

EUREKA STREET

Vol. 5 No. 9 November 1995

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Fighting Memories

Jack Waterford on strife at the Memorial

Ken Inglis on rival shrines

Great Escapes: **Rachel Griffiths** in London, **Chris McGillion** in America and **Juliette Hughes** in Canberra and the bush

Plus how to race
cane toads
and win



'Just where does Labor's problem with the environmental lobby lie? The question has mystified many who previously felt safe with the comfortable preference arrangements that have frequently saved Labor's bacon in the past. Why does the Federal Labor Government persist in its support for the export woodchipping industry, an industry that employs fewer than 600 people Australia-wide, that by any measure is environmentally destructive, uneconomic and electorally damaging?'

—Juliette Hughes, *Counting the chips*, p6.

A magazine of public affairs, the arts and theology

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Clear-felled forest area. Photograph, above left, by Bill Thomas

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The score

EUREKA STREET IS 50 NOT OUT this month, which puts us in Alan Border and Garfield Sobers territory, and looking forward to a Bradman average.

Many readers have loyally supported the magazine since we began this risky publishing venture in 1991, in a recession and during the Gulf War, and with publications out of religious institutions closing more often than they opened. It is with some pleasure, then, that I can report that 1995 has been our most successful year to date. The increase in subscription rates since March has been extraordinary, and newsstand sales also show a marked increase.

Readers might also like to know that articles first published in *Eureka Street* are now regularly reprinted in the major metropolitan dailies and many other magazines and publications. We have also become a resource for radio and television journalists who, in our experience, are much more interested in matters of belief and value than is commonly thought inside religious circles. Relations between the church and the media are not always successfully negotiated, but the problems and misrepresentations are not all one-sided.

At the October Melbourne Writers' Festival, David Tacey, author of *Edge of The Sacred*, remarked that he was struck by the renewed and pressing interest of readers, and his university students particularly, in publicly examining issues of belief, and aspects of what we call the spiritual, that were deemed taboo or simply not chic in the 1960s and '70s. 'We wouldn't have dreamed of talking about that kind of thing then,' Tacey claimed.

We do more than dream about discussing it now. But the forum, Tacey noted, is less likely to be the conventional one. Tacey was addressing a sold-out crowd on a dank Melbourne Sunday morning at the Malthouse Theatre. The panel, chaired by Fr Paul Collins, included English novelist and theologian, Sara Maitland, and the executive editor of *Hindustan*, Mrindal Pande. The session, called 'All that is Sacred', was sponsored by *Eureka Street*. A similarly sold-out *Eureka Street* session last year featured Seamus Heaney, talking freely and eloquently, with none of the '60s inhibitions he also remembered, about God and the mysterious metres of poetry.

This year, in the theatre next door, another crowd was listening to a panel discussion of grunge realism. Afterwards both audiences compared notes, and converging enthusiasms.

Eureka Street began, in 1991, with a commitment to publishing the best writing we could find or encourage on public affairs, theology and the arts. We believed then that the three categories were not separate and not incompatible. We are even more sure now.

—Morag Fraser

Poetic justice

SEAMUS HEANEY'S FRIEND and fellow-Nobel laureate Joseph Brodsky wrote not long ago that 'as arts go, poetry is not a mimetic but a revelatory one'.

The claim is provocative, not at least because it fortifies the power of this particular art—apes can mime, but it takes an altogether different class of being to reveal. There are few to whom this view of poetry would be more congenial than it is to Heaney.

He writes as if everything is potentially luminous with meaning. This does not preclude his writing about dreadful matters, which indeed he does. It means rather that for him potato-peeling or thatching or the eating of an oyster is always potentially an act of divulging. It may be symptomatic: it will certainly be significant.

One of his favourite words, in print or in conversation, is 'vigilant'. A Catholic farmboy in Northern Ireland in 1939 could have plenty of reasons for keeping a weather-eye out for trouble, and that remains true in the Year of Our Lord 1995; the traces of outrage and of immitigable grief char the later pages. But he also impresses, decisively, as one who is perpetually keeping vigil for the emergence of the true, or the beautiful, or the good, in the midst of life's various shafts. 'Funeral Rites' announces one title: 'Casualty', 'After a Killing', 'A Dream of Jealousy', 'Sweeney Astray'. These, be they public or private, are indeed amongst 'the troubles' of this citizen of a violated civilisation; but for Heaney as a poet, the question continues to be Yeats's—'What then?'

Part of the answer is to be found in another remark of Brodsky's: 'A poet is always the product of his—that is, his nation's—language, to which living experiences are what logs are to fire.' This gives full weight to the formidable transformative power of the word, without which our lives would be inane, and as full weight to everything we do or undergo. Heaney's thoroughly-deserved popularity as a poet has a lot to do with his writing from where those logs go into that fire. Stripling readers and weathered ones alike can sense that the poems make good the gap between word and deed which is so often our humiliated condition.

He asks, in 'Badgers', 'How perilous is it to choose/ not to love the life we're shown?', and there they are, essential elements of his writing—the vigilant speculation, the assumption of responsibility, the melody of phrase, the sense of cost. Nobody writes in English more authoritatively about the art of poetry itself, as his addresses given recently as Professor of Poetry at Oxford show: but he is undeluded about the hiatus between the finest of analysis and fidelity to

the Muse. 'The life we're shown' is realised, not simply recalled, in the making of the poem.

It was said of one well-known Irish politician, 'Give him enough rope, and he'll hang you.' Irish animosities can be lethal, as every significant Irish writer has testified in this century. To write with enough sensitivity to register the climate truly, and with enough robustness to survive and flourish, is itself an art of sorts. Each new book of Heaney's bears the stamp of that art—one scarcely practicable to perfection, but revealing beyond its local circumstances. As, increasingly, he has reached east and west to find spiritual comradeship in his art—in Dante, in Irish legend, in Greek tragedy, in *Beowulf*—he has in effect been trying to dream, alertly, for humanity.

That in itself makes him a 'traditional' poet, if by that one means a poet who actively expects that things will be passed down to us, held out to us, from moment to moment. Heaney's many poems addressed or dedicated to family, friends or historical confrères have the affability of all such writing, but, more significantly, they still tap into the wellsprings of meaning, freshets in murky times. Writing a sonnet out of love for a dead relative or living friend, he is blessing them with the little ritual of this old form, and blessing it with the treasured ones whom he consigns to its keeping. Summoning the shade of Joyce or Dante, of Kavanagh or Chekhov, he does so, not in hopes of esoteric company, but for the sake of celebration. Himself now in the greatest celebration the reading world can offer, he will no doubt, like Yeats and Beckett, compatriots in the Nobel Prize, have to devise strategies for addressing this too; as Alec Hope wrote some decades ago, 'In the instant of success/ Suddenly the heart stands still.' It is unlikely, though, that Heaney's mind or imagination will stand still. Out of many poems that come to mind, the conclusion of 'Drifting Off' makes its own claim. In seven earlier stanzas he has tallied 'the allure of the cuckoo/ and the gossip of starlings' and sundry other behaviours. At the end

*But when goldfinch or kingfisher rent
the veil of the usual,*

pinions whispered and braced

*as I stooped, unwieldy
and brimming,*

my spurs at the ready. ■

Peter Steele has a Personal Chair at the University of Melbourne.



Counting the chips

IN 1983 THE ALP WON GOVERNMENT, with the significant assistance of environmental preferences. Electors disapproved of the Fraser Government's support for the Tasmanian Hydro Electric Commission's plans to dam the Franklin River. In subsequent elections, environmental issues have proved to be of crucial importance in nudging Labor governments over the line in marginal seats.

But the heady days of the Franklin dispute are over a decade away in the past, and with the conflict over forest policy now raging, the relationship between the Labor Government and the environmental lobby is headed for complete breakdown unless something approaching a Cabinet *volte face* is seen.

The environmental lobby has always been a critic of any government, but there were many in the Labor Party who took the lobby's support for granted. That was until the woodchip licensing fiasco late last year. It was seen as axiomatic that the Liberal Party was always going to be the bogeyman that could be used to frighten voters into accepting the Labor line on environment. They cannot be so comfortable any more, even if they previously felt able to ignore the Tasmanian experience of 1991 when the Parliamentary Greens deserted Labor and enabled Ray Groom to govern.

Just where does Labor's problem with the environmental lobby lie? The question has mystified many who previously felt safe with the comfortable preference arrangements that have frequently saved Labor's bacon in the past. Why does the Federal Labor Government persist in its support for the export woodchipping industry, an industry that employs fewer than 600 people Australia-wide, that by any measure is environmentally destructive, uneconomic and electorally damaging? And with a union that does not hesitate to embarrass the government.

There was no such hesitancy in restructuring the motor and textile industries. Many thousands of workers lost their jobs as Australia was forced onto the level playing fields in these areas. But the native forest logging industry remains sacrosanct and receives millions of dollars annually from the taxpayer to keep it going. Why it continues to receive such generous, indeed quixotic, support is the subject of much conjecture.

Part of the answer lies in the army of conservative bureaucrats that administers the labyrinthine deals and agreements connected with environment and industry policy. It is common knowledge that federal environment bureaucrats have long been anxious to drop the hot potato of forest policy. To that end, and others, the Intergovernmental Agreement on Environment (IGAE) was signed in 1992. Under this agreement the Commonwealth Government is committed to trying to reach agreement with the States on environmental outcomes. A cynical reading would interpret this document as the federal government's attempt to deal with recalcitrant states by giving away its power.

The overall effect has been the extraordinary sight of a Federal Labor Government administering and indeed facilitating some of the more extreme state Coalition environmental policies. Tasmania has been recently allowed to build a huge new woodchip mill and, was granted a large increase in its export woodchip quota.

That, and many other examples, have caused mistrust in the environmental movement. There are many who claim that forest policy has been a failure from the start,

that minister after minister has been frightened by the claims of their Sir Humphreys that to do anything other than what has been done would be that anathema of all good politicians: 'courageous'. And that the portfolio desperately needs another Richardson is no longer in doubt. It would indeed stretch the imagination to conceive of him allowing himself, as did Faulkner, to be the sacrificial lamb in Cabinet during the 1994 woodchip-licence tragi-comedy.

The current quarrel over Deferred Forest Areas illustrates the level to which relations and policy have sunk. The environmental lobby was enraged by the Federal Government's offer, on state advice, of areas to be protected from logging. Again there was a bizarre Tasmanian factor: nearly 100,000 hectares of button grass and a couple of lakes were included as areas there that were declared safe from the loggers. In other states, areas that had already been clearfelled were set aside as protected from logging.

The background to this piece of bumbling was four months of intense negotiation between federal and state forestry bureaucrats, and thousands of small



'Re-growth' in the forest: photograph by Bill Thomas

deals emerged wherein the states got virtually everything they asked for.

The reluctance to go back on these soft-fought battles was understandable if not acceptable to the environmental lobby. But the federal bureaucrats would argue that they fulfilled their brief under IGAE, that the Commonwealth now has the responsibility to try to reach agreement with the states on environmental matters.

It would seem an act of the greatest hubris for the Federal Labor Government, then, to assume that it can count on the same level of preference support from environmental campaigners as before. And the message of the Queensland, NSW and Canberra elections has been clear: wherever environmental groups campaign against Labor in marginal seats, Labor polls badly. When they support Labor, Labor usually slips through.

At the moment, unless someone in Cabinet can come up with a solution that is credible to an environmentally conscious electorate, then the best it can hope for is that the environmental lobby will not actively campaign against Labor in the next federal election.

The worst-case scenario for Labor would be a direction of preferences to the Coalition parties. Once that would have been extremely unlikely, but the gap has been fast closing between Coalition and Labor environment policies. Some would argue that the Federal Government has already been colluding with Coalition states in the destruction of Australia's best old-growth eucalypt forests by its failure to control the native forest logging industry.

The recent leak of Liberal policies included a nod in the direction of protecting old-growth forests. Whether the measures are as 'green' as Labor's remains to be seen. The real issue is the electoral impact of such an awakening. Labor strategists have been hoping to flush out Howard's policies and neutralise them as part of the build-up to the next election. Here they have a valuable opportunity if they can persuade Mr Keating to assert himself more against the loggers this time.

There are many voters who feel that whatever the shading of the environmental policies of the Liberals, the hue is essentially the same as Labor's. The perception is fast growing that the environment would not be served very much worse by a Federal Coalition Government, because even if there were an immediate deleterious effect on the environment, as there was in Thatcher's Britain and Reagan's America, it would have the effect of revitalising opposition to such policies.

It does the environment no good, and Labor no good, if Labor's environment policies are seen as 'the frog in the pot' tactics: everyone cooked slowly, soothingly, but just as dead in the water at the end. ■

Juliette Hughes is a freelance journalist.



W In theological vane

WERE YOU TO SIT AT THE DESK of an editor of a theological journal, you could quickly pick theological wind shifts. The October number of *Pacifica*, for example, includes three overlapping studies of church-governance. The articles, none commissioned, landed simultaneously on my desk.

Bruce Kaye, general secretary of the Anglican Church of Australia, describes in detail the formative years of William Grant Broughton, first Bishop of Australia, prior to his arrival in Sydney in 1829. Broughton was a High Churchman who originally supported Newman's reforming zeal in the 1830s, but by the 1840s, his 'was a more open religion, with a more diffused sense of authority, a more open conception of history and theodicy'.

Meanwhile in Rome, in the same 1840s, Antonio Rosmini-Serbati was publishing *The five wounds of the Church*. Rosmini's 'wound in the right foot' was 'the nomination of bishops left in the hands of civil government'. John Hill, former president of the Catholic Institute of Sydney, has written a marvellous diagnosis of the present state of this wound. The appointment of bishops was not always a Roman privilege.

Hill notes the recent changes:

...from the time of Lateran II (1139), bishops were to be elected by their cathedral chapters, and this law was respected by popes as recent as Pius VII, Leo XII and Gregory XVI...When the hierarchies were restored in England and Wales (1850) and the Netherlands (1853), they were from the beginning subject to papal patronage...When France and Portugal renounced patronage, St Pius X began making appointments there, and so the number of sees under papal patronage further increased...At the death of Leo XII (1829), of 646 ordinaries, 555 were appointed by civil authorities; 67 were elected by chapters or their equivalent; and 24 were appointed by the pope. In 1904, Rome was appointing 700 diocesan bishops...Whatever the *de jure* position, *de facto* the Roman Pontiff 'freely appointed' the majority of bishops.

Such freedom was not always the case. Andrew Hamilton, president of the United Faculty of Theology in Melbourne, carefully explores the mutuality shown between Rome and local churches late in the second century. A quarrel had erupted when the Asian church wanted to end the Easter Fast at Passover, while all others opted for the Sunday following the Passover. Victor, Bishop of Rome, excommunicated the Asian churches for heterodoxy, but his decision was not well received. Many bishops, notably Irenaeus of Gaul, advised Victor to restore peace. And so he did. ■

John Honner SJ is the Editor-in-chief of *Pacifica* and lectures in theology and philosophy at the United Faculty of Theology in Parkville, Victoria.

Quite Whiteley

AFTER A THREE-DAY CONFERENCE ON AFRICA, with its wars, impoverishment, famine, AIDS, and the doubtful future facing South Africa, I went along to the Brett Whiteley exhibition. Just what would the overseas participants in that conference have made of this?

For there were—to put it mildly—one or two significant absences, despite the fashionable play-power revolution Whiteley got caught up in. Three-dimensional gimmicks were no substitute; more and more one was struck by the waste, by a sense of that capacity for fluid line wilting into nothingness. By the time the last room and the last phase of his life was reached, the expanses between the nodal points (ideas) were getting broader and broader.

