

Prevision

Should the future help the past?

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What's the scenario? A constantly mutating sequence of possibilities. Add a morsel of difference and the results slip out of control, shift the location for action and everything is different. There is a fundamental gap between societies that base their development on scenarios and those that base their development on planning. It could be argued that the great Cold War divide in socio-economic structuring was rooted in the different kinds of results that you get if you apply either one or the other technique to working out how things might end up in the future. And it is claimed that scenario thinking won. Our vision of the future is dominated by the 'What If?' scenario rather than the 'When do we Need More Tractors?' plan. Yet what is the quality of this scenario mentality and how is an awareness of it connected to the work of some artists now? Scenario thinking dominates Western cultures within politics, economics, film, television and literature. At one extreme a destabilised sense of doubt is crucial to the success of capitalist structures. Yet the nature of scenario thinking is deeply rooted in other forms of activity. It is a defining characteristic that is common in postmodern societies. It is crucial to the risk taking and delicate balance sought by those who wish to exploit resources and people, yet it is also the tool of those who wish to propose change. Within this text I will attempt to expose the rise and continued success of the scenario as a tool that is inherently linked to capitalism and the strategising that goes with it, and show how deeply embedded it has become in film and television. The production of scenarios is one of the key components necessary in order to maintain the level of mobility and reinvention required to provide the dynamic aura of so called free-market economies. And scenario production is not limited to global economic theory, it is reinforced by other areas of production, notably through a mainstream film and television structure that developed in America and is now common across the world. Artists also corrupt our dormant sense of how scenarios play with our desires and situations at any given time. Using scenario production and heightened awareness of its techniques and results in order to expose us to a mixture of play, resistance, potential and critique without the necessity to resort to the presentation of documentary evidence alone in order to ape the socio-anthropological research of those who work in the service of scenario production. Focus upon the scenario as a territory takes artists within the blurry border zone that was kept at a distance by modernist formalism, allowing the proposal of parallel strategies that remain responsive to society and capable of identifying moments of change.

The scenario as a construct is inextricably linked to a specific set of ideologies. It is best used for the control of situations where there is the requirement to disguise control. The World Bank produce them, IBM do it, Robert McNamara came up with them, NATO struggle with their implications but so do Greenpeace, road protesters and the new Euro-communists. Scenarios offer an attractive mirage of choice and options while often proposing limited solutions; it is unclear whether such

thinking requires defeat or merely greater attention and awareness. In any situation where one is faced by a lack of consensus, scenarios are used in order to predict various permutations and potentialities in relation to the development of society. As such it is essential for an artist to be aware of the temporal and strategic games that take place in and around the pre- and post-production phases of their work, the way it fits into the scenario mentality and the way it is used in order to back up a specific ideology.

Espionage and Subversion in an Industrial Society was first published in Britain in 1967. Subtitled *An Examination and Philosophy of Defence for Management*, the book marks out a territory that had been fought over since the emergence of industrial development in Western countries in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. From a brief glance at the contents page it is clear that the author, Peter Hamilton, is the kind of person who supported a value system that would now be described as right-wing conservative. Of course, throughout the book he is careful to avoid expressing support for any specific political party, but it is evident from his precise desire to protect emergent globalised corporate life that his background and ideology are clearly defined. There is a general tone that lays out a number of scenarios and suggests that the values that they attempt to preserve are the way things have been and will always be except that those values are now under threat. Yet this is to look back upon the text from a late 1990s perspective. Hamilton's role in the mid-1960s would have been perceived as more dynamic. Part of a new generation of management-oriented strategists, bringing wartime espionage experience to the service of the ever expanding, ever more international world of corporate activity. He was part of a development in thinking that would find figureheads in Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan later on in the late 1970s and early 1980s, almost a nostalgic throwback to the illusion of the 19th-century capitalist pioneer. Part of a group of people working hard to defeat social, economic and political changes by putting forward scenarios that predicted dire results if any major power shift were to be made by developed nations, yet avoiding overt class-based snobbery or an excess of assumption. Hamilton employs experience and neo-science. It is of some interest that the book was published in the year before students and workers took to the streets throughout the Europe in the spring of 1968. It is books such as Hamilton's that reminded corporate Britain and America about the perils of permitting change or revision to social and economic structure through a focus upon details and use of scenarios rather than moral imperatives. It is worth quoting the information about the author that was printed on the dust-jacket of the 1969 reprint of the book in order to glean biographical motivation.

