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STARSHIP BRITAIN OR UNIVERSAL ENTERPRISE?

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"I used to have a nightmare for the first six years in office that, when I had got the finances right, when I had got the law right, the deregulation etc., that the British sense of enterprise and initiative would have been killed by socialism. I was really afraid that when I had got it all ready to spring back, it would no longer be there and it would not come back...But then it came. The face began to smile, the spirits began to lift, the pride returned." (Margaret Thatcher, 'The Brian Walden Interview', Sunday Times, 8th May 1988).

From economic liberalism to enterprise culture

During the course of the 1980s, the idea of an enterprise culture has emerged as a central motif in the political thought and practice of the Conservative government in Britain. Its radical programme of economic and institutional reform had earlier been couched primarily in the re-discovered language of economic liberalism, with its appeals to the efficiency of markets, the liberty of individuals, and the non-interventionist state. But this programme has increasingly come also to be represented in 'cultural' terms, as concerned with the attitudes, values, and forms of self-understanding embedded in both individual and institutional activities. Thus the project of economic reconstruction has apparently been supplemented by, or at least partly redefined as, one of cultural reconstruction - the attempt to transform Britain into an 'enterprise culture' (see Morris, this volume).(1)

But what exactly does this phrase mean? It would be wrong to assume that there is a single correct answer to this question; and indeed the elasticity of the concept may itself have an important function in its political usage. But initially I shall suggest a distinction between two main senses (cf. Fairclough, and Selden, this volume). The first can be identified by considering briefly some of the main elements in the government's programme of economic and institutional reform, namely: the transfer of state-owned industries, public utilities, and so on, to the private sector; the removal of various non-market restrictions affecting the provision of financial services, the conduct of the professions, etc.; and the re-organization of publicly funded bodies in areas such as education, health, local government, broadcasting, and the arts.

At one level of analysis, these reforms can be seen as involving an extension of the domain of the 'free market', together with an intensification of the competitive forces operating within this domain; and certainly any account of an enterprise culture must attend to the nature and implications of this process. But in pursuing this analysis one must recognize that many of the reforms of publicly funded bodies have not involved their simple 'relocation' in the market domain, with the goods and services they provide becoming straightforwardly purchasable commodities; and indeed quite often these changes have been accompanied by new and more stringent forms of state control.

What has nonetheless been characteristic of these reforms is that they have encouraged or required the reconstruction of the institutions concerned along the lines suggested by the model of 'the commercial enterprise' - the privately owned firm or company operating in a free market economy. Precisely what this entails has depended upon which particular features of the model are selected or emphasised, and indeed upon what particular 'images' of the commercial enterprise are entertained by those involved.

In many cases, for example, this process of re-modelling has led to the introduction of new managerial structures, 'flexible' employment contracts, etc. (see Bagguley, this volume); and to new forms of financial control, strategic planning, and so on.

But perhaps the most striking and noticeable feature has been the adoption both of specific techniques of marketing and advertising, and of the previously alien vocabularies or 'discourses' associated with these. Terms such as 'product differentiation' and 'market niche' become increasingly commonplace; and above all, references to the consumer, a term which displaces others - such as 'student', 'patient' or 'client' - more closely tied to the ways in which the specific nature and purposes of these institutions' activities had previously been understood. Meeting the demands of the 'sovereign' consumer becomes the new and over-riding institutional imperative.

Thus 'the commercial enterprise' takes on a paradigmatic status, the preferred model for any form of institutional organisation and provision of goods and services; and this is at least one of the primary senses to be given to the concept of an 'enterprise culture'. What is therefore involved in the construction of an enterprise culture is an extremely wide-ranging process of 'de-differentiation' of previously distinct modes of organization, self-understanding, and conceptual representation. Just how far this process is intended to go remains unclear. But in practice, at least,it is by no means confined to the institutional contexts noted so far. For example, many 'personal' activities seem increasingly to be based upon a 'commercial' model - running one's life as a small business, as it were. And in phenomena such as the recent sub-titling of the Department of Trade and Industry as 'the Department for Enterprise', and the marketing of its 'enterprise initiatives' (see Fairclough, this volume), the political promotion of enterprise culture takes on an emblematically self-referring character.

