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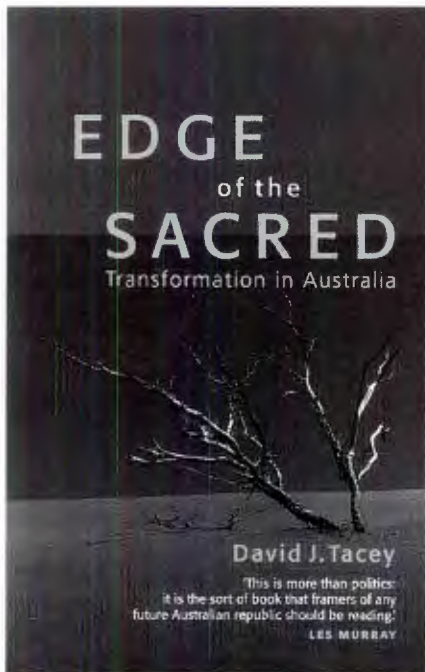
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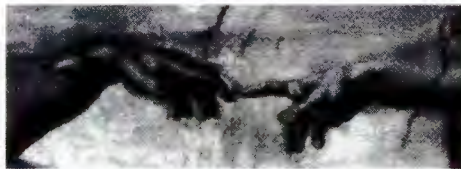
Edge of the Sacred: Transformation in Australia

by David Tacey



Tacey tells the story of travelling, as a child, in a 1962 EJ Holden along unmade desert tracks beside Lake Eyre. His family was emigrating from the northern suburbs of Melbourne to Alice Springs. For Tacey, this was the beginning of a spiritual awakening. *Edge of the Sacred* speaks of everyone's need for this kind of awakening: 'A world view based on the human element alone lands us squarely in the prison of the rational ego, where soul and spirit are banned, repressed and ignored.'

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To life

I HAVE JUST RETURNED from Rome and the General Congregation of the Jesuit order, its 34th in a 455-year history. There were 223 delegates from more than 120 countries, and they represented 22,869 Jesuits engaged in various forms of ministry around the world: in schools, universities, parishes, chaplaincies; in research in the sciences and the humanities; in theological reflection; in social welfare and social justice centres; in publication houses, and in spirituality and retreat centres.

Among the issues brought constantly to the attention of the delegates, there were inevitably those associated with what has come to be known as 'the promotion of life'. The growing incidence of homicide, suicide, euthanasia, abortion, AIDS and capital punishment; the tragedy of 45,000,000 refugees; the plight, especially, of Africa; the hypocrisy of the international arms trade; the terror of land mines; embryo experimentation and the ethical ambiguity of various other forms of genetic engineering; the severely limited access to health care not only in Third World countries but also among the poor and marginalised even in the First and Second Worlds; the growing resort to war and violence; the specifically feminine face of poverty, of domestic violence, and of refugee movements: all these seemed to the delegates to constitute a veritable 'culture of death'.

The only appropriate way it seemed suitable to respond was to use a phrase consecrated by a recent visitor to our shores, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago—in terms of 'a consistent ethic of life'. This involves seeing these issues not just in isolation from one another, but as interconnected and as part of a deeper political, economic, social, moral and spiritual malaise born of fear, insecurity, greed, an excessive individualism and an almost institutionalised insensitivity to the needs and claims of others.

The Jesuit congregation finished on 23 March. Two days later, Pope John Paul II issued his most recent encyclical letter, *Evangelium Vitae* ('The Gospel of Life'). Although it was primarily addressing the issues of homicide, abortion

and euthanasia, like the Jesuit agenda it was also concerned to situate these in the wider perspective of 'a consistent ethic of life'.

The Pope did this in two ways. First, the encyclical was not concerned exclusively with homicide, abortion and euthanasia, even though these were certainly the focus of the Pope's attention. But he saw them against the wider background of a 'culture of death'. Capital punishment, the traffic in arms, the traffic in body organs, the traffic in drugs, discrimination against women, the marginalised, the handicapped and the elderly, the resort to war and violence, destructive experimentation on human embryos, the degradation of the environment, the economic and social competitiveness that results in a minimal quality of life for so many of the earth's inhabitants—all these received much more than a cursory mention.

Secondly, while (not unexpectedly) the Pope did not resile from pronouncing in very definitive terms that homicide, euthanasia and abortion were gravely immoral, he did not see these *exclusively* in terms of the theoretical categories of 'objective moral absolutes' articulated in his encyclical letter of August 1993, *Veritatis Splendor*. Although *Evangelium Vitae* is no doubt meant to be a specific application of the principles enunciated in this earlier instruction, it also draws heavily both upon Christian tradition and upon other specific church declarations, particularly those on abortion and euthanasia. Perhaps because the Pope is drawing upon this wider tradition, there seems to be a more understanding and pastoral dimension to this encyclical than was evident in the more theoretical, and inevitably more tendentious, argumentation of *Veritatis Splendor*.

THERE IS A RECOGNITION, for instance, of the particular pressures on the single pregnant woman and on the marginalised elderly. Although paying a handsome tribute to those individuals and voluntary agencies who in so many ways contribute to the support of the handicapped, the marginalised, the elderly, the dying, single mothers, adoptees, drug addicts and those suffering from AIDS, the Pope also calls upon civil governments not only to develop in their own right a

'culture of life', but also to eliminate those structures of discrimination and disadvantage that lead to homicide, abortion and euthanasia. In particular, the Pope rejects emphatically the neoliberal presumptions, born, he maintains, of ethical subjectivism and relativism, that governments should make no moral options, but that they should merely respond to the moral marketplace. Although freedom is recognised by the Pope to be a *sine qua non* in moral decision-making, freedom must not be divorced from truth, nor should it be seen to be in conflict with life:

There is no true freedom where life is not welcomed and loved; and there is no fullness of life except in freedom (96).

This triad—life, freedom, truth—has been a constant theme in Pope John Paul's recent encyclicals, and understandably it strikes a chord in a society where not only the right to life but also the quality of life of many marginalised members and groups seems recently to have been so extensively devalued. Critics, of course, will point out that in a pluralist society there are many claims to 'truth' in morality, and that the overtly theist and Christian presuppositions out of which the Pope works are certainly not universally shared. They will also wonder

whether, in linking freedom in an instrumental way to truth, the Pope is really taking full account of the most radical text of Vatican II, the Declaration on Religious Liberty, *Dignitatis Humanae*, where the civil rights of even the misguided conscience are explicitly acknowledged.

However this may be—and it would seem to be true that in some instances at least the Pope is working out of a pre-Vatican II problematic—the clear and uncluttered message of this most recent encyclical should not for that reason be prematurely discounted. We do need 'a consistent ethic of life', so that freedom, the right to, and the quality of, life become realities for *all* members of our community, and especially for those who have become victims of 'the marketplace'—whether it be political, economic or even moral. ■

W.J. Uren SJ is Australian Provincial Superior of the Society of Jesus.



Photograph left:
Andrew Stark

Gently into that good night

ABOUT TWENTY YEARS AGO I talked to a man with advanced cancer who was undergoing chemotherapy treatment. He was just over 50 and he was suffering considerably and visibly from the consequences of the medication. He asked to speak to me as a priest, not as a counsellor. His question was simple: was he bound by Catholic teaching to continue the treatment? He had already talked to his wife and grown-up children. He wanted to stop the chemotherapy and to face the consequences. He was clear in his mind: he wanted to die. 'As long as it is OK with the church,' he said. Not God—just the church. He had already faced God.

I tried to explain in straight-forward English what I had learned some eight or ten years before from the Belgian Jesuit, Edouard Génicot, whose Latin moral theology text I had studied in the seminary. No-one, I told this brave man, was obliged to take extraordinary means to prolong life. It seemed to us both that, given the circumstances, the chemotherapy he was undergoing with its dreadful side-effects was an 'extraordinary means'. He made his own decision. He stopped the treatment that afternoon and died in pain but at peace the next day.

Excluding the area of sexuality and reproduction, I never cease to be surprised at how tolerant and sensible the Catholic moral tradition really is. An example: talking about this very issue of 'extraordinary means' to prolong life, Pope Pius XII says simply: 'Normally one is held to use only ordinary means—according to circumstances of places, times and culture—means that do not involve any grave burden for oneself or another.' (*The Pope Speaks*, 4/4 [1958] p.395ff). This humane and realistic comment came a man who was himself to die some six months after making it.

The Catholic moral tradition has always valued life, but it has not been afraid of death. At its best it has respected the circumstances of the person, his or her family, the doctor, the treatment and its cost, and has placed all of this within the context of the public good. The tradition knows that there are no absolute answers as we face the process of dying. There is always room for moral nuance, conscience and personal moral decision. And it also understands that the dying person is not always given the clear, moral choice provided for the dying man in my story. Often these decisions fall back on sons and daughters or other family.

Of course, intervening directly to help patients die is another ball-game altogether. The Catholic tradition has never accepted it but, given its sensible

approach to the issue of the right to die with dignity, it has also never espoused the fanaticism of the extremists who wish to maintain life at any cost; it stands as a humane contradiction to their ideological posturing. In contrast, I have heard some older, serious, practising Catholics say that they believe that doctors can in good faith help patients to die, especially in extreme circumstances.

So while I admire the courage of the doctors who have spoken out in Victoria about the issue of euthanasia, I have to disagree with them. And this is not just because of the Catholic teaching. I understand that their motivation is profoundly humane and I respect their honesty. But I feel a deep disquiet about asking governments to legislate on this and other issues concerning life and relationships. I am not sure

if this is the type of issue that is clarified by strident, public debate.

THE REASON WHY I oppose the legislative path is that the law is a blunt instrument which works through an adversarial system that seems to me to lack the subtlety required to deal with complex moral issues. The last thing we need in Australia is political and juridical clod-hoppers making decisions that properly belong to the individual conscience before God and to a person's family, friends and doctors. As Pope Pius XII said: circumstances, cultures and individuals are all different and it is these differences that must be respected. Given that the Catholic moral tradition is clear (no extraordinary means are required to maintain life) I do not want some impersonal judge making a decision as to whether I live or die. I will make that decision myself, thank you! Or, if I am incapable, I will hand it over to someone I know and trust.

In fact, in Australia we are becoming increasingly reliant on legislation to solve problems that properly belong to the responsibility of each individual. What I admire most in the Victorian doctors and their patients is their willingness to make a decision about their lives and their deaths. But I think it is a mistake to try to project that responsibility outward onto an external legal structure that could well destroy the individual and communal responsibility that is embedded in an admittedly untidy and difficult situation.

To face death is a frightening reality for us all. However, to assume personal responsibility for participation in the process of our own dying might well be the act of faith that leads us to face God with a little more equilibrium. ■

Paul Collins MSC is a priest, writer and broadcaster.

What's the matter with Vinnies?

FOR OVER A YEAR THE Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVDP), the country's biggest voluntary charity, with membership variously numbered at between 30,000 and 40,000, has been in turmoil.

Throughout that time, rank-and-file members have been perplexed. In more recent weeks, more extensive coverage of the issues in the media has revealed the extent of the problems to a wider public in the Catholic Church and general community.

What are the issues? It depends on whom you talk to. For example, John O'Brien, Victorian state president, criticises the development of public advocacy on behalf of the poor as part of the Society's service; the shaping of the Society as a national organisation; the alleged unaccountability of national office holders and employed staff, and financial mismanagement. His complaints have brought him to prominence as leader of the four states that seceded from the national council in mid-1994.

For others, the problem is a straightforward one: the SVDP needs reform—extensive, radical and very soon. Brian Murnane, national president until last October, and focus of most of the complaints of the seceding states, came to office in 1991 with a reform agenda already declared.

Murnane sees the object of reform to be a renewal of the SVDP that concentrated on the spiritual formation of members and the return of power to the membership. He wanted a clarification of the SVDP's role as a charity (people serving other people and not a vast welfare organisation like those spawned by other agencies and churches). He wanted public advocacy to be an integral part of serving the poor. And he saw the need for the Society to become a post-Vatican II lay movement, appealing especially to young people.

The antiquity problem is a real one for the Society. In Queensland and Victoria, the average age of the membership is in the high 60s. In NSW, where in 1992 there were 2,500 people under 25 in youth conferences, there has been a constant complaint of young people for the past decade that whenever they suggest anything or take an initiative they are either squashed or so buried in red tape that they give up.

Robert Fitzgerald, the NSW state president until late 1994, is convinced that Murnane's reform program is essential if the SVDP is to survive. He sees the organisation going through the pains felt by any group trying to adapt to changing times. Like religious

orders, voluntary organisations and any association driven by values, the SVDP needs a return to the spirit of its founder if it is to grow in a new age.

Fears about the SVDP's survival are well founded. Its membership is aged and it increasingly resembles a welfare bureaucracy that gets its life from government money and policy priorities. Management and leadership skills are in short supply. Its state-based administrative structure siphons power and resources away from the local level and blocks action at a national level. It stubbornly refuses to examine, at any depth, issues of theological and spiritual renewal. Its prospects, in consequence, are gloomy.

Almost half the SVDP membership is in NSW.

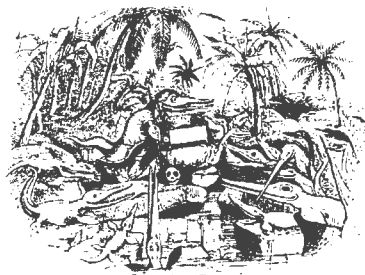
The moves for secession began in Victoria, and three other states followed that lead. Almost a year before the secession move began, attacks on Brian Murnane and his reform program were appearing in B.A. Santamaria's 'journal of religious opinion', *AD 2000*. Although it is an exaggeration to say Santamaria and the National Civic

Council have driven the secession, NCC influence has been active at crucial points. Its presence in the membership of the executive of the Victorian state council has been decisive in that council's actions over the national issues and its dealings with other individuals or groups attacked in *AD 2000*. Moreover, through *AD 2000*, Santamaria's lamentations over the contemporary church and reformers like Murnane have had extensive impact on the aged Victoria Vincentian membership. Many Victorian Catholics—Vincentians among them—who took sides with Santamaria in the 1940s and 50s remain with him in the 1990s.

What of the future? There are developments still to come. As information about reasons for secession spreads and the issues get wider public attention, the position for the secessionists grows more uncomfortable. More church leaders—bishops and heads of welfare organisations among them—are expressing their dismay not only about the quality of thought that drove the secession, but also about the behaviour and tactics of the secessionists.

But Robert Fitzgerald's point remains: without radical reform, the SVDP will go the way of all organisations that deny the need to change and adapt to new challenges. Death is a real prospect, and given the age of the membership, it may come swiftly. ■

Michael Kelly SJ is the publisher of *Eureka Street*.



Conning the State

From Paul Spencer

Moira Rayner's article (*Eureka Street* March '95) explores the position of the Governor, implying that the 'reserve powers' might provide some protection for the citizenry against a rogue government. However, what is paramount is that the source of authority of any constitution is in its validation by its constituents.

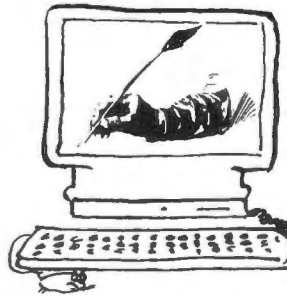
The Victorian State Constitution has never been validated by the people of Victoria. It allows the Victorian legislature to make laws in whatsoever cases it pleases, and does not even confine the legislature (as in the other States) to the peace, welfare and good government of its citizens. It has suffered ad hoc amendments without referral to the constituency. Whose interests does it serve? There are not even any provisions for referendums, as there are in other States.

We live under the vestigial apparatus of a colonial past, a sort of benevolent oligarchy where democracy manifests as a mandate given to a government to do whatever it likes for 3 or 4 years pending an election. Governments of both persuasions have displayed poor management and despotism. *We deserve better.* There is immediate need for provision in the State Constitution for: 1) State referendums initiated by an independent trigger. 2) A Bill of Rights. 3) Privacy of ballots in Parliaments. 4) Codification of the separation of powers doctrine.

Perhaps a legal remedy exists. Section 95 of the Constitution prohibiting public servants from making a political comment may breach common law in regard to freedom of speech, and it only awaits some brave public servant or teacher to exercise that right and defend it in court. That this has not happened as yet indicates the climate of intimidation we live in, where we fear to speak up in case it is shown we don't have that freedom. What a sorry state of affairs!

Certainly the Governor, Mr McGarvie, as a former judge of the Supreme Court, is excellently placed to offer suggestions for the remedy of the present constitutional disarray, now that no job description exists for the position that he holds—does offering advice to the Premier exclude offering suggestions to the general public?

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.



These are not just theoretical matters destined for the too-hard basket; they are as real as the cracks in houses around Albert Park, indicative of the cracks in the great principle that governments are not above the rule of law.

Paul Spencer
Ascot Vale, VIC

Interior view

From Peter Mulholland

It is obvious today that there is much disillusionment with religious institutions. The church is no longer a haven of security for people, and many find the church irrelevant in answering their questions and anxieties within society, where materialism, power and selfishness are the gods.

As I reflect on this, I am also aware that there is hope in this world. I also believe that it is a question of seeking to find some answers. What lights the way for me, with regards to the church is that, beyond its bureaucracy and politics, there are countless numbers of men and women who authentically live the message of Jesus. They truly want to liberate people. Although they are not in the news everyday, nor are they on the world stage, they are definite signs of the presence of God in this broken world that we live in. Two examples that come readily to mind are Jean Vanier (who founded world-wide communities for the intellectually disabled) and Mother Teresa. However, I do not need to look overseas as I know of many people, lay and religious whose lives are ones of justice, service and compassion in Australia.

So, even though we live in a world where there is so much negativity and many of us feel as though we are a part

of a church that has forgotten its foundational truths, I think it is important to remember that God is not dead. I believe that the people I have described above make a difference to our world, in the living out of their own lives. The good news about this is that we can all do the same.

Our human race needs peacemakers and in reality they are right at our front door, and inside our hearts if we but look.

Peter Mulholland
Ashfield, NSW



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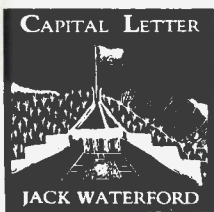
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Rights and the High Court

THE BRENNAN HIGH COURT has the shortest inbuilt clock of any court since Federation. Sir Gerard Brennan will be chief justice for three years and one month. The personality which that court will have will, of course, be rather more a function of the inclinations of the new junior judge, Bill Gummow, than of Brennan, long a leading figure on the Gibbs and Mason Courts. All the signs are, however, that the term of this court will be memorable.

Judges tend to get categorised as to whether they are essentially Labor in orientation or Tories. These are increasingly irrelevant issues. The big issues—so far as the division of powers between the Commonwealth and the states are concerned—have been largely resolved. Far more significant are issues which do not divide the court into 'left' and 'right'. These include issues about the limits of power of government over the individual and questions of the extent to which members of the court are prepared to substitute their own views about the most appropriate policy for others—an issue of adventurousness.

The most interesting movement of the High Court in recent times is the development of a new law about the rights and responsibilities of the individual in both private and public law. This is likely to continue under Brennan. Borrowing from equity and notions of fiduciary duty, fair dealing, honest conduct and extending old negligence concepts, the court has been developing new rules about what citizens have a duty to do for and a right to expect from each other. The law is noticeably more results-oriented.

This development is usually ignored by the politicians and, too often, the press. The courts can argue, with some justice, that first, they have tended to fill gaps neglected or ignored by the legislatures and second, that if parliaments disapproved of what they were doing, it is always open to them to overrule by new laws. This rarely happens. In a somewhat different way, the court is also developing a new jurisprudence on the relationship between the citizen and the state, one which is steeped in new notions of sovereignty flowing from below rather than from above. It will confidently stop government when it believes clear limits have been transgressed.

Judicial review laws have created a new administrative régime in which individuals have rights and reasonable expectations, not least to fair and due process. Privacy rights are increasingly established. A host of anti-discrimination laws are added to this. In another set of laws, from Trade Practices Acts to Family Law Acts, the most legislative guidance the judges are getting are almost meaningless phrases such as 'the best interests of the child' or 'unconscionable conduct'. In the words of Bill Gummow in one such case, such phrases 'invent new heads of public policy'.

The deepest radicalism of some of the members of the court is not shown so much in the streetlight cases such as *Mabo* and the free speech decisions but in far more routine cases and often unreported cases of the little guy

versus big bureaucratic government. Increasingly, one should back the little guy.

Judges handing down judgments are sometimes somewhat less than satisfactory in pretending that they have come to their conclusions by strictly legalistic reasoning. This infuriates politicians. A more fundamental problem is that the court has not itself sorted out its reasoning processes and sometimes looks very results-oriented. It dips selectively into international law to find standards. It reasons, inconsistently, from analogy, either from overseas laws or from the way other parts of the law work. The frequent appeals by some of the judges, including Sir Gerard himself, to words about 'community standards' and 'community expectations' invite questions about how they are tested. This is the more so when a judge such as Sir Gerard will talk of its being necessary 'to guard against the tyranny which majority opinion may impose on a weak and voiceless minority.'

As the sharpest analyst of the court's shifting values and thinking processes, Professor Paul Finn of the Australian National University [some of whose examples I have borrowed here] points out some of the fictions being used are getting somewhat strained, sometimes to lead to judicial innovation, sometimes to justify restraint.

Gerard Brennan is at the forefront of this revolution, if he is sometimes a little more restrained than some of his more exuberant colleagues, such as Bill Deane or Mary Gaudron.

WHERE WILL BILL GUMMOW FIT IN? He is not quite the mouse that some of the coverage has suggested. He is an equity man first and foremost with no great doubts about bringing its concepts in the common law. Like not a few judges argued to be high Tories (such as, say, Sir Daryl Dawson and Sir Keith Aickin) one can expect that his micrometer will be out when there are questions of how far government can go. One can expect him, however, to be a little more timid on questions of how far the court should go to fill a gap—least of all when it involves direct second-guessing of government. He may in fact bring some of the experiments back a trifle—which is what a government without a law reform agenda and frankly sick of judicial adventurism earnestly hopes.

Don't expect him to be too predictable. His last case as an advocate was in explaining to the High Court why I should not get special leave to appeal in a legal professional privilege case. He had a measured argument, but he lost. A month or two later I was surprised but pleased that in one of his first judgments he ruled very strongly in favour of propositions—good little guy versus the government ones—he had argued earlier were heresies. Unfortunately, several weeks after that, three High Court judges, including Sir Gerard Brennan (Bill Deane and Daryl Dawson dissenting) ruled that they *were* heresies. ■

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



Back to the ranks

ONE OF JOHN HALFPENNY'S LAST ACTS before retiring as secretary of the Victorian Trades Hall Council was to launch Trades Hall Finance, which will provide unionists with credit and cheaper home loans. The scheme, he explained, had a double goal: 'It's designed to reward people who are trade unionists, but people who want to take advantage of our offer also have to join a trade union if they're not already a member. So it will help in recruiting as well.'

The sub-text to Halfpenny's comments is the well-documented erosion of union membership. Unions have hitherto played a key role in Australian industry, but they are aware that if they cannot convince non-union workers of the benefits of membership now, in a generation's time the movement will have lost its clout.

The Victorian THC is not alone in this foray into the world of service provision, with union councils in New South Wales and the ACTU itself moving in this direction. But as well as waving carrots about, the union movement is also trying to win new members via shop-floor contact.

In March last year the ACTU launched its 'Organising Works' program in response to the slide in union numbers. The program breaks with tradition by selecting and training individuals, and then placing them in recruitment positions, instead of re-

lying wholly on unionists to come through the ranks. Organising Works director, Chris Walton, says the program will achieve its aim by changing the face of unions to include more women, people from ethnic backgrounds and the young.

The very existence of such a program, Walton concedes, is evidence that unions have failed to identify with, and therefore recruit, the new social and cultural groups that have entered the workforce.

'There's nothing hidden about the aim here,' he says, 'it's about this concept of like organising like, of actually getting people who can relate to the groups who aren't in unions. The fact is that the 50-year-old man may not relate well to the part-time worker in McDonalds. 'We do fairly well with migrant workers but it's not to say we can't do better. Where we do particularly badly, in terms of the statistics, is with young workers, with women and with part-time and casual workers.'

Walton emphasises that unions have also been slow to adjust to structural change: 'The cause of the membership decline is not because workers are leaving unions—there is no evidence of that at all. The recession has hit large business and areas where unions have been traditionally strong [such as] manufacturing, construction, etc.


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Australia's traditional manufacturing industries have shrunk or disappeared in the past 10 years, and union membership has eroded along with them. Now the unions are chasing members among casual workers in service industries, and are training a new kind of workplace organiser to do it.

How do things stand? The 'headline' statistics quoted above are certainly grim. Of the seven per cent decline, five per cent occurred in just the last two years. There has been a fall on virtually every front—among fulltime and part-time workers, among men and women, in both the private and public sectors. Perhaps the category of greatest concern for unionists is the young. Even if the fall in membership among those aged 15 to 19 is discounted because of fewer apprenticeship opportunities, the figures for those aged 20 to 24 are of little comfort. In 1988, more than 36 per cent were union members; today it is fewer than 27 per cent.

But the retreat is not yet anything approaching a rout. Organisation is still generally intact, with more than two-and-a-quarter-million unionists, represented at workplace level by 50,000 delegates and shop stewards. There is no general shift away from unionism as such. The biggest single factor behind falling numbers is the decline of those sectors of the economy with the highest level of organisation, such as manufacturing, utilities and public administration. Those who remain after every round of redundancies are just as likely to be unionised as before. More than half of all electricity, gas, water, communications, education, transport, and government administration workers continue to be union members.

