The term 'tory Anarchism' is reasonably well known but largely unanalysed in either popular or academic literature. It describes a group of apparently disparate figures in English popular and political culture whose work has, in part, satirised key British institutions and social relations. At the same time, tory anarchists also provide interesting insights into questions of British, though predominantly English, identity, by focusing upon issues of class, empire and nation. This article examines tory anarchism by focusing upon four representative figures: Evelyn Waugh, George Orwell, Peter Cook and Chris Morris.

Keywords: Tory anarchism, popular culture, world system, English identity, empire

INTRODUCTION: THE SOCIAL ORIGINS OF TORY ANARCHISM

Tory anarchism is a term that describes a group of (largely) English writers and artists who span the twentieth century. As a concept it is infrequently referred to and lacks any systematic analysis in either academic or popular literature. It is a predominantly English phenomenon, associated with men, not women, and members of the middle and upper-middle classes in revolt against what they see as the denigration of the core values of England or the idiocies of the ruling establishment. Although often linked with social satire, tory anarchism is much more than this and embraces ideas about the nation, morality, class, culture and patriotism. The argument that I develop in this paper is that tory anarchism emerges against the background of Britain's changing circumstances as a global power. In particular it should be seen in the following context:

* The end of empire and relative decline of the UK (more specifically England) as a political force. In this respect it is both an evocation of and a commentary upon the changing nature of English identity over the course of the twentieth century.

* An ambivalent reaction to modernity and capitalism that invokes a cultural critique sharing many concerns with those of the Frankfurt School:

1. The death of the individual;

2. The rise of authoritarianism and totalitarianism;

3. The subordination of moral to monetary values;

4. An ambiguous attitude towards both elite and mass popular culture.

However, tory anarchism offers a profoundly different analysis of these problems and ultimately hankers after a different kind of utopia to those of the critical theorists, one rooted in a romanticised past rather than a romanticised future.

What, then, does it mean, to describe someone as being both a tory and an anarchist? On one level the term is clearly paradoxical; conservatism and anarchism are often seen as political opposites and yet in truth there are often striking overlaps in these political philosophies: a concern with the local and the empirical,2 the concrete reality of everyday lived experience, as opposed to more abstract, universal theorising;3 and the importance of class in understanding...
social order. However, the analyses that orthodox anarchists and conservatives offer to explore these issues are radically different. What can be said to characterise the idea of a tory anarchist then? First, it is an individualist creed. There can be no party of tory anarchists as it is an anti-political stance or posture that would make such an idea impossible in practice. There is no institution in which the tory anarchist is housed and nor is it a political badge that simply anyone can wear. The history of tory anarchism suggests that it is restricted in its meaning to members of a particular social class, working in areas of popular culture. To be a tory anarchist in practice means having an authence for your work, to be someone that has made an impact on popular and political culture. Given the rebellious nature of tory anarchism it is difficult to make a case for lay people adopting the cause with any degree of conviction. Tory anarchists are essentially public figures who use their public image to unsettle, to question and to challenge the failings and contradictions of English society. In the context of tory anarchism in the UK there is a rich lineage of figures that can be referred to from Swift, Milton and Cobbett through to twentieth century journalists such as Richard Ingrams, Auberon Waugh and Michael Wharton. The social conditions and individual qualities that I have described as being necessary aspects of the character of the tory anarchist can no doubt be found elsewhere in the world system. For example, Louis-Ferdinand Céline in France, and Norman Mailer and Dwight MacDonald in the USA, might reasonably be described in this way. However, this article is concerned with tory anarchism as a predominantly English phenomenon and with its distinctive national qualities.

The backdrop to the idea of tory anarchism in the twentieth century is the end of empire and the gradual and relative decline of the UK’s global hegemony. In turn this raises the question of the relationship of tory anarchism to conservatism as a political ideology. The deepening of capitalism as a global system undermined many of the ideas, beliefs, values and institutions that conservatives have held dear, especially in the UK. Socialism, in any meaningful sense of the term, has also disappeared from mainstream party politics, with most political parties adhering to some variant of neo-liberalism or, to some extent, social democracy. But while the embedding of capitalism into everyday social relations has presented major problems for all political ideologies, as Wallerstcin has noted, conservatism has been dealt a particular blow. The party political ideology of traditional conservatism, which Ian Gilmour characterised as a commitment to one nation, a mixed economy and a pragmatic philosophy, has for the moment largely disappeared from the political landscape.

For the tory anarchist these developments are hugely significant, though the relationship to traditional conservative thought is somewhat ambivalent. Tory anarchists are often bohemians and ironists, exploring themes that are not usually associated with orthodox conservatism. The death of conservatism as a political force is an important target for tory anarchist iconoclasm, providing a prime example of the failure of the traditional ruling class to defend and sustain the values and institutions that helped shape modern England against a crude and vulgar materialist (neo) liberal ideology. Tory anarchists are able to combine a defence of values and institutions that they know to be outmoded, if not reactionary and frequently unacceptable (empire, colonialism, racism, a ruling class and fox hunting), with those typically celebrated in English culture and custom (from the pub to tea-drinking, bad cooking and cricket).

In this paper I focus on four well-known tory anarchists: Evelyn Waugh (1903-1966), George Orwell (1903-1950), Peter Cook (1937-1995) and Chris Morris (1965-). Each of these men has
used the dominant cultural formats of their time to explore their ideas about Englishness and identity. Waugh, Orwell, and Cook all worked with first-hand knowledge of the British empire and its disintegration. In his work Morris deals with the consequences of a post-empire and post-modern Britain: the apparent loss of faith felt by many in the grand narratives of identity rooted in the nation, class, politics, religion and science. Although my main concern is with satire I also want to bring out other aspects of their work to give full meaning to the idea of the tory anarchist. Thus the paper will examine their ideas regarding the following key themes: empire, class, nation and popular culture.