However, to understand what is implied by such attempts to promote an enterprise culture, a second and quite distinct sense of the term 'enterprise' must be introduced, in which it refers to the kind of action or project that displays 'enterprising' qualities or characteristics on the part of those concerned (primarily individuals, but also collectives). Here one finds a rather loosely related set of characteristics such as initiative, energy, independence, boldness, self-reliance, a willingness to take risks and to accept responsibility for one's actions, and so on. Correspondingly, then, an enterprise 'culture' in this second sense is one in which the acquisition and exercise of these qualities is both highly valued and extensively practised.

The current political rhetoric of enterprise gives considerable prominence to such qualities; and it also suggests a close though complex relationship between these and 'enterprises' in the first sense of the term. On the one hand the conduct of commercial enterprises is presented as a (or indeed the) primary field of activity in which enterprising qualities are displayed. And given that these qualities are themselves regarded as intrinsically desirable - as human 'virtues' - this serves to valorise engagement in such activities, and hence more generally the workings of a free market economy. On the other hand, however, it is also claimed that in order to maximize the benefits of this economic system, commercial enterprises and their participants must themselves be encouraged to be enterprising, i.e. to act in ways that fully express these qualities. In other words, it seems to be acknowledged that 'enterprises are not inherently or inevitably enterprising'; and enterprising qualities are thus given an instrumental value in relation to the optimal performance of a market economy.

Thus the task of constructing an 'enterprise' culture is (at least) twofold, reflecting these different senses of the term. First, a wide range of institutions and activities must be remodelled along the lines of the commercial enterprise, including its orientation to the demands of the consumer (see Keat, Stanley, and Whiteley, this volume). Second, the acquisition and exercise of enterprising qualities must be encouraged, so that the increasingly commercialised world will itself take on an appropriately 'enterprising' form. And this latter task will require, inter alia, a sustained attempt to neutralise and reverse all those tendencies within British society that are supposedly inimical to 'the spirit of enterprise'. For although enterprising qualities are sometimes depicted as 'natural', or even as distinctively 'British', they are also seen as highly vulnerable to various social forces which may stunt or inhibit their development (see Selden, this volume).

The educational system is frequently criticised as a major source of such 'un-' or 'anti-enterprising' cultural attitudes - including a certain disdain or contempt for commercial activities - which are often held to be at least partly responsible for the long-run decline of the British economy since the end of the nineteenth century. Correspondingly, the overcoming of these antithetical tendencies is sometimes presented as the re-capturing of an earlier 'golden age'.(2) Of more recent vintage are the supposedly damaging effects of the welfare state, which is said to have generated a 'culture of dependency' thoroughly at odds with the initiative and self-reliance required of the enterprising individual. The experience of receiving, as of right, a wide range of welfare

and unemployment benefits, pensions, housing (and even perhaps education and health-care), is held to generate attitudes of passivity and dependency.

The 'dependent self' regards others, and not itself, as primarily responsible for its own well-being; and ascribes to various organs and agencies of the state, in particular, the obligation to provide for this. By accepting such obligations the state, for its part, reinforces these attitudes, and makes the individual dependent, both materially and psychologically. (A similar line of argument may also be applied to collective entities, including both private and public sector companies, which become dependent through the expectation of and reliance upon state hand-outs, subsidies, rescue-operations, etc.. And they too must therefore be 'weaned' from their dependency).

Overcoming the culture of dependency, then, requires a major reconstruction of the systems through which the main elements of material well-being are provided. Along with increasingly stringent criteria for the receipt of benefits by right, in which the principle of need is modified by a strongly voluntaristic conception of desert, a key strategy is to encourage the commodification of previously state-supplied goods, replacing them by consumer-purchasable products - e.g. private pensions, health-insurance, home-ownership, and so on. Individuals become non-dependent and 'responsible' by taking financial responsibility for these matters, as consumers; and the sphere of consumption thus becomes an important training-ground for the enterprising self (see Heelas, this volume).