All that eagerness, all that thirst for life, propelled Whiteley for most of his career. Near the beginning is a portrait of a soup kitchen, where a tetchiness in the composition is finely balanced by the vacancy and resignation of the seated figures. And then there is the way that—like Jeffrey Smart—Whiteley early on was much taken with the stillness and resonance of Drysdale's rural buildings, and set about translating that to a dun-coloured urban setting. Not particularly successfully, it must be said; characteristically Whiteley (being the chameleon he was) had to go and paint Sofala, just as Drysdale had done. Later came abstraction, at which he became a dab hand: the disconsolateness glimpsed early on here becomes creative tension.

It was at this point, in the mid-sixties, that Whiteley went to London. Living in Ladbrooke Grove, it was quite by chance he discovered that Rillington Place, the scene of the notorious Christie murders, was not very far away. Whiteley, curious, sought out people who had known the murderer or his gassed and violated victims; and, since he was beginning to move towards his own version of the doctrine of the artist as exemplary sufferer, he decided that Christie 'crystallises the life around him... he could no more control his madness than the world can control its energies.' Certainly Christie crystallised something for Whiteley; this is a singularly clear case of the intensity of art being generated by human extremity. The tetchiness and the abstraction of the earlier paintings could now, under the influence of Francis Bacon, be brought into sharper focus. Whiteley was licensed

to deconstruct and reconstitute the female form. Significantly it is in these paintings that his characteristic cobalt blue first appears, just as a squiggle for one of Christie's ears.

As the reflective nature of his writings show—and he lavished great care on them—Whiteley was always seeming to redraw his basic equations, passing over some elements to foreground others. His love of the curve, 'the most spiritual of all forms', had gone underground at the time of the Christie paintings; but as tension receded, bombed or blissed out, a preoccupation with female form saw it burst forth again to produce images of striking plasticity.

By the late eighties a woman reading on the beach would be transformed into a kind of enormous paper clip, while other nudes would suggest the floppiness of a dog bouncing around on the settee. Again, while a post-colonial Matisse, baying at the lavender on bordello-like walls, Whiteley's earlier interest in Drysdale is unobtrusively manifested again, in the undulating calm of small craft

bobbing in water. These 'grey' paintings—actually a pale olive dominates—are the most haunting of the Lavender Bay series.

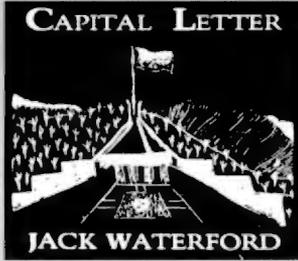
More usually, reflectiveness is transformed into a sensual tenderness; sometimes a sense of humour bursts through. In his painting of a lyrebird dancing on its mound, Whiteley tells us on the canvas that this is 'a pointless painting/ needs looking at for a long time/ in order to think (about it)'. The bit in brackets prompts an image of Sandy Stone scratching his head, as well he might, for the painting is a puzzle. Whiteley had resorted to his common trick of adding a three-dimensional element, in this case the feathers of a lyrebird's tail.

Here, though, they are functional, a necessary counterbalance; for in place of a single head—still there in the background—are three or four additional ones. The multiple images present the lyrebird, with its myriad capabilities for mimicry, pottering about the forest like a stoned songster. It could be the most revealing of Whiteley's self-portraits. ■

Jim Davidson has thought about lyrebirds deeply. The Brett Whiteley exhibition is at the Art Gallery of New South Wales until 19 November. It then travels to Darwin, Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne and Hobart.



*Detail, above,
from
Brett Whiteley's
Christie (1965).*



Push to the polls

WILL \$50 MILLION, MOST OF IT YOUR OWN MONEY, help you make up your mind at the next election? Politics is becoming higher and higher tech, with the political smarties using more and more clever, expensive techniques to persuade you to go their way.

The political caravans will be entirely hooked up—able to communicate across the continent with a single computer keystroke—with intelligence apparatuses able to keep them right up with what the other side is doing. Polling will be almost continuous. And despite Paul Keating's expressed distaste for in-depth attitudinal polling (or at least for having the results leaked) everyone will be doing it. Not a little of what they record about you will have found its way into a political data base so that your real or imagined prejudices can be tickled by focused polling—sometimes, by push polling, where purported sampling is by itself being used to send out a message, sometimes a lying one.

Every morning, campaign committees plotting the day's activities will have access to material of a sophistication hitherto unknown to detect how the message is selling, or failing to sell. Technology will also permit lightning shifts of tactics. And some of the demands of the very same technologies mean that good tactics have a better chance of working. The requirements of infotainment television and the 20-second grab mean, for example, that if you and your team say the one thing all day, it will get the priority hearing on the television screens that night, whether or not the correspondents judge it to be the most important development. They might get that message across too, but they will still run the footage of the parroted slogan.

In the past few years, practically every journalist on the campaign trail acquired a mobile telephone. If Paul Keating says something in Sydney which differs from what Kim Beazley is saying at the same moment in Perth, he could be being cross-examined about it before the end of the press conference. Any embarrassing statements made by any politician can be quickly conveyed or faxed to where it will do most damage.

During Alexander Downer's political decline the Government's National Media and Liaison Service (known as the Animals; the Opposition's unit is known as the Vegetables) were monitoring exactly what Downer said, and faxing to everyone in sight transcripts of previous occasions when he had said something opposite, or the party policy he was contradicting. It was fatal because the journalists knew he had stumbled before he himself did and before he was able to go into damage-control.

An indexed speech made many years ago by Liberal backbencher Bronwyn Bishop on the subject of tobacco advertising was used to embarrass her immediately she was named as shadow health spokesperson, that immediately put her in conflict with groups such as the doctors, and undermined her capacity to establish a relationship with the lobbies.

Virtually non-stop polling—right down to individual electorate level—means that sudden shifts in perceptions can be monitored. Messages can be quickly crafted to neutralise bad news or to stress positive points and they can be recrafted for local circumstance. Incumbents, particularly government incumbents, have such data bases on the electors that the average voter will get three or four personalised letters from the candidate, playing with subtlety at your assumed or known biases. You might be getting a letter stressing how green the candidate is; the person next door might be getting one stressing that the candidate recognises the significance of jobs in the timber industry.

Do all the new tricks and new technologies matter very much? I doubt it. They add a lot of extra information and noise to the debate. They can be very useful in befuddling the political commentators, who are not necessarily as on top of the moods as they pretend to be. They can sometimes serve to put politicians under great pressure, even occasionally to topple them. And, sometimes, they help politicians to focus on the issues which matter for them.

BUT THE VOTERS DO NOT LACK in sophistication either. A high proportion have strong preconceptions unlikely to be shaken by either hard or soft-selling. Each party spends more money keeping likely supporters on side than on wooing the genuine waverers or appealing to those who will not buy in any circumstance. The wooable, almost by definition are fickle: what worked on them today might not be so powerful a week or two hence when they are actually entering the polling booth. Neither the polls nor the political insiders foresaw the significant points of some of the most recent elections—say the by-election in Canberra or the Queensland or NSW state elections.

The campaign offices, moreover, are only a part of the show. Neither Paul Keating nor John Howard is a machine man. Both are hard men to run simply because they have their own appreciation of what works and what doesn't. They will not follow scripts, but they will follow their instincts.

Paul Keating is about to reinforce this with the return of Don Russell—one of the few advisers he has ever had who can stand up to him and tell him when he's being plain silly. Whatever discipline Russell brings, he won't be pushing the Prime Minister into following a script devised by marketing men. Russell is more likely to direct Keating's natural talents as a flexible and agile polariser. Keating has the capacity to exploit an issue, to package a policy, or to see the trivial example of a difference in approach—the cost of a Goods and Services Tax on a birthday cake, for example—which epitomises difference.

John Howard is much the same. It will still be the person before the machines. ■

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

Yes Geraldine

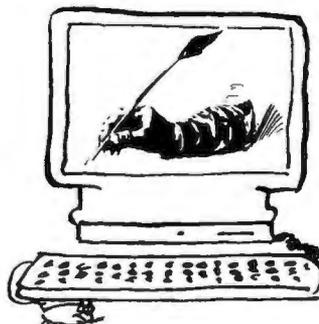
From Mark O'Brien

I was reading 'Frankly Geraldine' (*Eureka Street* October '95), when an image out of *Spiritus Mundi* troubled my sight, a kind of flashback to an earlier age. The scene: a group of bishops, listening; the speaker, an early medieval Geraldine (more likely a Gerald then, I suppose) who has first-hand experience of the marvels of monarchy or has been busily boning up on the late Roman empire; the message, monarchy is the way to go, brothers, and you had better get into it if you want to be relevant. The message is gladly received and the church launches itself with enthusiasm and relish into the monarchical world.

Flashforward to the present. A group of bishops struggling to shrug off the monarchical model, listening; the speaker, Geraldine, promoting the advantages of modern governments and corporations; the message, this is the way to go brothers and you had better get into it if you want to be relevant.

I hope the bishops and the church at large are listening to speakers like Geraldine. There is much that I liked in her talk. But frankly, will we be

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.



better served by Catholic Church Inc. or are we just setting ourselves up for the kind of abuses that occurred during the now-lamented monarchical age? Perhaps 'the best-functioning government departments or authorities' do exist, but they leave me as uneasy as monarchy for a model of church.

When parishioners come home from labouring for the corporation or the government to their christian community, do they want to see more of the same? Surely they want something different, something imaginative, challenging and fulfilling. RIP rather than BHP thank you Geraldine!

Mark O'Brien OP
Camberwell, VIC

No Geraldine

From R.F. Holt

I have seldom read a more silly text than that of Ms Doogue's lecture, published in your October issue.

When one separates the substance from the verbiage, she puts forward three propositions: first, the Church is not engaged in the modern world; second, the Church does not address contemporary ethical problems; third, the Church's governance should be changed, 'drawing from society's models'.

The first proposition is clearly not true. One can easily find innumerable examples of religiously motivated activity in fields like medicine, social welfare, development aid and educa-

tion, just to name a few. Also, the meaning attached to 'Church' is unnecessarily narrow; it refers to 'authority' whereas the 'Church' in essence is the total Faith community whose mission is to try to live, and ultimately establish, God's Kingdom now. It does not make sense to define the Church as those in authority and then blame these relatively few people for the fact that the world does not measure up to some individual's analysis.

The second proposition is also clearly untrue. The Church has many clear, traditional 'signposts' and values that concern things like: racism, social justice, euthanasia, abortion, artificial fertilisation, even consumerism, and so forth. That this is so, is attested to by the fact that Ms Doogue can only cite, as an example of the Church's ethical failure, the area of industrial relations.

The third proposition fills one with despair. Imagine the Church being run like our State and Commonwealth governments!

Perhaps all that Ms Doogue is on about is people creating social venues for trying to discern religious meaning in ordinary life. Her 'spirituality in the pub' is a fine idea but finally spirituality is beyond words and discussing euthanasia and consumerism over a pint, in a private room away from the public bar, is scarcely 'raw-edged', as she puts it. Also, it is only one out of many thousands of communicative ideas that have continued historically to ebb and flow. May they multiply and flourish. But why knock 'the Church'? It is the very medium and incubator for such endeavours.

R.F. Holt
Ashmore, QLD

Absolutely Geraldine

From Kristina Kerscher

Geraldine Doogue's Veech lecture boldly sets forth a new vision for the structure of the Church, provoking those who have a stake in that structure to consider her proposals carefully. She speaks well of the consequences of the gender imbalances present in the current ecclesiastical structure. She also accurately calls on the Church to proclaim its moral teachings in the areas of business and

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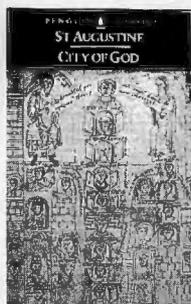
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politics as stridently as it has proclaimed its moral teachings on sexuality.

Her vision of a new institutional structure corrects these failings, and for that it is a commendable vision. Yet it is a vision that is seriously flawed. Though Doogue incorporates features such as Collegiality, Conversation, Devolution of Power, Modernness, Regularity and Respect into her envisioned structure, she fails to incorporate the one feature that makes any ecclesiastical structure into a church structure: Sacramentality.

The Church is a sign and a symbol of God's indwelling in humanity. As such, it is a sacrament, a human community representing the Kingdom of God on earth, here and now. The Church is not just an organisation, as Doogue has painted it, which should evidence good principles and practices such as inclusiveness, dialogue, and mutual respect. The Church should be an organisation which evidences these practices and principles *because* they flow from the sacramental nature of the church, from the teachings of Jesus Christ. At the heart of the Church's organisational structure must be, as its central feature and core principle, its sacramentality.

Doogue's conclusions miss the sacramentality of the church because her starting point allows no room for it. She asks if we, the Church, have the 'government' structure to meet the current needs. One might well ask the same question of Telstra, Optus or the ABC.

I suggest that the central question for the Church in regard to its structure is not whether or not it meets current needs, but whether or not it is a vibrant witness to the Gospel in the modern world. If the Church's structure no longer appears to derive from the teaching of its founder Jesus Christ, and I would suggest that in some ways it does not, then it must be re-examined in faithfulness to both the Christian tradition and contemporary human experience. But it cannot be simply a restructuring along good organisational principles.

I believe that Doogue is correct in her assessment that the Church's structure must be re-envisioned to fit the times in which we live. The Church, both universally and locally, must be a vibrant sign of God's incarnation among us in all the struggles and joys of daily human existence. I gladly join her and our church community in conversation as to how we can imagine, develop and construct a new institution.

Kristina Kerscher
Waverton, NSW

Under red

From Dr James Franklin

It is now little remembered that Calwell's anti-Communism went a good deal further than the statements quoted in Jim Griffin's letter (*Eureka Street* September '95). He was one of the founders of the Groups (*Be Just and Fear Not*, p. 218). The papers revealed in the Dobson affair of 1949 resulted in this exchange in Parliament:

Counselling

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Calwell: I made representations to the Postmaster-General to the effect that Mr. Dobson might be given telephone facilities, if that were possible, and a silent number to enable him to carry on the work of the industrial groups inside the [Federated Clerks] union.

Beale: Was that work of national importance?

Calwell: That, to me seemed to be work of very great importance. (Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives 21 September 1949, vol. 204 p. 395).

Dr James Franklin
University of New South Wales

Outplayed

From Michael Furtado, Department of Education, University of Newcastle

The historical links between religion and secular culture which Anne O'Brien (*Lifting the Lid, Eureka Street* August 1995 p. 31) so illuminatingly explores are alive and well today in the curriculum of Catholic schools in many parts of Australia.

Quite recently my wife and I objected to the use of revenue from a school fete to subsidise an extracurricular programme in instrumental music for children of parents who had committed themselves to paying for it.

Our position was that such monies, a not inconsiderable sum, could better be used to employ a qualified music education specialist who might develop a whole-school music education programme.

Over the protestations of many parents, the parish priest, regional education officer, regional director and Director of Catholic Education endorsed the decision, which subsequently found itself replicated in many other schools in the archdiocese concerned.

Our reflections on this cultural curiosity led us, despite intense heartache, to withdraw our daughters from Catholic schooling. They are now beneficiaries of a public education curriculum which is open to all, and which above all does not regard the aesthetic pursuits as the preserve of a privileged few.

I think Mary McKillop would have agreed.

Michael Furtado
Callaghan, NSW

In God we bust

The ECONOMY. The ECONOMY. Everybody's talkin' about the ECONOMY. They say this and that is good for the ECONOMY. Well I don't give a damn about the ECONOMY. We've still got the same potholes, the same high rents.

Hell, the ECONOMY ain't done nothin' for me.

—A cab driver in Nashville, Tennessee.

ON SEPTEMBER 29 the *New York Times* ran a report about the results of an anti-fraud program in New York City that involved fingerprinting welfare recipients. Over a two-month period earlier this year, 148,502 people in receipt of Home Relief funds were fingerprinted by caseworkers and the prints checked before any cheques were handed over.