TORY ANARCHY AS SOCIAL SATIRE: WAUGH, ORWELL, COOK AND MORRIS

What unites the avowedly socialist Orwell with the radically right-wing and racist Evelyn Waugh? What can be said to connect the gregarious public figure of Peter Cook with the intensely private Chris Morris? In short, what is it that gives coherent meaning to the idea of a tory anarchit? There are a number of threads that connect all of these figures. They share a similar social class background, being upper-middle class, public school and university educated.

Waugh came from a middle class family and was one of the 'bright young things' of 1920s England that he went on to satirise in Vile Bodies. He was educated at Lancing College and Oxford, where by all accounts he lived a relatively debauched and indulgent life, that of a Loafer. However, his relative lack of academic success led him to pursue a variety of jobs that left him deeply unhappy, with a possible attempted suicide by drowning aborted only when he was stung by a jellyfish. Orwell was born in India, where his father worked for the opium department of the civil service. His mother brought him to England when he was one year old and he was subsequendy educated at Wellington and Eton. Upon leaving Eton Orwell, as is well known, did indeed choose a career reflecting his social class, joining the Indian Imperial Police, an experience diat was to shape his future anti-imperialist politics. Like Orwell, Peter Cook was born into a family where the father was a colonial civil servant. Cook was educated at Radley and Pembroke College, Cambridge where he was perhaps the most famous ever member of the Foodights comedy group. Cook noted in various places that he had been expected to work in the Foreign Office, but his career as a satirist (something he went on to mock with some vehemence) put an end to this possibility. Finally, Chris Morris was educated at Stonyhurst, the Jesuit boy's boarding school in Lancashire, and the University of Bristol. Morris is by far the most private of these figures. His comparatively low public profile has been an important factor in his ability to satirise the media and popular and political culture. The less the media is able to tell us about Morris, the more he is able to retain his cutting edge and autonomy of purpose.

In addition to this shared background, each has a rebellious streak, an aesthetic interest in popular and elite culture, the ability and motivation to take huge risks, the desire to reflect upon, criticise and even profane the very things that dicy hold most dear. For example, Waugh was both a critic and a member of the bright young things movement; Cook was both a satirist and admirer of Macmillan; Orwell was a democratic socialist who defended provincial English village life and customs, which often entailed bigoted views about homosexuality, foreigners and women; Morris is a master of the modern media age but also a supreme critic of its impact on popular culture. Irony is the cutting edge of the tory anarchist and it is an irony that they are
adept at applying to themselves. They are tories in the area of culture; it is a cultural conservatism, not a political one that unites them. They are anarchists in the sense that they are anti-authoritarian, against the state and bureaucratic power, and defenders of individual liberty. In this sense Orwell, the only one of the four who was openly committed politically, is as much a tory anarchist as the other three, though he is without doubt the most problematic figure in the group. Indeed Orwell said of himself that when he was eighteen he was 'both a snob and a revolutionary. I was against all authority';17 and until 1934, at least, he referred to himself as a 'tory anarchist'.

As with all social practices, satire is rooted in a particular time and place. Unlike most other forms of English satire, however, tory anarchism knows no bounds in terms of its targets and the extremes of humour to which it will go in order to make its point. As a consequence it provides the most challenging of tests to free speech in its exposure of social folly and vices, whatever the consequences, in the public sphere. There is an irony here in that whilst the idea of the public sphere is most commonly associated with liberal and leftist social thought, in the English cultural mainstream it is the tory anarchist who has arguably pushed the boundaries of free speech and the public sphere the furthest. The work of liberal and leftist satirists is usually situated within part of a broader progressive social movement and has tended to subject itself to self-imposed limits on both its subject matter and the language used - for example, shunning sexist or racist jokes. By contrast, the tory anarchist is the ultimate contrarian, raising issues that others don't and often rubbing the noses of their fellow citizens in the most hypocritical and repulsive aspects of popular and political culture. Evelyn Waugh's treatment of English racism in his early novels; Orwell's satirical attacks on totalitarianism; Peter Cook's then-scandalous impersonation of then Prime Minister Harold Macmillan and the extreme scatology of his fictitious persona in 'Derek and Clive'; and Chris Morris's television programme Brass Eye on paedophilia - are all examples, all provoking hysterical reactions from the popular press and politicians.

