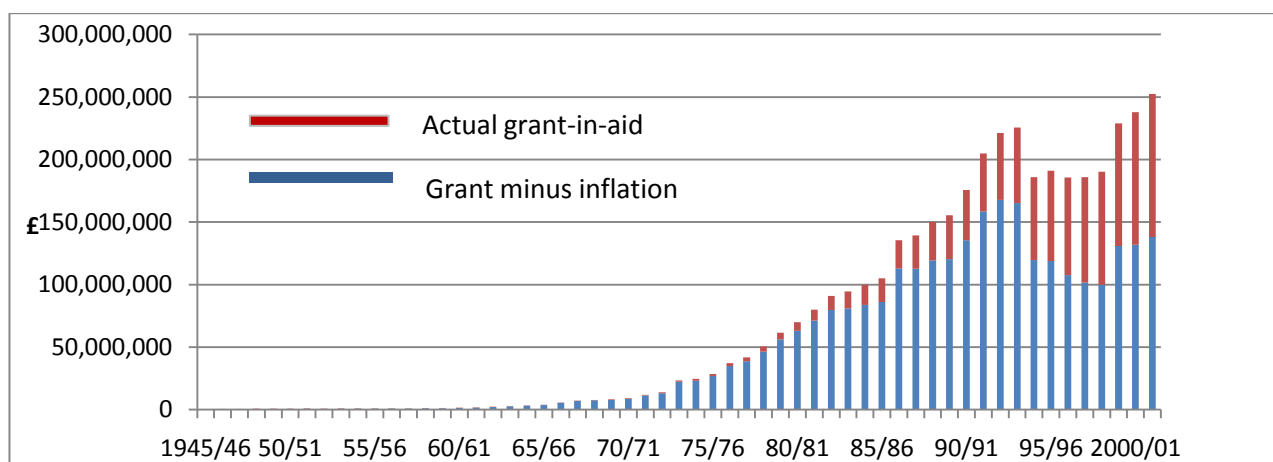
A report by the 1982 Education, Science & Arts Select Committee appeared to support this view with the recommendation that the economic importance of the arts justified the creation of a cabinet ministry (Education Science & Arts Committee, 1982: xxxviii). Then John Myerscough set the academic ground with his book: *The economic importance of the arts* (Myerscough, 1988) effectively establishing, as Sara Selwood put it: "...economic impact assessment as a form of

advocacy [for the arts] in the UK" (Selwood, 2010: 75). Enthusiasm for this new line of evaluation produced more contestable results when applied to social change. Francois Matarasso's paper on this subject, for example, was heavily rounded upon by academic sceptics (Merli, 2002; Matarasso, 1997). Translating artistic activity into economic performance was regaining credibility but arguing its place in social policy was still uncertain ground.

The arguments of the arts community were, though, often reductive, partial or ill-conceived. Claims that cuts had been imposed on Arts Council funding by the Thatcher government were evidence, it was said, of a "The New Conservatism', as essentially a macro-economic strategy to reduce inflation by reducing the supply of money to both private and public sectors of the economy", and, worse, as "laissez-faire economic liberalism" (Beck, 1989: 363). Like many at the time, Tony Beck accused the Thatcher government of "a reduction in the rate of increase of its [the Arts Council's] grant in recent years, year by year, until the rate is below that of even official figures for inflation" (1989: 364) in order to force arts organisations to raise money through commercial activity and sponsorship. Beck supported his arguments with a table showing the funds granted to the Arts Council from 1979 to 1992. The inflation figures Beck uses are, though, are higher than those published by the Bank of England, and the grants to the Arts Council are, in some cases, lower than those shown in the government's Appropriation Accounts. Furthermore, that argument does not take into account the many government grants made to artistic and cultural bodies other than by the Arts Council (principally local authorities, private trusts, and commercial sponsors). But examining just Arts Council grant-in-aid with figures from the Appropriation Accounts, and using inflation figures from the Bank of England, the graph below shows rates of increases were actually little different under the Conservative government than under the previous Labour government, with the biggest annual increases being in 1986 to 1987 and 1989 to 1993. Structural changes in the Arts Council and changes in the number and types of organisations it funded account for some of these increases but the raw data itself does not establish that the Thatcher government was less concerned with arts funding. Rather, the

evidence suggests more a policy intention to force a structural shift towards multiple funding sources, including commercial activity by the arts institutions themselves. This was in line with the government's belief that funding should be a wider responsibility of society and not fall simply on Government budgets; a version of the private-not-public argument of earlier years. It may be also have been another way of opposing the Arts Council's position as the dominant arts patron; a pertinent argument against monopolies that had long existed.

**Figure 1 Grants-in-Aid to the Arts Council**



NB: the drop in grant in 1994/5 was in part a result of splitting the ACGB into separate Arts Councils in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The amounts thereafter refer to Arts Council England which still retained responsibilities for some costs within the devolved nations.  
Data source: Appropriation Accounts published by the Comptroller and Auditor General

In all these debates, the value of *unsubsidised* activity by artistic and cultural organisations was rarely assessed. The 1994 Department of National Heritage *Annual Report* includes a rare comparison of the private and commercial sectors with the subsidies provide by government. Concerning the arts, the report says: "DNH funding matches that of local authorities but is small in relation to a sector estimated in 1988 to have a turnover of around £10 billion". The DNH budget for Arts that year was £236 million. The report makes similar comparisons for tourism, for which "DNH represents less than 0.2% of an industry valued at £30 billion a year", for film, where its contributions amounted to "less than 10% of box office revenues" and a contribution to sport's estimated sector value of "£8 billion in 1990" against

which "local authorities spend about £1¼ billion per annum ... while the Department's expenditure in 1994-95 will be £54 million" (Department of National Heritage, 1994: para. 1.10). Public debates on cultural funding, particularly of the arts, were (and often still are) inclined to present them as dependent on the public sector, but the robust and historic commercial sector remained dominant.

### **Tracing the Path (3): National Heritage to Culture, Media and Sport**

By early 1994 the Conservative government had largely accepted a wider role for DNH and, in doing so, formally widened its remit beyond the arts, media and national heritage, to encompass the new National Lottery, sport, architecture, royal parks, tourism, and film. The DNH sought to bring together many related interests previously spread across government departments into the single ministry; an ambition supported by its examining Select Committees (National Heritage Committee, 1995/6; Dept of Social Security, 1997-8). The combined effect of cabinet representation and the agglomeration of interests brought a considerable increase in power and influence for the DNH. With this came the first serious challenges to the traditional, if ill-defined (and, for many, sacrosanct) arms-length relationship.

The NH Select Committee expressed the view that: "We believe that the Secretary of State should not be inhibited from intervening in the operations of funded bodies. If this cannot be done through the funding agreement now being negotiated, we do not rule out the possibility that specific powers of direction may be necessary." (1995/6: xii). "Culture" was now moving from being a political side issue that operated in virtually unchallenged areas of artistic and intellectual values and where the principle of "hands off" as much as "arm's length" was largely accepted by government. Government was, in effect, pulling back from the implicit autonomy of "art for art's sake" by strengthening its control of policy. Once again, the arts were required to play a part in national economic development. "Arms length" was now to be, as the Minister of State for National Heritage, Virginia Bottomley, agreed: "Hands on" (44, para 194). In a significant change to the policy *laissez-faire* that had



continued since 1945, the DNH proposed instituting "Funding Agreements" with the Arts Council as one of its funded NDPBs. The 1996 DNH *Annual Report* explains that "Funding Agreements will encapsulate what the Department and its non-Departmental public bodies are trying to secure for the money the taxpayer provides" (Department of National Heritage, 1996: 66). The first of these was planned to be introduced later that Parliamentary year, but the process was overtaken by the general election of 1997.

### **Consolidating Departments and Cultural Policy**

Chris Smith's colourful explanation for the DNH as an "*ad hominem*" construction around David Mellor's interests (C. Smith, 2009) contrasts with the desiccated version in the Select Committee's report into the Department's "Structure and Remit":

The Department of National Heritage was established after the 1992 General Election. It subsumed the Office of Arts and libraries, and also took over responsibility for sport (from the Department of Education and Science), the built heritage (Department of the Environment), broadcasting, press regulation and the lottery (Home Office), film and export licensing of works of art (Department of Trade and Industry) and tourism (Department of Employment). Responsibility for charities and the voluntary sector was transferred on 1 May 1996. (National Heritage Committee, 1995/6: v)

Answering questions from the NH Committee, the department's Permanent Secretary, Hayden Phillips, first called the new responsibilities: "a rather peculiar collection", before later contradicting himself by praising their "remarkable coherence"<sup>1</sup>:

I hope and believe that in terms of the work of the Department, we have begun to draw together many of the interconnections that link what we do. On the face of it, to put sport together with other activities might not look sensible, but we have a broad cultural interest and sport is integral to that in this country. Equally we have found it quite valuable to have the connection between broadcasting media and the arts in general...". Secondly, there are a

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<sup>1</sup> It is tempting to speculate that Phillips's political masters may have required a change of mind.

number of areas...where there is a particular important interface between what we do and what another department does... (6).

Phillips's answer raised the prospect of even more responsibilities being transferred from other department in the future. The Committee took this as an invitation to discuss the possible inclusion of the Internet and telecommunications, the British Council, and the BBC World Service. Once the process had begun, it appeared to have its own logic. James Mahoney summarised the point concisely:

Once contingent events initially select a particular institution, functionalist logic identifies predictable self-reinforcing processes: the institution serves some function of the system, which causes the expansion of the institution, which enhances the institutions' ability to perform the useful function, which leads to further institutional expansion and eventually consolidation. (Mahoney, 1999: 519)

What is striking, though, is the way in which Jennie Lee's vision of culture, by which she meant amenities, the environment (built and natural) and social activities that enhance the quality of life, were now appearing to accrete around "heritage". The rationale for this institutional expansion provided by Hayden Phillips was administrative efficiency, but the necessarily enlarged budget brought with it an increase in political interest across government.

Superficially the rationales for this progressive institutional expansion appeared to continue under the DCMS. In a brief run-through of "the evolution of cultural support in the UK since 1945", Rod Fisher (writing as Director of International Intelligence on Culture, and Director of the European Cultural Foundation) argued that the creation of the DNH was the precursor of the DCMS, a view that placed him alongside those who believe the latter to have been just a departmental name change (Fisher and Gordon, 2010: 211 & 213). As will be argued, though, the Select Committee had identified another, more political reason, for enlargement; one which was later seized upon by Chris Smith when conceptualising the DCMS: "The department takes seriously its ability to champion its sectors with other parts of the Government, and to ensure that the needs of those sectors are taken into account in the framing of

policies" (National Heritage Committee, 1995/6: 3). While the Secretary of State for DNH argued the need for "coherence across the sectors" (1996/7: vii), the Select Committee under Gerald Kaufman had in mind the power and influence of the department.

### **The National Lottery**

The advent of the National Lottery provided a considerable boost in public profile, budgetary power, and, potentially, political influence for the DNH. It was an institution whose importance to the British arts and cultural sectors has been compared with the formation of the Arts Council: (Creigh-Tyte, 1997: 321). But only under the DCMS and with the support of Tony Blair would its influence be exploited across government.

The keyword here is *National*. Although lotteries were illegal in Britain after 1826, following a series of fraud scandals (one of which was mentioned earlier with respect to the funding of the British Museum) and changes in attitudes to gambling, they had been responsible for financing several great infrastructure projects since their inception in 1569 (P. G. Moore, 1997: 169; DCMS Select Committee, 2001: para 7-13; Creigh-Tyte, 1997: 321-22). The views of an 1808 Parliamentary Committee on lotteries brought their character starkly into the political spotlight: "No mode of raising Money appears to Your Committee so burdensome, so pernicious, and so unproductive; no species of adventure is known, where the chances are so great against the adventurer, none where the infatuation is more powerful, lasting, and destructive" (Committee on the Laws relating to Lotteries, 24th June 1808: 12). This view had been common even a century earlier and notably satirised in a song from *The Lottery*, written and first performed by Henry Fielding at the Drury Lane Theatre on January 1st 1732:

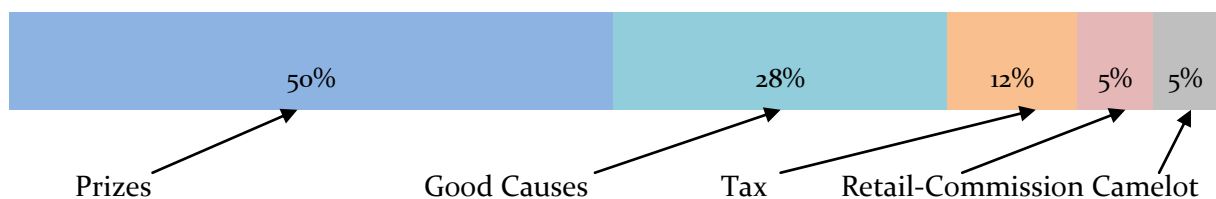
A Lottery is Taxation  
Upon all the Fools in Creation;  
and Heaven be prais'd  
it is easily raised,

Credulity's always in fashion.  
 For Folly's a Fund,  
 Will never lose ground,  
 While Fools are so rife in the Nation  
 (Ashton, 1893: 2)

Their return into British life was formalised in the Betting and Lotteries Act 1934, but only at a local level. A national lottery only followed the 1978 Royal Commission on Gambling. Given suitable controls, the Royal Commission believed that public opinion had changed sufficiently that they could safely be reintroduced (Royal Commission on Gambling, 1978: 163-64). A strong argument had been found by comparison with lotteries in other countries that had shown great potential to aid national "good causes" (1978: 213-227). The eventual result was the National Lottery etc Act of 1993.

In line with the *laissez-faire* tradition, the regulatory regime adopted was to licence a private "supplier" through a public body, OFLOT, empowered as regulator working within the DCMS. However, other than by the power to appoint its Director General, DCMS claimed to have no involvement in OFLOT's activities (Creigh-Tyte, 1997: 323-24). Tenders were sought from potential operators, with the first seven-year contract being awarded to the Camelot Group, a consortium comprised of five large international corporations: Cadbury Schweppes, De La Rue, Racal Electronics, ICL and GTech. Their bid was assessed as potentially providing the largest amount to good causes over the contract period. Lottery ticket sales were to be split as follows:

**Figure 2:**  
**Percentage Distribution of National Lottery Ticket Sales**



The 28% allocated to good causes was passed to five distributing bodies, listed in the following table:

**Table 3:**

<b><u>Grants Announced by the Distributing Bodies to 30 July 1997</u></b>		
	<i>No of Awards</i>	<i>Value in £m</i>
Arts Council	7,488	922.1
National Lottery Charities Board	8,852	506.4
Heritage Lottery Fund	1,169	684.7
Millennium Commission	6,653	1,012.9
Sports Council	3,303	657.2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>27,465</b>	<b>3,783.3</b>

Sources: (Creigh-Tyte, 1997: 527; DCMS Select Committee, 2000b: 130)

The financial impact of the Lottery was immediately clear. Taking the Arts Council as an example, the total of its grant-in-aid from government received since the Lottery was created in 1994 came to £562,911,000, compared to its receipts from the Lottery of £922,100,000 - a 64% increase (less costs) in its funding receipts over the period. An associated effect was to enhance considerable DCMS's power. That alone may explain Smith's revision of lottery history in his speech to the Lottery Monitor Conference in 1997 (C. Smith, 1998: 114-5). Tony Blair, though, saw the Lottery as powering more than cultural policy. In his address to the Party Conference in 2000 he referred to the use of Lottery money by Sport England, saying: "Today we set out plans to invest £750 million of lottery money in schools and community sport as part of a £1 billion investment over three years. ... this is not just a sports policy. It's a health policy, an education policy, an anti-crime policy, an anti-drugs policy" (Blair, 2000; DCMS Select Committee, 2000a). The concept of culture here was not sport *per se* and certainly not the arts; it was one that reached across the social policies of government, embedding DCMS and the Lottery within New Labour's mission. DCMS appeared to have invented a cultural policy that fitted the wider ambitions of the New Labour government. What these policies were and how they integrated across government policy is the subject discussed in the next chapter.

## Chapter 3

### New Labour's Cultural Policies

#### Policies, Networks and Control

Chris Smith had never disguised his ambitions for the DCMS. Whilst his personal interests in the arts showed through in speeches and policy statements, he made his political interests clear the first day in office: stating that their work "places the Department at the centre of the country's economic life and regeneration" (C. Smith, 1997a). This was hardly realistic with a small department that had never been other than at the periphery of government and with only a marginal relationship with economic policy. It necessarily required more than an extended concept of culture; the core idea of culture itself had to be reconceived. The brief study of the British government's interventions in cultural matters, given above, reveals the trajectory of changing attitudes towards an increasing interest in the public value whilst operationally maintaining a respectful distance. At no point had culture, by any definition, had a role "at the *centre* of the country's economic life..." (emphasis added). What Smith intended in declaring this ambition can only be assessed in retrospect and through the actions and policies of the DCMS. As will be shown, DCMS became primarily concerned with structures rather than with individual objects or actions. Culture, in this concept, became the soft osteological framework on which social and economic policy could be formed, although always containing normative and moral elements that had accreted around cultural institutions since their formation (Mahoney, 1999); forming, reforming and reproducing over time.

These claims are supported empirically by the policies of DCMS in the context of a cross-government agenda, and it these that are now examined. When historically set

against governmental interest and action on implicitly cultural matters over two and half centuries two characteristics become apparent:

1. In one dramatic shift, DCMS moved politically from the peripheral locus of its antecedents into an apparently central role in cross-government policy;
2. and that, in contrast to the tradition of British governments' interventions in cultural affairs, "culture" under New Labour became a collective, ideological, expression for a socio-economic structure of social relations out of which a particular ethos of civic society could be engendered. As Tony Blair himself asserted, the citizen and the state required a new relationship (Dept of Social Security, 1998: v) which was to be practically achieved through controls over associational civic life and with fiscal, legal and welfare changes that purported to coerce rather than demand change. In short, it was "governing by culture" (6, 1997) .

This is not to suggest that New Labour's parliamentarians were knowingly and collectively pursuing these ideas as they are expressed here; the doxa of politics "in the wild" (Finlayson, 2012: 751) was never so planned. For most, their constant attention was on the implications of that word "New" in the light of Labour's long period out of office. Even New Labour's fractious triumvirate of conceptualisers; Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and Peter Mandelson, were engrossed in their own career interests and the overriding need to be re-elected. Andrew Rawnsley put it that: "Whatever else happened to New Labour in government, one thing has remained constant. The Project was still controlled by less than a handful of men, each consumed with maintaining his grip on power" (Rawnsley, 2000: 392). Nevertheless, by joining the policy dots (particularly those drawn by Gordon Brown) marked by rhetoric, the claims of legislative programmes, methods of budgetary control, public defences of policy, and what the Audit Commission referred to as the "Delivery Chain" (Comptroller & Auditor General, 2006: 1), the general assertion made above not only makes sense, but accounts for many of the paradoxes and rhetoric of New Labour's cultural policy initiatives.

## The Cultural Policies of the New Labour Government

Looking back over the time since the government first facilitated the acquisition of the collections of Sir Hans Sloane, it has been shown that the rationales for government action in implicit and explicit cultural policies could be categorised as commercial advantage, moral development, education, national prestige, and entertainment (O. Bennett, 1995: 201). Chris Smith's rationales for policies that furthered the combined interests of DCMS were partially formed from those historic strands of policy. The following table makes those links by comparison with the language used by Chris Smith in his foreword to DCMS's foundational policy document, *A New Cultural Framework*:

**Table 4: Comparing Rationales**

<b>Past Rationales</b>	<b>New Labour's Rationales</b>
Competitive advantage:	"the importance of tourism" "the nation's economy"
Health and Moral development:	"social regeneration" "individual fulfilment and well-being" "social regeneration"
Education:	"the quality of education"
National interest:	"together as a community"
Entertainment:	"enjoyment and inspiration"

The title of that first major policy document also suggests, though, another story. As a "Framework", its emphasis was on structural policies while its rationales took British cultural policy into the political territory of state governance for the first time. To explain this, the policies of DCMS are categorised in this chapter as either:

- (1) New structural innovations, or
- (2) Policy directives imposed on funded NDPBs.



Underlying them both are four foundational "themes" or "pillars" (in Chris Smith's words) upon which "A new role for the DCMS" was to be built:

- the promotion of access for the many not just the few
- the pursuit of excellence and innovation
- the nurturing of educational opportunity; and
- the fostering of the creative industries  
(DCMS, 1998c: 2; C. Smith, 2009)

These themes, to which all policy was intended to relate, were repeated consistently by DCMS and Chris Smith personally in reports and interviews. They are very clearly aligned with New Labour policies more generally and appear to be directed less at cultural matters in their traditional meaning but more towards Smith's stated objective to give the department greater importance within government. By the time the department's 1999 Annual Report was published (its first full report) the language had hardened, extended and clarified into specific policies. The Report claimed that the £290 million increase in the DCMS's budget following the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) "represents a clear message that money spent on culture, in its widest sense, can play an important part in achieving Government objectives". Accordingly, the policies supporting the themes were adjusted closer to cross-government concerns: "DCMS is first and foremost about improving the quality of people's lives. But in doing that we shall also help improve education; to promote social inclusion; to improve economic performance; and to promote equal opportunities and access for all to the high quality public services" (DCMS, 1999a: 8). The Annual report then repeated word for word the themes written into the policy Framework document, prefaced with the statement that DCMS "will be at the heart of the 3 year programme of modernisation and social renewal set out in the overall public expenditure plans" (1999a: 8).

**(1) New Structural Innovations: the Cross-Government agenda**

DCMS's 1999 Annual Report set-out "New DCMS aims and objectives" arising from "the main results of the Comprehensive Spending Review". Together with the policy detail and new institutional support, they represented its "New Approach to Investment in Culture" (1999a: 16). The table below gives a summary:

**Table 5: New Approaches to Investment in Culture**

Arising from the CSR (quoting from the 2009 Annual Report)	Explanations given in the Report
"New DCMS aims and objectives"	Although they are listed separately, it is not clear what differentiates "aims" and "objectives" but together they follow Chris Smith's "four themes" or "four pillars" mantra of "excellence, access, education and the creative economy" (C. Smith, 2009; 1998: 2). Additionally, the Report makes specific an "objective" to "create an efficient and competitive market by removing obstacles to growth and unnecessary regulation so as to promote Britain's success in the fields of culture, media, sport and tourism at home and abroad". It further introduces the Department's new interest in urban regeneration "in pursuing sustainability and in combating social exclusion" (17).
"A new framework of investment, rather than mere subsidy, designed to link public expenditure to specific outcomes"	"Investment", the Report explains, refers to funds that ensure that the Department and its client bodies meet the requirements of the Public Service Agreements (PSAs) with the Treasury. In this sense it is not physical objects or infrastructure but "investment" in the means to pursue the policy objectives set by the Treasury when awarding departmental budgets.
"A new body, QUEST, to help promote efficiency and good practice within that framework "	The Quality, Efficiency and Standards Team - a new "watchdog" created and effectively controlled by DCMS. It is discussed separately below.
"A new DCMS organisation, designed to support strategic aims..."	<p>The "sectoral" interests inherited from the previous DNH, itself formed "from bits of other Departments", were to be retained, but new Departmental Units were to be formed to "perform across DCMS various common executive tasks". They included a Central Appointments Unit, and Education Unit, the Creative Industries Unit and the Strategy Unit (given the lead on "access and social exclusion"). There was also to be a new Local, Regional and International Division of DCMS to work with local authorities in the UK as well as with other countries internationally.</p> <p>Explanatory text in the Report also referred to "streamlining" the department's work for improved</p>

	"efficiency and effectiveness". In practice this meant making policy and operational changes to its funded NDPBs, combining and creating new bodies. Although a significant issue, the legal independence of most of these bodies is not referred to, perhaps on the assumption that the Department's control's over finance and board appointments allowed them to make changes as they wished. (18). This subject is discussed below in category (2) - policy directives to funded NDPBs.
"New Regional Consortia to develop the cultural element in regional bodies' and Government programmes"	These were to bring together "DCMS' NDPBs, local authorities and representatives of other regional interests including the creative industries". Their task was to advise Government and to "influence, interpret and integrate notional sectoral strategies in the light of the individual region's needs". (20)
"DCMS staff in Government offices in each region to promote DCMS aims across the country"	Each of the nine Government Offices in the English Regions were to have a "senior DCMS official (grade 7)" to "ensure that the regional agenda is fully addressed" (19)

The Framework document laid the ideational groundwork that was then confirmed in the Annual Report for broadening the policy interests of DCMS well beyond that of the old DNH. The policy area in which its new cultural concept was most obvious was in the Government's social, economic and physical regeneration agenda in which DCMS participated with policies for social inclusion and, as it claimed, the unrealised economic power of the cultural industries. Placing culture at the heart of social and physical regeneration would allow the DCMS to move from a department at the fringes of Whitehall power-broking into the centre of the New Labour mission. In the words of the Framework document, DCMS would now:

play a full part in 'joined-up Government', not only making the case for support for our sectors from other parts of Whitehall, but developing more integrated approaches to policy development, exploiting the links which already exist and arguing for recognition of the part the arts, sport, tourism, etc. can play in delivering Government policies beyond this Department's direct interests; (DCMS, 1998c: 2)

The DCMS 1999 Annual Report then dedicated a chapter (Chapter 9) to "Regeneration and Social Inclusion" policies to be realised through their participation in a number of cross-government initiatives (DCMS, 1999a: 76).

Principally among them:

- the PAT 10 Neighbourhood Renewal Programme -  
DCMS was to be one of the 18 teams to examine the various issues related to neighbourhood renewal. Arts and sport were the particular aspects of concern to DCMS.
- the New Deal for Communities -  
led by DETR, DCMS was a member of the NDC Steering Groups to work in 17 Pathfinder Districts ("selected because their problems are very severe" (1999a: 77) with a fund of £800 million. DCMS also participated in the Sure Start programme led by the Department of Health.
- the Social Inclusion element in culture and leisure policies -  
the main force of which was to be realised by the department's funded bodies under a new regime of contracts that tied them to DCMS policy (this is discussed below). In addition, libraries were highlighted as the "cornerstone" in the National Grid for Learning. The Lottery-funded New Opportunities Fund was another new institutional tool for social inclusion, particularly as it might support the Priority Areas Initiative of the English Sports Council. Tourism was argued to have a role in promoting social inclusion, but the mechanism by which this might be effected was not detailed.
- the Regional Development Agencies -  
Established on April 1st 1999 and covering the English regions, these were to have "business-led boards" with responsibility for regional regeneration and economic development. No specific role for DCMS is mentioned in the Annual Report, except that it claims they, the RDAs, would "make a

significant contribution to the quality of life in the regions and to attracting investors" (78).

- Regional Cultural Strategies - (discussed below);

- Sustainable Development policies -

This expressions appears throughout the Annual report, with references to "sustainable use" of Millennium projects, "sustainable public access to World Heritage sites", "sustainable domestic film industry", "sustainable tourism", and "sustainable communities". "Sustainable development" though, has a section in the Report to itself in which tourism, in particular, is featured "in ensuring a better quality of life for everyone". How this was to be achieved was not explained.

- Environment-Friendly policies -

Obligations for "greening" and environmental improvements were contained in DCMS's PSA, to be achieved by the British Tourist Authority, the Royal Parks Agency, and "the larger NDPBs".

### **Policy Action Teams**

The DCMS's inclusion in the cross-Government policies of regeneration and social inclusion, to which Chapter 9 of the Annual Report was devoted, took "excellence, access, education and the creative economy" collectively into new governance territory. This extension arose, it was stated, "following the Social Exclusion Unit's recent [1998] report" (noting DCMS's conscious rewording of "exclusion" to "inclusion") that set-out a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998). The SEU was "to report to the Prime Minister [Tony Blair] on how to 'develop integrated and sustainable approaches to the problems of the worst housing estates, including crime, drugs, unemployment, community breakdown, and bad schools, etc.'" (1998: 3). While its remit covered only England it was also stated that "the analysis underlying the report, and the priority accorded to solving the problems identified is shared by the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Offices. The Government will pursue vigorously action to address the issues in all

four countries using measures appropriate to each situation" (1998: 3). The SEU's report brought together new and existing Government policies central to New Labour's mission, among them the New Deal for Communities, Sure Start, Employment Zones and the Education and Health Action Zones, with the collective aim of "setting in motion a virtuous circle of regeneration, with improvements in jobs, crime, education, health and housing all reinforcing each other" (1998: 9). And to achieve all this, every Government department was asked to participate in a "joined-up", "national strategy" of:

- Investing in people, not just buildings
- involving communities, not parachuting in solutions
- developing integrated approaches with clear leadership
- ensuring mainstream policies really work for the poorest neighbourhoods
- making a long-term commitment with sustained political authority (1998: 10)

Institutionally, collaboration was realised by the representation of eleven "Whitehall Departments" on eighteen "cross-cutting action teams" or Policy Action Teams (PATs), with "the whole process co-ordinated by the Social Exclusion Unit" (1998: 11). The overriding rationale given for the SEUs' work was summarised simply as "National Programmes to tackle the causes of social exclusion" (1998: 52), but this challenge contained the most intractable problems every government has to face: unemployment, the benefits system, crime and drugs, the problems faced by young people, housing, the environment, public health generally and mental health specifically.

Of the eighteen PATs, the DCMS was to participate in ten, with Tony Banks leading PAT 10 on Arts & Sport.

Table 6:

Policy Actions Teams in which the DCMS Participated	
Issue	PAT title
"Getting People to Work"	<i>Skills</i>
"Getting the Place to Work"	<i>Unpopular Housing</i>
	<i>Community Self-help</i>
	<i>Arts &amp; Sport (Lead Department)</i>
"A Future for Young People"	<i>Schools Plus</i>
	<i>Young People</i>
"Access to Services"	<i>Information Technology</i>
"Making the Government Work Better"	<i>Learning Lessons</i>
	<i>Joining it up locally</i>
	<i>Better information</i>

Data source: (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998: 58-59)

On the face of it, the breadth of issues addressed within this list appeared to demonstrate the importance of culture, media and sports policy to government ambitions. As the table below shows, DCMS participated in more than half the PATs, making their contribution greater than that of the DTI, the DSS and even the Cabinet Office. On the other hand, it also suggests the Government's rhetoric was somewhat disingenuous. A strategy to deal with the major socio-economic problems of the time but with the comparatively minor involvement of the DSS and the DTI is curious. Research on the "Task Force Revolution" by Democratic Audit lists all the PATs as the responsibility of the Cabinet Office (Barker, Byrne *et al.*, 1999: 43-54), yet their participation in only two teams, and leading none, also begs questions of how strategy and policy were aligned.



