

EUREKA STREET

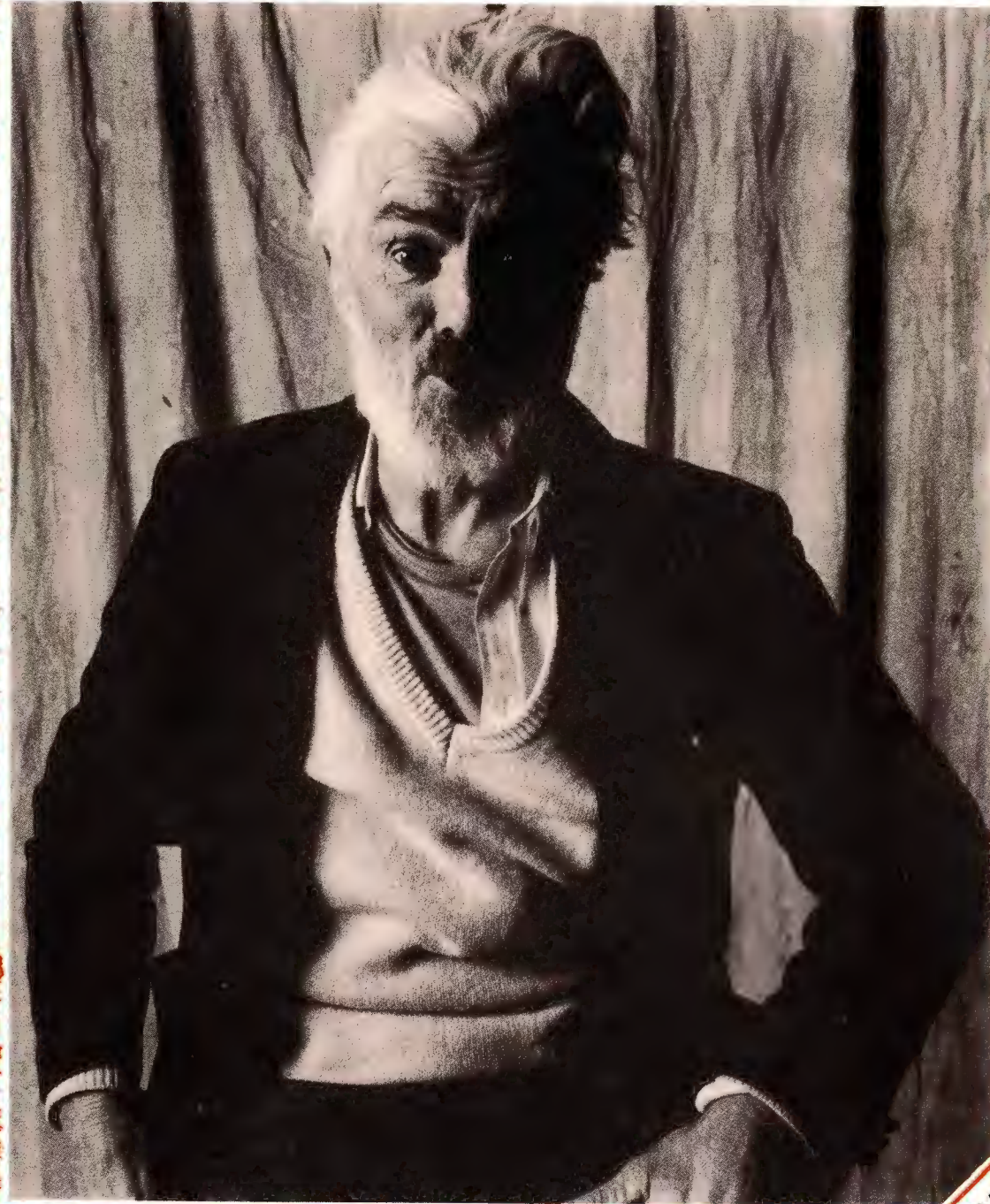
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CHINA AND ETHNICITY

in a postcommunist world

TREVOR HAY



MELBOURNE WRITERS' FESTIVAL
The Poetry of Peter Porter
Peter Steele

The photographs on the cover and centre pages of this issue were taken by Michael Coyne at Ozanam House, Melbourne. They appear by the kind permission of the men depicted, all of whom are residents of Ozanam House.



Ruffly
Shaves off his beard to
please his mother when
he goes to visit her
every three months



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Jesuit Publications
PO Box 553
Richmond VIC 3121
Tel (03) 427 7311
Fax (03) 428 4450

Publisher
Michael Kelly SJ
Editor
Morag Fraser
Production Editor
Ray Cassin
Design Consultant
John van Loon
Production Assistant
Paul Fyfe SJ

Contributing Editors
Perth: Janette Gray RSM
Adelaide: Frances Browne IBVM
Sydney: Edmund Campion, Gerard Windsor
Brisbane: Ian Howells SJ
Darwin: Margaret Palmer

European correspondent: Damien Simonis
US correspondent: Michael Harter SJ

Editorial Board
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Margaret Coady, Margaret Coffey,
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Trevor Hales, David Hawke FSC,
Christine Martin, Kevin McDonald,
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Peter Steele SJ, Bill Uren SJ

Business Manager: Louise Metres
Accounts Manager: Bernadette Bacash

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Extraordinary voices

IN ALL THE TELESCOPED SENSATION of the past month—a month in which the world has been shaken as profoundly as it was in 1917, when John Reed was recording those ten famous days—one of the most heartening and moving features has been the simple sound of people talking. It is an expectation of modern communications that we should see all the iconic moments in the making: Mikhail Gorbachev emerging, crumpled and safe, from his aeroplane; Boris Yeltsin, on his tank podium while Lenin swings on a rope and crashes. These images are part of the predictable pattern of change, and if one day the Ozyman-dias head is Stalin's, another day Lenin's, then that should serve as a caution rather than an encouragement to demagoguery.



What lingers, however, is not just the high drama of set pieces but the extraordinary sound of ordinary people. We have heard citizens talking on Moscow streets, in Kiev, in St Petersburg, in Vilnius; politicians, soldiers, civilians, women and men in command of their own places of assembly. No one is foolish enough to believe that the euphoria could continue; there are too many problems, too many scores waiting to be settled. But for a brief moment we experienced one of those seeming gaps in time when the usual constraints do not apply, and some truths are told.

You could wake in the morning to hear four Russians in a room, seemingly next door, all talking at once, about policy, about change, about old cynicisms, about hope. If it sounded like Turgenev, then that simply indicates how much time has been lost. These voices have been mostly unavailable to peo-

ple in the West for 70 years, except in formal and distorting political exchange or through the particular initiatives of individuals.

Of course, none of it could have been heard if we did not have a media which often proved, in this instance, to be both informed and on the spot at the right time. Australian television, radio and newspaper coverage of events, both leading up to and after the unravelling of the Soviet Union, has been outstanding. The quality has been dependent upon the willingness, particularly on the part of the ABC and the Fairfax press, to invest in the long term. Expert correspondents, resident in Moscow, present the kind of reporting and analysis that no syndicated services can provide. After the sorry shambles of much of the reporting of the Gulf War—censored and manipulated as it was—the change is a welcome one.

—Morag Fraser

Different packages, same contents

DESPITE OBVIOUS DIFFERENCES between Labor and the coalition over superannuation and proposals for a consumption tax, there is also an underlying similarity of approach. The federal government and the opposition are both touting policies that reflect a narrow economic perspective, and which offer little hope to those who are most disadvantaged in the community. This can only confirm a widespread perception that voters lack a real choice, and will increase pessimism about the prospects for mainstream politics in Australia.

The federal budget brought down in August included a further step towards widening superannuation cover for the workforce. The proposal will help governments worried about supporting an aging population, and may create an illusion of greater security for wage earners. But, as the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) has pointed out, it actually 'extends a system which is basically unfair, wasteful and economically inefficient'.

Since super is awarded as a percentage of salary, it is of greater benefit to higher-paid workers. Unemployment and early retirement are more likely to affect those on low incomes. Tax concessions benefit the wealthier members of the community, while low-income families require most, if not all, of their income for day-to-day survival. ACOSS has calculated that high-income earners receive up to three times more in superannuation benefits than the average pensioner receives from the pension. Increased emphasis on superannuation will also accentuate the problems of many women. Women are more likely than men to work part-time, to be on low wages, and to have their careers interrupted by family responsibilities.

A variety of issues will need attention as the superannuation industry adjusts to the massive influx of money, not least the huge potential for corporate crime. Another is the use of a proportion of the funds to provide community services.

The proposed consumption tax, which Dr Hewson has advocated since 1977 and which became coalition policy in August last year, is an even clearer example of the grip of economic rationalism.

Proponents of the tax argue that it will increase incentives to work and to private saving through cuts in income-tax rates, while reducing the scope for tax avoidance. Yet the experience of other countries that have had a consumption tax, such as Britain and New Zealand, is informative and disturbing: introduction of the tax contributed to high levels of unemployment and inflation, and created difficulties in compensating lower-income earners. So, despite Dr Hewson's assurance regarding basic goods and services—'in due course we'll have a few exemptions'—talk of a consumption tax has caused great disquiet in community, consumer and welfare networks.

ACOSS has been vigorous in its opposition to the tax proposal, and in proposing alternatives—it has documented the need for tax reform related to capital gains, corporate borrowing and offshore transactions. Loopholes in these areas have caused massive tax avoidance, the blowout in house prices during the late 1980s, corporate crashes and excessive foreign debt.

There is some hope in the ACOSS approach, and in that taken by the Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission' in its document *A Consumption Tax, Is It Necessary?* But the wider debate about the proposed consumption tax, and about superannuation, does little to allay the pessimism already noted about the narrow economic options being presented to Australians.

In the five years since Paul Keating's 'banana republic' statement, economic policy has been directed to perceived problems of the national debt, diminishing exports and sustained imports. A commitment to financial deregulation and cuts in taxation and public expenditure have been important elements in a market-based attempt to improve Australia's international competitiveness. But these factors, coupled with high interest rates designed to curb spending and encourage overseas investors, have also resulted in the present recession and continued growth in unemployment.

The human cost of this complex economic scene has received emotive recognition, with media coverage of the rural crisis and of communities affected by the failure of financial institutions. This recognition, however, has not prevented cuts in services, diminished support for community groups, and a focus on international events, environmental concerns, industrial relations and micro-economic reform..

—Newton Daddow

Newton Daddow is a board member of ACOSS, and national liaison officer of the 'Fair Share' program

Fair play

From Roger Grant, general manager, Radio National and ABC FM

Needless to say Margaret Simons' article on RN ('The State of Play', September 1991) has been doing the rounds at the ABC, with the various 'factions' offering energetic analysis of their respective interpretations of the flow versus built programs.

For my part I thought the article a fair and welcome coverage of the various issues currently facing Radio National. There is clearly a place for both specialist and flow programming on RN. The proportion of both depends on listener lifestyle and the need to ensure that both types of programs integrate and support each other in making RN a better radio station, which not only emphasises intellectual worth but interesting quality.

I think we are getting there despite those who resist any change and yearn to return to the 1970s, which they still regard as the 'good old days'.

Roger Grant
Ultimo, NSW

From Ronald Nichols, executive producer, ABC Religious Radio

Congratulations on Margaret Simons' article on ABC Radio National—a fine piece of journalism, without fear or favour. I hope ABC Radio Management pluck up the courage to reply with candour.

We in the Religious Department applaud the article for the way it describes how specialists units can and do take issues further than generalist presenters are able.

Ronald Wilson
Sydney, NSW.

'Brides' revisited

From Helen Duffy

Having seen two episodes of the ABC's *Brides of Christ*, I find that I am left confused and disturbed.

I entered the convent in 1960 and I value my initiation into religious life. I have no doubt that the ensuing episodes will continue to open up issues which will fascinate. I fear they may intrude and unfold too much of my story. But my confusion and disturbance comes from the people I meet

Eureka Street welcomes letters from its readers. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters may be edited. Letters must be signed, and should include a contact phone number and the writer's name and address.



who want to discuss *Brides of Christ* 'ad nauseam'. It offers these Catholic and non-Catholic friends of mine a sense of security, a habit-filled predictability, which I believe is a danger to mature faith in a contemporary world.

I believe 'Sister Catherine' as portrayed in the contemporary film *Company of Strangers*, presents a far more helpful and challenging focus for our reflections than the nostalgic and sensational episodes of *Brides of Christ*.

Helen Duffy RSM
Corio, Vic.

Honner is saved

From James Franklin school of mathematics, University of NSW

A magazine with a mathematical column! Marvellous! Let's hope John Honner's *Archimedes* is syndicated coast to coast soon.

In the last column (September 1991), he wondered what Archimedes would have said about applying mathematics to such useful activities as petrol refining. Here's a guess: 'I envy you younger generation, actually getting grants to do mathematics. In my day, it was all sucking up to princes, running about the streets naked for a bit of publicity, etc. It's true I was reported as saying mathematics should avoid use and profit,

but if you'd seen what the average tyrant meant by 'use and profit' you'd have been reaching for excuses too. Actually, mathematics divorced from reality was an idea of Plato and those decadent Alexandrians, and I was the one who brought some solid experiment back into it. In my *Method*, I explained how to discover mathematical results by mechanical methods (though unfortunately some clowns lost the book for a couple of thousand years). I hear you even have a *Journal of Experimental Mathematics* now. You should all subscribe.'

James Franklin
Kensington, NSW.

From Fr John Doyle SJ, dean of studies at St John Fisher College, University of Tasmania at Hobart.

Archimedes' misadventure ('1063 and All That', July 1991) recalls a couple of similar instances that do not seem to be the typesetter's fault.

In *The Probability of God*, Hugh Montefiore writes of the weight of neutrinos being 'only just slightly more than it is (say, 5×10^{-34} kg instead of 5×10^{-35} kg)' and of neutron mass being 'reduced by only 0.998 of its actual value'. (The emphasis is mine.)

Neither is it safe to dictate a text. A recent piece in *The Age* spoke of St John Fischer (sic) College and its 'principal brother, Michael Lynch ... and dean father, John Doyle'.

Which reminds me that the food Isaac Jogues found 'insipid' became 'inspired' in a *Catholic Missions* article many years ago, while only last month 'Inquisition' was transmogrified into 'Institution'.

John Doyle
Dyynnyrne, Tas.

Caught in slips

From Graham Dunne

I refer to the meta-advertisement on p.40 of your August issue.

Tut-tut! On your way home tonight you should call in at a bookstore and buy a book about English verbs.

If you call into a place, the verb is 'to call' and your action is projecting your voice. 'Into' is a preposition indicating an inward direction. I don't think you want advertisers to stand outside your office and shout at you.

To invite visitors you can use the verb 'to call in'. Its indirect object, indicating the place for visiting, takes a preposition such as 'to' or 'at'. This preposition is not part of the verb, so that 'in' and 'to' are separate words in this case.

Our language has many ambiguities but this isn't one of them. Let's not create one unnecessarily via such a fine journal.

Graham Dunne
North Adelaide, SA

Moving on

From Bob Corcoran

Eureka Street showed a fitting sense of history by marking the 50th anniversary the Movement with three thoughtful articles on different aspects of that organisation (August 1991). It is a pity, however, that there was no indication of whether the Movement is still in operation. Further, some facts about the Movement were not mentioned: its constitution, structure and control; its membership (and the process of becoming a member); its spending and sources of funds; and the Movement's relations with the media and the conservative parties.

Robert Murray is rightly famous for his book *The Split*, but Murray's reputation does not mean that his opinions are necessarily correct. In particular, his belief that the Split need not have occurred but was an accidental result of 'bizarre behaviour' by Dr Evatt does not stand up to examination. Evatt's public statement in October 1954, in which he asserted that outside forces were operating within the Labor Party, may have brought forward the date of the Split but was not the cause of it. Two factors, neither of them directly related to Evatt, had already made the Split unavoidable.

The first was the approaching domination of the official structure of the ALP by Santamaria's Movement. The Movement's power within the Labor Party had grown rapidly during the 1940s and '50s, although its methods, and even its existence, were kept secret. By 1954 it had already gained substantial support, or a majority, in ALP executive committees in the eastern states, plus support from

almost half the federal executive. Control was almost within its grasp.

The second factor was that the Movement had little support from Labor's rank-and-file, as was shown clearly and repeatedly in federal elections after the Split. Even in its best result, the Movement-backed Democratic Labor Party received only a fifth of the number of votes obtained by the ALP. If the Split had not occurred when it did, it would certainly have happened if the Movement had gained control of the party.

Murray also says that the Movement's effect on Labor was 'not much'. This view runs counter to most professional opinions, which give great significance to the diversion of Catholic Labor votes to the conservative parties, via DLP preferences. Without going into detail, which is readily available elsewhere, it appears likely that only DLP preferences saved the conservative government in 1961 and 1969, and possibly in 1963. Opposition to some Labor candidates by Movement supporters probably cost the ALP the 1954 election also. All this hardly tallies with 'not much' effect on Labor.

In the present context of concern over the control and performance of the media, coverage of the Movement, especially by the daily newspapers, is of both historical importance and topical interest. From an examination of the papers of the 1940s and '50s, it will be clear that they purported to know nothing of the Movement's activities, or even of its existence. This policy was continued even after Evatt's public statement in October 1954 and the ALP federal executive's investigation later that year. By that time, the Movement had been operating for more than a decade. Throughout those years its own publication *Freedom*, later renamed *News Weekly*, had maintained that it knew nothing of the Movement.

The fact that the Movement's existence was concealed by the media can easily be established, yet the media have offered no explanation and no assurance that their standards have changed. Consequently the worrying question persists: have other matters of importance to the Australian community been concealed or distorted over the years?

Bob Corcoran
Edithvale, Vic.

Of gods and gold

From E. Lovett

Your article 'Tempting Earthly Powers' (September 1991) advocates recognition of the Jawoyn god Bula, and likewise other gods. Perhaps the author, Fr Frank Brennan SJ, might explain why his article does not offend against the first commandment of Yahweh.

Among the many gifts that the true God has given mankind, intended for his good are the mineral deposits of the world. The meaning of his gift of gold at Coronation Hill, and its possible use for the common good of man, are valid matters for study and debate. However, I cannot accept that he intended it to be used for the recognition and service of false and repugnant gods.

I agree with the central theme of the article concerning the democratic and God-given right of man to choose his particular god. That is what creation is about. However, the limits of that recognition must be set, first and foremost, by the commandments of the true God.

E. Lovett
Doncaster, Vic.

Frank Brennan replies:

Neither the Jawoyn nor I see or advocate Bula as a god. There is no divine imperative that all God's gifts of gold, platinum and palladium be consumed now by the present generation. There may be compelling reasons for leaving some gifts in the ground so that other, superior gifts can be enjoyed, now and in the future.