Forty-three cases of double-dipping were uncovered less than a third of one per cent of the target group. Even so, the city plans to fingerprint other welfare recipients including those on Federal assistance. Los Angeles has been doing so since 1994. Texas will introduce fingerprinting of welfare recipients in Dallas and at least one other county next year.

The drift towards such extreme measures points to two things. The first is the way the political Right (which includes Democrats as well as Republicans) wants to devolve responsibility for welfare. The Right talks about efficiency and accountability, but cost cutting is really what it's on about.

Most State governments in the US are required by law to bring down balanced budgets. There is no room for compromise and little for compassion of the bleeding-heart

variety. Moreover, local authorities tend to be more immune to the public outcry over the consequences of welfare cuts than their Federal counterparts. On a national level the poor and underprivileged have



some hope of mobilising in the sort of numbers that command attention. On a State level their numbers are smaller, more fragmented, harder to organise, and, for all these reasons, much more easily ignored.

The rush to try new and morally, if not legally, questionable measures to save welfare dollars also demonstrates the extent to which the under-privileged are being blamed for the country's fiscal and economic woes. The current Republican-controlled Congress wants a balanced Federal budget by the year 2002. But it also wants a \$US245 billion tax cut for the wealthy as part of the deal. There are no prizes for guessing where the money's going to come from. Nor are the Democrats (generally) or Bill Clinton (specifically) crying 'foul' on behalf of the less well-off Americans who will pay it.

Democrats in both houses of Congress have put their signatures to cuts in Medicaid, food stamps, aid

to families with dependant children, and cash for unmarried mothers. For his part, Clinton is gaining a reputation as the best (and most generous) President corporate America has had this century.

Welfare has not lifted Americans out of poverty—if that was ever its intention. According to the latest US Census Bureau figures, the poverty rate dropped in 1994 by 0.6 per cent to 14.5 per cent, or more than 38 million Americans. That kind of slow progress is proof enough to some people that everyone would be better off if the money earners were left to do what they do best, and the money yearners were forced to go out and make a living instead of relying on handouts.

But this kind of thinking ignores the fundamental changes going on at the core of the US economy. In the mid-1960s, seven per cent of the US Gross National Product came from export earnings. Now that figure is over thirty per cent. In other words, the domestic market is becoming less important to US capital, and overseas markets are becoming crucial.

WHERE ONCE THE HIGH COST of American labour was a boon to American manufacturers (average wages in the US doubled between 1947 and 1967 and companies couldn't keep up with the demand for bigger and better consumer goods) it is now a major drag on the US' international competitiveness. One

way to decrease labour costs is to move production to areas of low wages (hence the flight of US operations to Latin America).

Another way is to cut wages, including the social wage—health, education, public transport, subsidised food and housing for the poor. The surprise is not that this is happening—the trend is hardly peculiar to the US—but that it is failing to encourage any kind of class politics among Americans in response.

One reason can be found in the *Chicken and Rice Cafe* in Indianapolis, Mississippi. *The Chicken and Rice Cafe* will never make the tourist guides. It is a run-down diner in the back of a clapboard house across litter-strewn railway tracks on the wrong side of town. And it serves blacks, exclusively. The latter arrangement has nothing to do with the law (that battle was fought and won long ago) but everything to do with the preference of local blacks and whites alike. Martin Luther King Jr dreamed of the day when 'the sons of slaves and the sons of slave-owners would sit down at the same table.' At the *Chicken and Rice Cafe* that dream is a long way off and only a picture of King on the wall seems to keep it alive at all.

Indianapolis is not unique. 'You've got to remember that this is still the South', said a white store keeper in Yazoo City, Mississippi, when asked why blacks and whites went to different barber shops. 'They [the blacks] keep pretty much to themselves and we keep to ourselves. Things change slowly here'.

American blacks gained civil rights in the 1960s and many of them have gained economic inclusion since. But in many ways, blacks and whites remain peoples apart. The reaction to last month's acquittal of O.J. Simpson demonstrates this most obviously.

To most blacks, Simpson was a race hero—or, more correctly, a victim of a white police and legal

system skewed against blacks. To most whites, he was a smart operator who used his colour to beat a murder rap. This difference of opinion is not about legal rights or wrongs but about opposing worldviews and life experiences. It reflects a divide in American society—the kind of gulf that encourages one group to blame another for shortage of jobs or university places and glues their attention to epiphenomena while structural adjustment goes unquestioned.

ANOTHER REASON FOR national political distraction in the US can be found outside Adamsville, Tennessee. Along the nearly 500 kilometres of Highway 64 between Memphis and Chattanooga is one bar—the *Wagon Wheel*. 'This here is Bible Belt' explains Eddy, the *Wagon Wheel's* proprietor. 'They've tried to close me down as well,' he says. 'But we've only had one shooting and one serious beating in five years, so I don't like their chances'. Even so, the business shows signs of the squeeze it's under. The bar consists of 'Budweiser- \$1.50; Bud Lite- \$1.25; Natural Lite-\$1.25 and wine coolers- \$2.00'. That's it. Hard liquor can be consumed at the *Wagon Wheel* but not

bought there. The furnishings are basic, the jukebox plays lonely cowboy songs between the Bluegrass, and the few patrons seem as defeated and faded as the posters.

That's the power of religion. Mississippi boasts 5,500 churches, even though Mississippians are thin on the ground. In neighbouring Alabama it's impossible to keep a count because new churches are going up all the time.

But while the names are elaborate—'Bible Hill Missionary Baptist Church'; 'Wings of Eagles True Gospel Church'; 'God in Christ

Church'—the message isn't. It all comes down to loving Jesus and Jesus loving back. Still, in tiny Dora, Alabama, 200 people listen to that message over and over each Sunday and 75 come back for another dose on Wednesday night prayer meetings.

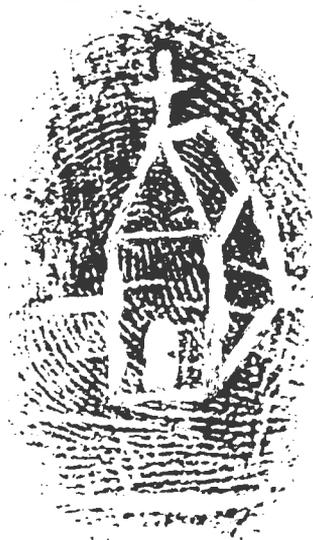
With this kind of reach, and that kind of vacuousness, the religious right has the ability to bog down national political debate down on moral issues that most other countries resolved long ago—abortion laws, pornography laws, prayer-in-school. It also has the ability to champion an extreme form of individualism to great effect. Hence welfare becomes an issue of individual responsibility ('a good thing') versus welfare dependency ('a bad thing'). That kind of thinking well suits the political agenda of conservatives in Washington.

Twelve months ago, the Republican Party won control of the Congress after only 39 per cent of the electorate bothered to turn out to vote, and just over half of these swung against the Democrats. Yet now, 12 months before the 1996 Presidential election, even Democrats like Clinton have essentially adopted the Republican agenda.

The foundations are being laid for the dismantling of the social welfare state. There is no prominent political figure in the US promising to reverse the change, no labour movement strong enough to resist it, and no sense of community that seems capable of surviving the effects this change will bring.

Once inequality was tolerated by Americans because they believed in the myth of upward socio-economic opportunity. Less benign myths quite possibly will replace it. ■

Chris McGillion is the opinion page editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*.



End of the Georgian era

WHEN I WAS YOUNG, MY FATHER WENT AWAY TO Melbourne and came back with a gift for mum from Georges. Even in Sydney, we knew to stand in awe of Melbourne's legendary department store. It didn't matter that instead of perfume or fashion, dad had bought a set of plastic barbeque plates. They were always known as the Georges plates. We had our tea on them for years until mum cashed in several hundred Lan Choo tea coupons for a new set of crockery. The scene on the plates gradually faded but they have ended up surviving Georges itself. In a blaze of publicity, Georges closed on October 5.

It's difficult to explain the sudden rush of interest once Georges announced their imminent closure. Those who attend to the minutiae of Melbourne life knew that the old dowager had been suffering ill health and struggling to keep up appearances for a long time. There were whispers last December that Georges had been unable to buy new Christmas decorations and had endured the shame of wearing the same outfit two years in a row. The right people were keeping their distance.

The wake was a different matter. For the last week, Georges was crowded. An employee recognised a face in one of the queues and resorted to gallows humour to say he thought they should close more often. It was good for business. Two other employees spoke in hushed tones across a crowded lift:

'It's very sad.'

'For more than one reason.'

'I know exactly what you mean.'

Georges wanted to die with dignity. There was to be no closing sale. Georges deserved mourners, not jackals. There were a few bargains marked demurely as 'reductions', such as a manual potato masher with a superbly turned handle marked down from \$25 to

\$15, but nothing untoward. We were not going to see Georges' labels on the tables of Dimmeys, Melbourne's other legendary olde worlde emporium where all things gaudy and crass are eventually remaindered. On the day Helen Demidenko (as she then was) was awarded her controversial Miles Franklin Award, *The Hand That Signed the Paper* had been marked down on the Dimmeys' tables to \$2.50. No such fate for Georges' merchandise. On the final day of trading, a serviceable men's sports-jacket was still waiting for a buyer at \$2495. There were some imported plastic dominoes in the children's department for \$9 a set, but fortunately in homeware there were other dominoes with Picasso motifs for \$99. Meanwhile, people lined up to buy Georges' packaging, presumably as mementos or even heirlooms. Empty cardboard boxes sold for \$2, \$5 and \$10.

Melbourne is full of stories about Georges, many of them with a wry twist. One dedicated communist, for example, used always to do her Christmas shopping there.

On the last afternoon, a man in a suit approached me outside in Collins St. He had the look of needing to talk to someone. He told me when he was a toddler,

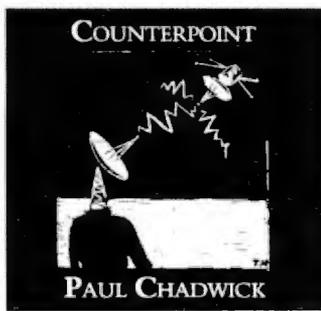
his mother used to put him in a collar and tie and take him to Georges. 'That was fifty years ago,' he said bleakly.

A moment later, an American tourist asked what the fuss was about. In a way, those two exchanges embody Georges' problem. An institution to which an entire class could formerly relate unselfconsciously had become a curiosity. The Grand Prix and the Casino are not, as the Georges staff might have once advised, 'quite the thing'.

Michael McGirr is consulting editor of *Eureka Street*.



Photograph by
Tim Stoney



Cracking the code

Journalists describe society to itself. They seek truth. They convey information, ideas and opinions; a privileged role. They search, disclose, record, question, entertain, suggest and remember. They inform citizens and animate democracy. They give a practical form to freedom of expression. Many journalists work in private enterprise, but all have these public responsibilities. They scrutinise power, but also exercise it, and should be accountable. Accountability engenders trust. Without trust, journalists do not fulfil their public responsibilities.

—preamble to the recommended revised Code of Ethics, Australian Journalists' Association section, Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance

WE PRESUME THAT JOURNALISM is about more than making money (Lord Thomson) and propaganda (Lord Beaverbrook).

If media *are* a necessary element of democracy, they must be free from control by public power. We, the people, are told by media that for our own safety we should accept that that great private power, Media, be left to self-regulate.

My purpose here is not to debate whether the time has come to reconsider. And I declare an interest as a member of the committee that is reviewing the AJA code, its enforcement, its relationship to other media self-regulatory schemes and its relationship to the law. The views that follow are mine, not the committee's.

I want to suggest that the media would have a better chance of earning credibility and trust if it gave more practical life to assertions like those in the proposed new preamble. And a good place to do it would be the national conversation about whether and how Australia should become a republic.

How often do you feel, as a member of the Australian public, as a citizen, that the media are fulfilling their public service role? To be sure, as *consumers* of media you are 'served' with media products. Pay TV will add to the quantity, although not necessarily the diversity or quality. This is merely the money-making side of the media, an honorable and necessary element, but not the dimension that is said to justify the unique privilege of immunity from imposed regulation.

'We serve the public with the news,' comes the media reply. But *is* it a public service to turn politics

into entertainment? A 'leadership struggle' may intrigue us (detective series), a minister's travails may have us alternately weeping or baying (soap opera), and in election campaigns we consider whether we agree with the expert commentators (sports coverage), and finally whether we buy (advertising of anything). In this kind of journalism the subject matter is the set, not the script. The players could be arguing over anything, as long as they argue animatedly enough for us to watch, not think.

I am not so glum as to join Neil Postman in concluding that we are 'amusing ourselves to death', but the implications for civic life are grave. As Joshua Gamson has observed: 'The popularity of infotainment is based on accepting the summons to treat information as play. Play is best when consequences are small. This is the heart of the matter and the truly disturbing part.'

'Only when people perceive public life as inconsequential, as not their own, do they readily accept the invitation to turn news into play. When the outcome matters it is not so easy to switch gears and give up the need for significant and trustworthy information. Today, a shrunken sense of political efficacy makes possible the unsurprising conversion of news into infotainment. Without a renewed sense of political consequence, we can only expect television news to continue on its happy, profitable march towards the incredible.' (*American Prospect*, no. 19, 1994)

Such fears have led in the United States to a surge of interest in 'public journalism'. A leading proponent is Professor Jay Rosen, director of the Project on

Public Life and the Press, who suggests journalism is 'the art of constructing a political present that 'works' in the sense that it persuades large numbers of people to accept the challenge of public work when there are so many other alternatives, among them drift, despair, and the false comfort of a privatised existence.

For Rosen, a 'professional' journalist is 'someone whose own work is concerned with whether public work gets done.' According to this view, journalism is: primarily an act of persuasion rather than information delivery; which helps to construct 'the present' rather than merely reflect it; depends on, rather than opposes, the work of other civic agencies; and distinguishes 'freedom within politics' from 'freedom from politics', supporting the former against the latter.

THE IDEA MAKES ME NERVOUS. Healthy scepticism seems a better role for journalism than barracking. Even if he means 'the work of other civic agencies' in the largest sense of governance (executive) or justice (police and courts), it is not hard to imagine Rosen's hopes being translated in practice into mere media advocacy of the current agendas of those agencies under the banner of public journalism. Still, the idea merits a discussion that has yet to begin in Australian journalism circles. (For more see *Quill*, November 1993; *American Journalism Review*, September 1994.)

We need not endorse 'public journalism' in order to adopt the constructive spirit of its advocates. Although necessary, it is too easy to criticise and satirise the media. Suggesting how it might improve its contribution to Australian civic life is harder but even more necessary.

In 1994, the Federal Government's Civics Expert Group reported widespread public ignorance of basic civic institutions. Such findings have appeared since at least 1946. In 1988 the Constitutional Commission said that only 53 percent of the population knew Australia has a written Constitution, and almost 70 percent of the 17-to-24-year-olds who were surveyed didn't know.

Such results dent hopes for a genuinely inclusive debate over the next five years about whether Australia should become a republic and, if so, what kind and by what steps. Debate assumes shared information. For example, how does a citizen form a view about appropriate presidential powers if he or she does not understand the present separation of powers?

Neither Keating's minimalist model nor Howard's people's convention means anything if discussion is limited to the élites that create them. Civics in the education system is a necessary but longer term response. It is inescapable that the media will be vital to whether the republic debate and any referenda are democratic in substance as well as form.

The work ahead is not glamorous, nor can it be instant. And this is unnatural for journalists, who

are used to playing a prominent role in the climax of events when they become 'the issue of the day', flare, then fade. Well before any referenda there must be an accretion of common knowledge of Australia's constitutional structure and practice. What practical contribution could the media make to that?