The Achilles heel is the burgeoning service sector. The union movement has failed, to date, to implant itself firmly among the growing ranks of entertainment, hospitality and shop workers. This is not, as some might think, a new, let alone insurmountable, problem. Changing economies continually throw up new categories of worker, while making others marginal. As Diane Fieldes, who lectures in industrial relations at the University of NSW, notes: 'In Marx's time the largest single group of employees in Britain was domestic servants. When the first Australian census was taken in 1911, labourers and miners made up a quarter of the workforce. Yet by the 1991 census only one worker in eight was engaged in these occupations, while the proportion of clerical workers had more than quadrupled.' The challenge, then, is to organise new sectors of the workforce to compensate for the decline of the old.



THE YOUNG WOMAN PAUSED HALFWAY through filling in the union membership form. 'I hate unions. When I was at school it seemed there were rail strikes every week. Life was always disrupted. But the conditions here are so bad you hope the union can do something about it.' Then she continued writing out her details, becoming the first, and so far only, member of the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) at this particular Timezone games arcade in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

As an indicator of the future for Australian trade unionism, she might for many people appear an unlikely choice. A 21-year-old university engineering student, working casual shifts at a 'family entertainment centre' and paying her first union dues by Visa—it seems a long way from the stereotype of the average unionist.

But for Bill Kelty at the ACTU, and the other heavies in the union movement leadership, she represents both a challenge and a ray of hope as they survey the statistics that indicate what is probably the sharpest decline in union membership since the 1930s—from 42 per cent of the workforce in August 1988 to 35 per cent in August 1994. For if it is the case that reports of the death rattle of the movement are much exaggerated, it is also true that if unions fail to transplant traditions of organisation and solidarity into those sectors of the economy that are expanding, their influence will be weakened.

That is the task the ACTU has set itself, aiming to create an extra 20,000 job delegates and to recruit 200,000 extra members by July 1997. The frontline troops in this exercise are the 100 or so young people employed as recruiting officers under the banner of the ACTU's scheme, Organising Works. Which brings us back to Timezone and the entertainment industry.

Spending an afternoon out on the road with MEAA official Alice Blake, who recently graduated from Organising Works 'trainee' to full-fledged industrial organiser, shows that it's one thing to set recruitment targets, it's another to carry them out. This is the tough end of the business. Trying to get a foothold in places that specialise in casual labour, that employ tiny handfuls of generally younger staff, and that have no union traditions—this is where there's no alternative to old-fashioned hard slog and firm argument.

First stop is a Mount Waverley cinema. The duty manager smiles, but he's blunt. 'We're a family business. We don't employ union members.' Gently reminded that such a policy is illegal, he puts it more politely, that it just turns out that no one working there is a unionist. Alice leaves a few union leaflets, but they're clearly destined for the bin. At least, she says, he was aware of the relevant award. Some employers don't know that much.

Into a Timezone. The duty manager, a full-time worker, is clearly pleased to be approached. Yes, she does know that there's a new award. Management had sent out a glossy circular that was careful to say that staff could join the union, while listing the reasons why they had no need to. Then a straightforward question—what's in it for the workers there? What can the union deliver for them?

The answer coming from the union leadership relies heavily on offering services. Bill Kelty has put great store on discount schemes and cut-price home loans. The ACTU is talking about sinking up to \$8 million into a cheap airfare scheme for union members. Whether or not that particular flight of fancy ever gets off the ground remains to be seen, but even a whole flying circus of union planes is unlikely to dent that 200,000 target.

QUITE SIMPLY, THE BULK OF PEOPLE do not join unions for services. A recent study from the University of Adelaide, 'Raising our Voices', reveals that more than half of all new members joined for 'the protection of rights', with a further quarter joining to improve wages and conditions. Only 20 per cent cited union services as the factor that recruited them—with the figure dropping to 13 per cent among the young. Asked what should be the unions' top priorities, 69 per cent nominated working conditions, 63 per cent said health and safety, and services took the wooden spoon.

Why does the union leadership continue to push the services barrow despite such figures? The answer lies in the difficulty facing many unions, not least

those representing poorly organised, atomised and 'non-traditional' sectors such as Timezone workers, in delivering real increases in wages and conditions.

Alice doesn't tell the Timezone worker about services. Later she confides: 'I think they're an added bonus. People join because of wages and conditions.' Neither does she talk about enterprise bargaining. Instead she puts the emphasis on getting enough people to join so the union can gauge members' needs and submit a claim. 'My job is to get people to talk to us. They're interested and want better conditions, but they're too scared to pursue it. I'm trying to get them to stand up for themselves.'

The duty manager is obviously tempted, but doesn't join this time. The one recruit for the day comes from the final visit at another store a few suburbs further on. A single recruit doesn't sound like much—199,999 to go—but it represents a better than average result, and another brick in the union wall. Whether she stays at Timezone long enough to allow the union to build to a critical mass remains to be seen.

The ACTU wants to see a further 300 Organising Works recruiters out in the field within the next two years. They will undoubtedly find success. Not everyone works in video arcades, and there are entire workforces ripe for the plucking. But if the union movement is to avoid putting one member on the front, while losing two or more off the back, it will have to do more than woo the young and bribe the would-be jet passenger. It will also need to go beyond relying on the ingrained loyalty of the disgruntled, but established and longterm, sectors of its membership. It will need to prove to the wary that it is prepared to lead a fight for the things that concern them.

Take the example of Victoria. In the early days of the Trades Hall-led campaign against the new government of Jeff Kennett, 150 people a day joined the state public sector union (SPSF). A rising movement, tens of thousands on the streets, a sense that cutbacks could be halted, gave a sense of purpose to many who had previously been agnostic about union membership. Today the SPSF is suffering the effects of a substantial drop in membership. Job losses and the State government's refusal to collect union dues; are partly to blame; a sense that the union is too weak to be a buffer accounts for the rest.

Union leaders need to get back to the most basic of basics, like wage rises that come without the sting of losing hard-won conditions, and defence of jobs. As a tram driver in Brunswick, Melbourne, put it: 'You sometimes think, what's the point? It looks like we're losing things. If people could see that the union was actually achieving things, they could see a point.' ■

David Glanz is a freelance journalist and a regular contributor to *Eureka Street*.

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'Also, there's been a change in the composition of the workforce from full-time to part-time and casual jobs, where unions traditionally haven't had a hold. And the new area that has grown is the service industry, and again the unions haven't traditionally been in there. Our membership has declined in percentage terms because all these areas have grown and we just haven't kept up with the change.'

THE INITIAL SUCCESS OF ORGANISING WORKS lends some weight to Walton's claim that the program can turn union membership around. Of the intake of 58 trainees in March last year, only three dropped out and the 54 who have been placed with unions across the country have since recruited over 10,000 members. Walton hopes that over 100 people will graduate from the program this year, to gain work as recruitment officers with the 20 'super' unions that are sponsoring the scheme. And its chances won't be hurt by the ACTU declaration that Organising Works is a priority area for support in 1995.

The interest the union movement has in the Organising Works strategy was apparent at the launch of the Evatt Foundation's study *Unions 2001, A Blueprint for Trade Union Activism*, in Sydney at the end of February. The gathered faithful were addressed by Tom McDonald, one of the book's authors and a former member of the ACTU executive, Bill Kelty, and Amanda Perkins, a recruitment officer with the Printing and Kindred Industries Union, and a 29-year-old graduate of Organising Works. Afterward, Perkins fielded as many questions as her more illustrious companions, from people wanting to know how unions could attract a new generation of workers.

'Unions can learn a lot from the environmental movement', argued Perkins, 'because the environmental movement has been able to capture the imagination of young people and we haven't. They give people things to do, like demos, rock concerts and chaining themselves to trees. The environment movement can get people excited about the Antarctic, thousands of miles away, and make them feel that it impacts on their life, yet we can't get people excited about things that happen at work every single day.'

Perkins agrees with Chris Walton's assessment of why membership has declined, but talks about a tyranny of ignorance that has frustrated her efforts to recruit workers in the newer industries. 'It's still obviously easier to have success in a workplace where people see themselves as working-class,' she says. 'I'm still trying to find ways to appeal to Sydney's North Shore advertising agencies and design houses. When I go and talk to people there, they know or care so little about unions that they don't even know they're not supposed to like me.'

Perkins also cautions union officials against talking about recruiting 'women' and 'casuals' as if these

are separate groups; in her industry, the two are inextricably linked. 'If there are casuals, you can bet *their* bottom dollar that most of them are going to be women. A lot of the time I'll go into a factory and I'll say "Is everyone in the union?" and the tradesmen will say "Oh yeah, this is a union shop", but then I'll ask the women and they'll say, "Oh no, I'm just a casual". There's a real lack of esteem and a failure to recognise that they have a right to be organised.'

Perkins and Walton argue that ultimately there can be only one solution to membership decline. Cheap airline tickets and Visa cards aside, unions must be more involved in the workplace. And both suggest that the industrial consensus the Labor government has fostered since 1983 has led to this reduced presence. 'The accord was good in many ways,' says Walton. 'In terms of the social wage, child care and Medicare, in rebuilding social infrastructure for this country, it was a fantastic success.'

'But even its strongest supporters now recognise that the accord had an effect that they hadn't predicted—a lack of things happening at the shop-floor level. And that's what educates workers, that's what gives them an understanding of the importance of acting as a collective rather than as individuals.'

He points out that union officials sometimes fail to realise how much educating needs to be done.

'You get the impression that the world isn't too bad out there, that workplaces and bosses are all right. And you get that impression because you deal in unionised work sites all the time, and of course in unionised work sites the boss doesn't try things on as much—there are grievance mechanisms and workers know their rights. But what's horrifying is when you get into the non-union areas. Sure there's a few sophisticated shows, but there's a hell of a lot of bloody shocking situations.'

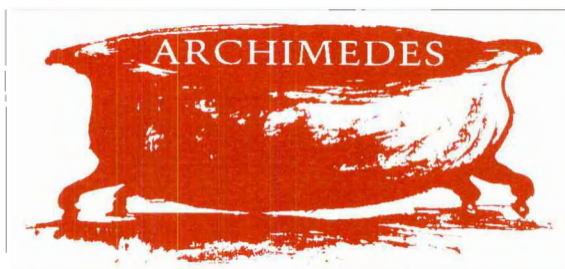
The present challenge for unions is not only to confront but to embrace change. The industrial landscape has had new industries, work practices and social groups added to the map, but while the union movement has come reluctantly to accept this change, up until now it has not explored ways to participate in it. This, Chris Walton argues, is what Organising Works is about.

'Unions have to get out of the comfort zones and get into the virgin territories where workers need unions. They need to organise.'

Jon Greenaway is a *Eureka Street* staff writer.

The environment movement can get people excited about the Antarctic, thousands of miles away, and make them feel that it impacts on their life, yet we can't get people excited about things that happen at work every single day.

Printing and Kindred Industries Union recruitment co-ordinator
Amanda Perkins.



Forecasting sea-changes

IN ALL THE POLITICAL BROUHAHA of the global warming conference in Berlin last month, reports of a concurrent scientific meeting of just as much significance for world climate were almost lost. But what can you expect? After all, this was a meeting of scientists, the news was almost uniformly good, it was held in Melbourne and Australia performed well. How boring can you get? Yet the meeting was of enough interest to attract more than 400 researchers from 27 countries. They came to discuss 10 years of work under the World Meteorological Organisation's Tropical Ocean and Global Atmosphere (TOGA) program which wound up at the end of last year. In short, they came to talk about El Niño—when the air pressures at sea level across the Pacific change pattern and Eastern Australia experiences drought.

In the 10 years of the TOGA program, a great deal has been achieved at all levels, from the purely theoretical and conceptual right through to providing concrete predictions now used by Queensland cattle farmers and the Peruvian fishing industry. 'This is the most successful research program there has ever been in the earth sciences,' says Dr Mark Cane, of the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory in New York. He means it, because in the same breath he admits that what he has just said is not the sort of statement one expects from a scientist.

According to Dr Cane, one of the program's great achievements was to get meteorologists and oceanographers working together for the first time. In the past, meteorologists were mainly concerned with day-to-day weather, he said. They considered that the atmosphere moved far too quickly to be affected by the warming and cooling of the ocean. But TOGA has helped shift the focus of meteorologists from questions of weather to longer-term questions of climate. For instance, Cane says, the real impact of global warming may not be in increased temperatures, but in increasing the chances of El Niño events.

At a practical level, the program has established for the first time that we can predict aspects of climate. 'It is now widely accepted that an El Niño event can be forecast with useful skill at lead times out to a year.' And that information can be used to help farmers and fishermen.

The prime example comes from Peru, the country that gave us the name for El Niño (because in Peru El Niño's effects become most apparent at Christmas, the time of the Christ child, El Niño). In normal years, the waters off the coast of Peru are cold and productive. A cold upwelling current brings nutrients from the ocean floor to the surface. These nutrients support large numbers of plankton that in turn feed anchovies and sardines. Based on abundant supply of anchovies, Peru's fishing industry has become one of the country's most profitable, and a significant earner of export dollars. But during an El Niño event, warm waters sweep down from the tropics to the north. The anchovies, which are very sensitive to temperature, leave their usual haunts in the top 50 metres of ocean, dive down to colder waters below 150 metres, and gradually work their way south. In the upper waters their place is taken by larger, faster tropical fishes, like tuna.

This can have a vast impact. In 1971, according to Dr Pablo Lagos, the scientific director of the Geophysical Institute in Lima, the anchovy catch was about 12 million tonnes; in 1972, a strong El Niño year, there was no catch. But now, by watching temperature changes and the behaviour of the trade winds in the central equatorial Pacific, Lagos and his international colleagues can predict El Niño events with certainty about three months in advance. And that is enough time for the fishing industry to switch strategy—to send the small anchovy boats south and prepare a fleet of larger, faster boats to fish for the tropical species that El Niño brings.

In Australia too, things are moving. Five years of drought in Queensland have resulted in a flurry of research by that state's Department of Primary Industries to produce computer packages to help farmers make decisions about how they should stock and manage their properties. The first product is *Australian Rainman*, a computer database of rainfall records for nearly 4000 locations in Australia together with the software to analyse it. *Australian Rainman* was much admired at the conference as a useful tool for coping with climate variability.

In fact, there was a general feeling that Australia was the appropriate place for this conference. During the 10 years of the program, the impact of El Niño through droughts and bushfires has become apparent to all Australians—so much so that Dr Cane says this is the only country where he can comfortably discuss his work with a taxi driver. ■

Tim Thwaites is a freelance science writer.



Post script: Hello to Berlin

IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE WOODCHIP debacle and Senator Faulkner's failed attempt to influence the outcomes of the Berlin Framework Conference on Climate Change, many Labor voters are worried. The results in both the Canberra by-election and the NSW State election were, as has so often been the case, strongly influenced by environmental campaigning. When Labor's policy makers forget this, they forget that their successes were aided, often crucially, by the perception that Labor would be the more responsible party on environmental issues.

If this perception changes, then so could the electorate's willingness to risk a change of government. ■

Juliette Hughes is a *Eureka Street* staff writer.

Right about face

KEN BAXTER, WHO AT THE TIME was secretary of the Victorian Premier's department, informed us that we were about to hear one of the world's greatest philosophers. Perhaps Baxter was distracted by thoughts of the offer—since accepted—to help Bob Carr do to NSW what he had hitherto been helping Jeff Kennett do to Victoria, for in the next breath he described the eminent speaker as a Jesuit.

As Michael Novak, winner of the 1994 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, ascended to the rostrum, he did not blush at either the exaggerated philosophical acclaim or the taint of Jesuitry, though the latter tag probably caused him some discomfort. Not only is he not a Jesuit (nor, *pace* a report in *The Australian*, a priest at all) but he has grown accustomed to regarding Jesuits as antagonists.

Novak is a philosopher, though not in the sense that Alasdair MacIntyre or John Rawls are philosophers. He is what is quaintly termed a public intellectual: someone who is as much concerned with the advocacy of causes as with scholarly inquiry, and whose natural milieu—

a long list of academic credits notwithstanding—is the think tank rather than the university.

At the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, DC, he holds a chair in religion and public policy, and from this lofty pulpit he preaches the gospel of democratic capitalism. In the '60s, from a variety of other pulpits, he used to preach the gospel of democratic socialism, but he has had a conversion. Michael Novak is a man who has changed his mind.

That change of mind was the reason another think tank, the Centre for Independent Studies, brought him to Australia. Like other institutions that feel a need to include the word 'independent' in their title, the centre proclaims itself to be free of party affiliation. No doubt it is, but that is not the same thing as being free of politics.

In the CIS *Annual Review* for 1994, the organisation's executive director, Greg Lindsay, gave his cohorts this axe to grind: 'The CIS must continue to endorse individual

freedom, the promotion of stable family arrangements and values, free competitive markets and limited government as the true guides for our future.' And Rupert Murdoch, who lectured under the CIS aegis last year, praised his hosts this way: the CIS, he said, was 'one of the remarkable universe of similar think tanks around the world ... [each] following its own independent course ... all are inspired with the principles of classical liberalism that are fundamental to our civilisation.'

The joker in this pack is 'liberalism'. The word 'liberal' may not yet be, like 'socialist', a bearer of almost as many meanings as there are people who use the term to describe themselves. But, even with Murdoch's qualifying adjective 'classical', liberalism remains an elastic concept. In the modern world, notions of individual freedom have taken root most strongly in societies characterised by a plurality of values, but pluralism does not always sit easily

*Convert to capitalism:
Michael Novak
in Melbourne.*

Photo: Tim Stoney



with the liberalism found on the neo-conservative agenda: the kind that wants *both* 'stable family arrangements and values' and 'free competitive markets and limited government'.

MICHAEL NOVAK BELIEVES that the component bits of this sort of liberalism do cohere, and his reassurance on this point was what seemed most in demand when he spoke at a dinner in Melbourne hosted by the CIS and *The Australian*. Ken Baxter, in introducing him to the assembled neo-conservative faithful, and Liberal MHR Jim Carlton, in moving a vote of thanks, each spoke glowingly of the moral certitudes that animate democratic capitalism *a la* Novak.

The frankly Catholic spin that Novak gives to his particular version of liberal democracy did not seem to worry his ecumenical audience. It was reminiscent of the reaction that some rightwing commentators had to *Veritatis Splendor*: 'Well, of course, I'm not a Catholic, but it's good that someone's standing up for moral values. Society can't survive, you know, unless ...'

Novak himself is fond of quoting the present Pope's encyclicals, especially *Centesimus Annus*, with which John Paul II greeted the fall of Eastern European communism in 1991 and marked the centenary of Leo XIII's pioneering social encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*. The parallels between the teaching of *Centesimus Annus* and Novak's own prescriptions for how society should work are so close that journalists have often speculated that he had a hand in drafting it.

His reply to this question, when I spoke to him before the CIS dinner, was akin to that which the US Navy makes when asked whether its ships in Australian ports are carrying nuclear weapons: he would neither confirm nor deny such reports. But why should he? The suspicion that he is the Pope's ghostwriter won't do Michael Novak any harm in the circles in which he moves.

The Novak/*Centesimus Annus* analysis of the world and its discontents goes like this. The failure of communism has left modern societies, and modernising societies, with

no alternative to some form of market economy. Further, although markets and democracy are not necessarily found in combination, the kind of market economy known as capitalism works best in societies where the rule of law is guaranteed by a democratic polity. (Capitalism's driving engine, the corporation, depends on general acceptance of the validity of contracts, and basic liberties like freedom of association.)

Finally, capitalist democracy needs to be sustained by a culture which restrains vices that inhibit productive activity, such as envy, and which nurtures forms of association that serve as buffers between individuals and the state, whether 'natural' (such as the family) or artificial (such as the corporation).

If that sounds pretty much like the mainstream neo-conservative agenda, it's because it is. To be fair, both Novak and *Centesimus Annus* caution against divinising the market ('all human institutions are imperfect', etc), and concede that the state has a duty to protect those who, for one reason or another, cannot compete. But there is not much enthusiasm, at least on Novak's part, for social-democratic aspirations to redistribute wealth and provide equality of opportunity.

He is a critic, for example, of the Australian bishops' statement on the economy, *Common Wealth for Common Good*: 'A great deal of space was spent on the idea of the gap in income, and that, I think, is a misplaced moral problem ... in fact, in the Catholic tradition that's never been a worry.'

So does he read the document as suggesting that the mere existence of wealth is a bad thing? Surely it was concerned with the *distribution* of wealth, and the plight of those excluded from the opportunities that possession of wealth provides?

'That's an appeal to envy! If the argument were that rich people should be stricken in conscience because of the suffering of poor people, then that's true. The problem is not the gap, but that people who have resources should bring them to the use of the poor. But then it's a blessing that there's a gap because it's a blessing that some people have the means to do this.'

What about a country like the Philippines, which has enormous disparities of wealth—a much greater gap between rich and poor than that which is familiar to Australians or Americans. Are poor Filipinos blessed in being able to so afflict the consciences of their richer neighbours? Capitalism has not failed the Philippines, Novak replies, for it has not really been tried: 'I deny that what they have in the Philippines, or in most of the Third World, is properly capitalism. They have markets and they have private property, but something dramatic inhibits the growth of the small-business sector. There are not supporting institutions to allow poor people to start businesses of their own. If there were, Filipinos wouldn't be fleeing by the millions to other places in search of opportunity.'

Novak explains that the landed proprietors who have dominated the Philippines economy since the days of Spanish rule have managed, through their control of the state, to retain most of the benefits of American-style capitalism for themselves, leaving their poorer compatriots in the grip of that deadly vice, envy. Coming from an apostle of capitalism, the argument has an oddly Marxist ring to it. But perhaps this should not surprise. Like Novak, Marx was an admirer of the creative energy of capitalist entrepreneurs.

On Novak's part, the flip side of this admiration is his emphasis on the evils of a culture of envy: envious people do not raise themselves, they bring others down. The pedigree of Novak's analysis of envy is recognisably the pre-Reformation moral theology of virtues and vices and deadly sins, but one suspects that the medieval scholastics would be more than a little surprised to find that all the effort they put into the condemnation of usury had been enlisted in support of market economics.

IF THERE IS A NOVEL ELEMENT in Novak's defence of the American way of commerce, it is this attempt to write a sort of *Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Novak thinks that Weber was at least partly right about the origins of capitalism in European Protestantism (though

he reckons Weber got the significant dates wrong). Like the Pope, however, he believes that the moral fibre of the West needs a stiffening of resolve through renewed contact with Catholic tradition. Novak argues that tolerance for a diversity of moral and religious beliefs does not entail relativism—the thesis that ultimately one cannot advance reasons for deciding between one set of beliefs and another. He adds that any society where this thesis is generally accepted is headed for breakdown.

His claim about tolerance and relativism is certainly true as a matter of logic (since tolerance itself becomes a non-relative value) and his claim about social order may be true as a matter of fact. Several questions asked by the CIS audience in Melbourne registered similar fears about the social fabric, though I doubt whether those questioners who did not share Novak's own moral and religious beliefs have since become converts. And there's the rub. Novak's vision of democratic capitalism leaves entangled a knot of problems that confront any kind of liberalism, including both the neo-conservative variety that he champions and the left-leaning variety that he despises.

There is a pseudo-problem, the one about the relation between tolerance and relativism; there is a philosophical problem, about the status of relativism itself; and there is a political problem, arising from the fact that, although human societies require a minimal moral consensus, a liberal society cannot coerce this consensus. Answering the philosophical problem, if it can be answered, does not resolve the political problem.

Consider, for example, Novak's response when I asked him about that intractable moral and political issue, abortion. The Catholic Church's strong opposition to abortion is well-known, but in most Western societies the Catholic stance is now a minority view. How does he balance advocacy of that view with living in a pluralist democracy?

'If you understand that pluralist society means that there is no truth,

then that's a road that leads directly to totalitarianism... it means that intellect has no purchase on reality, and that means that then there is only the totalitarian will. And this is exactly the argument that Mussolini and Hitler made at the beginning

Photo: Tim Stoney



A great deal of space was spent on the idea of the gap in income, and that, I think, is a misplaced moral problem ... The problem is not the gap, but that people who have resources should bring them to the use of the poor. But then it's a blessing that there's a gap because it's a blessing that some people have the means to do this.

—Novak on *Common Wealth for Common Good*.

of the 20th century, that there is no moral truth, there is only opinion.

'I wouldn't want to see people take that road again. When you say that liberty must be based on truth, the implication of that is that you

must argue, with all the evidence that you can bring to bear, to persuade people that the case you make is the true case ... this means that the Catholic Church and all those who agree with us—and in America we have a majority on our side—that there is something morally wrong with abortion must make arguments for that and try to persuade those who now don't agree with us that they're wrong, and we're making good progress at that.'

Here is what Michael Novak calls good progress: 'Abortion is more free in the United States than anywhere on Earth—we have the least restrictive laws, although the laws we have were not commanded by legislatures, it was a tyrannical decision.' [Novak is referring to the US Supreme Court's ruling in *Roe v Wade*, 1973, that privacy rights guaranteed by the US constitution preclude a ban on abortion.]

'We have the strongest Right-to-Life movement in the whole world, and we're persuading people, even people who want to have the law open to abortion, not to have them [i.e. abortions]. The feminists are fond of saying that although the law allows abortion everywhere, in only 16 per cent of American counties can you actually get an abortion. There are vast stretches of America where, although it's legal, people won't perform them.'