But more positive measures of cultural engineering are also called for in this overall project of constructing an enterprise culture. It is not enough to make individuals less passive and dependent: they must also be trained in the virtues of enterprise, so that they are fully equipped with the characteristic qualities of the enterprising individual, and can thus contribute to the success of a properly enterprising form of free market economy. Hence, for example, the recent introduction of schemes such as Enterprise in Higher Education, partly following on from the earlier Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) in secondary education (see Morris, this volume). In these and related contexts can be found a more fully articulated vision of the 'enterprising' self than is implied by the ordinary meaning of this term: a mode of self-identity whose main features can be presented, albeit in a somewhat impressionistic fashion, as follows:

First, enterprising individuals are self-reliant and non-dependent. They make their own decisions, rather than wanting or expecting others to make these for them; and they take responsibility for their own lives, so that when things go wrong they do not assume there is always someone else to blame, or whose job it is to put things right. Second, their activities are oriented towards specific goals or objectives; they are concerned to monitor and evaluate their progress in achieving these; and they are motivated to acquire whatever skills and resources are necessary to pursue these goals effectively. Enterprising individuals can always tell one what they are trying to achieve, and how successful they have thus far been in doing so.

Further, such individuals display high levels of energy, optimism, and initiative. They see the world as full of opportunities for making new things happen; they do not hang back and wait to see what others will do before committing themselves to action; and they regard problems as there to be solved or overcome - not as objects of contemplative fascination, nor as occasions for self-doubt or dismay. Finally, enterprising individuals are keen to pursue the rewards that come from success in a competitive world, and are thus highly responsive to the incentives provided by the prospect of such rewards. They greet success on their own part without feelings of guilt or embarrassment; and they view the success of others not with envy or resentment, but rather as spurs to greater efforts of their own.

This picture of the enterprising self clearly leaves considerable scope for diverging interpretations of many of its elements, and for different degrees of emphasis upon each of them - a point whose significance will be explored later on. But first I shall consider a certain kind of sceptical response that might be made to the conception of an enterprise culture which has now been presented. I shall then outline some possible rejoinders to this which may serve to shift the analysis of enterprise culture beyond the framework in which it has so far been presented, namely as the current political project of the Conservative government in Britain.

Enterprising producers and sovereign consumers?

The ways in which the idea of an enterprise culture is represented in its current political rhetoric, and the measures taken in its name, depend for their plausibility on a number of claims or assumptions about which considerable scepticism might be expressed. In particular, they seem to assume an actual or at least achievable relationship between the conduct of commercial enterprises in a free market economy and the display of enterprising characteristics by those involved in the process of production; and also a high degree of control over what is produced being exercised by the freely made choices of 'sovereign' consumers. Yet both these assumptions may well be regarded as highly implausible.

For example, it might be argued that any credence that could be given to the image of enterprising producers belongs at best - and even then only to a very limited extent - to an earlier period of 'competitive' capitalism, with relatively small-scale firms and significant numbers of individual entrepreneurs. By contrast, the conditions of modern capitalist production, with the dominance of large-scale globally organized companies, the separation of ownership and managerial control, and the hierarchical command structures of their internal organization, make the idea that free market economies depend primarily on the activities of enterprising individuals an absurdity - a typical petit bourgeois illusion (see Ray, this volume). And in this context, attention might be drawn to the apparent failure of current representations of enterprise culture to notice the problematic relationship between enterprising individuals, and enterprising collectives or organizations - it being naively assumed that the latter are composed straightforwardly of the former.

Similar scepticism may be expressed towards the idea that consumers possess any significant form of 'sovereignty' in contemporary capitalist economies. For this to be so, consumer preferences would at the very least have to be generated independently of the plans and activities of producers. Yet in reality, it might argued, the reverse is increasingly the case, given the massive resources available to modern capitalist enterprises in their attempts to shape and control the 'choices' of consumers, including the growing sophistication and effectiveness of marketing and advertising techniques. It is production which determines consumption, and not vice versa: the sovereign consumer is a fictitious being.

Given these apparently striking divergences between the political rhetoric of enterprise culture and the realities of contemporary capitalism, it may then seem natural to regard the former primarily as an ideological disguise for political projects of a quite different kind - for example, to restore the fortunes of capital after its long period of decline; and/or to increase the powers of the state by the weakening of various 'intermediary institutions' (including trade unions), whose autonomy is undermined, inter alia, by the extension and intensification of market forces and the introduction of commercially modelled forms of organization.(3) Nor does the success of such projects depend upon the transformation of cultural values: the coercive powers of the state, and the forces of material necessity, are enough to ensure this. And if any reference is needed here to the attitudes and motives of individuals, then fear, greed, opportunism, and the like will suffice - human qualities whose actual character is dignified and sanitised by the rhetoric of enterprise.