I think this year's remembrance of the end of the Second World War carries clues. In supplements and special programs, as well as segments in regular fare, the print and electronic media showed that it can treat us like citizens. The coverage generated reflection, not just distraction. I found it better than the usual formulaic bathos.

Journalists chronicled for us and future Australians the distilled memories of many of our older people, undiluted now by self-censorship, and spiked often by the urgency of advancing years. Here was perhaps their last chance to tell, because we might not ask again in such a sustained way. Hatreds had cooled, improving clarity. Everyone could find something in the coverage that reflected his or her experience as a member of a family in a community, not just a target in a market.

So it could be with the republic issue. The Civics Expert Group recommended the creation of prestigious awards for educative media coverage about civics and citizenship. But the media should not have to be fed public funds in the form of awards or advertising campaigns. The privilege to self-regulate demands more in return. We are justified in pressing for media contributions of space and airtime, and the investment of journalistic expertise, in presenting information in easily accessible forms.

ADDITIONS ARE INVITED to the following list of practical suggestions (please send them directly to the papers and networks):

- Efforts by political reporters to avoid fashionable jargon (for example, 'spin doctor') that can mystify and alienate readers who do not inhabit the politico-media world.
- Regular publication in newspapers of a glossary of terms, perhaps next to the TV guide or the weather details. Here the uncertain citizen could check what a 'reserve power' is, or when a habit becomes a convention.
- Publication at regular intervals of 'at-a-glance' summaries of the competing models of constitutional reform.
- Brief, accurate television explanations of the basic elements of the Constitution could be aired in prime time and repeated often enough to produce recall without nausea. By all means, use those wonderful computer graphics, but to aid meaning, not just for show.
- Reconstruction of seminal moments in constitutional history could be produced in a way that values meaning over feeling. Insert them into television formats in a similar way to the 'Australia Remembers' spots that have appeared this year.

•Broadcast discussions of *one particular aspect* of the republic issue, hosted by a household name, backed by sound research and directed by someone who trusts the viewer to be able to listen to the same person for more than seven seconds. The issue will not go away and does not have to be 'solved' within one program. Start now with one program every three months and increase the frequency later.

THIS CHALLENGE WOULD SEPARATE the journalists from the entertainers in the media. The great array of skills, of brevity with clarity, that journalists regularly apply, say, to a Royal marital spat or a film star's indiscretion, can equally be applied to this fundamental issue about how we want to govern ourselves.

The ABC and SBS are expected to contribute. But the prime-time commercial news and current affairs programs and their luminous stars share the responsibility. As they often point out, the people watch them most.

It is not unprecedented. On 20 July 1987, the Ray Martin Midday Show hosted the launch of the report of the Constitutional Commission's advisory committee on individual and democratic rights.

A deeper issue requires attention. Media are not mere bystanders to government, but intimately related both as suppliers of images to the electorate and, crucially, as corporations whose fortunes are affected by government policy.

Nothing exemplifies the interrelationships better than the alliance between News Corporation and Telstra to create the cable pay TV operation Foxtel. Most of the media seem blind to the serious conflict of interest this creates for Government, in particular because privatisation of Telstra is on the agenda.

Does anybody doubt that government policies on the vital issues of Australia's preparation for the Information Age are affected by its intimate involvement with the owner of most of the country's newspapers and a chunk of the Seven Network?

Part of civics consists in developing a more sophisticated understanding of the interaction of media and government. Yet media, as parties to the relationship, are unlikely to be the ones best equipped to lead this particular aspect of an education campaign. Non-media organisations will need to organise forums and distribute materials in which the media participate but do not control. ■

Paul Chadwick is Victorian co-ordinator of the Communications Law Centre.



ONE OF THE SPINOFFS of our growing awareness of the environment is that scientists, whether they like it or not, have been thrown into political and social debate. Recognition of the importance of public opinion was underscored at a session on biological control of pest animals at the latest Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science (ANZAAS) held in Newcastle. Much of the discussion centred around social and ethical issues.

Rabbits are still the most high-profile pest problem in Australia. Current estimates put rabbit numbers in Australia at about 300 million, causing about A\$90 million a year in direct damage to agricultural and pastoral production.

Rabbits are also a problem in New Zealand, but not as severe as brush-tailed possums. There are now more possums in New Zealand than Australia—70 million of them—and the New Zealand Government spends about NZ\$35 million a year on control measures, mainly trapping them or poisoning them with 1080. Because possums harbour bovine tuberculosis, New Zealand lives in fear of the damage possums could do to its beef and dairy industries.

As myxomatosis loses its grip on Australian rabbit populations, Australian and New Zealand biologists have been working on two possibilities to take its place. For short to medium term control, researchers at the CSIRO's Australian Animal Health Laboratories (AAHL) in Geelong have been studying a virus which originated in China and devastated rabbit populations in Europe. Since March, the rabbit calici virus has been undergoing testing in quarantined rabbit populations on Wardang Island in Spencer Gulf, South Australia.

But all has not gone well. The virus has escaped and has been detected in several animals on the mainland nearby. Even if it spreads no further, the project has been set back years and lost much in public confidence. Throughout their research, the scientists at AAHL have devoted much time and effort to demonstrating that the virus kills rabbits in a humane manner. The rabbits do not appear to suffer. That was never considered with the introduction of the myxoma virus which can blind rabbits and send them mad.

But it is the long-term strategy that caused the greatest discussion at ANZAAS. Researchers in Canberra, at the Co-operative Research Centre for Biological Control of Vertebrate Pest Populations, are working on a strategy to engineer a virus that will cause female rabbits to become immune to rabbit sperm and their own eggs. And the New Zealanders are hoping to adapt the scheme to control their possums.

The scheme has several attractions. Contraception avoids the use of poison, guns, disease or traps to kill animals. Already in New Zealand there is considerable public unease with the 1080 poisoning program against the possums. Also, most of the breeding in rabbit populations is done by a few dominant animals. If dominant females become sterile, the population structure remains intact and younger females are discouraged from breeding.

In general, animal welfare groups are pleased with the direction of this research. But they are not so sanguine about another method of fertility control being trialled with foxes—the use of drugs to terminate pregnancies. 'Technology should be focused on stopping embryos forming, not on killing young,' said animal rights campaigner, Glenys Oogjes.

Other critics, such as University of Newcastle environmental philosopher Glenn Albrecht, believe that using a genetically engineered virus to control pests is a dangerous and high cost solution. 'Introducing a new disease may not work—and it could jump over to other species. To think we can eradicate a species without consequence is at best stupid, and at worst arrogant.'

Public opinion is often swayed by the perceived severity of the pest problem. Whereas New Zealanders were unhappy about introducing myxomatosis into their rabbit populations, there has only ever been minimal outcry in Australia. On the other hand, a recent New Zealand survey has found that over 70 per cent were quite happy to see possums exterminated by whatever means, although there was a high preference for humane methods such as contraception. ■

Tim Thwaites is a freelance science writer.

War at the memorial

MICHAEL MCKERNAN MIGHT BE entitled to feel bemused about the Commonwealth's system of administrative law. On the one hand it has, courtesy of Justice Paul Finn of the Federal Court, saved him from a Kafkaesque conviction for offences which may not even exist, on the evidence of witnesses who were never identified to him or able to be cross-examined against people who interpreted every move he or others took on his own behalf as denial or an attempt to frustrate the due process of his execution. But, he might also reflect, if the damn system had not existed in the first place, he might never have found himself in such a predicament.

And the irony of it all may be, that his rout of the forces it arrayed against him has been so complete, that his very victory may well achieve the result for which some think the inquisition was created in the first place: to frustrate, to deny his ambition to become director of the Australian War Memorial—a memorial whose present face to the world owes much to his boldness and energy, but the creation of which has made him enemies and trod on corns. The tumult about him might make those selecting for the now-vacant directorship opt instead for someone safe, boring and without a history.

The Australian War Memorial affair has so far been a factor in the loss of one job—that of the former Public Service Commissioner, Dennis Ives—and has left another senior public servant, Brendan Kelson, retiring in undeserved rancour and bitterness rather than the pride his achievement warranted. Most of the senior public service, and not a little of the Government, cheered last month's Federal Court's decision as a come-uppance for Star Chamber procedures. But it is not over yet.

The memorial has been factionalised for years. A decade ago, staff were drawing up accusations

against the then director, Air Vice-Marshal Jim Flemming. The ear of the then minister, Arthur Gietzelt, was obtained. An external report was commissioned. Counter-reports were prepared. Before it was all over—Flemming was ultimately sacked—there had been half a dozen separate inquiries into aspects of his management. Flemming was a gung-ho military man with a passionate love of the memorial. Like McKernan, he had a capacity to inspire, and to inspire love and hatred. He was impatient with 'red tape' and procedure.

Some involved in the guerrilla warfare on Flemming's side were involved in the warfare against McKernan a decade later. Jim Flemming believed—wrongly, I think—that one of those who orchestrated the attacks on him was Dr Michael McKernan. In his own politicking to save his job, Flemming sought to cast himself as the saviour of the memorial as a military shrine against, to use one of his parliamentary supporter's words 'a small dishonest cadre of dishonest academics' who, it was said, were conspiring to turn the memorial into a peace museum.

McKernan might have had the job on merit then, even immediately after Flemming or when the successor, Keith Pearson, stepped down six years ago, but for the perceived need for an outsider to settle things down.

But no one could have accused him of not knuckling down. His inspiration and leadership have been central to the memorial's finding a new role and prom-





The management style of neither [Kelson nor McKernan] has ever figured in the top 20 reputed bailiwicks of arbitrary, capricious and intimidating managements in Canberra—which has some monsters who still get every sign of official favour.

inence for itself: through the 75th anniversary of the Armistice and the 50th anniversaries of World War II, through the ceremonies and rituals of the entombment of the Unknown Soldier and the Australia Remembers campaign this year. Over the last decade the memorial has gained a new significance for those several generations of Australians with no personal experience of the major wars it commemorates: the turnout of young people to Anzac Day and other ceremonies these days is higher than ever before. The memorial is many things to different people, but it is as much a treasure house of Australian history and of the lives and stories of individuals, as it is a chapel of the dead.

THOSE ACHIEVEMENTS—many of which brought him close to the senior ministers and officials—also brought him enemies. There was no secret that he aspired to the top job and there were those who were determined to see that he did not get it. Kelson, who thought McKernan should succeed him, also became a target for those who were drawing up bills of indictment even before the Merit Protection and Review Agency began its investigation. The thrust of the attack was a claimed bullying and wheedling style of management, alleged favouritisms and management by reward and punishment, and just enough of the whiff of oppressiveness towards women on the establishment—most very vaguely put—to accentuate impressions of a fundamentally

antediluvian approach.

Even if one is assured that there was no smoke without fire, the broad allegation was a little puzzling to seasoned observers of the bureaucracy. Kelson's general reputation was as a straight up and down, perhaps a little old-fashioned, public servant; McKernan may have had some reputation for being a little brusque. But

the management style of neither has ever figured in the top 20 reputed bailiwicks of arbitrary, capricious and intimidating managements in Canberra—which has some monsters who still get every sign of official favour. And some of the external indicia suggests that things could not be that bad. Turnover of middle-to-senior staff, for example, was very low, and the memorial's output, by any standard, high—neither signs of an organisation in chaos or stress.

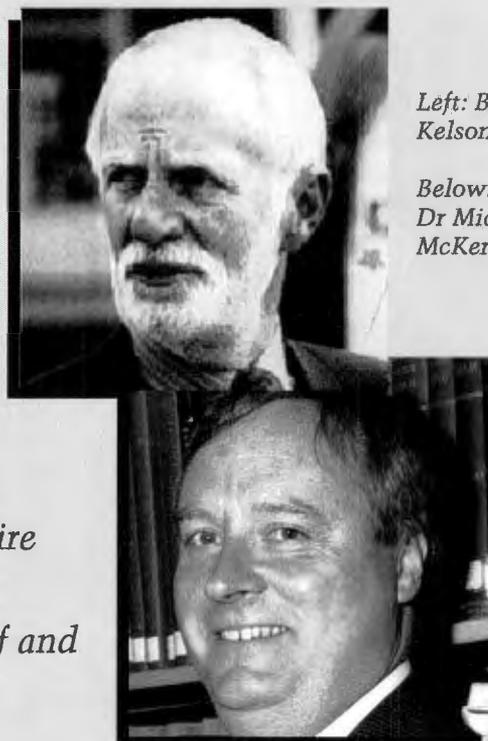
The Merit Protection and Review Agency has two primary functions: dealing with appeals against promotion and against penalties for infractions of public service discipline, and hearing and making recommendations about grievances. Both tend to involve clear protagonists and clear areas of disputed ground: the MPRA's role is far more adjudicative than investigative.

But its enabling Act also permits it to engage in open-ended inquiries at the direction of the minister responsible for public service matters. It was the MPRA itself which, having been told informally that there was trouble at the memorial, persuaded the minister, Gary Johns, that it would be a good idea to conduct the first-ever such inquiry; it also drafted the letter of reference for him to sign. Oddly, Johns agreed to do so without consulting the minister actually responsible for the memorial, Con Sciacca, Minister for Veterans Affairs; at most Sciacca or, more accurately, one of his staffers, was merely informed of the decision after the event.

*Photograph by
Emmanuel Santos*

On Kelson's reaching the end of his term a year ago ... the memorial council, wanting to be fair to McKernan, decided to fill the job temporarily pending a resolution to the affair. McKernan took a leave of absence to work at the Australian National University. He has now applied for the permanent position, but ... now wears a double handicap: the feeling that things might settle down better with a completely new team, and a festering suspicion that, despite the vehement denials, there might have been fire behind the smoke.

The same old Catch 22; damned if you protect yourself and damned if you don't.



Left: Brian Kelson

Below: Dr Michael McKernan

The reference referred to alleged workplace harassment at the memorial, but it did not specify any particular allegations—an MPRA official was later to concede that there were no specific allegations and the inquiry 'will be a trawling exercise'. It did not define what workplace harassment was, and it did not limit the inquiry to any particular people, or even a period of time.

IT STARTED WITHOUT INCIDENT. An MPRA officer was deputed to do the investigation. The staff were circled with a letter jointly signed by the MRPA and Brendan Kelson inviting them to come forward with any grievances; promises were made that there would be full rights of natural justice and opportunities for comment before any findings were made.

A number of memorial staff busied themselves not only making complaints but co-ordinating the making of them by others: by season's end about 400 critical claims had been made by about 70 people—about 20 per cent of the staff. Some involved the same allegations detailed by different people: not all involved Kelson or McKernan, and many of the complaints were not of alleged harassment but about what was claimed to be poor management. Some involved allegations of incidents of long before, recounted as rumours and not by those said to have been involved.

Some months earlier, Gary Johns and the Public Service Commission had issued guidelines on workplace harassment. It had defined it as a form of employment discrimination, consisting of offensive, abusive, belittling or threatening behaviour directed at workers as a result of real or perceived attributes or differences, having the effect of making the workplace unpleasant, humiliating or intimidating for the victims. It was specifically stated that it should not be confused with legitimate comment or advice,

including negative feedback, about work performance and behaviour.

It soon emerged, however, that the MPRA was working to a quite different definition and that, in any event, it saw its brief as extending to all aspects of management style, not only to allegations of harassment. The MPRA ultimately adopted a working definition which said that 'harassment is any type of behaviour that can be reasonably expected to cause a person to feel threatened, uncomfortable or unable to cope with their work environment.' As Justice Finn was to comment in the ultimate court case: 'there is a well-known aphorism in US tort law—it is not a tort for government to govern. Likewise, it is not workplace harassment for managers to manage. The MPRA's definition appears to have lost sight of this.'