The various ways in which people who want abortions in America have been 'persuaded' not to have them, from harassing pregnant women to shooting their doctors, have been well publicised. I do not suggest that Michael Novak would defend the actions of extremist Right to Lifers. But the question is this: how many of those who endorse his vision of a free society would share his views on this issue? And if he and they cannot agree, how is it possible to reconcile freedom of choice (not just on abortion) with the CIS's 'promotion of stable family arrangements and values'?

I think, Michael, that we are still at square one. ■

Ray Cassin is a *Eureka Street* staff writer.

Shutting the gate

State law and order campaigns fail to acknowledge that harsher sentencing does not reduce crime. Australian prisons are more likely at the moment to promote recidivism than reform.

IN BRISBANE ONE WEEKEND in April, a 78-year-old woman was bashed to death in her nursing home bed. Her purse was ransacked and a \$20 note and some coins in a jar were missing. She was described by the pastor of the Lutheran church she regularly attended as a 'tiny, frail lady'. There would have been few people who read the Sunday papers who were not outraged by the crime.

Queensland is facing a state election at the end of 1995, and law and order is already shaping up as the primary election issue. Last year, the Goss Labor government attempted to pre-empt community feeling by tabling a draft criminal code which proposed strict penalties for a host of offences. The murder of a frail woman precipitated another volley of calls from the Opposition for even tougher prison sentences.

Despite the existence of dozens of urgent social, economic and political issues, we have already had one law and order election in Australia this year. Early on Saturday, 4 March, three weeks before the NSW state election, Fred Many walked from Sydney's Long Bay prison. He had served eight-and-a-half years of a twenty-year sentence for the rape and murder of a fifteen-year-old girl. Law and order suddenly became the main election issue.

Within a week, the then premier, John Fahey, had offered voters the guarantee that a fresh Liberal government would imprison for life those convicted of a third violent offence. 'It's three strikes and you're in,' he said. The *Repeat Offenders Act* was set to mirror, in some ways, laws that had, not long before, sent an American to jail for twenty-five years for the theft of a slice of pizza. 'The man is simply out of control,' the prosecution lawyer had postured on TV, leaving many to wonder that if this was the price of a ham and pineapple pizza, what would you get for one with the lot?

Not to be outdone by Fahey's attempt to regain an initiative, the NSW Labor leader, Bob Carr, proposed a category of 'horrific crime' for which even a first offence would merit a mandatory life sentence'. With ten days to go to the election, the NSW director of public prosecutions, Mr Nicholas Cowdery QC, made a plea to both parties: 'stop the auction on law and order and stop it now'. NSW already had a

proportionally higher prison population than anywhere else in Australia.

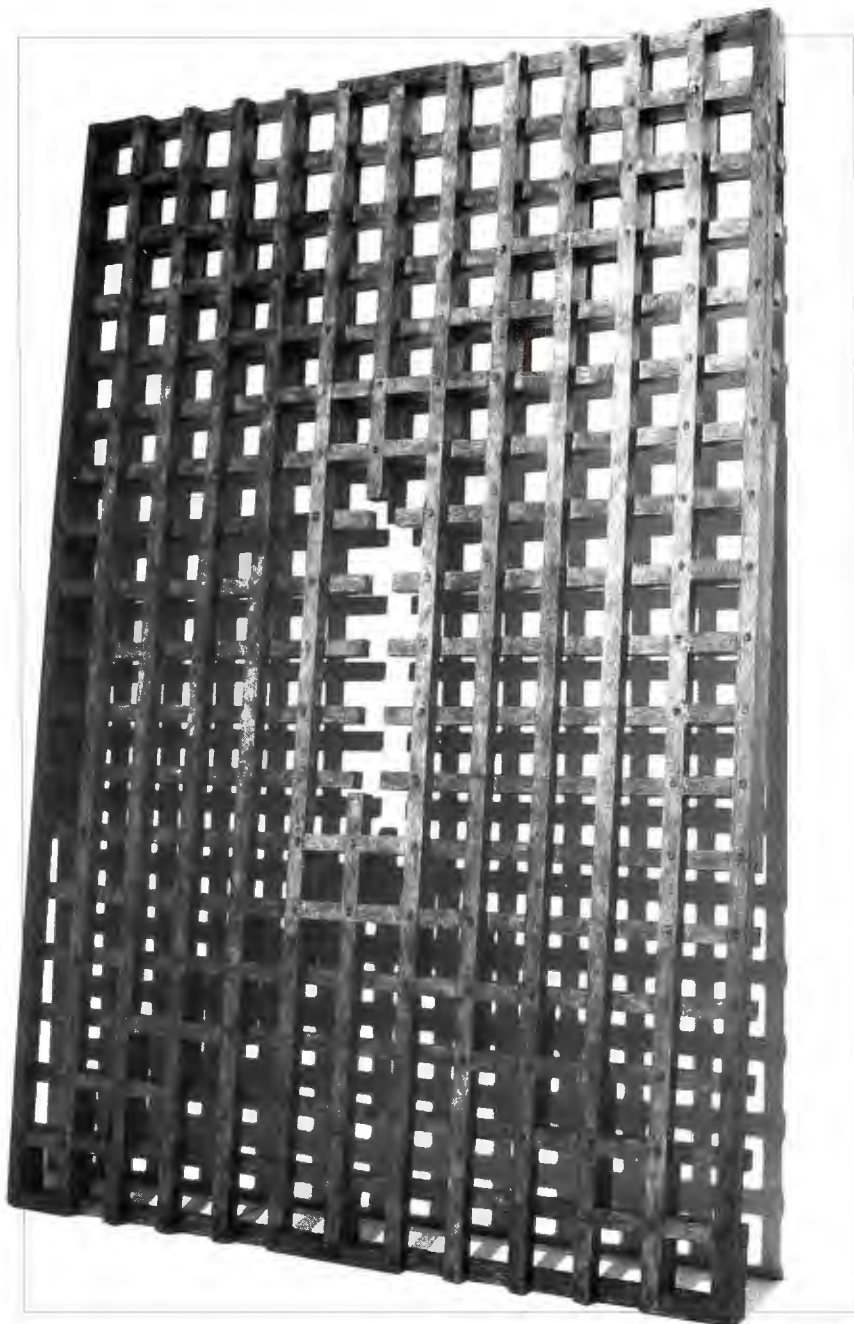
On 25 March, Bob Carr managed to get over the line. Questions about what imprisonment is supposed to achieve, however, remain undecided. In the shadow of shocking crimes it is difficult to argue that prison is not the answer and that tougher penalties should not be introduced. Reassurance from criminologists and governments that violent crime is not on the increase does little to abate community anger. It does seem appropriate that penalties should reflect the community's proportional disapproval, and at times abhorrence, of particular crimes.

However, the negative effect of introducing longer sentences, across the board, might outweigh any benefit the community could gain. It is generally accepted that prison, as a form of punishment, serves four main purposes: rehabilitation, deterrence, incapacitation and retaliation. It must be assumed then that the introduction of longer sentences for many offences should further one or more of these goals. But how sound is that assumption?

Rehabilitation is the most altruistic goal of the correctional system. When public passions are not excited by calls for retributive justice, most of the community probably hope that prison will rehabilitate. In the parlance of the Queensland Corrective Services Commission, 'prison will provide the opportunity to address offending behaviour'.

Expectations of how rehabilitation is to be achieved have changed with our changing view of human nature. A pre-Enlightenment 'Christian' society modelled prisons on the monastery. They were to be places of discipline, solitude, repentance, and penitence. In a post-Freudian secular society, rehabilitation is apparently achieved through various forms of treatment and counselling, but most importantly through 'programs'. The expectation of rehabilitation envisages a positive outcome from the prison experience. Yet the reality for many, if not most inmates, is that the effects of imprisonment are negative.

PRISON IS AN OPPRESSIVE, often violent environment. Control, on both an institutional and prisoner level,



is maintained predominantly through the use or threat of force. Although the community hopes that prisoners will make positive choices about their lives, they are placed in an extremely hostile environment and most of their freedom to make choices is removed from them. Young people in search of identity and role models are introduced into a criminal culture: feelings of distrust, suspicion and contempt towards authority are fostered. And prison life is not conducive to developing habits of industry. Prisoners with drug or alcohol-related problems are placed in an environment where drugs are readily available. Through threats of violence and intimidation, 'clean' prisoners are coerced into illegal behaviour to facilitate the movement of drugs and contraband within the prison. Vulnerable inmates face the risk of sexual assault and rape.

Further, the separation and isolation that prison involves often leads to the disintegration of family relationships. On release, the social alienation that prisoners experience makes it difficult for them to find accommodation and employment, let alone a

home, a family and a future to look forward to. Rather than reinforcing social and personal bonds, which provide belonging and identity, prison contributes to the process of social disintegration, one of the underlying causes of crime.

The simple evidence is that 61 per cent of people in prison in Queensland have been there before, so at least for those people, prison has failed to provide rehabilitation. The fact that some individuals manage to negotiate the prison system, and come out less dysfunctional, a little wiser, and more 'whole' than when they went in, is probably more a testament to the essential goodness of those people, rather than the effectiveness of prison as a rehabilitating influence.

If prison does not rehabilitate people it is hoped that it will at least deter people from breaking the law. Deterrence is based on the observation that most people respond to incentives and disincentives most of the time. On a specific or personal level, it is hoped that the imposition of a punishment will deter the offender from breaking the law again. On a general or social level, it is hoped that the threat of punishment will deter the rest of the community from offending.

But experience in Australia and overseas indicates that the threat of longer prison sentences does not effectively deter individuals from offending or re-offending. In 1989 New South Wales introduced 'truth in sentencing' with the passing of the *Sentencing Act* of 1989. This act effectively increased the length of sentences.

CONSEQUENTLY PRISON NUMBERS increased from 4124 in 1988 to 6441 in November 1993. Although public perception suggested an increase in crime, the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research figures indicate no significant rise in the crime rate. To cater for the increase in prison numbers the Government had to build five new prisons at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars.

In the United States, 'get-tough' policies used to 'fight crime' over the past 25 years have led to an increase in prison numbers from 200,000 in the early 1970's to 500,000 in 1987 and one million in January 1995. It is envisaged that prison numbers will rise to 2.26 million within the next decade. The United States has the highest incarceration rate of any free nation. This policy has, however, manifestly failed

Photograph left: 'Veiling Silence', by Hilarie Mais, in wood and oil paint, was the recent winner of the Blake Prize.

The Touring Blake Exhibition can be seen at the Waverley City Gallery, Melbourne, until 14 May. It will be at St Peter's Cathedral, North Adelaide from 26 May to 6 July, and Wollongong City Gallery from 14 July to 27 August.

to reduce the crime rate and make the community safer.

On a specific or personal level, there is some evidence which indicates that the imposition of punishment, promptly and consistently, might lessen the risk of re-offending.

Using as their experimental group a large cohort of men in Denmark, two researchers in the correctional field, P.A. Brennan and S.A. Mednick, did a major study on the specific deterrence effect of punishment, and arrived at a number of important conclusions.

The study showed that if offenders did not receive some form of sanction after arrest they were more likely to re-offend.

It was also found that people who were sent to prison for the first or second arrest would be more likely to re-offend, and, contrary to what they expected, their study indicated that the severity of the sanction was not significant in affecting the level of re-offending. This finding directly challenges the move to increase prison sentences. Their study concluded that, instead of increasing the severity of penalties, the available penalties should be restructured to permit the greater use of very mild sanctions.

FURTHER, THE STUDY HIGHLIGHTED the importance of consistency in the application of sanctions. (One of the most common concerns heard by those working with people in the justice system is the perceived lack of consistency.)

Learning theory recognises that while inappropriate behaviour should be punished, positive behaviour should be reinforced. However, the prison system too frequently fails to reinforce or reward positive behaviour.

Often people in prison who are genuinely attempting to improve themselves experience little encouragement—arbitrary sanctions and rules punish prisoners across the board. The experience, the research, and the theory all indicate that longer prison sentences are not effective in reducing the crime rate through deterrence.

So if prison fails to rehabilitate or deter people, then it is hoped that it will at least prevent them from committing *further* crimes. Prison, in other words, should protect the community through the isolation and incapacitation of offenders.

In the short term, longer prison sentences can reduce the incidence of crime in the community, by keeping potential offenders behind bars—an obvious justification for those in the community who propose tougher sentences.

But the long-term effectiveness of this approach is doubtful: almost every person in prison will be released, most within a few years. And unless the prison experience can reduce the likelihood of re-offending, then the use of longer sentences is only a short-term

response to controlling crime.

Given the other effects of imprisonment—social fragmentation, the fostering of criminal and anti-social behaviour, institutional dependency—then longer prison sentencing is only likely to lead to an *increase* in crime rates in the long term.

Further, incapacitation does not prevent crime from occurring: violent assaults, drug use, extortion, and property crimes are all part of the prison sub-culture. Imprisonment does not stop crime.

Rehabilitation, deterrence and incapacitation are all strategies aimed at reducing the incidence of crime. Retribution, on the other hand, is the only sentencing motivation that pursues punishment for its own sake.

It is based on the concept of 'just deserts': that the pain inflicted on an offender through the process of punishment should balance the pain that the offender caused the victim and the community.

While the use of imprisonment for rehabilitation, deterrence or incapacitation is motivated by the logical and rational desire to reduce crime, retribution is very much an emotional response to crime. Crime causes anger, in the victim and in the community. Retribution is meant to assuage this, and both the media and politicians exploit the public anger which crime generates. However, allowing this anger to influence public policy and sentencing legislation has serious drawbacks, one of the most important being that public anger is not necessarily related to the seriousness of the crime.

This is clearly reflected in Queensland's new draft Criminal Code. The 20-year maximum prison sentence for burglary of a dwelling house seems to reflect more the public anger about the high incidence of house break-ins, and the Government's frustration and powerlessness to control that specific crime, rather than the actual seriousness of this non-violent offence. And retribution, in reality, does not alleviate the anger.

THE UNITED STATES EXPERIENCE indicates that retributive responses to crime only generate louder calls for even tougher penalties and longer prison sentences. Anger begets anger in the community, and punishment motivated by retribution often fosters anger and resentment in the offender. Rather than dissipating the anger which often underlies crime, retribution escalates it.

Governments have a responsibility to develop policies which effectively tackle crime and justice issues. But the introduction of longer sentences is a politically expedient approach, which in the long term will only lead to further social breakdown, and consequently an increase in the level of crime in the community. ■

Gerard Palk is a community education worker with the Catholic Prison Ministry in Brisbane.

TRAVELS
BILL HANNAN

The progressive pilgrim

Bill Hannan hit an ancient road to find himself 'one step short of glory'.



ST HELENA, MOTHER OF CONSTANTINE the Great, is said to be the first Christian pilgrim. She went to Jerusalem and brought back the True Cross, destined over the centuries to provide churches with tonnes of relics.

Last year Lorna and I were pilgrims. We walked across Northern Spain to Santiago de Compostela where, according to the Spanish church, Saint James the Apostle is buried.

People ask us if the pilgrimage changed us. It's hard to know whether they want a serious answer. What would an answer be like? We went there protesting that we were tourists not pilgrims. The pilgrimage route known as the *camino frances*, the French Road, is lavishly adorned with art and architecture from Romanesque to Gaudi. Provincial Spain sounded like a great place to spend some annual leave. Don't ask me how we figured out that walking 800 km would make a good holiday. I suppose you don't ever really imagine the bad bits. Our minds were on the roadside, not the road.

Whether it changed us or not, we were so affected by the *camino* we're going to walk it again this year. Two plenary indulgences in two years. Another 800 km walk. At our age—both turned 60—what sins

could exact such penance?

The end point of the *camino* is Santiago de Compostela, in the North-West coastal province of Galicia. It was there that the bones of Saint James turned up, without an agreed explanation, in the ninth century. Ever since, the pilgrimage to Santiago has been the biggest in Christendom, a progenitor of European tourism. It claims the world's first touring guide, the 12th century *Book of Saint James the Apostle* by a French priest, Aymeric Picaud.

The *camino* still follows Picaud's route, from the French border to Master Mateo's wondrous Portico de la Gloria through which pilgrims enter the cathedral of Santiago, touching foreheads as they go with the Master's self-portrait in stone. Over the centuries, popes, kings, queens and bishops have built and endowed the *camino* and its shrines, sometimes out of piety, more often to extend their domination.

In 1987, the Council of Europe declared the *camino* 'Europe's first cultural itinerary'. This was much to our advantage since it involves restoring, signposting and servicing the *camino* and its ramifications throughout Europe. Church and state now promote the tourist attractions of the *camino* to motorists and parish bus tours. But foot pilgrims give

Photograph above: the writer, en route to glory, courtesy Bill Hannan.

the whole enterprise its legitimacy and they are generously catered for, as the tradition dictates, with refuges, medical services, prayers, drinking fountains, and, if you happen to die in the effort, monuments.

The first third of the *camino*, through the regions of Navarre and La Rioja to Burgos, was nearly as we had imagined it. Sunny days. Lovely red and rosé wines. A wealth of monuments. Roman roads. Medieval bridges. A living tradition of hospitality encapsulated in a couplet spray-painted on the side of a house in Najera. *Peregrino, en Najera najerino*. Pilgrim, in Najera you are one of us.

IT WAS AUTUMN, SAID to be the best season for the *camino*, the others being too hot, too crowded, too cold or too wet. But the best is not good. Even as the sun shone, a gale blew straight into our faces. Cyclists hung on the air like seagulls and were often forced to the ground. We swore at the wind, blamed our packs for our troubles and stopped making detours to what were certain to be rare and beautiful works.

We were badly prepared for walking 20km a day, day after day. We thought the whole journey would be about 500km. The first road sign we saw to Santiago said it was more than 800. At our pace, this was a difference of a couple of weeks. I was so fat Lorna said I shuffled rather than walked. The huge pack on Lorna's slight figure made her look like a Walt Disney tortoise tottering down the road. My feet were blistered and Lorna was limping on a bulbous ankle. Parts of the track, steep, rocky and muddy, were a Calvary. Other parts followed the highway where motorists in sunglasses ran you down and semi-trailer slipstreams swept you off your feet.

My notes written at Najera on October 3, said the *camino* was 'the sort of thing you wouldn't do if you knew it would be like this.' It took a young Spaniard to show us that in spite of everything you would do it.

We came across Daniel in the draughty refuge at Najera. He was lying on one of the bunks having a fit of the shakes. With the shakes, your legs twitch uncontrollably in a kind of reverse cramp. Lorna asked if she could get him a cup of tea, Daniel said he'd be OK. He had started out too fast, devouring the 120 km from his home town Pamplona to Najera at a rate of about 40km a day. Now he was buggered, so he would follow our wise example, as he called it, and have a few days' rest at 20km a day.

At the next stop, Santo Domingo de la Calzada, we had a long talk with Daniel over plates of macaroni

and coffee made from the supplies provided in the refuge kitchen. Santo Domingo was one of several saints canonised for their contributions to engineering, hospitality and podiatry along the *camino*. We were still benefiting from his holy works. We talked, inevitably, about Basque resistance to invaders, and then about why young people like him and old people like us go on pilgrimage.

At Santiago, said Daniel, when you step through Master Mateo's Portico de la Gloria you become a new person. The *camino* is a metaphor for life, an odyssey sufficient to itself, an ancient version of route 66 or the retirement trip around Australia. You have to keep walking the *camino* till you reach the end, no matter what it's like. It's a way of living life to the full. Tourists in the bus can look out at the metaphor and have it interpreted for them; the pilgrim makes the meta-

phor real, is part of what is toured as much as façades and altarpieces are. Once upon a time, pilgrims used to go on from Santiago to the end of early Europe's known earth, Finisterre, and throw their clothes and their goods into the great sea where the fish swarm. They brought back a scallop shell as a sign of their new life.

Revelation along the road and transfiguration at the end, no less. It could not have come at a better time for one who was ageing, pushed out of his profession and tempted by idleness and drink. We both needed voices to tell us more than to maximise our superannuation.

The middle section of the *camino*, across the high plateau of Castille and the mountains of Leon would be gruelling in any weather. The heavens opened all right but only to precipitate water. We had rain night and day whipped along by headwinds, and in the mountains sleet and snow. As we crossed the passes into Galicia, we were walking in a blizzard,

hunched in waterproofs that condensed body heat like a distillery. I felt that my hydraulic system was evolving in the direction of the plants, taking in moisture through the feet and emitting it from the pores. Old blisters ballooned palely inside my sodden boots.

By now, however, we were learning about endurance: the sight of a bus no longer tempted us. We were developing, or recapturing, a different idea of the pace of things. We were learning again that you get somewhere if you keep at it. How had we forgotten that? We were working out that parts of our bodies would get tougher but other parts would go on in permanent pain. Stoicism became a virtue. We were learning to live with little: what you could carry, the absolute essentials. We preferred the refuges to hotels. For the



moment we were poor in spirit; but we were beginning to accept hospitality as our due, thinking we were adding to the spiritual capital of this world.

The hospitality of the *camino* is remarkable. The people you pass always say at least 'G'day' and often stop to make sure you know where the road, the refuge or the cheapest restaurant is. Priests are solicitous only of your comfort. It does not occur to children to jeer at you. Older people seem to be honoured by the passing of a 'poor' pilgrim. Some even bless themselves. The chain of refuges offering accommodation—bunks, showers, kitchen and a box for a few dollars' donation if you can afford it—services the entire *camino*.

Besides being extraordinarily cheap compared with what you would have to spend as a tourist, the *camino* confers something tourists can only crave: respect. People treat you as someone who has a job to do. In their eyes you are not a tourist. You become, as they said in Najera, an honorary local. Before long you begin to think you mustn't let these wonderful people down. If for some reason they can't do the pilgrimage themselves, you'd better do it for them.

The final stretch, through Galicia, is normally as green and damp as Ireland, but though the wind was chilly as it was, as Picaud predicts, a paradise. The sun shone. The sky was clear (of signs too, unfortunately). The grass was bright green. The water murmured underfoot. Subsidised cows smiled on us through the hedges. The *camino* was off the road and peaceful. At several points it went on stepping stones up the middle of the rivers. We had plenty of time now. We detoured to look at monuments and thought about how much we'd missed earlier on the road. The hospitality intensified. Radio Santiago played in the bars; our destination was no longer legendary.

We had been walking for thirty-six days when we reached Santiago. There had been no revelations, though we badly needed one to show us how to keep up all the things we had learnt about endurance. Such knowledge fades like New Year's resolutions. Nor was there any transfiguration as I went through the Portico de la Gloria in the Cathedral. My feet were still sore, and I had lost less than a kilo of fat for every 100 kilometres walked. Lorna's ankle still twinges. Worst of all, we were robbed. Not of our goods, but of the metaphor that had kept us going since we met Daniel.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE IN SANTIAGO you present your credentials to the diocese, declare your motives and receive a certificate in Latin. This 'Compostela' once gave its bearer trading rights on the *camino*. Today it entitles you to a mention in the daily midday pilgrims' Mass and if supplemented by confession and communion within a certain time, a plenary indulgence.

By the time we fronted for the pilgrim's mass the pews were full of parish groups being warmed up by an MC. They sang boldly. They wore souvenir scarves,

buttons and scallop shells and carried staffs. A handful of pilgrims wandered round the edges of the congregation, too late for a seat.

It was inescapably moving to enter the crowded church after walking so long towards it. The shadow of awe in the eyes of the congregation as you passed made you think you were a key part of what they had come to see and celebrate.

A PROCESSION LED IN BY THE BISHOP, descendant of powerful churchmen for centuries. The pilgrims of the day were welcomed, *en bloc* except for priests and large groups. The preacher dwelt on the metaphor of the *camino*. The church is a pilgrim church. Life is a journey to salvation. Blessed are the humble. Rewarded are the seekers. Etc. By the time he had done, the only journey that mattered was the one to the communion rail to receive not bread but flesh and blood. The idea of the road that had kept us going was looking as poor and redundant as our backpacks. The only thing that upstaged the clergy was the *botafumeiro*, a gigantic thurible swung from a rope from one side of the transept to the other, breathing flames and clouds of incense.

I said the priests were missing the point. Why not have a few pilgrims on the altar, for example? Lorna thought the priests understood the point only too well.

She was right. In the managed, metaphorical world of pilgrim churches and journeys to salvation, pilgrims exist in peoples' imagination as medieval figures of the sort Buñuel mocks in the *Milky Way*. In that world the true destination of the journey is not just Master Mateo's Portico de la Gloria. It is a destination beyond the horizon, out of the present grasp, indeed not available in this present life at all. Running pilgrimages for tourists is no different from playing to spectators in the theatre, cinema or stadium. Because the physical acts have not been performed, nor the spiritual experience lived through, the emotional level of the show has to be pumped up and rewards plucked from the fantastic.

Those who have made the physical journey are not so easily engaged by the metaphorical one. Appearances have ceased to matter. Very few pilgrims on the road carried staffs, or scallop shells, much less cloaks, sandals and broad-brimmed hats. Nor did they pray and sing piously along the road, not even when the sun shone. Such pilgrims will not accept an end conjured out of words and images. They want more road. They want to endure. Salvation is not marked on their maps. Not even foot comfort is guaranteed.

A purist's pilgrimage would stop one step short of the Portico de la Gloria leaving the metaphor managers to perform in front of Master Mateo's upturned Romanesque smile. ■

Bill Hannan is a Melbourne writer.



A yen for cricket

Japan's first century maker, Minoru Mito, in the Long Room of the MCG, gazing out on the hallowed turf.

Photograph: Tim Stoney

IMAGINE A HOT SUMMER'S DAY in 2020. You sit down in front of the TV—or the next generation's equivalent—open a cold can of beer, and start to browse through a selection of some 6000 channels, eventually coming across a cricket match.