Alas, poor George

From Denise Buckley

Having just read issue no. 4, perhaps Patrick Hayes ('A Question of Dignity', June 1991) should add to his request for employers to treat journalists with 'humanity and understanding' the plight of those such as George Herscu, whose misery was so callously splashed across our newspapers after his trial. I'm sure he also shares Hayes' observation that journalism can 'highlight the innate dignity and worth of individual human beings.'

Denise Buckley
Abbotsford, Vic.

Self-taught

From Mark Perica

I must concur with Gerard Windsor in his essay 'The New Zealand Traveller Sketches the Ruins of St Patrick's' (September 1991) that 'no transmission of the church's intellectual and cultural heritage is being attempted.'

As a post-Vatican II child, I did not learn a great deal from my religious educators. They seemed paralysed by a fear that conveying information about the church and its teachings would be mistaken for handing down immutable dogma. As a result, after 12 years of Catholic education I had not read a single encyclical, and would not have known a Father of the Church if I fell over him.

The Catholic lay organisations that I attended (such as the Newman Society and YCW) seemed more concerned with the social, rather than the intellectual or doctrinal, aspects of the faith. In those circumstances I and other Catholics of my generation have had to embark on a fairly lonely and haphazard journey of self-education about the intellectual riches of the church. I only discovered *Rerum Novarum* earlier this year!

I think there is a need for a forum where those interested members of the laity can learn more about the intellectual side of the faith. It seems to me that such a forum would ensure that young people retain a cultural and spiritual affinity with the church—a true hearts and minds approach. Perhaps then I won't feel at a loss next time a Jehovah's Witness or Mormon comes to my door!

Mark Perica
Richmond, Vic.

Notionally a nation

From Stephen Alomes

Australian nationalism is like the Australian wool industry—it can often be better understood by looking at what happened in other places and at other times. That crucial point was missed in your fascinating forum on nationalism and multiculturalism (August 1991). Australian nationalism, even more than other nationalisms, is a cultural response to internationalising forces—materialism, economics, politics and the ideology

fashionably termed 'globalisation'.

In Australia every step towards national consciousness has been one step behind international forces that have overwhelmed Australian themes. In the 19th century ideas of progress undermined local traditions and mores as urban industrial society became a stronger shaping force than the society of the bush. The port cities were conduits for imported culture and social practices, which weakened their role as sources of home-grown sentiment.

The earlier stages of national assertiveness were truncated by the new imperialism of the late 19th century, Australia's 'dominion culture' was sealed in the blood of the Great War, and the national hopes of World War II were swept aside by American, European and Japanese economic influences and by American political and cultural power. So what chance does nationalism have in the new global era of deregulation? As Catherine Jones and I argue in *Australian Nationalism: A Documentary History* (1991): 'The 1980s saw a surge in popular nationalism at a time of growing international influences ... deregulation brought growing foreign participation in the economy; the satellite allowed for more centralised entertainment networks in Australia and for greater overseas access; a popular cult of "New York" arose (even Crocodile Dundee went there) at a time when Australians no longer looked to London as their world metropolis.'

The current era might seem at first glance like one of republicanism, nationalism and multiculturalism. Nationalist feeling has been stimulated by the Bicentenary, similar state anniversaries, advertisers' discovery of the uses of the flag and the green-and-gold, and more recently by American wheat subsidies. Republicanism has grown naturally with the passing of time—it is now more than 40 years since our first waves of European migration, and about 20 years since Britain joined the European Community and closed its military bases east of Suez.

National policies are in decline as the new language of 'deregulation', 'best international practice', 'world class' and 'New York' shapes ruling ideology. Traditional national policies to protect the poor, the regional and

local creators have gone out the window faster than tariffs, at least in the Keating period. (Will Kerin be more of a change than expected?) 'The devil take the hindmost' is the philosophy for these Social Darwinian times.

Republicanism, despite inevitably increasing in strength, will not achieve its goal while any major political party sees votes in opposing it. Similarly, multiculturalism, despite its rhetoric, is a cultural department-store ideology in a society more shaped by actual department stores and the shopping malls where they are found. Such a diffuse ideology works effectively at the level of cuisine and dance, but has little deep impact in a society shaped by the media, secular materialism and a consumer culture.

The homogenising influence of a new society, of Australian suburban conventionality, of the mass media and the peer group results in a different kind of diversity, the 'lifestyle' variations expressed in different consumer tastes. While nationalism, republicanism and multiculturalism may all get a guernsey in the debate of politicians and academics, they are small beer compared to the 'lifestyle pluralism' of a consumer society.

Stephen Alomes
Kensington, Vic.

In the beginning

From Peter Spierings

The latest campaign against the monarchy by republicans is bound to fail. The simple reason is that '-archy', as in 'monarchy', means 'origin' or 'beginning', and according to an ancient Oriental concept 'origin' implies knowledge, power and therefore authority (from above) to rule. The concept is brilliant because it precludes any debate; in fact, there is nothing to discuss. In the year 2001, the republicans will be given the message: 'Nick orf, I was here first.'

Clearly then, and much more originally, the right to rule Australia is the sole preserve of the Aboriginal people since *ab origine* is translated as: 'from the beginning' or 'from the origin'. But that will never work because it makes too much sense. So let's start again, this time from the beginning.

Peter Spierings
Nudgee, Qld



China, red and ethnic

It is not only the contagion of democracy that Chinese leaders fear from the Soviet collapse, but the example of that country's assertive national groups.

CURIOSLY, ALTHOUGH THE CHINESE TERM for 'ethnic minority' matches the English term in a close literal sense, official Chinese descriptions in English always use the term 'minority nationalities'. Yet it is precisely the national identity of ethnic groups that the Chinese government wishes to subsume within Han political culture; hence the strife in Tibet and other regions. So what are Chinese 'minorities' like, and how do they relate to what Western educators would call the 'dominant majority?'

I should note in passing that the Chinese debate does not appear to have been marked by the revelation recently experienced in Australia that 'everybody is ethnic'—usually stimulated by resentment of some putative special status enjoyed by migrants and Aborigines. In China, to all intents and purposes, only the minorities are ethnic, and to be ethnic is literally to be in a minority. But there are 91 million such people and their population is growing at more than three times the rate of Han Chinese.

China's 1990 census reveals that 92 per cent of the population are Han, with the remainder made up of 55 other ethnic groups. These calculations include the Gaoshan people, who have been a minority in Taiwan since the main Chinese migrations of the 17th and 20th centuries. There are many other groups that are not listed as distinct minorities, but as branches of some major group. Some of these are sizeable, and some are ex-

tremely small. For example, in Xishuangbanna autonomous prefecture, near the Burma-Laos border, there is a single village community, Akelaozhai, that appears to be a distinct branch of the Dai people. However, the groups included in the 55 official minorities range in number from the thousands to the millions. Big populations of Mongols and Uighurs are concentrated in autonomous regions in the north and west of China.

It is very significant that these concentrations occupy about half of China's land mass, and are scattered along strategically important ethnic and national boundaries from the Soviet Union to India and Vietnam. But from the standpoint of 'race' most of these groups are not obviously distinct from Han Chinese. Some, like the Muslim Hui minority, of about eight million, are Chinese of remote Arabic ancestry or are descended from Chinese who converted to Islam, and differ only in religion and culture rather than ethnically or linguistically. Others, like the Xinjiang Uighurs, are ethnically Caucasian or Central Asian, but have cultural and linguistic links with Turkic, Mongolic and Tungusic (e.g. Manchu) groups.

TO FURTHER COMPLICATE the picture, Mongols and Manchus have been 'assimilated' with the Han for centuries, although hardly in the usual subservient sense; in fact during the Yuan and Qing dynasties they were

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extremely dominant minorities. The Zhuang, in Guangxi Autonomous Region, who number 15 million, are ethnically and linguistically distinct from the Han, and signified through proximity with Guangdong Province, but exhibit the strong regional characteristics, including the use of Cantonese, which separate southern and northern China.

In general, educated members of minority groups, including cadres, are culturally and politically sinified and speak modern standard Chinese—'Mandarin'. It is worth noting however, that 70 per cent of China's estimated 200 million illiterates are women—mostly aged 16 and above—and that ethnic minorities form a high proportion of illiterates. If education is the primary factor in homogenising the Chinese population, then ethnic women of child-bearing age are least susceptible to it.

Like the Soviet Union, China is a good antidote for that contagion of thought which treats ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity as if it were all part of some 'agenda' for political de-

gency. When it comes to the spread of education and literacy there are tough problems for China's bureaucrats and those who would like to help them do their

planning, such as Unicef. Even within the sub-groups of non-Han minorities there are mutually unintelligible languages and scripts, and this complexity makes it more attractive and feasible to talk about the standardization of Mandarin than the maintenance of minority languages.

Some of the scripts are viable—for example Mongolian, borrowed from an old form of Uighur—and some are not. Manchu script, seen on Qing dynasty architecture all over China, is quite closely related to Mongolian, but the spoken language has perished. Other languages, such as that of the Yi minority of Yunnan Province, are viable but have an obsolescent script. And the Tibetan language, like all other minority languages in China, is theoretically protected by China's constitution, but it cannot be used to say the things that Tibetans most want to say.

WITH THIS SORT OF THING IN MIND, in July I raised some issues about multiculturalism and Australia's national language policy, during a Unicef project in Yunnan and Inner Mongolia involving the Child Development Centre of China and Melbourne University's school of early childhood studies. I talked about language maintenance and bilingualism, key objectives of Australian language policy, and about language shift and attrition under assimilationist policy. But to begin with, I tried to explain the meaning of multiculturalism as a policy. I made it as clear as I possibly could that in Australia 'policy' is the official speech of the court, based on the Canberra dialect, and is frequently unintelligible to people in the outlying semi-autonomous regions.

Big Brother no more

BOTH CHINA AND THE SOVIET UNION refer to ethnic peoples within their political boundaries as 'nationalities'. Stalin himself defined a nation as a 'stable community of people formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in common culture.' Theoretically, under a socialist system, these aspects of culture would not be at odds with the rule of the proletariat. However, in Marxist historical analysis, nationhood, from the French Revolution to the 'Second Russian Revolution' of August 1991, has been linked with bourgeois ideology. No doubt Chinese political philosophers are working overtime at the moment, trying to produce a marketable distinction between the legitimate 'culture' of ethnic minorities and the bourgeois ideology of those who seek national autonomy.

China's rulers will be anxiously watching developments from the Caucasus to the Central Asian republics and beyond the Soviet Union itself in Mongolia. The most obvious source of anxiety will be Soviet Muslims, whose population is growing at three times the rate of European Russians. They represent a largely 'unassimilated' group and they share crucial aspects of

culture and ethnicity with China's Xinjiang Uighurs, who mounted serious demonstrations in 1989. Early in its existence the Chinese Communist Party assumed control of Chinese Central Asia, a huge area originally inhabited by Turkic and Mongol tribes and later conquered by the Manchus. These ethnic groups in the north and north-west of China were 'integrated' into China by Chinese migration in the 19th century, and it is evident that many of them regard their 'minority' status as a minus. Consequently, they may well look to the peoples of the Soviet autonomous regions to lead a restoration of ethnic independence in Central Asia.

And speaking of culture, Stalin was right to list 'psychological make-up' among his crucial ingredients. Stalinism itself, the cult of authority and authority figures, the ruthless use of power and all-pervasive 'security' forces, has left a colossal imprint on China. But the collapse of 'Big Brother'—ironically there was no Orwellian implication in the Chinese use of this term during the years of massive Soviet influence—will have a profound effect on the psychological make-up of the Chinese Communist Party and on the political culture of China.



In the end I defined multiculturalism as 'the name the Australian government has given to its policy on ethnic minorities.' I also pointed out that many other governments, with quite different policies, called their policies the same thing. Then I spoke of the move away from 'assimilation' to multiculturalism in Australian policy-making. I was less certain than ever of the theoretical distinction between the two. If I had had the benefit of the August edition of *Eureka Street*, I might have said something about multiculturalism being the 'clever way to assimilation'.

I NTERESTINGLY, I WAS TOLD SEVERAL TIMES during our visit that China and Australia were essentially different because Australia had migrants who had been assimilated, whereas China had indigenous minorities living in clearly defined regions. Leaving aside the fact that this situation does not apply to all Chinese minorities, it also disguises the fact that Han Chinese have

colonised much of China that was not Chinese until quite recent times. Naturally, this means that we still have a very significant area of shared experience when it comes to relations between the political majority and the ethnic minority. But many Chinese are quite content to maintain that China and Australia simply cannot be compared. Next time I will talk about the colonization of Taiwan by Chinese.

It is very clear that Chinese educators and social planners have not taken the philosophical step from a notional respect and preservation of cultures to participation of majority Chinese in minority cultures and languages. But it remains a pious myth in Australia too. The links between multiculturalism and assimilation became clearer to my Chinese audience as I spoke of the 'core values' that are retained in the Australian social framework—parliamentary democracy, the English language, the rule of law etc. They have 'core values' in China too—dictatorship of the proletariat, socialism,

Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought, and party leadership. Even Han Chinese have to maintain these values, as the residents of the capital discovered in June 1989. A week or so after I gave this talk, I was told by an international aid official in Peking that the next incident of Tian'anmen proportions was less than a year away, and would involve ethnic minorities.

China wants to show the world that its ethnic minorities are well treated. In some cases they are. That is why a huge amount of money and resources is being poured into certain ethnic showplaces, like Xishuangbanna. But outside these places, in the remote and inaccessible mountain valleys, and in deserts and grasslands, ethnic minorities remain poor, uneducated and illiterate. I was told by a professor at Yunnan Teachers' University that half the province's minority children could not speak Mandarin, and in the context of Chinese political life this means there is no 'equality of opportunity' for them. On the other hand, the small and privileged number of minority children who get into urban kindergartens and schools in Kunming will have a hybrid form of linguistic training that leaves them acutely aware of the low status of their native language but inadequately trained to use Mandarin.

In this respect, China is not so different from Australia. The curriculum frequently focuses on superficial

and often phoney elements of culture, and ignores the actual lifestyle of children, which is much more likely to be determined by living in a household of urban factory workers than by anything to do with ethnic traditions. In a Yi minority kindergarten in Lu Nan autonomous county, Yunnan province, I saw kids in national costumes dancing and singing along to popular contemporary Mandarin songs played on a Sony ghetto blaster operated by Mandarin-speaking teachers in Shani costume. Outside in the street, genuine ethnic urchins gazed in wonder at the performance, until somebody closed the gates so that they would not spoil the effect. That, I'm afraid, is a typical display of 'ethnicity' in China.

Speaking of displays of ethnicity, our party was taken to a place out in the grasslands in Inner Mongolia, where we were to sample nomadic Mongolian lifestyle. We were led into a 'yurt' which had a large steel water tank attached to the back, and was connected to the electricity supply, making life a little less nomadic. Our host was a large man in a blue silk gown, flying boots and sunglasses. He turned out to be a sort of Mongolian Arthur Daley, charging a fee for the unique experience of sitting in a smelly felt dome, rather like the inside of a giant Akubra, drinking rancid camel's milk and eating some sort of birdseed. I heard him telling somebody behind me, in standard Mandarin, that he had been out



Rooms without a view: yurts in Mongolia.

in this place since the rustification movement of the early 1970s, and had gradually built up a pretty respectable business. I suppose it's amazing what the punters will pay for if you tell them it's ethnic.

In Inner Mongolia too, we were shown a kindergarten where the children boarded from Monday to Saturday, although their parents worked in the city (Hohhot). Several of us asked why children should be boarded when their homes were in the city, and we were told that it was to teach the children habits of 'independence', and because they were 'only children' who required the social experience of group activity. But to ensure that the kids did not feel cut off from their culture, the kindergarten had a yurt-shaped cubby house. There are obvious signs that people in the city of Hohhot are long since sinified. In a market area of several long streets—a market being a place where information has to be precise, constantly altered, and readily accessible to ordinary people—I saw no sign in any language except Chinese.

Since 1949, reports of Chinese treatment of the ethnic minorities, with the very notable exception of Tibet, have stressed that China has indeed adopted a 'clever' form of assimilation, in which most groups are either left to traditional lifestyles or gradually educated into the political culture of China's ruling majority. There is also a very positive side to the work of some educational agencies in China, including the All-China Women's Federation, which, with the Child Development Centre of China and Unicef, has made remarkable efforts to make simple information about health, hygiene and child-rearing available to minority groups.

One can argue that all forms of education, including these philanthropic ones, represent a form of cultural chauvinism, and that it is not practicable or desirable for any state to preserve all its cultures intact. In most cases, China's policies on ethnic minorities are not inherently more 'assimilationist' than Australian multicultural policy, although the practice of sending Tibetan children away to school in Han cities is reminiscent of the abduction of Aboriginal children in the 1950s and '60s—and I have always been cynical about the purpose of 'national minority institutes' in China, since they provide political training for ethnic cadres. The crucial issue, however, is whether ethnic groups will be content as minorities, or whether, as in so much of the world, they will want to be 'nationalities'. ■

Trevor Hay is a senior lecturer in education at the University of Melbourne.

I was told by an international aid official in Peking that the next incident of Tian'anmen proportions was less than a year away, and would involve ethnic minorities.

A crisis of nationality

Central Asia and a post-Soviet Union

EVEN BEFORE THE FAILED MOSCOW COUP, and the subsequent collapse of central authority in the Soviet Union, Boris Yeltsin was urging a specifically Russian, as opposed to Soviet, renewal. After his break with Gorbachev in 1987, and especially after his departure from the Communist Party last year, Yeltsin had been proposing that Russia should shed her self-imposed leading role in the union. Boris, anti-Tsar of all the Russians, has decreed that Russia must not only recover its pre-Soviet past, but acquire an appropriate post-imperial identity as well. Hence the Russian president's commitment to building new relations among the former constituent members of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, with a view to replacing the coerced union of 1922 by a voluntary confederation or alliance. The Soviet crisis has become predominantly a crisis of nationality, not only for the minorities but for the Russian majority as well.

The process launched by Yeltsin before the coup, whereby a core of four republics—Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia and Kazakhstan—would try to negotiate the fundamentals of a new voluntary association, could still quite sensibly incorporate all five Central Asian republics. As was confirmed in March by President Gorbachev's referendum on the future of the USSR, these republics remain, individually and collectively, pro-union. This may seem surprising, given the history of Tsarist and Soviet conquest, colonisation and exploitation in the region. But the five republics—Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia and Tadzhikistan—do not have the same incentive as the Baltic states to leave a union that has devastated, but also modernised, industrialised and subsidised them for 70 years.