Table 7

<b>Departmental Participation in Policy Action Teams</b>	
<b>Department</b>	<b>No. of PATs</b>
Social Exclusion Unit	18
Dept of the Environment, Transport & the Regions	18
Dept of Education and Employment	14
Her Majesty's Treasury	12
Home Office	12
<b>Dept of Culture, Media and Sport</b>	<b>10</b>
Department of Health	10
Dept of Trade & Industry	9
Dept of Social Security	9
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food	2
Cabinet Office	2

Data source: (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998: 58-59)

DCMS also claimed a number of its policies as "social inclusion element[s]", not just those arising from the work of the Social Exclusion Unit, notably:

- The "Outcomes" required of its funded NDPBs;
- Libraries - "a cornerstone of the National Grid for Learning" which can "develop community organisational capacity, help people develop community pride and confidence, and contribute significantly to people's quality of life";
- English Sports Council Priority Area Initiatives - bringing Lottery funding to deprived areas;
- The Lottery's New Opportunities Fund - and its first initiative, Healthy Living Centres;
- Community Access to Lifelong Learning;
- Inclusive, Sustainable Tourism "spreading the benefits of tourism through society". (DCMS, 1999a: 78-79)

In effect, the DCMS was taking on policy issues of concern to government generally but fitted to the new and extended cultural remit DCMS had given itself.

### **Regional Cultural Consortia**

Another of DCMS's early initiatives were eight new Regional Cultural Consortia. The aim was to bring together a wide range of organisations within each region (as defined geographically by the Regional Development Authorities) to "identify regional policy priorities and themes" and "to contribute to the development of regional economic strategies" (DCMS, 1999a: 80). They were "charged with ensuring that culture and creativity have a strong voice in the developing regional picture and that they play a full and coherent part in contributing to increasing prosperity and enjoyment of life in the regions" (DCMS, 2001a: 146). In this way, they would "champion cultural and creative interests" and "promote the role of culture, tourism and the creative industries in economic development, regeneration and social inclusion" (2001a: 125). The breadth of interests represented in these bodies was, though, extremely wide with no defined mechanisms for agreeing their "policies, priorities and themes". The 2000 DCMS Annual Report explains their constitution in these words:

The Secretary of State appoints the Chairs of the Regional Cultural Consortia. Nominations to the membership of the consortia are made by the regional arts, museums, heritage, tourism and sporting public bodies, library and archive interests, the Regional Development Agency, and local government. Other interests may be invited to join the consortium, particularly from the creative industries and also from National Lottery distributors, countryside, recreation and educational interests and the voluntary sector. The major task of the consortium will be to draw up a regional cultural strategy that will set out the future of cultural, creative and sporting activity in the region (DCMS, 2000: 108).

It is also noteworthy that the RCCs had no remit and little money to take any action on their own account, but each were given the improbable task of developing a cultural strategy (itself not defined) that all its participating members would enact. Their value to Government policy appeared to be in the presumption that out of

discourse and networking would arise common aims among the participants together with collaborative strategies for their realisation. In a detailed paper on the Regional Cultural Consortia, Jane Lutz refers to RCCs as "characterized by flirting with notions of devolution and regional autonomy" (Lutz, 2006: 26). One of the tasks they undertook, apparently in preparation for regional devolution, was research and data collection, although their work targetted mostly economic factors. As a number of researchers have identified, the lack of supporting data remained a major weakness of New Labour's cultural policy (Evans, 2005; Evans and Shaw, 2004; S. Miles and Paddison, 2005; Selwood, 2002). What remains significant, though, with or without appropriate data, is the manner in which these bodies quickly became links in the DCMS policy chain.

### **The DCMS Task Forces**

There have been few attempts to list the extent of the "bacterial growth" of New Labour's task forces, advisory groups and policy review groups, perhaps because information on them was seemingly evanescent or never recorded (Barker, Byrne *et al.*, 1999: 7). The research body, Democratic Audit, published in 1999 the most extensive guide of these phenomena, listing all those that had been "invented by the Blair administration" (1999: 7) since coming to power. Although their report includes the centrally-formed PATs under their book's title of "Ruling by Task Force", the DCMS 1999 Annual Report treats the Task Forces separately, the former being an outcome of the cross-government initiatives arising from the SEU Report, and the latter concerning internal DCMS own policy generation, research and "watchdogs". Excluding the PATs, Democratic Audit lists 30 Task Forces, Policy Review Panels, Forums and their sub-groups, and working groups.

In one sense they appear as a genuine move towards more open, inclusive government as their membership included practitioners and critics among the political and governmental representatives. This practice follows, too, the style seen in the formation of the Regional Cultural Consortia and in the principles of cross-

government action on shared socio-economic ambitions. In the wake of the 1995 Nolan Committee report, "openness" might be expected in making appointments to these bodies but, in practice, Democratic Audit claimed that "Senior civil servants talk of appointments in terms of 'being invited to the party'" as "invitations are made outside the Nolan rules which govern appointments to public bodies..." (Democratic Audit, 1999).

## **(2) DCMS Policy, Directives & its funded NDPBs**

In discussing "the main results of the Comprehensive Spending Review outcome", DCMS's 1999 Annual Report refers specifically to an additional £290 million in funding from the Treasury over three years, but "with strings attached". Those strings tied the money to the creation of "A new framework of investment, rather than mere subsidy, designed to link public expenditure to specific outcomes". This implied a greater control of cultural policies that had, until then, been largely a matter for each individual, legally independent, NDPB. As discussed above, one way to achieve this was to form new institutions or projects in fields in which the NDPBs operated, particularly where that work carried the interests of DCMS across the Government's policy agenda. However, that route still left the activities of the funded NDPBs themselves outside the Department's control. Two approaches were taken to rectify this:

1. The creation of work programmes, defined by DCMS, that existing or new NDPBs would undertake; and
2. Changes in DCMS's relationship with the NDPBs from one that was relatively undefined (the "arm's length" relationship) to one based on a contract which required them to achieve the objectives of DCMS as passed down from the Treasury in the PSAs.

### **1. New work programmes**

This group of policies are in a category that concerns the activities of existing NDPBs across all DCMS's sectoral interests. They are differentiated here from the "structural

innovations", discussed above, and from the mechanism by which the policy objectives of funded NDPBs could be influenced or even directed by contract (discussed below). The ambitions that underlay all DCMS's structural ambitions were also embedded in these policies, most especially extending public access to the work of the NDPBs (DCMS, 1999a: 40), improving their efficiency and competitiveness (50), and improving "value for money" granted to the NDPBs (84). Some of the work programmes were quite practical, examples being measures against doping in sport, the "rescue" proposals for Stonehenge, and "Marking the Millennium". Others, such as free entry to museums for children, directed the policies of funded bodies to meet Labour's political objectives or commitments. More indicative of the deeper changes being instigated by DCMS were the new institutions and programmes that drew the work of the NDPBs into the ambit of departmental policy and strategy. A selection of the main new initiatives is given here:

**Table 8: New Policy Initiatives**

Sector	Policies
Arts:	<p>Creation of a New Audiences Fund - "to broaden access to the arts to the widest possible audience", to be administrated by the Arts Council.</p> <p>Establishment of the Youth Music Trust, run in conjunction with the Department for Education and Employment's Fair Funding Initiative.</p>
National Lottery:	<p>Establishment of the Lottery Commission to replace the single regulator.</p> <p>Creation of the "Awards for All" Lottery scheme for local community groups.</p> <p>Establishment of a new fund for health, education and the environment.</p>

Museums:	<p>A new £15 million museums improvement fund.</p> <p>Work undertaken with the Heritage Lottery Fund to "institute" a new "access fund".</p>
Sport:	<p>The Introduction of measures "to protect against the sell-off of school playing fields".</p> <p>The creation of "world class training and back-up facilities for elite sports people".</p> <p>To "Finalise" plans for a UK Sports Institute.</p>
Heritage:	<p>Establishment of a national "Champion" for architecture.</p>
Broadcasting:	<p>Extending the list of "protected" sports events that must be shown on free-to-air television</p>
Film:	<p>Establishment of the Film Finance Forum.</p> <p>Opening of a British Film Office in Los Angeles</p> <p>Establishment of British Film - a body to "help" channel Lottery funds into film and coordinate Government support for film.</p>
Creative Industries:	<p>Establishing NESTA with Lottery funds to help develop ideas in the arts, sciences and technology.</p> <p>Producing a mapping document showing the value of the creative industries prior to "establishing an agenda for action by Government and industry".</p> <p>Promoting creativity through "Creative Partnerships" between schools and</p>

	creative professionals. The programme was funded by DCMS via the Arts Council and an independent charity, Creativity, Culture and Education. It was operated by more than 20 organisations across the country.
Tourism:	"develop plans for a more strategic body [than the British Tourist Authority] to support tourism in England".  Work to "realise the full potential of the New Deal within tourism".
Libraries:	DCMS requirement for library authorities "to produce annual plans as a means of monitoring the quality of service and driving up standards".
Millennium:	Completion of the Millennium Dome and other Millennium plans.

### QUEST

Among the proposals in the 1998 New Cultural Framework was a new body, referred to as a "Watchdog": the Quality, Efficiency and Standards Team, usually abbreviated to QUEST. Its creation was one of the changes "central to the new relationship which DCMS is developing with its sponsored bodies and with the sectors more broadly". The absence of any guidance to what was "quality", what was "efficient", and what would meet the Department's "standard" meant, though, that QUEST was also a rein with which to control the policy direction of the NDPBs, something further confirmed by that aggressive, adversarial, description: "Watchdog". As the Framework document stated: "We need to ensure that sponsored bodies meet our objectives and deliver improvements in efficiency, access, etc. in return for the investment of public money". The role of QUEST was stated as being "to identify, evaluate and promote good practice in the delivery of outputs related to DCMS objectives across all our responsibilities..." (DCMS, 1998c: 14). DCMS argued proleptically that its work would not duplicate that of the National Audit Office nor

the Audit Commission although, as will be seen later, the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee was unconvinced about this.

The 1999 Annual Report added a little to the description of QUEST's brief, referring to "The emphasis on outcomes and the development of contractual links" with its "sponsored bodies and with the wider 'constituency' of practitioners", before adding that QUEST was to "provide independent advice to the Secretary of State on the performance of sponsored bodies in meeting our objectives [viz, those of the DCMS]" (DCMS, 1999a: 18). In operation, the QUEST would be formed of "a small core team supported by individuals from sponsored bodies, the wider cultural sector, local Government and the private sector". Although it was to be "independent of DCMS" (DCMS, 2000: 29, 67), senior appointments were to be made by the DCMS and its "annual work programme" would have to be agreed in advance with the Secretary of State (DCMS, 1999a: 18).

The QUEST was finally formed in July 1999 with the initial task of "looking at strengthening the funding agreement process" (DCMS, 2000: 18), a task that explicitly added to the argument that it was a departmental instrument for policy enforcement. Indeed, the whole idea of "best practice" was said by DCMS to be "indirect policy persuasion" (DCMS, 2001a: 51; 2000: 37). In June, 2001, QUEST "agreed a framework for future work with the Secretary of State which it used as the basis for consultation with sponsored bodies and others". It set-out three "broad themes", the first of which was again explicit about: "how sponsored bodies are best delivering specific Government objectives for the cultural and sporting sectors..." (DCMS, 2001a: 124). By 2002, the DCMS had published four QUEST reports on social inclusion, the contractual agreements with funded bodies, e-commerce and the internet, and a review of Lottery application processes (QUEST, 2002a, 2000b, a, 2002b).



## **2. Public Service Agreements and the "Delivery Chain"**

The most radical structural change implemented by the DCMSs, particularly in an historical perspective, was to co-opt its "sectoral interests" into the New Labour mission by contract (DCMS, 1999a: 19), by which was meant the work of the NDPBs. The principle behind this was not, though, a New Labour innovation. As mentioned above, in *Tracing the Path* (3), the recommendation of the 1996 National Heritage Select Committee had proposed just such a change (National Heritage Committee, 1995/6: xii), which was then incorporated into the Department's plans under the explicit heading of "Funding Agreements" (Department of National Heritage, 1996: 66). This action ran counter to a tradition of "arm's length" policy independence for most of the Government funded NDPBs, a principle with historic roots demanded by Keynes during the formation of the Arts Council and reinforced by Lord Redcliffe Maud's 1976 report for the Gulbenkian Foundation (Redcliffe-Maud, 1976).

Redcliffe-Maud's use of the arm's-length metaphor was far from original but nevertheless characterised the Arts Council's relationship with the government as being "... a satisfactory substitute for the old patrons of the past ..." and which "...by self-denying ordinance the politicians leave the [Arts] Council free to spend as it thinks fit" (1976: 24). His report captured the essence of an existing arrangement which others then quickly appropriated into a seemingly immutable natural law of artistic rights in Britain. The change of government after the 1997 General Election prevented the DNH from fulfilling its plans for funding contracts, leaving little indication of what terms they might have contained. However, it is quite conceivable, perhaps even probable, that they would have stipulated no more than a requirement for the NDPBs to act with probity and efficiency, respecting employment laws and anti-discrimination practices. The terms of the contract imposed by DCMS were quite different.

The origin of the contracts DCMS formed with its clients was in the Public Service Agreement (PSA) between the Treasury and the DCMS that set out how the

Department's spending "will deliver Government objectives alongside increased efficiency and improved effectiveness" (DCMS, 1999a: 17). In Tony Blair's words, they were "... setting targets right across the public services ... . PSAs set out each departments aims and objectives in services or in the results of those services ... in concrete targets" (HM Treasury, 1998: Foreword). But the most emphatic claim came from the Treasury itself, saying: "The Public Service Agreements ... are at the cutting edge of a revolution in the way public services are managed ... These PSAs are part of the biggest drive to modernise public services our country has ever seen" (HM Treasury, 1999: Foreword).

The PSA set overall "Performance Targets" for the DCMS, with a rationale explained in the 1999 Annual Report:

All areas for which the Department is responsible have a role in delivering the Government's wider social, educational and economic objectives. The Department plays a leading role in developing the quality of life of the nation, funding cultural organisations, regulating broadcasting and the new media, and fostering sporting activity. All these activities are important to the economy – whether tourism or the creative industries. They are sectors in which employment opportunities are expanding and are central to improving the quality of life and tackling social exclusion (1999a: 95).

The obligations it contained were listed under four headings aimed at three "objectives" within which were some quite specific targets:

**Table 9: PSA Objectives and Targets**

Heading	Objective	Performance Targets
To increase national productivity	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Facilitate competitiveness</li> <li>– Promote high quality sustainable tourism</li> <li>– Develop proposal for a broadcasting regulatory system</li> <li>– Promote competitiveness in broadcasting</li> <li>– Ensure broadcasters sustain quality and output</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implement a strategy to develop the film industry</li> </ul>
To Widen Access	2 & 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase the numbers of children and pensioners visiting national museums (following the removal of entry charges)</li> <li>- Increase access to the performing arts with 300,000 new opportunities to experience the arts</li> <li>- Establish a £15 million Challenge Fund to raise standard of care for collections and public access in Designated Museums</li> <li>- Extend social inclusiveness in identified priority social groups [not defined]</li> <li>- Maintain and ensure standards of inclusiveness in broadcasting to harness the educational potential of DCMS funded institutions</li> <li>- 200,000 new educational sessions undertaken by arts organisations</li> <li>- Double the Internet connections in 75% of libraries by 2002</li> </ul>
To Agree New Standards of Effectiveness	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make funding of NDPBs conditional on quantified improvements in outputs - efficiency, access, quality, and income generation/private sector funding</li> <li>- Improve efficiency by completing efficiency review</li> </ul>
To Streamline Policy Delivery Mechanisms	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish new funding council for the performing and visual arts and film; create a new strategic body for museums, libraries and archives; change existing frameworks for heritage, sport and tourism so as to save £23 million</li> <li>- Establish the new Film Council by April 2000 with objectives to develop film culture and a sustainable industry</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transfer responsibilities for the Heritage Grant Fund to English Heritage</li> <li>- Establish a new Lottery Commission and transfer responsibilities</li> <li>- Lottery funding to achieve a proper balance between capital and revenue schemes and geographic spread</li> <li>- Devolve decisions where possible</li> </ul>
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Sources: (DCMS, 1999a: 94-97; HM Treasury, 1998: 107-112).

While the text is a précis, the vocabulary is largely that used in the source documents. Sara Selwood also produced a summary of these objectives and targets together with some historical comparisons, although her concern was primarily for the arts (see Selwood, 1999).

A number of the requirements of the PSA simply enshrine the Department's policy initiatives, but others demonstrate the depth of the conceptual shift in which DCMS was engaged. The effectiveness of individual policies or actions can be debated, but the significance of the move towards detailed control of the whole breath of cultural policy, itself now concerned with cross-government social, educational and economic policies, has a greater significance. In this respect, one particular clause is revealing: under the heading "To Agree new Standards of Effectiveness" is the requirement to make "funding of NDPBs conditional on quantified improvements in outputs - efficiency, access, quality, and income generation/private sector funding" (DCMS, 1999a: 96). It is this clause that effectively ratified the notion that DCMS pass on to its funded clients the policy demands made upon it under the PSA. The consequence of this requirement was to create a policy "chain", ultimately linking the Treasury to thousands of organisations and individuals across the country in receipt of financial support from the NDPBs. The links of this chain were to be assayed with quantitative evidence that measured success in achieving "outputs" and, rather more improbably, their "quality".

## The "Delivery Chain"

In March 2006 the National Audit Office of the Audit Commission published a report into the mechanisms by which the Labour Government “delivered” its policies both through its departments and Government funded NDPBs. It used the expression “delivery chain” to describe the process, defining it in the following way:

“A delivery chain refers to the complex network of organisations, including central and local government agencies, and bodies from the private and third sectors, that need to work together to achieve or deliver an improved public sector outcome defined through a central government Public Service Agreement.” (Comptroller & Auditor General, 2006: 1).

The report described four types of delivery chain:

1. Those based solely on “Internal links” within departments;
2. Those requiring “Contractual or regulatory links” with external bodies;
3. Links with “common purpose”, such as might exist between a housing association and a local authority;
4. Links into the “wider community” which, to be effective, relied on coercion or persuasion to align the actions of community groups with Government policy.

The PSAs fell within type 2, although their origination may owe something to type 1 and their subsequent effects were intended to affect types 3 and 4. They are the source of the policies that were then formulated by each department, in this case DCMS, into conditions attached to agreements as funds were transmitted to their clients. The conditions of the PSA were initially defined by the Treasury, but it fell to each department to decide how they were to be achieved. As a consequence, in setting policies to its funded bodies the DCMS added and altered conditions. Where funds were then passed further down the funding line, for example the grant-in-aid to the Arts Council, these conditions were further adjusted before being imposed, in turn, on its own clients. In effect then, every recipient of state grants or financial assistance was unilaterally co-opted into the consanguineous policy objectives originated by HM Treasury.

As mentioned above, the PSAs also required a base point from which the value returned by the money awarded, the "outputs", could be measured. In this respect, the Audit Commission said, "It is essential that the achievement of a PSA target will be measured appropriately" (Comptroller & Auditor General, 2006: 14). The resulting complexity of this simple statement became most apparent when the "outputs" of each funded organisation were passed back up the delivery chain for eventual assessment by the progenitor of its demands; HM Treasury. To demonstrate the process by example, a brief case study of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra follows.

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### **Case Study:**

#### **Down and Up the Delivery Chain - the example of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra**

The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO) is an independent charitable trust formed from a private company limited by guarantee and financially reliant on the support of the Arts Council England (ACE) and the Birmingham City Council. The CBSO has its own objectives that are formed and maintained ultimately by its trustees. They are:

1. To give a high concentration of concerts in Birmingham;
  2. To present a wide range of musical activities;
  3. To be an international ambassador [for Birmingham];
  4. To give performances of the highest possible quality;
  5. To perform to the widest possible range of people.
- (Maddock, 2006a)

The origins of the first four objectives predate its funding arrangements. Only one, the fifth, is a subsequent concession to its funding bodies.

The PSA DCMS contracted with the Treasury for the period 2005 to 2008 was an outcome of the 2004 Spending Review. Structurally it was similar to that arising from the 1998 review discussed above and the following 2000 and 2002 reviews (HM

Treasury, 2000, 2002), and its policy objectives were extensions of those resulting from those reviews. In essence they come down to New Labour's consistent themes from 1997: broadening access, increasing economic performance and increasing efficiency, but they contain many more precise quantitative targets. It listed the performance targets under four main objectives, all of which may be interpreted to contain ambitions for the arts (as part of a broad definition of "implicit" culture). They were:

1. "Further enhance access to culture and sport for children and give them the opportunity to develop their talents to the full and enjoy the full benefits of participation."
2. "Increase and broaden the impact of culture and sport, to enrich individual lives, strengthen communities and improve the places where people live, now and for future generations."
3. "Maximise the contribution which the tourism, creative and leisure industries can make to the economy."
4. "Modernise delivery by ensuring our sponsored bodies are efficient and work with others to meet the cultural and sporting needs of individuals and communities."

(HM Treasury, 2004a: 35; see also HM Treasury, 2004b)

The sub-sections of Objectives 1 and 4 contain no further reference to arts or culture, but Objective 2 does. By 2008 it required the DCMS to;

increase the take-up of cultural and sporting opportunities by adults and young people aged 16 and above from priority groups by :

- increasing the number who participate in active sports at least twelve times a year, by 3%, and increasing the number who engage in at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity level sport at least three times a week, by 3%;
- increasing the number who participate in an arts activity at least twice a year by 2%, and increasing the number who attend arts events at least twice a year by 3%;

- increasing the number accessing museums and galleries collections by 2%; and  
increasing the number visiting designated historic environment sites by 3%.

The single sub-section of Objective 3 simply says: “By 2008, improve the productivity of the tourism, creative and leisure industries.” (2004a: 35)

The funds that were granted by ACE to the CBSO came from the DCMS grant-in-aid, which itself was received from the Treasury under the PSA. In its 2005 Annual Report DCMS confirmed the co-option of ACE in realising the "outputs" required of the PSA:

“Our target to increase the number of adults benefiting from the arts is being delivered through Arts Council England and its partnership organisations. This will build on their existing approach to target as many people as possible in accordance with their cultural diversity priority and sharing information learned from the £20 million New Audiences programmes” (DCMS, 2005: 35).

The point was made again later in the Report, but this time extending itself to direct how the Arts Council should deliver the policy objectives:

The package of interventions underpinning this objective will be delivered by Arts Council England, managed and monitored through the Funding Agreement with DCMS. Arts Council England will work through three main funding channels: regularly funded organisations (RFOs), grants for the arts (open application funds) and flexible funds (which are not open to application) (DCMS, 2005: 60).

Given the Arts Council's fifty years of policy independence, some resistance to this co-option might have been expected. In fact, in an interview with ACE's Director of Corporate Programmes, Helen Flach, she was quite accepting, saying that “We are the lead delivery agency for the arts in achieving the DCMS PSA targets” (Flach, 2006). Difficulties of defining the targeted "priority" social groups were also side-stepped as she added “The Treasury decides what is art, so they decide who is included in the measurements against the PSA”.



## ACE Grant to the CBSO

Funds for the CBSO, as a "Regularly Funded Organisation", or RFO, were awarded under a contract with ACE, through its West Midlands office. The contract contained two parts: a "Funding Agreement" and "Standard Conditions for Grants". The latter is of little interest to the subject of this essay as its conditions were unrelated to policy but dealt with procedural matters, legal liabilities, and contingencies. However, the Funding Agreement committed the CBSO to two conditions that could affect its operational practises. To quote from the Agreement:

- 4.2 carrying out the plan of activity set out in outline in appendix 1 and detailed in the plan of activity agreed by the Arts Council prior to beginning each year;
- 4.3 participating and cooperating in the monitoring and review process set out in appendix 3.

Appendix 1 described the required "activity" as being: "To operate a world-class symphony orchestra offering a season of concerts at Birmingham Symphony Hall and elsewhere together with a full range of associated education and outreach programmes, a full chorus, youth orchestra and youth chorus". Within a clause in the appendix entitled "Other specific requirements" it also required the CBSO to "...provide evidence that you have continued to discuss and take forward the development of an effective plan for your organisation to address the issue of race equality/diversity." (Arts Council England, 2006a).

All these conditions sat comfortably with the CBSO's own objects. However, the conditions in appendix 3 were more problematic. It began by restating the responsibilities ACE had imposed on it by DCMS, saying: "We are required by the terms of our funding agreement with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to monitor the performance of the organisations we fund". Clause 4 of the appendix then continues;

The annual review will consider your performance under the terms of this agreement, against the targets you have set in your detailed plan of activity and in relation to ambitions for the arts, which are:

- supporting the artist
- enabling organisations to thrive, not just survive
- championing diversity
- offering opportunities to young people
- encouraging growth.

Together, those requirements took the CBSO's responsibilities beyond its own objects, demanding ambitions that had not been seen before at any point in the policy delivery chain. In effect, they required that the CBSO assist ACE to achieve its “ambitions for the arts”, even though several were arguably beyond the powers of the CBSO to affect to any noticeable degree. Interestingly, the agreement made no comment on any data collection requirements nor how the CBSO’s “outputs” could be measured.

### **Climbing the Chain**

In making funding applications, Stephen Maddock recognised that funders’ requirements may not, indeed probably would not, coincide with the objectives of the orchestra. “Everyone running an arts organisation has to learn how to play the game. In any case, the criteria are always changing so you can never match-up what you actually do with what you say you’ll do” (Maddock, 2006b). The most difficult examples of unsympathetic requirements actually appeared to arise with funding applications to the European Union. A CBSO project to present all of Igor Stravinsky's works under the City Council’s “Urban Fusion” programme required an application for European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) made under their “Image enhancement” criterion (Robinson, 2006)<sup>1</sup>. ERDF funds were assessed by their economic “outputs” so, rather absurdly, the application required evidence that the funds would “improve productivity”, produce “better quality products” and “reduce costs”, and that there must be “New sales generated by the intervention” and a vocational “Training place” must be created (2006). This application was then made to the City Council which compiled it into a larger application for part of the

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<sup>1</sup> Then Director of the Regional, European and International Division of Birmingham City Council

ERDF budget held by the Region Development Authority, which was then assessed initially by Government Office West Midlands. It was then judged against other strategic programmes that fitted the criteria for the whole region's Objective 2 ERDF allocation before making its way to Brussels.

For the CBSO, the uncertainties of European funding were, Maddock said, a comparatively small problem as applications were infrequent and always project-based. Rather, it was somewhere along the Treasury-DCMS-ACE-CBSO delivery chain that the task of meeting the Government's PSA requirements and the orchestra's own objectives created the most turbulence. That is not to say that the ACE agreement caused the CBSO severe practical difficulties, but that the interlinked process allowed the PSA requirements to be altered, sometimes quite substantially, creating a confusion of purpose. Sir Michael Lyons<sup>1</sup> asked the question, "Is the CBSO an appropriate subject for a PSA?", "In a rationally managed world you would expect the PSA to be agreed directly with the end-client" (Lyons, 2006). Stephen Maddock expressed it more directly, saying that funding rationales were subject to "knowingly disingenuous deceit on the way down from Treasury" (Maddock, 2006a). Lyons appeared to place the source of problems with the Treasury, whilst Maddock found them in the interpretation of the PSA in the process of delivery.

### **The Delivery Chain and Data Collection**

The Arts Council was charged by DCMS with two types of task: the first was to deliver "the package of interventions" that must achieve DCMS's objectives, and the second to collect data that measured the effects of the actions taken. DCMS was conscious that data from which performance indicators were produced lacked any base-line position (Davey, 2006b)<sup>2</sup> so made it a primary requirement that ACE should "establish target baseline and finalise trajectories for 2006-07 and 2007-08."

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<sup>1</sup> Then Chairman of the CBSO, ex Chief Executive of Birmingham City Council, Honorary Professor of Public Policy at Birmingham University, author of the Lyons Report for HM Treasury, and ex BBC Chairman.

<sup>2</sup> Then Director of Arts and Culture, Department of Culture, Media & Sport. Now Chief Executive of Arts Council England

(DCMS, 2006: 9), although Davey stated that this had not yet been achieved. It may therefore seem curious that ACE's contract with the CBSO did not contain any requirements for data collection. But there appears to be a reason for this; the specific requirements of DCMS's PSA in this period, unlike the obligations DCMS has passed to ACE, were all numerical in nature and did not socially differentiate within the targets. Capturing qualitative social data was a completely impractical task for the CBSO. The only source of raw data of attendances at CBSO concerts was that recorded by box office systems when selling tickets. Understandably, the selling process did not record age, social group, nor ethnicity. Even the box office data from concerts at the same venue were irreconcilable with actual attendances as any multiple purchase (*viz.* for two or more tickets) was only recorded as a single purchaser. This issue, by the way, affected galleries even more than theatres and concert halls, most particularly in the period of free entry when no tickets were issued (Kawashima, 2006: 62; Bailey and Falconer, 1998). In any case, the data did not belong to the CBSO but to the venue and without each customer's individual consent, information could not be shared under data protection legislation<sup>1</sup>. Though some data collection was undertaken by the CBSO from its outreach and community programmes, it represented only a small part of its activities. For ACE to require the CBSO to provide statistics was practically pointless.

Nevertheless, ACE did collect some data towards the obligations of the PSA. It came primarily from two sources:

1. The "Taking Part" survey, described by ACE as "... a major continuous survey that will ask nearly 30,000 members of the public every year about their attendance at a wide variety of arts events, museums, galleries, libraries and heritage sites; and their participation in creative activities and sport". The figures eventually published were therefore a projection from a large and

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<sup>1</sup> The DPA of 1998 replaced the 1984 Act and the Access to Personal Files Act of 1987 following the European Data Protection Directive of 1995.

statistically significant sample of the English public. The survey was commissioned by DCMS<sup>1</sup>.

2. The “Statistical Survey of Regularly Funded Organisations”. This survey, it claimed, “provides essential information for reporting to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Treasury about what has been achieved as a result of their funding” (Arts Council England, 2006b: 1). Matching the data to DCMS’s requirements was, however, not possible. The “constant sample” from which comparisons were drawn were not a complete record of RFO activity and it recorded no social data at all. (Arts Council England, 2006b: 89-93).