AGAINST MODERNITY? TORY ANARCHISM AS CULTURAL CRITICISM

The relationship between tory anarchism and modernity is a complex one. Often it takes the form of scathing hostility: Waugh's complaint, articulated in the guise of Gilbert Penfold, that the evils of modern life could be summed up as 'plastics, Picasso, sunbathing and Jazz' is a neat summation of this mood.18 More tellingly, his novel The Loved One: An Anglo-American Tragedy is upon first reading both a shock and a thrill in its characterisation of the vapid and amoral social relations of 1940s Los Angeles. With its exiled English poet Denis Barlow as anti-hero taking advantage of the naivete and vulgarity of his American hosts whilst working at the garish pet cemetery (the pcrfcedy named 'Whispering Glades'), The Loved One is a thoroughly modern novel in style, target, tone and humour. It is written with a dead-pan and vicious wit that enables Waugh to skewer the narcissism and emptiness of modern consumer society. Its relevance for an understanding of the dangers of commodification on social and moral norms has only grown over time. The theme that emerges here and throughout tory anarchist writings is that of human imperfection, the willingness of people to carry out the most awful and often inhumane actions and even to find black humour and pleasure in them. Orwell noted this tendency in his writings on the appeal of fascism, for example.19 More benignly, tory anarchists find humour in the imperfection and imperfectability of human nature, leading them to dwell upon the often absurd nature of life.20
Peter Cook both loved and ridiculed aspects of the modern world. He claimed to spend most of his time reading newspapers, watching television, consuming pornography, listening to rock music and engaging in gossip.21 His flawed film The Rise of Michael Rimmer was a failed attempt to examine and ridicule the rise of public relations in political life as a mechanism for controlling public opinion.22 As is now well recognised, his theme has become central to political culture in most countries. George Orwell saw the dark aspects of modernity most famously in 1984 where the mass media has become the mechanism of social control and totalitarianism, but he drew upon his experiences at the BBC for inspiration for the idea.23 Similarly, Chris Morris is accused by his critics of being a symptom of the very decline he satirises, someone who panders to the audience's worst taste. What can be concluded, then, is that tory anarchists have contrary views about the nature of modernity, and in the following section I will examine the major themes in their work to draw out further this contradictory nature.

EMPIRE, CLASS AND NATION: THE END OF ENGLAND?

A major theme of tory anarchist writing has been the apparent erosion and transformation of English identity over the course of the twentieth century. This change in national identity takes place against and within the backdrop of three developments: the end of empire, ruling class weakness and the transformation of the nation and its values.24

The end of empire

This theme is addressed explicitly by Waugh, Orwell and Cook, and serves as a cultural backdrop to the work of Chris Morris. Orwell had mixed feelings about empire but ultimately reached a consistent anti-imperialist politics. Empire was a source for some of the works of literature that he most admired, notably Kipling. Equally, it was the source of a general racism in the English ruling classes that he came to despise. The brutality of empire and its deadening effect on the moral consciousness of rulers and ruled alike is explored in the essays 'Hanging' and 'Shooting an Elephant', and in his accounts of life in the Imperial Police, where Orwell acknowledges with customary honesty that the institution was changing him and moulding him to its own racist norms and values.25

For Waugh empire is less problematic but equally indicative of die corrupting effect of power and the decline of England. In both Scoop and Black Mischief Waugh is able to expose the follies of arrogant ruling class megalomaniacs such as Lord Copper of The Daily Beast and Lord Zinc of The Daily Brute, in a way that is devastatingly funny, affectionate yet brutally clear about the unaccountable power of media and political elites. Both novels arc laced with acerbic observations about the intricate relationship between British racism and die empire, reflected in the complacent and arrogant practices of a ruling class that is increasingly unable to rule with any authority. Infusing his conservatism with Catholicism, Waugh reacted to what he saw as the moral collapse of die world around him and armed himself with the weapons diat he needed to express his hatred and intolerance of an atheistic and nihilistic age.26 The latter themes connect his writing to the work of Orwell and Morris. The former addressed recurrently the question of how to be a good person in a world without faith and Morris likewise focuses upon aspects of Britain's moral and intellectual decline.
By the 1950s the British empire was in full retreat but in ideological terms it continued (and still does) to hold a massive significance in popular and political culture. British politicians continued to act as though they possessed imperial power, as Anthony Eden showed with the attack on Suez in 1956, and as more recendy Tony Blair indicated in the offensives against Afghanistan and Iraq. This arrogance and the continued belief in the right to exercise imperial power left Britain's ruling classes of the period open to the attacks of a younger generation who came of age after the Second World War. At the forefront was Peter Cook. Cook's club, 'The Establishment', was the first and most important comedy club in Britain, providing a new generation of satirists with space to vent their spleen against an establishment from which many of them were actually drawn. For Cook and his peers, the 1950s were not only a period of cultural stagnation and decline but were marked by a series of social conventions that had their roots in Victorian Britain, and seemed increasingly irrelevant to contemporary needs and desires. Cook's aims were to ridicule the manners and morals of an elite that appeared ridiculous in their pretence of imperial power. Cook's work was filled with characters that he would develop later in his career: jaded, violent and corrupt judges, pompous and deluded politicians, the sexually repressed middle classes, stiff-upper-lipped and desperate military officers and perverse public school teachers. In short he was mocking the weaknesses and failures of a generation shaped by empire and its decline.

Class rule

Class is a central concept in the tory anarchist's lexicon and reflects their general ambivalence towards modernity. In practice, classes are sources of rich cultural heritage, humour and values, setting out clear social roles and forms of authority, obligation and morality. Class relations are not vehicles for the analysis of social conflict or revolutionary change. Tory anarchists are committed to a more moral idea: no class is necessarily good or bad in its cultural influence, except the commercial philistines who emerged with modern capitalism. There is a sense of a natural order to the tory anarchist view, which has its roots in English (perhaps British) culture; and an idea of an order that has been fundamentally subverted by modernity and die rise of capitalist society. Under capitalism, the working classes have been transformed into wage slaves and die traditional aristocracy are frequney reduced into a faded and ridiculous grandeur. It is the newly emerging Victorian middle class entrepreneurs with their depressing utilitarian and philistine ethos that has served to destroy the real meaning of English culture: life and liberty. In the Brass Eye episode 'Decline', Chris Morris focuses upon the moral decay of Britain, a theme that also predominates in Waugh's work. Morris paints an exaggerated and satirical portrait of a morally decayed and corrupted society that has succumbed to the quintessence of capitalist culture: consumer commodification. At one point he uncovers a map of the UK to reveal that it has lost all 'decency', a theme that resonates in the work of Orwell, too, and which is at the heart of the tory anarchist critique of class: values and manners lost, in a world corrupted by money and profit.