'Hello and good morning, this is Shane Warne in the commentary box. Welcome to today's play in the Third Test match between the traditional rivals of the Asia-Pacific Region, Japan and Australia. The series is tied at one all and it's a beautiful day here at the Tokyo Stadium with a good crowd building up ...'

Impossible? Perhaps—but not as far-fetched as you might think. The nation best known for incredibly small everything is rapidly embracing the game many consider only marginally more exciting than watching grass grow.

Cricket first came to Japan through the universities, in the late '80s—the first Japanese cricket club was founded at Keio University in 1987—with teams made up largely of expatriates. Six years later there are 20 Japanese teams—10 of them women's teams—and 20 teams of foreigners competing on a regular basis.

At the forefront of developing cricket in Japan is Minoru Mito, credited as Japan's first century maker, who recently visited Australia to learn the latest in

coaching techniques and ground preparation from staff at the Victorian Cricket Association (VCA).

According to Mito, 'in Japan nobody knows cricket, nobody plays cricket, but cricket is a worldwide sport. My friend was interested in cricket because he saw it in the movie *Chariots of Fire*. He wanted to start playing cricket, so I joined too for my curiosity.'

So much did Mito love the game, he has thrown all his energy behind the development of cricket in Japan, and today heads the cricket staff at M. T. Works, a cricket promotion company and publisher of *Straight Bat*, Japan's first cricket magazine.

Mito believes the biggest short term problems facing the development of cricket in Japan, or any country wanting to take it up, are a lack of basic skills and expert coaching.

'BECAUSE WE HAVE NO COACHES, players have to watch cricket videos and copy from them. Bowling form and batting form are quite different from a sport like baseball. In baseball you field and throw, but bowling is very different. In baseball we use the bat horizontally, but cricket is straight through. It took me over a year to even start to learn the technique. Almost all Japanese players start cricket when they

are eighteen years old. I think it's too late because children can learn these skills more easily.

'For example we mostly have medium pace bowlers, because spin bowling requires a lot of skill and many players are still developing the basic skills.'

In the long term, Mito believes cricket must attract a younger audience to ensure its success. For this reason he spent considerable time while in Australia, learning the basics of *Kanga Cricket*—a cricket coaching programme designed in Australia for use in primary schools—which aims to teach young children basic cricket skills in an enjoyable way.

'In Japan it will be difficult to introduce coaching into schools because the school programme is already fixed in their sports, so we will have to introduce it as an after school activity to improve skills and get more young people interested in playing.'

Mark McAllion, development officer with the VCA, who worked closely with Mito during his stay, believes Australia has a wealth of expertise to offer new cricket nations, like Japan, and junior development projects such as *Kanga Cricket* are the key.

'The Japanese might also use the programme for adults, to teach them the basic skills, as well as getting the kids involved. The programme is based on learning skills by breaking them down to the basics. We teach bowling while standing still—and batting with kids hitting the ball off a cone. We're taking an open skill, where you hit a ball being bowled at you, to a closed skill, where you're in control.'

After facing relatively few changes for over a century, the past 20 years have seen enormous changes in the way cricket is played and who plays it. Japan is the newest cricket nation in a group that includes such unlikely countries as Holland, Kenya and the United Arab Emirates.

MCALLION BELIEVES, if it is to survive growing competition from other sports, cricket must continue to expand and become a truly international sport. He sees Australia as uniquely positioned in the cricket world to develop these expanding markets.

'There's no reason why Shane Warne can't be marketed in every country in the world, just like Michael Jordan. These days, with so many other choices for kids, we can't expect to have the same market share that we did 20 years ago. But *Kanga Cricket* is played in some form in over 90% of primary schools, under 12 numbers are better this year than they have been in the last five years, crowds are up for the one-day games and the test match crowds are similar to what they've been.

'Obviously we're sharing the market now with a lot of other sports, but I think cricket is still very, very healthy.'

After his time in Australia, Mito is confident cricket has a big future in Japan. Strangely, given the fast-paced Japanese lifestyle, he sees cricket as a game

uniquely suited to the Japanese psyche.

'Most Japanese are smaller than people in western countries and size doesn't matter so much in cricket. The Japanese like tactical games, for example chess, or sumo wrestling—which is a 15-day tournament. So five days for cricket is very short to us but tactics are important.'

Ironically it's the people already playing cricket in Japan who present the biggest obstacle to its development and have resisted attempts to increase the profile of the competition within Japan.

'People who are interested in cricket are people who prefer to do unusual things. This is a problem for developing cricket in Japan. These kinds of people don't want to spread cricket, because they say 'only me, only I play cricket'.'

McAllion believes it will take some time before Japanese cricket will be competitive, but the signs are positive.

'We've been playing cricket for 150 years and they've been playing it for six, so it will take a while but it needs people like Mito to start at the bottom. That's the key. If you can get big numbers of kids under the age of 10 involved, before their skill levels have developed, then there's no reason why in a few years' time they couldn't be mixing with the best.' ■

Tim Stoney is a *Eureka Street* staff writer.

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The man who signed the notes

NUGGET COOMBS HAS BEEN THE GREATEST LIVING AUSTRALIAN for so long that he has almost vanished into the scenery, his nagging and very modern messages almost taken for granted.

If he had died before this writer-grandfather was born, his position in the history books would already have been secure. He is the last of a generation of public servants of enormous intellectual breadth who had seemed, even then, to have dabbled in everything. He had been a schoolteacher in rural Western Australia, horrifying school inspectors in the mid-1930s by teaching *The Wasteland* to his students. He had studied at the London School of Economics, where he was caught up in the ferment and excitement created by the publication, in 1936, of Keynes' *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*—'for me the most seminal intellectual event of our time'.

For Coombs, Keynes' achievement clearly lay not in the work's explanations of economic activity—indeed, he was later to see their limitations, and expand upon them—but in its recognition that social, political and other 'non-economic' objectives could be inserted into the processes of allocating resources and setting priorities. Human communities, Coombs came to understand, could consciously shape the context in which the lives of their members were led.

By early in the war, he was a young permanent head and Director of Rationing: the man who cut off the nation's shirt-tails to save cloth. But he was also developing theories of how the husbanding of resources could, when the emergency was over, create a fairer Australia freed from the threat of the Depression and able to rebuild itself. In mid-war he came to head the Department of Post-War Reconstruction—that engine room of ideas designed to make an Australia after the war something to live for and to fight for.

That agency created ideas of planning and regionalism, injecting social and environmental agendas into government economic policy. It was responsible, among other things, for the Snowy Mountains Scheme and the development of the Australian National University, but it also organised re-training schemes after the war, various soldier settlement programs and the beginnings of a Commonwealth housing policy. The confident men who worked for Coombs were themselves to dominate public administration for three decades.

He went on to head the Commonwealth Bank (which was then also the Reserve Bank) and played a role of international importance in the financial settlements after the war that laid the basis for international trade and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. As a person very closely identified with Ben Chifley, he had been expected to be sacked on the election of Menzies in 1949. As Menzies wrote to him many years later, 'you, as a man suspected of unorthodox ideas, were under a cloud of suspicion by some of my colleagues. The cloud soon disappeared as it became increasingly clear to even the most prejudiced that we had as Governor of the bank a man of the most conspicuous ability and the most shining integrity.'

Nugget has his own affections for Menzies, the third of seven Prime Ministers he was to work closely with—though his clear affection is for Chifley.

MENZIES, HE SAID, LISTENED TO BUREAUCRATIC ADVICE. 'He always knew what it was, anyway ... he asked the right questions. He was a very good bureaucrat. In fact I think he was a very good minister, by and large ...except when his ambitions and prejudices got in the way. Though he did not have any ambitions to do anything, he just wanted to be Prime Minister and to have months in England watching the cricket and so on. When he became Prime Minister in 1949 and I was with the Commonwealth Bank and I was working to (Treasurer) Artie Fadden, Menzies called me in and he said "Nugget, you know, I am bored with this economic stuff, and I am perfectly happy to leave it to Artie, but I know there are times when I need to know. You tell me that this is one of them and I will listen to you".'

'So I went to Artie and I said, "The Prime Minister has asked me to see him when the situation is such that I think he should be fully informed, and I think this is not an unreasonable thing. Is it all right with you?"'

'"Oh," he said. "I think that will be marvellous. The bastard won't listen to me!"'

'I liked Artie. He was one of the few politicians I have ever known who really went out on the hustings in support of something he knew his supporters would not approve of. It was in that period when we had that sudden rise in wool prices, and prices went up like crazy and we said "For Christ's sake, get people to put it in the bank, will you. We will have a balancing scheme so that we get less now but get the rest later."'

'Everyone was against such a scheme. They all wanted it now. But we talked to Artie about it and he finally said "Look, it's the only thing we can do which makes any kind of sense." So he said "I'll go out from country town to country town preaching the need for this balancing system—we'll take it from you now but you'll get it when you need it" and they said "Oh yair". But he was a good man, he really was, basically a good man. He had a basic sort of common sense.'

At the Reserve Bank Coombs helped create an élite with intellectual vigour, as sensitive to social and intellectual change, to policy and political constraints as it was dedicated to understanding and to explaining the workings of the economy. His breadth of outlook, as opposed to the narrowness of the present day, was shown in his pushing on Menzies a Commonwealth role in universities—the achievement for which Menzies most wanted to be remembered—and a *de facto* housing policy from his promotion of the banking system. He saw early the need for training bankers in Papua New Guinea, and was one of the first to help develop trading contacts with China.

At 'retirement' 30 years ago, these achievements were behind him, but in the next few years he was to play a major role in Commonwealth funding for the arts, and the further expansion of the universities. And from 1967 he became involved in Aboriginal affairs, first as a member of a three-man council to advise Holt on taking up the mandate given by the referendum, then to fight a holy war against the assimilationist policies and practices then in vogue, seeking instead a policy of integration.

HE WAS TO BE AN ADVISER TO WHITLAM and later to chair a Royal Commission into Australian Government Administration—still the most important document on the bureaucracy, and the document to which government will one day return when it wants to reintegrate some of its financial and managerial reforms with some old-fashioned notions of public trust and public

service.

If Aboriginal affairs is the subject to which he constantly returns, Coombs at 89 is still very interested in the big picture, in despair at the narrowness of the modern economist and the lack of idealism in public life, bitter at the damage done to the university system by John Dawkins, and bemoaning the treason of a new, uncaring intelligentsia.

The battles of ideas, he says, are being won by an uncaring corporate society without a sense of community obligation.

'By intelligentsia,' he told a recent seminar on ethics, 'I mean not those people who have inherited power because of nobility, but those who by good fortune have had access to time to think or to read or to argue; those who have had the benefit of what we used to call small-l liberal education; those who have inherited the same kinds of obligations as the lords of the manor inherited—the sense that we, too, have an obligation personally to care for others.'

'One of the distressing things to me about what has happened towards the end of my life is ... the fact that decisions are made without the kind of study which it is the function of the intelligentsia to provide, that decisions are made without allowing that kind of debate in an independent context.'

IT DISTRESSES ME TO SEE how far the corporate society, in addition to taking over the economic culture of the management of resources, seems to have taken over the intelligentsia.

'... Regrettably, the intelligentsia is becoming increasingly the instrument of the corporate society.'

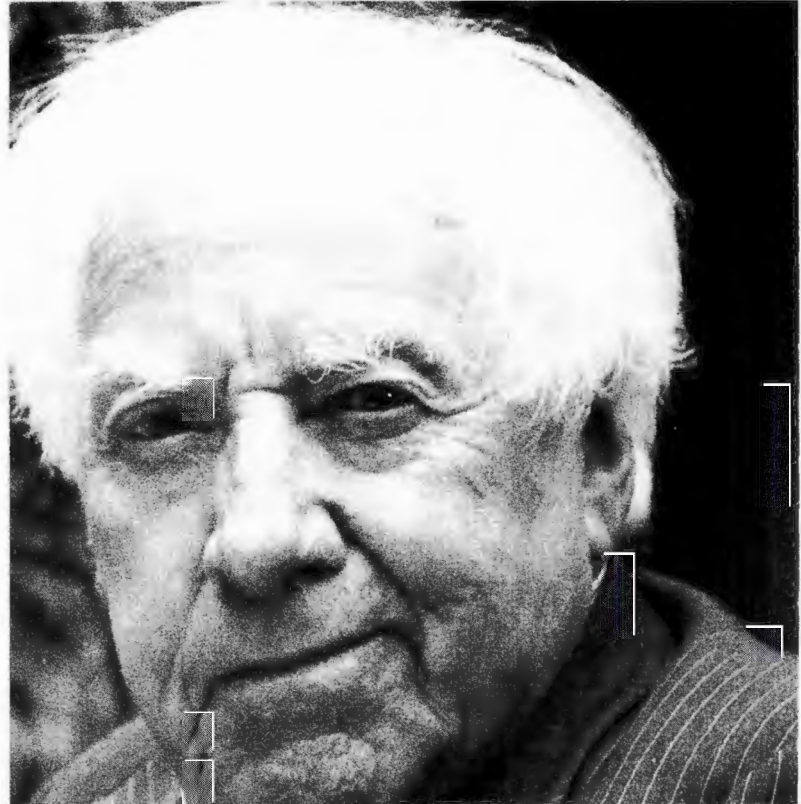
A decade after he first became involved in Aboriginal affairs, Coombs became increasingly involved not only in policy, but on-the-ground activity, particularly in northern and western Australia. These days, finding the Canberra winter too grim, he spends half his year there, writing, listening, looking, advising, learning and spreading ideas. His focus is on helping communities, such as the Pitjantjatjara people in South Australia, communities at the Top End and in the Kimberley, maintain their traditions while developing economic self-sufficiency.

He has played a major role in the outstation movement, in helping Aboriginal communities acquire cattle stations, and in developing models of education. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission is his bastard child—real in that it adopted a broad structure he sketched of giving Aborigines more control over policies and practices, bastard in that its genesis neither followed the processes he thought imperative (of extensive community consultation and discussion) and that its structures became more complicated and less responsive to Aboriginal opinion than he had recommended. He told a former minister, Gerry Hand, that his consultation had been '... a unilateral paternalistic process. Judgment and power of decision continue with the initiating party. Whatever changes are achieved by it, it carries no implication of agreement or commitment by Aborigines'.

In recent times, he has become extremely focused on regional solutions and on regional agreements, focused at pushing decision-making further down the line, and in developing and refining ideas that work.

What does he think of Paul Keating?

'Keating is a great puzzle to me because in some ways I believe he's the only bloody hope we've got.'



*Two elder statesmen:
on the left,
Bill Wentworth,
the first Minister for
Aboriginal Affairs, in the
Menzies Government,
with H.C. Coombs.*

*Photograph courtesy of
The Canberra Times.*

'He has courage and he has a vision, but I wish he would still this awful vulgar blackguarding. Mind you, I can't blame him with some of them, but it is so demeaning. I just do not know where the balance in him lies.

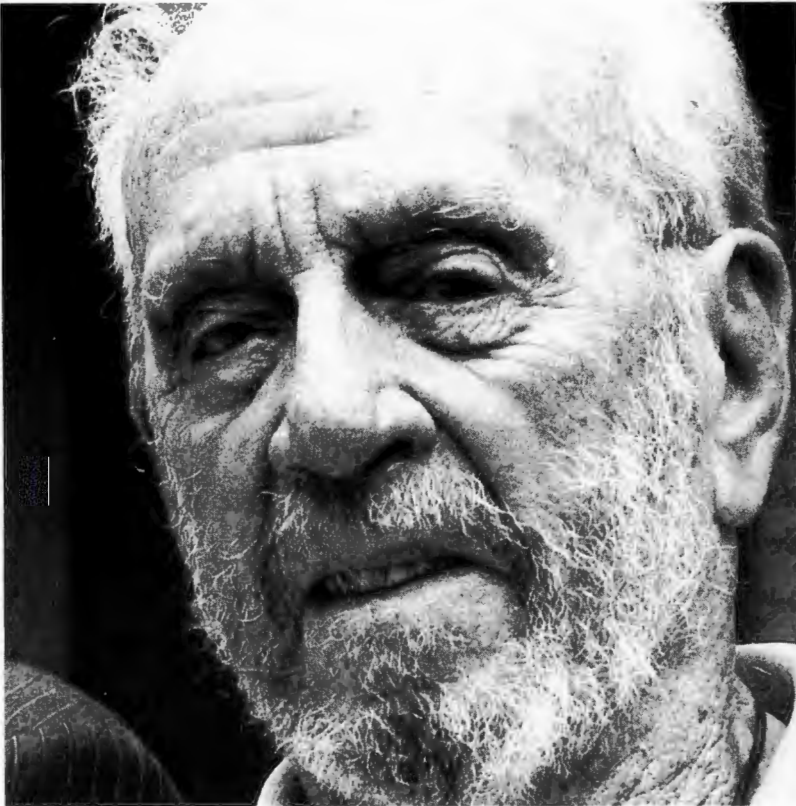
'Who else is there, really? It is just inconceivable to me that anyone would want to put the Leader of the Opposition in there again.

'The really remarkable thing was Keating's winning the last election. It went right against history. It may have been one of the things which has distorted his judgment. But one thing it did, I think, was to show that it was possible for a leader to make a contribution, to have a role in history rather than to wait for history to hit him.

'On Aboriginal affairs, I think he is the best chance we have got, but I don't think he really understands it. I don't think it is really in his blood in any way. He sees himself as having this role in history, and it's a good one, but I don't think he has any sense of how you achieve it, and I don't think he has ever really talked to an Aborigine in Aboriginal territory or in an Aboriginal context. He's never spoken to me except in social chit chat. On the other hand, the prospect if he loses ...

'I read the first drafts of the land fund legislation and frankly I thought it was awful, because it completely ignored all of the Aboriginal aspects of land ownership and treated it simply as if it were another form of freehold where they could mortgage it and treat it as an asset ... Whenever anything like this has happened, with indigenous peoples around the world, they have usually received money or they have received land on conditions where they could sell it, give it away and the result has always been that they finish within a few years with nothing ...

'What I want to do with such time as I have left is to look at what Aborigines are doing where they are



in some position to make choices.

'There's really some very exciting stuff. One of the next articles I want to write is about [the] Coronation Hill people, where John Ah Kit is really the master mind on the economic and financial front and he is reaching agreements with mining companies which gives them a share in the ownership, a share in the current incomes and a right to determine what percentage of the workforce are Aborigines, employed in real jobs in the mine and training provided for them and all those sort of things. And also they have established a whole series of cultural tourist exercises under Aboriginal control, which they are making their money from ...

'In fact it's so successful that I am a bit worried how far it might, not so much corrupt, but lead other Aborigines to believe that that is the only way. That intelligent or competent Aborigines should manage their affairs in that way—which will give them money and give them control—and that that may be enough, but also at the same time destroy their interest in their traditional ways of thinking, their traditional mutual support systems.

'Which way should things go? To me those questions are of the essence of the issues I want to devote my mind to over the next few years. I want to look at Coronation Hill people because I think it is very interesting; they were the ones who protected Coronation Hill against everybody but they are the ones who are now taking the lead in reaching agreements not to touch Coronation Hill but to do these other things.

'Now the same thing, in a different way, is happening in the Kimberleys, where they have Aboriginal organisations which came into existence when they could get nothing from the state

government and next to nothing from the Commonwealth and they had to set up their own organisations—Kimberley Land Council, Warranari and resource agencies and others which they set up and which in the early stages they financed by gifts from churches and trade unions ... but they got organisations of some kind into existence to run things themselves.

'You see they have a structure there so that if the Commonwealth is prepared to deal with them and say 'Look, you are undertaking work which we have been contemplating [being done] by the bureaucracy, we will pay you accordingly, we will reach an agreement that you run this particular service' ... now that's a real possibility.

'There are things in east Arnhem Land, on the cultural side, particularly in education where they are way ahead. They leave Dawkins for dead.'

COOMBS CITES THE PITJANTJARA PEOPLE, who have developed regionalised structures for dealing with their problems at a grassroots level.

'That federal structure which they have in operation is something we have very little understanding of but it works.

'In Alice Springs, the town camp organisation, Tangatjira, is a beautiful model and I believe it works—it creaks now and again, and conflicts sometimes emerge between the councils, but the conflicts were always there. But they have found a way of reconciling them, or, if not resolving them, of enabling them to come out and deal with them and reach decisions without sacrificing their autonomy. Now I think that's marvellous stuff. They are issues, they are real and practical and the resolution of them is more important to me than what goes into Commonwealth legislation.'

Can ATSIC deal locally and flexibly with these issues?

'I don't think it can because it is too isolated from [these] sorts of structures. I think it would be relatively easy, theoretically at any rate, to convert the ATSIC regional councils into bodies which were under the control of the Aboriginal organisations in that area. They could nominate the people to sit on these councils and almost overnight you could get a situation where the key part of the ATSIC structure was under Aboriginal control. Lois O'Donoghue and her organisation is all very interesting, but it is not really relevant to the critical decisions they are making.

'There is no real hostility from her to the idea that Aboriginal organisations should have greater control, and if that happens, it matters less what happens to the commission.'

From Nugget's work in Aboriginal affairs come consistent themes—of trusting people themselves; listening as well as hearing and of taking their aspirations into account; of insisting that real change can come only from the people themselves—change that will not occur unless the resources become theirs and that they have a stake in the transformation of them into Aboriginal capital; a strong belief that Aboriginal culture and tradition, particularly in the more traditional communities, is a strong and underutilised resource. Implicit in all of this is the need for Aborigines to improve their bargaining power, politically, economically and socially.

IT IS HERE THAT THE HUMAN AND THE SOCIAL VISION (rather than the accountant's or the narrow economist's) shines most strongly, if from a banker and economist.

The basis of building up bargaining power is control over land and in developing economic self-sufficiency. But these are not mere matters for a balance sheet. An Aboriginal cattle station is not, for example, to be judged solely on its capacity to earn a profit. Once it might have scratched a subsistence living for a white family and a handful of Aborigines. Now it might house many families. Aboriginal tenure can now provide the basis for assistance with housing, health care, education and other services, access to food, and a base for activities such as art and handicrafts. Just as importantly, it gives access 'to sacred sites and the group security and cohesion which being on one's own land and living among one's own kinsfolk provides. No simple viability test based on potential to earn profit would incorporate such considerations.'

At 89, Coombs is visibly frail and just a little conscious of his mortality. But he is not slowing down.

His faith in the human spirit, his optimism and his unflagging nagging at the fundamentals make some people think him a mere romantic. But at the core of a man Mick Dodson, Aboriginal Social Justice Commissioner called the 'whitefellas' most senior elder' is someone who is ever practical, talking about real people doing real things down at the ground in real communities. We need a few more public servants like him. ■

Jack Waterford is editor of *The Canberra Times*.

Where the boys are

Helen Garner's study of allegations of sexual assault made against a Master of Ormond College, Melbourne, has become a publishing sensation and a document for our times. Moira Rayner reviews Garner's book, and looks at another institution where a culture of sexual harassment is beginning to change.

The First Stone, Some Questions about Sex and Power, Helen Garner, Picador, Sydney, 1995. ISBN 0 330 35583 X RRP \$14.95

SHE SELLS EVERYTHING from breakfast cereal to books. Helen Garner's runaway best-seller about the Ormond College case, *The First Stone*, will make her richer than her novels, though it is their critical success that gives it *cachet*. Had she not been a famous novelist and feminist, her letter of support to the Master of Ormond College would not have divided women—I have had more high words with other women over the letter, and her book, than about the case itself—nor caused hurt, not least to Garner herself.

In 1992 Helen Garner read in the paper that the Master of Melbourne's Ormond College had been charged with indecently assaulting two young women residents. She shot off one of her characteristic support letters, challenging the 'appalling destructive, priggish and pitiless' way

of dealing with the allegations. This was a warm, spontaneous and almost endearing gesture. The letter was also judgmental, and written in ignorance of the facts and of the law. This would not have mattered, had the Master dealt with it in the middle-class, Melbourne way—with dignity and constraint. In hindsight it seems obvious that a man in his place would use anything in his defence, especially a letter from a famous feminist to a man who believed he was the victim of a feminist conspiracy.