Part of ACE's difficulty was that the DCMS remit simply could not be accurately fulfilled, making the PSA indicators too reliant on comparative data extracted from DCMS's “Taking Part” survey. Even when discussing “social stratification”, ACE appeared implicitly to accept that its data did not address the precision required of the PSA (Bunting, 2005), and that “data gathering in the cultural sector has been a spurious exercise” (Selwood, 2002). Furthermore, the insistence of DCMS that ACE should be their delivery organisation for the arts presumed that ACE shared, or could be directed to share, the political aims that directed the ministry’s work. Yet its objects and origins gave it a different purpose, and one which now sat uncomfortably with its new remit. Alan Davey understood the issue, though from a different viewpoint, when saying “The Arts Council are more than just deliverers of the PSA, but this is where the PSA is so partial.” (Davey, 2006b). From ACE’s viewpoint Helen Flach made a similar point about partiality, insisting that fulfilling the terms of DCMS's PSA was only one of its many tasks (Flach, 2006).

### **The Broken Chain?**

These factors leave the indicators of qualitative data on cultural consumption and participation particularly susceptible to criticism. Quantitative indicators formed in

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/aboutus/project\\_detail.php?rid=0&sid=&browse=recent&id=373](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/aboutus/project_detail.php?rid=0&sid=&browse=recent&id=373). Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> June 06.

this way are generally considered as less than precise instruments of analysis, lying “...at the nexus between the *production* of cultural data and the *analysis* of cultural phenomena...” (Madden, 2005: 221, original italics). Perhaps it is for this reason that the performing arts do not appear among the “Cultural and Related Services” indicators published by the Government (ODPM, 2006: 217-230). With all this in mind it is interesting to reflect back on the opinion of the National Audit Office, that: “It is essential that the achievement of a PSA target will be measured appropriately”.

However, although the Treasury was not receiving the hard evidence it required, Alan Davey stressed that it was not a major concern. His surprising claim was that, on the one hand, the Treasury actually had no real interest in the PSA targets but was content “to leave DCMS to build a model that encompasses public value by tying together instrumental value, institutional value and artistic value”; and, on the other, it was a recognition that the PSAs were “partial, and distorted” and actually had little value for DCMS either. Davey then added, “We are not alone with this problem. The Home Office, for one, is in much the same situation” (Davey, 2006b). These concerns over the measure of “performance” and outputs were also shared by the Treasury's Select Committee (Treasury Select Committee, 1999). Chris Smith later confirmed this same line in 2003, saying:

So, use the measurements and figures and labels that you can, when you need to, in order to convince the rest of the governmental system of the value and importance of what you're seeking to do. But recognise at the same time that this is not the whole story, that it is not enough as an understanding of cultural value. (Quoted in Belfiore, 2009: 348)

The natural question that follows this insight is then: why did the DCMS agree with the Treasury to instigate the PSAs in the first place? Davey answered: “We didn't. It was just sent to us by No. 10 after the [financial] settlement with DCMS was agreed... They would have given the money anyway”. In a later email Davey confirmed that “Special advisors in No 10 and HMT [Her Majesty's Treasury] cooked them up” (Davey, 2006a). This view of the PSAs was not actually news: The Times of July 2<sup>nd</sup>

2002, quoted Paul Boateng, when Chief Secretary to the Treasury, commenting on PSAs, saying: "There was never any question that: 'Oh if we don't meet this target, our money's going to be cut' ... The purpose is to focus minds, and get people to work together better.'" (Crooks and Blitz, 2002), and it fits well with Tony Blair's comment on what matters in New Labour's strategies: "It's the signals. Not the policies" (Jones, 1999).

These comments appear dismissive of cultural policy of a concern of government at all, but there is another reading, and one that explains the intensity with which DCMS pursued its policy concerns and fits with the economic model that will be discussed in chapter 5 below: DCMS was concerned with building the structures within which culturally driven economic potential could be created, not with any specific qualitative outcomes. These were, by analogy, the company's profit-loss account of the moment, not its balance sheet. It expressed the work that had to be done and the direction of travel, not the potential of the structural plan. At the same time, it was Chris Smith's primary aim that DCMS should participate in core government policy. The politics was more important than cogency, coherence or fact.

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## **Conclusion**

One of the most striking and defining characteristics of DCMS was its insistence on participating, one way or another, in the policies of every Government department. "Without culture", Chris Smith claimed, "there can ultimately be no society and no sense of shared identity or worth. For a government elected primarily to try and re-establish that sense of society that we had so painfully lost, this is a very important realization" (C. Smith, 1998: 16); and "culture" in Smith's argument was the structural framework for social and economic development. The DCMS was re-drawing its curtilage as if to place itself at the centre of a grand Venn diagram in which it

overlapped sections of the entire government policy agenda. The aims and targets of these policies were set-out in policy statements, in the PSAs, and in contracts with its funded NDPBs, yet the example of the CBSO showed just how difficult it was to apply them in practice or to assess their effects. But then, as both Alan Davey and Paul Boateng claimed, quantitative measures were not actually of much interest anyway. Rather the point was "to get people to work together"; towards common aims and shared agendas, whether institutions or individuals. This was at the core of the "conceptual inconsistencies" noted by Sara Selwood and referred to above in the Introduction. Chris Smith had acknowledged that quantitative justifications for cultural policy were "necessarily going to be inadequate" yet the implicit alternative, the promotion of the arts for their own intrinsic value, was an argument rarely heard within government (C. Smith, 2003; quoted in Selwood, 2006: 39). By clear implication, there was an agenda that lay behind the policy statements, contractual demands and data gathering: the ambition to make the department relevant to all government policy.



## Chapter 4

### Commentary and Criticism

Preceding chapters have sought to establish the profound change in national cultural policy instigated by the DCMS in 1997; one constructed to place the DCMS at the heart of government and predicated on its ability to influence social change for economic effect. This chapter will query the validity of the claims DCMS made for its policies to be efficient and effective ways to bolster cross-government objectives, and for how cultural policy could result in improvements in economic performance while ameliorating "the quality of life". It will show many aspects of DCMS cultural policy were superficially incoherent but, when judged against Chris Smith's ambitions for the department, they nevertheless had a consistent and purposeful logic.

#### **The Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee**

The remit of CMS Committee was similar to that of most Select Committees, its constitution, powers and purposes being prescribed by a Standing Order (SO 152): "to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and associated public bodies" (1998b: vi). Except for the change of the Department's name, and thereby the title of the select committee, its terms of reference essentially repeated those of the preceding National Heritage Committee<sup>1</sup>. Gerald Kaufman<sup>2</sup> was appointed its Chairman on July 17th 1997 and remained in post until 2005, being re-elected after the 2001 General Election. Kaufman's acerbic, incisive, and sometimes satirical style of cross-examination, combined with his strong views on the shortcomings of his own Labour Party and the workings of Government more generally, brought attention to a committee that

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<sup>1</sup> Appointed under SO 130

<sup>2</sup> The Rt. Hon. Sir Gerald Bernard Kaufman, Labour MP for Gorton, in Greater Manchester.

its brief might not otherwise have attracted. His caustic summary of Labour's 1983 election manifesto as "the longest suicide note in history" was typical (quoted in Healey, 1989: 500) and launched a phrase that, in the language of the Internet, quickly went "viral". Given that Kaufman referred often to the advice of the preceding NH Select Committee (the first to examine the policies of a department responsible for arts, heritage and other implicitly cultural matters) it is also noteworthy that he was elected as its first Chairman in 1992, so bridging the change of Government in 1997.

During its seven years, the NH Committee published just three reports. The CMS Committee, by comparison, produced twenty-eight "Standard" reports and eighteen "Special" reports between 1997 and 2001. It is tempting to read some motivational significance into this dramatic increase in activity, but a review of the CMS Committee's reports show them to be firmly focused on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department (however measured) rather than any ideological debates or disputes. For this same reason, its criticisms provide limited help in resolving the conundrums that concern this thesis, but four reports do contain useful material: the 5th 1998 Report on the *Objects and Performance of the Department* (DCMS Select Committee, 1998b); the 6th 1999 report on its QUANGOS (DCMS Select Committee, 1999a); and the subsequent responses by the Government (DCMS Select Committee, 1999b, 1998a).

### **The Objects and Performance of DCMS**

The Select Committee's deliberations on economic development, the creative industries, tourism, NDPBs and the relative power of DCMS within government, contributed to arguments that the Department's rationales were power-seeking through its perceived role in economic development and the reformation of societal structures that related to economic performance. At the same time, this was countered by DCMS's apparent ineffectiveness in negotiations with the Treasury. In the year of the Select Committee's review of DCMS's "Objectives and Performance"

(published on June 4th 1998) the Department's total budget had actually decreased over the period since the DNH was formed in 1992. In the Committee's words, there was "a history of continuous decline", as "the Department's share of the Government total [expenditure] has fallen from 0.44% in 1992-93 to 0.33% in 1998-99" (DCMS Select Committee, 1998b: xiii) <sup>1</sup>. Given the passage of time, inflation, and the department's increased responsibilities, this drew scathing criticism from the Select Committee and the recommendation that: "The Secretary of State should make it his highest priority to advance the Department both within Cabinet by taking a much tougher attitude in his negotiations with the Treasury which has certainly not been achieved and may not even have been attempted" (DCMS Select Committee, 1998b: ix). A comparison of the cash expenditure of the DNH and DCMS since 1992 supports the Committee's concerns:

**Table 10:**

<b>DNH/DCMS Cash Expenditure 1992-1999</b> <b>£ millions</b>						
1992-3 outturn	1993-4 outturn	1994-5 outturn	1995-6 outturn	1996-7 outturn	1997-8 outturn (estimate)	1998-9 outturn
974	964	975	1,023	950	882	885
Data Source: (DCMS, 1998a: 16)						

<b>DNH/DCMS Expenditure 1992-1999</b> <b>£ millions</b> <b>Corrected for inflation, 1996-7 = 0%</b>						
1992-3 outturn	1993-4 outturn	1994-5 outturn	1995-6 outturn	1996-7 outturn	1997-8 outturn (est)	1998-9 outturn
1,109	1,048	1,035	1,056	959	889	863
Data Sources: (DCMS Select Committee, 1998b: Minutes of Evidence, p1). Note that there are small differences in the data between the two sources.						

<sup>1</sup> The Select Committee's source was given as "Public Expenditure: Statistical Analyses 1998-99, April 1998, Cm 3901, p10; Evidence, p1".

Smith's reply to this accusation was to refer to the on-going Comprehensive Spending Review, whose conclusions had not then been published, with the implication that the downward trend would be reversed. The outcome of the CSR was later reported in the 1999 DCMS Annual report, showing a budgetted expenditure increase of £290 million. In a somewhat loaded but unexplained comment, these increased funds were said to be "investment, not mere subsidy", and explicitly attached to the conditions of the Department's PSA agreement (DCMS, 1999a: 17). This, the Annual Report claimed, represented "a clear message that money spent on culture, in its widest sense, can play an important part in achieving key Government objectives ..." (1999a: 8). It was, Chris Smith himself wrote, "...a new and enhanced investment in our cultural life, and we are placing new responsibilities on funded bodies to agree improvements in efficiency, access and private sector sponsorship" (DCMS Select Committee, 1998a: iii). Even so, compared to the DNH budgets for 1992 to 1996, the increase of "5.7% in real terms" or ca 9% on 1995/6, when corrected for inflation (DCMS Select Committee, 1998a: v), was not a dramatic increase, particularly bearing in mind the extended responsibilities of the Department. *Pace* Niskanen, what motivated DCMS appeared to be closer to Dunleavy's arguments on the behaviour of institutions: that officials (a word that would include the Secretary of State) are actually more interested in shaping institutional boundaries and "conferring high status and agreeable work tasks" than in "budget maximising" (Niskanen, 1991; Dunleavy, 1991; see also Niskanen, 1971)<sup>1</sup>. Given DCMS's unprecedented participation in other areas of national policy, their institutional boundaries had indeed expanded considerably.

In coercing the DCMS "to enhance its influence within Whitehall", the CMS Committee began its argument by referring briefly to the Department's "economic and cultural importance", making clear its view that "The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is avowedly an economic Department" (DCMS, 1999a: v), quoting

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<sup>1</sup> Niskanen did revise his views on the incentive mechanisms employed by "bureaus" (sic) in the later paper, but still maintained the principle of budget-maximising.

also a statement by Chris Smith that "at its heart are a series of powerful economic sectors: the creative industries ...media, tourism and sport" (DNH, 14th July 1997). However, the Committee not only tacitly declined to discuss the concept of "creative industries" but referred to the title of Chris Smith's recently published book, *Creative Britain*, that expounded these theories as "an inadequate label for what should be the Department's focus" (1998b: ix).

"Creative Industries" were defined by the Office for National Statistics under the heading "the arts and creative industries" (a distinction never made by DCMS) which, after discussion with the Arts Council, the DTI, "and academics researching this field", came to include:

film; music; architecture; publishing (including electronic publishing); computer games; radio and television; the content industries (for example, museum collections on CD); software; advertising; crafts; visual and performing arts; designer fashion and art/antiques trade.

This list was then "translated into components of the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC)" (1998b: Evidence, 4). The turnover of these industries in the UK was said to be "of the order of £50 billion a year". Although not original, this process of naming and defining the creative industries (one perhaps more accurately called "listing") had global impact, leading quickly to gaining worldwide currency (Flew, 2012; see also Wang, 2004; Ross, 2007). Given their silence on the subject, yet a record of robust investigation, it is possible that the CMS Committee had simply not then realised the significance of this conceptual wrapper or perhaps rejected it as a priority for a department for culture.

In any event, their interest was more for what that list did not include: tourism. The Committee expressed particular concern at the Department's apparent lack of emphasis on tourism for its potential to realise "the economic objective [of the Department] that we recommend" (DCMS Select Committee, 1998b: vi), referring to it as "the biggest Dollar or export currency earner for the United Kingdom" (1998b:

Evidence, 36). Smith put an annual value on it of £40 million, significantly below that of the "value and importance of the creative industries to the economy" (1998b: Evidence, 35).

It was mentioned earlier that the Committee believed an opportunity to bring tourism into the centre of its work had been missed when "renaming" the Department. They now went further, expressing themselves as "deeply concerned that ... tourism is subordinated in favour of more glamorous and trivial matters" and, in a rare reference to the new industrial category named by the DCMS, that "we recommend that the Department's economic objective should be to foster tourism, creative and sports industries" (DCMS, 1999a: vi).

In its response to the Committee's report, the Government (*viz*, DCMS) again refuted this criticism, enclosing supporting letters from the Chairmen of the British Tourist Authority, the Tourism Society, the British Hospitality Association (in the form of a press release) and the Joint Hospitality Industry Congress. Their central message was support for "fruitful and constructive dialogue" with the Department, "a fruitful relationship", recognising the "immense input from your Department" and its "clear sighted leadership". These views challenged the Committee's assertion of comparative disinterest in the tourism industry but not how that support was actualised financially - the measure that most particularly concerned the Select Committee.

In seeking to promote the business of tourism the CMS Committee appeared not to have understood DCMS's macro-economic mission or, if it did, it offered no criticism of it. DCMS was primarily concerned with building institutional and contractual systems that would support, develop and operationalise its policies rather than fighting for budget increases in pursuit of old-style DNH objectives. Across all its funded bodies, it pursued rigorous systems of policy control without significantly increasing financial support for their work (but with some decreases). In effect, DCMS policy was concerned with building guiding and constraining structures

rather than for individual objects or actions. The sector of DCMS's work where these structural controls were most glaring was in the arts. Despite the significant precedent of classifying "arts" as an industry, it drew no comment from the Committee nor from those DCMS called in evidence. This was all the more surprising as it appeared to demonstrate so exactly Adorno's and Horkheimer's intentionally egregious and oxymoronic neologism: the "culture industry" (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979; J. M. Bernstein, 1991) and the prospect, if not the inevitability, of the commodification and mass production of the arts that was necessary if increased economic value and greater public access were to be simultaneously achieved.

### **Non-Departmental Public Bodies**

Capitalising non-departmental public bodies as NDPBs was DCMS's preferred description for what the CMS Select Committee and the Select Committee on Public Administration both referred to acronymically as QUANGOs (quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations), (DCMS Select Committee, 1999a, b; Select Committee on Public Administration, 1999). The Cabinet Office referred to them as "Executive" NDPBs, while in his Foreword to a 1997 Cabinet Report on the subject, David Clark used both terms in adjacent paragraphs (Cabinet Office, 1997; see also Cabinet Office, 1998, 1999a). None offered an explanation for their preference (at least, that this author can find), although, in their Memorandum of Evidence to the Select Committee on Public Administration, DCMS wrote pointedly that: "The Government's policies set out in 'Quangos: Opening the Doors' are focused on non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs)". They then referred to the "full list of NDPBs" attached to their submission to the report (1999: 22). A total of 54 were listed, of which 40 were "Executive Bodies", many of which were themselves grant-giving bodies, 9 "Advisory Bodies" and 5 "Public Corporations", the latter all being broadcasting companies (1999: 24). This was one of the few instances in which DCMS appeared to suggest that the terms "QUANGO" and "NDPB" may not be entirely synonymous. If that was the case, though, it was a matter of little concern

to Government generally, despite the academic literature that dwells on the subject (for example Greve, Flinders *et al.*, 1999; Hogwood, 1995).

The predominance of NDPBs under contract to DCMS makes relevant a particular body of academic literature on governance. Guy Peters's, and Rod Rhodes's claims for the "hollowed out" state (B. G. Peters, 1993; Rhodes, 1994; D. Wilson, 1995; Rhodes, 1996), in which the state distributes its powers to a plethora of unelected bodies, were re-described by Chris Skelcher as "congested" following increasingly "plural modes of governance" through the 1990s (Skelcher, 2000: 12; 1998). Skelcher's arguments have a particular relevance to the socio-cybernetic concerns of DCMS, in which NDPBs were the structural instrument of policy implementation. Writing in the mid-1990s, Rhodes's "stipulative definition" of governance as "self-organizing, interorganizational networks" regarded the main issue for government to be policy "steerage" when "central government is no longer supreme" in the hollowed-out state (Rhodes, 1996). This principle can be seen in DCMS's policy operations as "more than any Whitehall department, ([DCMS] meets its objectives through a network of sponsored bodies" (DCMS Select Committee, 1999a: v, 99). NDPBs accounted for "about 95% of the Department's programme" (1999a: v), and of those, 97% were categorised as grant-distributing bodies in the arts and sports (DCMS Select Committee, 1998b: x).

Under New Labour, all the reports on the subject produced by the Cabinet Office, the Public Administration Committee, the CMS Committee and DCMS itself were explicit in their treatment of NDPBs as extensions of Government departments. For the effective and consistent application of policy, Government sought to install controls over the NDPBs in three respects: firstly, policy objectives were contractually defined, initially in the PSAs then in the contractual funding processes that cascaded down to end users; secondly, their operational practices were subject to constant scrutiny rationalised in the "3Es" (efficiency, efficacy and effectiveness). This was a New Public Management mantra from the 1980s, to which "transparency" and "accountability" were added as both a nod to the "democratic deficit" of



governing through unelected bodies (to use a term popularised in the literature on the European Union) and a necessary requirement for oversight of the minutiae of NDPB operations. The third mechanism of control was over the seven hundred appointments to the boards and senior executive positions of the NDPBs (DCMS Select Committee, 1999a: xi). In most case these became subject to the formal public appointments system in addition to any requirements for their approval by their funding Departments.

This was a crucial factor in the logic by which DCMS's cultural policies were formed and exercised. Unlike every other government department, it was unable to take executive control of its policies. Previous departments had seen their role solely as financial distributors to cultural NDPBs and other supported bodies, in which the state's duty was to support the arts and national heritage as a patron, not through policy direction. Although there had been the rumblings of an incipient discontent of arms-length funding since the 1980s, becoming more explicit as financial allocations to NDPBs increased over the years, Chris Smith's instigation of a complex, cross-departmental cultural policy left DCMS with only one route for its delivery, and that was control over its funded bodies. Structurally, it also has to be seen as conveniently co-incident with the Treasury's creation of PSAs as these provided the mechanism with which DCMS could apply its policies right down the "delivery chain" without taking on what would otherwise have surely been a highly controversial reorganizational challenge.

Noticeable by its absence in all the Government's reports is any but scant consideration of the legal independence of most of the executive NDPBs. Given that among them were organisations with Royal Charters, (the Arts Council being a prime example), independent corporations and private companies, all of which were legally obliged to operate according to their own best interests under their constitutions or Memorandum and Articles of Association, this is a subject that might reasonably have been given more consideration.

Outside the DCMS, reports by the Cabinet Office and the Committee on Public Administration questioned neither the value nor the purposes of NDPB's; rather they expressed concerns only for how well these bodies met the performance targets set by the sponsoring government departments, recording their achievements and failures annually for three years (1997 to 1999). Tightening control of the NDPB's was undertaken more severely by DCMS than within government more generally. In their view, it must ensure the work of its NDPBs "is aligned with the Department's overall objectives, that measurable and meaningful targets are set related to those objectives ...": "We regard the autonomy in certain areas of budget allocation ... as letting the arm's length principle go much too far" (DCMS Select Committee, 1998b: xviii). This was reinforced and extended by Chris Smith: "There is no arm's length as far as the setting of principle, the setting of overall directions and the accountability of public money is concerned" (1998b: 28).

### **"Creative Britain"**

Given the remit of the CMS Select Committee it is also surprising that they never questioned the Department's declared policy "pillars" or "four themes": access, excellence, education and the creative industries. These had been set-out in its first policy statement - *A New Cultural Framework* (DCMS, 1998c: 2), and thereafter consistently restated by Chris Smith even as late as his interview with this author in 2009 (C. Smith, 2009). In 1998 Smith published his ideas in *Creative Britain*, a reworking of fourteen of his speeches made in 1997 and 1998 to which he added a substantial introduction and conclusion (C. Smith, 1998). The book, referred to by Timothy Bewes as "the most explicit statement yet on the importance of culture for New Labour" (Bewes and Gilbert, 2000: 31), repeated Smith's remark that "Excellence, innovation, regeneration and access may be the main justifying purposes for modern state patronage" (C. Smith, 1998: 19). Neither Bewes nor, more importantly, Smith elaborate on this assertion, nor provide any logical link between those policy objectives and the responsibilities of the organisations funded by

DCMS. In this respect, the texts in *Creative Britain* suggest a dichotomy between the inherited understanding of culture and Smith's ambitions for his department.

Each of Smith's speeches were directed at a different audience with the language and the arguments of each adjusted accordingly. They include the Fabian Society, the Association of London Government, the Lottery Monitor Conference, the IPPR think tank, Royal Television Society Biennial Convention, Public Library Authorities, among other arts and creative-industry audiences. Chris Smith himself put it that "...you have to talk a very different set of priorities and a very different kind of language" when addressing different Government departments, and the same seemed to be true of public and professional audiences (C. Smith, 2009). Despite their rhetorical deceit, the content of the speeches was both repetitive and, at an ideational level, inevitably conflicted given Smith's assertions for the power of culture to ameliorate just about every aspect of social and economic life. These ideas are, though, those that form the substance of DCMS's founding policies, further establishing Smith's role as their principal author.

That said, there is one important difference. Smith records within parts of these speeches a view of culture as meaning the arts, expressing an intellectual view on their value. Where large sections of the DCMS's policy statements reify culture into an object to be nurtured for its manifold values to contemporary society, for Smith it was creative activities that had the ameliorative power, not a crude hypostatised concept of culture itself. Discussing "cultural value", Smith makes an argument rarely heard within the New Labour government, saying "let me stress that the creative and cultural value of experience and activity is important simply and solely for its own sake" (C. Smith, 1998: 28), and "it tends in fact to be the artistic and creative activity that helps define what Hazlitt called the 'Spirit of the Age'" (1998: 21). Addressing the Royal Academy, he adapted an earlier statement saying it is "the arts ...", not culture, that "... are at the very centre of our mission" (1998: 42, emphasis added) and relegated the much vaunted economic value of the arts to a side issue; as a fortuitous benefit that should be exploited. Sport is rarely mentioned

in the book, and tourism appears to be just another way, or another reason, to support artistic works and our national heritage. Given Smith's advanced education, it may be that his personal understanding of culture was much closer to the tradition in which it was defined by artistic and intellectual works. Comparing these speeches with DCMS policy suggests a difference between his personal convictions and his political aspirations. Culture for the DCMS was a political initiative in which ambitions for institutional power were dominant.

This tendency to reinvent or adjust his arguments according to his audience are an important part of the argument that culture, for Smith, was a malleable political device. The conceptual foundations of DCMS policy are discussed later in this chapter but two examples from *Creative Britain* demonstrate their rhetorical construction. The first of these is comparatively straightforward, its principal significance being an indication of Smith's willingness to re-describe the past to suit a present need. In his speech to the Lottery Monitor Conference on 24th September 1997, he asserted that: "Through the years, there has been a fine tradition of lotteries financing the desirable things of community life, as opposed to the normal responsibilities that should be shouldered by all of us as tax payers. The building of the British Museum, for example..." (1998: 114-5). While Smith did acknowledge "the man running it [i.e. the British Museum lottery] ran off with half the funds", he did not mention that it was one of several scandals that cemented Parliament's view that lotteries were "pernicious" and "destructive"; resulting in their prohibition until re-introduced at a local level by the Betting and Lotteries Act of 1934. This subject is discussed in more detail above (Chapter 2) and shows that, quite aside from arguments on the morality of gambling for the financial benefit of the public good, British lotteries simply did not have the "fine tradition" Smith claimed for them.

A far more complex and substantial issue concerns Smith's claim to have been reuniting the arts and industry, a quest intrinsic to his ambitions for the "creative industries". On October 17th 1997 he made a speech at the opening of the *Design Resolutions Exhibition* in London's Royal Festival Hall which he later adapted for

*Creative Britain* (C. Smith, 1998: 111-113). The ideas behind that speech appear to be a reference to the separation of the humanities from the rationalistic and deterministic claims of science and technology embedded in late 19th industrialism and 20th century modernism. The subject, "Design: at the Crossroads of Science and Art", was one that reached back to the foundations of British cultural policy in the 19th century: to the 1835 Select Committee on "The Arts and their Connexions with Manufactures"; the Department of Practical Art; the Great Exhibition; the collaboration between Henry Cole and Prince Albert; and to the Department of Arts and Manufactures itself .

It was not, though, the "manufactures" of the 18th and 19th centuries for which Smith sought a renaissance but an apparently naïve view of an earlier period, when: "Before the Industrial Revolution, science [by which Smith meant, he said, 'technological accomplishment and...innovation'] and the arts were two sides of the same coin, two aspects on 'creativity'". The spirit of "Leonardo, Michelangelo, Bernini or Brunelleschi" were now, he claimed, being rediscovered: "We are now beginning to witness a breaking-down of the artificial barriers which have separated science and the arts over the last 200 years" (C. Smith, 1998: 111). Were that the case, it might add credibility to DCMS's claim of the economic importance of cultural activity. However, contrary to Smith's proposition, the early 15th to late 17th century could be better characterised by a growing scientism and the *separation* of the arts from science; a shift from the restoration of classical texts to an increasing vigour for experimentation and the logical validation of hypotheses (Dear, 2001). It was this increasing methodological demarcation of empirical science from art (or, rather, non-science) as found, for example, in the works of Copernicus, Descartes and Bacon, that led directly to the disengagement that concerned Smith. As the "two cultures debate" had shown<sup>1</sup>, the resulting manifestations were becoming clear by

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<sup>1</sup> A dispute between C. P. Snow and F. R. Leavis that erupted in 1959 with Snow's article in the *New Statesman* (subsequently published in book form: SNOW, C. P. 1998 [1959]. *The Two Cultures*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.) followed by Leavis's reply in the *Spectator* (also published in book form as LEAVIS, F. R. 1962. *Two Cultures? The Significance of C. P. Snow: Being the Richmond Lecture*. London, Chatto & Windus.). Snow argued that the British educational system had favoured

the 19th century (and, indeed, noted by Matthew Arnold at the time) but its origins were in Enlightenment rationalism not Victorian industrialisation. Smith did acknowledge the attempts by William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement to unite "the useful and the beautiful" (C. Smith, 1998: 112), but he ignored the technological energy arising from the potent mix of art, design, and science in the 18th and 19th centuries (Holmes, 2008; Uglow, 2002). In sum, the claim that there had been "artificial barriers" between art and science in the 19th century was at best partial. In practice the two had been economically and politically intertwined.

In many respects the policies of Smith and DCMS drew on practices in 19th century industrial Britain far more than they did from early Enlightenment thought. In commerce and in politics, artists, scientists and technologists had cooperated intensely, and mutually profited in the process. Even at a practical level, the arts and sciences were consistently intermingled throughout Smith's "last 200 years" just as 19th century entrepreneurialism had been synchronous with governments' promotion of art to improve industrial design. This specifically met with Smith's objectives for the modern economy; one in which state invention, collaborations across disciplines, education and a strong sense of national pride, were characteristic of the economic spirit the New Labour government promoted. Ironically, it was the logically-positivist, syllogistic, forms for the validation of truth and knowledge that New Labour drew upon in its desire to employ "evidence-based policy" (Boaz, Grayson *et al.*, 2008; Solesbury, 2002; Sanderson, 1998, 2002; Parsons, 2002; Evans, 2005), not the philosophies of classical thought, however profound and prescient they were in so many respects. New Labour required evidence that a selected policy would have the intended effects; that policy makers could establish *pre factum* the efficacy of particular strategies. The 1999 White Paper on *Modernising Government* put it unequivocally: "government must...produce policies that really deal with problems; that are forward-looking and shaped by evidence rather than a response

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the humanities over the sciences resulting in the deterioration of the nation's international strength and standing. Leavis's reply was excoriating but left standing an argument on the separation of science and the arts that is still unresolved.

to short-term pressures" (Cabinet Office, 1999b: 15). In other words, Blair's consequentialism demanded that the government must do what works (Blair, 1998).