For Waugh the lesson is that the aristocracy and the upper classes remain an important source of inspiration in English culture, notwithstanding their debauchery, stupidity and abnegation of responsibility. Happiness and a good society are to be found in the complex interplay of social classes and the diversity of character and outlook to be found within the nation. The enemy for the tory anarchist is grey uniformity, the homogeneity of class and character that results in
societies engineered by the state through social policy. Orwell’s concern about the transformative power of the state emerges in his celebrations of the lives of the English working classes, his vivid pictures of the sights, sounds, smells and feel of class as a lived cultural experience, and his worry that western democracies were as vulnerable as the states in the Soviet bloc to the totalitarian pressures of modern bureaucracy.33

Rather than the gritty realism of Orwell, Peter Cook inherited the mandate of the aristocratic dandy (shades of Oscar Wilde and Noel Coward perhaps): a brilliant and savage wit who mocks and celebrates the rich array of crazed and crackpot characters that the ruling elite throws up.34 In 1986, when Cook attacked the ultimate symbol of utilitarian and philistine values - prime minister Margaret Thatcher - he readopted the guise of Harold Macmillan. Whatever Cooks critique of the generation that Macmillan represented, he realised that the former prime minister was as aghast as he was at Margaret Thatcher’s philistinism.35 If Macmillan represented a ruling class at the fag-end of empire, Thatcher was the culmination of everything horrible in the new commercial conservatism.36

One nation in decline

The nation is fundamental to conservative politics in general, and for tory anarchists serves as a source of inspiration, meaning, black humour and ultimately satire.37 In terms of the tory anarchists’ vision of a good society (and I make that claim tentatively), the nation is the repository of practices and traditions from which a modern society can and should draw.38 The history of the nation, particularly its rural past and present, is a site of inspiration for tory anarchism rather than simply being the home of ‘rural idiocy’, as Marx once described it. It should be stressed, however, that for tory anarchists, the countryside is also the home of ‘rural idiocy’ and therefore a site rich in potential for caricature and humour. For example, Waugh famously adopted the guise of the traditional English country gentleman as part of his transformation into a curmudgeon but admitted he had not the slightest interest in rural life.39

Unlike socialist Utopians, who imagine a future good society, tory anarchists draw from the qualities of the nation’s past for their inspiration. Their view is that English national identity is rooted in a defence of ‘life and liberty’, a love of play, community and self-help and autonomy. It is an expression of the lived experience and history of a group of people, not a commitment to abstract principles or citizenship or belonging. In undermining these features of national life, modern industrial capitalism has replaced skilled or semi-skilled communitarians with atomised, routinised and de-skilled drones of progress.40 Life and liberty have been sacrificed for the promise of security’ in all its forms.

A love of the nation, despite its flaws and often ugly or horrendous past, is a connecting feature of these writers, but in Orwell it perhaps finds its clearest expression. His defence of patriotism in his ‘Notes on Nationalism’41 argued that love of country was a fundamental social and political virtue and something generally lacking in the political left wing. Indeed, Orwell was equally scathing about die mindless ‘John Bull’ patriotism of the right and the snobbery and intellectual detachment of many leading British socialists, finding that they had nothing in common with the working classes they aspired to represent.42 Orwell was selfcritical about his own relationship to British working class life, but unlike many of his contemporaries could
openly admit this. He took his concern with the nation and its culture to focus upon the peculiarities of the English - their love of pubs, vulgar seaside postcards and music-hall humour, even the correct method for making a cup of tea.

It is worth noting that there is nothing sentimental about the tory anarchist view of English culture. On the contrary, the assessments are of its resilience and its contradictory nature: it is the diversity and peculiarity that national identity generates that is so attractive to tory anarchists. For Chris Morris, writing in what I described earlier as a post-modern, multicultural England (what John Gray has described as post-traditional England), a key question emerges here.

What happens when a people that was once held together through grand narratives of class, nation and empire begins to reject or move away from those meanings? What does it mean to live in an increasingly multicultural England for the tory anarchist? Morris is ambiguous about this in his work, and I suspect this is because he is unsure about the answers. Rather, he raises awkward questions, prickling the pompous (like Waugh before him) and exposing contradictions, as tory anarchists are wont to do. What is transparent is his mockery of a dumbed-down England of mass culture, moral decline, popular idiocy and shallow intellectual depths, as personified in the rise of a facile celebrity culture. What are the consequences of this for the tory anarchist?

POPULAR CULTURE IN THEORY AND PRACTICE - PROFANING THE PUBLIC SPHERE

In theory - how very un-British

What can tory anarchists tell us about the nature of British popular culture over the course of the twentieth century? It would be an exaggeration to say that tory anarchism represents a coherent social theory, and no doubt its practitioners would regard this suggestion with some mockery and scepticism. At best it is a stance or a position that is taken against the grain of contemporary culture and politics. Nonetheless it is not unreasonable to say that there are certain themes that underlie the position of the tory anarchist, and that at its heart is a moral response - though not a didactic or moralising one - to what is seen as decline in British life, art and culture.