Despite the force of these sceptical claims it may nonetheless be argued that they partly ignore or misrepresent a number of increasingly significant features of contemporary capitalist societies. Consider first the sphere of consumption (see Abercrombie, this volume). A growing degree of sophistication and discrimination on the part of consumers may be discernible here, with a corresponding resistance to inflated and unsubstantiated claims on the part of producers, and a more actively demanding attitude towards them. Further, the relatively anonymous and impersonal character of mass production and consumption is arguably being displaced by more differentiated and individualised goods and services, thereby providing consumers with a heightened sense of individual autonomy and choice. Flexibility and responsiveness to the consumer are nowadays genuine requirements for the producer, indicating that the preferences of consumers are to some considerable extent independently generated and out of the producer's control: hence the increasingly 'demand-' or 'market-led' character of production. And these changes are arguably taking place in the context of a more general shift towards a culture in which consumption is itself seen as a primary mode of self-expression.

Similarly 'anti-sceptical' points might be made in relation to the sphere of production, where a number of recent developments may give some credibility to the image of enterprising producers. For example, according to at least some versions of post-Fordist theory (see Bagguley, this volume), significant changes are taking place in the internal organization of many firms, especially in the 'leading sectors' of the economy. The hierarchical command structures of 'Fordist' production are being replaced by less centralized systems, often taking advantage of new information technology, which give greater degrees of autonomy to lower-level units, and provide more obvious opportunities for the exercise of independence and initiative by managers and workers,

either individually or in small teams. The related contracting-out of specific services and functions has itself contributed to the marked increase in the numbers of the self-employed and of small businesses, whose growth and economic significance has been further stimulated by other factors also. And even the massive trans-national corporations, which in many ways dominate the economies of nation-states, seem increasingly to recognize the truth of the ecologists' slogan 'Think globally, act locally'.(4)

In these and similar ways, then, it might be argued that neither the figure of the sovereign consumer, nor that of the enterprising producer, are altogether illusory; and indeed that they will in many respects become less so as these developments in capitalist societies gather momentum. Further, the two figures may themselves be seen increasingly to intertwine. For, with the growth of personal financial services, the use of home computers and their accounting software, the vicissitudes of the housing market, etc., the sphere of consumption itself takes on some of the characteristics of commercial life: working out how to maximise retirement income, treating one's home as a business investment, and so on.

Of course, the extent and significance of these changes in production and consumption is open to considerable debate. For example, de-centralized organizational structures may actually involve more effective means of control rather than genuinely 'local' autonomy; the self-employed and those working in small businesses are by no means necessarily wedded to the supposed virtues of enterprising individuals; 'market-led production' may have more to do with the power of retailers over producers than of consumers over either; and product-differentiation may do little really to increase the choices or express the individuality of consumers. Furthermore, the effects of all these developments are themselves highly differentiated along lines of class, gender, ethnicity, and so on: compare, for example, the situation of the freelance business consultant with that of the door-to-door salesman or woman 'participating' in a youth unemployment scheme; or the skilled male employee in a small high-tech company with the part-time female temporary worker in a contract cleaning firm.(5)

Nonetheless, these changes do have a number of important implications for the understanding of enterprise culture. First, they should serve to dispel the idea that whatever actual manifestations of enterprise culture may be found in contemporary Britain are solely or even primarily the result of the programme of reforms carried out in the name of this political project. For whilst some of these developments have been given an additional impetus by those reforms, they are largely the result of quite independently generated processes. Hence the project of reconstruction may be seen as one that goes 'with the grain' - not of 'human nature' (see Selden, this volume), but of autonomously determined developments which are themselves by no means peculiar to Britain (see Schwengel, this volume). Second, they may also imply that some of the changes experienced in publicly funded institutions now being re-modelled along commercial line are likewise affecting the conduct of 'already' commercial enterprises in the private sector itself; and perhaps that similar pressures would be operating upon the former even in the absence of politically engineered reforms directed towards them.