What, then, do the Central Asians want? Nationalist feeling abounds, but it is not solely, or even principally, anti-Russian. Pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic sentiments run freely, cutting across conflicting tribalisms: Kirghiz versus Uzbeks over land and housing in Kirghizia; forcibly transplanted Meskhetian Turks (from Georgia) versus Kirghiz; Persian-speaking Tadzhiks resenting Uzbek control of their ancient city, Samarkand.

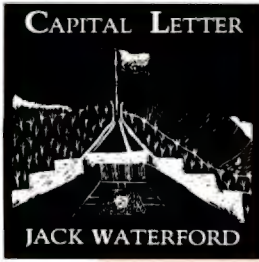
A further complication is that, whatever relationship does eventually develop between these republics and Yeltsin's Russia, some Russians would happily shed the Central Asian territories anyway. Alexander Solzhenitsyn has appealed, from his sanctuary in the United States, for the formation of a union shrunk to include only the three Slav republics—Russia, Belorussia and Ukraine. 'We have to make a hard choice,' he wrote last year, 'between the empire, which has been ruining primarily us, and the spiritual and bodily salvation of our people ... Did Russia grow poorer from its separation from Poland and Finland? ... We will straighten up even more without the crushing burden of our Central Asian underbelly, so thoughtlessly conquered by Alexander II.'

A union pared down to its Slavic core would have to decide its attitude to the Russian diaspora, which now numbers 25 million. These ethnic Russians stem from colonisation in the old empire, Tsar-driven or free; from the upheavals of the Revolution and Civil War; from Stalin's kulak deportations during the enforced collectivisation of agriculture; from the Terror of the 1930s; from the World War II deportations of supposedly disloyal Balts, Caucasians, Crimeans and others, whose places were often filled by Russians, and from the economic migrations of the 1960s and '70s. Russians of the diaspora would like to be repatriated in their millions, but they cannot be. The push of minority nationalism against them in other republics, and of German, Polish and other nationalisms against the lost Russian tribe in Eastern Europe, have both encountered resistance arising from lack of jobs and housing in the Russian heartland.

IN THE CAUCASIAN REPUBLICS of Georgia and Armenia, Christian civilisations that are older than Russia herself, and which historically looked to Russia for protection against both Sunni (Turkish) and Shiite (Iranian) Islam, long ago turned decisively against Moscow. In neither republic was the desire for protection sufficient to prevent moves for independence in the wake of the 1917 Revolution, moves that were crushed by Stalin, himself a Georgian. Now, any lingering desire for protection has evaporated in the fierce light of *glasnost*, and under the impact of disillusioning trauma: the bloody crackdown on nationalist protest in Georgia in April, 1989; Moscow's failure to prevent anti-Armenian pogroms that have erupted since 1988 in Baku, capital of Azerbaijan, and in Nagorno-Karabakh, the ancient Armenian territory awarded to Azerbaijan by Stalin.

For the people of Moldova, for the Baltic peoples, and for the Uniate Catholics of Western Ukraine—Eastern in ritual, papal in loyalty—there never was any question of Russian or Soviet 'protection': incorporation into the Stalinist empire was pure tragedy and loss. The Uniates had Marxism *and* the Orthodoxy of the Moscow Patriarch imposed on them. The Balts are now, apparently, fully free; the Uniates have stimulated the rest of the Ukraine to demand independence, while Moldavians simply aspire to become citizens of Romania, whence they were plucked in 1939-40, at the same time that Stalin was annulling the independence of the Baltic states in collusion with Hitler, and forcibly detaching Western Ukraine from Poland. ■

Peter King is director of the centre for peace and conflict studies, University of Sydney. This article is extracted from a paper delivered earlier this year at a peace research conference in the Netherlands.



The rise and rise of the *sans maisons*

A PARADOX OF OUR egalitarian social democracy: though standards of living continue to rise—even during the recession, for most of us—many of the next generation will have a lower standard of living than their parents. Despite all the welfare measures aimed at helping the worst off, class lines in Australia have begun to harden, and an individual's prospects of making it rich have more to do with family circumstances than ever before.

To accept this is to modify our concept of class. Forget terms like working class or middle class, just ask one question: do you own a house or are you well on the way to owning one? If so, you are in; if not, you are out. And whether one is in or out most often reflects how one's family coped during the boom days of the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s.

Many of Australia's working class bought houses in those times. Then, no doubt, it seemed a tremendous burden. But those who did so are now sitting pretty compared with their peers who could not quite scrape up enough money for a deposit, whose rental payments—though at the time not significantly different from the mortgage payments for an equivalent house—did not allow them to save, or who simply opted to wait. During the past 20 years, rising interest rates and house prices have wiped out their chances of buying a house, probably forever.

Three decades ago, a single-income family on an average wage could afford a median-priced house. That family is now far more likely to have two incomes, but the 'deposit gap'—the amount of money needed to put a deposit on a house—has risen at a much faster rate than household incomes. In the past 10 years the gap has doubled. Households without two incomes are dropping out of the race altogether. Special government allowances, whether to bridge deposit gaps or supplement interest rates, increasingly help only those at the margin of eligibility, not the ordinary home buyer.

So an increasing proportion of Australians must simply abandon dreams of home ownership. That has implications for their poverty in retirement—whether or not one owns a home is perhaps the best pointer to poverty in retirement—but also for their ability to provide for their own children. The new in-class, in fact, are the children of the housed. Most of them will die owning not one house but two.

The housed—those who bought before inflation and interest rates took off in the '70s—have, in relation to the value of their houses, low interest and repayments, and an effortless build up of equity that can be put into further housing or capital accumulation. About the time

they are making their final mortgage repayments, their children will come of age, and they will be able to subsidise their children's entry into the housing market.

This 'socialism-in-one-family' goes beyond lending a helping hand to the 25-year-old son or daughter who is on the housing market for the first time. By the time the son or daughter is 45, having probably paid off the mortgage and starting to find themselves comfortable on their income, the odds are that mum and dad will conveniently pop off, leaving a nice extra paid-off house to their already well-ensconced children. So we can start talking about the two-house and three-house families, even in the middle class. These are people whose capital and disposable income utterly separates them even from others doing similar jobs and earning equivalent incomes.

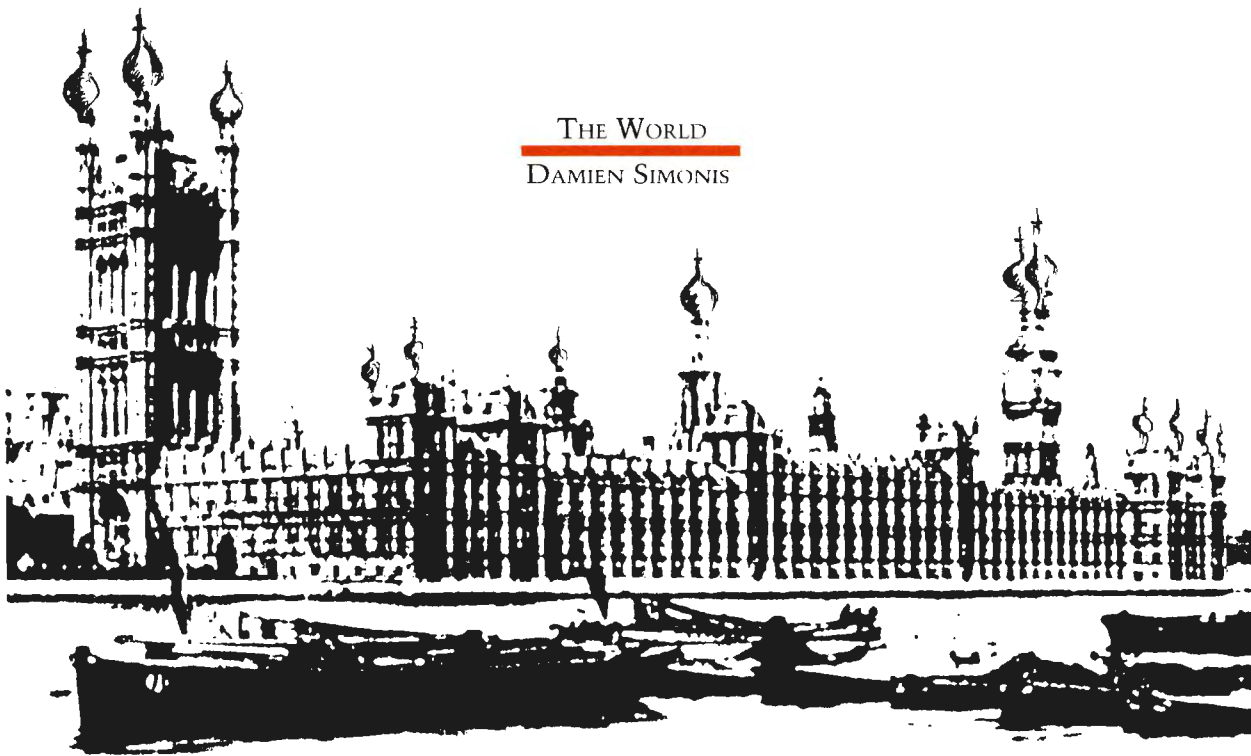
The gaps grow wider. There are no death duties or effective capital gains taxes on the accumulation of unearned income. Tickets in the race of life are much less matters of self-reliance than of patrimony, but those lucky enough to benefit are also those most likely to resist the idea that the lucky should help out the not-so-lucky, and to argue that doing so instils dependence and attacks initiative.

Just how one helps the *sans maisons* is not clear. About 200,000 households, 110,000 of them private renters, spend more than 50 per cent of their income on housing, nearly 500,000 spend more than 30 per cent. About half of them are singles, but 17 per cent are sole parents—60 per cent of single mothers in the private market have real difficulty—18 per cent are couples with children and 12 per cent couples without children.

In the past, government housing has been a source of refuge, with rents either fixed or rebated to 25 per cent or less of income; the average government tenant pays about 18 per cent. More recently, the government has subsidised low-income households in the private rental market, but this has not been fixed in relation to rent paid and a high proportion of recipients still pay more than 30 per cent of incomes in rent.

The Commonwealth is looking at ways of providing more equity in these arrangements e.g. setting benchmark figures—probably 30 per cent of income—beyond which it will subsidise rents. But unless there is a substantial injection of fresh welfare funds, relief for private tenants will chiefly be funded by higher rents for public ones. Rental assistance, however, helps people only to keep their heads above water, not to cross the deposit gap. The new poor will always be with us.

Jack Waterford is deputy editor of the *Canberra Times*.



'R Talking up Islam

'RUSHDIE WAS A GIFT FROM GOD.' The controversy over Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, which in February 1989 brought the author a 'death sentence' from Ayatollah Khomeini, was not only a *cause celebre* for the defence of artistic freedom in the West. It also gave the West's fragmented Muslim communities a new dynamism in their expression of Muslim identity.

In January next year a Muslim organisation in Britain intends to inaugurate what it calls a 'Muslim parliament'. The promoters of this bicameral council of prominent Muslim citizens hope that it will enable them to combat what they see as veiled hostility from the wider British community. This hostility, they argue, is encapsulated not in Rushdie himself, or even in his 'filthy' book, but in the contempt for Muslim sensibilities expressed by Rushdie's defenders and the media.

Mansour Ansari, a Lebanese American who is working on the parliament plan and an associated 'Muslim manifesto' for London's Muslim Institute, says the aim is to create a lobby that will focus the political and social resources of British Muslims. The parliament would also help Muslim entrepreneurs to develop those resources. 'We want to make Muslims rich and prosperous,' Ansari says.

The institute's head, Kalim Siddiqui, has gained a reputation in the British press as a pro-Iranian extremist. His outspoken support for Ayatollah Khomeini's *fatwa* [pronouncement on an issue according to religious law] on Rushdie has put him in the spotlight, and some Muslims believe his 'extremism' is a ploy to win media interest, on the assumption that any publicity is good publicity. Sceptics see the proposal for a Muslim parliament in a similar light. Ansari dismisses the detractors, but is also quick to say that 'what we are doing is no more than what other minorities do—it is not directed against society.'

In fact, the draft proposals for the parliament take as their model the Board of Deputies of British Jews. 'The Jews are organised and their wealth is converted into effective power,' Ansari says. The institute sees power as an essential ingredient in social relationships, so 'a wealthy Muslim is a potential source of Islamic power.'

The institute claims to be establishing 'manifesto groups' throughout the country, and has begun collecting a database that will provide a more accurate picture of the Muslim community and its needs. But the level of support among Muslims for the planned parliament is disputed by rival groups. Muhammad Usammah, a mathematics teacher at London's only Muslim secondary school for boys, the Islamic College, says that 'much of this sort of thing doesn't filter down to the ordinary people. There are so many Islamic groups that it's hard to keep track of us.'

Nevertheless, Usammah senses a closing of ranks among British Muslims, and attributes it largely to the scandal flowing from the Rushdie affair. 'The general reaction was one of shock, disbelief and sadness,' he says. 'There are many things that cannot be said, that are restricted in this country—just look at the libel laws. But there is no consideration for Muslim feelings. The references to the prophet [Muhammad], his family and companions [roughly comparable to the apostles] were obvious and insulting. Should there be freedom to insult or freedom from insult?'

THERE ARE TWO MILLION MUSLIMS IN BRITAIN. They come from all over the Muslim world, but more than half are from the Indian subcontinent: 700,000 from Pakistan, 200,000 from Bangladesh and 150,000 from India. Many Britons lump them together with Hindus, Sikhs and others as 'Asians'. Somali and Yemeni seamen have lived

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in Britain for almost a century, but the big influx of Muslims took place in the 1960s and '70s, when Germany and France also absorbed big Muslim populations. In France there are three million Muslims, drawn from France's former North African colonies, and in Germany about two million, most of them Turkish guest workers.

The first wave of Muslims to arrive in Britain were men seeking to escape the desperate poverty of their homelands. They settled mainly in London, the West Midlands and Yorkshire, where they are still concentrated, and their families followed. Many had to satisfy themselves with low-paid jobs in textile or other factories, but others went into business and the image of the 'shifty Paki' grew. Mansour Ansari, himself a businessman, admits there are a few engaging in 'a lot of hanky-panky, and spoiling it for everybody else'. Most, however, continue to live in straitened circumstances, and own small businesses and shops in which they work long hours for modest gain.

Abu Taher, the editor of a Bangladeshi newsletter, points to continuing racial harassment, particularly in the East London borough of Tower Hamlets where he and many other Muslims live. Discrimination is still felt in employment and housing, he says, and families of 14 or 15 sometimes live in two or three

rooms. 'Paki-bashing' is not as big a problem as it was, but has not been entirely consigned to the past. That it has subsided at all is partly due to the fact that Muslims now fight back. Of at least 1000 mosques up and down the country, more than a third hold self-defence classes. The mosque is a centre of community activities as well as a place of worship. Most of Britain's mosques are not immediately recognisable as such, being anything from flats to converted churches or factories.

E DUCATION IS A BIG SOURCE OF FRUSTRATION. The Islamic College has 57 students, lodged in a pokey terrace in East London. In Muhammad Usammah's words, it is 'the poorest school imaginable', financed by donations and annual fees of £500—about \$1100—not high by British standards and applied only to those families that can afford it. There are 20 single-sex, Muslim primary and secondary schools in Britain, 11 of them secondary girls' schools.

Usammah complains that, although other private schools—Anglican, Catholic and Jewish—receive government grants, Islamic schools get nothing. Muslim insistence on single-sex education is one obstacle, though it is hardly an issue peculiar to Muslims. 'The real problem is on the religious side,' Usammah says. 'Islam is perceived as a threat, and a Muslim single-sex

school as a potential breeding ground for future extremists.'

Ibrahim Hewitt, a convert to Islam, works for the 25-year-old Muslim Educational Trust, an information unit that also organises after-school and weekend classes for Muslim students. He says that, with the second and third generations of Muslims now growing up, 'many fear integration could in fact mean disintegration—a complete loss of all content of faith on the part of young people.' Hewitt agrees with Usammah about the educational difficulties confronting Muslims. The trust has drawn up a list of areas in which it feels mainstream schools should make provision for Muslims, ranging from the performance of religious duties to matters of diet.

Religious education and collective worship are sore points. The Education Reform Act of 1988 allows parents to withdraw their children from collective prayers and religious education classes, but Hewitt claims schools have often not carried out such wishes when expressed by Muslim parents. 'There is no problem when, say, Jehovah's Witnesses ask for withdrawal,' he says. 'But for some reason, when Muslims make such requests it provokes animosity.'

LIKE MANY BRITISH MUSLIMS, Hewitt sees the media as 'a pernicious source of discrimination', propagating an image of Muslims as fanatics who want to convert all and sundry at the point of a sword. 'A crusader mentality survives.' He is cautious about the Muslim parliament idea, but agrees that a representative body would help improve the position of Muslims.

Dr Muhammad Manazir Ahsan, the director general of the Islamic Foundation in Leeds, is also sensitive to the media image of Muslims. Yet he is wary of anything that might fuel it, including a Muslim parliament. He fears that the proposal is a 'half-baked idea', which will only lead to confrontation between Muslims and the wider community. But that there is hostility to Islam, he has no doubt: 'Perhaps other religions are not considered a challenge to the West. The media always misrepresent Islam—in one program, for instance, a Jewish scholar said it is written in the Quran that Jews should be killed like scorpions ... People talk about Lebanon and infer that is how all Muslims live. Now, if I were to focus on Northern Ireland and say all Britons live like that, I would be accused of distorting the truth.'

Ahsan also notes that the handling of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International scandal—the bank was founded by a Pakistani Muslim—has, rightly or wrongly, aroused suspicions that the Bank of England found it easier to act as and when it did because the failed bank's local clients were mainly 'Asians'. A Fleet Street Hindu reporter considered the reporting of the disaster to be racist, showing real interest when non-Asians were seen to be victims as well.

Jihad is a catchery that causes Muslims despair. Muhammad Usammah stresses that for devout Muslims the most important element of *jihad* is the inner



Raiders of the lost texts

A RCHIMEDES DISCOVERED THAT when a sphere was fitted exactly into a cylinder, the ratio of the volume of the cylinder to the volume of the sphere was as 3 is to 2. Even more remarkable, he was also able to prove that the ratio of the areas of their surfaces was also 3:2. Given the shapes of spheres and cylinders, this is an astounding exactitude. Archimedes was so impressed—he thought it his greatest achievement—that he asked his friends to inscribe this formula on his tomb. When Cicero was quaestor in Sicily, a century or so later, he found Archimedes' neglected grave, along with its inscription, and restored it. It was, as Carl Boyer says in his *History of Mathematics*, 'almost the only contribution of a Roman to the history of mathematics'. Since then, however, no trace has been found of the tomb.