For Waugh the concern is with the defence of the values of true or great art against mere populism. There are echoes of this in the work of Orwell, Cook and Morris, but in general they take a more complicated view of popular culture. Their work exposes the ways in which mass culture in the hands of an oligarchy of media professionals can be used as a mechanism to exploit and corrupt taste, playing on popular fear, ignorance and gullibility.

It is clear that for all of these figures, except perhaps Morris, there was a resistance to theory and theorising, often coupled with a deep hostility to what was seen as unnecessary pretentiousness. Waugh is an ambiguous figure here, in that he experimented with and was influenced by modernist literary style and devices, such as collage, the interior monologue, classical parody, the intrusive narrator, the camera eye, montage. Allen suggests, however, that Waugh’s heart was never really in this, and that he used these techniques at least as much as a way of shocking his elders and the public, as through any intellectual commitment to the tradition. In particular Waugh rejected the way in which modernism connected aesthetics and politics in support of wider political projects, something he saw as demeaning and potentially corrupting of art.
Waugh’s prickly attitude to the modernist movement in popular culture is reflected in his general loathing of modernist art and comments on modernist contemporaries such as Joyce. In his work Waugh pilloried major modernist figures and movements from Le Corbusier to the surrealists for their pretensions and pomposity. In style and method Waugh was like Orwell, an empiricist, committed to the clear and precise use of language.

In a similar vein Orwell was hostile to unnecessary theoretical pretensions, and one of his most famous essays, 'The Politics of the English Language', is an attempt to defend the virtues of clarity and simplicity in style. For Orwell language became intrinsically connected with morality as he sought to defend principles of truth, objectivity and the verification of historical narratives, all things that he saw being systematically decimated during the 1930s on all sides. Both Orwell and Waugh associated theoretical pretension with obscurantism and intellectual elitism. Critics have noted that Orwell's empiricism remained theoretically unsophisticated, a factor he would perhaps have been perfectly happy with.

The reaction of both Waugh and Orwell to theoretical innovation were reflective of the tradition of British empiricism that has its roots in Hobbes, Locke and Hume. For many of its modern critics British empiricism is seen as an inherently conservative and outdated philosophy. This is hardly fair, in that empiricism was a sceptical philosophy that could generate radical and unsettling conclusions. The work of Hume and Hobbes, as is well known, can be seen to call into question everything from a belief in god to the authority of religious and political institutions - hardly the position of the traditional conservative. Indeed, it is the corrosive relativism at the centre of this tradition that Waugh found most difficult to live with, finding only in Catholicism the absolutism and foundations that he felt necessary to secure social life in the modern world. This kind of empiricism is a sceptical tradition that doubts the power of reason to resolve fundamental problems of social life.

By contrast both Cook and Morris owe debts to the surrealist tradition in their works. Cook's caricature of English eccentricity frequently evokes the rich tradition from Lear and Carroll to the Goons. Cook was a masterful deflator of pomposity and pretension in his work, and a number of pieces show his ability to ridicule dieoretical pretension. His well-known 'pete'n'dud' sketch with Dudley Moore set in an unnamed Art Gallery illustrates this nicely. In the sketch die two work dieir way through various classical works of art in a gende, mocking and deeply affectionate parody of the impact of the opening up of classical art to the working classes. In die age of mass culture anyone and everyone can have an opinion on matters of high and low art, irrespective of education, upbringing and die quality of their judgments. Cook's ambivalent attitude to art and dieory is almost a precursor to postmodern rejections of the division between high and low art; and it is with Morris diat die tory anarchist fully enters the postmodern age. In works such as Zsjam and Brass Eye Morris is able to mix surrealist ideas with the mundane aspects of everyday life to force the viewer to revise radically the way in which they approach and interpret TV shows. Morris appears to share something of Baudrillard's view of the media as creating a 'hyper real' world where the difference between appearance and reality is abandoned, as popular culture becomes a realm of continuous invention of the idea of what is real. As Patrick West noted, it is impossible to watch a TV current affairs show in die same way after viewing Morris's work.
In practice - iconoclasm and profanity

The impact of tory anarchists on the public sphere in the UK has been immense and challenging. As noted earlier, one of the distinguishing aspects of tory anarchism is its unrelenting iconoclasm and rebellious nature. This manifests itself in a variety of ways, from affectionate caricatures of all social classes through to hostile and extreme attacks on religion and politics. There is something of the permanent adolescent about tory anarchists, die need to continually annoy and aggravate in order to gain attention.

Waugh was very much a rebel in his youth and early years as a writer. His relationship to 'anarchy' was complicated, diough, in diat he had bodi the impulse of die natural rebel whilst at the same time he was driven by a fear of nihilism and chaos, which in part inspired his conversion to Catholicism. In his novels Waugh creates an amoral and chaotic world where justice and morality have little place. In diese works black comedy and satire become Waugh's defence against the nihilism that he feared was an inevitable outcome of modernity where atheism replaced faith. The early satires were controversial for a number of reasons: their clear analysis and tacit defence of English racism, die venal nature of a corrupt and idiotic ruling class, the opportunistic nature of public figures, businessmen and politicians, the stupidity of religious figures, perverse sexual practices including paedophilia, all were ripe targets for Waugh's lacerating wit. But they were also diings not much commented upon by members of his class at the time, let alone in such an open manner. Orwell noted of Waugh that he was about as good a novelist as one can be while holding untenable opinions.' As an ironist Waugh's relationship to the things he satirised was ambiguous, as Orwell also noted. In exposing the corruption of culture Waugh was also defending things diat were abhorrent to the socialist Orwell. For Waugh there is a sense in which these things simply are and as such they can only be mocked, satirised or celebrated as part of the true picture of England.