In contrast, the texts in *Creative Britain* presumed but never substantiated causal relations between cultural activity and social amelioration. Rather, Chris Smith proposed a sociological legitimation for creativity through a paralogical cultural narrative: "creative and cultural activity... is also about helping to lead each and every one of us into a glimpse of a deeper world than that which exists simply on the surface"; "...the individual fulfilment that comes from the act of creating, or the appreciation of the created experience, leads to a sense of something that lies beyond the immediate surface consciousness, and that makes the real world more real still" (1998: 23). In this sense, the "artificial barriers" Smith had referred to (1998: 111) brought him closer to Baudelaire's insight - "au fond de l'Inconnu pour trouver du *nouveau*" than to Gordon Brown's brand of positivist social economics (Baudelaire, 1997: 351, original emphasis; also quoted by Frederick Jameson in Lyotard, 1984: ix)<sup>1</sup>. But as DCMS preferred the language of the Treasury, this difference may be down to Smith's educational background rather than any difference of intent.

As has been discussed above, industrial and post-industrial Britain had, in combining art and technology, already identified a necessary chemistry for the creation of successful products and their passage from invention to sales in the marketplace. So why not praise their example? Perhaps Smith felt that the brutal political economy of industrial Britain may not have been something that suited the post-industrial argument he was making. Or perhaps he felt intuitively that his, and New Labour's, commitment to social policy might appear corroded by an unqualified, simplistic association with the coarseness of 19th century industrialisation and its apparent lack of concern for the welfare of individuals. On

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Baudelaire's *Le Voyage*, within *Death* in the collection *Les Fleurs du Mal*. There are many different translations of this. Preferred here is William Aggeler's (1954) in an Academy Library Guild paper, Fresno, CA: "To the depths of the Unknown to find the *new*". It is also one most commonly used.

the other hand, it is possible that references to 19th century arts and industry might have been thought to imply support for its excesses of utilitarian individualism (a criticism the Left also made of the Thatcher government (see Hoover, 1987 for example)) and the brutality of mechanical muscle over the aesthetic refinement of the late-Renaissance Greats or the utopian romantics of Victoria's England. Whether Smith's statements arose from rhetorical, political or ideological intent is not clear, but given his stated willingness to re-describe his arguments according to his audience, perhaps the most supportable view is that he employed the former (rhetoric) in pursuit of the latter (ideology).

### **The Four Themes**

Although the CMS Select Committee largely failed to examine the nature and depth of DCMS's policy initiatives, Chris Smith consistently repeated the themes within which he sought to corral his social and economic ideas: "Access, excellence, education, and the creative economy: these stand as the great aims of policy" (C. Smith, 1998: 142). In addition to defining core concepts they also provide subjects for testing the cogency and logic of Smith's policies. In effect, they stand between the traditions of governmental interest in cultural matters and the socio-economic objectives of the New Labour government. To place DCMS "centre stage" (C. Smith, 2009), these policies would need to be effective in furthering government aims whilst still honouring the department's responsibilities to the cultural objectives of its funded NDPBs.

For analytical clarity, these themes are discussed below separately but in practise they were never finely demarcated.

#### **Access**

At its simplest, "access" questions the extent to which there are material or cultural (in a socio-anthropological sense) barriers between an individual and the object or service they wish to acquire. Such barriers, if impermeable, are said to prevent



distributive equality ("equality of outcome") and damage social cohesion. For these reasons alone access was an immediate, driving concern of the Social Exclusion Unit and its eighteen Policy Action Teams. Significantly, Smith chose the term "access" rather than "social exclusion" to identify the policy theme. Once access to material and cultural resources becomes possible, so the proposition goes, it is then up to each individual whether or not they acquired them. The significance of this nomenclature is often missed (see, for example, Finlayson, 2003: 162-3) but Smith was one to choose his words carefully. Although true equality, whether of resources or opportunity, is generally accepted as an impossible utopian ideal (Arneson, 1989; Dworkin, 1981a, b) and, within New Labour, even undesirable, Smith could argue access to be part of "a profoundly democratic agenda, seeing cultural access as one of the egalitarian building blocks of society". Indeed, the whole of *Creative Britain*, Smith claimed, "is about bringing democracy culture" (C. Smith, 1998: 2, 3). In a persisting metaphor, this required the removal of "barriers" to national resources and participation in cultural life. "Exclusion", the preferred term of the Cabinet Office (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998), results, it argued, in deprivation which might be ameliorated by access to all the advantages and opportunities that a healthy society can provide.

DCMS then added a further subtlety by referring not to exclusion or access but to "inclusion": "A Policy Action Team has been established (following the Social Exclusion Unit's report on Neighbourhood Renewal) to explore with others the role of our sectors in promoting social *inclusion*" (DCMS, 1998c: 3, emphasis added). In this more positive form it suggested policy success and not simply a description of the problem. Nevertheless, despite the considerable effort made by New Labour to "develop integrated and sustainable approaches to the problems of the worst housing estates, including crime, drugs, unemployment, community breakdown, and bad schools..." (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998), the term "inclusion" also implied unhindered opportunities for disadvantaged individuals to draw upon skills, material resources and social institutions without differentiations arising from issues of class, education, or values formed by particular codes of social practice.

It was in this sense that the task was problematic for DCMS. In what way could DCMS open-up access to the health, education, social welfare, housing, employment, child care, transport, and all the other concerns of the SEU? After all, in DCMS's understanding of culture as social customs, norms and relations, it effectively constituted daily practises and could not exist outside of those who created them. The studies that have been undertaken into this subject have generally looked at material factors, most especially poverty, and less at the immaterial forces of cultural practises. Jeanne Moore's 1998 paper, which aimed to investigate the question: "What are the main barriers which deter people living on low incomes from attending arts institutions and events" (J. Moore, 1998: 53), found consistent correlations in several studies from which she (and others) drew conclusions on the effects of poverty, education and class. However, such conclusions presupposed an actual or potential desire to attend in the first place. Quoting M.G. Hood's rather obvious comment that "merely analysing demographics will not reveal what these groups [non-attenders] value in their leisure activities" (M. G. Hood, 1983; J. Moore, 1998: 60), Moore's work touched upon but never investigated those sociological and psychological factors thought to influence participatory preferences. In effect, it highlighted those attitudes which demarcated the world of the educated from their alterity.

In common with most of the literature on this subject, Moore's paper sought explanations for exclusion through researched statistics. Important examples can be found in the studies which examined DCMS's early decision to remove entry charges to museums and galleries. Chris Smith stated at the time that "Access is a cornerstone of all this government's cultural policies, including museums and galleries. We want to see access to our cultural treasures made available to the many, not just the few" (C. Smith, 1997b). Along with the policies pressed on the arts sector through the PSAs and funding contracts, free entry was intended to remove the most frequently reported barrier to attendance - ticket prices. Other factors were also shown by market research to be significant: travel difficulties, lack

of time, and a range of smaller miscellaneous costs among them. But ticket prices generally topped the list. What was much harder to pin down, or quantify - let alone change, was "disinterest" (J. Moore, 1998: 63), (see also, Bailey and Falconer, 1998; Dodd and Sandell, 2001; Sandell, 1998, 2002; C. S. Smith, 2001).

In a more detailed discussion of the terminology of "access" policies, Kawashima discussed the articulated links between "inclusion", "access" and "audience development", pointing particularly to the considerable force and the "significant impact" of DCMS's New Audience Fund (administered by ACE) (Kawashima, 2006: 56). Over the five years of its existence, from 1998 to 2003, the NAF supported 1,157 projects spending some £20 million, taking concerts, drama productions and exhibitions into shopping centres, hospitals and other unorthodox venues in the hope of stimulating an interest among those nominated as "non-attenders" (Johnson, Pфомmer *et al.*, 2004). Techniques of "Extended Marketing, Taste Cultivation, Audience Education and Outreach" (Kawashima, 2006: 57) were applied in a language of social coercion redolent of the 19th century inner-city missionaries, when "Culture, including state schools, libraries and museums, was considered effective for civilising these relatively uneducated people, uplifting their morale and thereby achieving social cohesion and harmony" (2006: 61).

"Access" in these initiatives was certainly affected by financial barriers, but those who responded to those changes were fewer than policy makers had hoped. This is not to doubt that the energy and commitment given by British artistic institutions to take their work to housing estates, shopping centres, factories, hospitals, prisons - anywhere, in fact, where "new" audiences might be found or fostered, had some effect. Some, perhaps many, of those touched by these efforts may have been enticed into further contact with artistic forms that they might never otherwise have encountered. It was recognised, though little researched, that to make a more substantial difference it would be necessary to engender a desire to participate. But to participate in what exactly? Smith's apparently conflicting thoughts on this are difficult to reconcile, but there is an unexplained logic to them if the arts and

culture are addressed as different concepts. He certainly supported the idiosyncratic but once orthodox Shavian view of the power of the arts<sup>1</sup> in which "poetry triumphs over pragmatism" (C. Smith, 1998: 130). But then, without further explanation, this idea was linked to "creativity" and the "interrelationship between culture and society" and its power to assist in the processes of social regeneration (1998: 131). That assertion, for it was not yet an argument, contributed to Smith's justifications for the emphasis on "access": "let no one try to convince me that art cannot move minds and help to drive a determination for change" (1998: 132).

There was, though, (as there still is) the question of the legitimacy in judging the tastes and preferences of those targetted as lacking access. This issue has produced some sharp criticism. Andrew Brighton's attacks on the logic of arts policies is an example:

The propagating of serious art amongst people who are relatively uneducated is an act of cultural aggression. It is requiring people in one form of life to adopt the values and sensibility of another. It is to conceive of their culture and way of life as other, as an enemy to be vanquished. The community arts movement solves this obvious objection by encouraging arts activities which have no significance except for those who make it. They are activities without any elaborated culture of reception or production (Brighton, 2006: 5).

James Fenton's article on a paper by Chris Smith's successor, Tessa Jowell, provides another example. It was headed "Down with this access pottiness" (Fenton, 2004), and reported Jowell's comment that "Access to the substandard is access to disappoint ... it will not inspire or raise levels of aspiration and the end is not worthwhile" (Jowell, 2004: 16): before noting: "She never believed that oboe concertos can help reduce crime, or binge-drinking, or indeed obesity in children".

A research programme in 2007 and, therefore, not available to Chris Smith or

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<sup>1</sup> Smith referred to Shaw's *Everybody's Political What's What* (SHAW, G. B. 1944. *Everybody's Political What's What?* London, Constable & Co.) as "rambling" (*Creative Britain*, p129), but explicitly shared Shaw's exhortations for the power of the classical arts, just as he did Matthew Arnold's, albeit conditionally.

DCMS, indicated that "cultural consumption" (meaning the arts and intellectual works) was separated more according to Weberian stratifications of education and social status than they were by lingering notions of class (Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007). A commentary by Catherine Bunting on behalf of ACE, referring to an early 2005 draft of the report, summarised Chan's and Goldthorpe's research by saying they found "no evidence of a 'cultural elite' " although acknowledging different opportunities for, in their term, "consumption" of the arts for geographic or cost reasons (Bunting, 2005: 213). These challenges were substantially avoided by DCMS by differentiating between the arts and a socio-anthropological idea of culture, that is to say the absolute values of the former were demarcated from the relative nature of the latter. But in order not to make value judgements between preferences within society that relativism then led to pluralism. "Culture - or perhaps we should talk rather of cultures" (C. Smith, 1998: 36) was also now synonymous with local practices and, by extension, national identity:

Is it warm beer and the sound of leather on willow and 'old maids' bicycling through the morning country mists to communion? Is it what goes on in Albert Square or Coronation Street? Is it the Notting Hill Carnival? Is it the crowd at Wembley rising silently to 'Candle in the Wind', or roaring at the goals that followed? Is it Italian Opera at Covent Garden, Scandinavian plays at the National Theatre and Russian music at the Proms? Is it marching down the catwalk in Paris or designing a new gallery in Stuttgart <sup>1</sup> ? (1998: 36).

This form of characterisation is of a different nature to the cultural jingoism of past rationales for cultural policy (O. Bennett, 1995: op.cit), being concerned more with civic cohesion and a common self-identity than with international competitiveness. Some artistic forms are mentioned, but only to support the idea of creativity as a national trait.

Despite Smith's implied distinction between the arts and culture it is not one generally made within DCMS policy, although the dichotomy had been present at

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<sup>1</sup> A reference to British architect James Sterling's design for the Neue Staatsgalerie Stuttgart which opened in 1984 to replace to original 1843 building bombed in World War II.

least since Jennie Lee's White Paper of 1965 (which, said Smith, "needs now to be taken up once more" (C. Smith, 1998: 130). Lee had attempted to promote both the high arts and social culture, but a later publication by two Labour Party members of the Greater London Enterprise Board, Geoff Mulgan<sup>1</sup> and Ken Worpole, took a different view in their book *Saturday Night or Sunday Morning* (Mulgan and Worpole, 1986). In it they challenged the Party "to develop [cultural] policies that are at the same time industrial and aesthetic" (1986: 15) and, through the democratisation of arts policy, support the development of "new forms of creative works" that had until then been "ignored" (1986: 29). In the process, they denigrated the Arts Council as a "self-appointed and self-perpetuating metropolitan clique" unable to represent the creative works of artists in contemporary Britain. But, most of all, they claimed for culture an emancipatory mission, fighting against the ravages of commercialism that had "most successfully destroyed all artistic standards and cultural standards" (1986: 61). In one manifestation of this argument they argued for a model of news broadcasting in which "new structures and conventions can be overturned to concentrate on what people do that is important, rather than what important people do" (1986: 59). These matters, they claimed, should rightly be a central concern of the Labour Party, and proffered an agenda for action for the Party that was an amalgam of ideology, socio-anthropology, and a critique of the orthodox concept of the arts.

In contrast, Chris Smith's ideas are much more carefully considered, if simplistically expressed, propositions for the interconnections between the separate semantic identities of the arts, culture and economy. In various forms, claims that a new culture can "now embrace the economic and the social, as well as the cultural" (Stevenson, Rowe *et al.*, 2010: 248), are found throughout *Creative Britain*. Nevertheless, in policy terms, these ambitions were all closely tied to the potent issue of "access" for which participation in cultural life and an appreciation

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<sup>1</sup> One time CEO of the Young Foundation, Chief Advisor to Gordon Brown, Director of Policy for Tony Blair at Downing Street, co-founder of Demos and now Chief Executive of NESTA. He also holds several academic posts.

of the arts were paramount: "Enhancing the cultural life of the nation will be at the heart of the New Labour's approach. The arts are not optional extras for governments; they are at the very centre of our mission." (C. Smith, 1998: 42).

An objective and apposite assessment of access to culture came from Olivier Donnat when discussing the results of France's 1990 survey of cultural practices, *Les Pratiques Culturelles des Français*. Donnat's arguments could have applied equally to New Labour's Britain: "It has been well known for a long time that simply creating a theatre in a provincial town or proposing tickets at a reduced price in workers' councils will not in themselves spontaneously attract a new public" (Donnat, 2002, 1990). Instead, he argued for our acceptance of "the decline in the model of the cultivated man accompanied by the diminishing influence of the previous cultural authorities" (2002: 139). "Media", Donnat claimed, was now the collective word for new cultural phenomena; one that required a re-appraisal of political concepts of culture. In this light, policies for "access" to the arts appears patronising and anachronistic. In a society unabashed and not at all disadvantaged socially by its cultural preferences, it has all the access it needs - indeed it defines the rules of its own cultural club.

### "Access" and Cultural Rights

The dualistic appeal to both absolute and relative cultural values is one that draws-in conceptions of cultural rights (Cowan, Dembour *et al.*, 2001). These are formulated around national cultural practices that are seen to have historic, timeless values, but at the same time seek to promote the rights of communities to their own, local values that may not be shared by others. Alain Finkelkraut referred to this conundrum, when discussing UNESCO's policies against racism (itself an ideational concoction of the absolute and the relative), as "double talk" (Finkelkraut, 1988: 78). Article 27 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its

benefits" (United Nations, 1948). UNESCO encourages nations to take a more promotional and interventionist view, as can be seen in its conventions for cultural protection which also seek to give "access" substantive meaning (UNESCO, 2005, ratified by the UK on Dec 7th 2007). The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights also speak of artistic freedoms and rights but, as with the UN Charter, their concerns are for unreasonable legal and physical denial of access to cultural assets and practices, not preferences. This was exemplified in the recent case of *Akdaş v. Turkey* (case 41056/04, 16th February 2010) which found against Turkey for fining the publisher of a Turkish translation of Apollinaire (this and other cases can be found in Division de la Recherche, 2011). In Britain, the existence of museums, galleries, theatres and other arts institutions that are open to the public undeniably provides access to cultural experiences. The UN principle of "rights" does not seek to equalise the individual circumstances of those who might seek that access, nor does it proselytise the values of any aspect of the culture(s) represented. Selectively encouraging visitors and audiences with financial inducements or with purposefully constructed exhibitions and performances (such as were promoted by DCMS and the Arts Council) is not, for the UN, a basic, moral obligation it seeks to promote.

By this argument "barriers to access" was a poorly chosen metaphor; what DCMS was promoting were inducements to participation. Smith's concerns for access were driven by a belief in the instrumental power of artistic activities for social benefit, but he, and DCMS, then appeared to confuse human rights, structural impediments and aesthetic preferences. The assertion that "equality of access to social and cultural aspects of society" are a "fundamental human right" merely made Smith's pleas for "access" untenable and confused.

### Intellectuals and Masses

There is also, though, another influence on Smith (and New Labour generally) that contextualises the policies intended to reclaim the arts for every citizen. His political



ideology was, of course, left of centre; social democratic rather than socialist but with a moral concern for society's underclass. Smith, like Blair, tended not to speak of society aggregated into classes, resisting socialist practises that, in John Carey's words, "deny the singularity of the individual" (Carey, 1992: 175). "Marxist ideology", said Blair in *New Britain*, "... suppressed the individual by starting with society" (Blair, 1996: 59). Nevertheless, for Smith, as for Jennie Lee thirty-five years earlier, any concept of culture had to include all of society not just those of privilege and education; *viz*, not just intellectuals who understood and revered great artistic works in all their manifestations. Here again, then, are the two "cultures" exposed in conflict: the first in its socio-anthropological definition towards which Lee had leaned, and the second as the arts and intellectual works. The wedge between them had been firmly driven-in by modernism.

John Carey's exploration of *The Intellectuals and the Masses* explains how Modernists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries' deliberately obfuscated their artistic and intellectual works as a reaction to widening democratic participation. It was contemporaneously perceived, Carey argues, as coincident with the destruction of the rural nation under a new and hideous urban sprawl occupied by the half-educated, the commuter and the clerk. In other words, in Carey's view, a new class, the masses, were aspirationally nibbling at the edges of an old world of refinement of aesthetic knowledge and class privilege. "The early twentieth century" Carey wrote, "saw a determined effort, on the part of the European intelligentsia, to exclude the masses from culture" (Carey, 1992: 16-17). It could be seen in the critical theory of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer in which mass culture and its transmitting media had defiled aesthetic values, and in Herbert Marcuse's "'elitist' doctrine that genuine arts must be inaccessible to the masses" (1992: 43). Aldous Huxley referred to "an immense class of what I may call the New Stupid" (quoted in 1992: 16) which he then fictionalised into *Brave New World*, while Eric Gill attacked canned foods as symptomatic of aesthetic corruption and Yeats praised the benefits of eugenic sterilization as a defensive plan against the crassness of the general population. Similar views came from George Orwell, Carey shows, in his conflicted relations with

the manners and squalor of low-class life. Philosophers, writers and musicians of the period, among them Nietzsche, Ortega y Gasset, T.S. Eliot, George Bernard Shaw (see also G. B. Shaw, 1944), E. M. Forster and even F. R. Leavis (in *Mass Civilization and Minority Culture* (Leavis, 1930) all joined the argument. Tom Wolfe's "Cultureburg" is the fictional location of the Modernist intellectual, the *cénacle* of the artistic elite for which, quoting from Tristan Tzara's Dada manifesto (1918): "Any work of art that can be understood is the product of a journalist" (Wolfe, 1975: 33). Also from the American side of the Atlantic, John Cage is quoted as saying: "If my work is accepted, I must move on to the point where it isn't" (Revill, 1992: 13), while from Austria Arnold Schoenberg expressed a feeling commonplace among the composers of serious music throughout most of the twentieth century, writing that:

[after the war] My works were played everywhere and acclaimed in such a manner that I started to doubt the value of my music...If previously my music has been difficult to understand .. how could it happen that now, all of a sudden, everybody could follow my ideas and like them? Either the music or the audience was worthless (Schoenberg, 1975: 51; also quoted in McClary, 1989: 59).

Schoenberg shared Milton Babbitt's uncompromising argument that music in the mid-20th century was comparable to advanced mathematics or physics in its rarefied intellectual demands. Few could be expected to understand it or appreciate its achievements, making it inaccessible to the public at large:

I dare suggest that the composer would do himself and his music an immediate and eventual service by total, resolute, and voluntary withdrawal from this public world to one of private performance and electronic media, with its very real possibility of confusion of categories, and the composer would be free to pursue a private life of professional achievement, as opposed to a public service life of unprofessional compromise and exhibitionism (Babbitt, 1958).

This intellectualism was observed by New Labour to be interrelated with approaches to knowledge and opportunities for personal advancement, just as poor education, allied to poverty, poor housing and other social problems, is said to result in "exclusion" from resources and opportunities otherwise freely available (Social

Exclusion Unit, 1998). To be excluded from things is to be "prevented from being a full member of society" (The Community Development Foundation, quoted in Jermyn, 2001: 2) whose optimal standards are defined with complex methodologies for the production of indices, comparative statistics and impact assessments in an attempt to measure, in the case of DCMS, the affects of aesthetic and intellectual experiences (Belfiore and Bennett, 2007a). Thus, the question of accessibility to cultural works is not only a concern for cultural policy but, in the related conception of "social exclusion", is one central to governmental responsibilities and therefore of primary interest to DCMS. A problem here which DCMS never addressed (unlike Victorian absolutists like Matthew Arnold) is that exclusion might arise from a lack of understanding or appreciation of what is considered "excellent" and therefore, paradoxically exactly the thing to which access is required.

## 2. Excellence

"It is important to have the twin goals of excellence *and* access in full view. The two go together; they do not - as some have assumed - contradict each other", said Chris Smith in *Creative Britain* (C. Smith, 1998: 50, original emphasis). This was also the view of Tony Blair, as he confirmed in his one and only speech on the arts (one that had to wait until 2007): "The funding squeeze persisted through the early 1990s and cemented the spurious distinction between excellence on the one hand and broad access on the other" (Blair, 2007). The CMS Select Committee reported the contention of Robin Young, then Permanent Secretary at DCMS, that "The themes of access and excellence seem almost self-evidently applicable to the wide range of activities which the Department sponsors" (DCMS Select Committee, 1998b). These all echo the supportive words of the earlier Select Committee (noting that both were Chaired by Gerald Kaufman): "Expenditure on the arts, museums and galleries and the heritage [sic] to enhance excellence and access for all represents an investment in the quality of life, as well as providing direct economic benefits and helping to underpin tourism..." (NH Select Committee, 1996, 1994).

Despite linking "access" to "excellence", DCMS also wrote rather of "the pursuit of excellence and *innovation*" (DCMS Select Committee, 1998b , emphasis added). Smith argued this to be important for "ensuring that governmental support is used to underpin the best, and most innovative..." (C. Smith, 1998: 2). Statements that link all three ("excellence", "access" and "innovation") are much harder to find, but one such came in 1999 from the Labour Peer, Lord McIntosh of Haringey, when declaring, somewhat mystifyingly: "We should provide those who are providing the arts with an opportunity to excel and give them the opportunities for innovation which will in turn bring excellence" (HL Hansard, 1999b: col 250).

The playwright and theatre director, Peter Gill, expressed an unease with all this: "And how is excellence going to be defined? Coming from the mouth of New Labour it sounds dismal. There is something churchy about it, a pious diversion from the orthodoxies of philistinism and populism" (Gill, 1998). Gill had blended the rich fog of New Labour's political rhetoric with his own sense that the words themselves had no meaning in the context in which they were employed. If so, then it may have been the rhetorical timbre of "excellence" that appealed to New Labour rather than its considered meaning. Nevertheless, it is still possible to deduce more purpose than Gill suggested.

A useful etymological history of "excellence" was given by Kathryn Allan in a paper on its use in education, explaining its relationship to "excellent" and "excel" since its first appearances in the 14th century. Her most significant point, and one made by others (for example H. J. Pratt, 2012), is that its meaning , "to rise above others" (OED definition), "implies comparison" (Allan, 2007: 59). This, in turn, requires a depth of knowledge and experience on the part of the critic before a judgement can be made. "Excellence" is, then, a word that implies process, knowledge, skill and experience on the parts of both the creators and their critics. In support of this, Pratt quotes David Hume's adage: "improved by practice, perfected by comparison" (H. J. Pratt, 2012: 46; Hume, 1979 [1757]: 494). Without a comparative opposite, its alterity, the idea of universal excellence would be a logical fallacy.

Smith, DCMS and New Labour at large, gave no definitions for "excellence" nor how it could be achieved but, rather, exhorted the concept as a general ambition; that everything should be excellent and anything that fell below that standard would be unacceptable<sup>1</sup>. This questionable logic appears to have its origins in 1980's business theory and the desire for standards that could compete internationally, particularly against Japanese industrial manufacturers. Initiatives for improving quality were soon initialised and institutionalised into TQM (Total Quality Management) by the EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) and a general movement for CWQC (Company-wide Quality Control), (Dale, Wiele *et al.*, 2000). In this context, the ambition that every manufactured article be of a high standard is both practical, desirable and, importantly, measurable. The subsequent descriptive shift from "quality" to "excellence" does not impair the intention to achieve consistently high standards in comparison with others competing in the marketplace.

That is the idea which, in part at least, lay behind DCMS's creation of QUEST, referred to earlier. However, in the immaterial world of cultural policy (whether of social relations, anthropological practices or artworks) comparisons are not absolute, measurable or consistent between individuals and their works. In the absence of any measurable standards, comparisons have to be judged by public (and that means also "market") responses. Be it a piece of music, a design, a performance, or other creative work, if people like it then *ipso facto* it is judged to be good. Presumably, then, if the public like it in preference to all other comparable works, it becomes "excellent".

The problems of judging the quality of cultural objects and activities accounts for the lack of any proposals for how excellence in the cultural field might be achieved, with

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<sup>1</sup> Although outside the period of this study, in 2008 DCMS commissioned a report from Sir Brian McMaster that investigated the concept of excellence in the arts. McMaster provided the definition: "...excellence in culture occurs when an experience affects and changes an individual. An excellent cultural experience goes to the root of living" MCMASTER, S. B. 2008. Supporting Excellence in the Arts: from Measurement to Judgement. London: DCMS.p9. This is a weak attempt and offers no help to this study. A critical view of McMaster's report is provided by ECKERSLEY, S. 2008. Policy Review: 'Supporting excellence in the arts: from measurement to judgement'. *Cultural Trends*, 17 (3), 183-187.

the important exception of education (discussed below). This is noteworthy, firstly, because "excellence" was a theme of the Department and rhetorically of political importance, and secondly, because "excellence" does appear to stand in opposition to "access" in some important respects. Although this latter problem was dismissed by both Chris Smith and Tony Blair (in the quotations given above), its denial neither removes nor resolves the conflict. At its most obvious, the problem lies in the assumption that intellectual refinement and specialist knowledge are required to understand cultural and artistic creations. Jeremy Lane expressed this succinctly when discussing the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu:

The appreciation of a work of art was, he [Bourdieu] argued, an act of decipherment which demanded possession of the requisite cultural code. Members of the bourgeoisie were far more likely to possess such a code, not simply because of their longer exposure to formal education but also thanks to a more general familiarity with the things of taste and culture, an aesthetic disposition they had acquired in earliest childhood by inhabiting a cultured environment of which high art and culture formed an integral part (J. F. Lane, 2000: 52).

Bourdieu's description may not have been specifically in the mind of Chris Smith or Tony Blair but its reference to "cultural codes" would have been readily understood<sup>1</sup>. Bourdieu's sociological theories contributed to a critical realist understanding of society. Unlike those of Karl Marx, his explanations of social structures gave a role for the kinds of agential influences that New Labour sought to promote in its active welfare programmes and for the development of responsible citizenship (in their terms). Bourdieu's concept of "habitus", in particular, provides a conceptual and metaphorical vocabulary with which to explain an interrelationship between theories of "access", "excellence" and "education". By habitus, Bourdieu meant formative cultural environments: the "product of history which produces individual and collective practises...which tend to guarantee the 'correctness' of practices, and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms" (Harker and May, 1993: 174). Bourdieu's own description: "an acquired system of

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<sup>1</sup> Although not necessarily as Bourdieu intended. For a discussion of this subject, see HARKER, R. & MAY, S. A. 1993. Code and Habitus: Comparing the Accounts of Bernstein and Bourdieu. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 14 (2), 169-178.

generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted" (Bourdieu, 1977: 95), is typically more precise but less easy to grasp. However, the point here is that excellence as a subjective judgement is a result of, or at least strongly influenced by, an individual's habitus and their innate understanding of the codes that give them access to a shared basis for evaluations.

Bourdieu's theory therefore relates judgements of quality to communities that believe themselves to share values and ideas. As Benedict Anderson has argued, in a globalised world these communities may not be geographically limited but may be local or global, private or public (Anderson, 1991), all of which makes relative the ideas and beliefs of the judges of quality. Thus, for "excellence" to be effective as a political idea there has to be, at the very least, a presumption of shared knowledge and values; the harmonisation of cultural understanding (in the arts as much as social values). As these arise also, perhaps even primarily, within differing material circumstances, shared judgements of excellence, or any other value, require socio-economic as much as purely cultural policies to attempt to equalise differences:

The participation of all individuals in cultural life requires the elimination of inequalities based, inter alia, on social background and status, education, nationality, age, language, sex, religious beliefs, health or the fact of belonging to ethnic, minority or fringe groups (UNESCO, 1982: para 22).

The circle of interrelations that links material life to common values to codes of access and to a shared comprehension of "excellence", relies ultimately on forms of education; a process that, in this respect, may be the only tool humanity has for creating a critical universality of knowledge and understanding.