The text in which Archimedes expounded his discovery is called *On the Sphere and the Cylinder*. Along with fragments of other lost works, an ancient version of this text was rediscovered some two thousand years after having been written. It happened like this: J.L. Heiberg, the noted Danish editor of Archimedes' works, heard about a palimpsest (parchment on which the original writing has been partly washed off and replaced by new writing) in Constantinople in 1906. These 185 pages of parchment and paper contained a collection of Eastern Orthodox prayers and liturgies. Underneath these prayers, when one looked closely enough, was a 10th-century copy of five treatises by Archimedes.

There is some irony in the connections between the church and the survival of Archimedes' texts. The best-known manuscript of Archimedes' work, which all others appear to have copied, was at one time in the possession of George Valla, a teacher in Venice in the 15th century. Upon Valla's death, the manuscript went to Alberto Pio, prince of Capri, and then either to the Vatican or to Cardinal Rodolpho Pio, a nephew, after which it seems to have disappeared. Pope Nicholas V had a manuscript of Archimedes' treatises about 1461, and Cardinal Bessarion was known to have possessed another copy. Versions of these works have come to us in other ways. From the early internal evidence, however, there remain eight treatises written by Archimedes, on a variety of topics, that are waiting to be rediscovered.

Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* was, in part, about a lost work of Aristotle on humour—a joke in itself. Harrison Ford's adventures as Indiana Jones included a search for the lost Ark of the Covenant. Please find me a copy of Archimedes' *On Sphere-making*, which describes the mechanics necessary to build a sphere representing all the motions of the heavenly bodies. Or find me Archimedes' tomb. *Eureka Street* will undoubtedly offer a reward.

—John Honner SJ

struggle for virtue, and suffering for the faith (cf. Quran 9:20, 22:78, 25:52). Ibrahim Hewitt says that, in its violent form, *jihad* refers to defence of the faith, not to aggression (cf. 2:190). The reputation of Muslims as violent, and even primitive, in Britain was reinforced by public burnings of copies of *The Satanic Verses* in Bradford and then enthusiastic support for the *fatwa*. Even today, most Muslims will tell you, often with surprising passion, that the content of the *fatwa* was correct.

Hewitt and Ahsan say that under Islamic law the punishment for Rushdie's blasphemy would indeed be death, but only in an Islamic state. 'We do not live under *sharia* [Islamic law] here,' says Ahsan, 'so it could never have been implemented. And no one said they would carry out the death sentence.'

The point, according to Hewitt, is that Islam is a way of life, so that in an Islamic society religious aspirations would inform the mechanisms and institutions of the state. Westerners, who have a neatly compartmentalised religion, isolated from political life, have trouble coming to grips with this. 'Ayatollah Khomeini was asked to give a religious judgment in an Islamic state,' says Hewitt, 'and in an Islamic state Rushdie would be guilty of treason. In this country, treason carries the death penalty too.'

This does not mean, Hewitt adds, that Islam cannot tolerate criticism: 'It is never against the dissemination of scholarly thought, but there is a difference between that and abuse.' Hewitt declines, however, to indicate where that line should be drawn. And suggestions that Islam, like Christianity, ought to turn the other cheek, elicit little more than references to the parlous state of modern Christianity, particularly in the Church of England.

M ANY WHO OPPOSE the Muslim Institute's ideas prefer to work through existing structures and political parties. Abu Taher says that 10 of the 50 borough councillors in Tower Hamlets are Muslims, members of the Labour Party or the Liberal Democrats, though he admits their progress in promoting Muslim issues has been unspectacular. And Hewitt notes that the media treated the Islamic Party, which endorsed a candidate in last year's Bradford byelection, as part of the lunatic fringe.

All of which is grist for the institute's mill. Mansour Ansari regards attempts to work within the political system as futile, but believes a combination of Western dynamic thinking and Muslim consciousness could produce a new wave of Muslim activists. The institute would also like to see the establishment of a British Islamic university, along the lines of the theological institute that opened in France last month. And there are greater hopes. If the parliament does get off the ground, Ansari says, the next step would be the creation of a pan-European lobby. ■

Damien Simonis is *Eureka Street's* European correspondent.

Slavery, Sudan's weapon of war

IN SUDAN, GOVERNMENT AND REBEL FORCES are fighting over oil fields and the state's right to enforce penalties like beheading, whipping, stoning, and amputations. With Sudan's civil war now in its eighth year, slavery has become a potent weapon in the government's struggle against the rebel Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA). Dinka tribespeople and foreign observers in the south of the country say that Arab militia from the north, armed by the Sudanese government, are kidnapping thousands of African children.

Human-rights groups say slave trading is mixed with murder, rape, the poisoning of water supplies and the slaughtering of cattle in a strategy aimed at weakening the four million-strong Dinkas, who are the SPLA's power base. The Anti-Slavery Society in London estimates that militia slavers have grabbed 7000 southern Sudanese children since 1983, and Amnesty International reports that thousands of Dinka civilians have been massacred since 1987.

Dr Bol Deng, a former regional minister of health in southern Sudan, claimed in London: 'The Government has a policy of exterminating whole tribes, beginning with the Dinka.' Sudan's dictator, General Omar Bashir, has legalised this strategy of atrocity with the Popular Defence Act, which codifies militia activities as part of Sudan's defence against the SPLA.

According to a Sudanese journalist, Sadia Jamal, Bashir's home in Khartoum holds Dinka slaves bought in the early 1980s, when Bashir was army commander at Muglad in south-west Sudan. Slaves who had escaped from their owners told of torture and mutilation when Jamal interviewed them last year. They said that owners cut the Achilles tendons of slaves who would not convert to Islam, and that a boy caught escaping had been tied by the neck and dragged behind a horse. Another was said to have been castrated before being sold, and a third boy branded with a hot cattle iron.

For unlucky children grabbed by militiamen, slavery begins in a suffocating saddlebag hanging from the hump of a camel. After being kidnapped in the south, children are taken north to a slave market at Safaha, in Darfour province, where they are auctioned to buyers who will use them as farm labourers, domestic servants or concubines. The price of a child ranges from \$20 to \$100; six children can be bought for the price of a machinegun.

One witness told World Vision that he had seen 150 children kidnapped last year, in the Nuer area of

Upper Nile province. 'They attacked when we were with our mothers among the cattle getting milk because there was no other food', said 13-year-old Nyong Kong. 'Our fathers came out with spears, but they got shot or chased away.' After gunning down the men, the slavers grabbed the children and stuffed them into their saddlebags.

Slave-trading is being used to replace Africans with Arabs in oil-rich parts of southern Sudan, according to a Sudan specialist in London, Dr Douglas Johnson. The oil fields, which are estimated to yield \$200 million annually, became a political issue in 1982, when the government did a deal with the US company Chevron that excluded southern Sudan from the profits. Arab militias were first armed by the government in 1983, after the oil issue and a declaration that Sudan was henceforth to be ruled by Islamic law (*sharia*) provoked the southern rebellion. Although armed by the government, the militias must take their wages in slaves and whatever else they can plunder from their African enemies. Some militiamen claim slave-trading does not violate the Qu'ran because slaves are prisoners taken in a *jihad* against the SPLA and other non-Muslims in southern Sudan.

THE WAR IS COSTING the government \$5 million a day, at a time when Sudan faces a \$14 billion foreign debt. Unable to sell oil, the government has begun selling grain to Europe for cattle feed, and seven million people now face starvation because the country's food stocks are depleted. Famine has crippled Sudan since 1983. With the SPLA, led by Dr John Garang, slowly defeating the Sudanese army, the government is using slave-raiding and massacres by the militia to weaken the Dinka. But although the attacks do wreak havoc, slaving and other atrocities have also filled the rebel ranks with revenge-hungry recruits.

Slave-raid survivors flee to refugee camps in southern Sudan, where they often join the SPLA's youth wing. Kidepo, a refugee camp in south-east Sudan, has 3000 boys under 12 years old. More children walk in daily from Bar el Gazal and other provinces hit by slave raiding. One survivor, Mabith Manuel, 12, told World Vision staff that he had seen slavers raid his hometown, Tonj, in February 1981. 'I hid in the bush,' he said. The Omars (Arab militia) came in on horses and camels, shooting and taking away many children. Mabith and other children reached Kidepo after walking for three months, surviving on leaves, roots and berries. Weakened by hunger, Mabith crawled for the last few weeks of the journey. ■

Jonathan Smith is a journalist with World Vision Australia. In May and August he toured five refugee camps in southern Sudan.



Slave-raid survivor Mabith Manuel.
(Photo: World Vision)



Messengers of pottage

'Let them eat sun-dried tomatoes with focaccia'—the writing of cookbooks and restaurant guides tells us more than we think about our attitudes to food.

IN HIS *Notes Towards A Definition of Culture*, T. S. Eliot bemoaned the rise of mass consumer culture. One sure sign of the threat was the 'indifference to the art of preparing food'. Had Eliot lived to see the rampant reliance on convenience foods he may well have felt vindicated, while welcoming the 12th edition of the *The Age Good Food Guide*, published in August, as one of the remaining buttresses of a quasi-aristocracy of taste.

But what is sauce for the goose is soup for the gander. The egalitarian-minded left, according to Eliot's reasoning, would decry epicurean guides for exactly the reasons that the poet would praise them. It is surprising, therefore, to find that the original British *Good Food Guide* was the brainchild of a left-wing labourite and socialist historian, Raymond Postgate, who put out his first edition in 1951. Postgate, who wanted to raise the standard of cooking in England, used no-nonsense criteria to interrogate the pretensions of the restaurant trade: Is the cooking good and ample? Is the price reasonable? Did you find the service courteous and adequate? So should we welcome *The Age Good Food Guide* as a worthy attempt to empower the consumer to rage against the debilitating effects of industrial capitalism? Roll on, Ralph Nader.

If *The Good Food Guide* seems to straddle divergent tendencies toward élitism and egalitarianism, it is

because the history of gastronomy is more complex than may be supposed. And because, as Marx saw, the course of industrialism itself holds out the promise of a kind of democratic culture that the left will always approach with ambivalence. 'All fixed, fast-frozen relationships, with their train of venerable ideas and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become obsolete before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air' he declaimed in the *Communist Manifesto*, and the diners shall take over the restaurants. Well, not exactly. But the French Revolution did throw the chefs of the aristocracy on to the street and out of work. By opening up restaurants as alternative means of employment they created a new clientele, while altering fundamentally the relationship between the chef and his public—a relationship that could now be traced along the cash nexus.

The aristocracy was pushed on to the defensive. Deprived of their status *and* of their biscuit, they took some time to catch up. Until World War I, Britain's upper classes still considered it ill-bred to talk about food. But a French gourmand, Maurice-Edmond Sailland, realised that if the art of gastronomy was to prosper, it must continue to reach out to the common folk. He proudly claimed to have consecrated 'the holy alliance between tourism and gastronomy'. The advent of mass-produced cars coincided with the desire for good food after the

privations of war, and so the French drove off to discover the cuisine of each province. Little wonder, then, that it was the Michelin tyre company which seized the opportunity to publish the first of our modern-day restaurant guides for what Sailland dubbed the new breed of 'gastro-nomads'.

If the French set out for the provinces in search of good food, the situation in Australia is somewhat different, as anyone who has driven from Melbourne to Sydney and tried to find a decent cup of coffee will know. But the emphasis here is on nomadism. A true provincial could not be a gastronome, as Stephen Mennell has observed: 'The social role of the gastronome is essentially urban in character, because it is at the opposite pole from the spirit of traditional rural self-sufficiency, eating the produce of one's own land and taking it as it comes'. Here's the conundrum for the purist. Gastronomy presumes variety and abundance, because only then can one exercise the discrimination that is essential to the exercise. Yet the technical means by which we have overcome the constraints of distance and seasonal variation are also the means by which we have produced the tasteless tomato, against which all good epicureans rail.

Nostalgia is a key organising category of modern life. The French urban bourgeoisie could return to their Paris apartments with the memory of what good provincial food was like and attempt to recreate it, with the fish of Brittany and the olives of Provence delivered to their door. Michael Symons, in his excellent history *One Continuous Picnic*, makes the same case in explaining Australia's culinary revolution of the past 25 years. The explosion of good and varied restaurants over that time is not due, as conventional wisdom would have it, to the influx of migrants (otherwise, why no Chinese restaurants in the 1860s?), or to prosperity (why such conformist dining in the prosperous 1920s and 1950s?), but to increasing numbers taking the grand tour.

Being further away from the action, Australians had to wait for easy jet travel rather than the T-model Ford, but by the early 1960s there were 90,000 departures of Australian residents, growing to one million by 1976. And they returned, telling of how they 'had sat for lunch on the side of the road in some Italian village and eaten flour-dusted bread, salami and a bottle of unlabelled red'. They had learnt that there was more to food than steak and eggs.

Aficionados of cookbooks will have noticed a similar phenomenon, characterised perhaps as the Quest for Authenticity. Recipes are now usually embedded in a narrative. It is not enough to know that we use olive oil in a recipe—we need to be told that the dish was originally made on a hiking trip near Carrara, using oil

just obtained from the first pressing of the olives from the gnarled trees of a domestic grove of a poor but honest Italian farmer. So we are at once reassured as to the indisputable authenticity of the recipe, while it is also made quite clear we cannot hope to recreate it this side of the Tuscan foothills. The manoeuvre is explicit in Elizabeth David's seminal and best-selling cookbook, *Mediterranean Food*, which was published in 1950, when rationing meant most of the favoured ingredients were unavailable. Never mind, for as she wrote, 'even if people could not very often make the dishes here described, it was stimulating to think about them, to escape from the deadly boredom of queuing ...'. Fittingly, then, *The Age Good Food Guide* gave its accolade for the best new restaurant of 1991 to Iain Hewitson's *Memories of the Mediterranean*. It is a scenario worthy of Aldous Huxley, our picturing the Melbourne bourgeoisie turning up for a gastronomic experience at a restaurant dubbed *Memories of the Mediterranean*.

Once eating becomes a business so does talking about it, and despite some ill-feeling between the restaurant trade and *The Guide*, they need each other. The trade renews itself through fads, and the *Guide* ably chronicles these for the spending public. The term *nouvelle cuisine* is generic enough for it to have been applied in the 1740s to the cookery of Marin and Menon, and again in the 1890s to the trends initiated by Escoffier, as well as to the work of Bocuse, Guérard and Verge in the 1960s.

The manifesto encompassing simplicity and reliance on the 'natural' qualities of good produce, is a constant as each new fashion is initiated. In Australia we can now discern several trends, each apparently justifiable. A rediscovery of the regional cooking of the Mediterranean, and a move toward the Californian/New Mexico cuisine of the USA both make good sense if we accept climatic similarities between the regions. And Keith Floyd's odyssey through Australia featured an abundance of local seafood, all cooked up with enough lemongrass, coriander and lime juice to satisfy the 'Australia is part of Asia' pundits.

BUT WHAT OF POSTGATE and fighting the good fight against the catering-industrial complex? Australians now spend up to 30 per cent of their food dollar on eating out, unheard of a generation ago. Yet much of that is accounted for by McDonalds, Pizza Hut and Kentucky Fried, and a significant proportion by cheap Chinese and Italian snack places. People do frequent these places with a sense of the entertainment value to be gained from eating out as a leisure time activity, but equally to escape domestic drudgery. It's hardly a qualitative revolution in eating, but Postgate and the consumer crusaders would put the blame at the door of the food trade, not, like Eliot, at the asses who have no choice but to fall into line. The solutions, for Postgate's colleague Phillip Harben, seemed clear in the *dirigiste* atmosphere of postwar Britain: 'I believe that if people are given the best of everything, if they are obstinately and stubborn-

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ly supplied with only the very finest food to eat, they will soon come not only to like it, but to demand it.' The problem with that attitude, as pointed out by Mennell, is that paternalism is paternalism, whether Fabian-inspired or otherwise; Harben's sentiments run dangerously close to a carefree 'Let them eat sun-dried tomatoes with focaccia' attitude.

ACCORDINGLY, FOR THE GASTRONOMIC knight errant there is no problem with foodie elitism if one adopts it as part of a prophetic lifestyle. It is all a question of 'cultural capital' as the theorists of the New Class would have it. The tertiary-educated workers of the information and service sectors might not have the abundance of riches of the gentry and captains of industry, but they sure got Style. The trouble, as British commentator Michael Rustin says, is that the political arena is skewed as a result. Politics now focuses on the battle between 'material' and 'cultural' capital, that is, commercial versus quality-of-life concerns. Effectively excluded from the debate is the largely forgotten stratum that possesses little economic or cultural capital. Call them the poor.

Food in Australia is a disgrace, especially institutional food, and most especially what we feed our sick

in hospitals and our aged in nursing homes. Good food should find a place near the top of a leftist agenda, but for several reasons has not yet done so in Australia. Symons argues that trade unions have not been sympathetic to the people who could provide the basis for good eating—market gardeners, fisherfolk, shopkeepers, restaurateurs, small business—and an urban labour movement has never cared greatly for the farmer who could provide the agricultural basis needed for a culinary revival. In the meantime, McDonalds open up outlets at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne and Pizza Hut sponsor school reading competitions, and another generation of our children is ensnared by a multinational marketing strategy, at some cost to their well-being. The *Good Food Guide*, so enmeshed with the recording of consumer fads, is probably not the tool to remedy this. A good consumer might be an informed consumer, but a better consumer would be one who interrogates the culture of consumerism that has dominated us for the past two centuries and in which, inevitably, gastronomy has been all too heavily implicated. ■

Anthony O'Donnell is a researcher at the University of Melbourne law school.

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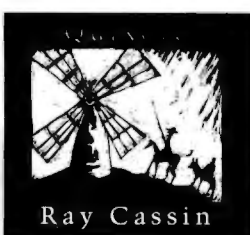
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You only have to ask

LATELY I HAVE BEEN more than usually concerned with public affairs. Politics is largely a utilitarian activity, at which those of quixotic disposition are either too eccentric or too fanatical to succeed. I do not think I am a fanatic, although I admit to holding views some would consider eccentric. But quixotic visions have not yet distracted me from the ordinary obligations of citizenship, and this year I again expressed my esteem for the fair city of Richmond, Victoria, by casting a valid vote in the municipal election.

It was not a simple task. After carefully perusing the ballot paper, and the profusion of pamphlets thrust into my hands by utilitarian louts lurking outside the polling booth, I could discern no means of deciding who should accede to the high dignity of Councillor for Coppin Ward. There were four candidates, none of them identified by party, faction or other formal association. But this lack of willingness to show their colours, I eventually decided, was a test of my worthiness as a voter. The task was to work out who was really who; if I got the right answer, Coppin Ward would enter a new golden age.