Finally, these points suggest a view of the 'ideological' function of the political rhetoric of enterprise which differs significantly from that noted earlier in presenting the sceptical case. Rather than seeing this as a matter of 'disguise', given the apparently radical divergence between rhetoric and reality, it might instead be seen as attempting to provide a particular (and politically 'motivated') interpretation of these phenomena. Any such interpretation has to 'make sense': it has not only to give them a particular meaning, but also to give one that seems 'reasonable' to those involved, partly in relation to the prior meanings available to or accepted by them. For just as projects of radical reform work best when they are carried along by independently generated forces, so too are ideologies most effective when they provide people with a not altogether implausible interpretation of their lives.

But at the same time, of course, such ideologies are open to challenge by competing yet equally plausible interpretations -by different ways of 'making sense'; and it is this feature of enterprise culture that will now be explored.

Enterprise culture and Thatcherism

It was noted earlier that even in more fully articulated visions of the enterprising self, let alone in the ordinary sense of the term 'enterprising', there remains a good deal of open-ness in possible interpretations of the concepts employed. Consider, for example, the idea of taking or accepting 'responsibility' for one's well-being. The politically favoured interpretation of this is such as to be paradigmatically expressed in the form of 'financial' responsibility - hence the encouragement of private health insurance schemes. Yet 'taking responsibility for one's health' is given a significantly different - though not unrelated - meaning in, for example,

contemporary 'self-help' women's health groups, and more generally in various alternative health movements which challenge the authority of orthodox medicine and its practitioners, and reject 'dependence' upon them.

Again, the concept of responsibility may be understood in relation to highly voluntaristic conceptions of human agency, which deny altogether the relevance of social conditions in determining individual action; and these are often, though not always, associated with the kind of judgmental moralism to be found in many current political articulations of enterprise and the rejection of 'dependency'. Yet there are other conceptions of responsibility which see it instead as a human potential whose realization depends upon a number of specific social conditions and learning experiences, themselves often of a non-individualistic nature, and requiring various collectively provided resources and opportunities.

Thus concepts such as 'responsibility', and many others which are used in the depiction of enterprising selves, might best be regarded as belonging to a number of partly overlapping moral theories or 'discourses', each of which provides them with more specific meanings that are contested by others. Nor is this a matter purely of semantic interest. For the open-ness and contestability of these concepts may play an important part in how the political demands of an enterprise culture are interpreted and responded to in particular contexts of 'implementation'; and the partly overlapping discourses are themseves often embedded in the specific kinds of practice actually or potentially at work in these contexts.

To take one example - and analogous points could be made about others - the actual implementation of schemes such as EHE and TVEI often draw heavily upon a conception of the individual based in the humanistic psychology of the 1960s, and already operative in a wide range of practices such as non-directive counselling, group therapy and assertiveness training, student-centred learning, certain forms of management training, and so on. Here one finds an 'ethic of the self' (as distinct from 'an ethic of rules', which specifies an authoritatively binding set of permissible and prohibited actions) that is in many respects congruent with the political rhetoric of enterprise: an active, self-motivated individual, accepting responsibility for its own fate, keen to identify clearly its aims and desires, to remove barriers to their fulfilment, to monitor its success in realizing them, and so on. Yet its relationship to the ways in which the political mentors of enterprise require such concepts to be interpreted is complex and problematic.

On the one hand, it may be argued that this 'humanistic' self already bears the conceptual marks of its origins in that legendary exemplar of a commercially oriented, consumption dominated enterprise culture, the U.S.A.; and hence, inter alia, that it is no surprise to find so many cases in which the practices associated with this conception of the self are now conducted in the form of highly entrepreneurial businesses or freelance consultancies. On the other hand, however, it may be claimed that there is no intrinsic or necessary relation between the two, and hence that these humanistically-informed practices may equally well be employed in ways that improve the ability of their participants to engage effectively in a wide range of activities which have little if anything to do with 'enterprise' in a free market economy.(6)

Similar points can be made about the concept of consumer sovereignty. Consider, for example, the increasing tendency for students in higher education to be referred to as 'consumers', both explicitly, and implicitly in the forms taken by publicity materials directed towards them. As yet, at least, they are not 'in fact' consumers in the sense of purchasers of goods and services in a market economy. But to many it may seem that the adoption of this concept serves only to pave the way for a more complete assimilation of educational institutions to commercial enterprises, in which what had previously been received freely, as of right, will be transformed into a purchasable commodity, with all the obvious implications for questions of justice and equality.