The progress of the inquiry quickly became one of mutual suspicions and paranoia. Though Kelson was initially co-operative, he expressed concern to his minister about the ambit, methods and vagueness of the inquiry. After the trawling had been done, he and McKernan were given raw data of the issues and allegations raised against them. Most did not allege harassment as such at all: they included complaints about particular management decisions, about alleged failures to provide career paths for officers, failures to delegate authority, or, in some cases, of bypassing a middle manager to speak directly to an underling. Others did make complaints of alleged harassment, but some, even if arguably harassment were of unbelievable triviality, and, in some cases, vintage. One complaint of alleged harassment was McKernan's failure to show at a public presentation by a junior; another, by a junior officer, was the claim that McKernan had not spoken to her for some months.

Kelson sought legal advice from the Attorney-General's Department about the status, scope and

method of the inquiry. And, as vague leaks, coming from the minister's office, began surfacing suggesting a hellhole of harassment, including sexual harassment, at the memorial, Kelson spoke to senior staff expressing some concerns about the ambit of the inquiry. This disquiet was also communicated to Dennis Ives, then Public Service Commissioner—in whose office McKernan's wife worked, a point seen as being of great significance by an MRPA which saw every action as a sign that the memorial's top management was bent on frustrating the inquiry. An expression of concern about the style of the inquiry at a staff meeting to staff was suggested as a form of intimidatory behaviour designed to discourage staff co-operation, and lurid suggestions were made that managers were spying on these making allegations.

From now on, each action taken by either side was interpreted as proof of bad faith by the other.

To concerns expressed by the Memorial's council, Ann Forward, Director of the MRPA was blunt in accusing it of failing to face up to serious allegations. 'There's an entrenched culture in this place, and it's apparent even around this table', she is reported to have said.

The advice from the Attorney-General's Department was that the inquiry had gone too wide, that it was patently without legal authority, that 'workplace harassment appears to have become an issue of relative insignificance in the overall inquiry' and that it was not operating with procedural fairness. Shown this advice, the MRPA rejected it and began pressing for answers to a now somewhat shortened list of allegations, some still lacking any real detail, and some, as the Attorney-General's Department noted, doing no more than presenting adverse conclusions in very general terms without setting out the basis for the conclusion. The MRPA ignored, also, a letter from Dennis Ives reiterating his opinion that workplace harassment was as the Government and his commission had defined it, not as the MRPA had—apart from complaining about getting involved, a factor in his own subsequent demise.

WHEN THEY COULD NOT GET RESPONSES to their demands for further particularisation, or any satisfaction to their demands about limiting the definition of harassment, Kelson and McKernan decided to take the MRPA to court. The MRPA proceeded to make findings—including dark claims about their lobbying to frustrate the inquiry—and recommendations without hearing their responses. Those are the findings the federal court has now quashed and suppressed.

For its own part the MRPA can now claim that whatever was legitimate in the original allegations may now be buried, and that it had a legitimate duty to protect the employees involved. But it was its own misinterpretation of its role, of its duties under natural justice requirements, and of its paranoia about quite legitimate disquiet at the way it went about its

job which has produced that result. It only has itself to blame.

On Kelson's reaching the end of his term a year ago—still in the heat of litigation and at that stage having to look to his own resources to defend himself—the Memorial council, wanting to be fair to McKernan, decided to fill the job temporarily pending a resolution to the affair. McKernan took a leave of absence to work at the Australian National University. He has now applied for the permanent position, but, for all of his obvious qualifications and his supporters, now wears a double handicap: the feeling that things might settle down better with a completely new team, and a festering suspicion that, despite the vehement denials, there might have been fire behind the smoke. The same old Catch 22; damned if you protect yourself and damned if you don't.

If he fails to get the job, and if those are the reasons why, it seems safe to predict that few people of talent and energy will be inspired to want to work in such a cesspool of internal and external politics without support from above or below. In the modern disposable public service, there's not much due process, loyalty or credit in the bank. ■

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

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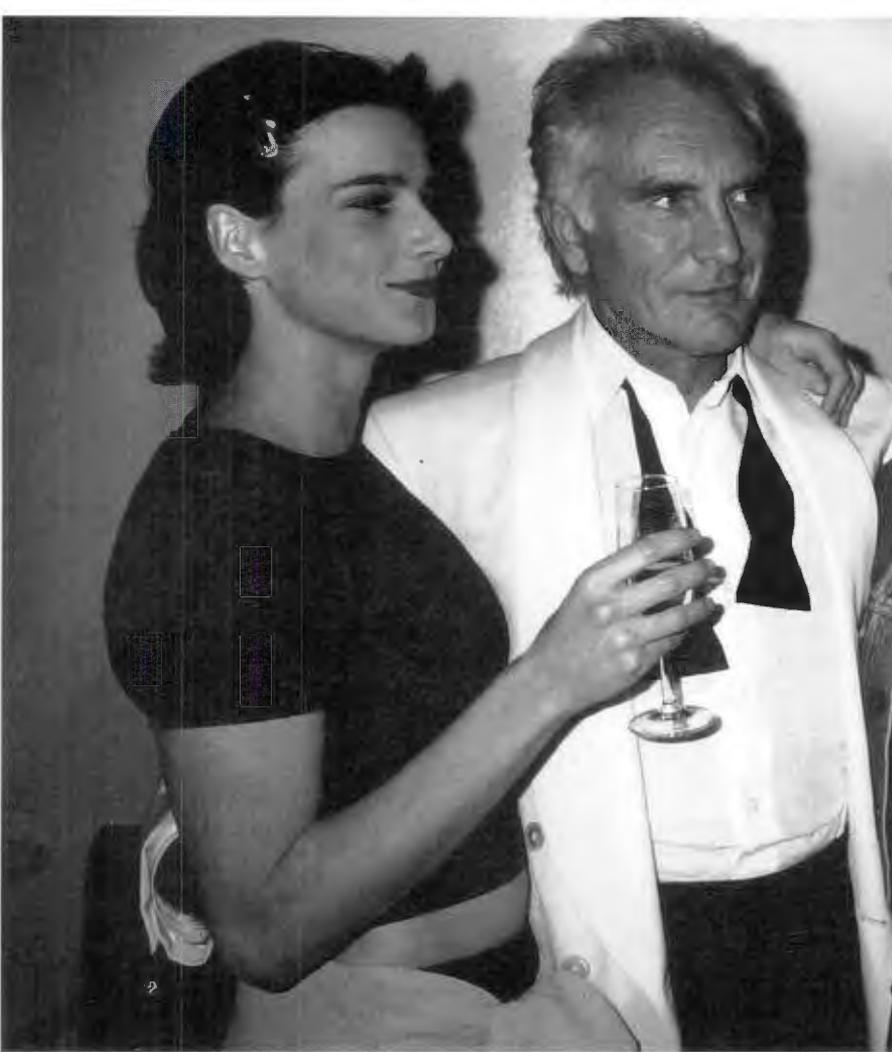
This time I arrive business class at Heathrow, am met by a film representative and a car. My minder checks me in and argues with the hotel while I, still under the effect of the sleeping pills which are the only way I know of coping with long flights, am almost unable to sign my name. I don't recall much of the drive into London on Tuesday. The memory of my arrival nine years ago is much clearer. I will never forget my excitement at spotting the white cliffs of Dover, of coming into London, dumping my bags and walking through the theatre district.

At my first London play in 1986, *The Code Breaker*, I exhibited all the clichés of theatrical arousal. I sat on the edge of my seat and watched Derek Jacobi and Juliet Stevenson, clutched my ticket stub, pored over a borrowed program and projected myself furiously on to the Criterion's stage.

I saw a play two nights ago at the same theatre. It was directed by Harold Pinter. I can't remember its name. I fell asleep in half an hour and left at interval. We walked to the Groucho Club, a private club where the frenzy of media hob-nobbing made a Sydney Theatre Company opening look like a Romper Room reunion.

I failed to notice Johnny Depp and Kate Moss—although they were there—and had the frisson I'd failed to have at the theatre, on spying Salman Rushdie in the corner. For the record there was no blonde wig although I couldn't see his feet to check for stilettos.

When I was last in London, I felt Thatcher's presence like Big Brother. Not only in her replicas on Regent Street but in the coldness of the people. It was the harshest winter in eighty years. The elderly were encouraged not to get out of bed and the people on benefits hoped the temperature could not rise momentarily above 1 degree during a 72-hour period, so their heating allowance would not become invalid. The pin-stripes unflinchingly stepped over the homeless in the tube. There was a sense that things had gotten so bad



SOMETIMES ONE MUST RETURN to a place once visited to learn how life and self have changed.

I am in London. I arrived on Tuesday for a job interview with the director of *Butterfly Kiss*, Michael Winterbottom, for his new film *Jude the Obscure*, based on Thomas Hardy's classic novel.

I first visited London in 1986. According to my mother, I acquired a rather unspecific accent somewhere in second class on the ferry from Calais. Perhaps the ear was quicker then—or was it that I had no idea who I was and so easily wore a new accent like a new hat? Regardless, it protected me from being identified as another drunk and randy antipodean backpacker, amused my mother and no doubt embarrassed Su, my travelling companion.

I have just returned from my fourth accent class with the eminent Joan Washington. I am still struggling to crowd in more diphthongs and relax the sides of my tongue (which are, apparently, responsible for our hard, flat vowels) in order to perfect my Oxfordshire brogue. I can't help wishing that the 18-year-old, so adept at disguising her Australian roots, had not mutated into the self-conscious professional actor.

I remember London in '86 as a cold, difficult and extremely classist city. My memories are also peppered with romantic experiences, drinking champagne from a frosty bottle in snow-covered Hyde park with a rather handsome boy from Essex.

Above, Rachel Griffiths with Terence Stamp. Photograph by Tim Cole. Right, the author in London for the first time.

it was best not to notice. I noticed.

As I stood in front of a fruit stall, contemplating an enormous orange, calculating it to be worth A\$4.40, I felt the underclass. I wanted to steal it for them, for me, for us. I understood how we were born as a colony. I was just this side of hungry enough not to risk deportation on an overcrowded boat and seven years' hard labour, but I understood how my ancestors did.

There seems to be an optimism in London now. Perhaps it is the end of a hot summer. Perhaps it is me, measured by my only mild horror on seeing a £112 phone call on my bill. Perhaps you just don't notice the homeless when you are rich. It is a terrifying thought.

In 1986 I accepted the indifference of the city towards me, unfazed, and enthusiastically embraced its less expensive pleasures. Now I argue with my hotel over undelivered faxes, refuse to tip the bad service... and so the service gets worse.

I am recognised and so am 'somebody'. Not only do doors open to private clubs that I didn't know existed at eighteen, I am offered international membership. In the afternoons I sleep, jet-lagged, while the British Museum and the Tate lie full of unvisited treasures.

I ask myself: Am I having a good time? There is an exception I should be going wild, I should be thrilled. What's wrong with me?

At 18 I felt each kilometre I was from home as an electron charging through my body. They created a force that liberated me from everything anyone had ever thought or expected of me. I was finally free to become.

I have had moments this week, like at Angels, the famous costumiers, squeezing into an original 19th century corset, in a dressing room in which I imagined Redgrave, Olivier and Gielgud to have unrobed, when I feel the wave of excitement. A moment of naked self-satisfaction: I have become!

The question that follows like a bad aftertaste is: *what* have I become? Instead of celebrating the kilometres from home I crowd them into my suitcase, I lessen the distance by ringing home. I have become *afraid*.

I try to stay sane. I talk to myself. I tell myself that even if I do fall on my face in a spectacular international prat-fall or am cut down to short poppy size in a Demidenko-fell-swoop, I am doing what I want to do. I've stored some cash, met wonderful people, been flown around the world a couple of times and had a few free lunches. Yet I am here in the shadow of the 18-year-old. She was the trailblazer, she covered more ground and got more for her money. I've looked for her here. I need her fearlessness and her hardy good sense. Coming back to London doesn't make me aware of my age so much as my fragility. It is as if her strength got me back here but she's abandoned the adult to childhood fears and left me

the hollow comfort of adult solutions: Order, Discipline, Routine, Simplicity, Control, Sleep. I'd rather have her Energy, Unlimited Sponge-like Capacity To Absorb Information.

I wonder if that is the essence of growing older, that we accumulate fears. We grow afraid of losing our strength, of having experiences faster than we can process them, of cracking up. Most of all afraid of losing what we have: our mind, our money, our position, our power. Somewhere in mid-life perhaps we come face to face with them. The crisis. If we pass we may accept the reality that we *will* lose our power, strength, position. It is inevitable.

It is cooler today. It is raining softly and it is grey. It could be Melbourne. It is Sunday. I have sat in a café and read the *Sunday Times*.

It is not something she did in London but it is what I do. It has more coloured bits and a terrible pro-French testing comment on page 2. I am incensed! I almost feel as if I'm home. That is calming. It is an awfully English word to end on, but it is very *nice*. ■

Rachel Griffiths won the AFI award for best supporting actress for her role in *Muriel's Wedding*.





Monuments to difference

Ken Inglis examines enshrined styles of remembrance in Melbourne and Sydney

AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR OF THE ELEVENTH DAY of the eleventh month, weather permitting, a ray of sunlight from the dome of the Shrine of Remembrance touches the word 'Love' in the text *Greater Love Hath no Man*, carved on the Stone of Remembrance which is set in the pavement at the centre of the Sanctuary. Were the architects inspired by those painters of the Annunciation who made a shaft of heavenly light fall on the waiting Mary? The official guidebook does not shrink from a religious reading of the device: 'It is much more than a mathematical contrivance. It symbolises the union of man's effort with the Divine plan.'

SIXTY YEARS AGO, WHEN THE SHRINE WAS NEW, when all the British empire and most of the world still remembered that the Great War had stopped at that hour in 1918, and when nobody knew that an even greater war was coming, Melburnians were likelier than in 1995 to shiver at numerical mystery, to wonder whether some supernatural power had chosen that time to end the slaughter. Nowadays, when 11 November passes almost without notice, we may wonder why the shaft of light was not set for 25 April. The answer is that the Shrine, as someone said in early days, was 'essentially an Armistice Day conception', designed in 1923, when Anzac Day, though a sacred date, was not yet the occasion for either great city marches or for public holidays.

The architects and their astronomical advisers had reckoned without daylight saving, which from 1971 jeopardised the mystical metaphor until consultants from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology restored it with mirrors. Technology was also enlisted in 1988 to simulate the ray of light, which now falls electronically every half hour while a guide shepherds visitors to watch it move across the Stone and instructs them in the history and significance of the building. Here is an ingenious solution to the problem of what people are to do in a war memorial, how to express the sense of reverence such a building is intended to engender towards ... towards whom or what? The war dead? All who have gone to war? The nation? The divine?

Differing answers to that question are accommodated by that text on the stone: biblical but not identified as such, truncated so that readers can finish Jesus' sentence however they choose. Uncertainty about the Shrine's meaning is evident also in what was said and done at its inauguration on Sunday 11 November 1934. The ceremony of dedication was Protestant enough, like those at most war memorials large and small, to keep Catholics off the platform—though not as Christian as some clergy would have liked. When the King's son the Duke of Gloucester laid the first wreath on the Stone, he said 'To the Glory of God'; but the carved record of his words leaves out God and has him dedicate the Shrine 'to the glory of service and sacrifice'.

Above, Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance. Photograph by Bill Thomas.

Right, Sydney's Anzac Memorial. Photograph by Andrew Stark.

That language comes from Pericles rather than Jesus. So do the three sentences inscribed on the western wall, facing St Kilda Road and telling everybody—mourners, pilgrims, visitors, tourists, tram travellers—what the Shrine is supposed to mean. First, in the third person archaic, a declaration that the site is sacred: *Let All Men Know That This is Holy Ground*. Next, name and purpose: *This Shrine Established in the Hearts of Men as on the Solid Earth Commemorates a People's Fortitude and Sacrifice*. Finally, a high-dictioned command: *Ye Therefore That Come After Give Remembrance*.