### 3. Education

While the roots of a social democratic, anthropological cultural policy can be found the White Paper of 1964 (the earlier social initiatives of CEMA having been cut short in favour of the professionalism and artistic absolutism of the Arts Council), cultural

policy as a concern for the arts had always been linked instrumentally to education and self-improvement. This is clearly evidenced by the institutional hosting of governmental expenditure on artistic matters within departments of education since the late 19th century; at first as a budgetary convenience but later, by 1900, also administratively (see Chapter 2). In both a professional and an aesthetic battle against anti-intellectuals (recalling the "philisters" of Jena), Matthew Arnold proselytised a view that cultural values, viz. the arts, were absolute; the unchanging foundations of a civilised society. Although his reputation as a Victorian man-of-letters was primarily earned as a poet and literary critic, it was Arnold's authorship of *Culture and Anarchy* that, together with his position of Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools, carried his work into the canon of political thought.

To a significant extent, it is the indisputable and invariable nature of great cultural works that, for Arnold and his generation, filtered the uneducated from civilised society. Even by 1979, Hugh Jenkins, the Minister for the Arts from 1974 to 1976, was writing about a "culture gap" defined as the social space between the culturally educated and those seduced by "the overwhelming torrent of technically competent but often mindless and antisocial pap, aimed at the most easily stirred instincts of consumers..." (Jenkins, 1979: 19). He had in mind Hollywood films and television broadcasting but this rant might also have included fashion, tabloid newspapers, consumer-oriented entertainments in general and all manner of modern conveniences. His views are redolent of Eric Gill's objections of canned food and to the intellectualism of the modernists. The culture gap that Jenkins observed had, he claimed, been left by the "collapse by the end of the 1860s" of a "common culture". What was common about it was not a shared appreciation of its values but its acceptance of the absolute nature of the arts; one that separated the merely transitory and popular from the permanent but, for the uneducated, abstruse, esoteric and inaccessible.

As has been noted, it was not until the last decade of the 20th century that policies for a social, anthropological culture really took hold, finally splitting from its long-



time institutional partner, education, and connecting with Jennie Lee's inceptive concerns (albeit interpreted *post hoc*). In those intervening years, "the principles of the evolutionary process" (Kidd, 1902: 239) were finally abandoned in favour of a localised and community construction of cultural values as practised in everyday life. Improvement in this context was "modernisation without *telos*" (Andersson, 2010: 18; refer also to Bauman, 2000; Bauman, 2007); meaning the assumption of advancement through constant change made possible by continuous, life-long, learning rather than by following a defined path to a utopian future. "One is not born a fully-fledged individual" Alain Finkielkraut wrote, "rather, it is something one learns to become by surmounting the chaos of mere appetite, narrow sectional interest and the tyranny of received ideas" (Finkielkraut, 1988: 123). These changes challenged the precepts of cultural policy inherited by DCMS and, in doing so, necessarily stimulated a new debate on the place of the arts and humanities within formal education. Chris Smith took this one stage further, arguing not only that education was the mechanism by which historic cultural values could be constructed and shared for each new generation but that cultural "texts" (to borrow a word from the lexicon of Cultural Studies) were themselves an essential component of the educational process. DCMS stated baldly that: "The activities we sponsor ... are important for the quality of education". Smith himself, synonymising culture and creativity, put it that "it [culture] is about helping the rest of the curriculum" (C. Smith, 1998: 133). It was even embedded in the Department's PSA: "Objective III" being to "develop the educational potential of the nation's cultural and sporting resources" (HM Treasury, 2000: ch.13).

These ideas appear to give culture an important role in education policy. But they are also an example of what Clive Gray argued to be policy "attachment" arising from the "considerable structural and political weakness" of the arts sector and its consequential need for a strategy to provide "a means by which greater opportunities may be created for policy development" (Gray, 2002: 88; Gray and Wingfield, 2011: 590; Gray, 2008: 217). Smith's explanation in a 2009 interview gave weight to this theory:

I knew that if I went along to talk to the Treasury and said I want you to put more money into the arts because I want you to invest in beauty and truth, I would get nowhere. If I go along to the Treasury and say I want you to invest more in the arts because there are hundreds of thousands of children whose education will benefit as a result of this and we will get millions more people coming to visit museums and we will help to reduce crime levels in run down areas and it will feed through into the creativity that drives quite a number of industries in the economy, then I might get a better hearing. This is nasty political horses for courses discussion (C. Smith, 2009).

Smith's argument depends, though, on a presumption of the instrumental power of the arts. In the same interview, Smith further asserted:

... there's been some scientific studies, the impact on participation of children in school, in music, and its impact on their learning in maths is pretty well documented now, with quite a lot of work having been done in the States. But some of the impacts on other educational aspects, are less certain, some of the economic things; it's difficult to present 100% proof. However if you walk into a school where they do music and drama and dance and art I defy you to tell me that that is not a better school with a better atmosphere, a better climate, more well-adjusted kids, a better learning environment for everything else, than a school that doesn't do those things, and you can go into school after school after school where that is the case.

Smith gave no references for that research, but what there is does not strongly support his assertion. Richard Deasy provided in 2002 an extensive compendium of the research (Deasy, 2002) and Anne Bamford another entitled a *Global Research Compendium on the impact of the arts in education* in 2006 (Bamford, 2006). However, as these surveys gave no conclusive analyses of the research reports they document, it is more useful to turn to Katharine Smithrim's and Rena Upitis's 2005 paper. This is an analysis of their own research programme on the effects of the arts in Canadian schools and includes reviews some of the most significant published literature on the subject since E. W. Eisner's article in 1974 (Smithrim and Upitis, 2005; Eisner, 1974). Eisner himself referred to no research earlier than his own. The conclusions to all this are rather weak. Across all the research, some improvements in mathematics were recorded, together with less quantifiable improvements referred to by Smithrim and Upitis as "engagement", along with improved levels of

"joy, attentiveness, and motivation" among the study subjects (1974: 124). A close reading shows even those conclusions to be unconvincing, as they themselves admitted.

Nearly all the above research was undertaken by those academically or pedagogically involved in the arts in one form or another, and noticeably favoured positive correlations between the academic performance of individuals at schools and the teaching or practise of the arts. Helpfully, Ellen Winnner and Lois Hetland summarised more neutral research in a special edition of the *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, pertinently also repeating that old academic adage that "correlation is not causality" (Winner and Hetland, 2000: 4). Published in 2000, this is work that would have been available to Chris Smith and DCMS. It indicated that: "there is as yet no evidence that arts-rich educational environments lead to improved academic achievement", although "In some (but not all) areas reviewed, we were in fact able to document potentially causal relationships between studying an art form and some area of non-arts achievement" (2000: 6). These two statements are crucially differentiated by the effect of an arts "environment" and studying an arts subject. Even so, they added, "more research would be required to determine whether transfer [of academic] skills, when it occurs, is due to transfer of cognitive skills, transfer of working habits, transfer of motivation and attitude, or to some other type of mechanism". They concluded that: "we should not expect more, in terms of transfer, from the arts than we expect from other disciplines" (2000: 7). The difficulty all the studies faced was separating-out their effects from any improvements simply from collaborative intellectual activity of any sort. As with most of the assertions made by Chris Smith and DCMS for the effects of their policies, supporting evidence was weak at best.

One explanation for DCMS's forays into education policy and "the nurturing of education opportunity" (DCMS Select Committee, 1998b) is for the economic potential of creativity rather than the Arnoldian argument for civilisation and citizenship. "We must develop the educational role that creativity can and must

have...", Chris Smith wrote (C. Smith, 1998: 26), and creativity, for Smith and New Labour, was an essential element in a competitive economy. It also provided DCMS with an argument for its centrality in national economic policy. Finlayson thought much the same: "Education is taken to be the key route out of poverty or social exclusion. [...] Primarily it is seen as the mechanism by which individuals can equip themselves and by which the national economy can feed itself with the appropriate skills of the new economy" (Finlayson, 2003: 164). This fundamental rationale is discussed in more depth later, but its relevance here is for what New Labour neologised as the "creative industries"; the fourth of Chris Smith's policy "themes" or "pillars".

#### 4. The Creative Industries

DCMS and Chris Smith used several expressions synonymously for this concept: "Labels such as creative industries, cultural industries, creative economy and cultural economy, or cultural and creative industries have all been used" (A. C. Pratt and Jeffcutt, 2009: 5; for critical views cf. Hesmondhalgh, 2002; Garnham, 2005; Flew, 2012; Cunningham, 2002; Hartley, 2005; Galloway and Dunlop, 2007), but what they share is a theory of culture, when embedded with industrial or mercantile activities, as an essentially economic concept. "Culture", Smith asserted to the Public Library Authorities, "also has a hard commercial edge. The creative industries are big business, and one of the Government's key objectives is to help improve economic performance in this area by taking a broad view of the cultural economy" (C. Smith, 1998: 57). This alone did not appear to be DCMS's rationale for placing the creative industries as a core theme of policy but, when conceptualised as the fabric of a new, modernised, society, and matched with the political importance given to this type of endogenous economic development, its rhetoric was easily co-naturalised within New Labour's Third Way ideology. It also brought DCMS into the centre of government policy.

A considerable critical literature has grown up around the concept of the creative industries since the term's adoption by Australian Government in 1994 (Commonwealth of Australia, 1994)<sup>1</sup>, but the task here is to try and relate that concept to the policy rationales of New Labour and DCMS. The list of business activities initially deemed by the Office of National Statistics to constitute the creative industries was given earlier as "film; music; architecture; publishing (including electronic publishing); computer games; radio and television; the content industries (for example, museum collections on CD); software; advertising; crafts; visual and performing arts; designer fashion and art/antiques trade" (DCMS, 1998b: evidence, 4). What is in and what is out of that grouping has changed over time between countries, governments, organisations and theorists, but they all attempt to aggregate innovation, and therefore creativity, within knowledge-based, post-Fordist, economic activities. It is the "creative" and "innovation" elements that have been loosely argued to be related to the arts, and thereby to cultural policy.

The concept of the creative industries appears close to that of Theodor Adorno's and Max Horkheimer's expression, "the culture industry" but there are fundamental differences. "From the outset", wrote Jay Bernstein, "Adorno's reflections on the culture industry were embedded in the wider context demanded by the collapse of the classical Marxist evolutionary scheme for historical development" (J. M. Bernstein, 1991: introduction) but it could equally be interpreted as another manifestation of modernist intellectualism. Indeed, in the early drafts for *Dialectic of Enlightenment* the term appears as "mass culture" before becoming "the culture industry" in the published text (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979; J. M. Bernstein, 1991: 98). In both possibilities it is some way from New Labour's idea of economic activity resulting from creativity and innovation. Adorno's concern was over the technological reproduction of cultural objects; the increasingly rapid growth of the means by which cultural products could be created and replicated in the service of profit, rather than for their aesthetic and non-material qualities:

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<sup>1</sup> The first nominally cultural policy by an Australian Federal Government

What parades as progress in the culture industry, as the incessantly new which it offers up, remains the disguise for an eternal sameness; everywhere the changes mask a skeleton which has changed just as little as the profit motive itself since the time it first gained its predominance over culture (J. M. Bernstein, 1991: 100).

As was observed above (in discussing Objectives and Performance of DCMS), Adorno's term was an intended oxymoron, expressing dismay at the loss of the artistic particular as it was "subsumed" by the manufactured general. It is then ironic that the term's passage via "cultural industries" ended in the 1990 as the "Creative Industries", embracing not just commercialised, commodified, cultural objects but also the businesses founded on those processes. They were then given the full weight of government support for their claimed economic powers.

Placing those two words together met precisely with the aspirations of the Third Way variant of social-democratic neo-liberalism, while proffering social reform as an outcome of the new economic principles and still appealed to the ideology of the artistically conscious left. The process was open to two interpretive directions, suiting both old and New Labour. By one view, the theories developed through Cultural Studies claimed that cultural democratisation would expose and undermine the real ideology of the ruling, capital-owning class, represented by its defining culture of elite, inaccessible, artistic forms. On the other hand, the creative industries and its subset, the cultural industries (Throsby, 2010: 89), were argued to create jobs, power economic development and, by liberating the aspiring individual from the pointless rigors of a traditional liberal education, equalise the opportunities of all who were intent on self-advancement. In effect, those old powers symbolically displayed in an anachronistic bourgeois culture could be "debunked" (Scruton, 2012).

Descriptions of culture are given above in Chapter 1, but, as is often the case in the period under discussion, its various meanings were exchanged freely according to the points being made, even where derived from foundationally different concepts. Never was this so obviously a difficulty as in discussions on creative industries

where, for the purposes of analysis at least, there is an acknowledged need to separate the arts, or culture as meaning the arts, from the industrial processes of commodification (Throsby, 2010: 88-89; O'Connor, 2007: 44-51). As Throsby argued: "If they are simply commodities bought and sold on markets like any other products that circulate in the economy, the application of economic policy to their production [etc]... would be no different from economic policy-making in respect of any other commodity" (Throsby, 2010: 15). The most developed and plausible of these attempts at economic location, if not definition, arguably belongs to the Work Foundation whose diagram, or "stylised typology", of the relationship has, at its core, "creative fields ... [that] possess a high degree of expressive value" which are then related in expanding concentric circles to "The rest of the economy" at the most distant (The Work Foundation, 2007: 4).

Satisfactory definitions of "creativity", as it interrelates culture to the economy, are more difficult to pin down. It was a problem identified by Peter Hall in his extensive survey of *Cities in Civilization*, where he noted the absence of literature on "the location of creativity" in the small number of studies on "the culturally creative" or even in studies on "the technologically innovative city, where we shall find the shelves bursting" (P. Hall, 1999: 10). A 1988 report by the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education made reference to one of the more thoughtful attempts by Calvin Taylor (C. W. Taylor, 1988: 99-121; NACCCE, 1999). Taylor's approach was essentially taxonomic though, resulting in more than 50 definitions that were, in effect, descriptions which offered no deeper understanding of the nature of creativity itself. For its connections to cultural policy, the most telling element of Taylor's work is that he made no attempt to differentiate artistic creativity from any other sort. That suited the nomenclature of the cultural industries, which (ironically) is not nominally associated with the arts. The reference to "cultural" is then both the creative source and the market for industrial products, but it does not otherwise recognise, or least differentiate, those creative sources as artistic.

The NACCCE itself made no claims for creativity to be a component of culture (or *vice versa*) but, rather, saw it as an influence on cultural formation. The report argued that the education system promoted creativity "in all areas of human activity...[for] when individuals find their creative strengths, it can have an enormous impact on self-esteem and on overall achievement" (1999: 6). Similarly, their concern for culture was primarily as a topic of education, seeking "to enable [young people] to understand and respect different cultural values and traditions and the processes of cultural change and development". Nevertheless, to further their educational aims its authors were seeking to exploit the Government's commitment "to promoting the creative abilities and cultural understanding of all young people through education" (1999: 7), and appeared to select language carefully to those ends.

The task of pursuing political ideologies can, though, distort the very object of concern. The commercial benefits of working with artists were long realised by industrial Victorians, but there was no intention then to subsume them both into a concept of cultural production but, rather, simply to use the talents of those engaged in one field (artists and designers) for the improvement of objects in another (industrial production). In contrast, the culture from which the creative industries were generated was constructed of social relations, but one that could also be reversed so as to reform those relations on of the economic structures defined by the creative industries. This was the weightless "new economy" which Charles Leadbeater described vividly:

Most of us make our money from thin air: we produce nothing that can be weighed, touched or easily measured. Our output is not stockpiled at harbours, stored in warehouses or shipped in railway cars. Most of us earn our livings producing service, judgement, information and analysis, whether in a telephone call centre, a lawyer's office, a government department or a scientific laboratory. We are all in the thin air business (Leadbeater, 1999: vii).

Leadbeater presented his arguments in a White Paper a year before his book was published. Written for the Department of Trade and Industry it was entitled *Our*



*Competitive Future: Building the Knowledge Economy* (Dept of Trade & Industry, 1998). In it he argued energetically that the rapid exchange and exploitation of knowledge across the world was already the basis of an economy no longer dependent or defined by mindless manufacturing processes or physical products. "Globalization is good ... If we turn our backs on the global economy, we turn our back on the most vital force in modern societies: the accelerating spread of knowledge and ideas ... We must not retreat into the illusory comfort of a closed, nostalgic, communitarian society" (Leadbeater, 1999: ix). The validity of this declaration is not the issue here, although it does rather obviously ignore the necessity of, and, for many, a preference for, routine manual work. It was the connection with creativity that carried Leadbeater's claims into the purview of DCMS and cultural policy.

At that time Leadbeater made no special claims for the knowledge economy as a *cultural* policy. Indeed, Tony Blair stated bluntly in his introduction to the White Paper that "All this is the DTI's role" (Dept of Trade & Industry, 1998: 5). However, Leadbeater's propositions suited Chris Smith's institutional and personal ambitions for cultural policy: "On the creative industries, I wanted to set up the creative industries task force, which would draw ministers from other departments together" (C. Smith, 2009). Some of Leadbeater's later work was, though, specifically aimed at cultural policy. Responding to a commission from the Arts Council, he proposed "Ten Challenges" to "Arts Organisations in the 21st Century" (Leadbeater, 2005). Although published after the period of concern of this thesis, it is written in a style somewhat similar to Chris Smith's *Creative Britain* and characteristic of other literature on its subject. The ideas are simple, but curiously difficult to read, being constituted mainly of unsupported assertions; a tirade of shallow, sometimes banal, statements and exhortations for which the author feels no evidence is required (Oakley, 2006, 2004; Evans, 2005; Evans and Shaw, 2004). Commending "radical steps to redefine creativity" (Leadbeater, 2005: 8), Leadbeater claims that we are (or rather were) all consumers in an "experience economy" which demands changes in how artists and their institutions should respond to the "knowledgeable and

committed groups of consumers... 'trading up' to experiences and goods that deliver added performance" (2005: 9). The marketplace competition for musicians, writers and artists is now, he claimed, Apple, Google and Playstation (2005: 10). To help arts organisations to meet these challenges, "The Arts Council must consciously promote disruptive innovation ...[to] shake up the established order", or else "Where will the arts equivalent of Zara come from?" (Leadbeater, 2005: 11); and so on.

In the process, Leadbeater promoted networks (and their social capital underwriting: trust), community activism, shared resources, and skills, whilst insisting on the need for innovators, entrepreneurs and market competitors in the arts (who, for Leadbeater appear to be managers, not artists) without commenting on the apparent conflict between sharing in the community and competition in a marketplace. The arts were not discussed, nor any consideration given to the actual motivations of those leading arts institutions at whom his sermon was directed.

The DCMS Task Force for the creative industries issued two reports "mapping" the locations and concentrations of the creative industries that were considered to have been instrumental in bringing credibility to the concept, in the process raising its importance to national economic policy (DCMS, 1998b, 2001b). Even by mid-2000s, though, Oakley and others were still complaining of "the almost uncritical acceptance of these arguments, many of which are untested and unproven" (Oakley, 2004; C. Taylor, 2006). Supported by explicit and long-standing declarations for the value and economic importance of the arts (for example: Myerscough, 1988), DCMS, its Task Force, and cultural policy makers nationally were by then, however, operating in the shadow of more politically attractive arguments for innovation and creativity as the essential ingredients in urban regeneration.

### Urban Regeneration

Embedding the creative industries into the challenges of urban regeneration resulted from the coincident trajectories of DCMS's social and economic policy and New

Labour's Third Way ideology. As mentioned, Tony Blair made just one speech on cultural policy throughout his premiership - at the Tate Modern gallery on March 6th 2007. In it he referred back to an earlier commitment to make "the arts and culture part of our 'core script'". They were, he said, to be "central, an essential part of the narrative about the character of a new, different, changed Britain". His argument was founded on the belief, he said, that "modern goods and services" come from "people - their ability to innovate, to think anew, to be creative" (Blair, 2007).

As was shown earlier, Chris Smith promoted the creative industries strongly through DCMS policy, in his speeches, and in writing (its elements dominate the text of *Creative Britain*). Perhaps because of strong support from the Treasury and No. 10, he also supported urban regeneration for its claimed socially ameliorating powers. Referring to a range of "cultural projects", from the Edinburgh Festival to the Gateshead-Newcastle regeneration, The Lowry in Salford, and the spread of "cultural quarters", Smith extolled their ability "to lift the eyes and thoughts and abilities of people in a local community" (C. Smith, 1998: 138). Tony Blair made almost exactly the same claims, but expressed in jobs and money:

"Cultural regeneration has created 11,000 jobs in Salford Quays, 6,500 attributable to the Lowry alone. This building we are in created 3,000 jobs in Southwark and an economic benefit of £100 million in its first year. The Baltic and Sage cultural centres have underpinned a £1 billion redevelopment programme for east Gateshead" (Blair, 2007).

"To anyone who doubts this" Smith concluded, "you only have to look at the remarkable rejuvenation of the South Bank alongside the Globe Theatre and Bankside to see what heritage and cultural-led regeneration is all about" (C. Smith, 1998: 139). It is glaringly obvious, though, that redeveloping the South Bank of the River Thames in Central London has few practical points of comparison with the derelict Salford Quays (ex Manchester Docks), Liverpool's inner city, or the Gateshead side of the River Tyne. Nevertheless, for Smith, Blair, Brown and New Labour, urban regeneration was an intervention in social and economic structures with the aim of stimulating, guiding, and growing "human capital" for the betterment of the nation. These grand cultural projects were thought to demonstrate

physically the innovation and entrepreneurialism on which the modern economy depends. Like Bentham's "projectors": "all such persons as, in the pursuit of wealth, strike out in any new channel, and more especially into any channel of invention" (Bentham, 1839 [1787]) 20-21), the entrepreneurs of these projects have, in Tony Blair's terms, the ability "to innovate, to think anew, to be creative" (Blair, 2007).

Those ideas were expounded most effectively by the American economic geographer Richard Florida, although not until 2002 with the publication of *The Rise of the Creative Class* (Florida, 2002) - five years after the advent of the New Labour government and more than twenty years after British theorists had first developed similar theories. Florida's book quickly gained international fame, but its arguments had precedents in the works of Franco Bianchini, Francois Matarasso, John Howkins, and Charles Landry, much of it published by the think-tank, Comedia, formed in 1978 by Landry to study and publish on the interconnectedness of culture, creativity and cities (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993; Bianchini and Landry, 1994; Landry and Bianchini, 1995; Matarasso, 1997; Landry, Greene *et al.*, 1996; Matarasso, 2003). Their collective propositions appeared to rest on two particular assertions. Firstly, that "artists and cultural organisations are urban agents par excellence" (Landry, Greene *et al.*, 1996: summary) - "urban agents" being those who catalyse the chemistry of desirable economic, social and cultural development in urban areas. By the nature of this metaphor, it proposes also that these reactions can be created artificially by bringing together the appropriate physical, environmental and human elements into areas targetted for regeneration. The second assertion is that the arts have socially ameliorative powers: that classical economic analyses "miss the real purposes of the arts, which is not to create wealth but to contribute to a stable, confidence and creative society" (Matarasso, 1997: summary).

This is a broader issue which begs questions on many arguments about the instrumental power of the arts. Criticisms have been levelled at both the creative industries and urban regeneration programmes: that they are actually socially divisive and segregating, favouring and furthering the interests of one section of

society above "the creative class"; that they are dismissive of trade unions, traditional practices, and mundane work; and that they regard traditions as uncreative anachronisms irrelevant to the modern economy (Peck, 2005). In a detailed analysis of "culture-led regeneration", Jonathan Vickery raised what is still perhaps the most incisive question: "To what degree the cultural component of urban regeneration was masking forms of economic development that were actually destructive to cultural development" (Vickery, 2007: 24).

These criticisms were mostly made some years after the idea of cultural industries and their part in the social and physical regeneration of towns and cities had been first voiced. At the time, though, the principles of the Landry-Florida-*et al* thesis attracted heavyweight political support from local government, regional development authorities, Government business departments (including the DTI) and, most importantly, Gordon Brown's Treasury. In fact, they had a history in economic and social analysis that began even before Comedia's work or the Blair-Brown leadership of the Labour Party to be found, for example, in Alfred Marshall's work on "agglomerations" (now called "clusters") (Marshall, 1890; Johansson and Quigley, 2004) and Alfred Weber's *Theory of the Location of Industries* (Weber and Friedrich, 1909).

While these neo-classical approaches to economic development posited arguments for industrial locations according to the availability of existing resources, workers, communications, and raw materials, they provide a stark differentiation with the urban development theories now founded on the uses of knowledge and "human capital". In this sense, human capital means the collected experience and knowledge of each person, enabled by their cultural influences and innate creative abilities. Joseph Schumpeter's analysis of business cycles (J. Schumpeter, 1939), itself a response to the business cycle "wave" theories of Nikolai Kondratieff (Kondratieff, 1935), illuminated the mechanisms of change in this new knowledge economy with the concept of "creative destruction" (J. Schumpeter, 1939; McCraw, 2007; P. Hall, 1999: 295). Over time, other theories strengthened compatible socio-economic

approaches: Perroux's Pole Theory, 1955; Aydalot's forms of innovation, 1988; Castells's work on development logic 1989; Granovetter's concept of the "strength of weak ties" (Granovetter, 1973); and Daniel Bell's theory of post-industrial society (Bell, 1973). All featured in that narrative and all can claim to have found correlations between the social structures of cities, the quality of both public and private realms, and developmental outcomes.

The most beneficial and essential structural element, through which agents could be empowered, was identified as networks. Through these were generated human capital, technological innovations, and as Jane Jacobs termed it "differential production": *viz.* new development arising out of innovative niche products rather than more established mass manufacturing (Jacobs, 1970: 278). Peter Hall was one who recorded the economic history of relationships between those who work and live in cities and the social and cultural milieu (all of which constituted nodes in the network metaphor) that they naturally construct around them (P. Hall, 1999). His work provided an historical context for Florida's and Handy's attempts to construct causal relations between economic success, innovation (*viz.* creativity) and both societal and artistic culture. Leadbeater's pleas for "disruptive innovation", for example, can be found in Schumpeter, as much of the originality of Florida's book is found in its ability to draw together arguments formed over more than a century and across differing theoretical economic foundations: classical, social, cultural (social and artistic), and psychological. In a British context, Jonathan Vickery's research published in 2007 showed just how broad, more researched and economically embedded, this whole idea had become under New Labour (Vickery, 2007), but in doing so it defined its own particular form of culture.

### **Research and Evidence**

It was said earlier (p169) that Smith's four themes or pillars of policy stand between "the traditions of governmental interest in cultural matters and the socio-economic objectives of the New Labour government". While they fit well into the rhetoric of

the New Labour government, on close examination any claims for their ability to carry cultural activity into the centre of its agenda appear unjustified. Indeed, this mismatch contributes substantially to the observed incoherence and inconsistencies of DCMS policy, suggesting their function may, in large part, be as a vehicle to carry the department into areas of greater institutional power rather than for the promotion of cultural values.

The problem of finding evidence for the effectiveness of any line of policy is an important question in this thesis generally. Whatever the private value of the arts (as the traditional substance of cultural policy), if their public value is proved to be in their power to cohere society and generate economic development then any inconsistencies and logical contradictions may also be shown as ill-conceived or at least irrelevant. But just as this chapter has shown the theoretical foundations of DCMS cultural policy to be incoherent, empirical evidence also offers little support. Empirical research faces two difficulties: the first in the nature of the subject to be researched and the second over concerns about research methodologies.

The artistic world remained vociferous on arts policy throughout the New Labour's government but, in doing so, showed how it misunderstood cultural policy. Nicholas Hytner's 2003 tirade on rhetorical economism in the arts, David Edgar's acerbic review in the *Guardian* of post-war funding for arts, Stephen Bayley's post-Dome critique of New Labour, and Jonathan Glancey's protests at cultural "dumbing-down" are typical for their views, albeit that they are expressed so differently (Hytner, 2003; Edgar, 2004; Bayley, 1998; Glancey, 1998: 21). Most are accusations of instrumentalism for economic and social policy purposes (Jermyn, 2001; Sanderson, 2002; Gray, 2007), or plaintive attacks at New Labour's or Chris Smith's apparent disinterest in the quality they claimed to promote. Glancey noted pointedly that the index in Smith's *Creative Britain* listed only "Gallagher, Noel" under "G". "What did you expect?", he asked, "Glazunov? Giotto?".

These criticisms, typical of the period, were targetted at New Labour on the presumption that cultural policy was arts policy. A longer historical view of the relationship between the arts and the state was published in 2006 by Eleonora Belfiore (Belfiore, 2006a, b) and Belfiore and Bennett the following year (Belfiore and Bennett, 2007b, 2008) that questioned the most basic assumptions of how the arts affect society. Reaching back to debates in ancient Greece they found arguments for the potential for the arts to corrupt as much as benefit well-being; to provide a means of catharsis; for moral improvement; for their educative potential; and for their civilising effects. Nevertheless, this approach also viewed cultural policy as arts policy even while recognising its definitive relationship with society generally; a relationship that makes any transformative power of the arts all but impossible to establish.

What was (and still is) required was a research methodology capable of producing the information from which strong conclusions can be built. The parsimonious principle of controlled research design that lies within the logic of science is inappropriate for this task. Although it may provide the research methods most valued by those seeking to construct "evidence based policy", at the same time and by the nature of those methods, it actually denies the possibility of robust conclusions. Quite obviously, to understand social phenomena requires all the characteristics of that society to be present, producing such complexity that conclusions are at best indicative and rarely certain. In the words of Belfiore and Bennett:

"...the idea of transformation is so complex that it is impossible to imagine how it might be reduced to a set of measurable attributes. Moreover, even if it were, the number of potential factors effecting the transformation would be so great that it would be impossible to establish with any certainty that experiences of the arts had been the root cause" (2008: 6).

Although Belfiore's and Bennett's concerns were for the arts, the same criticisms can be made of research into the cultural industries. The effective characteristics of creativity and innovation are the basis of claims for the power of the arts to affect



social improvements, economic activity and the quality of life in urban areas, and are entangled with the same "contorted and torturous definitional historical discourse" from an international as well as a national perspective (Roodhouse, 2006). As noted earlier in this chapter, research problems into the cultural industries begin with attempts to define them (A. C. Pratt and Jeffcutt, 2009; Hesmondhalgh, 2002; Garnham, 2005; Flew, 2012; Cunningham, 2002; Hartley, 2005; Galloway and Dunlop, 2007) but ultimately fail when confronted with the complexity of influences and conditions within which human interactions take place. As the breadth and claims for cultural policy increased in the final decades of the last century, the lack of strong evidence was gradually to become an increasing concern, both in cultural theory and in the methods by which that theory might be tested (Selwood, 2002, 2009; Belfiore, 2006a; Belfiore and Bennett, 2007b, 2008).