Yet at least some who are keen to 'talk' of students in this way interpret the concept rather differently - as implying, instead, the need to make educational institutions more responsive and accessible to those who enter them ('consumer-friendly', like 'user-friendly' computer software), and to reduce the non-accountable authority of teachers and administrators. Thus by according students the status of consumers, a more extensive and effective set of rights, and a greater degree of control, may be made available to them than they had previously possessed; and similarly for the recipients of other publicly funded services.

So the appeal to consumer sovereignty may in practice be interpreted in ways that connect it with concepts such as accountability and the undermining of certain forms of privilege and authority. But this kind of linkage is politically double-edged. The current political rhetoric of enterprise itself seems often to trade on such links, implying that the extension of the market domain is itself an extension of democracy, via the assimilation of 'sovereign' consumers to 'sovereign' citizens. The supposed identity here is

clearly spurious, if for no other reason than that the inequalities of 'consumer-power' generated by the free market are at odds with the supposed equality of democratic citizens. Yet the political function of this implied identity can, at least in principle, be quite easily reversed, so that the appeal to consumer sovereignty is taken to support, not the extension of the free market, but a shift towards more democratic forms of control over institutions which had previously been insufficiently reponsive to those whom they supposedly served.

Thus a central task for current proponents of an enterprise culture is, as it were, to ensure that only the politically favoured interpretations of the various concepts involved in its articulation are accepted in practice. In particular, there is the fundamental need to ensure that the various characteristics of the enterprising self are understood in such a way that it will seem 'natural' to associate them exclusively or primarily with the conduct of commercial enterprises in a free market economy: to prevent, in other words, the two main senses of the term 'enterprise' being prized apart. Correspondingly, therefore, opposition to this project may depend upon the successful articulation of competing interpretations; but also, of course, on the ability to realise such interpretations in practice. For what determines the specific outcomes of such 'contests of meaning' is not itself 'immaterial': it is also a matter of the economic, political, and other resources that can be mobilised in particular situations.

But what is also suggested by the preceding argument is that such opposition may often involve not so much the complete rejection of 'enterprise culture', but rather the attempt to define an alternative version of this which differs from, yet also resembles, its current political form. For although the discussion so far has based its conception of an enterprise culture largely upon its representation in the political thought and practice of the Conservative government in Britain, there is no reason to limit its analysis to this context alone.

In particular, it has been noted already that various developments in the spheres of production and consumption, which may serve to provide both a degree of plausibility for the rhetoric of enterprise, and also an independently generated momentum for its programme of reforms, are far from peculiar to Britain. One might therefore expect to find, in other similarly affected societies, phenomena which bear at least a family resemblance to those of enterprise culture in Britain - even if this is largely a matter of their emerging in response to a common set of problems that have recently faced modern capitalist economies (see Schwengel, this volume). But at the same time, one would also expect these analogous phenomena to differ in ways that reflect their specific economic, cultural, and political contexts ; and this is one amongst several reasons for doubting that these can be explained as 'the export of Thatcherism'(see Crawshaw, and Ray, this volume).

For in Britain, it is 'Thatcherism' (if one accepts the legitimacy of this concept) that has provided the immediate political context for the theory and practice of 'enterprise culture'. Indeed the two terms are sometimes used more or less interchangeably. Yet this is misleading, not only for the reasons just adduced, but also because the idea of an enterprise culture is only one, albeit a central one, of the organizing elements of this ideological melange, to which must be added, inter alia, its moral conservatism and appeal to 'traditional values', its populistic nationalism, and - at least in practice - its empowering of the state.(7) It has often been noted that there are significant tensions between these various elements, though opinions differ as to how far this is a source of difficulty or of strength. For example, the ideal of consumer sovereignty in its pure form sits uneasily with moral conservatism, since the former rules out any judgements being made about the desirability or otherwise of the actual content of consumer preferences, whilst the latter most certainly does not (see Heelas, this volume).