Conscious of the grave burden that had been placed upon me, I began to read once more the pamphlets proffered by the utilitarian louts. One candidate declared she was in favour of road closures, to protect the residential character of the ward. She must be the yuppie candidate, I reasoned, so I could not vote for her. A second contender declared himself against road closures, since they might hurt local traders. I decided he must be the business candidate, so I could not vote for him. Choice number 3 had nothing apart from his name printed on his pamphlet. He was obviously the candidate of vanity and inanity, so I could not vote for him. The fourth candidate had a great deal of text on his pamphlet but I could not read it. It was printed in several languages, none of them familiar to me. He was obviously the candidate of international understanding, peace, friendship, fraternity, sorority and interesting fast food. And since these are clearly quixotic ideals, I placed a '1' next to his name.

News travels slowly in Coppin Ward, so I don't know yet whether I did get the right answer. The results of my test were probably published in the local newspaper, which I never read. (It is obsessed with utilitarians.) So I await some formal proclamation of the golden age, perhaps in an illuminated scroll delivered by the mayor's personal herald.

Some times, of course, notification of success never comes. We just see it in practice. Such was the case with my one venture into international diplomacy, of which I was reminded during a recent visit to Perth. One day, as I sat on the terrace of one those renovated Fremantle hotels that have been the chief beneficiaries of the America's Cup and Alan Bond's attempt at a windled recovery, I began to reflect on a time when the streets of Perth and Fremantle looked very different. Not so

much because the buildings have changed (though they have), or the inhabitants; the visitors have changed.

In the time of which I speak American naval uniforms were a common sight in Western Australia. Ronald Reagan and Malcolm Fraser were still with us, Mikhail Gorbachev and Bob Hawke and Brian Burke were yet to come. The Soviets were in Afghanistan, the Ayatollah Khomeini was in Iran, and the Americans were trying to keep as much of their fleet in the Indian Ocean as possible. Which meant that several times a year a task force would dock in Fremantle, disgorging large numbers of sailors and marines on to the streets for rest and recreation.

It became a not inconsequential part of the local economy. *The West Australian*, for which I then worked as a reporter, predicted before one visit that the resting and recreating sailors and marines would spend several million dollars in the shops of Perth and Fremantle. 'Shops' was either an inclusive term or a euphemism; recreating sailors spend at least as much money in sundry places of entertainment as they do in retail stores.

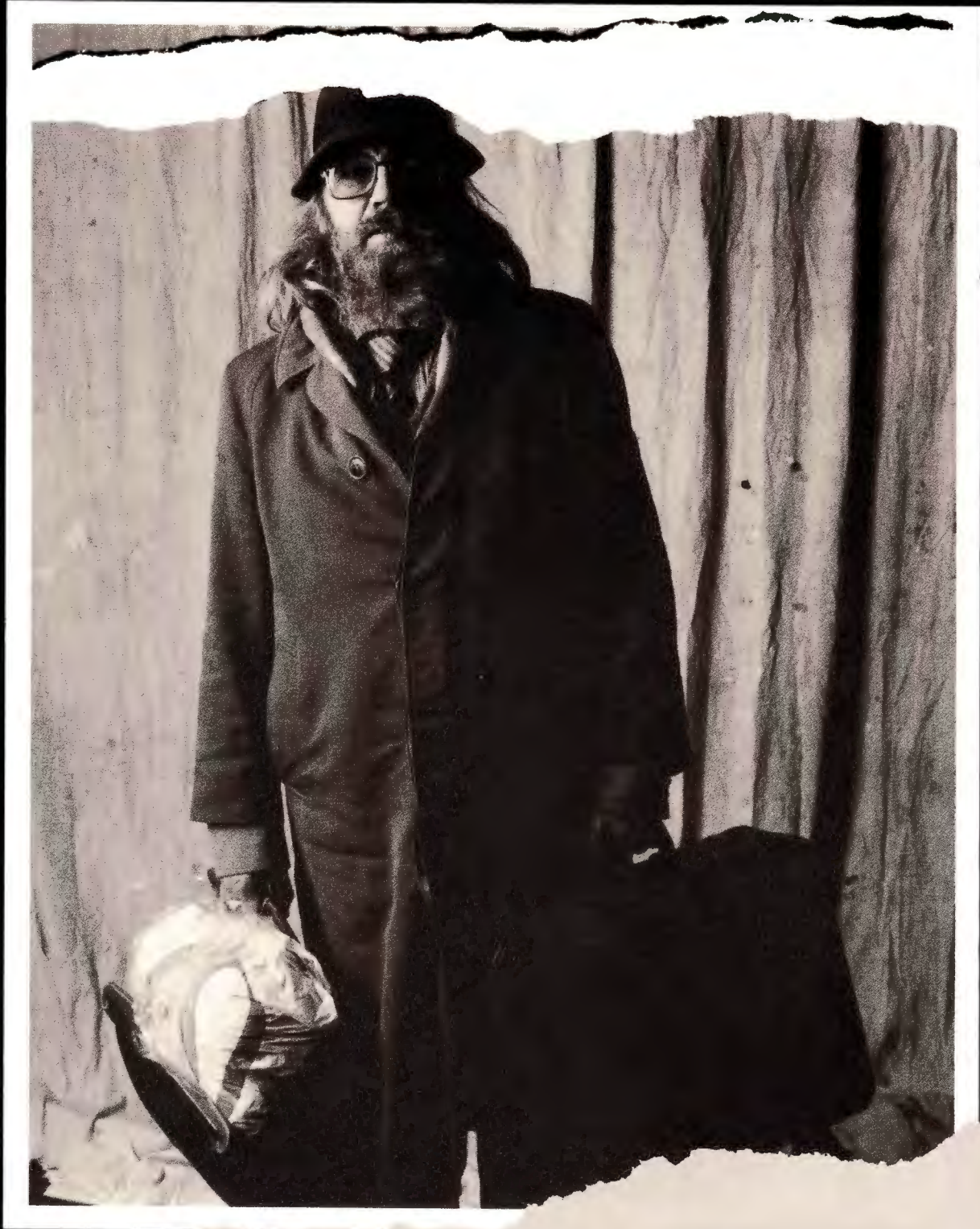
During one R-and-R visit a fellow reporter and I, having spent our lunch break trudging the uniform-clogged streets of Fremantle, feeling like extras from the cast of *Come In, Spinner*, entered one of that city's public bars. It was the wrong choice. I say this not because a notice posted on the door announced that payment for drinks could be tendered in American currency. Nor because the barmaid appeared to be wearing a sort of zip-up American flag. Nor even because a mural painted above the bar depicted a bald eagle with one wing curled protectively round a wallaby. But because several extremely loud marines insisted that we drink with them. When we declined, they commanded Ms Stars and Stripes to keep filling our glasses anyway, at their expense.

That afternoon, I wrote a letter. To Ronald Reagan. 'Dear Ron,' I wrote, 'I thought I'd let you know how glad we all are to see the boys back in town. We feel much safer knowing that the alliance is still in good shape. But could you do me a favour? Do you think that next time, you could send a shipload of American women instead?' And he did. I never received a written reply to the letter, but Ron replied in kind. The next US warship to berth in Fremantle had women in its crew. And since women were comparative rarities on naval vessels in those days, the local press were invited aboard to meet them. Fortunately, the women were not wearing up zip-up Australian flags.

I have not repeated this foray into the councils of the great. But when I reflect on the amount of time it has taken Gareth Evans to broker the peace in Cambodia, I sometimes wonder whether he should read the chapter on letter writing in my forthcoming self-help manual, *Quixotry: A Users's Guide*. ■

Ray Cassin is production editor of *Eureka Street*.

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MICHAEL COYNE

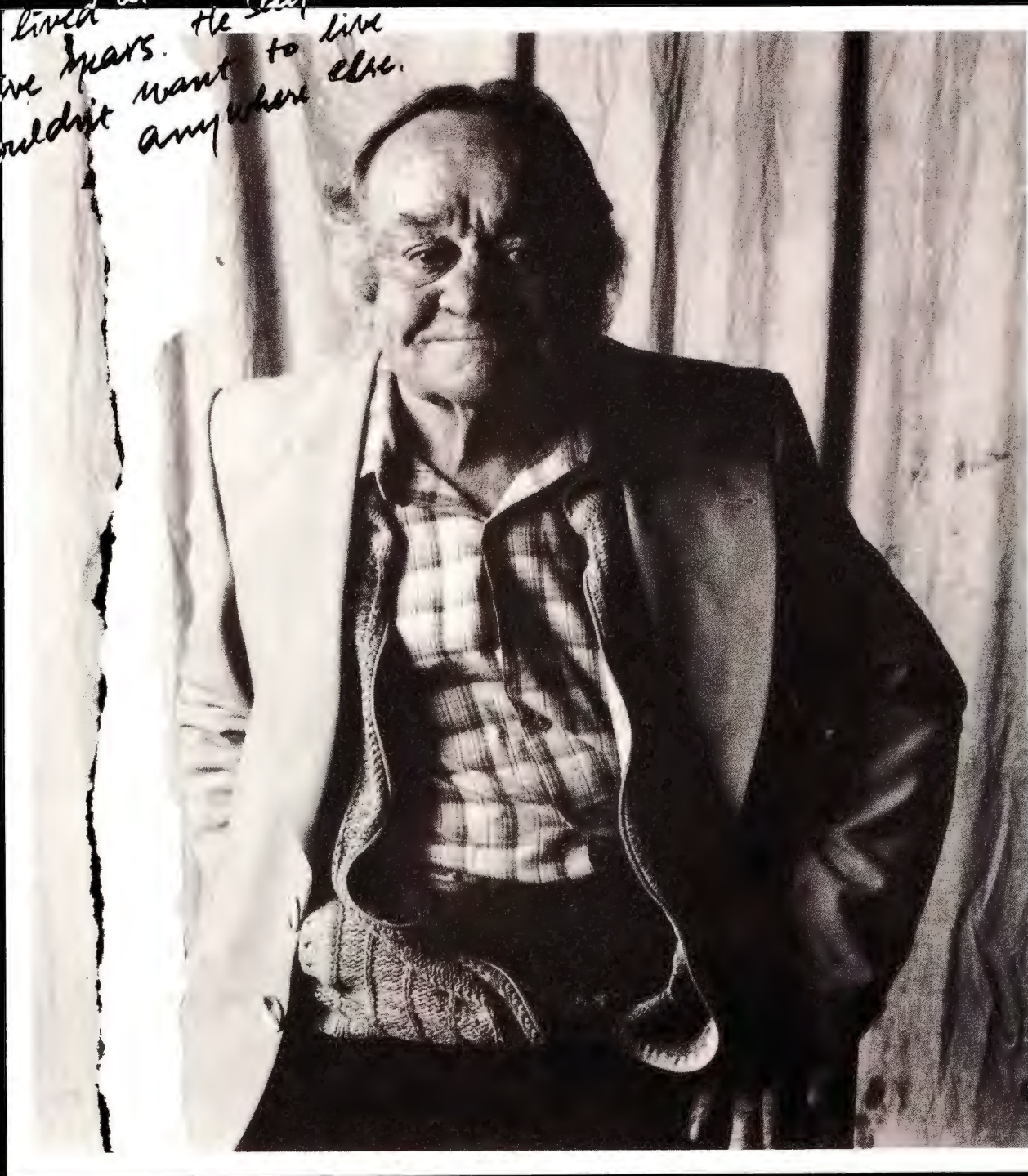


Francis James
has lived at Otisway House
for six years.
He does not smoke
or drink.

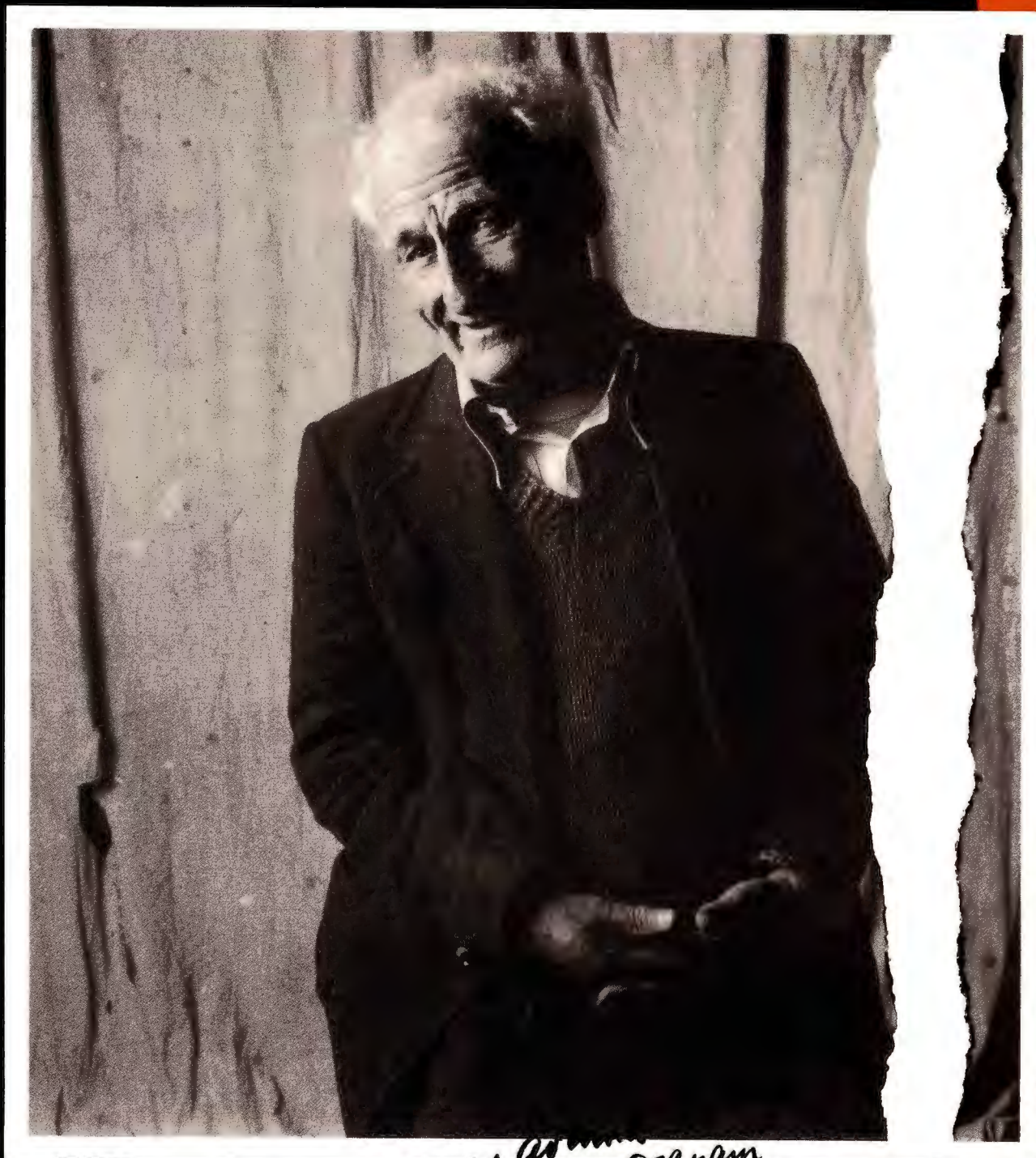
Christopher George Locke
ex-boxer and carpenter
He has lived at Ozanam House
for five years. He says he
wouldn't want to live
anywhere else.

PHOTOGRAPHY

MICHAEL COYNE



PHOTOGRAPHY
MICHAEL COYNE



Stan sells newspaper ^{at home}
He has been a regular at ^{Oznam}
House since 1956. He knows all
the history of the place and
loves talking about it.

PHOTOGRAPHY
MICHAEL COYNE



Roy Fisher

man

a country
from Shepperton,
would like to live in the country
but chooses to live in one of
the Ozanam Communities

Talking theology

October's forum derives from a discussion, on the state of theology, which took place at Newman College, Melbourne. Eureka Street invited **Gerald O'Collins SJ**, dean of the theology faculty at the Gregorian University in Rome, to open the forum. The theologians, biblical scholars and philosophers taking part were **Paul Connell, Maryanne Confoy RSC, Dorothy Lee-Pollard, Tony Kelly CSsR and Joan Nowotny IBVM**. Eureka Street was represented by **Ray Cassin, Morag Fraser and Michael Kelly SJ**. The convenor was **Peter L'Estrange SJ**.

Gerald O'Collins: It might be better to talk about the state of theologies today. One can speak about at least three kinds of theology in the contemporary world. The geographical habitats break down somewhat, but there are characteristic haunts. The first one is the academic, North Atlantic type that one finds in Western Europe, North America and places like Australia. Then there's a practical style of theology, characteristically found in Latin America, but not only there. And then there's a contemplative style that you find wherever Eastern-rite Christians are—in Greece, the Soviet Union, the Middle East. But it's not an Eastern monopoly—some Western Christians might also buy in there, and one name that comes to mind there would be Hans Urs von Balthasar.

The North Atlantic style comes out of medieval faculties of theology in places like Bologna and Paris. It's a theology of debate and dialogue, one that's anxious to show that it has scientific status. This has been an important issue for people like Wolfhart Pannenberg, that theology has a right to be taught on a university campus. This style of theology is obviously being deeply affected by developments in the past 30 or 40 years. The fact that more and more laywomen and laymen have been studying and teaching theologies has affected it, and the fact that theology is ecumenical both in the narrower and broader sense of the word. One of the things I like about Italians is that they understand the word ecumenism in the broad sense of the world'. It's not just a matter of relations between different Christian families, but relationships between Christianity, Jews, Moslems, etc. But whether we look at ecumenism in that broader Italian sense, or in the narrower sense the word is often given, I think ecumenism has touched and shaped North Atlantic theology.

So how's it going at the moment? Many of the big stars are dead—like Barth, Tillich and Bultmann. Karl Rahner is gone and so is Lonergan, if one thinks he should belong there. So it's a world in which there aren't as many big stars as were in the past but there are lots of solid performers.

What are the weaknesses of the North Atlantic style of theology? Well, it can be out of touch with the suffering world. And I think it's peculiarly prone to considerations of academic and church advancement.

The second theology is the practical style, represented classically by liberation theology, though that's not the only example (one remembers Metz and his political theology). It's a theology of the marketplace, of the streets, of slums.

What are the problems with this style of theology? Many people think that it's weak on social analysis. My main concern would be the way that the Bible is handled or mishandled in liberation theology. Sometimes it's not used, more often it's misused. I'm not asking for people simply to use the historical-critical method but at least they ought to be more aware and sophisticated in the way they use the Bible. And I say that remembering what I take to be the greatest Jesuit contribution of the Second Vatican Council—that phrase in *Dei Verbum* 24 about the use of the Bible being the very soul of theology.