Orwell's impact is perhaps the greatest of any of the figures here, in ways that he could not have anticipated. In some respects this is a little surprising, in that his work is generally die least satirical of any of the tory anarchists mentioned here. Orwell's tory anarchist instincts were rendered more explicit in his short essays celebrating England and its cultural traditions. Nonetheless Animal Farm is now celebrated as one of the greatest of political satires. Together with die bleak 1984, the book has had die greatest impact upon popular and political culture of any of Orwell's writings, and is precisely in keeping with tory anarchism. Orwell believed in a public sphere that would enable people through the critical and precise use of language to see the true horror of totalitarianism and injustice, diough, as he noted, being able to recognise what is in front of your nose is often the hardest of tasks. The book was thus a polemic and a provocation, rubbing the authence's nose in the truth of what was. The hostility to the state, the defence of die individual and of liberty, the need to rebel against authority and conformism were his central themes. Initially - and ironically - Orwell had great trouble publishing Animal Farm, as the standard left-wing publishing houses of the time were not sympathetic to works that would be seen as attacks on Britain's erstwhile ally, Stalin.

A superficial reading would suggest that Peter Cook's work is perhaps the least politicised of the tory anarchists featured here, but in fact Cook has had a lasting and important impact on British popular and political culture. His purchase of Private Eye magazine in 1964 was to prove far-
sighted as it remains Britain's longest running and most notorious satirical magazine, and has, over the years, taken on every manner of bully, crook and cheat in public life, risking bankruptcy and imprisonment along the way. The weapons of Private Eye are straightforward: iconoclastic humour and relentless investigative reporting, personified in the work of former contributor Paul Foot. Ian Hislop, the current editor, insists that Private Eye has always been politically ecumenical but there is no doubt that it became a haven for Tory anarchists, including former editor Richard Ingrams and Evelyn Waugh's son Auberon. The tone of the magazine is very much infused with Cook's surreal humour and as long-term owner he was a regular contributor. Equally important however was Cook's earlier work with Beyond the Fringe and the 'Establishment Club', where satire as public performance became mainstream. It is difficult to appreciate the bravery of Cook's stance now in mocking the Macmillan Government and the social mores of a conformist era, but his colleagues from Beyond the Fringe attested to this in a posthumous collection of essays and interviews on Cook's life and work. Cook's influence over subsequent British comedy has been immense, and the notorious Derek and Clive records and film went on to break new ground in scatological humour, opening the way for future comedians to broach the most extreme and taboo areas of life and language.

Throughout his career Cook remained a public figure, readily available to appear on chat shows and radio. Apparently wracked by almost terminal boredom and depression in his later life, his work varied from contributions to the Amnesty International Secret Policemen's Ball to what was at the time a series of relatively anonymous contributions to a late-night Radio London talk show where he would adopt the guise of 'Sven', a Norwegian migrant to Britain. Towards the end of his life he returned to a stock character, the aristocratic eccentric Sir Arthur GrchbStreebling, for a series of often uncomfortable exchanges with Chris Morris on BBC Radio 4 in the show Why Botheri Morris adopts his customary persona to interrogate Sir Arthur and is unrelenting in his treatment of Cook, who by then was suffering badly from alcohol-related health problems.

Cook's politics remain ambiguous and his friends straddled the political divide. He was claimed equally by the right and the left, but it seems that he did at one point consider standing as a liberal candidate in Hampstead so that he could contest the seat with Labour's Glenda Jackson. Whether this was out of a deep-seated commitment to liberal principles or merely because it was an opportunity to poke fun at and deflate the political ambitions of Glenda Jackson is less clear.

Morris's work in the public sphere is wide-ranging and includes television and radio shows. I want to concentrate on his work Brass Eye and in particular the special edition produced in 2001 called 'Paedogeddon'. 'Paedogeddon' was a critique of the ways in which the media in Britain had covered and hyped fears about paedophiles in the community. More deeply it was an examination of the irresponsibility of the media, coupled with its manifest hypocrisy. The show provoked by pointing up the ways in which popular culture sexualises children, parading them in beauty pageants and in popular music, producing artists such as Britney Spears and Jennifer Lopez. These are not the Lolitas of Nabokov's work, but merely children being used by corporations as a means to sell goods to adults and children alike. The real threat to children comes from a culture where children gain value and respect from peers and adults by the extent of their sexual maturity. Needless to say, few of these points were raised in the media coverage of the show other than in a few articles in UK papers such as The Independent. Instead the
programme was lambasted in predictable manner by press and politicians alike. Home Secretary David Blunkett condemned the show, and MP Beverley Hughes attacked the programme in the House of Commons - while at the same time acknowledging she hadn't actually watched it. The then culture secretary Tessa Jowell moved to have Channel 4 amend its constitution so that such a show could not be broadcast again. Amongst the hysterical and ridiculous press coverage pride of place goes to the tabloid Daily Star who condemned the programme under the heading 'Sick show goes on regardless', while on the adjacent page of the newspaper a picture of a buxom Charlotte Church is headed with the phrase 'She's a big girl now' and that the singer was looking chest swell'. Charlotte Church was 15 years old at the time.

The Brass Eye special was a classic example of tory anarchist provocation, holding up a mirror to the hypocrisy of contemporary society without a need for a didactic moralism in order to make its point. Tellingly the show received the highest ever response from viewers at the time of broadcast, producing a record number of phone calls condemning the show, and a record number praising it. At least it can be said that the British public held to a more complex understanding of the programme than the media and political elites that almost uniformly condemned it.