These days we might call it a mission statement. The message had been drafted by a man of the Australian Imperial Force—the man of the AIF, Sir John Monash, 'broadly accepted', his biographer Geoffrey Serle judges, 'as the greatest living Australian.' To polish the words he had called on Bernard O'Dowd, poet and parliamentary draftsman. Their classical Greek resonance fitted the building perfectly, for the architects had modelled its lowest parts on the Parthenon and its roof on the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus.

Monash has chaired the assessors who chose, in 1923, P B Hudson's and J H Wardrop's design for a Victorian National War Memorial to be erected in the Domain, and who agreed with the architects to name it the Shrine of Remembrance. Not everybody in Melbourne liked the design. Keith Murdoch's *Herald* gave space to wide-ranging criticisms: the architects had used Greek models unskillfully; they should not have looked back to Greece at all; their Shrine was a tomb, speaking only of death, not victory. 1924 brought to office a state ministry of Labor men who believed that if Victoria was to have any war memorial it should be a hospital. Then came an anti-Labor coalition inclined to prefer at first an arch of victory over St Kilda Road, and before long an Anzac Square with a cenotaph facing Parliament House.

A cenotaph of wood and plaster, half-sized copy of Sir Edwin Lutyens' monument in Whitehall, had been installed on the steps of Parliament House for the marchers to salute in 1926. The Country-National government resolved that the Victorian National War Memorial would not be the Shrine but an Anzac Square with permanent cenotaph at the top of Bourke Street. Cleared of buildings, that space would become the ceremonial centre of the city.

Melbourne would have that complex today, had Monash not been persuaded by a few wartime comrades in the Melbourne Legacy Club to come out on behalf of the Shrine. For this élite of digger nationalists the Shrine became a test case of the nation's gratitude. They damned the Anzac Square project by identifying it with the politicians whose environs it would beautify, and declared that only the Shrine, set in a landscape of its own, would worthily commemorate the soldiers of Victoria. Monash committed himself to it on the eve of Anzac Day 1927, and that was that.

Monash died late in 1931, knowing that the Shrine was assured, having himself organised both its construction and a brilliantly executed public appeal for £160,000 pounds to add to the £100,000 already promised by the state government and the Melbourne City Council.

THREE MELBOURNES WENT ON DISPLAY late in 1934. The Duke of Gloucester was available to dedicate the Shrine because he had come out for Victoria's centenary celebrations, and the dedication, attended by more than 300,000 people, became an event in that pageant, alongside the London-to-Melbourne air race and other demonstrations of the imperial connection: Rudyard Kipling composed an ode for the occasion. Catholics had their own centennial celebration, with its equivalent to the Duke: the papal legate Cardinal MacRory was guest at a eucharistic congress whose opening on 2 December was said to have drawn an even greater crowd than the Shrine. And people on the far left created a counter-festival, the All-Australia Congress Against War, to challenge the triumphalist imperialism of the centenary. They too engaged an imported celebrity, the émigré Czech anti-fascist Egon Kisch; but their opening on 10 November had to go ahead without him, for the visitor was being held against his will at Port Melbourne on board the *Strathaird*. Kisch landed on 13 November, illegally, awkwardly and famously, breaking a leg and setting off a political and judicial comedy which he chronicled in a book with the droll title *Australian Landfall*.



The first of those three Melbournes—Protestant, loyally imperial—embraced the Shrine; Catholic Melbourne and left-wing Melbourne long harboured hostility or at least unease towards the temple that dominated the city's southern skyline

Adherents of the Movement Against War distributed leaflets among the crowd at the Shrine, characterising it as a vessel of the war spirit, until they were stopped by policemen. Catholics were not officially represented at the Shrine on 11 November because by the rules of their church the ceremony was a service of Protestant worship. Archbishop Mannix's personal antagonism towards the Shrine went beyond both its Protestant rituals and its pagan design: Irish nationality as well as Catholic faith impelled his description of the building as one of the most extravagant expenditures of which Australia had ever been guilty.

The first of those three Melbournes—Protestant, loyally imperial—embraced the Shrine; Catholic Melbourne and left-wing Melbourne long harboured hostility or at least unease towards the temple that dominated the city's southern skyline.

I THINK THE SHRINE IS THE LARGEST purely commemorative monument to participation in the Great War raised anywhere in the world. How come? The presence of Monash is part of the answer: 'a hollow and specious monument to one man's egotism', grumbled the Sydney-based, anti-officer *Smith's Weekly*. Secondly, planners of commemoration in Melbourne could most easily think of their project as standing for the nation, when the city was filling in as federal capital. Thirdly, and more speculatively, more than one student of the story has detected in it a resurgent civic pride. Thirty years earlier, when the makers of post-war commemoration were young, Melbourne had had a great fall, greater than Sydney's. The Shrine was an affirmation that the city in which the Parliament House, the Public Library, the Exhibition Building had been raised before the fall was capable again of municipal marvels.

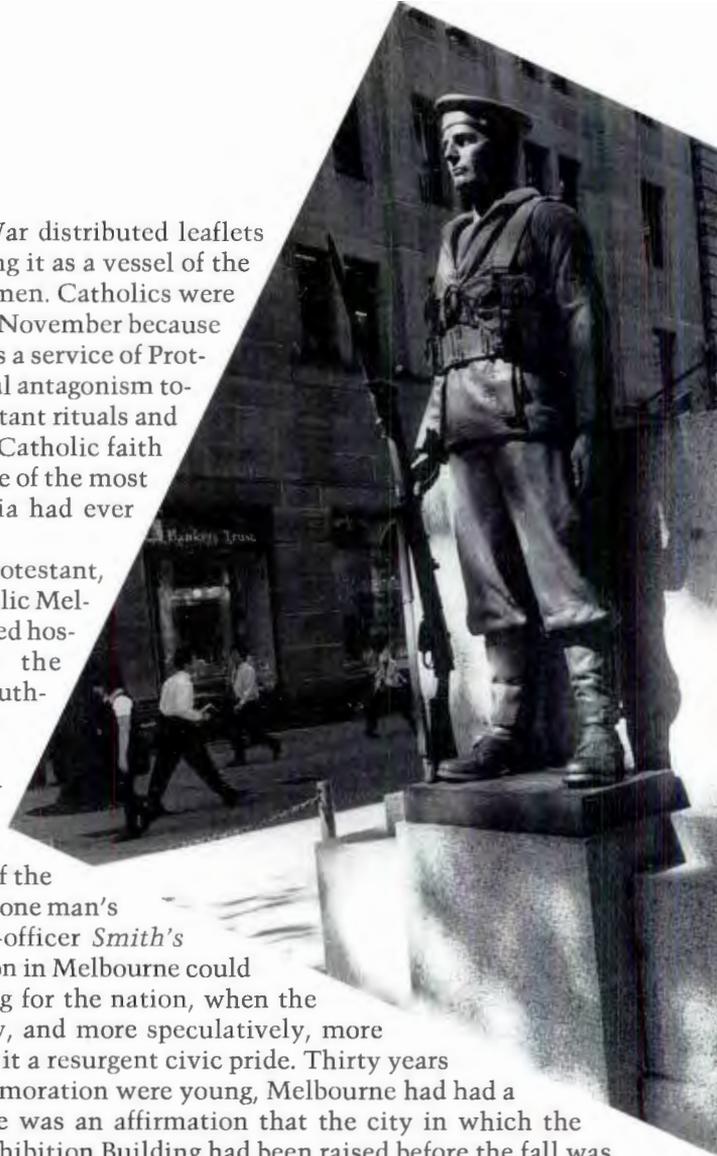
Sydney

The British warship HMS *Sussex* carried the Duke to Sydney, where he dedicated the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park. As in Victoria, the making of a state war memorial in New South Wales had been long delayed by conflict.

Newspaper publisher, Hugh D. McIntosh, and the RSL had secured another Anzac memorial for Sydney. Just after Armistice Day 1924 McIntosh's *Sunday Times* published a plea by an RSL leader, Fred Davison, for a cenotaph, in Martin Place, centre of wartime patriotic rallies. When Jack Lang became premier next year, McIntosh persuaded him to find £10,000 for the project. Lang called McIntosh 'the Barnum of Australia', who 'wanted to be known as the Soldiers' Friend'. So did Lang. The eminent Australian expatriate sculptor Sir Bertram Mackennal was commissioned to design an empty tomb guarded by soldier and sailor. 'And so we dedicate to the Dead the heart of Sydney City', said Fred Davison at the inauguration in 1927. The statues were added in 1929. Monash unveiled them, and the anti-Labor premier, Thomas Bavin, quoted Pericles, declaring his words 'just as apt for Australia as they were for Athens.' *To Our Glorious Dead*, said the inscription in Martin Place, adapting Lutyens' *To The Glorious Dead* in Whitehall.

In Sydney as in Melbourne, 25 April had overtaken 11 November as the primary date for commemoration in the years since the Cenotaph was first imaged. Long before the Anzac Memorial was ready, the Cenotaph became the centrepiece for Sydney's Anzac Day ritual: as returned men marched through Martin Place, their heads turned to the empty tomb with bronze sentinels in salute to dead comrades.

In 1928 the men of the RSL agreed that the Anzac Memorial should be commemorative in character. Fred Davison said on Anzac Day that the soldiers now opted for 'a shrine of remembrance': Melbourne's term was now in wider currency. The competition for a design was won in 1930 by a young architect named Bruce Dellit. His plan was deliberately unclassical, he explained, 'purely contemporary'. By 1930 architects and clients everywhere had begun to absorb the influence of the International Exhibition of Decoration and Modern Industrial Arts held in Paris in



Above, The Martin Place Cenotaph. Photograph by Andrew Stark.

1925, from which the much later term Art Deco derives. Dellitt was among Australian architects now designing shops, cinemas, hotels and office blocks, plain in design and decorated with details from outside the classical tradition. They liked to let in the sun through amber glass, 'to outlast', as Dellitt said, 'any drab depression which might arise out of personal grief for the fallen': a characteristically modern attitude to death. This design would not confine light to a single ray piercing funereal semi-darkness.

In Melbourne the architecture was everything, the sculpture by Paul Montford—classical female abstractions—rarely noticed. In Sydney, Rayner Hoff's marble and bronze figures were integral to the structure. Dellitt engaged him not only as an admired fellow-artist but as a man whose personal experience of war's horrors was now informing his work. Inside, bronze reliefs on the walls of a Hall of Memory would depict service men and women resting, and behind each group a March of the Dead. From a balustrade in that Hall the visitor would look down into a Hall of Silence at a naked bronze male figure lying on shield and sword, supported by mourning women. Outside, high on the marble walls, twenty realistic statues, portraits of Australians at war; lower down, stone and bronze bas-reliefs, finally and spectacularly, dominating the eastern and western elevations, bronze groups symbolising 'Victory after Sacrifice' and 'Crucifixion of Civilisation'.

These last two works remained plaster models. In the first, Britannia and a female Australia stood among the dead who had made victory possible. In the second, a naked female Peace hung from a cross, surrounded by the armour, shield and helmet of Mars, with dead men and broken weapons at her feet. 'No more mordant denunciation of the criminal insanity of war', said an admirer, 'has come from all our pulpits'.

From many pulpits, however, the groups themselves were denounced. 'Nude Woman on Anzac Cross. RC Church Attack'. Next day 'Sculptor Defends his work. Reply to Protest.' 'Australians Crucified During War'. All Catholic priests who spoke up deplored the group, and especially the Crucifixion: 'a travesty of the Redemption', said coadjutor Archbishop Sheehan. Protestants were divided. The trustees abandoned both groups, ostensibly on grounds of cost.

Money was certainly on their mind. Above the money in the bank (now £75,000, including interest for all those years). £15,000 was still needed in 1933 to finish the building. The RSL sponsored the sale of Anzac memorial stars, to embellish the ceiling with stars each representing a volunteer from New South Wales and thus to incorporate an element of honouring men who returned as well as the dead. (In Melbourne that had been done more explicitly, the names of all Victorians who went to the war being recorded in books in glass-topped cases within an 'ambulatory' beyond the Sanctuary.)

A CROWD OF 100,000 PEOPLE—one third the size of Melbourne's—gathered around the Anzac Memorial and its Lake of Remembrance on Saturday 24 November 1934 for the inaugural (and as usual Catholic-free) ceremony. The building was also smaller than Melbourne's, its makers having had no help from the municipal or state treasury.

Twenty thousand returned soldiers had marched into Hyde Park from the Domain. Those of them who entered the Anzac Memorial after the ceremony could look up at the stars representing themselves and down at the sculpture honouring in a manner unlike any other war memorial in the country their dead comrades and three bereaved women. The women's prostrate burden, lean and delicate, is a sacrificial victim: not a giver of wounds but a bearer of them, like Saint Sebastian,

The ceremony of dedication [at the shrine] was Protestant enough, like those at most war memorials large and small, to keep Catholics off the platform—though not as Christian as some clergy would have liked. When the King's son the Duke of Gloucester laid the first wreath on the Stone, he said 'To the Glory of God'; but the carved record of his words leaves out God and has him dedicate the Shrine 'to the glory of service and sacrifice'.

Even without the Crucifixion of Civilisation, Hoff's vision could startle. The writer Frank Dalby Davison, son of Fred, and like his father a soldier in France, had a woman in a story say 'Shocking' and scurry away from the naked warrior in the Hall of Silence after noticing his penis. 'Even the scrawniness of death had not effaced his beauty', Davison wrote, 'and the artist, scorning to profane nature, has moulded him as she had made him.'

the sword and shield on which he lies no longer instruments of war, but elements of support for his limp body. Downstairs, looking side on at the group, visitors were enjoined by an inscription in the floor *Let Silent Contemplation be Your Offering* as they took in the mother, widow/wife with baby, and lover, stylised in the classical form of caryatids. Dellit and Hoff had wanted a more instructive inscription: 'They gave Sons, Husbands and Lovers that the Race might live'. The Trustees were still wondering about that message when they ran out of time. Nor did any mission statement inside or outside the building tell people what it meant. Here, as at other points in the story, Sydney lacked a Monash.

Would Monash have blessed a building for Melbourne in the modern style, or figures by Hoff? Even without the *Crucifixion of Civilisation*, Hoff's vision could startle. The writer Frank Dalby Davison, son of Fred, and like his father a soldier in France, had a woman in a story say 'Shocking' and scurry away from the naked warrior in the Hall of Silence after noticing his penis. 'Even the scrawniness of death had not effaced his beauty', Davison wrote, 'and the artist, scorning to profane nature, has moulded him as she had made him.'

The Anzac Memorial was a monument strikingly different from either Sydney's Cenotaph or Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance, and it never dislodged an attachment to the Cenotaph which was already strong by 1934.

Melbourne and Sydney, 1934-1995

Established in the hearts of men, the Shrine declared of itself. Though 'men' in those days was read to include women, the hearts of some women remained with the temporary cenotaph. In 1933 the War Widows and Widowed Mothers' Association asked the men in charge of Anzac commemoration to make the cenotaph permanent: more than the great temple rising over the Domain, said one, 'the cenotaph represented their deceased relatives'. The men were sympathetic enough to install the portable cenotaph in St Kilda Road for the first Anzac Day march to the Shrine; but after that the new monument stood alone.

Sydney's Anzac Memorial was never an obligatory destination for Anzac Day marchers. On Armistice Day, (or Remembrance Day as it became) and other anniversary occasions the empty tomb in Martin Place, not the monument in Hyde Park, received wreaths and rhetoric. The most singular of Anzac rituals, the dawn service, originated at the Cenotaph in 1928 and is still held there; the Anzac Memorial remains closed until after the march.