Then we have the third style, the contemplative style. If the first and second styles, respectively, look for truth and goodness, this looks for the divine beauty. Its natural habitat is the community of prayer, the liturgy, but also popular religiosity, pilgrimages,

FORUM

One of the things I like about Italians is that they understand the word ecumenism in the broad sense of 'the world'. But whether we look at ecumenism in that broader Italian sense, or in the narrower sense the word is often given, I think ecumenism has touched and shaped North Atlantic theology. —GERALD O'COLLINS



Gerald O'Collins in Melbourne in August

icons. It's deeply spiritual. Two or three years back there was a Russian archbishop visiting me from Moscow—he runs the theological academy there—who just couldn't believe that we had a separate institute of spirituality. It's a contemplative style of theology that one finds in the Russian world including the Russian emigré world. It's been represented in Paris—one thinks of Berdyaev and Bulgakov. Then of course the Russian novelists represent this approach to theology, so it's not as if it's coming west for the first time. But since 1989, with people from the west going east, and vice versa, I expect more intercommunion of theologies, so this style of theology may make a bigger impact on the western world.

What are its problems? I think its biggest problem lies with the lack of general education and the cultural deprivation that a lot of these people have had to put up with in the Middle East or in the Soviet Union. They lack many of the cultural and educational opportunities that have been there for us, and while they bring the wealth of their tradition, I still think that handicap is there.

There are many other things that one could say about these three approximations of mine. For example, what's the place of philosophy in each of them? How does philosophy help to structure each of these styles and give them a language? What about the Holy Spirit? It's fairly obvious the place that the Spirit plays in the third style, but what about the Holy Spirit in the first and second styles? So there are things to ask there. But let me come to a halt and pass it over to you, in the spirit of the first style of dialogue.

Maryanne Confoy: You didn't mention feminist theology, women in theology, in the first and third world, and yet they represent very significant trends and developments.

O'Collins: That would be a question of all three styles, really.

Confoy: Well the first two rather than the third, I'd imagine. In the Eastern churches there are a few women coming up, but not many.

Dorothy Lee-Pollard: I would have thought that one of the challenges of feminist theology to those sort of models—which I found very helpful—is the critique it brings of the way in which things which ought not be separated *are* separated. I'm not saying that any one of those approaches is bad, but why do we separate the academic from the contemplative, or action from praxis? Feminism would want to say that what we're aiming towards is some kind of reconciliation at all kinds of levels.

O'Collins: I wouldn't say they should be separated.

Lee-Pollard: Yes, but they have been, haven't they? I mean, the very fact that you identify one with a western approach ... The first style does however have the advantage that it can shake up traditional ideas, and it can be quite constructively critical of ideas of the past. Whereas perhaps the third model, the contemplative, can sometimes be conservative.

O'Collins: That's true. But I think it shouldn't be, really, because it centres on worship and liturgy that anticipates the end. I always find Eastern-rite celebrations very escatological—that sense of coming paradise, and making the present seem more painful—something to be corrected. They don't draw that lesson, but I think they could.

Ray Cassin: Two things I'd like to ask about, Gerry: one you raised as a question—what is the place of philosophy in each of these traditions? The other is more directly related to the issue of the liturgy. You said that we have a lot to learn from what the eastern contemplative tradition has to offer. Take the famous story about why the Russians followed Constantinople and not Rome—because they had heard the liturgy in Sancta Sophia. I think that's very interesting in the light of what has happened in the church of the past quarter century, because our western liturgy has moved very far from the sorts of experience that eastern liturgies concentrate on. The liturgical changes that were ushered in by the council have allowed us to be a lot more flexible, but I think you could argue that there's less of a feeling of the numinous in the liturgy now and I wonder whether that's made contact between the two traditions harder rather than easier.

The other point is the question of philosophy. Quite often, I think, people in ecclesiastical institutions go very much for continental fashions in philosophy and in a sense cut themselves off from the philosophical culture in Anglo-Saxon countries. I find when I listen to theologians that there is a kind of insularity—perhaps it doesn't exist on the continent, but in Britain, America and Australia it often comes across that way.

O'Collins: On the first point, yes, sometimes churches are like factories. I don't know what easterners would make of a thing like that. And in some countries—like Italy—people just don't sing. It's extraordinary. I expected they'd all be throwing open their windows in the morning and practising their scales and so on, but it's just left for the Pavarottis of this world. So I think there's a lot to be regained there, the sense of beauty, liturgical beauty. As to philosophy, the Anglo-Saxon philosophy sits pretty easily on the first style, so there can be a very happy marriage.

Cassin: I was thinking of people like Wittgenstein, who as a philosopher straddled several traditions. But I'm not aware that very many theologians tackle them—yet from all three of those traditions, they could profitably do so.

O'Collins: I think Wittgenstein's affected a lot of us, about mystery, about those things that we don't know, and about which we should be silent. My generation bought the wisdom of those remarks. But to be honest, in Wittgenstein there's a bit too much fideism to convince me.

Tony Kelly: In any theology faculty that I've seen, here or overseas, you have strong currents of philosophy, you've got a strong spirituality component, a very strong interest in liberation theology and then the whole is set in a historical context. Ray says that theologians can be very insular, and I suppose we can. On the other hand, nobody is forced more to have at least an amateur interest in the huge sways of other things, in a way that specialists in other faculties often don't. I think the question behind all this is: what notions of the human self is theology using? Everyone's notion of self is broken down in the modern world, depending on whether you're a Marxist or a capitalist or a Hindu or whatever.

Lee-Pollard: I think that within theology we can be in our separate fields too much: systematic theologians can be doing their thing, and we biblical people are doing ours, and we're not actually intersecting enough. So that we don't actually know most of the time what systematic theologians are doing, or not doing, with the Bible. And it doesn't necessarily have any connection with what we're doing. And we may be doing some appalling things with theology.

Morag Fraser: I have an outsider's question about that and it is related to what Tony was saying. At what point do you not just intersect but actually conflict? When do you discover that there isn't going to be just another fruitful intersection, but that you do have an intellectual conflict that has to be faced?

Kelly: I feel that we have lost the art of theological debate. I suppose that, because ecclesiastical authorities have often been somewhat suspicious of theologians, there is a feeling that if you start attacking fellow members of the guild you're almost letting down the side. Which is a terrible shame, because we could have saved ourselves a lot of pain, had we kept a good discipline of proper debate. What comes most to mind is Charlie Curran, in North America.

Joan Nowotny: You mean we didn't debate it?

Kelly: There were many issues there that should have been publicly debated. Most of the trade thought he was over the fence here or there, and it could have been sorted out. But because it was all a kind of a closed shop it became an absurd ecclesiastical knockdown situation. I think that the scars of that will be felt in North America for a long time.

O'Collins: I think you're right about this. When you look around, what debates have we had? There was the honest-to-infallibility debate, which was pretty good. I mean the book was bad, but the debates were good in Europe and North America and the British Isles. And what else? Debates about Moltmann's theology of the cross, and then I tried a new one when David Tracey produced his *Blessed Rage for Order*. That book produced a number of very interesting reviews. But there haven't been those books in recent years.

The feminist theology question ... it's been relegated to a subheading of liberation theology, and it's much more than that. The debate about women, and women's point of view in theology, is really much closer to a pneumatology, and is probably closest to the third way of doing theology that Gerry described. But it's not really being treated seriously by the official and western tradition in theology. —JOAN NOWOTNY

I feel that we have lost the art of theological debate. I suppose that, because ecclesiastical authorities have often been somewhat suspicious of theologians, there is a feeling that if you start attacking fellow members of the guild you're almost letting down the side. Which is a terrible shame, because we could have saved ourselves a lot of pain, had we kept a good discipline of proper debate. —TONY KELLY

Nowotny: What would be the effect of the papal pronouncement on theological teaching and so on? Wouldn't that have stifled a bit of debate as far as the church is concerned?

O'Collins: I think it goes a bit deeper than that. There may have been a general waning of interest among a lot of well-educated people; the theological book trade is not doing as well it did. Biblical books are selling well, and ones on spirituality, and New Age stuff. I think a lot of people who are not necessarily professionals are reading Moltmann's *Theology of Hope*. Then there's the Christian-Marxist dialogue, which fitted into that. There's a market out there. So if the audience has contracted somewhat, it's partly our fault. We should debate these things and write articles against each other. It just doesn't happen very much.

Kelly: We've lost the skill of it. It's almost as though it's an insult if someone attacks us, when actually it's a compliment.

Nowotny: Would you say that the church has retreated from debating the feminist theology question? I feel that it's not being given due weight—it's been relegated to a subheading of liberation theology, and it's much more than that. The debate about women, and women's point of view in theology, is really much closer to a pneumatology, and is probably closest to the third way of doing theology that Gerry described. But it is not really being treated seriously by the official and western tradition in theology.

Confoy: What I lament is the fact that a lot of women have stopped speaking to the mainstream. One of your comments that I especially liked was the one where you made mention of Pavarotti. What came to my mind there was the critique by the third world women theologians of the first world women theologians, which was: 'First of all why is that people leave it to the Pavarottis? We don't have to be Pavarotti equivalents; we can sing. And yet you people are trying to rush into hard cover. The world of professionalism is ruining you women theologians.'

Kelly: For 10 years the majority of people I've taught have been women. What is really going on here? It's true there's a kind of an ecclesiastical freeze on the ordination question. But women are good at theology, that's all. And they're emerging everywhere. I think there's a situation that's quite irreversible here. At least in Australia. It's not quite the same in the States because of the financial structure of the theological studies.

Nowotny: I think there's a difference between having good women students and the raising of consciousness within the official church. But it does not seem to be happening on any sort of official or church level. It's just not happening.

Michael Kelly: Can I just take that one step further. We began by talking about theology and its relationship to the world and we've ended up talking about the church. Is it a worry to any of you that there are fewer and fewer people who give a damn about anything that you're interested in?

Paul Connell: Well what really interests me is the philosophical question that Ray brought up. I'd be very grateful for any assistance in trying to define—just to keep it in our own backyard—what philosophy ought one use when theologising in Australia. How do you identify the prevailing philosophical culture? I find that rather difficult.

Cassin: What I should have acknowledged earlier is that even in philosophical circles there is now a blurring of the edges, in that English-speaking philosophers are interested in the sort of things that they might have sniffed at 20 years ago. I guess what I was feeling towards is this: if you are a theologian working in an ecclesiastical framework, at some stage you're going to have address the question of tradition and how we understand it. And on that question there are all sorts of interesting connections between different ways of doing philosophy and theology. Take a German philosopher like Gadamer, for example: he has interesting things to say about tradition, and a lot of theologians have taken their cue from him. But he also talks about Wittgenstein and language games, which intersects with a lot of what has happened in English-language philosophy since the 1950s. Now it seems to me that one way of understanding tradition, in the ecclesiastical sense, might be as a kind of very complex language game. But I'm not aware of any theologians who have tried to connect their work with that kind of philosophical approach. ■

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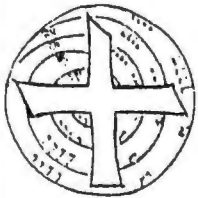
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Changing places

Traditionally, theological studies have been shunned by Australian universities. But as new attitudes emerge on campus and among the churches, theology is acquiring the acceptance as a university subject that it has long held in Europe and the Americas.

THE HISTORIC ESTRANGEMENT between theological education and publicly-funded universities in Australia, dating from the sectarian controversies of the 19th century, has ended.

Theology is entering the mainstream of tertiary studies through the affiliation of theological colleges with individual universities and through the offering of joint degrees by universities and autonomous theological institutes. In Western Australia, for example, the Perth College of Divinity is affiliated with Murdoch University and it is the university which offers and confers the theology degrees. A similar arrangement exists between the Adelaide College of Divinity and Flinders University in South Australia.

But in Victoria, under a recent agreement between Monash University and the Melbourne College of Divinity, a combined Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Theology course over four years will be offered from 1992, with each institution continuing to confer its own degree. The Melbourne College of Divinity, which was established under an act of the Victorian Parliament in 1910 and which is the second-oldest degree-conferring body in the state, is expected to reach a similar arrangement with Melbourne University for a five-year joint degree course.

The dean of the Melbourne Col-

lege of Divinity, the Reverend Harold Pidwell, said the college did not consider affiliation with one university only.

'I think the value of the partnership that is being established is that it does, in fact, enable each institution to be true to itself,' he said. 'The university did not want to, and rightly so, it did not want to compromise its secular stand. It would be inappropriate for them to teach or foster in any way one religion as against another. Christianity is not the only religion in Australia, so the universities rightly should not be involved in only one aspect of religious study. The MCD is quite clearly set up to teach Christian theology and does not want to, and ought not, compromise that stand.'

PIDWELL, A NEW ZEALAND Baptist minister who became dean in April, has had experience in the affiliation model. He was formerly dean of the Auckland Consortium for Theological Education, which is affiliated with a local university, and he negotiated the consortium's entry into the Melbourne College of Divinity as the college's first associated teaching institution not based in Melbourne. The Auckland body's association further broadened the college's constituency, which already included Anglican, Protestant and Roman Catholic

staff and students from around Victoria. The students include candidates for the ministry and lay people, who pay fees as private students.

Pidwell said that the colonial histories of Australia and New Zealand, like the United States, had included an insistence on the separation of church and state, but that this had taken a different form here and across the Tasman to that adopted in North America.

'There was an attempt to make sure that the churches never gained the power of being an established religion and in this part of the world the separation of church and state became almost a rejection of the churches' role in any public life or publicly-funded institution,' he said.

But Pidwell said the churches had themselves to blame for the long exclusion of theological studies from mainstream university life. Theology had traditionally been an integral part of the great universities of Europe, but here the failure of the churches in the late 19th century and early this century to present a united front to the universities on what should be taught in theology and how it should be taught delayed the introduction of theology into mainstream studies until now. The universities, he said, had waited 'until the churches got their act together'.

The new president of the Mel-

bourne College of Divinity, Father Norman Ford, agrees that divisions among churches have been costly to the development of theological studies in Australia. 'Christian denominations for over a century have paid the price of their squabbling by being excluded from academic life in Australian tertiary institutions,' said Ford, who is the Master of Catholic Theological College, Clayton. According to Pidwell the interest in theology indicated a growing awareness that other disciplines, such as the sciences, could not by themselves provide answers to the problems faced by humanity.

'It is true that we live in what appears to be an increasingly secular society. But, on the other hand, there is an increasing awareness that pure science or technology is not providing the answers that people have been looking for and there is disenchantment with the merely secularist approach of the past.

'Therefore, it is not out of character, I think, with the age in which we live that people are looking for a serious and credible understanding of what you might broadly call religion and they want to pursue it personally, critically, academically.'

Pidwell said the growing links between tertiary institutes and theological faculties did not represent a sudden recognition of the value of theological study. Universities and their staffs had recognised that a long time ago, he said. But, in the case of the Melbourne College of Divinity, the agreements for combined degrees recognised the quality of the teaching that had occurred in the college's associated teaching institutions for the past 18 or 19 years, in which time the Bachelor of Theology had proved itself to be a worthy degree. The combined arts/theology course would provide a much broader base of learning for theological and arts students and contract the time required to gain both degrees.

The director of the centre for studies in religion and theology at Monash University, Associate Professor Gary Bouma, said there was a growing recognition in secular academic circles of the significance and quality of work done by Australian theologians.

'When I first came here, if I wore

my collar I lost 40 points of IQ,' said Dr Bouma, an Anglican priest. 'I think it's down to 10 now. I think there is a recognition that significant people who are doing quality, creative work are also religious people.'

BOUMA'S POINT is borne out by a number of recent international appointments and the recognition accorded to Australian church scholars. Three Catholic priests in Melbourne, for instance, all of whom lecture at the Melbourne College of Divinity, have gained recent international stature — Jesuit Father Brendan Byrne, an internationally-published scripture scholar, with his appointment to the Vatican's Biblical Commission; Salesian Father Frank Moloney, who lectured at a distinguished biblical school in Jerusalem last year; and Ford, another Salesian, whose book on the origins of human life has been one of the most important and controversial contributions to the international debate on bioethics in recent years.

Bouma said the possibilities of a joint theology/arts degree became apparent to him as Monash entered into combined degrees between the arts

on Christianity and Eastern faiths, Judaism and Islam; another called 'The Search for Enlightenment', examining the traditions of the Eastern and Western worlds and of modern society; and other subjects concerning the sociology and philosophy of religion and the role of religion in Australian society. About 20 places will be available for the Monash course initially.

'We have the only course in town on hymnology which takes it from a literary criticism point of view,' Bouma said.

He said interest in religion in Australia had grown to a substantially deeper and broader level, as demonstrated by the fact that more than half the students at theological faculties were not preparing for ordained ministry, but were pursuing studies to enrich their faith.

Christian denominations for over a century have paid the price of their squabbling by being excluded from academic life in Australian tertiary institutions

—FR NORMAN FORD,
MELBOURNE COLLEGE OF DIVINITY



and science faculties, as well as other areas. 'I thought that if you could do a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Engineering in four years, certainly you could do a BA and B.Theol,' he said.

The Monash course will include a subject entitled 'The Religious Quest', a comparative religion study focusing

Changes in the way arts subjects have been taught have recognised the value of interdisciplinary studies, a further encouragement to the move of theology into mainstream tertiary institutions. 'I think that the closet religious are coming out in universities,' Bouma said.

Ford said the links between theological colleges and universities could correct an injustice which has long grated with theological students—the denial of federal assistance, through Austudy, now provided to students at publicly-funded institutions.

Ford said the joint degrees in theology and arts would make it more unjustifiable for theological students to continue to be denied Austudy. He said it was anomalous for students of theology, who often went on to work in publicly-funded institutions as chaplains and counsellors, to be denied the federal assistance given to students in other academic disciplines.

He agreed that the combined degree was an acknowledgement of theology as a legitimate academic discipline by secular institutions, and a recognition of the academic standards achieved by the college and of the international standing of many Australian theologians. The new course formalised what had been permitted on a limited scale for some time and would enable students from theological faculties and universities to test their ideas with students from different backgrounds.

'I do believe that the Christian tradition, the Christian way of thinking, Christian theology and Christian philosophy have a lot to offer our world, to thinking people in our world,' he said. 'We should not be ashamed of

it simply because not everybody out there is a believer.'

He said Christianity could be offered as 'an expression of authentic humanity' and that Jesus ought to be presented in a credible fashion to intelligent people. 'We have every right for this to occur in the teaching level of our publicly-funded universities.'

Ford laid stress on the value placed by the churches on the autonomy of the Melbourne College of Divinity and said this independence would not be compromised. He said the college had found a way in which Catholic theology, for instance, could be taught while exposing students to contacts and learning across denominational boundaries. The new degree would broaden that exposure further.