A further problem of research methodologies concerns so-called "advocacy research". In its design and the interpretation of qualitative and quantitative data, this type of research appeared to have become more frequent in cultural policy research after New Labour took office (Merli, 2002; for contemporaneous literature reviews, see Reeves, 2002; and Guetzkow, 2002). The prior assumptions of advocacy are claimed to bias the conclusions of a good deal of the research on the instrumental value of cultural policy. Belfiore and Bennett said that it "blurred the boundary between advocacy and research", and "Instead of questioning whether or not the arts actually do have the economic and social impact claimed for them, researchers have directed their efforts to coming up with evidence that they do" (Belfiore and Bennett, 2008: 6-7). Charles Peirce's observation that empirical science research actually operates through "retroduction" and less through an objective process of induction (and almost never through deduction<sup>1</sup>) in effect logically formalised that bias by employing pre-conceptions within the syllogism (Peirce, 2003). The origins of this problem lie in part with research commissioned from

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<sup>1</sup> The deduced conclusions to arguments being limited to what is already contained in their premises, empirical science must be primarily concerned with new information from which new premises can be formed inductively. By contrast, retroduction tests the validity of pre-conceived hypotheses, denying that conclusions are actually reached through inductive logic.

organisations interested in particular outcomes: arts organisations, regional development authorities, and government departments principally among them (M. Miles, 2005; C. Taylor, 2006, gives examples).

The problems of research reinforce the apparent conceptual incoherence of cultural policy but add the further possibility that accurate data (which requires accurate definitions and sound research) was not the critical factor in political discourse that it was claimed to be. Viewing the complexity of DCMS's institutional and ideational legacy, its axiomatic precepts, and its apparent disregard of the many criticisms levelled against its cultural policies, poses a serious challenge to anyone searching for foundational rationales. Yet in striving for objectives, politics, like most human affairs, follows the fault lines between the possible and the aspirational. But there is a logic to it and strong guidance in Chris Smith's declared ambitions. The task now is to synthesise that logic into a clear and compelling picture. At the root of all these difficulties is the confusion of meaning of culture represented in the traditions of British arts policy and New Labour's cultural policy. But once the arts are seen as marginal to Smith's and DCMS's proclaimed objectives many of the inconsistencies fall away. For this proposition to have credibility, the operational model by which the DCMS could argue its place in social and economic policy, yet still maintain adherence to its culture remit, has to be established.

## Chapter 5

### Economics and Governance

It has been shown that the aims of DCMS were social and economic, with little interest in the notion of culture the Arts Council was formed to promote. It was a change that was little understood then, as it is now. Even the ACGB's move towards business practises was intended not intended to debase the principle of *l'art pour l'art* but to satisfy the Treasury's demands for more self-sufficiency, plural funding sources, and the application of New Public Management techniques. Jennie Lee's socialism had inclined her to apply the arts to wider social issues, but still the arts prevailed as the core meaning. In the latter decades of the 20th century, "amenities" and "leisure" activities were added to the institutional concerns of the government departments responsible for the subsidised arts, but these were minor political issues which did little but slowly dissolve the distinctions between culture as the arts and culture as society.

By contrast, the strength and clarity of Chris Smith's objectives should have brought immediate critical attention. Only under New Labour was culture to be the vehicle for political power achieved by management of the social relations as the active framework of the economy; culture as a structure within which economic relations could be enacted. In the process, any immanent values thought to be encapsulated in artistic works seemed to have been lost to the political class together with words for its recovery (witness Tessa Jowell's essay *Government and the value of culture* (Jowell, 2004) and its critique by Belfiore (Belfiore, 2009: 350)). As an extended socio-anthropological meaning of culture became part of the political theory of economic policy, DCMS had a part to play (so it would argue) in all government policy. After all, "political theories are also always social theories of some kind"

(Finlayson, 2003: 104). Those artists and their managers, complaining of inadequate subsidies and their fear that work had stopped on the national arts edifice, had missed the point. DCMS had abandoned the site to its own devices in pursuit of a bigger plan. Culture was now society, and society was the economy. The new plan required a consequentialist outlook of business backed with the determination of the ideologue to coerce every citizen to play their part. The normative principle of non-intervention into people's lives that had once left the arts and entertainment as matters of individual and private concerns, was barely discernible. Even Henry Cole's promotion of the arts as a useful adjunct to manufacturing was a strand worn very thin by the time of New Labour. It is to the underlying economic model behind these changes that this thesis now turns; one in which DCMS could argue a central role and one that united the Treasury's economic model with New Labour's Third Way social democracy.

## Outline of an Economic Model

In a speech at an economics seminar in London on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1994, Gordon Brown, then Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, explained his developing economic policies. One sentence in particular was extensively reported:

Our new economic approach is rooted in ideas which stress the importance of macro-economics, post neo-classical endogenous growth theory and the symbiotic relationships between growth and investment, and people and infrastructure.

Given the nature of his audience, it provided an opportunity to air this complex theory to specialists whom he could expect to have both a practical and theoretical interest in what might otherwise seem arcane technical issues. But whatever its theoretical merits, Michael White, writing in the Guardian, facetiously referred to Brown's speech as not being "his punchy, Periclean best" (M. White, 1994). A few days later, and with rather less subtlety, Norman Macrae in the Sunday Times suggested: "There have to be giggles about what academic cuckoo got Gordon Brown to mouth last week that Labour's new economic policy would be rooted in 'the growth of post neo-classical endogenous growth theory' " (Macrae, 1994). These comments, aimed at important economic theoretical principals, might be seen as somewhat disingenuous snipes with more than a hint of anti-intellectualism. White's comment even managed the ironic twist of depreciating intellectualism with an intellectual reference. But they weren't alone in their disdain. The speech was said to have been written by a then unknown Labour Party researcher, Ed Balls. Two weeks later, Michael Heseltine, then President of the Board of Trade, greatly amused the Conservative Party annual conference with mocking ridicule: "So there you have it. The final proof. Labour's brand new shining modernist economic dream. But it wasn't Brown's. It was Ball's!" (Heseltine, 1994, October 14th.)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> TV footage of Heseltine's speech became an early example of viral distribution. It is still circulating – see (as of Feb 12<sup>th</sup> 2010): [http://news.bbc.co.uk/player/nol/newsid\\_7020000/newsid\\_7023900/7023973.stm?bw=bb&mp=wm&sb=1&news=1&bbcws=1](http://news.bbc.co.uk/player/nol/newsid_7020000/newsid_7023900/7023973.stm?bw=bb&mp=wm&sb=1&news=1&bbcws=1).

Heseltine's speech was broadcast around the world and, at a stroke, silenced Brown on the issue.

Although the principles of endogenous growth theory ("EGT") were hardly new, having been discussed in economic literature for some years, Gordon Brown never again openly referred to the theory by name. Nevertheless they became central to New Labour's economic theories, eventually to be pursued in government three years later. Brown had in fact captured in that one sentence a central idea in EGT. He noted that its inclusion of ideas, knowledge and resulting innovations in economic models (which arise from both public and private investments) gave a central role for a Labour government in the prevailing British capitalist, neoclassical economy. Just as classical economics was concerned with the accumulation and uses of surpluses, neoclassical economics found an interest in individuals and their choices. In its attempts to solve a well-acknowledged problem, EGT was in effect a collective criticism of neo-classical economic models, seeking to incorporate further the part played by individuals within society, assessing their influences and measuring their potential: "The basic error of modern macroeconomics is the belief that the economy is simply the sum of microeconomic decisions of rational agents. But the economy is more than that" (De Grauwe, 2009). EGT was said to make good a fundamental deficiency: "the thrust of this new endeavor [sic] has been to escape the straightjacket of conventional neoclassical theory by treating as endogenous to the growth process those factors that neoclassical growth model relegates as exogenous, in particular technological change and human capital" (R. Martin and Sunley, 1998: 202).

### **Macro-micro**

Before discussing further the principles and criticisms of EGT and its relevance to cultural policy, it is important to say what it is not. Since the 1980s, debates in the arts-world over economic instrumentalism have generally confused trade and

commerce in the micro-economy with structural, macro-economic policy. EGT is a development of supply-side macroeconomic growth theory in which the outcomes of trade (for example, in the creative industries) are embedded and endogenously effective. But the extent of profit or loss (or subsidy) from those industries does not challenge the theoretical principles of EGT, they merely change the numbers, not the structural model nor its formulae.

In the 1980s, the Thatcher government's rejection of Keynesian economics and the promotion of individual ambition within the mercantile economy ran concurrently with the demands of the New Public Management (Beck, 1989; Belfiore, 2004; J.-E. Lane, 2000). Together they characterised a period when the arts, which was then still the primary object of cultural policy, were marked by a "discourse of beleaguerment" (O. Bennett, 1995: 200) in the belief that subsidies were under attack by a government disinterested in the intrinsic and materially-transcendent values expressed in *l'art pour l'art*. To be worthy of financial support it was thought by many working in the arts that artistic activity had to provide evidence that it was a net contributor to the national economy. This was indicated by, among other things, re-terming "subsidy" as "investment". Other than by a considerable volume of direct protests, the principal defence of artists and arts administrators alike was to claim their work did indeed have considerable economic impact and, thereby, it was worthy of "investment" alongside any other economically productive activity.

Whether this interpretation was mistaken or an insightful truth is not the point here, although it is worth observing several factors that indicate the former. Firstly, the subsidised arts were then, as now, only a small portion of what came to be called "the arts market", much of which was thriving (Caust, 2003; Department of National Heritage, 1994: para 1.10); secondly, the data used in these arguments did not separate the commercial, unsubsidised work from the subsidised; and, thirdly, that the reliability of the data was in any case strongly contested (as discussed in the last chapter). Myerscough's claims (Myerscough, 1988) and the infamous Arts Council's Annual Report of 1985 (Arts Council of Great Britain, 1985) were early, if also

extreme, examples of arguments which sought to inveigle the arts into the utilitarian business world (as it was perceived), thereby placing their products squarely in the micro economy. This seemed to meet the demands of the market economy promoted by the Thatcher government, although, as can be seen by looking at changes to the Arts Council's Grant-in-Aid, then the largest element of the Arts & Heritage budget within the Office of Arts and Libraries, their arguments probably had little impact either under the Conservative Government or under New Labour.

It is reasonable to speculate that the Conservative government of the time simply did not accept these arguments and may even have been more receptive to pleas for support for the arts under the idealist argument of *l'art pour l'art*. For New Labour, though, their truth and falsity was a side issue. Their concern was for the social and economic structures in which any "economic impact" resulting from arts or cultural activity might arise; viz. their place in the macro economy. Any particular business outcomes would be of interest only as contributions to aggregated evidence for the micro-economic effectiveness of macro-economic policies. This argument does not deny the business potential of "cultural" activity, but does suggest the lobbying and the "buy-in" by arts organisations to that idea was misdirected.

That idea was, though, gradually absorbed, such that in the depths of the current economic recession, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Commission published a paper on behalf of seventeen national arts bodies entitled *Cultural Capital: A Manifesto for the Future*. In fear of reducing subsidies, it proffered a policy solution through: "economic renewal and social recovery led by the arts and culture with an entrepreneurial and creative spirit at its heart" (MLA, 2010: 1). Richard Morrison, writing in the Times, referred to it as a script for *Carry on Subsidising* (Morrison, 2010), but his criticisms were in effect aimed at New Labour's economic policies and its central argument - that "Creativity is the key to economic recovery" (2010: 7). The paper was published in March, two months before Labour lost power in the General Election to a coalition whose constituent parties had shown far less interest in New Labour's economic models. The result of all the lobbying based around the



arguments in *Cultural Capital* was ultimately annual reductions in grant-in-aid to the Arts Council in 2011/12, with further reductions budgetted for the following three years (CMS Select Committee, 2011: Sect 2, para 25).

Published research into the "economy" of the arts since the mid-1960s have been similarly concerned primarily with microeconomic or even simply business questions. Baumol and Bowen's much quoted (but contestable) application of the "cost disease" to the arts (Baumol and Bowen, 1966; Towse, 1997) is an early example. Even Mark Blaug's thirty-year retrospective survey of the "economics of the arts" confirmed that "most of the literature remains wedded to the older, narrower conception in which cultural economics means the economics of the performing visual and literary arts" (Blaug, 2001: 123). More recent publications, able to take-in the post-1997 changes to cultural rather than simply arts policy were linked to that micro-economic lineage established by Baumol and Bowen, examples being those by Ruth Towse (Towse, 2006), Ginesburgh and Throsby (Ginsburgh and Throsby, 2006), and David Throsby's 2010 book *The Economics of Cultural Policy* (Throsby, 2010),

The contention (made in this thesis) that New Labour integrated social and moral developments into economic performance was little understood at the time (at least within the arts world) and resulted in arguments for subsidy being at least partially misdirected. These had, though, absorbed and re-applied New Labour's persistent rhetoric even to the point of reversing social policy into cultural policy: under new Labour, "Social policies become cultural policies, aimed at the behavior and dispositions of individuals" (Andersson, 2010: 98). Compared with the economic potential of increased access to resources, the development of human capital through education, and the promotion of creativity and innovation (*viz*: three of DCMS's policy themes), *l'art pour l'art* had little or no significance in Smith's or DCMS's ambitions.

## **Endogenous Growth Theories**

Shortly after New Labour took office, Aghion and Howitt published what remains one of the most complete assessments of EGT (Aghion and Howitt, 1999). In the opening pages they make the central point that: "it has not been possible to capture this vision [of technological change] of economic life using mainstream economic theory..." (1999: 3). It is a claim repeated in one form or another by many economic theorists. What traditional economic models cannot allow for, say Aghion and Howitt, are, typically, the effects of research, innovation, training, knowledge transfers, and technological progress; those particularly human activities for which the outcomes and benefits are not easily assessed in quantifiable financial data. "The purpose of endogenous growth theory is to fill this gap in neoclassical theory – to open up technological progress and innovation to systematic analysis and to study their effects on growth..." (1999: 7).

Although EGT is named a "theory", it is not in fact a singular, cohesive proposition but a description of adjustments and additions to traditional economic models built on the formulae and methodological vocabulary of neoclassical economics. Elements of this approach can be traced back to Joseph Schumpeter, most particularly outcomes arising from his much quoted concept of "creative destruction" that favours innovative entrepreneurialism, but its effects had always been very difficult to model predicatively. Robert Solow's 1957 analysis of the US economy between 1909 and 1949 noted the need to add "something else" or more technically, a "residual" to the standard models to account for its rapid development. He settled on "technological change in the widest sense" because, in Omar Al-Ubaydli's terms: "it also represented advances in everything in the economy that was not labour or capital. These included advances in basic science, industrial management, education, training, nourishment, morale, the weather, pollution, and so on" (R. Solow, 1957: 29; Al-Ubaydli and Kealey, 2000: 10).

Writing in 1994, Solow located the revival of EGT in "three waves" over the latter half of the 20th century (R. M. Solow, 1994: 45): the first with publications by Roy Harrod and E. Domar of their investigations into the relations between investment (and therefore capital) and output, and their argument for why these were inadequately dealt with in the neo-classical models. The second wave he defines as "the development of the neoclassical model", in which attempts were made to include endogenous as well as exogenous variables. Solow's third wave is then characterised by questioning the long-established idea of "diminishing returns to 'capital', (now interpreted as the whole collection of accumulatable factors of production, one of which might be labelled human capital or even the stock of knowledge)" (1994: 49). In passing, Solow later commented that: "I think the real value of endogenous growth theory will emerge from its attempt to model the endogenous component of technological progress as an integral part of the theory of economic growth". Solow also referred to Paul Romer (as had others) as the "pioneer" in this respect (1994: 51). Indeed, it is Romer's "long-run growth" model that is most often given the economists' own innovation accolade. In all these works, the term "technical" refers to a broad concept of innovations, and is not field specific (for a literature review on innovation in the public sector, see (Røste, 2004)).

Romer's work is worth describing in a little more detail as it was of direct interest to New Labour. He characterised his economic model as "essentially a competitive equilibrium model with endogenous technical change" in which "knowledge is assumed to be an input in production" (P. Romer, 1986). His work was reinforced by Robert Lucas's critique of neoclassical growth models, which proposed instead an alternative "or, at least complimentary" model by adding to it the effects of "human capital" (Lucas, 1988: 14). Romer continued to develop the principles of EGT, publishing papers in 1990 and 1994 as his ideas developed (P. Romer, 1990; P. M. Romer, 1994). The last of these was published in the *Journal of Economic Perspectives* alongside papers on EGT from four other eminent authors; Gene Grossman and Elhanan Helpman, Robert Solow, and Howard Pack, each reflecting on the resurgence of endogenous growth in development theory (Grossman and Helpman,

1994; R. M. Solow, 1994; Pack, 1994). Together they provided a detailed history, explication, and critique of EGT that would have been available to Ed Balls and Gordon Brown at the time of that ill-fated speech.

In his 1994 paper, Romer begins with a brief explanation of EGT which, while not universally accepted, provides the basis for understanding his contribution to its development. Work on EGT, he says: "distinguishes itself from neoclassical growth theory by emphasizing that economic growth is an endogenous outcome of an economic system, not the result of forces that impinge from outside". Noting that neoclassical theory inadequately accounts for differing growth rates in different countries, he then adds that EGT "tried instead to uncover the private and public sector choices that cause the rate of growth of the residual to vary across countries". In the rest of the paper Romer discussed these two questions under the headings of "The Convergence Controversy" and "The Passing of Perfect Competition", before relating them both to "Neo-Schumpertarian Growth" (P. M. Romer, 1994: 4, 11, 17). The challenge under the first of these headings can be summed-up with two further questions: "why is it that poor countries as a group are not catching up with the rich countries...", and why do workers in the creative industries tend to move towards areas that are crowded and more competitive, regardless of wage rates and other rewards. Any differences between wages and market conditions should have been "arbitraged away" (1994: 9) in convergence, he claimed, but the opposite tends to occur (1994: 9; see also Lucas, 1988). His answer was not absolute, but pointed instead to the need for inputs and algorithmic adjustments that take account of the complex reasoning, often not obviously utilitarian, with which humankind make their decisions.

Romer addressed the question of perfect competition with the somewhat startling "observation" that "we had enough evidence to reject all the available growth models throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s" (1994: 11). In search of an explanation why endogenous models had been comparatively neglected he stated that progress in economics has resulted "not merely from the mechanical application of hypothesis

test to data set" but "there is a creative act associated with the construction of new models that is also crucial to the process" (1994: 11). Romer appeared to be describing a process of retrodution, referred to earlier in Chapter 4, as a more accurate description of the logical processes in empirical research. This is an interesting point as it makes retrodution itself one of the creative, endogenous processes that factor in EGT.

Romer gave "five basic facts" about economic growth that, while long acknowledged, had, he claimed, been difficult to incorporate into neo-classical models:

- i. *"There are many firms in the market"*.

Traditional models tend to treat the effect of firms in aggregate or singular, whereas their rationales, skills, management practices, resources and learned knowledge are multifarious and highly varied. A crucial differentiation needs to be made between those that innovate and those that don't.

- ii. *"Discoveries differ from other inputs in the sense that many people can use them at the same time"*.

Orthodox neoclassical models treat discoveries and the knowledge that accompanies them as non-rival goods, which is only partially the case. The availability of discoveries and knowledge then depends upon "spillovers"; that is to say, how the acquisition and use of knowledge spreads beyond its sources at little additional cost.

- iii. *"It is possible to replicate physical activities"*.

This is a technical issue concerning the utilisation of assets and capital, but can also relate to the question of whether innovations are rival or non-rival goods and how their creation can be rewarded.

- iv. *"Technological advance comes from things that people do"*.

This "fact" places the aggregate rate of discovery as endogenous, not as an outcome of random events under external influences.

- v. *"Many individuals and firms have market power and earn monopoly rents on discoveries".*

As the counterpart to point ii, it picks up the point that many innovations are rival goods, protected by patents, copyrights and secrecy in order to ensure rents provide sufficient incentive for further innovation. It is a point made earlier by Kenneth Arrow, linking the sources of knowledge to technical innovations (Arrow, 1962).

These "facts" have important implications for New Labour's economic policy, linking general education, learning-by-doing, and knowledge to the creative processes of research and innovation. These interlink the private and public sectors with policies intended to stimulate the economy through research, education and the promotion of creativity. And it provided New Labour with a crucial role in economic development without the need for the operational interventions of the sort that had characterised earlier Labour governments. The summary argument was straightforward:

economic growth depends on new technology, that new technology depends upon research, and that because research and knowledge are 'public goods' they are underprovided by the market. Therefore, in the interests of society, the government has to pay for research" (Al-Ubaydli and Kealey, 2000: 10).

Nick Crafts concurred: "government can affect the long-run rate of growth - thereby influencing the scale of resources allocated to the innovation sector" (Crafts, 1996: 33). It was a comfortable logic for Third Way ideologists, combining social as well as economic measures, and appeared to highlight exactly the issues that were the targets of DCMS policies.

In addressing the development of EGT theories, Romer had added much sophisticated analysis, but from a simpler political viewpoint these arguments had long been available even in the absence of the algorithmic adjustments to the neoclassical models. Indeed, much of the debate over EGT had been about

difficulties of economic modelling, not about the concept itself. Howard Pack's critical paper on EGT's "Intellectual appeal and empirical shortcomings" noted: "It can be rather difficult, using aggregate economic data, to distinguish between the traditional neoclassical model of growth theory, and the more recent endogenous growth theory" (Pack, 1994: 55). While it is fully recognised that there is a need to account for economic growth factors not explained by standard models, it is quite another to be certain of what those other factors are and exactly how they affect the economy.

A second line of criticism concerns what Al-Ubaydli and Kealey called "endogenous growth theory's mistake" (Al-Ubaydli and Kealey, 2000: 13). They were referring to the problem noted above in Romer's "facts"; that it is not true that "knowledge" is freely available, as neoclassical models require (at least in part), yet nor is it possible to protect or control it, as required by EGT. It was not a new criticism but went back at least as far as Kenneth Arrow's 1962 paper *The Economic Implications of Learning by Doing* (Arrow, 1962). "Imperfect competition" has to be built into EGT, balancing the theoretical requirement for knowledge exchange with a need for returns on investment through the protection of new ideas and products. At the very least: "To make innovation worthwhile, it must be possible to appropriate returns to cover fixed costs of research and for this some element of imperfect competition is required" (Crafts, 1996: 33). However, this is a problem of mathematical modelling, of scientific definition, rather than of concept or theory. It can be resolved by judgement and flexibility in the models while informally noting the complexity of the challenge and agreeing that aggregated data used in any formula will be indicative rather than accurate or predictive in any particular instance.

### **Cultural Policy and EGT**

My argument is this. A country like Britain today survives and prospers by the talent and ability of its people. Human capital is key. The more it is developed, the better we are. Modern goods and services require high value added input. Some of it comes from technology or financial capital - both

instantly transferable. Much of it comes from people - their ability to innovate, to think anew, to be creative. (Blair, 2007)

This could have been a speech about trade, industrial competitiveness, or to an audience of economists. It could have been a reference to the development policies of the OECD or the World Bank. But it was in fact a speech on the arts, made by Tony Blair at the Tate Modern gallery in 2007, anticipating a White Paper (due for publication the following year) in which the importance of innovation as an outcome of research would be strongly argued:

We want innovation to flourish across every area of the economy and, in particular, wherever high value added businesses can flourish and grow. We must innovate in our public services too. Innovation is as important to the delivery of healthcare and education as it is to industries such as manufacturing, retail and the creative economy" (John Denham, Secr of State, Innovation Universities & Skills, 2008).

The explanation for the elaboration of Blair's ideas in an speech on the arts can be traced back to the original objects of DCMS and its "four central themes - access, excellence and innovation, education and the creative industries" (DCMS, 1998c; DCMS Select Committee, 1998b). Chris Smith had defended the department's title to the Select Committee with the same line of thought, saying that: "The new name was more suited to a 'Department of the future' which was 'about creativity, innovation and excitement'" (DCMS Select Committee, 1998b). Innovation and creativity subsequently appeared as a departmental aim in every Annual Report in the period of this study as well as in the Department's PSA agreements. In *Creative Britain* Chris Smith repeatedly emphasised the points, integrating artistic values with the "four themes" and arguing for the "role of culture in economic society" (C. Smith, 1998: 17).

While Chris Smith promoted culture as the social and economic fabric of society, Blair's reference to "human capital" was the economic shorthand for those "skills, knowledge and competences" (Schuller, 2010: 25; see also Schuller, Baron *et al.*, 2000: 24; Coleman, 1988: 109). This "capital" was said to be accumulated through learning, research and practical "knowledge by doing" (Arrow, 1962); in other words,



the sum of the functional usefulness of the individual formed by their education, learning and experience. It represents the potential in each individual to contribute to economic development in a socialised model of the economy (Granovetter, 1985). In his 1988 paper, James Coleman identified three types of "capital" described as the "components" of "family background": "financial", "human" and "social", relating all to the individual education (Coleman, 1988: 109). Using ideas from Gary Becker (G. Becker, 1964) and Theodore Schultz (Schultz, 1961) to formulate his theories for how child education is affected by the social environment in which a child matures, Coleman claimed:

Probably the most important and most original development in the economics of education in the past 30 years has been the idea that the concept of physical capital as embodied in tools, machines, and other productive equipment can be extended to include human capital as well (Coleman, 1988: 100).

The potential created through education was then expressed in an uncompromisingly economic term as "returns to investments in education" (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2004). In more mundane terms: "Human capital theory views schooling as an investment in skills and hence as a way of augmenting worker productivity" (Wolff, 2000: 433), supported by the findings of Blundell *et al* (among others) that "there is a substantial body of evidence on the contribution of education to economic growth" (Blundell, Dearden *et al.*, 1999: abstract). These ideas formed an essential part of DCMS's claim for education policy to be a part of its remit.

### **Social Capital**

Like all capital, human capital is a form of potential; it has no effect until utilised in certain productive ways. It is that other socially generated form of capital, social capital, that describes the interconnections between people that allow human capital to function economically. Without dynamic social mechanisms, that human capital would have only a notional value. Since the term was used by Jane Jacobs in 1961

(Jacobs, 1961: 180), the concept of social capital has generated a vast literature from the fields of economics, sociology, anthropology, human geography, cultural policy, political theory, and elsewhere (Meadowcroft and Pennington, 2007: 17; Herreros, 2004: 5). Retrospectively, its principles can be found in social and economic theory commonly traced back to Alexis de Tocqueville, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber (OECD, 2001: 40; Field, 2008).

The OECD summarised these points with unusual brevity:

- Human capital resides in individuals.
- Social capital resides in social relations.
- Political, institutional and legal arrangements describe the rules and institutions in which human and social capital work (OECD, 2001: 13).

The holders of human capital must, then, interact with others, using their knowledge and skills "as a resource" within society, with "the expectation of reciprocity" that is a claimed hallmark of social, rather than merely individual, action (Field, 2008: 23). However, as James Coleman pointed out, this is not a uni-directional relationship; social actions that result in the breakdown or deterioration of social capital can also affect the acquisition of human capital; one cannot be entirely decoupled from the other (Coleman, 1988). In this sense, this author disagrees with David Halpern's comment that "It is not what you know, but who you know" (Halpern, 2005: 44). Both the "what" and the "who" are interdependent.

Hence social capital forms a structure through which the skills and resources (of which knowledge is the most significant) of individuals can operate, each being a predicate for the existence of the other:

Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors –

whether persons or corporate actors – within the structure (Coleman, 1988: 98).

Among Robert Putnam's numerous definitions of social capital one is particularly to the point; social capital being, he said: "features of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated action" (R. D. Putnam, Leonardi *et al.*, 1994: 167).

At its most effective, social capital must operate within a society in which all its members have access to its resources; one made cohesive through trust and shared values, and that is productively interconnected through complex networks. This is a description of the social relations that can give rise to the endogenous economic effects modelled in EGT, and it is a description of the society that the cultural policies of DCMS sought to form. The point deserves emphasis: it is argued that the term "social capital" contains theories of social and economic behaviour intentionally coerced by New Labour's cultural policies and that are integral to the economic models of EGT.

From an economic perspective, the concept of social capital shares a great deal with social economics more generally (Swedberg, 1991; Hunt, 2005; Staveren and Knorringa, 2007: 113), although New Labour appeared to make no distinction between them. In fact, although much of its ideational sources are specific on the subject (Leadbeater's *Living on Thin Air* being an example) the policy statements from DCMS rarely mentioned social capital as a concept, even though its elements were there in abundance, spelled out in White Papers, Annual reports, in Chris Smith's speeches, in the strategies of Task Forces, and embedded in policies for education, economic development and social welfare. For its presumed economic effectiveness, it also appeared (as it still does) in crude forms within regeneration programmes and in the work of the Regional Development Authorities. The principles of social capital were also contemporaneously explicitly adopted across the world, appearing in the policies of governmental bodies including the World Bank, the OECD, and the EU. All relied to some degree on a "socialized" concept of

the economy (Bebbington, Guggenheim *et al.*, 2004; Harriss, 2002; OECD, 2001). Social economics arises out of the idea that people make decisions that are strongly influenced by their place and experiences in society, but, as has been noted in describing the principles of EGT, this puts it outside the algorithms of orthodox neoclassical microeconomic models that rely on self-interested rational action. This subject deserves further discussion before returning to the topic of social capital.

### "The Oversocialized Conception of Man"

This phrase has been brought to bear on questions that reach to the heart of social economics. It addresses the dialectic of rational choice and economic determinism as the bedrock of neoliberal economic models as they combine with the forces of socially, or culturally constructed, norms and practises that lie behind individual decision-making (Wrong, 1961). Its importance here is that it draws together the challenge to create a neoclassical economic model than can encompass endogenous economic factors with the potential for cultural policy (in a socio-anthropological conception) to promote or influence those factors exogenously. In effect, it shifts the study of economics from its scientific pretensions towards a sociological conception where it is politically malleable.