EVEN THOUGH he had been accused of transgressing the boundaries between the generations—young women and older men in authority over them—Garner must have assumed that he would (or perhaps didn't even consider that he might

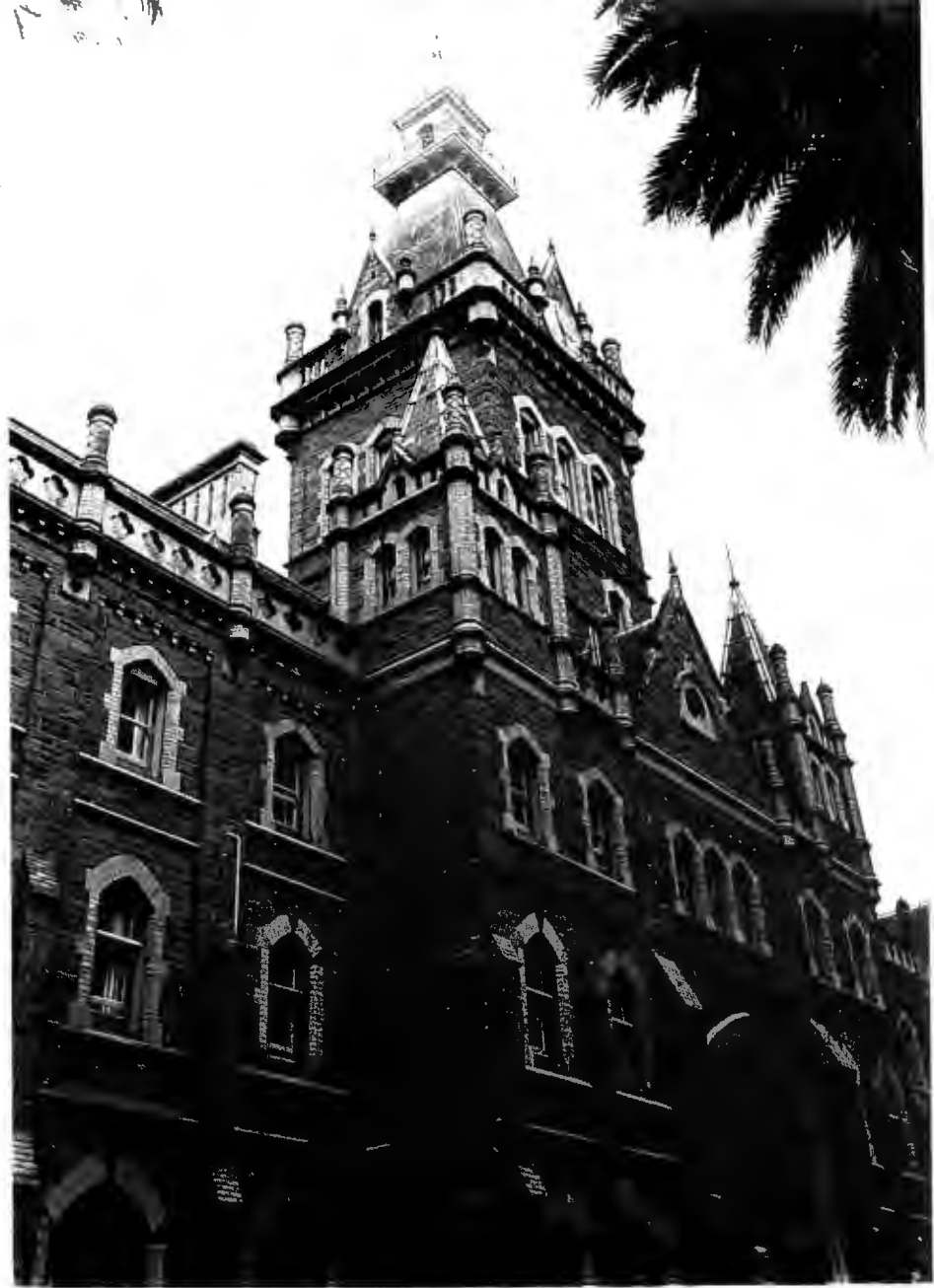
not) appreciate and respect the difference between private support and public position-taking. He didn't. He copied the letter, and distributed it far and wide.

What happened after is now notorious. Her letter divided feminists. Women took positions about 'Garner' as well as Ormond. When she came to write her book, many, including old friends, refused to speak to her about it, or even to talk to her. Doors and phones were slammed. She was shunned.

The First Stone is her very personal working-out of a considered public position about women, power and responsibility. It is a work by a feminist in her fifties who found herself out of step with feminism in—or some feminists of—the '90s. It is a hurt book about painful events. Its tone is often anguished, some-

'The personality of Ormond, the culture in which 'the case' was galvanised into a kind of monstrous life, is the real subject of the book.'

Photograph: Tim Stoney



times angry, or injured; the voice of one whose cause is just but who has been condemned because of its presentation, whose compassion has been misrepresented as cruelty. She is humble: she pedals away from meetings with powerful men. She is honest: she tends to present and represent her arguments with subtle variation, re-statement and qualification. And she speaks from experience: her personal history and experiences are presented to validate her judgment.

Her conclusions: that a 'prissiness, cowardice and brutality' had destroyed lives; that older women with their '60s libertarian version of feminism have a more generous attitude and a greater wisdom than the young, passionate and judgmental campus feminists of the 1990s; that women have 'potential power' which they do not use; that by characterising the full range of sexual harassment as 'violence against women' they caricature and trivialise real violence between women and men; and (aggrievedly) that she, who insists on drawing such distinctions, has also been victimised. It isn't, of course, as simple as that.

The Ormond case was not about 'sexual harassment' but about how closed communities deal with complaints of explicitly sexual, unwanted behaviour between students and a person in authority over them. Two young women students raised their complaints, verbally through an intermediary, with the Master's deputy

the next day. Later, through an emissary, their unsigned statements were brought to the chairman of the college council. Later again, they were taken to the council, which involved the university's counselling service. Their complaints had been documented by a subcommittee of the council. After receiving the subcommittee's report the council passed and published a motion of confidence in the Master. It also

found that the complaints had been made in good faith.

The women went to the police, who prosecuted. After two defended hearings at which each gave evidence in open court, and an appeal and rehearing, the Master was acquitted. He subsequently resigned after the council's later vote of confidence in him failed, on undisclosed grounds. The women and the council then settled complaints that were lodged with the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, on undisclosed terms. These included the publication of an acknowledgement by the council that the complaints could have been better handled.

On those bare facts it must be evident that the students are neither 'anonymous', as so many commentators have alleged, nor cowardly. There has been suffering all round.

Why did 'it' happen? Helen Garner actually doesn't dwell on what happened on the night of the Smoko (the facts have become 'unknowable'), but instead asks why the women went to the police about it. From the statement of facts it seems to me obvious that they went because their truth had been denied by those in power over them. Would conciliation have worked, when the validity of their experience had been publicly denied? The choices, surely, were to do nothing, or do as they did. Curiously, the focus in Garner's book is also not on the truth of the facts alleged but the validity of women's experience of being sexual prey.

I T WOULD BE SATISFYING to know 'what happened', but this review, like *The First Stone*, has no answers, and some 'no go' zones. Garner's arise from lack of information; mine from an excess of it. I was the Victorian Commissioner for Equal Opportunity who finally brought at least the legal proceedings, though not the ongoing bitterness, to an end, and I am committed to keep confidential what I might know or believe.

This review is about the broad relationship issues touched on in *The First Stone*: of inter-generational feminism; between sexual harassment and sexual assault laws, of victimhood, persecution,

emancipation and responsibility; about why women argue with other women and men about these things. Garner's book is about power and equity; how our justice, social and political systems failed to achieve it, and who is responsible. For, after all the pain, the Master who was exonerated by the criminal courts is unemployed, the women whose evidence was believed but did not persuade have been demonised as cowardly, 'anonymous' victim-*poseuses*, and the Ormond College Council is still stuck in a nightmare. They introduced new sexual harassment policies and procedures—even voluntary sexual harassment classes for new students—but as ABC's *Four Corners* (27 March 1995) revealed, the initiatives did not prevent a new claim of sexual harassment (not against the Master this time), nor a former resident's claim that there continued to be an anti-women culture, two years after the events.

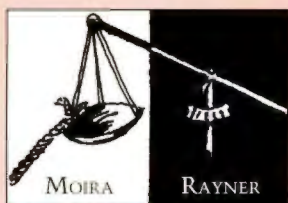
Most Melburnians have an opinion about the Ormond College case, if only about the relative notoriety of the accused and anonymity of the women. The perception that they were somehow culpable in this anonymity should be dropped: the reason they have not been named is that Victoria's criminal procedures prohibit publishing the identities of sexual assault complainants. They did not ask for that.

Helen Garner anonymises everyone in her book (I am 'Sonia O' of the fierce eyebrows) except herself, some former masters and 'Ormond', whose character inhabits every page, whose presence accentuates every silence. Ormond inspires loyalty, affection and commitment in those it took to its heart, a deep anger and resentment in those it did not. The personality of Ormond, the culture in which 'the case' was galvanised into a kind of monstrous life, is the real subject of the book, not the metaphor of 'sexual harassment'.

Sexual harassment has been a ground of complaint under discrimination laws for more than 10 years. It has come to represent the significance to all women of sexually-charged bullying experienced by even one woman. It is a new legal concept,

Continued p34

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Naval manoeuvres

LOIS BRYSON IS A FAMOUS FEMINIST who believes that sexual harassers can change and that converts make great preachers. Bryson, who is President of the National Foundation for Australian Women, and Professor of Sociology at the University of Newcastle, argues that the navy is doing better than corporate or academic Australia in trying to eradicate sexism from its ranks.

None of this fits any stereotype about feminists, sailors or sexism.

When the Senate ordered an inquiry into sexual harassment in the Australian Defence Force, after complaints of sexual harassment on HMAS Swan, the top brass asked Bryson to help them make their submission to the inquiry. She laid down two conditions: she would focus on the future, not the past, and, instead of merely writing the submission or giving advice that might go unheeded, she would prepare a separate report that they would publish. The defence chiefs agreed. Her report, *The Issue of Sexual Harassment in the ADF*, is a punchy document that pulls together the best research into who harasses whom, and when, and why, and tells the ADF what it ought to be doing about it. The report is not only what the navy submitted to the Senate inquiry, but also the first chapter of what looks like a success story.

It had started off badly. A naval board of inquiry had found that women sailors had been hounded, abused, spied on and humiliated by the men they were recruited to serve with on equal terms. By the time the service chiefs contacted Bryson, they had realised that the lesser of the two problems facing them was the damage already done to the ADF's public image: a reputation for sexual harassment would certainly repel women recruits. Between 1984 and 1994 there has been a virtual doubling in numbers of women in the navy's permanent strength, to about 7300 or 12.4 per cent of the total, and they are highly valued. The ADF stood to lose some of its best women, which meant it risked losing a massive investment in training, equipment and recruiting. It also meant there were risky games being played in the workplace that might threaten not just productivity, but lives.

Because they acted swiftly, the ADF in general and the navy in particular are now more likely than any other employer to succeed in their efforts to rid themselves of sexual harassment. What the Defence Force has already done and is still doing offers a major lesson to academic and corporate Australia.

There has been a largely whipped-up controversy about what 'sexual harassment' means, which will probably look pretty silly in 20 years' time. 'Unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature' can be described, and Bryson's report usefully categorises it into three broad areas: environmental, personal, and blackmail.

Perhaps the most difficult to deal with is the first. Harassment that poisons the atmosphere seems trivial to some men: off-colour jokes, swearing, derogatory remarks about women, or vaguely sexual or constantly

sexist jokes. Some think that if they are not aimed at a specific person, they are not important enough to be called 'harassment'. Bryson's report points out that that 'atmosphere' often triggers a chain of events, with wretched outcomes for all concerned.

Working back from cases where harassment has been established independently (by courts and tribunals), we can predict where sexual harassment complaints are most likely to arise, by looking for particular characteristics of the workplace, potential perpetrators and potential victims. Sexual harassment is most likely to occur in traditionally masculine workplaces that women have entered relatively recently. Working standards, practices, values, materials and tools might have been developed and designed for men's skills and strength, and women, consciously or not, are resented because they don't 'fit'. The acknowledged workplace leaders will have considerable professional and organisational status, and supervisors' personal behaviour and attitudes will strongly influence work standards. There will be strong group ties and loyalties, and the staff's working and social lives may be intertwined closely. Senior management might be relatively remote, and the work units somewhat isolated. The profile of potential harassers is also relatively predictable. Because workers have more equals than superiors, most harassment cases arise between equals—but those higher in the pecking order than the victims do much more than their share of it. They are often in a position to prevent or deter complaints. They tend to associate their sense of self-worth with their gender roles, and those roles with their work, so women doing 'their' jobs might make them deeply, unconsciously, uneasy. They might have fought for good working conditions and resent women walking in and taking the benefit. They might never have worked with women before: they seek to relate to their female colleagues as they would to the women they have known—mothers, girlfriends, wives or daughters—which is emphatically not an appropriate way to relate to a work colleague.

VICTIMS OF HARASSMENT are always in a minority, and usually in relatively subordinate positions. They might have been recruited because of 'non-traditional' qualifications that are not valued by the 'traditional' workforce. They often feel as if they were seen to be somehow representative of all women and constantly on trial. By the time the harassment issue arises they have become isolated, unsupported and vulnerable to victimisation, which often includes ostracism for taking the matter 'outside', and thus being 'disloyal'.

Lois Bryson says that it is important to stop sexual harassment early, because the cases show a very clear pattern. Harassment often begins with words, remarks or jokes from one particular person, but it rapidly

progresses to personal and sometimes physical or intimidating behaviour by more and more people. Characteristically, whether women complain about it or ignore it, the offensive behaviour goes on, and gets worse as on-lookers join in.

What is needed to prevent this, according to Bryson, is what the navy is doing, even if it took a Senate inquiry to trigger it. It did its research, setting benchmarks of complaints and objectionable behaviours. It set up training schedules and prepared, as for a major outbreak of hostilities. Unusually, and Bryson thinks this was a key factor in their success, the top brass did more than pay lip service. They put their personal dignity on the line. Does it take the threat of a court case? Perhaps. Research evidence suggests that there's nothing like public and costly litigation, public shaming, and the understanding that individuals will be personally, financially responsible if something goes wrong, to promote change.

Perhaps it was too much to hope that lawyers (my own profession) might adopt the same level of commitment after the massive damages award against Baker and McKenzie, a USA law firm, for one of its partners' sexual harassment of a staff member (and their own failure to deal with him).

Perhaps, said Bryson, they simply lack the discipline of the military. But perhaps it is also true that the ADF was prepared, and more ready than most organisations, to devote resources to training. As Bryson points out, when there isn't a war, the Defence Force is always in 'training mode'. Lawyers tend to think they know it already, whatever 'it' is.

The Defence Force is pragmatic. Its commanders aren't especially interested in changing attitudes, and

their concern was not with what their subordinates believe about feminism, equal opportunity, sex or multiculturalism. They take a much more realistic approach: they want their people to be in no doubt about what they may and may not do.

I asked Bryson what she thought were the most effective ways of changing overwhelmingly masculinist cultures where sexual harassment was likely to be, or had become a problem.

She nominated two necessary strategies: one, to acknowledge that one of the major obstacles to successful changes in behaviour is the fear of many men that they might, before they knew any better, have harassed others and be punished for it. 'I think it is very important to do something about the past, about those fears, perhaps by declaring a moratorium on old complaints, and setting up a very good internal mediation process.'

The other is using repentant sinners to communicate their new vision to the unenlightened. One man who had reassessed his past behaviour was very successful in explaining the essential nature of sexual harassment, which he did by relating his own involvement in a bullying 'joke', played by a group of men, called 'get the parson'. It involved using foul language and blaspheming in the presence of the chaplain to win bets on how long it would take to get him to leave the room.

Lois Bryson says that the navy experienced the scandal and distress associated with the inquiry as something positive. It adapted its discipline, culture and resources to confront the problems brought upon it by inappropriate expectations arising from outdated traditions. In other words, the navy used the cause of the infection to defeat it. —Moira Rayner ■

From p32

created a century after Ormond was established as a residential hall for University men. When Ormond opened its doors the only laws prescribing sexual behaviour were criminal, or matrimonial, laws which were interpreted and enforced by men in a society which certainly treated women as lesser in status. Sexual harassment in the 1990s is not a crime which is punished by the state. Sexual harassment procedures are a new remedy initiated by an individual making a complaint, derived from a law which acknowledges that someone can be harmed because of attitudes within groups towards other groups.

Like a sackful of electric eels, 'sexual harassment' is hard to grasp because it is not, intrinsically, a precise definition. It is a test, or a standard used to assess conduct, *in a context*, in a continuum ranging from a 'hostile atmosphere', through to

personal or targeted jokes, games, suggestions, touching—the final cause of the majority of complaints—and at the end of the spectrum, sexual threats, assaults or blackmail. Oddly, very few complaints are made at this end, though the conduct is easiest to identify: arguably, this is because the victims either choose to use the criminal law, or are too damaged to do anything but retreat. The whole continuum is 'sexual harassment', but it does not require a standard response, or even a punitive one: the primary remedy, conciliation, leaves all options open.

I have found that those who are accused of harassing are as angry and upset as the people who complain. Each has been challenged in their roles as men, as women, as people of worth. This anger goes very deep, which makes it hard to reach an understanding that there might have been misunderstandings, or misuse of power. It is easier and more com-

forting to be self-righteous. Conciliation is only possible if there can be a degree of privacy, some kind of basis of guarded trust and good will. Within a hierarchical structure, it is crucial that the resolution procedure and the values underlying have the support of those in authority.

Garner seems, in her final analysis, to conclude that those feminists—and there are ten thousand varieties of feminism—who call on the structures of masculine authority somehow institutionalise outmoded perceptions of women's powerlessness. But on my analysis and experience, trying to resolve discrimination issues without the backing of authority is worse than useless: you have to *grab* a bully's attention, the more so if he does not realise he *is* a bully.

HARASSMENT WHICH IS TOLERATED does not stop, and is likely to get worse; women who complain or

confront those whose behaviour offends them are highly likely to be retaliated against, often by their peers, who perceive their objections going outside the group as disloyalty. They are shunned, as Garner was shunned, because they have brought shame to the group. There is a lot of shame in the book.

Helen Garner does not deal fully with the complexity of these issues, though they go to the heart of both that primary question: why did the women go to the police? and her complaint: why wouldn't they explain themselves to her?

She does, however, document the masculinist culture of Ormond; its student initiations and social mores; its muscular environment; its consciousness of a grand colonial past. She finds a college which has been co-educational for 20 years but which still sees itself in a masculine, academic, British collegiate tradition.

What effect this might have had on the relationships between women and men in the College before the fatal Smoko night, on the probability of upsetting events, and how they might have been experienced, remembered, or responded to; and how it might have affected trust, is not resolved. Yet it seems to me a crucial and underplayed factor in the drama, not reflected in the judgment Garner makes, that the women 'dealt with' the Master in a priggish, pitiless and unforgiving way. This she apparently believed—on the evidence of her letter—before she knew anything about the case. There is a telling remark, early in the third chapter, as she watches the young women students mill about after the Master's acquittal, outside the court: 'For the first time', she says, 'I felt sorry for the two students.'

We women are hard on one another, as if we had licence to criticise the conduct of other women because we are women ourselves. As a defence lawyer I would make certain I had no women on a rape trial jury. As a woman, however, I haven't forgotten how it was, when I was 19 or 20. I was no more able then than I am now to respond to a 'grope' with a heel to the instep or a knee in the balls, as Garner tentatively suggested in her *Four Corners* interview. I would be even more reluctant now

that I know how direct action works. About 20 years ago, I cooled off a persistent *frotteur* in a crowded nightclub bar by pouring a glass of cold water over him. I had to be whisked out by friends as the club erupted into a riot after he tried to attack me. Should we expect women of our daughters' age to be wiser and braver than we were at that age? Have they any more reason to believe that they will be believed, supported, vindicated than we did?

Finally, Garner asks—as she had not asked when she wrote her letter—what 'the women' would say, about their decision to go to the police. (Why, I wonder, doesn't she ask the police why they decided to prosecute?) She is incredulous, hurt and finally furious that they will not tell her. She attributes to them, by

default, the justifications of the 'angry feminists' who stand between her and her quarry. There is another valid reason why they might have chosen not to testify again. Many of Helen Garner's generation have found themselves translated into the material of her novels, some flatteringly, some not.

But surely it is reasonable to choose, if you wish, not to be someone's 'material'? If people have any human rights at all, one is the right to privacy, to close the door on the face of the judgment of the world. ■

Maira Rayner was formerly Victorian Commissioner for Equal Opportunity. She is now a part-time commissioner of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

BOOKS: I

MICHAEL MCGRAW

Inside out

Letter to my daughter, Graham Little, Text Publishing, Melbourne, 1995. ISBN 1 875847 07 3 RRP \$24.95

LETTER TO MY DAUGHTER is a deceptively sweet title. The daughter to whom Graham Little addresses the story of his own childhood is mentioned a few times throughout the book, but she only emerges from the shadows in the last paragraph. Looking back towards Australia from a long delayed return trip to Northern Ireland, Little is glad that the daughter who spends so much time in the surf 'will still come for a walk with her Belfast-born dad on those nights when the streets are wet and there's a cold wind cutting across Princes Park in what we once called sunny Australia.'

Little's prose is reserved and unostentatious. His memories are hedged by all kinds of clutter: the names of schoolfriends, the tonnage of ships, the details of films and

Biggles' books, the way people pronounced words. These details work better than all the theory in the world to explain what it means to be relocated as a child from Belfast to England and then to Australia. But Little is not writing on behalf of a migrant generation. He is writing solely on his own account. You don't have to wait for the last sentence of the book to notice the vulnerability whistling through his words.

The figure that dominates *Letter to my daughter* is, ironically, Little's own father. In Ireland Frank Little was an insurance salesman and in London the proprietor of a club, but, much like the characters in Dennis Potter's *Pennies from Heaven* or *The Singing Detective*, you can make believe that he had been denied his calling to

showbusiness. Frank Little was only comfortable in public. His family 'bored him precisely because we weren't strangers to present to.' He brought an *Encyclopaedia Britannica* salesman to the house. 'We ended up with a set of the *Encyclopaedia*, which we returned inside the due date for a refund, and the poor man left with a hefty policy on his life that he couldn't return.' In strife-torn Belfast, he gained the confidence of a Catholic family by kneeling with them through their rosary. In charge of the club, he was a performer, 'as alert as the producer of any stage show.'

Frank Little's opportunism is in evidence when he accompanies the real Bud Abbott to a cricket game and, to please the crowd, is required to impersonate Lou Costello and sign autographs. Abbott agrees to try his hand in the centre and pleases the crowd by his ineptitude at the English game; Frank Little nearly gives his game away by being too good at it. The boy is humiliated. Years later, Little's last sighting of his father is 'on a ship preparing to cross the Tasman to a kind of freedom he seemed to long for.' Little never wonders aloud why he should have been cast as no more than a bit part in his father's idea of freedom.

In *Friendship: being ourselves with others*, Graham Little remarks that 'each day people essay themselves with others, as Montaigne did, not only in a book but up the bush or at the beach. Every essay in being oneself is a significant basis for hope not only for the individual but for society.' *Letter to my daughter* is an essay, an attempt to hold together all the unruly experiences that finally create an adult and a father. In attempting to be himself with readers, Graham Little has drawn from the rag-and-bone-shop of his heart a rich and friendly book. ■

Michael McGirr SJ is the consulting editor of *Eureka Street*.



Vatican futures

The Next Pope: An Inquiry, Peter Hebblethwaite, Fount, London 1995. ISBN 006278310 RRP \$14.95.

PETER HEBBLETHWAITE does not predict who will be the next pope, though he indicates his preferred candidate. Nor does *The Next Pope* assume the imminent demise of John Paul II. It simply argues from what was obvious to anyone who saw the Pope at close hand during his visit to Australia in January: John Paul is showing the effects of long-term overwork and constant travel, and clearly his health is not good.

Although the Pope himself seems determined to push on to the turn of the millennium, if God and his health permit (Hebblethwaite excludes the possibility of resignation), all the signs are that the church in general—and the Roman Curia, especially—has begun thinking about the next pontificate. Though of course, no important ecclesiastic would admit this publicly. So what does the future hold for the papacy, and what will the next pope be like?

Hebblethwaite answers these questions by looking at the conclaves of the past 200 years. He explains the complex process by which the cardinal electors might reach a decision, and outlines Paul VI's important reform of the electoral rules, including the exclusion of cardinals over 80 years of age.

The figure of Pope John Paul II, born Karol Wojtyła, dominates the book. Hebblethwaite points out how idiosyncratic the Wojtyła pontificate has been. In an overly-long chapter he explains the Pope's oddly Eurocentric vision, based on a notion of the spiritual unity of Europe from the Urals to the Atlantic. Hebblethwaite highlights the Pope's 'Polishness', his deep sense of mission, his conviction that he is especially protected by Our Lady of Fatima, and his determination to impose his own vision on the church. Hebblethwaite could have added the Pope's enormous influence on the media and, through modern communications, his ability to maintain a highly centralised papacy. On a

recent visit to Rome, one experienced Australian cleric also referred to Pope Wojtyła's pontificate as 'the pontificate of the Catholic sects'—Opus Dei, Communion and Liberation, the Neo-Catechumenate.

Hebblethwaite argues that the lesson to be learned from the pontificate is that the church now needs a reconciling leader, someone from the middle ground, a genuinely international pope. It seems odd to say that when John Paul has travelled so far and met so many. But he has always taken his own theocratic vision of the church with him. There has been little time for local voices and no tolerance of dissent.

THE *NEXT POPE*, HOWEVER, remains an optimistic book. Hebblethwaite emphasises that despite the length of this pontificate and the fact that most of the cardinals are, literally, the present Pope's creations, the moment he dies they become their own men, free to bring to bear their own ideas and priorities. They will not be mere clones of Pope Wojtyła. So which of them are electable?

Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, a Jesuit biblical scholar who is Archbishop of Milan, is the favourite of the Italian (and, increasingly, the English-speaking) press, and of those with a more open vision of the church. But powerful forces will be arrayed against him. Hebblethwaite thinks that Cardinal Josef Ratzinger, the hardliner who heads the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, is not electable, and neither is the Dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal Bernardin Gantin. He describes Cardinal Antonio Sodano, who visited Sydney with the Pope, as 'the most limited Secretary of State in the 20th century': the conservative Sodano is a hatchet man with a foul temper. Among other Europeans, Hebblethwaite describes Cardinal Godfried Daneels, the Archbishop of Brussels-Malines, as a 'good theologian' who is 'refreshingly

blunt', though he lacks human warmth and has the reputation of being a 'loner'. Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, the Archbishop of Paris, could be considered a candidate of the charismatic movements, but his vision of ministry reflects the spirituality of 17th century France rather than the needs of the contemporary world.