'It will be interesting to see which way the flow of students will be,' Ford said. 'Will the flow be predominantly happening across to the university or will it be university students hopping across here?'

One thing, at least, is clear. Theological studies have emerged from the seminaries and colleges into a new, uncertain, exciting era that is unlikely to leave studies in the sacred or the secular untouched. ■

Mark Brolly is religious affairs reporter for *The Age*.

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*of action the cameras just include her,
shawl or scarf or sari over her head
outlining the experienced peasant face
in place anywhere the injured
are carried off after Demonstrators
Clash With Police, Local Resistance
to Leftist Stroke Rightist Troops
or Rescuers Search Disaster Rubble.
A face beyond ancient and sudden emotion.
Sometimes microphone and interpreter
intrude on her distance
to yield us media-language banalities
or grief plus anger times resignation equals
untranslatable: a reporter's miscalculation.
Left to herself and the viewer
her best comment is silence,
her impact visual, slightly out of focus*

*in the image of God:
an unidentified thumbprint in the margin
that leaves the text untouched.*

Aileen Kelly

Ikons

*This feather is a door.
I enter
and pull it closed behind me*

*The room is mobile with air
currents pulsed by familiar wings
and the mutual whisper of paired
gang-gangs and lorikeets
gentled out of their secular clatter.
The room has walls, if any,
elsewhere; this feather
stands door for my going
here or there.*

*This candle is a door.
The room is steady with light.*

Aileen Kelly

The muses' gatekeeper

CLIVE JAMES, WHO GETS MANY Australian things right, including Peter Porter, wrote of him in 1983 that he was 'setting out to cry over the last things, and sounding like a carnival'. There, in a line, is most of what I enjoy about Porter's work.

It is just as well that Jeremiah got the *Book of Lamentations* done for us: otherwise Porter would have had to devote some of his energies to it. Life is in many respects lamentable, his poems keep telling us. Self-deception abounds, fools and criminals scale ladders which the good distractedly hold, bewilderment comes over us like the drizzle of a 'soft day' in Ireland: and everywhere there is death, sometimes aggrandized as Death—ingenious, intransigent, inexorable. Lady Caroline Lamb thought that Byron was 'bad, mad, and dangerous to know': it sounds like much of the world seen through Porter's eyes.

But the poetry does not feel like that at all. Often melodious, always open to incursions of zest and brio, it does sound like a carnival—sounds as if the Byron of *Don Juan* had come to town. In non-poetical life—if there is such a thing for a poet—Porter embodies the same paradox: the drastic and the tonic flow from him as if they could never be separated. Years ago Michael Frayn gave a talk on 'Pleasure and Happiness in the English Novel': hardly anyone came, alas. Porter, cutting loose on 'Displeasure and Unhappiness in life', is a constant delight to the eye and the ear.

In part this is the poet's, the artist's, constant calling, of course: magic comes with the territory. Just as every mirror, every time, turns every face around, the artist gives us the world's condition both faithfully and transformed. But in Porter's case the artist's intervention itself becomes one of the prized things—and that, without any self-inflation.

His first love is not language but music, and painting runs it close. I remember his saying that we should all go down on our knees and thank God that Mozart was created; and there would be many a painter or writer who would be gathered into that benediction. What he values in these figures is not their status as cultural adornments, but their generative force, their generosity of imagination. Banality depletes the world, and originality magnifies it: Porter is usually pronouncing a secular *Magnificat*.

HE IS THE BEST Australian poet not living in the country. That way of putting it takes account of the fact that when people have been at a loss what to say about him they have saddled up the old nag of 'expatriation' and have trotted it round for a while. Though Porter must be thoroughly sick of that ride, it does suggest something of permanent spiritual importance in his work. Bruce Bennett's just-published *Spirit in Exile: Peter Porter and His Poetry* appropriately makes much of Porter's sense of being

at odds with almost any imaginable world. Had he stayed in Australia, he would still have turned out to be an internal emigré, like some of the best of the East European writers.

More than a dozen books up, or down, since he began to publish in the early sixties, including a *Collected Poems* (1983) and *A Porter Selected* (1989), and with a new volume *The Chair of Babel* due out soon, he has established himself in a poetical world of his own making. It is as definitively his as, say, Seamus Heaney's, or Derek Walcott's. Enter it, and you find this kind of thing:

*On the left flank a brigade of nettles
defying the corn-ingesting hens,
On the right, athwart the pig-yard,
Squadrons of righteous cow parsley,
In the centre, unperturbed as Hannibal,
bracken already gold with epaulettes.*

(The King of Limerick's Army)

This turns out to be a rueful, scornful poem, in large measure, but ingenuity and adornment crowd in, as by long habit: 'brigade', 'squadrons', 'Hannibal' and 'epaulettes' elevate a farmyard, while 'nettles', 'hens', 'pig-yard' and 'cow parsley' domesticate it again. Porter, a lover of Pope, knows much of the virtues of the mock-heroic. 'Unperturbed as Hannibal' is one of those flashes of analogy so often

flung off by Porter: he is an over-achiever of the imagination, a man for whom the baroque might have been made. His retort to the opening of Pandora's Box, as opened it is in every age, is the tilting of the cornucopia, the spill of plenitude.

It is a fighting gesture, this one: that 'it's a battlefield' is a sense powerful from Porter's earliest poetry to his latest. Poets, asked what the trouble is or where it hurts, may shrug or stammer: Porter does not do so. Personal distress may take private forms—sexual hunger, griefs and guilts, depression, a sense that sloth or fear is keeping talent hostage—or be intensified by the chronic condition of public ills—that the administration of justice is more administration than justice, that society conspires more efficiently than it communes, that wisdom remains a pigmy while technique swaggers gigantically.

A MAN SO AFFLICTED will, sooner or later, write satire. Porter did it sooner. Lodged in London, the anthropologist of the English and the chronicler of fallen humanity, he lamented, denounced and defined just as Juvenal and Pope had predicted that a man like him would be forced to do. Sometimes the gambit had a savage immediacy. In 'Farewell to Theophrastus', surveying at work the board of an advertising agency—Porter had worked for one—he came to the seventh figure:

*Love of Evil knows the world is
shrinking
he hates those latitudinarians, his
friends,
he's for napalm and white merce-
naries
and has invented a pack of playing
cards
of murdered girls from Mrs Crip-
pen to Sharon Tate.*

A type? Certainly, as the title suggests: but a type who, whatever his ancestry in Roman satire, in Ben Jonson or in John Bunyan, could be encountered with heart-sickening ease within the City. Sometimes Porter went an indirect way, writing *After Martial* to render something of that astringent observer's registration of Rome, but scarcely forgetting his contemporary world:

*'The skies are empty
and the gods are dead',
says Segius, the proof of which
is that he sees himself made rich.*
(IV, xxi)

You can live for this kind of thing for a while, but you cannot live from it. Other things were nourishing Porter's imagination, and tempering his resolve: the normal human ensemble of loves, friendships, enmities, labours,

memories and anticipations. Of many of these he has written in his poems, typically in somewhat deflected fashion, or has addressed in various interviews that he has given or in pieces of prose memoir scattered over the years and through the journals. What is much harder to address systematically is the magic, black or white, worked upon him by things read, heard, or gazed-upon.

He has for instance an imaginative



Photograph of Peter Porter by Caroline Forbes (courtesy OUP).

intimacy with Shakespeare whose only precedent I can think of is in Keats. In a manuscript lodged in the Australian National Library, along with a string of potential triggering-points for poems, is the line, 'Shakespeare wasn't Bacon, he was me'. This is *drôlerie* of course—like his 'I have always thought of myself as being, if not the Shakespeare, at least the Cecil B. DeMille of dreams'—but it also registers more than grateful indebtedness, it claims a shared fire. Individual poems announce in their titles that the titanic influence on us all is at hand: 'Exit, Pursued by a Bear', 'In the Giving Vein', 'The King of the Cats is Dead', but anyone listening for long to the Porterian music will recognize that, as the devout Christian tries to keep 'in the presence of God', Porter has very decisively kept himself in the presence of Shakespeare.

AS FOR GOD, that is quite another matter. 'A Tribute to My Enemies' begins, 'Apart from God I suppose I have none', and the argument or quarrel is an old one. God—sometimes, incognito, as 'the gods'—crops up all the time in Porter's writing: together with Death, he has star billing. I don't know exactly what Porter makes of all this, and suspect that he may not know what to make of it himself. Being no theologian, not even an atheist one, he is not held to consistency of attitude or reaction; and indeed anyone looking for that kind of consistency when reading, say, Job, Isaiah and John—let alone Donne, Pope, Eliot and R.S. Thomas—will be looking for a long time.

At the very least, Porter can put to shame both those whom Karl Rahner once tartly called 'the court chaplains of the Holy Ghost' and those whose secularity is so ingrained that nothing could move them to 'have a need of the hypothesis' of the sacred. This I would say, anyhow: that if I was in need of a spiritual director and was forbidden to have a 'believer' as one, I would start looking for Peter Porter.

Taken in isolation, such a view would give the wrong impression, and drift too far from the Clive James sentence with which I began. Auden, whose work Porter understands intimately, and who has had a notable effect on his writing, spent his whole

life as a writer trying to effect a durable marriage between solemnity and play, the monumental and the vivacious, the lion and the unicorn. Porter's every poem, least squib or full-dress rehearsal, presides over those difficult nuptials.

The late Jesuit general Pedro Arrupe, replying to a Jesuit who described himself as a young man in a hurry, said that he was himself an old man in a hurry. Porter is a sapient figure squalled by passions, a delineator whose lines flower in new directions, a *jongleur d'homme*. So, at the end of 'The Loud Bassoon',

*Now morning unsettles the dust
in shut rooms,
Airwaves revive with the titles of
living,
The Wrong of the Earth, old words
in new harmony,
Listened to lovingly, one cat on
your lap
And one in a sun-stripe—how can
you bear it,
The clatter your heart makes as it
challenges
Air and the universality of air.*

*At the very least,
Porter can put to
shame both those
whom Karl Rahner
once tartly called
'the court chaplains
of the Holy Ghost'
and those whose
secularity is so
ingrained that
nothing could move
them to 'have a need
of the hypothesis'
of the sacred.*

My own favourite image for Porter is that he is a transmuter, a transposer: metamorphosis is both his compulsion and his game. Give him a reality and he will start thinking of an alternative milieu for it, and will have it change colour, chameleon-like, to match that milieu.

Dreams fascinate him, and always have, since they are both such shape-shifters themselves, and such apt emblems for much else in life. Dreams remind of films and paintings, which recapitulate drama, which enacts personal volatility, which echoes the mutation of seasons, which instances the blend of stability and mutability in the whole world, which Shakespeare sometimes thought a dream, and so it goes, *ad capo*.

PORTER, BY NOW THE OLD HAND, the old magus, manoeuvres endlessly in all this, himself above all an agent riddled with mortality and compassionate for all in the same case, but incorrigibly haunted by what Seamus Heaney once called 'the music of what happens'.

Near the end of an address on 'The Shape of Poetry and the Shape of Music', Porter says.

*In Eden we were all listeners, but
what we heard were the unimprovable
sounds of Nature. Since the expulsion
we have made much more beautiful
and complex sounds for ourselves.
And called them poetry and music.
Great men worked hard to invent them
for us, and it behoves us to be grateful
and to go on reading, listening and
applauding while human time
continues.*

Amen to that: and *Deo et Petro gratias*. ■

Peter Steele SJ is reader in English at the University of Melbourne. His book on the poetry of Peter Porter is due to be published next year by Oxford University Press.

Bruce Bennett's *Spirit in Exile, Peter Porter And His Poetry* (OUP) was launched at the Melbourne Writers' Festival in September.

Famous Oz

IT SHOULDN'T COME AS NEWS that Jews have suffered out of the ordinary in this century. They have also been extraordinarily creative. Amos Oz, Israeli novelist and essayist, was in Australia during September for the Melbourne Writers' Festival. His novel, *To Know A Woman*, is about suffering creatively. At least, it's about being creative in the context of grief. It is also about Israel.

The story opens in the presence of a modest work of art, a figurine of a feline predator. The main character, Yoel Ravid, becomes fascinated by it and out of his fascination signs a lease on the house where the figurine resides. This is the house in suburban Tel Aviv in which he will now begin a new life after the sudden death of his wife. He will live there with his daughter, his mother and his mother-in-law. It is also the house to which he will retire from the Israeli secret service. Throughout the novel the figurine continues to fascinate Yoel. He can never work out why the feline shape, carved at a precarious and aggressive angle, doesn't topple over. There is no rational explanation to be had, except perhaps by destroying the work of art. The figurine appears to be living a lie.

Yoel has an instinct against telling lies. In his office he became known as 'the Walking Lie-Detector'. In 23 years in intelligence he was seldom cornered into falsehood. In some ways this helped his success. There were occasions on which he was asked at customs the reason for his visit to a country and he replied '*espionage, madame*.' The customs officer would laugh. Yet we come to appreciate in Yoel something like the difference between accuracy and truth. He is guided, in his grief, through and around a small number of cold sexual encounters to finally volunteer his services in a hospital. Here he assumes a name and is revealed as 'a liar you



To Know a Woman, Amos Oz, trans. by Nicholas de Lange, Chatto & Windus, London, 1991. ISBN 0 7011 3572 7 RRP \$29.95.

The Newspaper of Claremont Street, adapted for the stage by Alan Becher and David Britton, from a novel by Elizabeth Jolley. Produced by Playbox at the Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne.

can trust. A liar who doesn't lie'. The relationships that develop for Yoel in the hospital are unspectacular but real. The same might be said of the book as a whole. Surely it takes an Israeli to conceive a Mossad novel in which there are no elaborate riddles with the right answer and in which nothing sensational happens.

Amos Oz deals with the contracts that are drawn up in the soul when public and private *personae* have to cohabit the same character, a task he shares with the Czech novelist Milan Kundera. The world of *To Know a Woman* is essentially Yoel's private suburban space, his garden. From this space Yoel spies on the man who delivers the paper, the brother of his lover next door, even on his own daughter. But his privacy is also under siege. He learnt from his father-in-law long ago that 'we all have the same secrets'. Of course, once a secret is made public it is no longer a secret. That is the unspectacular riddle of the book. How much of mine is mine?

On the frontiers of Yoel's suburban existence, his daughter is due for military service, wounded soldiers are flown into the hospital from South Lebanon and a massacre in Melbourne of the Israeli Philharmonic is narrowly averted by one of Yoel's colleagues. That same colleague dies on an errand in Thailand which Yoel has refused to come out of retirement to perform.

Yoel is called 'Cain' and 'traitor'. He has not fulfilled the obligations of an Israeli chosen to work 'in the heart of the heart'. He has now to stand on an impossible angle without toppling over. He copes for the moment with a stubborn creativity.

The death in New York this year of Isaac Bashevis Singer is a timely reminder of the ubiquitous presence of expatriate Jewish creativity in Western literature since the

Holocaust. Bellow, Malamud and Doctorow are only three more names. Amos Oz is not quite in this company. He is a patriot. For him, the only question is survival. The word for this book is gritty.

ELIZABETH JOLLEY IS NOT the first novelist whose work you'd think of committing to the stage. But *The Newspaper of Claremont St* scrubs up well. It's the story of a charlady, called Weekly, whose brutal upbringing and daily grind do nothing to undermine her dream of some day owning a rural property of her own. One of her clients, Nasty, however, nearly does. Nasty leeches on to Weekly and accompanies her into the promised land. But Weekly is a resourceful and, it turns out, a hard woman.

As incidents from all parts of Weekly's life tumble in on top of one another, this adaptation shows a crispness that Jolley's prose neither has nor needs. The cast of four move deftly in and out of various roles; sometimes two memories, years apart, are linked by a word or a cough. The effect is that the whole of Weekly's life seems present to her at any one moment. The play begins with the scene with which the novel ends, making the close of the drama a little more ambiguous. We are not sure if Nasty is left to dance or freeze beside the pear tree she has stolen from Weekly.

Patricia Kennedy is in full command of the subtleties of Weekly's personality, giving vitality to Weekly's old age. Marion Edwards makes Nasty funny. And sad. But still nasty. ■

Michael McGirr SJ is a student at Jesuit Theological College, Parkville, Vic.

The return of the narrative

I SUPPOSE YOU CAN'T blame it all on Aristotle. When your project is to invent Western literary criticism, you're bound to oversimplify at first. There's the one about catharsis, for example. It's sad to think how many theatregoers have faked it over the years, wondering if the earth really moved for others. Then there's his attempt to draw a hard-and-fast distinction between narrative and dramatic kinds of imitation. The one, says Aristotle, is told, and the other shown. This distinction, half-true at best and loosely applied by later generations to plays and stories in general, still muddles our understanding of the theatre.

The story—so the story goes—is the least important, the least respectable, element of a play. This is bashed into kids in the middle forms, as part of a rite of passage into critical maturity. 'Don't just tell the story, tell us what the theme is, what the author meant, how it is relevant to today's society, how it relates to the environment.' I have some sympathy with those dogged retailers of narrative; some of them are on to something.

They have an ally in Bert Brecht, whose commentaries on his own plays are full of retellings of their stories. It was Brecht, too, who complained that the quest for truth and relevance in the theatre had resulted in a generation



of plays without a single memorable story. In plays like *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* and *Mother Courage*, he tries to make up the shortfall.

THEATRE'S HISTORY is intertwined with that of narrative. It makes formal use of narrative: what is presented, enacted, shown, produces narrative in the imagination of the spectator. Periodically there are attempts to rid it of this three-fold impurity. 'Non-narrative' theatre, for example, is one of the regimental banners of the *avant-garde*. Particular scorn is reserved for 'linear narrative', which is, roughly speaking, the kind of story in which one damn thing happens after another. Many feminist critics identify a narrative that displays this kind of order as

a patriarchal imposition. Then there are those who practise drama as a performance art, a succession of images, bypassing story. Most radically, and recently, poststructuralist theatre attempts to cut through, across and into the very notion of narrative order, to 'foreground' the process of representation.

Meanwhile the soaps continue to discharge the raw, untreated stuff into the living rooms of the land. Frame by frame, their intertwining couples process across the screen, while populist academics do their best to explain it all, and the legions of the addicted ask one another, simply, 'What happened?' The desire for narrative, at this level, is obstinately non-deconstructible.

And for some time now there have been signs of a return of the story—and of the practice of storytelling—among serious practitioners of theatre. Witness, at Melbourne's Theatreworks—until recently a community theatre company—a memorable production of *Pericles*. Few people have read this late play; fewer know that the first two acts are not even by Shakespeare and nobody at all knows just who did write them.