'Peter Hamilton has spent most of his working life in the security/intelligence world. His first appointment of this nature was in China in 1943 when he was appointed to the British Military Mission, Chungking. He served under the command of US General Wedermeyer who was successor to General Stillwell. Highlights of the following years were three years fighting Communism in Malaya both in the intelligence and combat senses, three years in Cyprus as Security Officer to the Government, and two years in Rhodesia as Security Adviser to the Prime Minister, Sir Edgar Whitehead. Since then he has turned his attention to the fight against crime in England with Chubb and Son Limited, the worldwide security group. Described in the *Illustrated London News* of 18 June

1966 as “one of the outstanding ‘security theoreticians’ team of Chubb”, he is mainly concerned with theory, especially conceptual analysis of security against crime. He has broadcast and given numerous lectures on the subject.’

The shift from fighting fascism to fighting communism is clearly charted, a familiar route that underpins the development of the scenario as a tool for the adjustment of post-war international power relations. Unsurprisingly there is very little concentration within the text upon social changes in the form of neo-anthropological study, therefore little attempt to understand changing trends in society in general. There is an assumption that our values and desires are basically constant across different time periods, or should at least appear to be so. There is an assumption made about the primacy of Western democratic systems above all others, but few instances where the definition of such structures can be played out and examined. The book sets up a condition of crisis that must be overcome in order to maintain a standard of life commensurate with a developed consumer culture. It attempts to provide intellectual ammunition to those who opposed the increasing power of workers through the union movement by cartoonising the efforts of unions to breakdown established power structures; it fuels a common anxiety at the time about communist take-over of large industrial organisations in Britain rather than trying to understand why a power struggle might be taking place in the first place. In common with many similar texts that form the basic reading material in corporate life, it makes no attempt to play with the democratic shifts in society that the book claims to want to protect at all cost. The rise of movements such as the Red Army Faction and Brigade Rosso in the following decade would have been Hamilton’s greatest fear, and the lack of foresight inherent in his scenario structures ensured that he could not predict the changes to be wrought just one year later that would splinter off into many directions, including direct action. While it may seem unfair to single out this one forgotten text for examination, *Espionage and Subversion in an Industrial Society* can be seen as a useful example of the kind of structure that dominates predictive thinking in the second half of the 20th century. The scenarios laid out in this and other books like it, only focus when they are concerned with situations that could provoke potential loss of profit, or hinder the complex, hard to maintain processes of free-market capital.

In some senses scenarios such as those laid out in *Espionage ...* are common from the beginning of the industrial revolution onwards: a shift towards the protection of capital as a relatively autonomous concept held in the hands of entrepreneurs and away from the preservation of territory, money and honour in the hands of a head of state and their aristocracy. An attempt to counter the perceived threat that might come from those groups of society who had most to gain from improved education systems. Education in this context is always a difficult issue tied in with religion and fear. For early capitalism to thrive it needed a slightly educated, or at least disciplined, work force. And once this process began, the balance of power between education and the requirements of capitalism were always being fought over. It is no surprise therefore that education is the area that created most anxiety for 19th-century reformers. By the late 1960s and Hamilton’s book, education is not an issue, information is the key.

The conflicted feelings of early reformers, especially in Britain, which had not gone through a republican revolution in the late 18th century, cannot be underestimated and are possibly at the root of the development of the scenario mentality. But at the early stage, progressive proto-capitalists were worried about the mob rather than any specific group of organised workers. We only have evidence of anxiety between individuals rather than the organised creation of scenarios. While pamphlets appeared, such as those put forward by Harriet Martineau in Britain, there was little in the sense of organised scenarios and a great deal of prediction and warning. We know that Erasmus Darwin and his more famous brother Charles were terrified that their beliefs and subsequent scientific findings would emancipate the workers of the new swollen industrial cities to such an extent that they would no longer be held back by their sense of place in society, that the biological research and findings of Charles Darwin would imply that there was no God-given hierarchy to social formation, and that such a realisation would lead to panic and revolution on a large scale. Scientists of this modern period were often caught between the perceived objectivity of their empirical researches and their ideological attachment to a specific sense of social structure. The Darwins were a low church, non-conformist family, therefore Charles and Erasmus were brought up in an environment that encouraged a value system in which the kind of hierarchical structures found in Catholicism were collapsed. Finding a ready audience and a great deal of influence in the dynamic developments in French, German and Scottish biological research, it was this background that enabled Darwin to embark on his scientific project. Yet it is also important to remember that the Darwin family had intermarried with the Wedgwood family for some time before Charles's birth. The Wedgwoods were proto-capitalists, operating factories in the late 18th century for the production of their still-famous pottery. Charles Darwin's grandfather, also named Erasmus, met frequently with the Wedgwood industrialists and other early factory owners in the Birmingham area of England to discuss new and dynamic ideas in a situation where the universality of established religion was collapsing. They shared an interest in technology and development. Yet by the time of Charles's youth, the family status had already shifted enough to ensure that his education would be completed under the umbrella of social status that was more openly bourgeois in character. It has been argued that it was this shift of social status, combined with his background and devotion to work, that enabled Darwin's ideas to become so well known. It was his use of social disguise and mobility that allowed him to secrete ideas with a radical base under a cloak of amateur respectability. Yet there was to be a drawback for him. An ability to be aware of the significance of his findings would ensure that Darwin was more than aware of the implications that his research would carry for social structure in general. As a result he withheld many of his findings until he was an old man, and could be quite sure that their distribution would not lead to social upheaval on a grand scale. The ability to engage in an early scenario mentality, the playing out of a number of possibilities based upon the use of a multiplied circumstances, events, populations and intellectual tools, is at the heart of the crisis of early capitalist development. Some were aware of the potential of strategy, if only in their reluctance to contribute to the mass of new ideas and ideologies that were pulling at the emergent working class. A few, like Marx, did embark on a project of analysis amid the