In the decades before 1970, sociology had been dominated by the structural functionalism of those, like Talcott Parsons, whose theories left little room for individual agency. Reacting to the latter ("a model of human nature... that pervades modern sociology"), Dennis Wrong took exception to the structurally and culturally determined "oversocialized" theories of human behaviour in which "man is essentially motivated by the desire to achieve a positive image of self by winning acceptance or status in the eyes of others" (Wrong, 1961: 185). He objected to the notion that internalised and habitualised norms of behaviour were solidified and perpetuated by the expectations of peers and the requirements of the institutions that formed around them. This would leave no place for a Hobbesian view of mankind as self-determined, atomised, utilitarian and rational (requiring the need

for social order to be contracted to a "Leviathan"), producing instead a concept of society, and thereby of the economy, unable to account for personal choice, the existence of dispute, and social disorder. If actions were derived from a common perception of right and wrong, and individuals made their decisions accordingly, there would never be moral disagreement. Wrong put this point as a question: "How is it that violence, conflict, revolution, and the individuals' sense of coercion by society manage to exist at all...?" (Wrong, 1961: 186). Wrong's well-referenced arguments leaned strongly on a Freudian analysis, but they stand regardless, implicitly questioning models of individual economic behaviour in the process.

Approaching from another direction, Douglas North, writing about "New Institutional Economics", claimed neoclassical economic theory took too little account of cultural forces as they were manifested by institutions: "we have incomplete information and limited mental capacity by which to process information ... In such a world ideas and ideologies play a major role in choices and transaction costs result in imperfect markets" (North, 1992-4). North's purpose was to "incorporate a theory of institutions into economics ... the new institutional economics builds on, modifies, and extends neoclassical theory to permit it to come to grips and deal with an entire range of issues heretofore beyond its ken" (1992: 3). His definition of an institution was uncontroversially consistent with the New Institutionalism more generally, being, he said: "the rules of the game of a society or more formally are the humanly devised constraints that structure human interaction. They are composed of the formal rules (statute law, common law, regulations), informal constraints (conventions, norms of behavior); and the enforcement characteristics of both" (1992: 4). This apparently Parsonian approach was nevertheless formed in support of individuals under strong cultural influences in its socio-anthropological form: "Individuals possess mental models to interpret the world around them. These are in part culturally derived - that is produced by the intergenerational transfer of knowledge, values, and norms which vary radically among different ethnic groups and societies" (1992: 3). North's "conception of man" was acting rationally in an economic society in ways that were locally,

environmentally and contingently determined. As he himself made clear, it was not a rejection of the neoclassical model but an extension to it, just as was proposed by EGT.

Discussing these arguments, Mark Granovetter compared the "*undersocialized* conception of human action, continuing in the utilitarian tradition" with an institutionalised, culturally determined member of a community, unwilling to take independent action. But as he then pointed out, both theoretical extremes are essentially deterministic. In one account, albeit requiring perfect knowledge in a perfectly competitive society, rational decisions are predictable; in the other, institutionalised norms and practices equally predetermine how people will act. Neither are true representations of how people actually act, Granovetter claimed. More likely, people are culturally *influenced*; and that in the absence of perfect knowledge or even knowing which "rational" acts might be the most beneficial decisions, social factors provide a default position; a guide to behaviour that appears to place community above the individual. The term "embedded" is frequently used to express the internalized nature of these default preferences (B. Edwards and Foley, 1979; Cooke, 2007) as it expresses the aggregate influences of social relationships and community history (Granovetter, 1973: 97; 1985; Coleman, 1988), much like Bourdieu's "habitus". However, this can also imply a permanency that rejects change and ignores the process of constant reformation to which socially determined preferences are subject.

Although the balance of arguments between rational choice and socialization theories are both subject to criticisms of determinacy, the latter does at least allow for changes of ideas and practices resulting from social interactions. At their extremes, the two approaches address the conundrum of the Prisoners' Dilemma as it can result in two equilibria, each stable but in opposition. The rational choice outcome, in which each prisoner distrusts the other (the least risk option) is countered by the existence of trust and collaboration in which each remains silent. The former outcome appears to work well in a single situation, but in repeated

games - in effect, interactions as might more likely occur in real social experiences - the latter is more successful and stable (Sugden, 2005; Neumann and Morgenstern, 1944). It suggests, too, the sort of social world New Labour proposed to develop, with a reliance on trust and reciprocity that is a model of social capital in operation.

Importantly for New Labour, the dynamism of social capital gave a place for agency within institutions if they are conceived and reproduced from the norms and practices of individuals, just as those institutions subsequently tend to perpetuate those norms and guide or coerce the actions of their individual members. This culturally derived symbiotic relationship between individuals and institutions (and organizations in which they are embedded) was central to New Labour's cultural theories as they instigated institutional developments through the cooption of individuals (the Cultural Consortia being a good example). The prospect of adjusting both by changing the structures in which they operate gave a legitimate role for both policy development and the institutions created or funded for its realisation (see Coleman, 1971 for an apposite discussion on this structure/agency relationship).

### Three Approaches to Social Capital

In the form that social capital developed in the latter decades of the 20th century, it is the works of Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putnam that defined the breadth and terms of contemporary debates (Woolcock, 1998: 15-43; Schuller, Baron *et al.*, 2000: 28; Daly, 2005: 5, 12-14; Field, 2008). Each is a different concept but, while Bourdieu elaborated a socialised world divided by forms of capital, both Putnam and Coleman maintained elements of rational choice logic within the construction and application of social capital, albeit to different degrees. All, though, agreed on the foundational importance of education in its formation.

### Pierre Bourdieu

Of the three, Bourdieu's ideas are the least represented in the literature on social economics and Third Way politics, perhaps in part because they describe relations of

knowledge, power and social divisions that are not easily applied to economic models. Drawing eclectically on scholarship across history and many academic disciplines, his descriptions of the forces that govern social relations used a conceptual lexicon in which forms of "capital" are central to the ways in which "systems of domination find expression in virtually all areas of cultural practice and symbolic exchange" (Bourdieu, 1993: 2). Culture, for Bourdieu, was an important form of capital and symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1991). In his own, oft-quoted words, so characteristic of his literary style: "taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make..." (Bourdieu, 1984: 6). Within the "field" of social relations, capital was the essential possession:

The social world is accumulated history, and if it is not to be reduced to a discontinuous series of instantaneous mechanical equilibria between agents who are treated as interchangeable particles, one must reintroduce into it the notion of capital and with it, accumulation and all its effects.  
(Bourdieu, 1986: 241)

This was capital in forms made distinctive by knowledge, "habitus" (and its associated "doxa"), and practice within each social field (Bourdieu, 1990: 52-66). The cultural capital possessed by each individual then defined their place within an hierarchical network of relationships; each competitively achieved and in constant tension with others. It was, he said: "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition" (Bourdieu, 1986; quoted in Portes, 1998).

Bourdieu's profound and complex sociology was nevertheless exceptionally coherent (Fine, 2000) and in its explanation for the persistence and dominance of elites (the possessors of "cultural capital") appeared to speak directly to New Labour's policy assault on "exclusion" and for the social and economic need for open "access" to education, knowledge, and thus opportunity. Bourdieu's explanation for the appreciation of art and artists in "the field of cultural production" defined it as



cultural capital acquired through education and cultural inculcation. As a consequence, museums and art galleries, he claimed, demonstrate and reproduce the symbolic power of those with cultural capital (Bourdieu, Darbel *et al.*, 1997). Once again, this explanation appeared to meet with the policies for education and access pursued by the DCMS and promoted by Chris Smith. But Bourdieu's ideas linked more to the post-Marxist foundations of Cultural Studies rather than with the neo-liberal, socio-economic, ambitions of New Labour. In this regard, for example, Bourdieu's version of "cultural capital" should not be confused with the purely financial concerns of the afore-mentioned MLA publication and its interest in entrepreneurship and the financial exploitation of heritage and artistic works. It is, perhaps, because of the difficulty in using Bourdieu's theory as a financial instrument that, in Britain at least, it was of comparatively little interest to government.

### James Coleman

Influenced by Gary Becker (G. Becker, 1964), one of the earliest neoclassical economists to carry his theories into sociology (with a particular interest in the family), James Coleman's concept of social capital also maintained a place of deterministic rational choice within sociology. His major 1990 work, *Foundations of Social Theory*, was based on this approach just as was *Mathematical Sociology*, published twenty six years earlier (Coleman, 1990, 1964; see also Coleman and Fararo, 1992). Although Coleman is frequently cited in commentaries on rational choice theory in sociology his work is far more heterogeneous, often setting out competing theoretical approaches to the analysis of social behaviour, concluding that none alone are entirely adequate (examples: Coleman, 2002, 1988).

In his 2002 paper, Coleman discussed the rationales of social actors, describing "the work of most sociologists [which] sees the actor as socialized and action as governed by social norms, rules, and obligations", compared with the inadequacy of social models built of self-interested individuals having a single "principle of action, that of

maximizing utility". He added that, "in earlier works [(Coleman, 1986a, b)] I have argued for and engaged in the development of a theoretical orientation in sociology that includes components from both these intellectual streams" (Coleman, 1988: 95-6). His aim, he said, "is to import the economists' principle of rational action for use in the analysis of social systems proper, including but not limited to economic systems, and to do so without discarding social organization in the process" (1988: 97). This combination of theoretical principles made Coleman's work especially relevant to economists and politicians interested in the development of EGT models.

The rational character of Coleman's descriptions of social interactions appeared in the form of "reciprocity" (1988: 102-4). This was the essential element that could explain collaborations between individuals as rational and self-regarding. In Coleman's model, "social capital ... represents a resource because it involves the expectation of reciprocity, and goes beyond any given individual to involve wider networks whose relationships are governed by a high degree of trust and shared values" (Field, 2008: 23). Reciprocity is also a description of how networks of social relations can develop and stabilise, even without a *prior* requirement for that "high degree of trust and shared values".

Coleman's interest in social capital was always practical and his research empirically based, constantly seeking "the engine of [human] action" while rejecting the notion that "the internal springs of action that give the actor a purpose or direction" could be accounted for purely by the nature of, to quote again Dennis Wrong, "The Oversocialized Conception of Man in Modern Society" (Coleman, 1986b; 1988: 96).

### Robert Putnam

Both Bourdieu's sociology and Colman's empirical rationalism provided explanations for human choices and the structures, influences, and internal logics of society.

Robert Putnam's work, though, did this and more, providing also a working model of

how the individual relates to civic and economic life through the bonds that form between families, communities, civil associations and institutions.

It was two books by Robert Putnam in 1993 and 2000 (and related journal articles) that really brought worldwide political attention to the concept of social capital (R. D. Putnam, Leonardi *et al.*, 1994; R. Putnam, 1995, 2000), although he gave his source of the concept as the economist Glen Loury. It was Loury, he said, who: "used the term 'social capital' to capture the fundamental fact that racial segregation, coupled with socially inherited differences in community networks and norms, means that individually targeted 'equal opportunity' policies may not eliminate racial inequality, even in the long run" <sup>1</sup> (R. Putnam, 1993; Loury, 1977). <sup>2</sup>

Much of the American literature on Putnam locates his impact from *Bowling Alone* (John Field, 2008, among them), perhaps because of the application of his theories specifically to a North American case. But in Europe it was the earlier 1993 work, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, that really heated the simmering debates on social capital. As a political scientist, unlike the sociologists Bourdieu and Coleman, his approach to social capital also had a theoretical significance for governments. In John Field's words: "Putnam's contribution is monumental. His scholarship rests in a wide-ranging knowledge of a variety of sources of evidence. His wider visibility and influence have ensured that his approach has virtually eclipsed those of Coleman and Bourdieu" (Field, 2008: 40).

*Making Democracy Work* is a substantial work that sought, in Putnam's own words "to explore some fundamental questions about civic life by studying the regions of Italy" (R. D. Putnam, Leonardi *et al.*, 1994: preface) and, in so doing, explain why regions differed so greatly in their economic performance and social practices. His

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<sup>1</sup> Putnam names Loury rather than the earlier work of Jane Jacobs (*op.cit*) while others, notably among them being Alejandro Portes, name Pierre Bourdieu as producing "the first systematic contemporary analysis of social capital", PORTES, A. 1998. Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24 1-24.p3.

work began in 1970 at a time coincident with the establishment in Italy of a system of regional governments:

I had just gotten my PhD and was in Rome, with my one-year-old and three-year-old, trying to set up interviews with members of the Italian parliament for another study I wanted to do. The government was falling apart. The politicians had left the city, I couldn't arrange my interviews, and in the midst of all this confusion, the government decided to go forward with a constitutional reform to establish regional governments. To me, this seemed like being able to start a study in 1789 of Congress [sic]. . . to be able to understand how it took root, what social circumstances conditioned how it evolved. And so, in a hand-to-mouth kind of way, I started with several colleagues doing this research (Edgerton, 1995).

His primary concern became "the origins of effective government", something characterised by "the connection between economic modernity and institutional performances" and in which "the civic community is marked by an active, public spirited citizenry, by egalitarian political relations, by a social fabric of trust and cooperation". Across the Italian regions, Putnam noted how "some ... are blessed with vibrant networks and norms of civic engagement, while others are cursed with vertically structured politics, a social life of fragmentation and isolation, and a culture of distrust" (R. D. Putnam, Leonardi *et al.*, 1994: 15). "The theoretical approach we develop", he said, "drawing on the logic of collective action and the concept of 'social capital', is intended not merely to account for the Italian case, but to conjoin historical and rational choice perspectives in a way that can improve our understanding of institutional performance and public life in many other cases" (1994: 16).

The importance of his work to the British cultural policies of the New Labour government lay in two areas; the first that, through its policies, DCMS was promoting exactly the civic and economically effective society characterised by "trust, norms, and networks" (R. D. Putnam, Leonardi *et al.*, 1994: *passim*). These were, Putnam claimed, "the vital ingredient in economic development around the world" (R. Putnam, 1993: 16). Secondly, that Putnam laid great emphasis on the role of institutions and associations in forming those values. In other words, that there

was a structural element to those societal relations that government could directly influence or control, for example through its contracts with NDPBs. Like Coleman, Putnam found reciprocity to be an essential element in social interactions, reliant on forms of trust (whether in an individual, in the rules of an association, or in a legal system), but he placed far greater weight on the networks through which social interactions take place and in the "norms of reciprocity" which might then occur (R. D. Putnam, Leonardi *et al.*, 1994: 171). These he included in his description of social capital:

Networks of civic engagement, like neighbourhood associations, choral societies, cooperative, sports clubs, mass-based parties, and the like... represent intense horizontal interaction. Networks of civic engagement are an essential form of social capital: the denser such networks in a community, the more likely that its citizens will be able to cooperate for mutual benefit (1994: 173)

"[H]orizontal interaction" refers to social connections characterised by the "weak ties" of civic engagement resulting from "bridging" between remote or associational relations (what Anthony Giddens referred to as "active trust" - earned rather than "pre-established" (Giddens, 1994: 30)), compared with the "strong ties" of vertical, mostly kin relations or between close friends (Granovetter, 1973; R. Putnam, 2000: 22-23). Comparing the two, Putnam noted: "If horizontal networks of civic engagement help participants solve dilemmas of collective action, then the more horizontally structured an organization, the more it should foster institutional success in the broader community" (R. D. Putnam, Leonardi *et al.*, 1994: 175; see also Schuller, 2007).

Elaborating the point, the transmission of human capital across social networks requires a "broader community", and it was this in particular that lay behind the interest of the OECD and the World Bank to construct policies to promote social capital as an aid to economic development (Bebbington, Guggenheim *et al.*, 2004; Harriss, 2002; OECD, 2001; Schuller, 2007; London School of Economics, 2007; World Bank, 2000). The concerns of these agencies was more than just for civic

society in an abstract sense. They wished to see ideas, innovations, and knowledge from the developed world utilised practically and commercially in each locality. This required a “milieu” (Camagni, 1991) in which individuals learn, collaborate and exploit their innovations within their social and economic marketplace. These processes are also said to have a spatial context in which the ideas of collaborative networks of knowledgeable individuals “swarm” in an appropriate local environment, driving business incubation and competition both collaboratively and competitively (Davelaar, 1991). To have economic force, individuals cannot act alone, but must share thoughts and ideas as much as hard cash across multilayered networks of common interests. In order to develop, economically and morally, each must cooperate and learn. New knowledge then spills-over into the general community of entrepreneurs to be converted into innovations, and more new knowledge, as the endogenously powered cycle virtuously repeats (Ács, 2010; D. Audretsch and Keilbach, 2007; D. B. Audretsch and Lehmann, 2005).

### **Counter-arguments**

Despite the almost universal adoption of the principles of social capital by governments and their agencies, these concepts are not beyond dispute. Even the metaphor “capital” has been challenged as being, on the one hand, misdirecting and therefore inappropriate (Baron and Hannan, 1994) and, on the other, simply a reinforcement of the hegemony of ownership and financial capital in a neo-liberal world. Epistemological objections abound, with arguments that social capital is a concept that can never be defined or measured (Evans, 2005; OECD, 2001), and that it is just another protean, interpretive construction of the sociologist. And its connections to political organisations and institutions are sometimes said to be, at best, particularistic and conditional.

Social capital is also said to have a “dark side”, giving rise to secretive and often illegal groupings, autocracies and forms of community tyranny in which close bonds counter its argued benefits (Levi, 1996: 52; Field, 2008: 42; OECD, 2001: 79-100;

Meadowcroft and Pennington, 2007: 23, *passim*; Ostrom, 1997). In what Rhodes referred to "that neologism to end all neologisms" (Rhodes, 1996: n659) this has been called "cultural autopoietics"; a reference to the idea of communities reflexively reproducing cultural norms that, over time, exclude others (Boyd, 2011). Meadowcroft and Pennington develop this argument in support of neoliberal individualism in which, they claim, it is the weak ties of bridging social relations that feature in international commerce that are the true generators of social capital. Collectivism and social democracy tend to exclude entrepreneurialism: "bonding social capital ensures a sense of social solidarity within small groups, while bridging social capital links often disparate people and provides information and opportunities outside the small group" (Meadowcroft and Pennington, 2007: 22). The argument represented by Ralph Fevre, that: "It is no exaggeration to say that capitalism is now manufacturing its own synthetic substitute for social capital" is entirely rejected by the views of Meadowcroft, Fukuyama, and others who claim that it is only those neoliberal, open market, capitalist forces that create true and effective social capital (Fevre, 2000: 106; Fukuyama, 1995b). Significantly, New Labour's Third Way, and its tendency to conflate dichotomies, attempts to meet this criticism by promoting the individual within their community, seeming to recognise the validity of both views so denying that one excluded the other.

Perhaps the most complex criticism is that the promotion of social capital may transfer responsibility for the civic realm away from the state towards unelected actors and is, thus, anti-democratic. This criticism is most usually targeted at international development agencies and the increasing reliance on non-governmental bodies for policy delivery (Harriss, 2002; see also M. Edwards, 2009; Marquand, 2004), but it has also been attached to New Labour's economic and social policies (Finlayson, 2003), particularly as they pursued the distribution of executive power through NDPBs and subsidised agencies. In New Labour's logic, they were forming the market (and its rules of fairness) as a public good in itself.

Just as Putnam's work has had world-wide influence at the highest levels, it has also profoundly affected policies of neighbourhood regeneration (Forrest and Kearns, 2001). Its well-researched arguments give a role for governments in their relations with civil life; it describes the manner in which its institutions can be most effective at producing economic growth with improvements in civil order; and it serves to identify where the necessary structural, behavioural and culture elements are absent. Structural changes can be made administratively or legislatively, but behaviour, norms, and trust require *cultural* changes achieved through education or coercion with incentives. Recent research has resulted in arguments that trust and norms may be cognitive rather than purely relational factors (Larsen, 2013), but this further strengthens the idea that culture, in its socio-anthropological meaning, is either the result or the generative mechanism of these characteristics. Discussing this, the OECD used a definition of culture that followed Inglehart's as a "system of attitudes, values and knowledge that is widely shared within a society and is transmitted from generation to generation" (Inglehart, 1997: 15; OECD, 2001: 10-N). This is a shallow, anthropological definition, yet it opens the possibility of interference through political action in the construction and reconstruction of social norms and values.



## Culture as Governance

Like so many new ideas, "governance" is a term that was "nearly incomprehensible and hardly ever used as late as twenty years ago [the late 1980s]" (Offe, 2009: 554), yet it is founded on principles that have long been debated (for example Deutsche, 1963) on how power is exercised through its institutionalisation and the "naturalization of procedures of decision making" (Levi-Faur, 2012: 9). It has a central place in this thesis as a description of the mechanisms the DCMS employed to effect cultural changes and policies within NDPBs, civil associations and, thereby, individuals within the national community.

Rod Rhodes's analysis of the subject (see Rhodes, 1997, 1994, 1996, 2012), most recently described its development in Britain as coming in "three waves"; the first in the 1980s<sup>1</sup> with, he argues, the growth of policy networks "clustered around a major government function or department", the second as the "meta-governance" of the Blair government in which No 10 and the Treasury controlled the work of other departments through policy instruments (notably the PSAs, as discussed in Chapter 3 above), and the third, in which the state sets "the rules of the game for other actors", then "leave[s] them to do what they will within those rules". That then places all those working within those rules, voluntarily or by force of contract, "in the shadow of hierarchy" (2012: 37). The metaphor, "rules of the game", is one repeated across the literature (see for example Phillips, 2012: 493).

While it quickly found its way into many areas of organisational concern, the meaning of governance has shifted according to the circumstances of its use. For example, governance is now formally structured into the legal and moral compliance of business corporations, NDPBs and civil associations, but these localised instances are quite separate from the assertion that those same organisations actually

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<sup>1</sup> Others give a slightly earlier date, around the start of the 1980s - for example RON, A. 2012. Modes of Democratic Governance. In: LEVI-FAUR, D. (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p474.

constitute governance as distributed government. Unsurprising, then, the word has also taken on different meanings in different countries, reflecting varieties of governmental structures, traditions and values. As a result, "governance" has required a note of clarification by the European Union. Defining its use in the UK, their Translation Service explains (in words suitably devoid of theoretical content):

The word 'governance' was awarded the honour in 1990 by Anglo-Saxon economists and political scientists and some international institutions (UN, World Bank and IMF in particular), to designate the new 'art or manner of governing', but with two additional concerns. On the one hand, to distinguish the government as an institution, and secondly, as a little-used term and therefore having little connotative history, to promote a new mode of governance based on the participation of civil society at all levels (national, but also local, regional and international).  
(HUYNH-QUAN-SUU, Undated)  
(translated from French by Hetherington)

Placing governance in the hands of civil society, as this definition suggests, effects a clear separation from government, and it differentiates informal regulation from legislation: "Government involves formal means of exercising power, while governance ... means a communal system of rule on the basis of common convictions" (Schmitt, 2011: 20).

Within the many semantic descriptions and philological definitions of the word a fundamental dichotomy has been claimed. On the one hand the state has been seen as "hollowed out" by governance structures (B. G. Peters, 1993) as "power and authority drift away upwards toward transitional markets and political institutions and downward toward local or regional government, domestic business communities and non-governmental organizations" (Levi-Faur, 2012: 10). On the other, Chris Skelcher characterised an "overloaded, hollowed-out, congested" state of the late 1990s (and the period of the New Labour government) resulting from its own characteristic forms of governance. All definitions open-up fundamental questions about the role of the state and how power is exercised. They concern the operation of government which remains in all cases "the centre of considerable

political power" (Pierre and Peters, 2000: 12). Methods of plural governance are, then, operational choices of government as they manipulate power.

That all government actions in some ways alter cultural norms, beliefs, practises, values, and a sense of what is fair and just, is not contentious. David Throsby is one who commented that every area of government policy has examples that "may involve a deliberative intent to bring about cultural change" (Throsby, 2009: 182). History is full of examples; from the ruthless totalitarian severity of the Maoist cultural revolution to minimal state support in Western democracies to maintain individual "positive liberty" (Berlin, 1969). Indeed, it has been claimed that all government policies "are theories that change people's perceptions of the problems the government seeks to resolve" (Bevir, Rhodes *et al.*, 2003: 7). The principles of governance and a belief in the power of government, in this case of the New Labour government, to change cultural norms is a crucial argument in this thesis. That is not to say they were successful, simply that they adopted this logic. They relied upon a belief in collective action as much as in adapting cultural practices into the service of their mission; the two being inextricably intertwined.

New Labour's concept of an economy fuelled and fired by human and social capital integrally required normative changes in both the public and governmental spheres: "a new contract between citizen and state", Blair called it, in which individuals recognised their own responsibility to exploit the opportunities the state provided (Dept of Social Security, 1997-8: v). The "old" was a welfare state of universal rights backed by an ideological commitment to an equal distribution of national resources, the "new" referred to access to economic opportunities in return for accepting civic responsibilities to the state. The intention was "to restructure the relationships between the state, the economy and the individual" (Finlayson, 2009: 400). By DCMS's socio-anthropological definition, these were cultural changes, prospectively charging DCMS with a central role in all government business. There is little evidence that, at the time, the rest of the government took much interest in DCMS's self-appointed role but, as has been shown, their policies nevertheless overlapped

those of nearly every other department, giving them a presence in all regional government offices, in the majority of the Policy Action Teams and Task Groups, and with a stake in many of the government's initiatives for social and economic development. It is then a short step to link those political and operational claims with their role in cultural formation.

Chris Smith's four themes or pillars (excellence, access, education and the creative economy) (C. Smith, 2009; 1998: 2) can all be seen as part of the deal. Under theories of social and human capital, these ideas travelled easily into the agenda of many organisations and working groups across government and across Britain. It was something the policies of the erstwhile DNH and all its predecessors could never achieve. Yet it was a view of the state as civil society as much as it was of the individual, collapsing notions of personal liberty into the well-being of the national community and harnessing the energies and the knowledge of entrepreneurial, self-sufficient, individuals into its service. In effect this continued the decentralization of government that had begun two decades earlier, distributing responsibilities around civil society under rules defined in Westminster. Government appeared to have become fragmented; "a complex welter of intermediate institutions, including businesses, voluntary associations, educational institutions, clubs, unions, media charities and churches..." (Fukuyama, 1995b: 4) but through a plethora of targets and controls, backed-up with the endoscopic surveillance provided by the techniques of NPM, the centre of government still focused the policy lens.

As supplicants for financial support, NDPBs (and their clients) were directed through the imposition of NPM, contracts and the control of resources, often adopting the rhetoric of government in the process. As the advent of these process predated New Labour, it might be argued that attempts to alter cultural norms was as Thatcherite and Majorite as it was Blairite <sup>1</sup>. In fact, as a result of its supposed

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the "change versus continuity" argument in post-war British politics, see KERR, P. P. 2001. *Postwar British Politics*. London, Routledge. The question of the "periodicity", with particular reference to Thatcherism, can be found in HAY, C. & FARRALL, S. 2011. Establishing the

"portability", NPM in particular had been an international trend since the late 1970s and "emphatically not a uniquely British development" (C. Hood, 1991: 3), although it was always and essentially dependent on the development of appropriate cultures (T. J. Peters and Waterman, 1982). Yet it was just the supposed universality of NPM that offered New Labour an administrative system suited to their ideal of locally situated but centrally controlled policy units. Writing in 1996, just one year before New Labour's election victory, Rod Rhodes analysed the relationship between the NPM and the apparently concomitant phenomenon of "governing without government" and effectively contradicted Hood by arguing that NPM actually undermined "reforms rooted in competition": "NPM may suit line bureaucracies", he argued, "but it is inappropriate for managing interorganizational networks and, more important such networks undermine NPM with its intra-organizational focus on objectives and results" (Rhodes, 1996: abstract, 663). NPM is frequently associated with the replacement of government with governance (Rhodes, 1997, 1996; Kooiman, 1993; C. Hood, 1991) but, while coincident with New Labour's cultural forms of distributed governance (perhaps, in part at least, because of an element of path dependency in the application of NPM (Bevir, Rhodes *et al.*, 2003)), these are quite different concepts. The assumption most authors make is that the control or "steering" of policy, in which government is exercised through multiple and varied actors, requires both tighter controls and frequent measurement of outcomes. In fact DCMS made the point plain, saying the whole idea of "best practise" imposed by NPM was "indirect policy persuasion" (DCMS, 2001a: 51; 2000: 37).

The controls applied by PSAs and NPM mixed coercion with incentives but were always backed by the threat of sanctions: "...[a] variety of state and non-state agencies", claimed Finlayson, "may act directly on individuals with the aim of remaking them into people who will be willing and able to care for themselves in an open and financialised economy" (Finlayson, 2009: 400). The systems of NPM tied together ever-increasing numbers of organisations that played some role in realising

government policy ("the meso soup" as Colin Hay called it<sup>1</sup>), in the process requiring all those linked in the policy chains to accept its ideational principles. In Fukuyama's words, this was the realisation of "The improbable power of culture in the making of economic society" (Fukuyama, 1995b: Part 1 title). Fukuyama added to this idea a paper headed "The Primacy of Culture" in which he set-out how those relations should be formed between neoliberal economies, democratic states and individual liberty (Fukuyama, 1995a). There is a strong element of the Third Way about his arguments, eliding the ideological divisions between atomistic behaviour and communitarian ideals:

Liberalism based on individual rights is quite compatible with strong, communitarian social structures and disciplined cultural habits. Indeed, one can argue that the true importance of civil society and culture in a modern democracy lies precisely in their ability to balance or moderate the atomizing individualism that is inherent in traditional liberal doctrine, both political and economic (Fukuyama, 1995a: 13).

The centre-left think tank, Demos<sup>2</sup>, considered some of these issues, albeit from a position of engagement with the New Labour mission. In an edited book published in the year of New Labour's election victory, Geoff Mulgan reflected on the "new ideas and new thinking" required to meet contemporary social problems by arguing that "these challenges are, above all, collective ones, that aren't easily susceptible to individual choice and individual action" (Mulgan, 1997: ix). The democratic idea itself, he said, had "permeated" culture. But the democracy he had in mind was exercised by a community with a shared identity and purpose, it was not the atomistic libertarian ideal of the minimal state preferred by the previous Conservative government, with which New Labour was so often compared. The old minimal "night watchman state" <sup>3</sup> was, for New Labour, an idea as anachronistic as

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<sup>1</sup> In his response as Discussant to Vivien Schmidt in the Third Annual Warwick University/ RIPE Debate - 'The Fall, Rise, Fall and Rise of the State within Modern Capitalism', 2nd March 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Demos (taken from "democracy") was formed in 1993 by Martin Jacques, a past editor of *Marxism Today*, and Geoff Mulgan, in the belief that democracy was becoming the natural and dominant mode of government around the world and that the shifting relations between people and the state deserved special attention.