After the greater war of 1939-1945, the Victorian government and the Melbourne City Council again supplemented a public appeal to create for the Shrine a new forecourt with sculptured figures and eternal flame, dedicated by the Queen before a crowd about the same size as had seen her uncle Gloucester dedicate the original building. In Sydney the trustees of the Anzac Memorial dithered for years and added no word or symbol recognising participation and death in World War II. If anybody noticed, they made no fuss. The Anzac Memorial lacked a constituency, a public who cared. As a site for protest—against war in Vietnam, or Indonesian annexation of East Timor, or rape—the monument in Hyde Park was much less likely to be spray-painted than the one in Martin Place, which stirrers preferred both for its central position and because its desecration would provoke far more outrage. When the Anzac Memorial became severely damaged by water, that made hardly any news, while less dangerous seepage at the Shrine provoked in the *Herald-Sun* a marvellously Melburnian front page: 'Shrine Crumbles'.

OVER THE DECADES THE ANZAC MEMORIAL has become literally overshadowed by huge commercial neighbours; in Melbourne, regulations protect the Shrine's commanding presence. If you stand in Swanston Street, Keith Dunstan once observed, you see 'citadels of strength at either end—the Shrine and the Carlton Brewery. You might even say that they are the symbols of all culture in Melbourne'. The brewery has gone but the insight has become Melbourne folklore. St Paul's Cathedral, though at the midpoint of the axis, has no part in the image: the culture represented by the churches has been pushed to the margin.

At night, floodlights create an unearthly glow to be seen from cars and trams, not only around 25 April and 11 November, but at times of other than Anzac festivity, including one date earlier in November than Remembrance Day. A plaque inside the Shrine records gratitude to the State Electricity Commission for illumination during the carnival for that other part of the culture whose one day of the year is a holiday for the Melbourne Cup. ■

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W One for the toad thanks mate

WHAT IS IT ABOUT THE MELBOURNE CUP that gives rise to the oddest behaviour in people? Why do normally staid librarians and actuaries make their way to Flemington resplendent in togas and gorilla suits, drink enough to fill a car boot, and fall over each other like extras in a Chaplin movie? And why do people, who for the rest of the year walk past TABs without turning a hair, rush in at half-past-two on the first Tuesday in November, plonk five dollars on a nag whose name they can't remember and form they can't verify, and, unaware that it's plodding on behind the leaders by the length of the straight, shout for their charge with all the desperation of a gambler who's mortgaged his house?

Purely and simply it's the romance of the punt. Beyond picking up some extra cash, there is the hint of something transcendent in backing a winner, a sweet prospect which will again seduce the nation and command its rapt attention for some three-and-a-half minutes on November 7.

While the Cup Sweep has become an institution—always won by someone who agonises over the dollar bet, having claimed to be ideologically opposed to gambling, who then runs around like a loon waving their ticket in everyone's face screaming 'I am the champion!'—there are more bizarre ways in which the nation's premier horse race is celebrated.

If you have occasion to be just north of Daintree River for Cup Day you might come across one of the strangest. Since there is a dearth of race tracks and an oversupply of vermin in Far North Queensland, nature has corrected itself and the Cape Tribulation Cup for cane toads is run every year in the pub on the flat. I was there three years ago and as soon as the last round of drinks had been bought following the finish of that other race—won by Sub-Zero—24 superbly bred toads are set on their way, with a room full of drunks ready to cheer them on, and snare the winner in a ham-fisted grasp.

Cane toads are mustered (a five minute search down by the mangroves), saddled (a rubber band with a number on it is placed around the torso) and stalled (chucked in a garbage bin). It is then that the skill of picking the winner is played out like a finely measured piece of theatre.

Each is held up for inspection and auctioned to the highest bidder. All the money raised is pooled to be divided amongst the place getters after the race (known—why I know not—as a 'Calcutta'). Old heads and canny punters gather to eye the talent, occasionally nodding and winking to each other when a 'good bit o' frog' is spotted. Despite the absurdity of it all, the atmosphere is thick with ritual.

At first the bidding was slow, the first two toads going for \$10 each, but the auctioneer had a well-practised patter, seeming to pull bids out of the ether, and soon the big money came out. When a particularly frisky-looking customer went for the record price of \$80, the crowd gasped and the atmosphere was charged with a great expectancy.



I had viewed the carry-on with no small amount of amusement beforehand, assuming that no-one would be silly enough to pay more than a couple of dollars to have the privilege of calling themselves an owner and racer of cane toads. But when the pool reached \$300 before half the field had been sold I naturally took a greater interest in proceedings. When number 20 came out of the bin, kicking like a champion, it was time to enter the fray.

I was engaged in a short but intense bidding duel with two others. However they dropped out early and I picked it up for the very reasonable price of \$30. I'm not sure if they let me have it because the price was too rich or I looked ready and willing to sacrifice everything I owned by the way I maniacally waved my arms about. Then came the ritual of naming my steed. Some of the more interesting monickers chosen were *Joh's Jury*, *Truckload of Beer*, and a personal favourite, *Give Us a Kiss*. In conjunction with connections—I borrowed ten bucks from the publican—we settled on *Son of Kermit*. A couple of old-timers nodded at me in recognition of an astute choice.

Soon the formalities were over and it was time to get down to business. A circle was drawn in the middle of the concrete floor and the garbage bin gently tipped over at its centre. The winner would be the toad to get to the perimeter first. The start was delayed when the heavily backed *Squeeze Me* slipped out from under the rim. Fortunately it was collared quickly and returned to the bin. Silence descended as the crowd anticipated the start, which was punctuated by the starter giving the bin three raps on the side with a stick followed by a tumultuous cheer as it was lifted.

The pub was consumed by an explosion of toad flesh. Drinkers charged in every direction chasing the prized jumpers, upending tables, beers and chairs in the process. While the two place-getters were grabbed quickly, the winner eluded the punters and escaped via an open door. The pub emptied out into the tropical heat and around 20 or 30 blokes descended on the shrubs and bushes around the hotel, hoping to flush out our reluctant champion. A yelp from the showers in the adjoining backpacker resort alerted the presence of an unwanted visitor and the entire search party jumped the fence and rushed the toilet block. Moments later our victor was carried triumphantly back into the bar.

The winner was an unfancied starter, sold for a paltry \$12. In all the fuss I had forgotten about *Son of Kermit*. There he or she sat (I'm no expert at determining the sex of cane toads) in the middle of the circle, looking more than a little superior. I wondered what on earth had possessed me, had possessed all of us for that matter.

The publican came over, slapped me on the back and as if to answer my thoughts said, 'Cup fever, mate. It's like this every year.'

Jon Greenaway is the assistant editor of *Eureka Street*.

Essays in Remembrance

1. Seven Sketches of Evan Owen

*Evan Owen has a bent leg,
The left leg,
Bowed like the belly of a cello.*

*It had rained all night until dawn next morning
With grey cloud still a ragged fringe
Halfway down the mountain,
So the road to the cemetery was wet
When they buried his Aunt Emmy
And she so heavy it had taken four men
To lift her onto the hay-wain.
Evan walked beside the corpse with one hand on the coffin
To keep it from shifting.
But the horse on the nearside was blind in one eye
And stumbled in a puddle:
The coffin slipped and reaching over to steady it
Evan tripped over a poking-up stone.
The snap, they said, when the wheel of the hay-wain
Ran over his leg, was like a whip crack:
And the doctor over by Pen-y-pas
Tending Mrs Phillips in labour with her fifth.
So Evan's leg was never properly mended
And he only a young fellow then.*

2.

*Evan Owen, now past middle age and well respected,
Limps along the mountain's lower slopes
(all around the grey shapes tower
Like sculptured monuments piled together by giants).
With his bent leg and lop-sided body
He seems a gnome-like being
Until he smiles at the boy by his side.
I was ten then and said to be delicate,
Something to do with the chest,
And had been sent to stay for the summer months
At Uncle Gwynedd's place in Wales.
A large stone house with orchard and garden;
A stretch of singing river
And seventy acres of fair grazing.
But Uncle Gwynedd spent much of his time travelling
To strange and faraway places
Leaving Evan to manage the land
While Olwen, his childless wife, buxom and bubbling
With an abundance of mothering love,
Took care of the house and was pleased that Evan,
So kindly and wise, should have,
If only for the time being,
A surrogate son to keep him company.*

3.

*Together they hoe between vegetable rows,
Pick berries and early plums for preserving,
And while Evan milks the cow
The boy crawls under hedges
To look for eggs in hidden nests.
They feed the white sow with her squealing litter
And, these things finished, go side by side
Across the mountains' lower slopes
To check on the flock of fat-tailed sheep
Scattered about the grazing
As if placed to complete the scenery.
So they go, the limping mountain man,
And the small boy from the city
Eager to become part of this completeness;
To absorb and be drawn into its secrecies,
Learning to recognise the footprints of a fox
Or a stoat's hiding place beneath a lichen-covered stone:
A nest that a skylark has left,
A dead, bent tree where a kestrel slept,
And an undercut ledge in a river-bend
Where, time and light being right,
One might reach in quietly and lift out a trout.
And always the mountains stand around,
Great shapes with changing faces as Olwen explains:
'Come sun, come moon, come snow, come rain,
And nature points them a different way.'*

4.

*The boy sleeps in a room with a steeped ceiling
And before getting into bed goes to the window
To stand for a while looking at the peaks,
Each uniquely aloof in a collective solitude
Like hooded monks locked inside the privacy
Of a separate silence while above,
Behind and beyond each peak
Stars repeat according to time and season
Their own quiet rising and passing again into darkness:
And he wonders if each speaks to each, stars and peaks,
In a mystical language of a knowing beyond our own,
Linking physical and spiritual.
He will ask Evan about this*

For Evan has a wisdom that sees beyond reason
 And the familiar unity of all that is visible;
 Peaks, valleys, rivers, creatures,
 Moon and stars, light and dark,
 And lives within a bigger completeness
 In which history, myth, prophecies
 And apocalyptic visions are all of a piece
 With the business of mixing a bran mash
 For the white pig and her litter.

5.

Lynn Ogwen in late light, burnished copper and orange,
 The loveliest lake in Wales.
 Beyond it, thrusting up from a jumble
 Of lesser peaks and rock shapes, the pinnacle of Tryfan,
 Dignified symbol of defiance.
 There, after a day of neighbourly hay making
 Evan speaks to the boy of the history,
 Myths and prophetic visions that had kept
 The Welsh together in a separate identity for centuries
 In spite of the persistence of the English
 Who ringed their borders about with castles and forts,
 Trying to choke them into submission when invasions failed.
 He quoted from poems and prophecies that were spoken
 Before ever history was written,
 Telling of horrors undreamed of, and days to come
 When great mountains would lean their heads together
 And weep to see rivers running blood
 And unborn infants die in their mother's stomachs.
 With his corrugated face strangely radiant
 Evan told the boy of two great dragons
 Fighting for supremacy, one red and one white,
 Their great tails flailing,
 Fangs and talons ripping at each other
 Until both were submerged in a lake of their own blood.
 And out of it came the red dragon with the banner
 That flies over Wales to this day.
 Grazing sheep, accustomed to quietness,
 Turn their heads towards Evan and stop feeding,
 But only briefly. The sun goes down, the lake sleeps,
 But all night the boy dreams.

6.

A compact stone chapel and Evan at the porch door
 With hymn books and homely greetings,
 For mountain people are God-conscious
 And come each Sunday to pray, sing hymns
 And listen to their preacher.
 Evan, a robust but melodious baritone,
 Leads the singing. Olwyn's lilting contralto

Reminds the boy of clean spring water running over stones
 (They had met at an eisteddfod).

Hymns, prayers and preaching; everything in Welsh
 And although he has only a smattering of the language
 He understands it all, for the praying and preaching
 Are full of deep and hidden meaning, and the hymns
 Made him feel that his whole being is overflowing
 With love and a comforting one-ness with these people
 Who seem so eager to look upon the face of their creator
 That he wonders if the thick walls will
 Always be strong enough to contain their impatience.
 But as Olwyn said as they went home together,
 'For us it is easy to believe.
 Each day we wake and see the mountains all around,
 Sometimes in sunshine, sometimes in rain;
 Sometimes in the soft silence of snow and at other times
 When the shrieking of wild winds, and thunder
 And lightning are enough to make you afraid.
 We see it all. We feel, and we believe.'

7.

Each evening Evan took his scythe
 From its hook in the toolshed
 And went to the sown pasture patch
 By the orchard wall to cut a few swathes
 Of fresh green feed for the milking cow.
 Swifts dipped and flitted as we went through the gate,
 Me so keenly looking forward to this performance
 Because it always seemed both beautifully complete
 and curiously dreamlike and unreal.
 The scythe, strange and awkwardly misshapen,
 Yet in the hands of that gnome-like figure
 The centrepiece of a concentricity of rhythms
 That flowed across his shoulders, arms and body
 Into an arc of whispering steel
 That swung back and forth while little waves
 Of pasture grass swooned across the blade.
 I could hear the sounds of an orchestra
 And see bows moving back and forth
 Across the strings of double-basses
 And the bellies of cellos
 While my friend Evan Owen moved through
 A stately pas de deux,
 The curved and cambered handle of the scythe
 Matching the shape of his bent leg.

Envoi :

At the window of a room with a steepled ceiling
 A boy looks out on moonlit mountains
 While speaking wordlessly to something beyond reach.
 Grateful for each day, knowing that he is growing.

Coming into shore

British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism. Manipulation, Conflict and Compromise in the Late Nineteenth Century. Luke Trainor, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and Melbourne 1994. ISBN 0 521 43476 9 RRP \$29.95

From Italy to Ingham. Italians in North Queensland. William Douglass, Queensland University Press, Brisbane, 1995. ISBN 0 7022 2635 1 RRP \$19.95

Redefining Australians. Immigration, Citizenship and National Identity. Ann-Mari Jordens, Hale and Ironmonger, Sydney, 1995. ISBN 0 86806 565 X RRP \$24.95

FOR PERCEPTIVE REMARKS about national identity and immigration, look to the bureaucrat's marginal notes and not to the big public speeches. In 1885, for example, there was much public debate about the value of an imperial federation. The subject lent itself to high rhetoric.

With an eye both to practicality and morality, Lord Blatchford wrote mordantly:

The notion of an Anglo-Saxon alliance will degenerate into an unsuccessful contrivance for bullying the rest of the world. To contend for such an alliance on the ground that Anglo-Saxons the great exterminators of aborigines in the temperate zone would, when confederated set a new and exceptional example of justice and humanity seems to me a somewhat transcendental expectation.

Luke Trainor, who provides this quotation, studies under its imperial aspect the relationship between Australia and Great Britain in the decades before Federation. His account is convincingly complex, in that he takes full account of the diverse and conflicting interests which helped shape the Australian relationship to Britain after Federation.

The British Government, for example, wanted to have the costs of defence defrayed by the Colonies. But it wanted also to retain control over the composition and the deployment of its forces abroad. The colonies, on the other hand, desired to maintain the umbrella of security offered by the British, but did not want to pay for it. As a compromise,

Australia accepted British leadership and training of its own forces, with the result that the culture of the Australian Armed Forces has remained stubbornly British.

The colonial economy was also shaped by conflicting interests within Australia and Britain. Victoria, a manufacturing centre, for example, preferred tariffs to protect its industry, while New South Wales wanted a free trade arrangement to protect its agricultural exports under British hegemony. Agriculturalists in Australia generally found common cause with British capital; the workers from each nation also formed common cause on occasion. But the Depression of the 1890s showed that Australia was heavily dependent on British investment, with the result that the form which Federation took had to reassure the creditors.

Trainor brings out well the influence of these complex set of relationships on the way in which Australians came to conceive and give legislative embodiment to their identity. To define Australian identity in terms of British descent served the interests of most competing groups. It respected the desire of the British Government to maintain a decisive influence on Australian defence and foreign policy, and to protect its foreign investment. Landowners and businessmen believed that it protected their relationships with British investors and their cultural standing, in the face of populist threats. Workers recognised in it a bulwark against a plantation economy, dependent on cheap imported labour. This was one of the latter options for development which the colonies could have taken; many

colonists saw it as representing a continuing threat in the shape of Chinese, Afghan or Islander immigration. The imaging of Australian identity in terms of a white, male and British archetype united groups who were otherwise divided.