Hebblethwaite thinks that a Latin American might be electable, but excludes all the individuals he considers. The Brazilian cardinals who have supported liberation theology and the ecclesial base communities, Paulo Aváristo Arns and Aloisio Lorscheider, are said to be 'bullied, brow-beaten and too old'.

A possible candidate from the right is Cardinal Lopez Trujillo, a reactionary from Colombia, but his unscrupulous political behaviour would probably render him unelectable. The only North American mentioned as a possibility in *The Next Pope* is Cardinal Roger

Mahoney, of Los Angeles.

If Hebblethwaite were to put his money on anyone, should a conclave be held in the next 12 months, it would be Cardinal Achille Silvestrini. A broadly cultured diplomat who was a friend of the late Federico Fellini, Silvestrini is a 'Paul VI man'. He has been a cardinal since 1988 and is now Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. Silvestrini and Martini are the only Italian cardinals who have remained untainted by their country's corruption scandals and the political consequences for the former Christian Democrats.

The Next Pope is an interesting work by a man who, at the time of his death in December last year, probably knew the Vatican scene better than any journalist in the English-speaking world. Inevitably, it is a tract for the time. And time will tell how accurate it is. ■

Paul Collins MSC is a broadcaster and writer.

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BOOKS: 3

JAMES GRIFFIN

Righting things

Retreat from Injustice: Human Rights in Australian Law,
Nicholas O'Neill and Robin Handley, The Federation Press, Leichhardt, NSW, 1995.
ISBN 1 86287 121 3 RRP \$55.00

ALAYMAN MAY LOOK at a lawyer especially when the title of his book is so socially cheery and the opening sentence as declamatory as: 'Human rights is an idea whose time has finally come in Australia'.

Readers will have to consult the legal journals for an authoritatively detailed critique but the book's scope, lucidity, attention to evidence, indices of case and statutory references and careful footnoting should make it an invaluable text not just for the students at whom I assume it is primarily aimed but for commentators on politics and civil liberties.

To test O'Neill's manifesto (he is the senior author, responsible for all but three of the 25 chapters) his book can be compared with that justly

praised commentary of 1966, *Freedom in Australia* by Enid Campbell and Harry Whitmore.

As well as updating in a more systematic way developments in constitutional law and in the basic freedoms of the individual and of association, assembly and speech, expanding areas of law (which, naturally enough, were only intimated in the earlier work) are here explored at some length.

One chapter specifically deals with the protection of human rights issuing from the signing of international covenants.

The index has 14 references to women's issues where earlier there was one only—on women's employment. There are four chapters on Aborigines and the law where one

previously seemed to suffice and a complete chapter now on immigrants and refugees.

O'Neill is currently Acting President of the Guardianship Board of NSW and was formerly an executive member of the Civil Liberties Council of NSW. He approves of judges taking up 'the challenge laid down by Brennan J and other judges of the High Court to move continuously but effectively to bring the common law more into line with international human rights norms and contemporary notions of justice and human rights', and favours progress towards a Bill of Rights. ■

James Griffin is a Canberra writer and historian.

Intimations of mortality

The Trap, by James Goldsmith, MacMillan, 1994. ISBN 0 333 64224 4

The Camp of the Saints, by Jean Raspail, Social Contract Press, 1994. ISBN 1 881780 07 4

The great divisions among humankind will be cultural, our Western culture being but one among many. We should be prepared to find it either rejected, or else ingested and excreted, by most of the non-Western societies that we are trying to woo. Consumerism, and information superhighways, are not going to dissipate long-standing social, historical and religious traditions. The rise of nationalism, the return of religion as a potent socio-political force, and fundamentalism, are ways of preserving or redefining identity, in order to avoid being swallowed up in the one-world-one-market dream of Western multinationals and entertainment industries.

The wars that have racked Europe, involving in some cases the rest of the world, have hitherto been European civil wars, with this century's two world wars and the Cold War being prime examples. Even the ideological conflicts after the French and Russian revolutions, including the anti-Fascist War, have been European-sourced. Earlier, they took the form of struggles among Europeans for hegemony over Europe, or for colonies and markets elsewhere.


Huntington thinks this period is now over and new players are emerging, powered by different cultural and political concerns as well as by economic motives: the Sino-Buddhist (or is it Confucian?) realm, the Japanese, the Islamic—even a militant Hindu India may soon play its own hand. The division between the First, Second and Third Worlds is now unhelpful and it is a matter of the West versus the Rest, with a new version of balance-of-power politics.

Last year Robert Kaplan wrote in the *Atlantic Monthly* of the coming world anarchy, with countries collapsing under the tidal flow of refugees escaping from environmental disaster. More and more 'nations' are becoming basket cases, as populations explode and fragile environments are destroyed. Former colonies with arbitrary frontiers are going to be especially prone to wars that will be fought over scarce resources, including water.

Violent conflict may simultaneously be international war, civil war and crime, as armed bands of stateless marauders clash with the private security forces of the élite. Recent events in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and the Sudan are just the start. Developing countries with resources, such as Angola or the Congo, will not benefit from them but will be preyed upon by powerful outsiders who back tribes or military factions so as to destabilise the nation concerned, as a preliminary to looting. Some things haven't changed since the British moved on India.

BUT OTHER THINGS HAVE. The desperate condition of more and more nations on the margin, due to their population-environmental imbalance, is new. Kaplan suggests that a new kind of frontier, a wall against disease, will have to be erected. The rich countries will quarantine the rest, leaving them to fight or expire.

Paul Kennedy has just followed this, also in the *Atlantic Monthly*, with a different version of the West versus the Rest, whereby the dispossessed are already migrating by the



NOW THAT WAR BETWEEN the superpowers has receded into the region of the implausible—or for some, the regretted might-have-been—the great game of geopolitics has returned. It beats *Dungeons and Dragons* or role-playing by a mile. Most strategic thinkers have never renounced the image of the world as a place of permanent conflict, and a whole new series of gloomy, if not apocalyptic, visions is vying for our attention. Nostradamus and the Delphic Oracle are back in town.

After a false start by Fukuyama with *The End of History*, another American, Samuel Huntington, has announced the future as the clash of civilisations, neither ideological nor economic in character. Some nation states are going to remain powerful, but as the leaders or standard bearers of particular civilisations.

The rise of nationalism, the return of religion as a potent socio-political force, and fundamentalism, are ways of preserving or redefining identity

millions to the planet's wealthy regions. Perhaps land frontiers can be barred, but armadas of boat people? Kennedy draws on *The Camp of the Saints*, by the Frenchman Jean Raspail, for many of his arguments. Raspail tells a bitter, compelling story of how first France, then the rest of Western Europe and finally Russia surrender before the incursion of millions of unarmed self-proclaimed refugees from Africa and Asia. 'Surrender', because these European nations are guilt-ridden and seeking to buy peace, and time, at any price. A bit like the first fall of France.

Raspail's book, a European best-seller in 1973, was ignored in Australia. Long out of print, it has been reissued with a new introduction. Kennedy doesn't follow the novel's terminal direction and tragic *dénouement*, nor take issue with those whom Raspail would call 'the bleeding hearts' and Trojan horses of the West who make it all possible, i.e. the sharers in the liberal culture. Nor is he a prisoner of the fierce hatred and cultural phobias *vis à vis* 'the others' that Raspail conveys through his narrator, the last patriotic Frenchman standing. Instead Kennedy urges an enormous Western aid effort, a transfer of resources to the troubled countries, so as to persuade the locals to stay at home and repair their countries. This strategy has been tried and seems prone to failure. But it buys time, and a better conscience for the donors—who seem to think they need one. But if it fails again, we face some big decisions.

Both the Kaplan and the Kennedy-Raspail processes might be classified as symptoms, albeit gigantic, rather than causes. A greenie would point out some of the causal and predisposing factors—population explosions, destruction of the environment, and the often baneful and self-interested interventions of the rich countries among the poor. GATT's level playing fields, the black hole of Third World debt, and the endless supply of arms to poor countries and élites who simply can't cope, are bringing the Third World crisis to the boil.

After a 'phenomenally success-

ful business career', James Goldsmith went into politics 'to publicise the pressing issues threatening our society'. Last year he co-founded a new political movement, *L'Autre Europe*, and was elected a French member of the European Parliament. His party campaigned against Maastricht and GATT, and he now leads the group in the European parliament. His book, a widely influential best-seller in Europe, eventually obtained an English translation and publisher. Strangely, it is not being generally distributed in Australia.

Goldsmith gives three specific examples of how we have, (as he puts it), profoundly destroyed our social stability by using ill-conceived modern economic tools. He targets global free trade, intensive agriculture, and nuclear energy—all pure products of the Enlightenment, and as such venerated by modern conventional wisdom.

THE WORSHIP OF GROWTH, and that bizarre construct, GNP, has led to counting and measuring without understanding the implications. Thus in France over the past twenty years GNP has grown by 80 per cent—quite remarkable. But unemployment has risen from 420,000 to 5.1 million (official figures say 3.3 million, but the government's own statistics show that various categories consisting of 1.8 million people have been omitted). In Britain, GNP rose by 97 per cent between 1961 and 1991, while those living in poverty went from 5.3 million to 11.4 million. The US turns up similar figures. With everyone faking their unemployment statistics, as we do in Australia, 'growth' does not entail a general increase in well-being or social stability.

Global free trade, whose aim is to create a world-wide market in products, services, capital and labour, whose present instrument is GATT, complemented by APEC and NAFTA, will if implemented, 'impoverish and destabilise the industrialised world, while at the same time cruelly ravaging the Third World'. The concepts of specialisation and comparative advantage, which have underpinned free-trade doctrine since Ricardo, worked up to a point,

though there were many casualties on the way. That is, nations should abandon certain industries and develop those where they have the greatest comparative advantage. International trade would grow as nations export their surpluses and import the products they no longer manufacture; efficiency and productivity would increase in line with economies of scale, and prosperity would advance. These ideas are obsolete in today's world.

Within a few years, 4 billion people have entered the world economy. They include China, India, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Indonesia and the former Soviet empire. Most of these countries already have high unemployment rates but, as their agriculture moves from a subsistence model to a mechanised western model, rural unemployment will soar and a flight to the cities will begin. As Goldsmith says, if China moves to Western techniques 200 million farm workers will be made redundant. And as the vogue for privatisation and cost-cutting catches on, high urban unemployment rates will follow.

As to comparative advantage, 47 Vietnamese or 47 Filipinos can be employed for the cost of one person in a developed country, such as France. Technology can be transferred instantaneously anywhere in the world on microchip, capital can be invested wherever the expected yields are highest.

Enterprises will arise in Vietnam or China, for example, that are very similar to those we have in Europe, Australia and the United States.

Often they will make the same product for the same markets, using identical technologies and with access to the same pool of international capital.

*GATT represents
200 global
multinationals, who
have no time for
national boundaries
or local allegiances,
for unions or
minimum wages.
And the IMF has
been holding up a
small but vital loan
to Yeltsin because
he is not pushing
economic 'reform'
quickly enough. His
latest budget had a
provision for a
minimum wage for
all Russians—and
that will have to go.*

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But the Vietnamese can employ forty-seven people, the French only one. You know who will be the winner.

Goldsmith estimates that in most developed countries the cost to an average manufacturing company of paying its workforce is an amount equal to between 20 and 25 per cent of sales. If such a company retains only its head office at home, while moving production to a low-cost area, it will save about 20 per cent of sales volume. Thus a company with sales of \$500 million could increase pre-tax profits by up to \$100 million a year. If it decides to stay at home, the enterprise will be unable to compete with low-cost imports and will perish.

Goldsmith concludes that it must surely be a mistake to adopt an economic policy that makes you rich if you eliminate your national workforce and transfer production abroad, and which bankrupts you if you continue to employ your own people.

His recipe for Europe, and for anyone with any patriotism or survival instinct, is to use tariff walls to account for the cheap labour components of foreign imports. If outsiders want to trade with you, let them establish plants in Europe and employ Europeans at European wages. In the past the US has required Japan to do this.

It is the élites of the world who benefit from free trade, says Goldsmith, not the people. Thus in Europe it is the 17 unelected commissioners of the European Union who call the shots, backed by the German élites who have globalist ambitions. The outgoing head of the EU commission, Jacques Delors, says that within a few years 80 per cent of all significant decisions will be taken by Brussels. Goldsmith calls for sweeping reforms in the direction of general devolution.

GATT represents 200 global multinationals, who have no time for national boundaries or local allegiances, for unions or minimum wages. And the IMF has been holding up a small but vital loan to Yeltsin because he is not pushing economic 'reform' quickly enough. His latest budget had a provision for a minimum wage for all Russians—

and that will have to go.

Goldsmith, who is an apocalyptic greenie, has some chilling chapters on the kind of genetically engineered food being produced by agro-business, and the unforeseen and unforeseeable diseases that are starting to emerge as a result of our perversion of nature. His chapter on the total undesirability of nuclear power, and the faking of comparative energy costs, convinced me.

He would regard Kennedy and Kaplan's analyses as directly relevant, Huntington's as evading all the important problems. He thinks allowing millions of migrants won't help the four billion—soon to become six or eight—but it will mightily depress living standards in their host countries. The former must be allowed to tackle their own problems, for we have lost all moral authority to tell them how they should run their societies. We should start fixing up our own, before it is too late.

Goldsmith's book should be made generally available here, as should the other contributions I have outlined. They are more important than our debates over the republic, or even Bob and Blanche's Mills and Boonery. ■

Max Teichmann is a Melbourne writer and reviewer.

Other references: 'The Clash of Civilisations', Samuel P. Huntington, *Foreign Affairs* vol. 72, no. 3, 1993. 'If Not Civilisations, What? Paradigms of the post-Cold War World', Samuel P. Huntington, *Foreign Affairs* vol. 72, no. 5. 'The Coming Anarchy', Robert Kaplan, *Atlantic Monthly*, February 1994. 'Must It Be the Rest Against the West?' Paul Kennedy and Mathew Connolly, *Atlantic Monthly*, November 1994.

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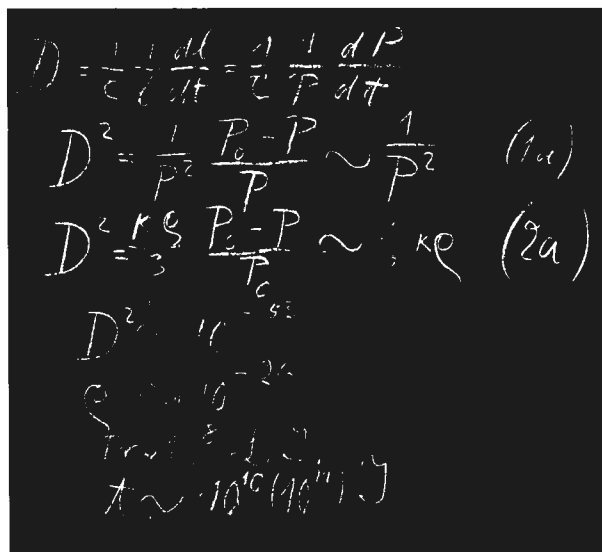
*He can't give you the world,
but he can show you a very
attractive corner of it.*

Economics as physics envy

THERE IS SOMETHING rotten in the state of economics. This is not news. After a decade in which politics has effectively been reduced to claims about economic performance, and during which most of the economists' claims have proven unfounded, widespread disillusionment is hardly surprising.

Precisely where the problem lies remains a matter of contention. Is it in the 'greed is good' attitudes which reduce the complexities of social life to an economic contest? Is it in the policies of 'economic rationalism' which have placed unwarranted faith in the functioning of the capitalist market economy? Is it the underlying economic theories which fail to come to grips with how the economic system actually functions? Or all of the above?

The attempt to demonstrate that the roots of the problem lie in the realm of economic theory—and particularly in the dominant neo-classical theory of efficient markets—is of long standing. It is over two decades since American political economist J. K. Galbraith made his observation that 'I would judge as well as hope that the present attack on neo-classical economics will prove decisive'. Galbraith was wrong. In the last two decades the influence of neo-classical economic theory—in the vulgarised form known as 'economic rationalism'—has become yet more pervasive. The late 1980s were its high-water mark. Politicians and their economic advisors soothingly reassured us that free market economics would produce beneficial outcomes while, in reality, corporate cowboys redirected investment from productive to speculative purposes, fuelling rampant asset price inflation and regressive income redistribution. The nadir was 'the recession we had to have'.



Tumbling Dice: the Story of Modern Economic Policy,
Brian Toohey,
William Heinemann, Port
Melbourne, 1994. ISBN 0855616008
RRP \$24.95

The last few years have seen a flurry of new books with titles like *The Trouble with Economic Rationalism*; *Shutdown: the Failure of Economic Rationalism*; *Economic Rationalism in Canberra*; *The Lie of the Level Playing Field* and *Beyond the Market: Alternatives to Economic Rationalism*. Now journalist Brian Toohey who, with Ken Davidson, has been one of the few journalists not to be sucked in to an acceptance of the prevailing economic orthodoxies of the last decade, makes his contribution.

AND WHAT A CONTRIBUTION it is! It is simultaneously the most academic and most readable contribution to the critique of economic ideology. It is scholarly yet caustic. It ranges from reflections on the history of economic ideas and observations about the relationship between economic theory and the physical sciences to a damning critique of contemporary Australian economic policy and the role of the media in buttressing the biases.

Perhaps what is most distinctive

about Toohey's analysis is the focus on the development and influence of a particularly mechanistic view of economic issues. This is economics as 'physics envy'. Newtonian physics, with its emphasis on the laws governing the interaction of matter, comes to be applied to social phenomena. 'Rational economics men' (and women too) pursuing their self-interest in a competitive market environment ensure that the society's resources are optimally allocated,

given the prevailing pattern of consumer tastes and the existing state of technology. So the theory runs. And if the real world doesn't quite seem to work that way, then the role of policy-makers is to change the real world so that it more closely approximates the textbook ideal. Hence the policies of deregulation, privatisation, tariff cuts and the pursuit of a 'level playing field'. Thus, the mechanistic model has its practical manifestation in the libertarian economics of the 'new right' and the policies of so called 'economic rationalism'.

Toohey takes us on an extended tour through the development of these ideas in economics, including the marginalist 'revolution' which ushered in the neo-classical theory, the most abstract expression of 'physics envy'. This theory has also a pervasive influence on the construction of econometric models, such as that which the Industry Commission uses to come to its predictably 'economic rationalist' pronouncements on policy issues. To be consistent, the Industry Commission should recommend its own disbandment, or at least its own privatisation. But, as Toohey wryly observes, the Commission is 'not coy about appealing for further government funding ... despite the preference for others having to respond to a market-

'What is most distinctive about Toohey's analysis is the focus on the development and influence of a particularly mechanistic view of economics. This is economics as 'physics envy'.

Photograph above left: the real thing—Einstein's blackboard used at the second of his three lectures on relativity given at Oxford in 1931.

based price signal'.

Whatever happened to the more 'interventionist' Keynesian economics? Toohey documents the effects of the monetarist assault and the subsequent influence of 'new classical economics' in reasserting the case for laissez-faire. Quite why such simplistic notions should have been so influential requires explanation. Probably more attention needs to be accorded to the big bad bogeymen of Marxist economics, for so long both the main contender in explaining how capitalism works and in posing an alternative. Economics has been required to serve as cold-war ideology as well as a means of understanding the real world.

In practice, the Australian economic policy mix has also been shaped by the institutional context. The Treasury ('masters of fiscal discipline') is the key player in what Toohey calls the 'official family' of economic policy formulation. It bears primary responsibility for the view that there are 'intrinsic benefits' in reducing the size of the public sector. The Reserve Bank ignoring that part of its charter which stresses the goal of full employment, has simultaneously emphasised control of inflation (with 'six strokes of the interest rate' cane). The social disaster of widespread unemployment is hardly surprising in these circumstances.

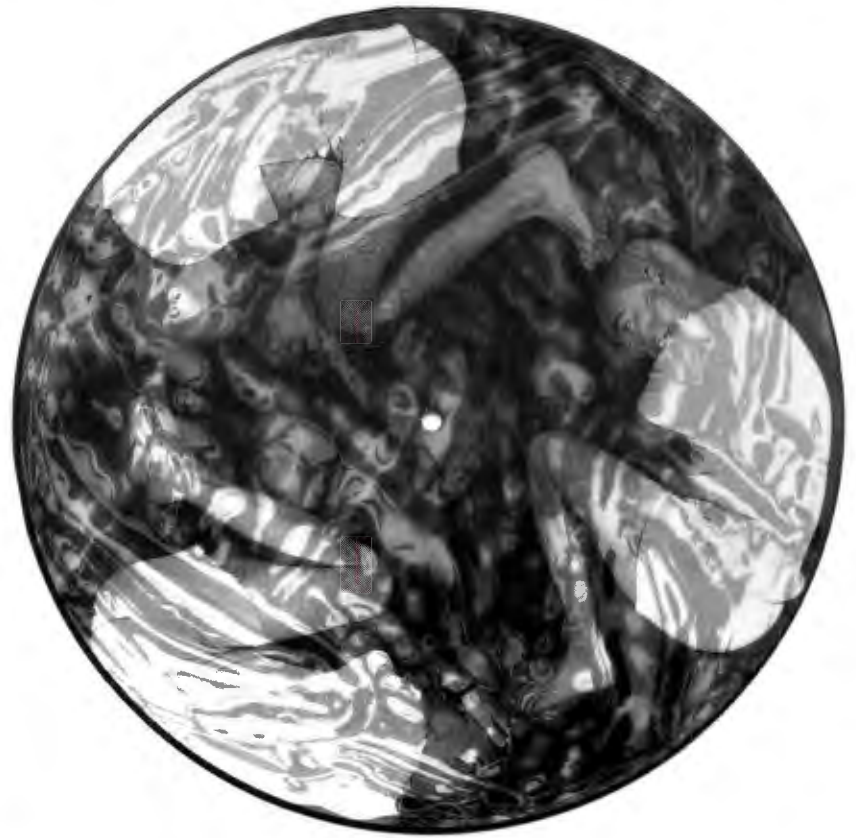
Toohey's analysis is iconoclastic rather than reformist. His concern is not to posit a clearly identifiable alternative to the dominant orthodoxies. Rather, it is to debunk the mythology surrounding economics and economic policy, to reveal that the Emperor has no clothes. In the closing chapter there is an interesting discussion of what economics might learn from modern science. This requires 'living in a non-linear world' with recognition of 'the role of memory, learning, novelty and uncertainty in ways that break free of an old-style determinism'. Quite what would be the implications of this for economic theory and economic policy remains a tantalising question. ■

Frank Stilwell is Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Sydney.

Endorphin highs

THE VINYL LP IS NOT BLACK. From a short distance it looks like a pond of waterlilies, but closer up, the greens and whites resolve into an image of three white-robed men in foetal curl revolving perpetually in stillness. No label. 'Who made it?' I ask. 'Dunno,' says my instructor. I

waterlily figures spin slowly into a blur and a thumping bass beat pulses out, with eerie interpolations over-tracked. To call it repetitive is like calling the Bayeux Tapestry a long piece of cloth. He shows me more, no longer defensive: the baby-boomer is hooked. Philip Glass, eat your heart



persist. 'You mean, you don't know the musicians who recorded this?' 'That's right,' he says, 'it's a collectors' item. They don't need a label. Anyone would recognise it.' 'But not if they've never heard of them,' I say. 'Look,' he says patiently, 'it's not like that. People who buy these things know the ones they're looking for. The companies that make them are tiny, and none of them make vinyl in Australia any more. Of 500 that get pressed in the UK, perhaps five dribble over here.'

He puts it on the turntable. The

out. This music is not sterile commercial pap, nor is it the charlatany of postmodern academic rag-pickers—it is a virile tradition in the making, healthily subversive, with many branches and offshoots, springing from the grassroots of current urban experience. This is tekno. 'Only nerds spell it with a c-h,' he says.

It is the first popular music form this century in which the European influence has been as strong as the American one. When a German band called Kraftwerk released the numb-

ingly banal *Autobahn* in the late '70s, it was played on a few radio stations and faded away. But a seed had been sown. At the same time, rap was making a beginning in the poorer black streets of east-coast USA. Rap started as a spontaneous street party around a ghetto blaster, accompanied by extempore lyrics chanted in *sprechstimme* monotone to a pulsing beat. Later it settled into something smoother, more melodic, and hip-hop was born. By the early '80s discos were resurrected in Chicago and Detroit, to play 'acid-house'—fusions of rap and R&B. Derrick May was the prime innovator, mixing basic disco beats with weird over-tracks. Discothèques became dancehouses because the beat was so infectious: people had to dance to it.

Meanwhile, over the Atlantic, in Berlin, Doktor Motte, a dancehouse DJ, began to blend the hip-hop beat with the electronic atmospherics of a Kraftwerk. The music became serious, allusive and often hypnotic. 'Sometimes the music dances you,' says my instructor. Doktor Motte is known as the Mozart of tekno, and the comparison has some meaning, if the sense of absolute freedom within a tight form can be seen as the link.

PARTHS BEGAN. DJs were now no longer human stopgaps for introducing music on a radio station: since the days of disco they had become performers in their own right, voicing-over ironic commentary in perfect time, cutting and pasting tracks on the hop, nodding to the beat that only the best of them could keep going without a break as they segued and finessed tracks from vinyl and cassette in and out of the dance. Now they came into their own, creating the music they played as an elongated series of sound collages, speeded up and interpolated with the constant driving beat. DUHduh dada DUHduh, DUHduh dada DUHduh, and infinite variations. The most easily recognisable motif in it was insistent keyboarded triplets over a pounding bass 4/4.