<sup>3</sup> This expression was first coined by Ferdinand Lassalle in a speech in Berlin in 1862: "The bourgeoisie conceive the ethical purpose of the state as consisting solely and exclusively in the protections of the

the command economics of socialist *dirigisme*. Instead, state institutions were to be nodes in a reticulated society of economic actors, adopting the perceived virtues of the business world for its managerial practices and thrusting entrepreneurialism, both being employed to hone the tools of government and "scale up the capacities of government to use them" (6, 1995: 3). In a quote made earlier in this thesis, but worth repeating here as it goes to the core of New Labour's convictions, Perri 6, expressed this new ideology strongly:

Culture is now the centre of the agenda for government reform, because we now know from the findings of a wide range of recent research that culture is perhaps the most important determinant of a combination of long-run economic success and social cohesion (6, 1997: 272).

By any traditional understanding of culture, this might have seemed a far-fetched and unsupported proposition. But this was not the "culture" of the past, this was a civic take on a socio-anthropological description of culture in which arts were no more than a symptomatic product. "When I speak of culture", said Perri 6:

I mean nothing more sophisticated than those sets of beliefs and behaviours, aspirations, expectations, values, senses of duty and right, those way of evaluating what is prudent and legitimate and so forth, that inform the decisions of politicians, bureaucrats, organizations, users of services or the public at large" (6, 1997: 424n).

This was the "culture" defined in theories of social capital in economic and civic life as elaborated by Putnam, Coleman, and Fukuyama (Putnam and Coleman op.cit. Fukuyama, 1995b). It was a collective expression for the norms shared by society and which, 6 claimed, informed our decisions and steered our actions. How to manage and manipulate that culture then became a crucial issue. Accordingly, "we need to understand the full range of tools with which governments can influence cultures" (6, 1997: 262).

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personal freedom and property of the individual. This is a night-watchman concept, gentlemen, a night-watchman concept because we can conceive of the state only in the form of a night watchman whose functions consist solely in preventing robbery and burglary". Quoted in BERNSTEIN, E. 1993. *Ferdinand Lassalle as a Social Reformer*. London, Swan Sonnenschien. pp 139-202.

The economist, Sir Douglas Hague, had looked at just this question for Demos (of which he later became a trustee) in a 1993 paper tellingly entitled *Transforming the Dinosaurs*. His analysis rested on the "compatibility" of culture and values, for which changes in one should be reflected in changes in the other. His focus was on changing the culture of organisations and institutions, but they could just as easily be read for how institutions might change the cultural norms of the individuals that constitute those organisations:

**Table 11: Transforming the Dinosaurs**

Method	Hague's Explanation	As Applied by New Labour
Coercion	"pressure exerted by competition or recession..." "All organisations are coerced by direct government interference in their affairs..."	In this category can be placed privatisation, the creation of "pseudo-[internal] markets", the introduction of PSAs, contracts between DCMS and its funded bodies, and the increase in targets and league tables across government. However, all regulation could be argued to fall into this category if defined as "government action to control activities in which it is not directly involved" (Bishop, 1995: 153; see also Bishop, Kay <i>et al.</i> , 1995).
Contagion	The transference of ideas resulting from the movement of people and interactively shifting shared values and norms	New Labour's promotions of private sector practices and of entrepreneurialism, together with the increasing role of NDPBs in the delivery of government policy; all contributed to ideological and methodological contagion. Tony Blair's promotion of popular culture may also have had a part to play. Note also that contagion may result from the exercise of "bridging" social capital.
Coaching	An effect of institutional, organisational and community	Across government, the increasing use of external advisors and



insiders seeking external and objective views of themselves and their activities

consultants. New Labour's close ideological relations with particular thinkers, such as Anthony Giddens, Charles Leadbeater, Tom Bentley and Geoff Mulgan, come into this category

#### Learning

"The most desirable way of changing a culture is for the organisation to set about doing it for itself. This involves becoming, in today's vogue phrase, a learning organisation". Hague related this to economic growth, saying: "An ability to innovate will be vital in a world of global competition, and learning is the key element in innovation..."

In Tony Blair's (in)famous words: "Our top priority was, is and always will be education, education, education. To overcome decades of neglect and make Britain a learning society, developing the talents and raising the ambitions of all our young people" (Blair, 2001). Knowledge as human and social capital became the fuel of the "knowledge economy", promoted as much by DCMS as it was by the Department of Education. In policy terms, it can be found in the promotion of creativity (for example, in the Creative Partnerships programme), in employment and training initiatives as much as in formal education. Blair's promotion of education in civil society also echoes another cultural concept - German *bildung*.

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Source: (Hague, 1993: 3-4)

Hague's approach provided a civil and business-orientated view of cultural change redolent of the psychological, but contains a cybernetic implication that reaches from Karl Deutsche's *Nerves of Government* (Deutsche, 1963) to Geert Hofstede's definition of culture as: "... the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another" (Hofstede, 2001: 24). The assertion is simple: that the culture of organisations, constantly constructed and re-constructed by its individual members, can be changed by coercion, contagion, coaching and learning.

Perri 6 considered this a "reinvention" of government's relationship with its citizens; a challenge to the "Libertarian Right" on one side, represented by the likes of Friedrich Hayek, Alan Duncan (Duncan and Hobson, 1995) and Newt Gingrich (Gingrich, 1995), as much as it was to the "social democratic left", exemplified by J. Kenneth Galbraith, and to "moderate centre Left" politicians like Frank Field (6, 1997: 263; 1995: 2). Drawing on Osborne and Gaebler's study on *Reinventing Government* (D. Osborne and Gaebler, 1992), what was being reinvented in this middle way, soon after to be invariably known as the "Third Way", was the normative conception of the state by its citizens - just as Blair proposed. Some have seen these changes in governance as a search for a method to manage "the inherent complexity and interdependencies of modern societies", "...enabling new modes of societal self-regulation" (Bevir, Rhodes *et al.*, 2003: 10; Jann, 2003), rather than an ideological desire for social engineering. The evidence for that more technically complex proposition is much harder to find. For DCMS, though, it enhanced and promoted through cultural formation a cohesive and comprehensive economic model that could make cultural policy the generative engine for economic growth.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusions

This research began with a series of questions arising from the "conceptual inconsistencies" of New Labour's cultural policies (Selwood, 2006: 36), and the unexplained decentring of the arts in favour of concerns that had never previously been relevant to a department of culture by any definition. Even by its own extended remit, Chris Smith's "four themes", declared to be the "pillars" on which all DCMS policy was constructed, appeared to be internally conflicted: "excellence" difficult to reconcile with "access"; initiatives in "education" were marginal to national education policy; and, despite the focus given to them, the "cultural industries" were not obviously categorisable as either cultural or industrial. In many respects they were more relevant to the work of the DTI than that of DCMS. Behind them all was Smith's statement that their work "places the Department at the centre of the country's economic life and regeneration" (C. Smith, 1997a) - a claim then without precedent for a government department of culture.

What has been shown is that Smith constructed within DCMS the policies to give the department a role in the government's management of the economy and in social policy - issues that then, as now, lay at the centre of governmental concerns. Strong evidence for this has been discussed in the course of this thesis, but what is more difficult to establish is why Smith would have this intention. The most obvious answer is political power and influence, but it can only be offered speculatively. Smith's claim was not that the DCMS would just support the government's economic plan, but would be at its centre. Yet to hold this ambition for a department of culture appears incompatible with its purposes and quite unlikely to succeed. As ever, though, he chose his words carefully. It would have been risible for DCMS to

claim a central responsibility for national economic policy but, with a cultural remit, Smith could lay claim to "economic *life*" (emphasis added) and his department's role in its "regeneration". His letter to staff, from which that quotation was taken, goes on to list other policy objectives, but they are quite tepid by comparison: to "bring excitement into the life of the nation and the work of Government"; to "make things of quality available to the many, not just the few"; and to "create the jobs of the future". These hardly justify the earlier claim, although the unconditional nature of that last statement does imply the new knowledge economy that was to be promoted by DCMS.

This research has established the socio-economic purposes of cultural policy and that, to achieve those objectives, conflicts with traditions and inherited responsibilities were inevitable. The inconsistencies and contradictions that arose can be explained in this way (although not always resolved). A review of the research shows these clearly.

### **Defining Culture**

For the protean nature of this central term, definition is essential. It is not just that meanings of "culture" have changed over time but that in general use the word is also synchronically polysemic. The common distinction between its anthropological and artistic meanings (O. Bennett, 1995: 201) make a fundamental distinction but one that does not delineate meaning sufficiently for the analysis of the policies to which it has been applied. Four distinct uses have been identified:

- (i) Culture in scientific anthropology;
- (ii) Culture in social anthropology;
- (iii) Culture as cultivation; and
- (iv) Culture as the arts, intellectual and aesthetic works.

The distinction between scientific and social anthropology (categories (i) and (ii)) is one not normally made in cultural policy but two characteristics make it analytically useful. New Labour had defined objectives intended to be achieved through cultural

interventions, implying the nomothetic logic of cause and effect and the deterministic view that an action (or policy) can have a predictable outcome. By this approach culture policies operating on social practices and cultural norms sought to coerce changes in both. Yet, at the same time, the individualism, innovation and creativity that New Labour identified as necessary for economic development was definitionally ideographic. This implies a dialectic between individual internal cognition and resulting social behaviour, not as conflicting processes but in the manner of "structuration" in which each is generative of the other (Archer, 1982; Giddens, 1984). With respect to the anthropological meanings of culture, this process can only be analysed by separating its scientific and sociological components. As noted, DCMS's search for evidence in support of its policies appeared to have been undertaken without any realistic prospect of finding any and with little concern that that turned out to be the case. It was the social and economic effects of policy that were of concern, not measurable aspects of individual behaviour. That they could not be measured was less important than the belief in their aggregate effects.

Cultivation and the arts, categories (iii) and (iv) of cultural meaning, are also tightly intertwined but analytically separable. In all their forms, the most valued elements of artistic heritage have been perceived as defining a cultivated society, just as knowledge and comprehension of those works have been claimed as the central mechanisms for the creation of the civilised individual. Through education and tradition these interrelate with social structures. The formation of the ACGB can be argued to result from this combination but, in its early days, exemplifying the elitism of F.R. Leavis and T.S. Eliot rather than the ambitions for access and equality of opportunity required by New Labour (Leavis, 1930; Eliot, 1948). The Arts Council was only to lower the walls of its cultural citadel slowly over decades, although Keynes's rejection of amateurs (the focus of CEMA's work) largely remains. The arts, then, may define culture but, as has been shown, anthropologists were content with a definition that entirely omitted their existence except as stylistic characteristics of local practices. In the same way, culture as the arts appeared not to be a concept of

use to DCMS for influencing social norms and practices, despite its promotion of individual creativity.

### **History and Context**

It is striking that most of the theatre, music, art, literature and built heritage that attracts Britain's "cultural tourism", said to be rank 7th in the world in value and numbers (Visit Britain, 2010), is founded mostly on a history of private rather than public finance. Tylor Cowen followed Alan Swingewood's earlier argument that the depth, range, variety and even accessibility of cultural works was a result of this private, commercial history, countering theories critical of capitalist markets argued from Adorno and the Frankfurt School to McGuigan and the Cultural Studies movement (Swingewood, 1977; Cowen, 1988). But these arguments were also integral with Parliament's historic relations with the private and public spheres. At least since the mid-18th century it has been shown that the commercial nature of the arts was concomitant with Parliament's determined disinterest in matters now judged to be of public value, although that changed gradually over the period. That is the first and most important of the conclusions that can be drawn from the historical sketches of the development of a cultural policy in Britain given in chapter 2.

The Treasury's disinterest in the collections of Sir Hans Sloane were significant as much for how they defined that attitude to cultural concerns as for the precedent of state intervention they marked, however reluctantly. For these were private interests, and not matters for government. Yet for both the intervention and the reluctance displayed it is a line of argument that persists even now, however much protested and counter-argued by the arts "industry". Indeed, there is some irony in the argument for increased subsidies that have, since the 1970s, been constructed around the purported commercial or economic value of the arts in that they are redolent of that commercially calculated "good deal" that persuaded Parliament in 1753 to take actions that eventually formed the British Museum.

That logic has only been dislodged by the actions of powerful individuals. This is the second observation: that changes have resulted not from public pressure or through democratic processes, and rarely as a result of party policies or from institutional decisions, but rather from the efforts of individuals<sup>1</sup>. The novelty of Sir Hans Sloane's bequest, Prince Albert's ambitions for the Great Exhibition and Henry Cole's creation of the Kensington museums, John Lubbock and Pitt Rivers determination to preserve our archaeological heritage, and Matthew Arnold's insistence for the necessity of education, all stand as great examples. Half a century later that same missionary spirit was evident in Lord Reith's moral exhortations in the development of the BBC, which in turn strengthened and deepened the path that led to Keynes's support for the elite performing arts in the formation of the ACGB. Given the nature of the status quo on each occasion, it is hard to believe that the same developmental path of arts policy would have been followed without the energy of powerful individuals. The new direction of policy instigated by Chris Smith, independently of Parliament and the Cabinet, might be seen in that tradition.

Where all British governments since the mid 18th century did intervene was in the support and promotion of scientific institutions and "learned societies", even where these were obviously not scientific by any modern understanding (for example, the Royal Academy of Music). These lie at the origins of the third characteristic: institutional path dependence. Fittingly, this term is derived from an economic concept which states that decisions in the present are guided, and choices limited, by those of the past. Among the many authors on this subject, James Mahoney argued for its use in sociology when defined as: "those historical sequences in which contingent events set into motion institutional patterns or event chains that have deterministic properties" (Mahoney, 1999: 507). Once formed, the persistence of institutions and the continuity of their funding is shown clearly in the Appropriation Accounts. Few institutions were dismantled, but many were added over the years. The grouping of these institutions has produced some odd bed-fellows but came

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<sup>1</sup> This argument follows Thomas Carlyle's "great man theory": CARLYLE, T. 1904. *On heroes, hero-worship, and the heroic in history*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

together in the 20th century under the Board of Education and stayed within that taxon until 1993 when a number of departmental responsibilities were brought together as "Heritage". Only in 1997 does a department of "culture" abruptly terminate that institutional lineage. But it was not simply the department's name, Culture Media and Sport, but its distinct socio-economic agenda that defined the breach. Nevertheless, as is noted, certain characteristics still persisted, even when at odds with the new policy initiatives.

The fourth characteristic arises from the attitudinal changes of government to subsidies for artistic activities. These also mark shifts in the nature, place and perceived legitimacy of *laissez-faire* as both an economic and social libertarian principle. Bennett noted *laissez-faire* as a "recurring theme" in government rationales for cultural policy, which "persisted ... until our own time" (O. Bennett, 1995: 203). The point was made earlier (in Chapter 1) that the principles of *laissez-faire* have remained in place to the present day; what has altered are perceptions of appropriate mechanisms to ensure its workings and compensate selectively for its effects. By the arguments of Keynes and Goodman, these compensations also work in both directions as subsidy became a necessary adjustment to the effects of taxation. Pertinently, *laissez-faire* was also the principle on which arm's-length funding depended if decisions of exactly what should be funded and to what extent were to remain beyond the direct control of politicians. In this respect, DCMS was conflicted; imposing controls while exhorting creative independence. The defence, if one were needed, would be that individual funding decisions remained with the funding agency concerned, but this could be countered by demands for policy consistency engrossed in funding contracts. How contractual obligations were exercised in practice may not have demonstrated the policy rigor that these contracts sought to impose (as seen, for example, in the case study of the CBSO), but their intended effects would most certainly impinge fundamentally on the decisions of funding bodies and the work of their clients. This attenuation of *laissez faire* was not for the maintenance or re-adjustment of libertarian principles, but for political gain.



Changes in the practice of *laissez-faire* related also to governments' increasing support of cultural institutions since the mid-19th century. This, the fifth characteristic, can also be expressed as a progressive change in the balance between the public and private realms in cultural matters. A clear example can be seen in the attempts to save historic objects for the nation (initially, mostly pre-historic). John Lubbock's influential book *Pre-historic Times* greatly widened public interest in the issues at a time when many ancient remains were being plundered, defaced or simply reused (Lubbock, 2002 [1872]). The first Parliamentary Bill for their protection was put before Parliament in 1873 but the resulting Ancient Monuments Protection Act was not actually passed until 1882. By the late 20th century, not only thousands of historic objects but buildings and even landscapes were protected with the upkeep of many partly financed by the State for the benefit of the nation. This braiding of private and public concerns was similarly found across the arts. What in the 18th century were essentially private matters and subject to the demands of that market (music, art, theatre, and literature) became selectively adopted by the state on arguments of "market failure"; an argument dependent on them being reconceived as public goods. Debate in the latter decades of the last century then polarised around the moral choice between the public or private funding of the arts; arguments which largely ignored the prevailing dominance of the private sector. The policies of DCMS appeared to disregard that polemic, not in recognition of the interdependence of subsidised and commercial activities, but in a denial of difference. It resulted in a profound contradiction: the lauding of artistic individualism and creativity in the promotion of entrepreneurialism and innovation in the private sector in conflict with policy conformity for the betterment of access and social cohesion.

DCMS was nevertheless inevitably influenced by the history of ideas and attitudes to cultural matters. Where these carried through from earlier periods, their contemporary relevance to New Labour was still discernible and, conversely, where they were abandoned and new ideas invented in their place, their reasoning was

plain and consistent. These are described in the table below. Although the process of tabulation inevitably over-simplifies complex changes with generalisations, it does identify elements that have characterised cultural policy (implied or nominal) past and present.

**Table 12:**

<b>Ideational Strands of Cultural Policy</b>			
<b>Strand</b>	<b>Origin</b>	<b>Under New Labour</b>	
Culture as cultivation	Education and <i>Bildung</i>	Threadbare	Replaced with relativism, and the promotion of creativity
Culture as education	Part of cultivation	Lost	Replaced with the arts as exemplars of creativity and innovation
Culture as the Arts	Ancient	Threadbare	Replaced with economic commodities
<i>L'art pour l'art</i>	18th century	Reformed	Creative "Cool": the Tate Modern phenomenon. A tool for national marketing
The Arts as industrial design	19th century	Continued	Design as a Cultural Industry
Cultural (arts) institutions	18th century	Continued	But re-conceived as structural nodes in a networked society and co-opted into delivering DCMS policy
Creativity	1980s	Continued	Expanded in importance in the industrial sector
Culture as society	1960s	Continued but reformed	The central concept from which economic relations can be formed.
Culture as the economy	1997	New	The central purpose to which all others are tied: Culture as the generator of an economic structure

Non-intervention in the arts (as private concerns)	Traditional, then aligned with principles of liberty	Partially continued	The traditions of independence and commercialism now controlled with subsidy
The Arts as a public good	Developed in the 20th century from earlier origins	Marginalised	The arts now subsumed within social and economic policy (in themselves affording little power within government)

The table demonstrates the dominance of economic intentions, shown here to be even greater even than social concerns. By this argument, policies for access were the techniques by which citizens might be brought to operate with commercial society.

### **DCMS Policies**

Academic analyses have addressed separately DCMS's policy interests across arts, media, and sport and many of the 54 NDPBs it financed, never accounting for the resulting diversity of policies but proposing explanations for their individual characteristics: instrumentalism, attachment, the economic value of artistic works; the application of NPM for greater efficiency; access for greater equality and social cohesion; and, in the spirit of joined-up government, participation in the remits of other departments (Bogdanor, 2005). These are valid and important arguments but are partial, in that they do not lead to an understanding of DCMS's underlying rationales, and superficial as they illustrate but never explain conceptual inconsistencies.

With respect to the arts, the quondam concern of DCMS's predecessors, the strongest contenders for a comprehensive explanation are instrumentalism and attachment. The former is the less useful. All policy is instrumental to some end, whether for a measurable economic or social change or the enhancement of the public good. What that term does not in itself provide is the rationale for the use of the instrument. Furthermore, any instrumental use of the arts would rely on a

presumption of their power, but that has been shown to be, at the very least, a doubtful notion. "Attachment", as conceived by Clive Gray, is the reverse of instrumentalism in that it assumes an inherent weakness in the attached policy (Gray, 2002: 81; see also Gray, 2007: 211; 2008: 217). By this argument, attaching the arts to social or economic policy would give them a higher political profile. The empirical evidence for this is apparent in the way the arts were argued under New Labour to be among the creative industries and, hence, of considerable economic importance. What was promoted, though, was not the aesthetic or intrinsic values of the arts but their market values and the artists' putative skills of creativity and innovation that might be applied across the economy. On balance, the weight of evidence in policy documents and political statements suggests that the arts were more exploited as one part of an economic model than attached for their own benefit. In this sense, they were of relatively little interest to government and, therefore, to DCMS.

That comparative disinterest was further demonstrated in three ways. Firstly, although awards to the Arts Council increased markedly after the CSR, rising 20% in a year, it was actually only a 1.6% increase on the award from the DNH in 1993/4<sup>1</sup> (although the following year's award was reduced by 17%, after devolving the Arts Council of Great Britain). Secondly, the higher award was given under the conditions of the new PSA, which contained the statement that: "All areas for which the Department is responsible have a role in delivering the Government's wider social, educational and economic objectives", with the specific requirement that all funded bodies must "invest" in new responsibilities (DCMS, 1999a: 95, 17). The conditions of the PSA were then expressed quantitatively; no interest in artistic standards was given nor strategies for their support and enhancement. The third characteristic concerns the rhetoric on arts policy. There are some references to the intrinsic

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<sup>1</sup> Figures calculated in real terms, after discounting for inflation. Sources: Grants-in-Aid from the House of Commons Appropriation Accounts, and inflation figures from the House of Commons Research Paper 02/44, *Inflation: the value of the pound 1750-2001*.

qualities of the arts in *Creative Britain* but they are otherwise few and far between. Compared to the persistent exhortations for access, creativity, innovation, education and economic impact, the arts had comparatively little profile within DCMS policy.

This marginalising of the arts and heritage, the traditional purposes of the department's predecessors, within a concept of culture that could envelop social and economic policy, also left the department functionally marooned. Its individual responsibilities to its funded NDPBs continued but the abandonment of support for the intrinsic values of the arts and an inability to prove its relevance to wider government policy left its purposes appearing fragmented and incoherent (despite the economic focus argued here). Chris Smith's successor, Tessa Jowell, later noted: "How we got here is well charted; how we get away is not so easy" (Jowell, 2004: 10).

It could be argued that DCMS's policies nevertheless successfully stimulated the mixed economy in which the arts operated. Promoting the commercially-orientated creative industries, tourism, sponsorship, and policy collaborations with the private sector, all point in that direction when notionally related to the arts by their characteristics of creativity and innovation as the seeds of economic growth. The CMS Select Committee made those economic ambitions very clear, stating: "The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is avowedly an economic Department" (DCMS, 1999a: v). However, neither Smith nor DCMS departmentally related these ambitions to arts funding. That said, responding to ideas from arts and heritage organisations, there were some new policies for arts funding: the New Audiences Fund, the establishment of the Youth Music Trust, and capital expenditure in museums notably among them. But these also had "access" as their declared rationale which, for New Labour, was a structural factor in the creation of social capital for economic development.

At a bureaucratic level that strategy was successful. As the CMS Select Committee noted, DCMS had little interest in increasing budgets but applied its efforts to gaining relevance in a broad range of government initiatives. Its participation in ten

of the eighteen Policy Action Teams of the Social Exclusion Unit, reporting directly to the Prime Minister, are a good example. Within these, DCMS worked on improving workforce skills, social housing, transportation, schools policy, information technology, and government information systems. It created the "quality, efficiency and standards" "watchdog" (their term) QUEST, and placed senior staff in all the regional Government Offices. Nominally, the Regional Cultural Consortia appeared to have had a culture remit and, indeed, their members were mostly drawn from arts and other culturally-related organisations. But its brief to "play a full and coherent part in contributing to increasing prosperity and enjoyment of life in the regions" (DCMS, 2001a: 146), promoting "the role of culture, tourism and the creative industries in economic development, regeneration and social inclusion" (2001a: 125) suggested again that DCMS's underlying objectives were more for participation in cross-government policy. The absence of any budget with which to take action further defined the RCCs as DCMS's collaborative conscripts for the creation and extension of policy rather than for the development of the culture as the arts.

However, in pursuit of policy conformity DCMS had a difficulty. Unlike other government departments, DCMS was the paymaster of a large number of independent NDPBs, all of which had their own policies and objectives, some of which then funded other individual organisations which were also legally independent. Funding the BBC was achieved by passing receipts from licences to the independent BBC Trust; support for heritage was given via English Heritage following the 1983 National Heritage Act; the Museum and Galleries Commission was financed by DCMS, as were several national libraries and related institutions. Support for the arts was channelled through the Arts Council just as sport was supported through the UK Sport Council, and similar arms-length arrangements applied to crafts and film. Then there was the Royal Household and the Historic Royal Palaces Agency, the Royal Parks Agency, English Tourist Board, British Film Institute, and numerous others. By the time DCMS had transferred to itself responsibilities previously held within other departments and had added a few

organisations of its own making (QUEST and Youth Music being examples) it had become paymaster for fifty-four NDPBs, 97% of which were classified as grant distributing bodies in the arts and sport. Together they provided 95% of the department's programme (Select Committee on Public Administration, 1999: v, x, 99).

Organisationally, the agglomeration of activities that began with the preceding DNH could be argued as transitional between an Office of Arts & Libraries and a Department of Culture as it demanded greater control over the use of its funds and policy conformity across its clients. But DCMS could only gain control of funds and policy by reducing the independence of its funded bodies. The introduction by the Treasury of PSAs provided the mechanism with which to do exactly that. Indeed, the whole idea of "best practice" as imposed by QUEST was said by DCMS to be "indirect policy persuasion" (DCMS, 2001a: 51; 2000: 37). The case study of the CBSO described how the resulting policy "delivery chain" operated. In addition, the DCMS also had vetoes over senior appointments, it demanded particular reporting structures, and applied to them all a consistent coercive rhetoric. What DCMS had constructed were structures that guided, limited and directed the actions of ostensibly independent agencies.

### **Economics and Governance**

All DCMS policy can be argued to have had an economic purpose, as was proudly noted by Chris Smith and the CMS Select Committee. Policy concerns for education, health, technology and the entrepreneurial facets of innovation and creativity were all directed at national workforce, urban and social regeneration and, thereby, to economic development. They defined an interest in culture as the structures, physical and sociological, on which the national economic system depended. These are factors difficult to integrate into classical economic models but, as Gordon Brown had recognised, they could be incorporated with the adjustments made within EGT. The essential ingredients were human capital (generated through skills and education policies), social capital (promoted by policies for "Joining it up locally"

as one of the PATs expressed it, but also in the work of the cultural consortia and the whole panoply of access policies), institutional power (in effect, the constituency of DCMS), and the innovative and creative side of the working population exhorted through adjuncts to arts policy (for example in the Creative Partnerships initiative). Once policy objectives were applied across all funded NDPBs and their clients, and social interrelations had become fluid and collaborative, the principles of EGT suggest economic growth would result of its own accord. But for these things to happen, formative structures and social compliance were the necessary precursors, each promoted and controlled through methods of distributed governance. As Andrew Brighton noted acerbically, these were characteristics at odds with an individualistic, libertarian, capitalist society, but in many respects were redolent of *dirigiste* socialist economies (Brighton, 1999); yet paradoxically, for its promotion of entrepreneurialism, innovation and a market economy, they are just what New Labour sought to enforce. The ideational conflicts were innate and unavoidable.

### **The International Context**

Throughout this thesis, the analysis of New Labour's cultural policies have been placed in an historical context. But there is also an international perspective that shows them to be far from unique and in some respects synchronous with the policies of a number of other nations. The notion of the "cultural industries", for example, had featured in Australia's first "cultural" policy (Commonwealth of Australia, 1994); ideas arising from the work of Robert Putnam on social capital were quickly universalised; and the appealing post-industrial theories of Richard Florida, the Comedia authors and Charles Leadbeater's hypothesis of the weightless new knowledge economy were all coincident with the rise of New Labour. But Britain's particular cultural history mixed with New Labour's defining (if only loosely defined) Third Way ideology produced ideas and a rhetorical lexicon that were also exported. Half a century after Jennie Lee's White Paper, the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies explained the intentions of its forthcoming (2014) 6th



World Summit on the Arts without any reference to the arts at all (other than in its title):

Within the overarching theme of *Creative Times: new models for cultural development*, the 6th World Summit will focus on how globalisation, shifts in social and economic development, and new forms of communication are generating an array of challenges and opportunities within the cultural field, and on how this is impacting on the development of our societies and nations (IFACCA, 2013).

In the years since Lee's White Paper the arts in Britain had become culture, and culture society: "the aggregate of people living together in a more or less ordered community" says the OED. The incorporation of this change into government policy was firmly completed on May 1st 1997 with the formation of the DCMS. As IFACCA demonstrates, creativity and the development of societies, economies and even nations appear now to be the *raison d'être* of cultural policy. They are themes with roots that lie deep in British governments' relations with the arts but, since Chris Smith and the DCMS, are now followed almost universally for social and economic purposes.

That description is implicitly critical, but at the same time New Labour expressed a general change across British society where the protecting walls of elitism and intellectual obscurity, both remnants of 20th century modernism, were falling under the onslaught of relativism. New Labour's advocacy for an economy in which the private and public realms were interlaced (albeit following a trend sharply defined in preceding decades) allowed variety and choice in the arts just as it was intended to do in other areas of life. "Has Amazon done more for access to literature and music than the Arts Council?" has become a rhetorical question which points to changes in society, technology, social norms and expectations that DCMS may not have invented but certainly sought to exploit.

Unquestionably, Chris Smith had ambitions for DCMS well beyond those of any previous ministers with responsibilities for cultural matters, seeking to lead DCMS

into the heart of the government's business. New Labour's promotion of neo-liberal market economics, active social welfare policy, and Gordon Brown's social economic theories all provided opportunities for just that. But so too did the spirit of the age, with social relations mutating under the onslaught of new technology and access to cultural experiences of unlimited variety. This research has placed Chris Smith's ambitions in the context of Britain's cultural history and within the contemporary *zeitgeist* around which DCMS policy was institutionalised and operated. Making cultural policy into a cross-government concern required a construction of culture that adopted influential ideas but which, when placed alongside the traditions of British cultural policy, *laissez-faire* and private-sector economic liberalism, resulted in contradictions and inconsistencies that obfuscated his driving rationales. Smith sought power and influence within a department that had, since its earliest manifestations, been at the periphery of government. The arts could be co-opted for this task but were otherwise of little practical interest. The rationales for New Labour's cultural policies were then inevitably replete with contradictions, most especially as, by any historical understanding, they were not cultural at all.

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