However, what is also significant is the way in which the conception of an enterprise culture is itself partly shaped by these other elements of Thatcherism, thereby acquiring specific features which might well be absent in other contexts, both actual and possible. For example, criticism of the 'culture of dependency' is often couched in a highly moralistic, desert-based vocabulary with punitive overtones, which correspondingly affects the depiction of its preferred alternative, the culture of enterprise. Relatedly, the sovereign consumer is represented as a 'responsible' agent, who perhaps thinks more of the costs involved in paying than of the pleasures involved in spending - though of course there is no guarantee that this is how actual consumers will view their activities. Further, there are frequent signs of a populistic anti-elitism at work in dismantling the protection against market forces enjoyed by various occupational groups, including the professions. And perhaps most pervasively, there is the individualistic conception of enterprise itself, so that the attribution of enterprising qualities is primarily to individuals rather than collective entities.

But none of these specific features of the Thatcherite representation of an enterprise culture are essential to the concept; and they should perhaps instead be seen as serving to delineate a particular variant or species belonging to a more broadly defined and generic category. Precisely how this should be characterized is open to considerable debate. But arguably it should be such as to include the possibility of more collectively oriented modes of enterprise; of 'socialist' market systems involving various forms of social ownership, and more narrowly drawn boundaries for the market itself; and of the exercise of enterprising qualities beyond the market domain. It might then be said that just as the project of Thatcherism is both to construct enterprise culture in a specifically capitalist mode, and to reconstruct capitalism in a distinctively enterprising form, the problem facing many of its opponents is how to to socialize the former without losing the economic benefits of the latter.

NOTES

1. References to other papers in the volume will be made in the text. Other references will be made in these footnotes, and are mainly confined to items not cited in the other papers. I am grateful to all the contributors to this volume for their ideas and suggestions, but would like to emphasise that they by no means necessarily agree with the claims made in this Introduction.

2. The historical work most frequently cited by proponents of enterprise is probably Wiener (1981): see Raven (1989) on how this and similar works have been 'used' politically. Walvin (1987) provides a sceptical account of the historical basis for contemporary appeals to 'Victorian values'; whilst Marquand (1988) argues that Britain's economic problems stem more from its individualist than its collectivist past. Cf. also Perkin (1989), whose interpretation of English social history since 1880 has important implications for the current ideology of enterprise.

3. On the erosion of intermediary institutions see e.g. Gamble (1988), and Grant (1989).

4. Cf. Lash and Urry (1987) on 'the end of organised capitalism; and Wright (1987) on the recent phenomenon of a burgeoning management literature about 'intrapreneurs' and the like. If 'dialectical' speculations were in order these days, one might postulate the emergence a third historical stage in the development of capitalism, transcending the opposition between its competitive and corporate predecessors.

5. On self-employment and small businesses, see Curran et al (1986), Hakim (1989), Burrows (forthcoming), and the current work of the ESRC Research Programme on Small Businesses at Kingston Polytechnic. On gender and ethnicity in enterprise, see Westwood and Bhachu (1989); and on 'the rise of retailing', Gardner and Sheppard (1989).

6. For a Foucauldian analysis of 'practices aimed at the self' see Rose (1989). On the politics of humanistic psychology, see Richards (1989), which also presents a psychoanalytic 'diagnosis' of hostility towards dependency. The concepts of autonomy and dependence, and their possibly gendered character, have been much discussed in femininist work: see Grimshaw (1987), ch.s 5 and 6. On TVEI schemes, see Gleeson (1987), and the working papers published by the Institute for Research and Development in Post-Compulsory Education, University of Lancaster. (It might of course be argued that substantial investment in training is a more important determinant of economic performance than individual values and attitudes).

7. On Thatcherism see e.g. Levitas (1986), Gamble (1988), and Skidelsky (1988); and for a review of many other discussions, Douglas (1989). One obvious danger of the concept is the tendency to ignore differences amongst 'Thatcherites': for example, in the speeches by Lord Young analysed elsewhere in this volume there seems little sign of the kind of 'judgmental moralism' often displayed by Thatcher herself.

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