Soon they hoomed, particularly in heavy industrial cities: Berlin, Manchester, Rotterdam, Lyons. Drugs were there, too—speed, ecsta-

sy, LSD. The police were alerted to this and began raiding 'house parties'. Now there is an entire subculture of dance-house undercover cops patrolling the scene, sometimes with too much zeal. It was ever thus: speakeasies were the target seventy years ago. The politics of pleasure, of the experience of ecstatic gathering goes back further, into earliest recorded history. City fathers have always feared and loathed Dionysiacs, Maenads, revellers. There will always be people who seek fusion, ecstasy, oceanic fullness. There will always be those too who would seek to stop them from doing so. And tekno's subversiveness has been recognised—in Britain a law has been passed banning the gathering together of more than 12 people in an environment where there is music playing at more than a certain number of beats per minute. It can focus ugliness and violence: in Rotterdam, heavy metal has been welded to the gentler dance forms to create 'industrial' tekno that attracts vast crowds of soccer hooligans who form a single self-mutilating entity under the influence of various chemicals and the crashing noise.

But the wider reality is of an ecstasy that owes as much to natural endorphins and the excitement of the occasion as it does to artificial stimulants; an expression of a culture that is as underground and alive as anything that the '60s produced. Organisers of tekno parties must often work on a hit-and-run basis, hiring warehouses, deserted factories and the like, passing the word around among devotees, keeping one step ahead of the authorities, who seldom take account of how little actual harm is being done. There are many subspecies of tekno, apart from 'industrial': trance or acidhouse, with a bass melody and trance-like 'head' sounds, and 'jungle'—a form of the music much-beloved of aerobics classes, those hallowed and approved purveyors of the benign and legal endorphin 'high'. But some of the hippies who crowded the rock festivals of the '60s are now busting the danceheads of the '90s. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.* ■

Juliette Hughes is a *Eureka Street* staff writer.

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Made in Australia

TWO SHOWS DOING THE ROUNDS in Melbourne highlight some of the problems of immigration in contemporary Australia. They also demonstrate the very divergent approaches to the portrayal of migration experience in recent Australian drama. The first is billed as the 'Farewell Season' of *Wog-a-rama* (descended from *Wogs Out Of Work*) at the Athenaeum Theatre; the second is a return season of the Melbourne Workers Theatre's *Home of a Stranger*. They could hardly be more different renditions of a similar experience.

Wogs Out Of Work floated rather than burst onto the scene back in 1987, in 'a strictly limited three-week season' for the inaugural Melbourne Comedy Festival. The three weeks have become eight years, and the show has transmuted from an initial three-hander (with Nick Giannopoulos, Simon Palomares and Mary Portesel), through the cult television show *Acropolis Now* to the most recent *Wog-a-rama*. Along the way, it has picked up new writers, performers and ethnicities, Giannopoulos remaining the constant presence throughout. In 1989, there were actually two versions of *Wogs* playing simultaneously in Sydney and Adelaide.

The present show has five performers: Giannopoulos, Mary Coustas (both Greek-Australian), Vince Colosimo (Italian-Australian), Hung Le (Vietnamese-Australian) and Denice Kickett (Aboriginal Australian). Essentially in the tried and trusted sketch-comedy format, the show maintains the broad, satirical, self-deprecating and self-referential—and stereotype-based—humour of its predecessors. And by now it has milked just about all of its possibilities to the nth degree.

Thus we have the macho humour of Giannopoulos as a night-club bouncer (complete with fake muscle-bound chest) and his dumb friend Colosimo who combine racist taunts

with physical aggression to keep Hung Le out; Le wreaks revenge at the end of the sketch when he returns with dozens of his mates. Likewise Mary Coustas as the posh and apparently Anglo Sophia, who discourages a diffident Kickett from touching the frocks in her boutique, only to be revealed at the end as a 'wog' herself.

One-line gags abound. Giannopoulos' prologue—here as a taxi-driver ostensibly seeking out a fare-evader among the audience—involves the familiar ethnic roll-call of the earlier show. He wonders if there are any Greeks or Italians in the audience (stacks of hands go up), Vietnamese (a few), Aborigines (no hands go up) and finally Australians. Welcoming the large number who put their hands up, he says 'Welcome to Australia; one day we'll give it back to you. We'll give you SBS, too; no good to us wogs, we can't read [the sub-titles]!' He then reveals that he is a Serbo-Croatian: 'When I wake up in the morning, I want to kill myself.'

And don't the fans lap it up! Interestingly, however, there are fewer laughs in much of Hung Le's material and hardly any in Denice Kickett's rather truncated version of a slightly bitter monologue in the second half (through no lack of skill on the performers' behalf). Her reference to the women always being at the back in the chorus while the men are up the front of the band does strike a chord, even though she is herself well to the back in the final number, which features Giannopoulos doing a rather tacky version of the song 'Devil in Disguise', substituting the words 'you're a *putana* in disguise'. This show appeals mainly, I suspect, to the mainstream Mediterranean (and male) part of its audience.

For all that, there are one or two really interesting flights of comic fancy in this show. One of them is Mary Coustas' wonderfully drug-crazed throw-back, in the night-club

scene, to the psychedelic '60s (which owes nothing to ethnic stereotyping); another is Hung Le's bizarre sketch in which he masquerades as Con (a pretend Greek) to win the hand of a moustachioed Greek bride, Maria. He is thus crowned with the doubtful sobriquet of 'woginese'; Kickett's character is proudly deemed to be a 'wogorigine' at another point in the show.

It has to be said, of course, that this work has served a higher purpose than the mere celebration (and, to some extent, the prolongation) of racial stereotyping. In reclaiming the 'wog' concept, with its derogatory racist overtone, the aim was to blunt the sticks-and-stones pain inflicted on immigrants by the host culture's vicious verbal tauntings. But too much of the material in this show is now reduced to a cliché of itself.

Home of a Stranger (by Adam Hatzimanolis and Patricia Cornelius) deals with the pain of migration in a very different way and on a very different level. It is set in a classroom in which four nicely differentiated migrants are learning English for various reasons. Mehmet (from Turkey) has been retrenched after 18 years at Ford, and his English classes are a condition of his welfare payments, while Mee Ling (from China) must pass an English test in order to continue her medical studies in an Australian university. Penelope (from Greece) and the Serbian Mira Iovanovic are learning English in an effort to improve their job prospects and more importantly—to make them independent of their faster-learning children, upon whom they still depend even for such simple necessities as doing the shopping.

EVEN THEIR TEACHER, Anna Masters (played by Daniela Farinacci), was born in Italy, as Anna Mastrogianni, but she has worked hard to polish her language and speaks Eng-

lish without a trace of accent. She stresses this as an advantage (obviously enough: as a teacher, she has a position of some 'power') although, as Mehmet points out poignantly at the end of the play, she has actually also lost something.

But her reluctant pupils must also learn to speak English 'in the present tense'; they must leave the baggage of their pasts behind them. 'The war is over', she insists. However, to the uncompromising Mira (in a striking performance by Nadja Kostich) this is manifestly not true, as we are reminded in one of the powerful flashbacks that are seamlessly woven into the text and the performance. Her worst nightmare is of fleeing Mostar with her children across the bombed bridge of that devastated city. All of the characters have memories of the past that simply will not go away; in these moments they tend to revert to their first languages, adding aural richness to the fabric of a densely layered text.

Home of a Stranger is directed by Renato Cuocolo, best-known for his sometimes highly enlightening (if sometimes obscure) adaptations of classical Greek drama for his own company, the Institute for Research into the Art of the Actor. This comes as no surprise; Cuocolo is a migrant himself and has been through the same mill, trying to learn English as a second language and developing a split identity. The hour-length play premièred last year and has been performed by day in workplaces and migrant-English classrooms, and in IRAA's Alphington theatre by night.

The classroom setting in this play might suggest the kind of didacticism often associated with the Melbourne Workers Theatre. There is an element of it here—especially in the 'dance of a multicultural society' song that the teacher sings to quell one of the racial mini-riots that erupt from time to time among her pupils—but it is minimal. What Cuocolo brings to this production is some of the physicality, rhythm and visual stylisation of his IRAA work, as well as a nicely flexible approach to characterisation.

When the teacher reminisces about her own past, for example, Ola Chan and Senol Mat (who play Mee

Ling and Mehmet) meld into characters in her story; this technique is frequently used in a play whose fragmentary, non-linear narrative is thus given luminous clarity. The music composed by veteran MWT musician Irine Vela, who also plays the feisty Greek woman, is another vital element in the play's success: melodies and rhythms accord with the ethnicity of the featured character, but rarely resort to stereotype or musical cliché.

In tackling problems of language, *Home of a Stranger* addresses with gritty realism one of the key issues facing migrant people—the fact that the language of the host country is the language of power—and it does so with great poignancy. But the play does not lack humour. Thus Mehmet's wry observation that, as no one wanted to hear his voice (even in Turkish) throughout his 18 years as a manual labourer, why is his acquisition of perfect English suddenly so fascinating? Likewise, in reply to the question 'How will you buy what you need in the shops, without perfect English?', Mira evinces a humorous response with her eloquently simple routine of pointing at the objects she wants and then at herself.

These laughs are no doubt based on the same principle of self-recognition that is prevalent in *Wogs Out Of Work* and in *Wog-a-rama*, although I believe that what is brought out here is a more ironic (and possibly more painful) sense of recognition than the comfortably self-parodic satire we see in those shows. There is also the matter of performance style. Kostich and Farinacci perform the shopping routine with matter-of-fact simplicity and sincerity; the point is made in a matter of seconds, but with telling effect. By contrast, some of the routines in *Wog-a-rama* are so elaborately built

up that the point behind the gags is blunted.

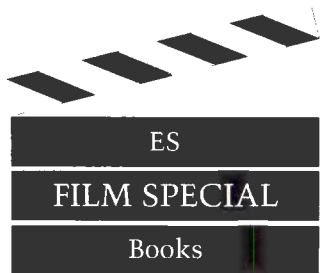
There is actually a lot of pain, as well as humour, in most recent multicultural Australian drama, particularly in those plays in which 'Australianised' second- and third-generation migrant characters return to the 'home country' (Italy, Greece, Latvia or wherever) in search of their roots. I'm thinking of plays like Dina Panozzo's *Varda que brutta... poretta* (1993), Janis Balodis' *No Going Back* (1992), Tes Lyssiotis' *Blood Moon* (1993) or even of Tom Petzinis' *The Drought* (1994). Many of these characters are inclined to draw the conclusion that Australia is actually home, however imperfect a society it may be to live in. Therein lies the drama of migration: the comedy and the tragedy—even the farce. Who's to say they're not all valid forms of expression? ■

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*Hung Le
in Wog-a-rama.*

Photo: Branco Gaica



An amiable life

THE ENGLISH PHILOSOPHER Roger Scruton has a theory that movies aren't real art, and locates one of the effects of this in the supposed fact that people cannot stand to see even their favourite films more than a few times. Well, maybe I'm a little slower than Professor Scruton and his Oxford friends, but I cannot imagine growing sick of the movies of Jean Renoir—*La Règle du Jeu* ('The Rules of the Game', 1939), *La Grande Illusion* (1937), *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* (1935), *Une Partie de Campagne* (1936)—to name a few of the better-known. Scruton's idea is that, unlike real art, movies are merely consumed, rather than lived with. Wrong. These movies you can watch over and over again and, even when you're doing something else, scenes or exchanges or even just bits of soundtrack have a way of popping into your head.

Renoir finds his peers not only among the great filmmakers, Welles and Godard and Von Stroheim, but also among the pantheon of world classics: he is the Shakespeare, Mozart and Flaubert of movies, all rolled into one. Normally there is something a bit embarrassing about the idea of movies as 'art': the idea conjures up chic boredom (Antonioni), sophomoric pessimism (Bergman) or simple bloody-minded aggression towards the audience (Greenaway).

Renoir is never earnest, never pretentious, never disdainful. But audiences did dislike his movies, partly because he was asking them to extend themselves more than they were used to: *The Rules of the Game* is the least dated, the most modern, the most grown-up of any '30s movie, or of any movie. (But if *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife, and Her Lover* is simply ahead of its time, then I'm

Jean Renoir Letters, edited by Lorraine LoBianco and David Thompson, Faber, London 1994.
ISBN 0 571 17298 9, RRP \$50.00

not especially looking forward to the future.)

He seems also to have been, quite simply, a very nice man. We don't expect this nowadays: so normal does it seem to us that great artists should turn out to have been bilious, dishonest, misogynistic, or at any rate to have drunk too much, or have been rude to people at parties, or something. These *Letters* don't do anything to sully the picture of Renoir you get from his memoirs and the various books written about him. The generosity of spirit that shines out from the films seems to have issued direct from his personality: no put-on, no smiling mask to hide the darkness within. These letters may not add up to much in the way of credos: there's no aesthetics, no musings on the art form in the manner of Keats, or Rilke.

But, more fascinating to the film buff than any amount of theorising, there's lots of details of the minutiae of film making: legal wrangles over accusations of plagiarism of *La Grande Illusion*; rows with the studio system when Renoir was working in Hollywood; the logistics of getting Technicolor to India for the making of *The River* and the most haunting and melancholy of all film trivia: unrealised projects (Did you know David O. Selznick wanted Renoir, Capra and Hitchcock to make an omnibus film together? What an advertisement for the superiority of French cinema that would have been!)

It is also a record of profound family love (Renoir had one son, from his first marriage to the actress Cath-

erine Hessling, and in 1938 married again, for keeps, his script girl Dido Freire) and of some very fine friendships: with the screenwriter Dudley Nichols and his wife Esta, Clifford Odets and his wife, Ingrid Bergman and Roberto Rossellini (nothing in this book is more moving than the letters of support from the Renoirs to Bergman when she ran off with Rossellini and brought down on her head everything that is most vile in American attitudes), and with Renoir's spiritual son, Francois Truffaut. (And, by the way, with two very amusing-looking dachshunds.)

The career, like many European filmmakers of his generation, divides into three: pre-Hollywood, Hollywood (he got there in 1941, and the rest of his life he lived in Beverly Hills, though he didn't really work in America after the '40s), and post-Hollywood. In France, he ran the whole show, had his own production company and worked with the same people. He knew filmmaking inside out, as you would if you'd started off with a few friends, teaching yourself the whole thing, making it up as you go along. The result is that nothing in his films is wasted: everything, performances, dialogue, the use of music and editing, all come together seamlessly. Intimacy and spontaneity were his touchstones: 'Always leave a door open on the set,' he used to say, 'so the unexpected can walk in.'

So Hollywood was horrible for him. He loved Americans, loved Roosevelt and the New Deal (loathed both Vichy and de Gaulle), but: 'I am not at all enthusiastic about my work at Fox. For a lazy director it would be ideal. It consists of being seated in an armchair and saying, 'Action!' and



A dog's life: 'It's been so nice working here at 16th Century Fox', Renoir said on his last day of work at the Hollywood studio.

'Cut!' It is useless to tire oneself out trying to present the scenes according to a personal conception, for everything is decided by Zanuck, and when the rushes don't conform to his ideas, he has the scenes reshot.'

For some reason, people often don't recover from this. Some of the post-war work is very good indeed (*The River, Eléna et les hommes*), and he was incapable of making a bad film. But changes in economics and technology made it harder for him to work. He wrote: novels, plays, a terrific memoir of Pierre-Auguste, and the wonderful *My Life and My Films*.

Most importantly of all, perhaps, he acted as the (very) corporeal muse to the New Wave of French filmmakers: Godard, Chabrol, Truffaut. They carried on his tradition of improvisation, of lyricism, of a cinema in touch with, though making no special obeisance to, the mainstream of European literary culture and modern mass culture. (In some cases the genealogy is quite explicit: the premise for Godard's movie *Hail Mary*, which created such a fuss by

setting the story of the birth of Jesus among the contemporary urban poor, was an idea Renoir mentions in one of the letters of the mid '40s).

It is impossible to read this book without feeling simply grateful to it for bringing one into the company—however mediated—of so attractive a personality. He was entirely without envy, without any of the bitterness his various disappointments could so easily have brought in their wake. He was completely without rancour or the desire to lord it over the younger filmmaker who succeeded so brilliantly by realising the principles that brought him such difficulties.

He adored women, but seems not have given his second wife any cause for distress: he was someone for whom being a man did not involve rejecting women, or rejecting the love of men. He was, in short, a completely civilised human being, as well as a great and influential filmmaker. ■

Owen Richardson is a Melbourne reviewer.

A special day for the diary

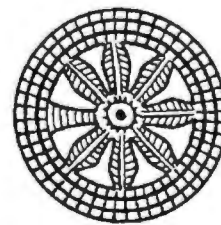
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CONFERENCE

Magic lantern shows

*The films of Ang Lee, especially **The Wedding Banquet** and **Eat Drink Man Woman**, have brought Taiwanese films to the attention of cinemagoers in Australia and other Western countries. **Lang Hsuing**, seen here in triple manifestation (photos courtesy of the actor), who acted in both films, spoke to **Jerry Martinson** about the differences between films made in Taiwan and in the People's Republic of China, and between 'arthouse' films and those made for mass entertainment.*

Martinson: How did you become the person you are now?

Lang: I joined the military when I was very young and began amateur stage acting. I had no professional training but I was chosen for many parts. Soon I started getting lead roles—people liked my acting. Later on I read many books about drama and acting. In those days, to be honest, I didn't like Chinese movies. I felt they were not true to life. Since 1953, I have watched mainly foreign films. Even now, if I have the time, I watch two to three foreign movies a week.

Most of my career has been in TV and stage acting. After I retired from television, the film director Ang Lee asked me to play the part of an old man from mainland China, who went to the United States to live with his son and American daughter-in-law. This was for his movie *Pushing Hands*. We worked very well together and the result was a very good film.

After that, Lee asked me to play the father of a gay Chinese man living in New York in *The Wedding Banquet*. That was followed by my role as the cook in *Eat Drink Man Woman*. Some people say I am very lucky to have gotten three such good roles at this stage of my life. It's like a Second Spring.

Ang Lee's movies show the loveable side of the Chinese to the foreign community. Do you feel his movies can help bridge the gap between Chinese and foreigners?

I do. Movies have gradually become a world-wide language. We see how other people live, eat, are happy, sad, and so forth. We understand that we're all basically the same.



Performance can reveal the interior aspects of a variety of human activities so that all can grasp its meaning. Ang Lee's films are not intended to be blockbusters. He wants to show what happens in Chinese families. Chinese families are deeply concerned with morality. They have accepted many aspects of Western culture which have eroded traditional morality.

What should we Chinese do now? We can't isolate ourselves forever from the rest of the world and cling only to the teachings of our ancestors. We have to accept this deluge of Western culture. Older Chinese have trouble dealing with cultural change.

Little by little, we are discovering that modern Chinese are different from our predecessors. Contemporary Chinese have their own thoughts and ideas, they have self-respect. They are not what you see in the recent films from The People's Republic of China (PRC): miserable, impoverished, oppressed. In our films, we depict the free, prosperous intelligent Chinese. That's what Ang Lee tries to show.

CHRISTOPHER DOYLE, an award-winning Australian cinematographer, has stated that he would not work on an Ang Lee film. He prefers to work for directors like Chen Kaike and Hou Hsiao-hsien. Why?

There is an on-going debate about contemporary films. European films, by and large, are influenced by the *auteur* approach to film making.

The director creates the script, and all the others are instruments who must perform exactly as the director says. The director tells the actors where to stand, what to do, and the cinematographer how to

shoot.

Their sole function is to enable the director to accomplish his or her cherished artistic goal.

The French often criticise their own film industry. They say the Government allocates a lot of money for film directors to play around with, to make their own personal statements. Some directors take a script that was meant to be entertaining and twist it into something they consider art. I believe that if we have to twist something to make it look like art, it probably isn't art. If I am the only one who considers my work artistic, perhaps I need to take a second look!

European countries like Germany, France, and Italy tend to react against Hollywood. Still, Hollywood films are the most popular in the world. Three years ago, a British Finance Minister said that if European films were to last, they would have to learn from Hollywood. I personally believe that much criticism of Hollywood films is 'sour grapes.'

In the United States, it is the system and process of production that is stressed. I prefer that to the *auteur* approach. The best director, the best script writer, the best actors, and the best producers are brought together to form a team. The time and effort that goes into pre-production in American films is well-spent. The script is developed and revised again and again until it is mature. Then, during rehearsals, and on the set, it is further revised according to the performances of the actors.

For instance, the film *Speed* made nearly \$4 million in Taiwan and much more in the U.S. We cannot say this is a mindless production. Many of my friends said they were transfixed during the entire film. It takes great skill and creativity to keep an audience captivated within the confines of a story like that without resorting to sentimentality or violence. Weapons were used only twice in the entire movie. The script obviously went through a long period of development.

I think films should be attractive. So many of our Chinese films are hard to watch. The audience must grit their teeth and they are not sure what the film is trying to say. Look at the mainland Chinese film, *To*

Live. No doubt it is powerful. But it is fragmented ... like a series of vignettes. It is not a unified whole. Once again, it's a film about the Cultural Revolution, displaying the saddest, most painful and tragic period of our history ... the worst and ugliest aspects of our predecessors. They are distorting our history. The Chinese have 5,000 years of wonderful, moving stories to tell. Why don't we share these?

ONCE I ASKED A MAINLAND Chinese film director this question. He answered, 'I am still angry about the Cultural Revolution, and I'm going to keep making films about it.' I guess it affected him too deeply.

Some Taiwanese film makers try to imitate European art films. Take, for instance, the recent award-winning *Vive l'amour* by T'sai Ming-liang. The director had his own idea. He wanted to make something like the French film *Les amants du Ponts Neuf*. But I have been asked many questions about this film. Many moviegoers just don't understand it.

Directors can produce art films for a limited audience, or they can make commercial entertainment films for the general public. Each type fulfils a distinct function. We shouldn't criticise one genre from the point of view of the other. I believe film festivals should place art films in a different category from commercial entertainment films. Forcing them to compete against each other just causes bad feelings.

Some film makers try to combine art and popular entertainment. That is the most challenging.

How do you see the future of Chinese films?

Well, take a look at the three places where Chinese films are produced. Mainland China is still mainly interested in showing the suffering they have been through. That's beginning to get a little old now. Also, they must still work within tight government restrictions. They are not allowed to go against the party line.

Hong Kong films are traditionally full of nonsense and have no content. But after the success of Ang Lee's films, there are indications that Hong Kong has a growing interest in

producing small, meaningful films about life. So far, however, they have not come up with much. Hong Kong lacks a sense of itself as a unified people with a real cultural heritage and common goals.

Taiwanese films tend to focus on human relationships. Our new wave of directors in the past ten years have concentrated on films which exemplify their ideals in life.

These films have won awards, but that's all. If we really want to develop our film industry we have to make commercially successful films which everyone will enjoy and want to see.

If the audience doesn't like our films, they won't take the trouble to go to the theatre. There are too many alternatives. With 50 or 60 channels on cable TV, people can stay home and often see very good films. We need more directors like Ang Lee.

In your opinion, are films like Jang Yimou's To Live and Chen Kaige's Farewell My Concubine too serious to be appreciated by the majority of film goers?

Yes, the themes are too heavy and depressing for most people, although they are very well-produced. They reflect the current mood of mainland Chinese film directors. These directors also know that films like these will cause a stir because the government will condemn them.

Every country has tragic periods in its history, including Taiwan. But that's history. We can't keep going over it again and again. Is that all we have to write about? Aren't there more interesting things to put up on the screen? Of course, mainland Chinese film makers are clever. They understand the foreign audience's morbid curiosity in poor and backward societies. For Westerners, those films are as fascinating as a portrayal of primitive peoples or prehistoric times.

Taiwanese films, however, have another message. They say: 'We are now on a par with Western societies, we have no cultural inferiority complex. We are prosperous.' ■

Jerry Martinson SJ is a television producer and presenter based in Taipei.



Take three

Little Women, dir. Gillian Armstrong (Hoyts). Ninety percent of the audience for this domestic saga spent their childhood loving Louisa May Alcott's 1868 book of the same name. That's why the film was made—the producer, the director, and the star, Winona Ryder are all similarly impassioned. This is much more of a period piece than the 1933 version starring Katharine Hepburn. It is a collection of carefully constructed lovely pictures—from the tons of dirt used to make the streets of modern Victoria (British Columbia) look like nineteenth century Greenwich Village, to the postage stamps and the herbs hanging in the kitchen. The cast are not the least part of this—they share the physical luminosity of Ryder. Even Alcott's homely Professor Bhaer, whom Ryder's character Jo marries, is transformed into 'to die for' status by Gabriel Byrne.

The four March sisters offer something for everyone. Meg (Trini Alvarado) is beautiful, dutiful and marries young. Jo is creative, rebellious and marries a foreigner. Beth (Claire Danes) is saintly, so of course dies young. Amy (played as a child by Kirsten Dunst, and an adult by Samantha Mathis) is vain, selfish and fulfils her childhood ambition to marry into money. And Marmee (Susan Sarandon) is the kind of remarkable mother who can combine extensive good works with effective parenting. Things happen (like Amy burning the manuscript that Jo has been working on for years) that would lead a modern family into group therapy. But the Marches never let the sun go down on their anger. You can tell that *Little Women* is a feminist film, because all the men are kind, supportive yet manly. It could only happen in the movies!

If you like to see young people living creatively, happy family life, and the triumph of true love, then this is a film for you.