The play retells the ancient story of Apollonius, Prince of Tyre, renamed, for the occasion, *Pericles*. Our hero seeks the hand of a fair princess, but in

deciphering the usual riddle he discovers that the princess and her father are guilty of incest. He flees the father's vengeance, and is shipwrecked. Cared for by some fisherfolk, he seeks his fortune (again) at a tournament. This time he finds a wife, and all goes well and fruitfully until he is shipwrecked (again). All three, baby, wife and prince, are cast ashore and each is saved, but none knows of the others' survival. After many vicissitudes they are reunited (it takes three acts), first father with daughter—this is the scene Eliot remembers in *Marina*—then both with the mother. Ben Jonson called it a 'mouldy tale', and you can see why.

To some extent, of course, the 'story' of a play is constructed by whoever offers to tell it. Plays do not so much contain stories as give rise to them. The version in the last paragraph contains a few interpretative emphases: the incest, the 'father's' vengeance, the restoration of father and daughter to one another. With such motifs it is easy to imagine a production that carved a fillet of contemporary meaning out of the wandering and circumstantial tale.

BUT ROBERT DRAFFIN at Theatreworks gave us a scrupulously respectful treatment of (almost) the whole text. Hoary bits of Elizabethan stock, like the 'I did it but to try thee' scene, and the 'desperado touched by innocence releases maiden' scene were staged with meticulous care and inventiveness. Despite some words in the program about the cult of Diana, there was no dwelling on those aspects of the play most obviously likely to appeal to an 'alternative' audience. Robert Menzies' Pericles was played with the utmost earnestness—an introverted king whose truest dialogue was conducted with his fate. The emotional centre of the evening was the raising from the dead of Pericles' wife, Thaisa. This was, I suspect, meant to be eclipsed by the still more clearly redemptive reunion of father and daughter. But it wasn't, due to undercasting of a key role, an outbreak of solemnity, and an unfortunate wig.

This production delighted in the 'surface' and trusted it to disclose what it would. Rather than shunning the thaumaturgic elements of the text, it

offered them, reverently. It was, in short, and whether consciously or not I cannot say, holy theatre.

NOT ONLY IS there a revival of interest in the possibilities of narrative, there are also signs of a related turn towards material that has not been prominent in our theatres for 30 years and more. But it is disclosing itself indirectly, almost secretively. Peter Brook's *Mahabharata* was one of the great international theatre events of the 1980s. I talked about this production with many theatre people—the quarry version, the TV version, the printed version. What we talked about was the 'theatre'. The 'content'—pardon the lapse—ran, if it ran at all, somewhere under the surface of the conversation, like artesian water, somewhat rusty. The press was full of what the story cycle meant to Indians. If anybody asked what it meant to us, I missed it. Peter Brook himself was given columns and columns to tell us what he thought it meant—an allegory of the human condition, all that—and everybody listened deferentially to the great man and nobody talked back.

Whatever is happening, it is not a return to *Murder in the Cathedral*, and it is not coming out of an explicit concern with belief. It is more like a quest for resistant stories to tell, stories that cannot be seen through, which escape or evade the nets of explanation, and which, in their abundance and their capacity to overwhelm, release us alike from the self-consciousness of modern theory and the banality of everyday narrative. So the material can be secular, as in the National Theatre of Great Britain's strangely resonant production of *Nicholas Nickleby*. Or sacred, as in the same company's marvellous version of the medieval English cycle plays.

Sheer size—a sense of totality—has become attractive again. Who would have thought, before the '80s, of displaying on stage the leviathan of Australian literature, Xavier Herbert's *Capricornia*? Not very numinous, that one; myth and legend seem to be the dominant strain. St Martin's Youth Theatre have done the *Odyssey*. Melbourne's Whistling in the Theatre have worked their way through the medieval *Ship of Fools*, the *Thousand*

and *One Nights* (see *Eureka Street*, March 1991) and are essaying, in 1992, the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm. Then there was a movie, *Jesus of*



Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm (c. 1850)

Montreal, that wrapped a narrative of big city corruption around the performance of a sacred drama. Readers will remember that the film contained striking extracts from a highly unconventional Passion play. Lots there for the explicators to work upon, and they duly worked. What interested me most, however, was the response of the young. One of my daughters, for example, after to-ing and fro-ing about the allegory, and the allusions to Brecht's *Galileo*, and all that, suddenly broke out: 'Wasn't the play wonderful? That's what I really want to see. Why can't we see that?'

Good question. ■

Bruce Williams is senior lecturer in drama at La Trobe University.

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MUSIC

MARGARET HEAGNEY

Since the Second Vatican Council, many Catholics have lamented a decline in the quality of liturgical music. But at St Francis' Church in central Melbourne, the busiest church in Australia, liturgical reform has accompanied a commitment to maintaining the great tradition of church music. This year, the church celebrates its 150th anniversary.

MUSIC LOVERS HAVE BEEN flocking to the great orchestral masses at St Francis for many years now. Just as Nellie Melba 'packed them in' during the 1880s, contemporary artists Merlyn Quaife, Lauris Elms and John Pringle fill the church to overflowing at Easter and Christmas and other great feasts as well.

Why does this small city church have such a fine musical tradition?

Roger Heagney, director of music at St Francis, believes that the answer lies partly in the tradition of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers, a French order by origin, and one sympathetic to the arts in ways which have been significant in practice. Many of the men in charge at St Francis have been music lovers who have sought to make the church a centre of liturgical excellence and have fostered music in that context. Whilst it is always a concern that a non-music-loving superior might dismantle the tradition built up over many years, liturgy and music have a firm place in the Blessed Sacrament Fathers' old constitutions. The belief that nothing is too good for Christ present in the Eucharist is enshrined there, manifesting itself in the flowers and candles on a grand scale in bygone days and in extensive commitment to liturgy and music today.

Great music was firmly established at St Francis long before the Blessed Sacrament Fathers came there in 1929.



St Francis of Assisi, by Magaritone di Arezzo, c. 1270. From the Vatican Museum.

The song of Francis

The archives tell us a choir was singing at St Francis in 1843, a year before the church building was completed. Church music historian John Byrne says the distinction between secular and sacred music and musicians was a late 19th century phenomenon. But in the colony's early days musicians moved easily between the two spheres, performing operas on Saturdays and taking part in great masses at St Francis on Sunday.

At St Francis the older tradition is still observed, with musicians moving back and forth between church and stage. The music at this year's feast of Saints Peter and Paul was Mozart's *Coronation Mass*, and the guest conductor was Richard Divall, music director of the Victoria State Opera. Haydn's *Nelson Mass*, first performed at St. Francis in 1858, will be the music setting for the *Living Stones Festival Mass* on October 6. Roger Heagney will conduct the St Francis Choir, the Melbourne Chamber Ensemble led by Stephen McTaggart with soloists Merlyn Quaife, Meredith Schilling, Michael Terry and Tim Patson. A number of these singers were in the cast of the recent Victoria State Opera production of *The Marriage of Figaro*.

The St Francis experience indicates that planning is the key to successful integration of the different strands of liturgy and music. To this end the liturgy task force meets every month. They listen to the movements of the great Masses before deciding how best to fit them into a liturgy, to preserve both the integrity of the music

and the flow of the liturgical movement. Each liturgy is designed specifically to make the music function. Consequently the formats differ markedly. Sometimes the liturgy starts with a sung 'Gloria' while at other times with a processional 'Kyrie'.

But you can't always guarantee that liturgies will be living celebrations and not museum pieces, not even with careful planning. There is a problem of integrity and relevance—a concern to church communities everywhere, especially those who import American music of the 1960s and '70s pop culture and then have to strain to integrate it into a local liturgical context.

COMMISSIONING WORKS by Australian composers is one way of addressing the problem. The St Francis Choir has recently commissioned a Mass by Paul Sarcich for choir and four percussion, and a Mass for instrumentalists and choir by Christopher Willcock. But in general the St Francis experience has been that music will speak if it is good enough; period is not the decisive factor. 'We do the best work, from all periods,' says the choir's director, Roger Heagney. 'From Gregorian chant of the 9th century, and Hildegard of Bingen (11th century) through the polyphonic masters of the 16th century to Kodaly, Willcock and Britten in the 20th century.'

Liturgy planning is just one strategy St Francis community uses to access the tradition of great music and make it available to the wider community. The choir itself also works

hard to raise funds to employ professional musicians and to commission new works. It visits Melbourne parishes as well as doing country and interstate tours to stimulate an interest in choral music and make people more aware of the range of great music available to them for worship. A group of 150 Friends of St Francis Choir offer their support financially and socially and their efforts help to make the choir's work known in the wider community. The great orchestral Masses are advertised in the secular press and the weekly programs are printed in some of the religious press.

TWO TOURS OF EUROPE, one in 1986 and one earlier this year have helped to keep the St Francis Choir in touch with musical and liturgical trends in Europe and England. The choir presented the works of Australian composers Jeremy Richards, Christopher Willcock and Anthony Halliday to audiences in East Berlin and Prague. For some Europeans it was the first time they had met Australians or had heard Australian music.

The choir has strong links with local musicians too. Heagney, a professional harpsichordist and regular performer with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, believes there should be no difference in standards of performance between the concert hall and the Mass. Consequently, a steady stream of musicians find their way to St Francis to play at services. They include Jacqueline Johnson, Vernon Hill, Stephen McTaggart and the Melbourne Chamber Ensemble, Denis Freeman and John Schmidli. Schmidli's group Canzona Brass will play during the St Francis Festival as will organist Anthony Way.

The festival opens on October 4 with a St Francis Day concert featuring the Mozart Collection directed by Brett Kelly; young Australian violinist Jane Peters will play concertos by Bach and Mozart; and the Mozart *Requiem* will be performed by the St Francis Choir with soloists Merlyn Quaife, Ruth Bramich, Michael Terry and Tim Patson, in the church at 8pm. ■

For further Festival details, telephone (03) 663 2495.



FLASH IN THE PAN

The Nasty Girl, dir. Michael Verhöven (independent cinemas). An unprepared cinema goer could be a little disconcerted by this compelling comedy. You could settle down, lulled by the breezy narration of the film's nasty girl, Sonja (Lena Stolze), and expect a charming mock documentary; a kind of Bavarian *Cane Toads* about the Nazi past of some of the honest burghers of Pflizing, suitably leavened by a wry, affectionate eye for social detail. But you'd be in for a shock.

Verhöven has already made the documentary, and it wasn't mock. It was about Anja Rosmus, a bright schoolgirl from Passau whose interest in local history led her to uncover much of the town's suppressed Third Reich history. *The Nasty Girl* is the fictionalisation of that story, but it is more than a fictionalisation. It somehow parodies the reality it is based on. It is a brilliantly mannered black comedy, with a whiff of magical realism off the back palate. While being both funny and stylised, the film manages to convey powerfully the determination and dedication of Sonja (Anja Rosmus' fictional *doppelgänger*) as she changes from an earnest schoolgirl entering essay competitions to an unrelenting investigator who overcomes the increasingly disturbing and violent opposition of the townsfolk. Throughout the film she gains in moral stature, and as she does so, sheds much of her youthful earnestness.

Even more surprising is that a male German director has made a film that is at once an entirely unpatronising feminist statement, an uninhibited exploration of the heritage of Nazism, and an energetic and unlaboured comedy. See this film. It is disconcerting, both visually and morally. But I left it somehow refreshed.

—David Braddon-Mitchell

Proof, dir. Jocelyn Moorhouse (independent cinemas). The lavishly praised *Proof* is surprisingly unconvincing. Unlike the best work of Paul Cox, whose influence is sporadically apparent here, Jocelyn Moorhouse's film suffers from superficial psychology and laboured myth-making.

A blind man, Martin, endlessly photographs his environment in hope of someday finding someone who can tell him the truth about it. Martin has a problem about trust; he never trusted his mother and thinks she might only have pretended to die to get away from him. His problems are compounded by his housekeeper, Celia, who harbours a desperate and unrequited love from him. She persecutes

rather than viciously disturbed. It seems we are meant to sympathise, but one wonders how Moorhouse would have presented the story with the sex roles reversed.

—Tony Coady

Dying Young, dir. Joel Schumacher (Hoyts). Almost throughout *Dying Young*, Victor (the waif-like but wealthy, leukemia-suffering, doomed love interest, Campbell Scott) suffers badly from nausea. Nor are we spared.

The one good thing about this film is that it pulls out all the stops in the doomed-love genre. Joel Schumacher has engineered something of a coup if the strength of our urge to recoil at the film's unashamed and gratuitous use of conventions is anything to go by.

Early in the film Victor announces to his prospective nurse/companion, Hilary (Julia Roberts), that he has leukemia. From this point, through this very word 'leukemia', the denouement is firmly set up and excruciatingly familiar, with all that follows little more than burlesque.

Dying Young seems principally intended to serve as a backdrop to Julia Roberts, who figures fruitily in virtually every frame. The film does make a limp and obvious attempt at self-reflexively underlining notions of voyeurism and obsessive love. Victor is writing his PhD thesis in art history; à la Pygmalion, he gives Hilary lessons on Klimt's and Rosetti's redhead pictures. The clichés get confused, however, and the viewer also is given an art lesson. In lingering shots we are forced to consider the similarities between Julia Roberts and impressionist painters' models. These scenes, concessions to Schumacher's idea of the higher-minded filmgoer, serve only to cloud his otherwise masterful schmalz-vision, which poses a genuine challenge to the high-minded.

—Hilary Spear

Terminator 2: Judgment Day, dir. James Cameron (Hoyts). How do you make a sequel to a film about a homicidal robot who speaks English with a thick Austrian accent? It's not easy, especially if our villain has since established himself as a *nice* tough guy with some comedic talent. Arnold Schwarzenegger has an image to protect and Cameron, accepting the inevitable, has cast him according to

Eureka Street Film Competition

Tell us what the typical nuclear family pictured above is discussing, and we'll award two tickets, to the film of your choice, for the answer we like best. Write to *Eureka Street* film competition, PO Box 553, Richmond VIC 3121. The winner of last month's competition was Barry Mahoney, of Sydney, who had Claude Rains saying: 'The Papal Nuncio has accepted. Round up the usual guests.'



him by waylaying his seeing-eye dog, photographing him on the toilet, blackmailing him with the photo, attempting rape, and moving his sharpest furniture around so as to cause him confusion or injury. She also seduces his new friend Andy, whom he has trusted enough to show him his photos.

All this is loony. Martin didn't have to wait 20 years for a totally trustworthy friend, since a random selection of strangers with no reason to deceive would have done just as well. Martin is bitter but not stupid. As for Celia, her obsessive love is almost as unbelievable as her astonishing malice, and Genevieve Picot doesn't help by playing Celia as fey

type. Arnie is now a robotic good guy, sent back from the future to protect an irritating brat who is destined to lead the human resistance in the War of People v. Machines.

But despite considerable expense—with a \$100 million budget it is claimed to be the most expensive movie ever made—Cameron has failed to deliver either the sense of menace or the careful plot that made his first *Terminator* a deserved success. That film made some attempt to grapple with the logical difficulties of time travel, whereas its sequel just assumes that 'the future' can be changed. Menace is here provided by Schwarzenegger's protracted duels with another robot, who provides the film's chief visual interest through an ability to change shape, rather like an oozing metallic jelly that hasn't quite set yet. In between bouts there is not much to do, except watch Arnie spend the \$100 million smashing cars, and listen to such gems as: 'De more contact I haff wit hoomans, de more I learn.'

—Ray Cassin



Wish you were there?

The most charitable comment that can be made about some invitations is that they remind us what bliss it is to be able to say 'no'. Conspicuously in this category was a 'please buy' mis-sive sent to *Eureka Street*.

On offer was an interview with the peripatetic American journalist P.J. O'Rourke, and we quote the blurb in full: 'In a fashionable London bistro P.J. O'Rourke, America's most famous journalist, chief foreign correspondent of *Rolling Stone* magazine and author of *Parliament of Whores*, his latest book, luxuriously entertains *Observer* feature writer John Sweeney with a mixture of humour and Philosophy. The Middle East, Ronald Reagan, Communism—all are intimately dealt with in a convivial atmosphere of wit, wine and women, leaving Sweeney reeling for his taxi and wallet, an hilarious encounter.'

A yen for the rite

The popularity of Christian wedding services for non-Christian couples in Japan has seen the birth of an organisation of ministers and choristers who perform such weddings in 285 hotels across Japan. The latest issue of *AERA*, a widely-read weekly, features Protestant minister Reverend Honda Sadao and his band of 640 ministers and choristers. In June alone, Mr Honda's group arranged 2500 weddings.

Mr Honda hopes that by offering weddings with Christian rites to non-Christians, he can present a glimpse of Christianity to a large segment of the population normally beyond the reach of missionaries. Taking advantage of the phenomenon, a number of entrepreneurs are providing hotels with 'Christian wedding ceremony equipment.' This usually includes a cross, stained-glass window panels, a lectern and taped hymns, selling for about 2 million yen (US\$14,500). (Source: *Asia Focus*, August 16, 1991)

Nostalgic sip

This month's *Eureka Street* 'It all helps to pass the time' award goes to the advertisement for Lavazza coffee, which describes the beverage thus: 'Nine popes, 63 governments, and still Italy's favourite coffee.'

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FESTIVAL

- Monday September 23, 8 p.m. **HERMAN HOHAUS - WORKS OF THE SPIRIT**
Sculptures on exhibition in the church from September 23 until October 13
- Friday October 4th, 8 p.m. **ST FRANCIS DAY CONCERT with the MOZART COLLECTION**,
and violinist Jane Peters, also Mozart Requiem with St Francis Choir and
soloists Merlyn Quaife, Ruth Bramich, Michael Terry and Tim Patston,
conducted by Brett Kelly.
- Sunday October 6, 11 a.m. **NELSON MASS** (Joseph Haydn) sung by St Francis' Choir with
Melbourne Chamber Ensemble and soloists Merlyn Quaife,
Meredith Schilling, Michael Terry, Tim Patston, conducted by Roger Heagney
- 2.30 p.m. **ORGAN RECITAL** by Anthony Way
3.45 p.m. **HISTORICAL ADDRESS** by Fr. Ian Waters
- Wednesday October 9 and
Thursday October 10, 8.15 p.m. Patricia Kennedy's dramatic presentation of
JULIAN OF NORWICH by J. Janda
- Friday October 11, 8 p.m. **IN MEMORY OF HER: A celebration of Women's Spirituality**
- Sunday October 13, 11 a.m. **CHORAL EUCHARIST**, St Paul's Choir, Geelong, conducted by John Brockman
2.30 p.m. **ECUMENICAL THANKS GIVING SERVICE**

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