confusion of mid-century revolt and the obvious plight of the new urban workforce. Planning and action versus scenarios and speculation was about to begin.

By the 1960s enormous changes had been made to the work place with the continued development of the concept of universal education, which had been ongoing since the guilty reformers of the 19th century had first realised their need for a slightly educated yet disciplined population. Yet this century-long development of education within a scenario mentality bore varied results. Planning had not yet been defeated by scenario play. The post-war devastation of Europe gave social planning a new lease of life. In Britain it was a short life; the first modernist public housing tower blocks were already being demolished in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In this context the scenarios that appeared to most disturb Hamilton, author of *Espionage and Subversion*, were the ones that involved the introduction of rouge individuals into the work place. Radicalised, politically dynamic cuckoos operating within a responsive work force, the operation of the outside agitator manoeuvring within a large corporation, educating fellow workers and attempting to mobilise revolt. Today our sense and use of scenario tools goes beyond the anxious predictions of the corporate sphere and governmental agencies: it is thoroughly embedded in multinational entertainment media such as film and television, while the fear of the subversive has somewhat subsided in contemporary Europe and America. The terrorist, taking direct action, trivialised the role of the hot-headed agitator and was much more film-worthy. What if the plane is blown up? What if the boss is kidnapped? All in place of what if they strike for a longer tea break?

Looking back at the time just before a main event inspires questions and wonder. This is an effect that has been heightened by the changes wrought to fiction through the development of film and television in the dynamic context of American capitalism with its combination of state control and a flickering sense of 18th-century free will. Although similar structures existed in literature and playwriting, no story medium has altered our conception of 'just before' quite as much as the introduction of the screen as a receptor for projected images. Yet there are elements in common between film and television and earlier theatrical presentation. A desire to play with time, or more correctly an awareness of the way a story can be compressed and played with in order to convey ideas without having to operate in real time. These games came into greater focus once film adopted the same theatrically-based compression of time and location that had been employed on stage and in books rather than presenting visual tricks or documentary alone. Within screen-projected time-games there is a greater potential for the development of 'prevision'. By 'prevision' I mean something different to prediction (a word derived from the idea of saying something before it happens) a new term quite divorced from the literary tool of dramatic irony with its audience awareness and character ignorance. I want to create an idea of 'before vision' meaning both the awareness of something before you see it and the ability to see something from the past in full Technicolor glory. It is arguable that 'prevision' is uniquely enabled by cinema and television. When you are confronted by a screen you are faced by the projection of 'prevision' combined with anticipation as an overloaded technique in order to hold attention and to differentiate the medium from those that came before it. Although this effect is slight, and hidden within a sense of occupation of the present, especially in most television, the concept of

'prevision' has also become a subject for television and film in the way that it did not necessarily become a subject for theatre and literature. While an evening of television might include news, interviews and reality shows, all apparently heightening a sense of the present or recent past, it is the fact that we are ready with scenario mentalities based on the medium's connection with 'prevision' that drives these 'present' forms of television. The desire to make news and reality shows entertaining usually means the introduction of 'previsionist' strategies that have been developed and heightened within the medium as part of television's development during a western capitalist consensus. And of course some television and film uses this sense of 'prevision' as its subject matter or the base of its plot-lines. It is therefore worth considering the more extreme forms of 'prevision' as they are presented to the receptive audience within an American context and then distributed to the rest of the world.