—Leonie Purcival

To the dogs

101 Dalmatians (Hoyts). The best thing about *101 Dalmatians* is the baddie. Ten years ago I covered my two-year-old son's eyes, (amid his vehement protests) as Cruella Deville, in her cad's Bentley, chased the truck full of vulnerable anthropomorphs through a hostile landscape. I thought the closeups of her enraged, demoniac face would give him nightmares.

Now she's ba-ack, and a new generation of kindergarten kids will have another evil archetype to focus on. Disney's villains and clowns are always so much more compelling than the goodies, who are all Brady-bunchish and ordinary. Disney wasn't alone in this; Milton had the same little problem in *Paradise Lost*: Satan really cuts it—Adam and God are pompous and humourless.

The same could be said for the milk-and-water goodies in this story, who start us off with some pretty post-*Peter Pan* artwork of cute London middle-class suburbia (even more a fairy tale, I'm afraid). The sentimentalism with the dogs goes beyond nausea to reach a sort of critical mass. It's a test of character really. It takes an iron stomach to sit through the scene where some motherly moocows suckle the pups, grimacing indulgently while their cute little teeth nip too eagerly. Now you're either going to run out screaming 'AARGH!' at this point or you're going to sit with the kids and take it like a man—or whatever. Either way you end up believing that there are worse things to do with 101 dalmatians than make them into a fur coat.

—Juliette Hughes

The hard way

Higher Learning, dir. John Singleton (Hoyts). *Higher Learning* certainly lives up to the standard of John Singleton's first film, the Academy Award-nominated *Boyz N The Hood*. The film follows the lives of three college freshmen as they fight to

find their place at college and struggle with their personal identities, cleverly interweaving a number of prominent social themes of the '90s into the story.

Malik Williams (Omar Epps) is brilliant as the former high school track star trying desperately to come to terms with his identity as a black American. Kristen Conner (Kristy Swanson) is a naïve white girl from Orange County, whose innocence is violently snatched from her, and Remy (Michael Rapaport) is a misfit from the midwest, who finds that the only place he can belong is with a group of skinheads.

Singleton describes *Higher Learning* as being less about a particular college campus than about the larger context of America. 'You have all these different types of people from different races, different cultures, different countries, different sexual orientations living together in one place.'

The film is a realistic portrayal of the issues facing today's generation. It is entertaining and will attract audiences who are prepared to face the reality of life for youth in the '90s.

—Amber Kerwin

Eureka Street

Film Competition

Tell us in 25 words or less what's running through Susan Sarandon's mind, in Gillian Armstrong's *Little Women*, and we'll award two tickets to the film of your choice for the answer we like best. Send entries to: Eureka Street Film Competition, PO Box 553, Richmond 3121. The winner of the March competition was F.G. Elliott of Port Melbourne, Victoria, who thought David Niven would be singing this little ditty to himself: 'I press this little valve down, and the music goes round and round. Ooha, ooha, ooha, and it comes out here.'



Just barely

Just Cause, dir. Arne Glimcher (Greater Union) In a backwoods in the deep south of the US, where 'things are done differently', an educated black man (Blair Underwood) is sentenced to death for the brutal rape and murder of a young white girl. After eight years on death row he persuades an East Coast academic lawyer (Sean Connery), who hasn't practised for twenty-five years, to investigate his case to prove his 'confession' was illegally and violently coerced by the mean local black cop (Laurence Fishburne).

Connery finds himself in a world he doesn't understand, one filled with hatred and an imperfect legal system. The film then twists and turns predictably, suggesting a range of suspects, from the cop to a Lecter-like loon. In the end, intellect and instinct must work together to overcome madness, the true killer.

Unfortunately *Just Cause* is the poor relative to much better films, like Welles's extraordinary *Touch of Evil*. The acting, editing and direction is largely pedestrian, except for the superb performance of Laurence Fishburne. Sadly, he's under-utilised in a film that will quickly go to video.

—Tim Mitchell

Mafia muse

Bullets Over Broadway, dir. Woody Allen (Village). At the start of the film you suspect that you're in for a rework on the old theme of artistic integrity corrupted by unwholesome commercialism. But the twist comes when the commercialism, sinister though it appears, actually enhances the art.

Set in Greenwich village and Broadway of the 1920s, in the world of mobsters and showgirls, a mediocre playwright is offered the chance to direct the performance of his latest work. It turns out that a Mafia heavy has provided the money for the show on the condition that his good-time girlfriend has a part in the production. One of his hit-men accompanies her to rehearsal as a body guard and, though he introduces himself by threatening to punch the playwright's head in, he ends up rewriting the play and turning it into

a smash hit. The result is not only a hilarious clash between the worlds of theatre and sly grog, but an examination of what makes good 'art'.

The performances are the key to the movie. Allen's style of letting the camera run, and his aversion to heavy editing and close-up shots, is an egalitarian approach that allows all the performers to show their wares. Dianne Wiest and Chazz Palminteri's Oscar nominations were well deserved—as was Wiest's win, but nearly any one of the others could have been chosen.

Bullets Over Broadway is a witty comedy which even Allen's detractors might find enjoyable. They'd be relieved at his absence from the cast and a less neurotic tone than some of his previous efforts. Maybe there's a coincidence here.

—Jon Greenaway

UpBeet

Immortal Beloved, dir. Bernard Rose, (Greater Union). In 1801 Beethoven wrote to his publishers: 'Musical politics demands that the best concertos should be withheld from the public for a time.' The maestro with solid and cynical marketing savvy is not the man whose life is remembered in *Immortal Beloved*.

This Beethoven (Gary Oldman) is a man of film-star good looks, who is capable of both extraordinarily destructive, and constructive passion—a bit more like a force of nature than a human being.

The film's tale begins after Beethoven's death, with his youngest brother Johann discovering that he is not to be the maestro's sole beneficiary. Instead, all the money and royalties have been left to a woman described in Beethoven's will only as his 'immortal beloved'. The rest of the film is taken up with the search for the mysterious woman undertaken by Beethoven's protégé, Anton Schindler (Jeroen Krabbe).

Schindler's search leads us through the reminiscences of a full ensemble of lovers, and thus a picture of Beethoven's life emerges: the early unfavourable comparisons with Mozart, the violent family, as well as the man's development into great composer and pianist. But central to the film is Beethoven's personal

decline in the wake of the deafness that accelerated after he turned thirty. From this point Beethoven pulls away from society, and becomes increasingly difficult, accusing family and servants of stealing money and manuscripts, and dismissing lifelong friends on a



whim. He does not, however, stop writing great music.

But, ask the film's makers, how does Beethoven keep 'creating' in the face of such blackness? Without giving away too much of the film's neat resolution, I'd say that Rose tries to humanise Beethoven retrospectively, and argues, unconvincingly, that great music cannot be made without selfless love.

—Catriona Jackson

Highland fling

Rob Roy, dir. Michael Caton-Jones (Hoyts). *Rob Roy* represents a return to his homeland for Scottish director Michael Caton-Jones, best known for his work on the British spy-thriller *Scandal*. Promoted as 'a passionate romantic epic' it has all the usual elements of films that claim epic status: beautiful scenery, (the Scottish Highlands are wonderfully photographed by Karl Walter Lindenlau) a booming soundtrack, and attractive stars. Unfortunately it ends up a bit like *The Last of the Mohicans* in kilts—simply an excuse for Jessica Lange (Mary MacGregor) and Liam Neeson (Rob Roy

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MacGregor) to gaze into each other's eyes.

Neeson lacks charisma as Rob Roy, the good man wronged by the corrupt Marquis of Montrose (John Hurt), and there is little on-screen chemistry between Neeson and Lange. The support cast, which includes Eric Stolz (Alan MacDon-ald) is generally strong, with the highlight of the film a stand-out performance by Tim Roth as the thoroughly despicable Archibald Cunningham.

At 135 minutes, *Rob Roy* is a long film, even by today's standards. But despite the predictable story, it keeps you involved enough for it to be an enjoyable watch. It will undoubtedly be a box office, if not a critical, success. —Tim Stoney

Cliché parfait

Strawberry And Chocolate, dir. Tomas Gutierrez Alea (independent cinemas). This Cuban movie may have won awards, and been nominated for an Oscar, but it's hard to see why. The story concerns itself with stereotypes and drearily correct politics. Diego, the gay artlover, lives in a bower-bird heap of referents toward a nostalgic past and even plays Callas, (opera's Judy Garland) to win the affections of David, the stereotypical young macho revolutionary. To complete the full range of clichés add Nancy, a suicidal tart with a golden heart.

This is an annoying movie. There may well be problems with living in Cuba, but kicking a socialist republic when it's down is a bit too easy these days. And of course we all know that in the West, gays are never discriminated against, people never lose their jobs for political reasons and art is never attacked by philistine critics—or so this movie seems to think. But presumably Cuba is free enough to let Alea criticise the Castro régime in this way.

There may well be much that needs to be said in movie form about political and sexual repression in Cuba, but *Strawberry and Chocolate* doesn't meet the challenge. It's easy to blame Castro for all the problems in Cuba, if one forgets that the alternative might have been 36 years of Batista and the Mafia.

Somehow I couldn't help thinking about that as the thin plot unrolled. Would Diego get to put on a daring exhibition of quasi-religious sculptures or would the censors prevent it? (At the time this was set the Robert Mapplethorpe furore was going on in the land of the free.) Would David get laid? And by whom? That's about it. —Juliette Hughes



Foreign aid

State of Siege, dir. Costa-Gavras ('Movie Legends', SBS TV, 12 May at 9.30pm). This 1973 film is not quite the movie legend that Costa-Gavras' most famous work, *Z* (1969), has become, but in some ways it is more interesting. The two films share an actor, Yves Montand, and a theme—the suppression of dissent by right-wing governments—but the setting has moved from a European country that is clearly Greece under the colonels to a Latin American country that is clearly Uruguay at the time of the Tupamaros urban guerrilla movement, in the early '70s.

Montand plays an American aid worker who is actually a CIA agent; his 'aid' amounts to instructing the police forces of régimes considered favourable to American interests in the finer points of torture and interrogation, and *State of Siege* traces the steps that lead to his kidnapping and execution by young revolutionaries. The indictment of US policy in Latin America at the height of the Cold War is thorough and persuasive, but this film also reveals the growth in fascination with the USA itself that marked Costa-Gavras' later career.

That fascination extended to American cinema as well as American politics, and fans of *Citizen Kane* will find some of the techniques that Welles pioneered in that film replicated in *State of Siege*. The film begins with the death of Montand's character, and the case against him is gradually built up, *Citizen Kane*-style, by a journalist trying to find out who the aid worker 'really' was.

But fear not, there's no irksome 'Rosebud' motif here. Evil is unveiled, and that's it. —Ray Cassin

Rock of ages

IT'S BEEN SAID THAT YOU ARE NOT really famous unless you are known by your first name, like the members of the famous rock 'n' roll band from Liverpool.

The Rolling Stones released their first British single in June 1963. Mick Jagger and Keith Richard, now both 51, Charlie Watts, 58, and Ronnie Wood, 48, are still at it. In 1974 Wood had replaced Mick Taylor, who had joined after Brian Jones died in 1969, aged 27. Bass player Bill Wyman, 59, has retired.

En route to being famous, the Stones' youthful crush on black American music was tempered by playing hundreds of live shows. They first toured Australia in 1965, sharing the bill with Roy Orbison and playing 16 shows in eight days (sometimes an afternoon show and two in the evening.) They played 11 shows in New Zealand in eight days, before returning for another four days and seven gigs in Australia, and one more played in a badminton stadium in Singapore.

This year, the Stones' bigger-than-Ben-Hur visit to Australia began with two chartered 747s, a road crew of 250 and eight supporting musicians. They had a 1.5 million-watt sound system and a light show that could allegedly shine to the Sea of Tranquillity, plus pyrotechnics and huge inflatables of everybody from Shiva to Elvis. This Voodoo Lounge tour will play to 6.1 million people before ending in Europe in August, a year after it began.

The band arrived in Australia amid an outbreak of groove-mania among public figures, especially politicians. Kim Beazley waxed lyrical on the ABC's Radio JJJ about Pearl Jam, and funky Tim Fischer rapped about Silverchair, a teenage rock band from Newcastle, NSW.

The Stones also arrived after an example of rock 'n' roll mayhem, like what used to happen at their concerts. Thousands of kids jumped the fence to see Pearl Jam at Melbourne's Myer Music Bowl and, to paraphrase another Seattle band, Nirvana, it smelt like teen

spirit. (Admission to Pearl Jam was \$35, compared with \$94 or \$66 for the Stones.)

It's best to skip the Stones' only press conference in Australia, where one attendee took it upon himself, on behalf of all present, to thank the band for 32 years of great rock 'n' roll. The four Stones were cheerful and alert, albeit with faces that could double for topographical maps of the Rift Valley. The scenes backstage at their shows may no longer resemble Fellini's *Satyricon*—as one observer of their 1973 Melbourne concert saw it—but it's not Dad's Army, either.

Their first Australian concert was on a clear night before about 55,000 people at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. My friends and I were stiffed on our pre-booked tickets and ended up on the MCG's playing surface, about five rows from the back, but it was better than being outside the stadium.

BEFORE THE CONCERT, everybody seems to be eating Drumstick icecreams. A teenage girl seated directly in front of us is reading a paperback called *The Ghosts Who Went to School*. She was with her family: mum, dad, a somewhat older brother and his mate. The family is busily chewing through several packets of snakes and other assorted lollies.

Two skinny blokes in Mick Jagger masks dance around the strip of grass between the rows of plastic chairs and the grandstands. Finally, a countdown of lights and everybody stands up. The Stones break into an oldie, *Not Fade Away*. I am about five feet 10 inches, and can at least see the stage. Anyone less than five feet six can see bugger all, except the top of the giant video screen.

The Stones play *Tumblin' Dice*, *All Over Now* and *Live With Me*, plus new stuff which stands up OK, like *You Got Me Rockin'* and *Sparks Will Fly*. Uncannily, a cloud of marijuana smoke wafts up immediately after the band launches into *Satisfaction*. The girl in front

wrinkles her nose and blows away the smoke. The crowd sings along: 'I can't get no ... hey, hey, hey ... that's what I say ...'

By now the shorter people are decidedly mutinous. The girl sits down, as do her mum and dad. Others squeeze across to the aisles, getting a better view but having to stand their ground with security guards over the course of the evening.

The Stones play some acoustic numbers, such as *Sweet Virginia* and *Angie*. Three average newish songs follow, before *Miss You* and *Honky Tonk Woman*. Keith sings two ho-hum songs, instead of his signature tune *Happy*, and some of the audience take a toilet break.

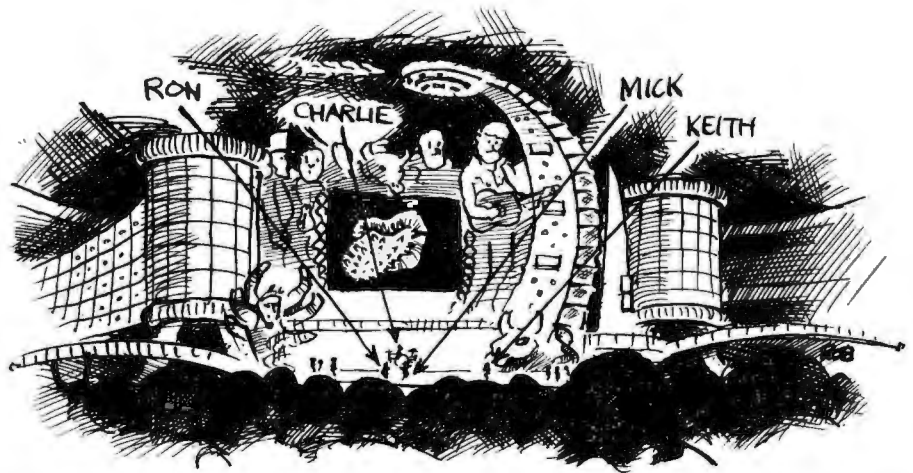
Sympathy for the Devil is greeted by another gust of marijuana. The band kicks into *Start Me Up*, and the girl in front finally stands on her chair, resting her arms on her mum and dad's shoulders. A woman behind me reaches and pushes the kid square in the middle of her back, yelling 'Siddown'.

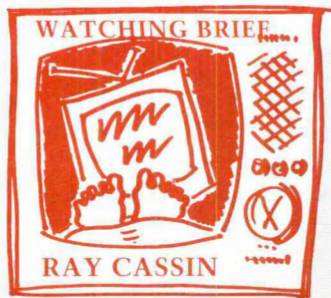
Jagger adapts the lyrics of *Brown Sugar* to 'How come you dance so good, just like a young MAN should?' but the song also features camera shots taken from between the legs of the band's statuesque, black backing-vocalist, Lisa Fischer. An encore of *Jumping Jack Flash* follows, plus fireworks.

Therein lay the rub for me, a Stones fan. What was I watching, the band or the video in mega-stereo plus fireworks? Sure, the band members made the occasional run along the wings of the 90-metre stage, and the sound was pumping, especially from replacement bass player Daryl Jones and veteran sax player Bobby Keys.

To get their message across, the band had to make bigger gestures, to be themselves only more so. One should not attend stadium rock, and then complain about it being stadium rock. This concert was good, for what it was. ■

Mark Skulley is a reporter with *The Sydney Morning Herald*.





Crime pays, with interest

'CHEATS NEVER PROSPER,' intoned the infant-school teachers of our (real or invented) memories. Like most bits of homespun moralising, the line turned out to be partly true and partly false,

though true in ways that do not touch what is conventionally regarded as prosperity. Cheats clearly become rich, and often remain beyond the reach of the law, plotting new careers for themselves in places like Majorca. But they take on the paranoid lives of fugitives, and may even find themselves reduced to swapping insults with the likes of Andrew Denton as he tries to hire a bounty hunter to snatch them from places where proper Aussie policepersons may not go. There are many kinds of degradation, but being afraid of Denton must be even more humiliating than having to pretend to be a wheelchair-ridden invalid, complete with silly oxygen mask and a hairstyle reminiscent of the dying Howard Hughes.

Christopher Skase is a home-grown cheat who has prospered financially while transmogrifying into something not always recognisably human. But what of H. Gordon Liddy, sometime FBI agent, co-architect of the Watergate break-in and now talkback radio host with an estimated audience of eight million? Liddy dominates the rogues' gallery of talking heads who can be seen in the BBC's five-part Watergate series, screened in Australia on *The Big Picture* (ABC, Thursdays, 9.30pm). As 'intelligence chief' for the wonderfully named CREEP (the Committee for Re-Election of the President), Liddy was perhaps not the worst villain in the saga of the Watergate break-in and its cover-up. Those who gave the orders, either in CREEP (campaign director and ex-Attorney General John Mitchell, and his deputy, Jeb Stuart Magruder) or in the White House (chief of staff Bob Haldeman, domestic adviser John Ehrlichman, special counsel John Dean, Richard Nixon himself), all merit a greater portion of blame for the events themselves. But by the Skase test it is Liddy who fascinates. His bosses, dead (Nixon, Mitchell) or alive (the rest), appear never to have become less venal than we remember them to have been. But Liddy! Here is the creature Viktor Frankenstein couldn't make, full of bombast and empty of pity; here is a sort of Nietzschean joke, someone who has shed the human condition to become not the Overman but an Underman; here is a cheat who is living proof that vice is its own reward.

And how the small screen loves him. The technique is simple and familiar, no great innovations required. Just cut from one contrite talking head to another, then use the preposterously unrepentant Liddy to remind the viewer that these bland, middle-aged men in their hacking jackets and leather armchairs (or in Magruder's case, in his minister's robes and celebrant's chair) were responsible for enormous abuses of public trust. A Dean or a Magruder, ruling-class boys who have spent their whole lives striving to be decorous in manner and mellifluous of speech, would almost be appealing were it not for the

constant reminder that it is men like these who made men like Liddy possible.

But for Liddy, there is no need to dissemble, even in admission of guilt. Indeed, he rarely seems to think there is any guilt to admit, because for this man all moral questions eventually become technical questions. Asked about how money donated to Nixon's campaign fund was diverted to the Watergate burglars to buy their silence, he begins with a potted history of how the FBI, the CIA and other agencies usually look after employees who have been apprehended in illegal covert operations: 'Well, normally bail would be provided, their families would be looked after ...'. Thank you, Gordon. If Dean or Magruder had given such a speech, it would be an attempt to evade the point at issue, but one soon realises that Liddy is actually fascinated by details and procedures. Choose your goal, and he will find the means to get you there. Who better to hire when you're the government and you want someone to break the law on your behalf? Someone smart enough not to get caught, no doubt, but neither Liddy nor his bosses ever seemed to be that smart, which presumably is why John Dean eventually decided to give the game away, testifying against himself and the rest of the president's men.

A curious feature of all this is that Liddy, at the bottom of the morass, turns out to be the cheat who most resembles the man at the top, Richard Nixon. In one of the hitherto unseen interviews with David Frost that Nixon recorded after his resignation (and whose inclusion in *The Big Picture* series is a coup for the producers), Tricky Dick tells us about the decision to form a White House 'special investigations unit' that, if necessary, would be prepared to break the law to obtain politically useful information. Because the president had decided that such illegal activities might be necessary, Nixon says, they would 'really' be legal after all. It is as frank a justification of autocratic government as anything ever enunciated by Louis XIV.

A POSTSCRIPT. The kinds of villainy that the Watergate series documents are, for the most part, not time-bound. Substitute some other historical context for that of America embroiled in the Vietnam War, and one could imagine the same things happening again. But one of the incidents in the story of the cover-up is unlikely to be repeated by future masters of deceit. The saddest figure in the whole story is surely Martha Mitchell, wife of John: when the conspirators feared that she would say too much to the press, John Mitchell put out the word that she was 'under a lot of stress'. In other words, reporters should not take too seriously the things being said by a hysterical woman.

In 1974 the media accepted that line and backed off. In 1995, I doubt that any budding John Mitchell would even have the courage to utter it. ■

Ray Cassin is a *Eureka Street* staff writer.



Eureka Street Cryptic Crossword no. 33, May 1995

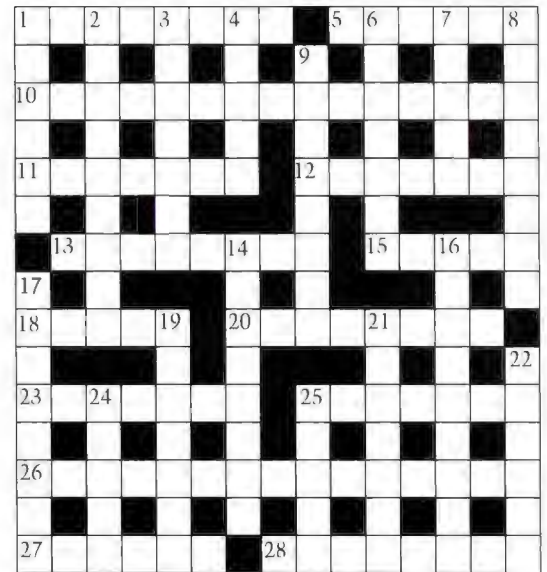
Devised by Joan Nowotny IBVM

ACROSS

- 1 Foolishly pursuing, I replace you joining in the revolt. (8)
- 5 That's me personally, curiously flimsy when the 'ego' begins to replace the 'I'. (6)
- 10 Will the republic do without him, or, in organised revenge, roar long and loud? (8,7)
- 11 Having been instructed initially, now I rise via a new ascent to complete blessedness. (7)
- 12 Inscribed the musical symbols to indicate agreement about the London gallery. (7)
- 13 Somehow it names a word that enlivens. (8)
- 15 Pity me when I leave in distress to face the void. (5)
- 18 Finished model now open for viewing. (5)
- 20 Hard work to attempt to follow the river. (8)
- 23 Joker returns to the monarch, goggling like a galoot. (7)
- 25 Rifle used in salute to Melbourne Cup winner. (7)
- 26 The practice of philanthropy? It's part of a fallible 4th century heresy. (15)
- 27 A kind of United Nations dart aimed at the cold treeless north. (6)
- 28 Some news of Italian river is on Ed's desk. It's badly polluted. (8)

DOWN

- 1 It's imperative to drive over Northern Territory countryside. (6)
- 2 Run always to points round North Carolina. It shows respect. (9)
- 3 Cynical derision? I am crass about using it. (7)
- 4 One soon to go up to a northern beach resort. (5)
- 6 Madly get zany in a party on the river. (7)
- 7 Feel remorse, cutting head off bird. (5)
- 8 Autumn mornings or afternoons—in Maine, perhaps. (4,4)
- 9 Was anguished when he said, 'Gone Crazy!' (8)
- 14 I somewhat foolishly leg it at a cracking pace to follow the car hard upon! (8)
- 16 Division a step backwards? No, it doubles the rap! (9)
- 17 Pines over latest tip—unlikely to win! (4,4)
- 19 Not so substantial as a solvent! (7)
- 21 Sounds as if Knight, with satisfactory grade, will outdo his rivals, perhaps. (7)
- 22 I object indeed to be so regarded. (6)
- 24 Will she go up now about mother? (5)
- 25 The dog I love is a fascinating object. (5)



Solution to Crossword no. 32, April 1995



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Budget note:

'Menzies called me in and he said "Nugget, you know, I am bored with this economic stuff, and I am perfectly happy to leave it to Artie Fadden, but I know there are times when I need to know. You tell me that this is one of them and I will listen to you".

'So I went to Artie and I said, "The Prime Minister has asked me to see him when the situation is such that I think he should be fully informed, and I think this is not an unreasonable thing. Is it all right with you?"

' "Oh," he said. "I think that will be marvellous. The bastard won't listen to me!" '

—The man who signed the notes,
Nugget Coombs, p26.



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