In the subsequent and what appears to be one-off series Nathan Barley, Morris presents the eponymous star of the programme as symptomatic of a modern moral malaise. Nathan Barley is a 'webmaster, guerrilla filmmaker, screenwriter, DJ and in his own words, a "self-facilitating media node"'. In fact as a new media figure Barley is concerned only with feeding his own ego and desires and has no qualms about how he achieves fame or gratification, whether it is through sex with a thirteen-year-old girl, the trivialising of rape or the unintended killing of his colleague: all are fair game for Barley in his quest to become a cool celebrity. Barley himself is a former public school boy, one of Waugh's 'bright young things' brought up to date, die logical outcome of eighty years of decadence and debauchery amongst the upper classes in modern Britain. Although Morris doesn't appear in the programme, it is hard not to diink that he is represented by the forlorn hero of the show, Dan Ashcroft. As the programme's website says of Ashcroft,:' [he] writes searing columns for Sugar Ape. He's considered astonishingly cool, but only by those he despises. He is surrounded by idiots and practically worshipped by Nathan (whom he considers to be their king). He is 34. Why has he failed to move on?69 Oh the irony indeed.

KICKING AGAINST THE PRICKS? THE LIMITATIONS OF TORY ANARCHISM

The biggest problem in writing about tory anarchists is that at any moment an analysis can be undermined by the claim that they are, as Roger Law put it, just 'arsing around.' In a sense this is of course true, tory anarchists are permanent adolescents who do indeed enjoy arsing around. My point in this paper is two-fold, that they are doing more than this and that their cultural criticism is something that requires explanation. My explanation is that tory anarchism emerges in the context of and in reaction to the relative decline of the UK (more specifically England) as a global power and with it the changing meaning of British identity. As a consequence there is no reason to suppose that tory anarchism will disappear from British culture, as the particularities of the UK's decline and social transformation continue to generate the grounds for its existence. The permanent tension that exists in tory anarchism is between the recognition that the world is always potentially chaotic and the need for certainty for society to function; between its rebellious impulse and its defence of the natural order of things. At its extreme this means the
tension between the alternatives of nihilism or authority, with satire as the means to negotiate this spectrum. As this article has made clear, tory anarchists have particular strengths, but these are also, in turn, part of their inherent weakness as cultural critique.

Taking its strengths first: tory anarchism is first and foremost an important source of rebellion in British culture. It shows that rebellion does not have to be the product of the oppressed but that it can emerge from amongst the privileged too, rebelling against the failings of their own class and culture. Tory anarchists provide an alternative commentary on capitalism, modernity and the state, setting out their shortcomings from a position that is rooted in defence of a conception of Britain that is both appealing and illusory. Perhaps its most important strength is that it brings humour into the realm of cultural critique as a weapon to deflate the pretensions of the pompous, the over-mighty and the arrogant. In a world driven by the ambitions of a puritan political class and a utilitarian economic class, tory anarchism is a refreshing defence of indulgence, disorder, idleness, quality of life over quantity - what Cobbett called 'Merrick England' - and endless eccentricity.

At the same time the limitations of tory anarchism are apparent. Orwell aside, their anti-political stance is unlike left-wing anarchism in that there is no sense of a political alternative to what exists, no desire to promote a different conception of a good society. Being a tory anarchist has built-in limitations, it is a minority sport rather than a social or political movement. Its social ideas rest on an appealing and partial vision of 'Merrick England' that exists only as a mirage in British culture, albeit an important one. While the tory anarchist rails against capitalism for its debasement of social values, against the state for its erosion of liberty and sweeping social engineering, and against modernity for its attempts to build a good society on the basis of abstract reason, it doesn't offer a coherent analysis of these issues. The purpose of tory anarchism is to be bloody-minded in defence of the indefensible and to expose society's hypocrisies and vices to public gaze, to laugh at, rather than condemn them, and invite others to start laughing too. Although it doesn't comment directly on abstractions such as the UK's decline in the world system, tory anarchism tells us much about this process indirectly, and in a way that mixes the tragic and the hilarious in an ongoing commentary on the changing nature of British culture. For that it deserves its place in the annals of British political and popular culture.

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Footnote

NOTES

1. Waugh says that satire is a matter of period. It flourishes in a stable society and presupposes homogeneous moral standards ... It is aimed at inconstancy and hypocrisy. It exposes polite cruelty and folly by exaggerating them. It seeks to produce shame'. Quoted in David Wykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Literary life (London, Macmillan, 1999), 7. Waugh rejected the idea that he was a satirist.


4. Patrick West argues that tory anarchists can be found in many parts of English society. I am agnostic on this point but my primary concern is with the tory anarchist as public figure. Email to the author dated 22 November 2005.


8. Ian Gilmour was a leading UK Conservative Party 'wet', sacked by Mrs. Thatcher and an outspoken critic of her administrations. He set out a coherent overview of the history of conservatism in the UK in Inside Right: Conservatism, Policies and the People (London, Quarter Books, 1978); and Whatever Happened to the Tories? (with Mark Garnett) (London, Fourth Estate Paperbacks, 1997).


14. Like Waugh, Cook denied that he was a satirist. John Bird makes the case for this interpretation of much of Cook's work in '3. The Last Pieces' in Something Like Fire: Peter Cook Remembered, 210.