So consider the film *Back to the Future* or television programmes such as *Time Tunnel* or *Quantum Leap*. In these examples we are faced by plotlines that are effective due to their reliance upon an excess of 'prevision' in order to catch our attention. We do not keep watching due to the classical dramatic irony of theatre (Oedipus) and some cinema (all cinema), but because we are watching a character involved in the exercise of 'prevision'. Such films and television programmes are usually rooted within the arrival of one or more characters at a situation just before one or more key historical events. The degree of significance varies. The event may only be of extreme historical importance to the character, such as the first meeting of his or her father and mother, or it may be that the character arrives in a context that is clearly of global significance, such as Germany in the late 1930s. Whatever happens, there is always the chance that they might initially arrive in the middle of nowhere, as is often the case in *The Twilight Zone*, but it is soon clear that they are just temporarily on the edge of some significant place or time, and that temporary dislocation heightens the psychological crisis of the character concerned. In these situations, the characters are inevitably faced with the same kind of moral dilemma over and over again. The question is always clear. Do they interfere with the known course of history and therefore save the unwitting people they have been thrust upon? Or do they allow events to pile up towards a resolution that they already know. Do they press on in the hope that the individual or group that they have come across is able to escape destiny due to their own skill, or do they at least offer a cryptic warning? Should they make a move? Should the future help the past?

Characters placed within a potentially ideal situation where they know what might happen next are inevitably caught up in a mess of problems. Maybe because their situation is against a received and ideologically based sense of time and space, they must be punished by having to face a dilemma, a crisis or a series of problems. In the 1960s series *Time Tunnel* for example, it is as if a secret wing of the military are being punished for playing with time travel, therefore finding their key 'test travellers' caught in a constantly flickering state of movement through time, doomed to travel forever while headquarters fights to fix up the machinery. All of this works towards our sense of stability in relation to the past. History in the movies is adjusted. In order to save our sense of the present, the past has to eventually appear to return to a fixed sequence of events. As a result the audience is faced with a curious situation, where historical moments of great cruelty or terror lead to a reluctance on the part of

the characters to act in a grand or dynamic way. And it is initially strange that there should be any problem around the decision of whether or not to act on a known crisis that is about to take place. The reasons for the characters to remain caught within a trap of inactivity are, of course, due to the demands of a classical narrative structure. There is a constant tension between the requirements of the 'prevision' scenario and the apparent needs to limit the concerns of the central character to those within reach of an averaged-out concept of audience. Due to such conventions, the characters caught in these action/inaction dilemmas tend to be focused upon themselves and their immediate surroundings rather than looking for the source of their peculiar problem. The explanation for such a situation is complex, a rationalisation normally based upon all or some of the following elements. The first character-excuse is capture by the agents of those in power at the time he or she has turned up in. A good example of this is the movie *Planet of the Apes*, starring Charlton Heston as an astronaut flung into a simian future. The second element is incapacity due to injury or fear. This involves either disablement of the main character or those he or she has been forced or chosen to help. The most commonly used element is the conceit that time is running out. A lack of time to complete a task, which leads to a conflict between the key protagonist and the onward shift of the scenario. At this point the implications of the scenario are only clear to the character and to us, not the rest of the participants in the drama. The central character of a 'previsionist' scenario rarely books a ticket right to the source of the event. They don't rush to Dallas if they appear in 1963, in order to save the president's brain, but they might try to save a child from intercepting the bullets. The shifted time traveller tends to focus upon some existential crisis surrounding an ordinary individual, rather than one of the key participants in a historically notable event. It is essential for the neo-American version of the prevision scenario that the historically determined event takes place, as it has been agreed to have happened. It is also clear that the story lines tend to privilege the rogue individual working alone, in an exercise of 8th-century free-will mixed with a frontier mentality. It appears that a central strength of the scenario is based upon the reinforcement of events derived from the particular ideology that generated the history in question. Of course in these fictional cases it is necessary to prod the scenario into action. Give it motion with a twist.