15. Morris has commented in interview that he grew up near Huntingdon, attended 'public school to get the right accent, catholic school to get the right guilt complex.'
16. Morris has been scornful of the ways in which satire has become institutionalised in Britain through shows such as 'Have I got news for you', because of their collusion with the establishment they claim to criticise. Morris said, by contrast, 'I think you can only really get underneath by deception.' Euan Ferguson, The Observer, 22 July 2001.


20. Patrick West makes this point when he says the 'tory anarchist laughs at the human condition because we despair often of its cruelty and ignorance ... In my opinion Morris so brutally satirised anti-paedophile campaigns because, like myself, he felt disgusted at the cretinous and blood-thirsty behaviour of "anti-pacdo" lynch-mobs.' Email to the author dated 22 November 2005.

21. On Cook's life and times see Harry Thompson, Peter Cook: A Biography.


23. Timothy Garton Ash, 'Orwell in 1998'.


27. On the Establishment club see John Bird in Something Like Fire: Peter Cook Remembered (London, Arrow Books, 2003). See also Peter Barberis, "The 1964 General Election the "Not Quite, But* and "But only Just" Election', Contemporary British History, 21,3, 2007, for an account of the satire boom inaugurated by Cook and his cohorts on the party political culture of the time.

29. See the chapters by Alan Bennett and Nicholas Luard in Something Like Fire: Peter Cook Remembered.

30. Waugh commented that 'the most valuable possession of any nation is an accepted system of classes', The Sayings of Evelyn Waugh, 41.


32. David Wykes, Evelyn Waugh, 36.


34. According to long-time friend Roger Law, Cook's theory of satire was that everyone was a potential target, no subject could be taboo and that you should be completely unjust to those you were attacking. Cook, like Chris Morris, felt that to remain credible as a professional you could never become cosy with the establishment for fear of losing your autonomy; see Harry Thompson, Peter Cook: A Biography, 297.

35. Former Tory Cabinet minister George Waiden notes Mrs Thatcher's lack of enthusiasm for 'non-utilitarian studies', subjects that did not contribute directly to the economy, in George Waiden, Lucky George (London, Allen Lane, 1999), 273.

36. Cook commented in interview that he found the Thatcher governments more offensive than any other, though it should be noted that he was liable to say different things to different friends on political issues; see Harry Thompson, Peter Cook: A Life, 295-296. On the relationship to the conservative tradition see R. J. White, The Conservative Tradition, 19-20 and Maurice Cowling's comments in Frank O'Gorman, British Conservatism, IY-1TLi.


41. Historically patriotism has tended to be regarded as a conservative idea against the more cosmopolitan and internationally inclined liberal, socialist and anarchist traditions. See Frank

42. See, for example, Orwell's pamphlet The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius (London, Penguin, 1982).


44. John Gray and David Willcts, Is Conservatism Dead?, p.viii.

45. Euan Ferguson reports one friend of Morris who says that the latter is motivated by 'pomposity of any type and stupidity'. Ferguson, The Observer.


48. Nisbet notes diat conservatives have always been alert to the dangers of populism in art and culture, Nisbet, Conservatism, 92.


50. Waugh was a strict defender of good grammar and clear expression. See his comments on Stephen Spender in Simon Whitchapcl, 'Relative Values', Evelyn Waugh Newsletter and Studies, last viewed 1-11-2007.


54. William Cook (editor), Tragically I was an only Twin (London, Arrow Books, 2003), 116-121.

55. Email from West to the author dated 22 November 2005, where West says of Morris: 'Chris Morris's main contribution is that he has changed the way many of us look at the media. His television programmes The Day Today (co-written with Armando Ianucci) and Brass Eye mercilessly exposed the way the media create stories, manipulate the viewers through devious editing and absurd graphics, and employ meaningless jargon. Most people will never read Marshall McLuhan or Jean Baudrillard, but Morris has done more to make a generation appreciate that what they see reported on television is not transparent and objective. As one of
the graphics on The Day Today said in a spirit of self-refutation: "Fact times interpretation equals truth", as if to say "truth" was a scientific entity.'


59. Terry Eagleton, in 'Reach-me-down Romantic'; Geoffrey Wheatcroft in 'Look right, look left, look right again', New Statesman, 2 April, 1999; and biographer D.J. Taylor, Orwell: The Life, 410.


61. An interesting historical irony here is that Jonathon Cape rejected the manuscript after having initially accepted it, on the advice of an official from the Ministry of Information who subsequently turned out to be a Soviet spy, D. J Taylor, Orwell: The Life, 337.

62. Email from Ian Hislop to the author, 22 November 2005.

63. Christopher Booker provides an orthodox conservative commentary on this period in The Neophiliacs (London, William Collins and Sons. Ltd, 1970), 99, where he notes that 'the upper classes in England had in fact been losing faith in their traditional values, and bourgeois self-confidence, for over half a century'.

64. See Harry Thompson, Peter Cook: A Biography, for a detailed account of Cook's early career with Beyond the Fringe, the Establishment and the Cambridge Footlights. Also, John Wells, 'The Mystic Spube' in Something Like Fire: Peter Cook Remembered.

65. See William Cook, Tragically I was an only Twin.

66. Nicholas Luard suggests that Cook was seduced by socialism in the 1960s but came to reject it and adopt a small V conservatism for the rest of his life, Peter Cook: Something Like Fire, 42. See also Harry Thompson, Peter Cook: A Biography, 81, for an account of Cook's distrust of radical politics.

67. Adrian Slade, 'Peter Cook: Thirty Seven Years a very rare friend', in Something Like Fire: Peter Cook Remembered, 18.


69. Nathan Barley, Channel Four, , last viewed 1 1/05/2007.