A common technique awaits the viewer at the end of the story. The erasure or restoration of a person's image in a photograph, as in *Back to the Future*. Evidence is presented of a temporal shift while history is restored to its correct course. And of course some directors reverse the process, fucking history and creating horror. Think of a late shot from Stanley Kubrick's film *The Shining* set around 1980. Towards the end of the film, as the camera moves back from a close-up of Jack Nicholson's face, it is revealed as part of a crowd of people celebrating new year's eve in the 1930s. More disturbing examples exist. There is a famous photo of Hitler as a face in the crowd during the First World War. Another form of potential horror. The appearance in a photograph is always loaded with potential or hindsight. With this in mind, the manipulation of the photographic image, from Stalin to Forrest Gump, has remained crucial to the development of constantly shifting, 'previsionist' scenario play.

All these examples tell us as much about our interest in time slips and a desire for 'prevision,' as much as they are a demonstration of it. Their success relies upon our internal questioning whenever we are faced with morally straightforward options that are hard to carry out due to the complexities of circumstance. We have all had dreams in which we attempt to deal with a number of situations that we remain powerless to alter. It is a common nightmare for people who have been involved in a traumatic event to replay their inability to act or to prevent the event from taking place. This scenario dream-link connects to other popular cultural tendencies at a time of crisis, such as the popularity of psychic networks and preachers of apocalypse. Along with the dream-link is the continual play we make with apparent 'prevision' in our daily lives. Coincidence is given cosmic potential in the hands of professionals. The potential of the human brain expressed in terms that are common within superstitions across many cultures.

It seems that there is a constant flickering between the eager presentation and reception of 'prevision' scenarios within the fictional context of film and television, posed against a concurrent desire for and fear of such situations in daily life. There are times when the screened scenario sensibility and human fear come together. Some environments are potentially more loaded than others. Aeroplanes for one. If you are nervous of flying, planes are where the full force of 'prevision' scenarios come into play. Film, superstition and fear mixed together. On a recent flight I found, much to my mixed horror and hilarity, that the crossword puzzle I was completing contained the following solutions. Inferno, life, airliner, loss. An appalling and hysterical combination that could only lead to a safe landing. Stories like this quickly become apocryphal, which is why the crossword writer probably included such a sequence of solutions. It has often been reported that during the Second World War, the Normandy landings were threatened by the appearance in *The Times* crossword of most of the code words for the beaches. The recurrence of apparent 'prevision' remains appealing.

While a play upon the potential of 'prevision' is a key element of 20th-century scenario constructions, manifestations of 'prevision' have of course occurred as a fictional tool across longer periods of time. The ghosts of Shakespeare's plays and the seers of Greek tragedy tapped into the same mind games for different, yet similar reasons. Attractive to us due to our knowledge of our death as the only true certainty, these earlier forms of dramatic 'prevision' were rooted in a threat of a suspended after-life. Human value systems and moral constructions do not remain consistent, but certain neurological tendencies appear to work across cultures and times. Some structures and techniques have always played on our ability to be aware that there might be a future and that there seems to have been a past.

There is no doubt that 'prevision' and the encouragement of an audience to take part in predictive scenarios moves in and out of popularity depending upon collective circumstances. Alternatively the situation can provide a specific tightening of 'previsionist' terms. It might be useful to use the example of 20th-century war once more. Between 1939 and 1945 there are few cinematic examples of 'prevision' in a British cinematic context other than the presentation of an immediate sense of foreboding or a resigned acknowledgement of impending tragedy. Films such as Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's *A Matter of Life and Death* are more about the fight between

existence and transcendence, a struggle between two perfect options, life in heaven or life on earth. Of course, earthly life wins, thanks to a trial conducted in front of the massed dead from earlier conflicts. In the recent remake of Wim Wender's film *Wings of Desire, City of Angels*, we witness an angel who fights to be allowed to descend to earth. A flight from perfect boredom to perfect insecurity with the promise of physical love. During the late 1950s, with the development of technology and the burgeoning space race, a scenario form of 'prevision' emerged once more. Conceptually softened by relativity and quantum theory, the old ghost games of Shakespeare took a new lease of after-life. The 'ordinary' person – and remember that American astronauts were always promoted as ordinary and extraordinary simultaneously – could project themselves into a potential time-slip dilemma once more. Our understanding of the flexibility of time and space through developments in mathematics and physics ensured that the old seers became time bandits. And with technological developments in the hands of the military combine along with its beneficiaries, a particular combination of logic and weird circumstance could be juggled together. The earliest effective mind-slip television series in America was *The Twilight Zone*. By the 1990s we had *Quantum Leap* and *The X-Files*. It is now arguable that we are suffering from an overdose coincidence series. An excess of 'prevision' in television and cinema. A movie titled *Armageddon* is possibly the ultimate, especially when the means of production remain essentially in the hands of a religiously confused yet economically dominant country such as America.

Yet not all 'prevision' entertainment has had its scenarios based upon war, trauma and millennial hysteria. *Groundhog Day* played with a repetitive scenario where every day remained the same. The reluctant central character caught within a repetitive drive for freedom from sameness with only the tools of cynicism to help him. 'Prevision' takes over his life. But there is a subtle time play in the film that allows room for manoeuvre. *Groundhog Day* embodies a constant play upon the fact that when you know the scenario and it's going to be the same tomorrow as today, then there remains room for the trapped central player to move around the locked operators within the repetitive scenario. These characters, whose behaviour is predictable, are still allowed time to act and respond, while their initial behaviour in any situation will remain the same unless they come into contact with the overdosed 'previsionist'. For example, he knows that every day at a certain time there will be an old friend who is an insurance agent at a specific place in the street. After that initial knowledge has been absorbed, the central character can play with that repeated meeting towards many different ends. The success of the film is based upon our pleasure in watching those movements between predictable events. The knowledge of when and where everyone else is going to be creates time gaps within which to develop skills that can be brought to bear upon those who will be ready to receive them. Skills such as ice-sculpture to impress Andie McDowell, the anticipation of desires, and the ability to be in place to prevent accidents. *Groundhog Day* self-consciously undermines the dominant culture's use of prevision and instead creates introduces an element of narcissism that has since become a strong sub-genre of previsionist production.

So the concept of 'prevision' and play with scenarios is rooted as one of the major strands within our entertainment culture. Yet it never dominates or completely disappears. It runs alongside

more generalised modern categories from comedy to tragedy. The current brand of western 'prevision' and scenario play is completely linked and inter-twined with powerful organisations and tools which control both our sense of how to deal with the near future, and spin our memory of the recent past until it shows a face that is comforting or useful for those in control of the means to spin it. There is a difference between such film and television representations and early science fiction that is worth exposing. With books such as Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backwards* and H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine*, first reading results in our marvelling at the author's sense of 'prevision' rather than that of the central character, who instead is forced to accentuate the dramatic time shifts involved by asking leading or rhetorical questions. Yet this marvelling at the author's ability to predict a future should not come as any surprise. As I have pointed out before, those who think about the future affect the future as much as thinking about the past changes what has already taken place. In these texts of the late 19th and early 20th century, the central character is disempowered and merely a witness to the authors' sense of the future. The key figures are not in control of the scenario and remain detached from the circumstances surrounding them.

Contemporary British politics are embroiled in a reassessment of scenario strategies. With the election of the Labour Party last year we witnessed a victory of scenario thinking over classical leftist planning. Young people who worked for the British New Labour party during their years in opposition are not quite so young anymore. They developed their rhetoric during nearly 20 years of a Thatcherite grab-fest of opportunism, graft and social upheaval, and now they have finally accessed a degree of power. Yet new governments do not have sufficient room for all those who had worked on strategy and planning. One of the notable elements of those Labour years in opposition, from 1979 to 1997, was that, by 1983, a new generation of people felt that Labour were never going to win an election unless they changed their image and strategy. Stop exposing the decision process to open scrutiny. Dump planning and start juggling scenarios. After election day, those who could not squeeze into the official offices were left out in a grey zone, winking at their friends and colleagues inside, continuing to talk and prepared to keep on helping. The brightest or most pushy are now working for companies who lobby the new government. Paid consultants who help those who are in pursuit of contacts, information and influence. And it is these people who have recently come under moral scrutiny without a concurrent shift of critical understanding in relation to their constantly changing role and context. The election hung upon scandals surrounding Conservative Members of Parliament accepting cash to ask specific questions in the House. Yet the relativism of Labour's current position is not as easy to designate. There is no direct exchange taking place between clients and Members of Parliament, instead we are faced by displacement strategies where scenarios are put together in order to provoke a sense of access and prior information. These insider-outsiders are operating in a centre ground of control that is constantly changing hands and is always mobile. Access and the rumour of access are the tools of any lobbyist, yet in a context where there are few clear laws of open government such as a written constitution and a freedom of information act, the new generation thrive, tooled up with an ability to weave a bendy course, meandering through relativist justification in a constant search for the multi-layered space between one set-up and another. Never able to leave the lobby and floundering

when they do. We are all caught within the scenario play of late capitalism. Some artists manipulate the techniques of 'prevision' in such a way as to allow the motivation to show.

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