The shrill debates that attended the definition of Australian identity lie on the margins of Trainor's theme, and he treats them only in passing. They generally reflected the narrow self-interest of groups which saw themselves as threatened by the importation of cheap labour. But while the interests defended were narrow, the shape of the argument was broad. It worked confidently from an abstract description of national characteristics.

Implicit in the argument was the assumption that nations were determined genetically, and that the most strongly endowed stock would survive. Groups, like the Australian aboriginals, who were particularly primitive could be expected to die out, while those of British stock stood highest on the evolutionary ladder. Moreover, because national qualities were determined by racial origin, unrestricted immigration which would mix racial stock would inevitably lead to national decadence.

This kind of discourse served to define Australians as British and to give a rationale for the definition. It also coloured the way in which Australians conceived of national identity itself. They were led to see it in terms of abstract qualities which were shared by individuals within the nation. From this perspective, personal qualities, relationships, achievement and experience were not relevant to a person's identity, when compared to his or her racial

and national origin. Furthermore, national identity was understood to unite individuals in the nation, and to distinguish the nation from other non-British nations and from non-white groups within British colonies. The relationships which non-British people formed within Australia and the communities of which they were part, were as irrelevant to national identity as the communities from which they had left behind when they came to Australia.

To identify Australians in such individualist and abstract terms meant that one never had to observe their changing relationships with the communities of which they were part, including their communities of origin. The debate about immigration was condemned to reveal little more than the interests of those who engaged in it, and not to illuminate the real changes in the way in which Australians identified themselves as and with the nation.

William Douglass, an indefatigable researcher into cross-cultural contact, studies one aspect of Australian immigration in the twentieth century, namely the Italian immigration to the sugar-growing areas of North Queensland. Italians came to Queensland in large numbers after the plantation economy, based on Islander labour, was rejected. At the same time central sugar mills were developed, and created a demand for seasonal labour to cut the sugar on the farms. Because conventional wisdom regarded this work as physically too demanding for those of British stock, Italians were introduced. Instead of working for salaries, as others did, they organised themselves into gangs which subcontracted for the work.

The Italians were willing to work long hours, because they hoped to earn enough either to return to Italy or to buy their own farms. Since they had such highly developed skills in agriculture, they could improve these farms, arrange co-operative finance,

and then sell them to later arrivals.

Douglass shows with exemplary clarity the gap between the complex reality of Italian immigration and the often stereotypical reaction to it. There was regular tension between the Italian immigrants and the Australian community, because the newcomers did not fit the stereotypes in which Australian identity was defined, and because other workers believed them-

identity in Queensland had been modified and enriched by Italian immigration. The most significant example of such debate would occur when at a national or state level union, political parties or returned servicemen's leagues condemned Italian immigration in abstract and general terms, and the resolutions were rejected by the branches in areas where Italian immigrants had a prominent part in town life.

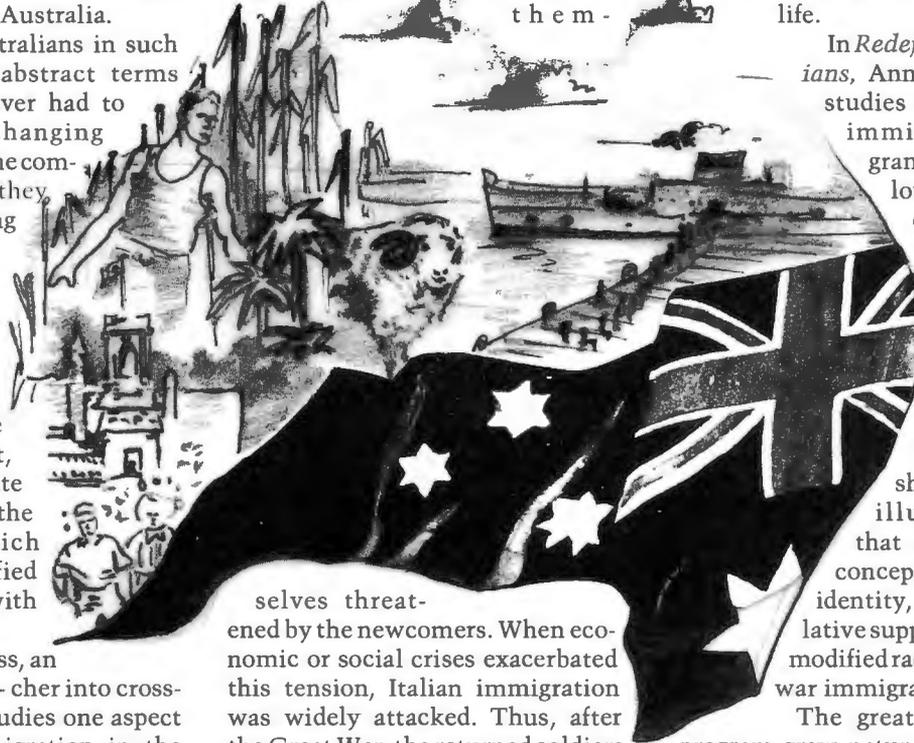
In *Redefining Australians*, Ann-Mari Jordens studies in detail the immigration programme that followed the Second World War. She has based her study on the files of the Department of Immigration, from which she argues, most illuminatingly, that the prevailing concept of Australian identity, and the legislative support for it, were modified radically by post-war immigration.

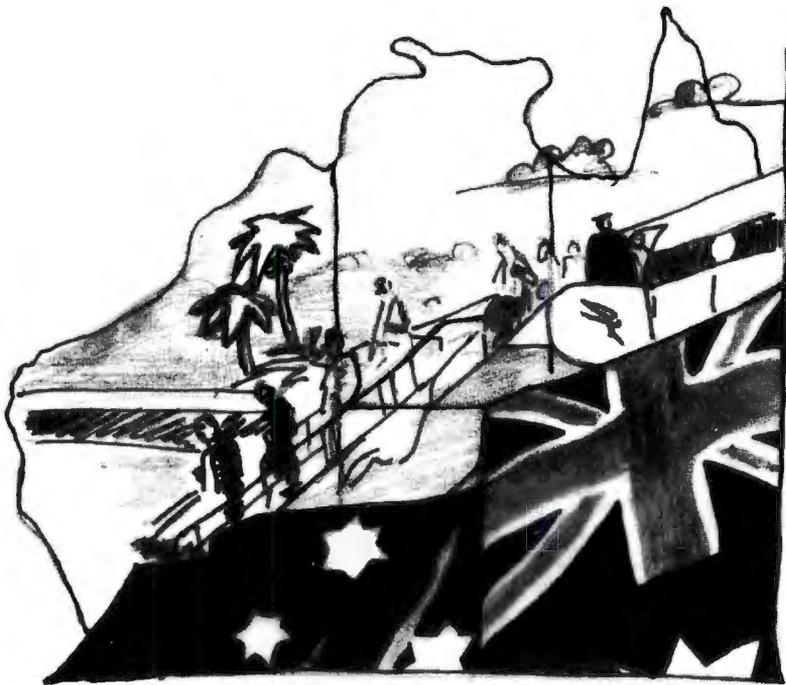
The great immigration program grew naturally out of the Australian experience during the war. After it, the Australian Government identified two problems: first, if Australia was to survive as a largely British society, it needed an effective defence capability which could be established only with an increased population; secondly, while Australia had developed an industrial capacity sufficient to eliminate the previous cycles of large-scale unemployment, this could not be filled by the existing population. Immigration was seen as the answer to the needs of defence and of the economy.

The paradox of post-war immigration was that it eroded the understanding of Australian identity which it was designed to support. The advocates of immigration, who conceived Australian identity as British, demanded that immigrants would be integrated into this British society. The Government according-

selves threatened by the newcomers. When economic or social crises exacerbated this tension, Italian immigration was widely attacked. Thus, after the Great War, the returned soldiers pressed for preference to be given to workers of British stock. This call was endorsed during the Depression. During the initial xenophobia of the Second World War, even Italians who had previously been suspect because of their anti-Fascist leanings, were routinely interned.

In such crises, which were fuelled by the perceived threat to the interest of local groups, debate about immigration was crude, abstract and based on contradictory stereotypes. As convenience demanded, Italian communities were seen as seedbeds of both Fascism and Communism; Italians were regarded as congenitally violent or lazy, as feckless or as ruthlessly efficient, as separatist or as taking over Australian institutions. Such debate perpetuated an abstract understanding of Australian identity, and prevented recognition of how the sense of Australian





ly gave initial preference to British immigrants, housed them in better conditions than aliens, and did not draft them into particular industries as need dictated. But economic growth depended on a flexible source of labour. This led the Government to seek non-British immigrants, who could be directed to work as required.

The internal contradictions of a simultaneous commitment both to integration into a British society and to a considerable non-British immigration, meant that legislative discrimination in favour of British migrants—in housing, health benefits, and access to citizenship—was soon eroded under the pressure to integrate all Australian residents into a harmonious society. The process led to the Government making a formal distinction between British and Australian citizenship, and proposing an understanding of Australian identity which could unite people of different cultural origins without forcing them to forget their origins. This broader understanding of citizenship also favoured women, aboriginals and the mentally handicapped, who had also been disadvantaged under the previous legislation.

One of the most significant features of the immigration program was the importance placed by the Government on negotiation with groups affected by it. These groups included overseas governments, employers' bodies, unions and the RSL. To further integration within the community, it established Good Neighbour Councils. The logic of

interest was readily seen as naked.

Jordens records relatively little debate about immigration. Such criticism as she quotes is little more than a threnody for a past whose underpinnings had been forgotten. Her account, however, may indirectly illuminate current polemic about political correctness. She shows how the responsibility for the welfare of minority groups in the community, which was previously invested in the Government and therefore with those of British origin, has increasingly been entrusted to the groups themselves, including immigrant communities, women and aboriginals. This administrative practice, which is consistent with a less prescriptive understanding of Australian identity, is likely to have a wider cultural significance.

In Australia, it may have had two effects. First, groups given responsibility for the integration of their members into the community naturally expect to provide the language by which they will be described in the broader community. They will expect other groups in the community to accept them and refer to them in their own terms. The language of the group, because concrete and anchored in the history and experience of the community, will be privileged.

The correlative consequence is that a more abstract discourse about identity, not anchored in the experience of the groups to which it refers, will lose the privileged status which it enjoyed. Those who refer pejoratively to minority groups on the basis

of an abstract understanding of Australian identity will have their views summarily dismissed. Furthermore, when a previously recognised form of discourse loses its legitimacy, those who practise it naturally resent its loss. The resentment will be compounded if, as can happen, the groups not only claim privilege for their language, but move to exempt it from question or criticism. In this case, one abstract and prescriptive language is simply replaced by another.

For all the ambiguities of this process, however, the claim that the experience of different immigrant groups, of women, children and other distinct groups is to be given preference over abstract notions of identity is surely valid.

* * *

TAKEN TOGETHER, these books suggest the reasons why discussion of immigration and of Australian identity is so often unfruitful. It is based on a false understanding of national identity which, because it ignores features central to identity, loses its contact with reality.

In popular debate it is assumed that national identity can be defined by attributing abstract qualities to national groups, and that these qualities provide ready criteria to judge whether individuals should belong to the nation. This was the assumption which justified the definition of Australian identity as British, and the exclusion of non-white immigrants. In the long run, this sharp definition of Australian identity proved unworkable and arbitrary because it did not correspond to reality.

In fact, identity is defined by a complex set of relationships by which people are linked through a wide range of communities. In the case of the Italians who came to North Queensland, these groups included their ethnic communities, the local town councils and committees, the local and state employers, unions and returned servicemen's groups, churches, the communities which they had left in Italy, and the Italian Government representatives who monitored their welfare in Aus-

tralia. Their identity as Australians was formed through their relationship to these groups and the relations between the groups themselves.

Because national identity is formed by such complex and subtle sets of relationships, which extend beyond the nation itself, it is never sharp edged. Any definition of national identity is always provisional, and is always blurred at the edges. Indeed, the sureness of national identity may be gauged by its openness to ambiguity at the margins and to those who are marginal, like asylum seekers.

Where a nation tries to exclude ambiguity, as Australia did through the White Australia Policy, its sense of identity is still immature.

The importance of relationships to a range of communities has generally been accepted in discussion of Australian identity, but often only with reference to Britain. It was assumed that Australians would be the more Australian the closer were their relationships to their home country. There was no tension either conceptually or legislatively between being British and being Australian. Specifically Australian identity was constituted by residence and insertion into a variety of local communities.

IN DEBATE ABOUT IMMIGRATION, however, the importance of these relationships was forgotten, and Australian identity was defined by an implicit ideal of what it meant to be British, and this abstract ideal was then used to identify and to discriminate against aliens.

The disadvantage of this style of debate is that it does not attend to the changing sets of relationships that define and give a sense of community.

Secondly, popular debate about immigration and national identity assumes that economics, cultural and humanitarian considerations, and the role of government can be isolated from one another. Reflection on the history of immigration

suggests that they need to be combined.

Where narrowly-based economic considerations are followed, the result is often short-term gain, but long-term economic loss. Thus, the plantation economies of Ireland relying on the exploitation of disappropriated local labour, or those of the Americas which relied on slave labour, met economic imperatives, but at a social cost that has impeded economic development in the longer term. In Australia, the opposition to the use of Islander labour in Queensland disrupted the sugar industry in the short term, but encour-



aged the development of an efficient local industry. A more soundly-based economy was built because a principled social policy was followed.

The post-war immigration programme also demonstrates that economic gains must be accompanied by respect for human values and by measured government action. The increase in immigration provided stable economic growth because it was accompanied by Government initiatives to ensure that the newcomers were welcomed and were integrated into the community. When short-term gains and sectional interests have dominated immigration policy and reflection on Australian identity, long-term interests have been betrayed.

While economic discussion of immigration must consider humane

values to be economically illuminating, so also must discussion of the cultural impact of immigration take account of economic considerations. Australian debate about immigration has often ignored the specific contribution which immigrants have made and the conditions under which they have worked. The debate about the reliability of Italian immigrants to North Queensland, for example, often ignored the fact that cane-cutting is a seasonal occupation, with the result that if no other employment could be found, people would naturally seek employment elsewhere.

The history of immigration shows also the need for Governments to encourage the common good. In fact, what Governments have done, as distinct from the rhetoric by which they have often masked their good deeds from electoral exposure, has been helpful. In times of xenophobic national feeling, Governments have generally introduced token measures with little real effect. In the post-war period, the Government took an active role, by reflecting on immigration, empowering groups of

migrants, by widespread consultation, and by removing discriminatory legislation. This is the proper role of government, in practical ways to counteract the effects of populist rhetoric.

In fact the activity of the Government also enabled a more constructive discussion of national identity. For it made it evident that national identity is formed by the interaction between groups of people, and not simply by the relationship between individual and society. Whether or not the debate about the Republic accepts this challenge or reverts to abstract and stereotypical images of identity, remains to be seen. ■

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Entering the lists

The Oxford Companion to Philosophy, Ted Honderich (ed.),
Oxford University Press 1995. ISBN 019 866 132 0 RRP \$69.95

NOT ONLY ARE 'Companions' all the rage, especially with Oxford, but companions to philosophy are in fashion. Blackwells have just issued one. English language Companions to Metaphysics and Ontology have appeared from European presses. Does this represent the publishing houses leading, or following, their publics, I wonder? What this newcomer offers is what we all expect from such works: a great deal of readily available and reliable information about its subject-matter, in this case, Philosophy as a whole.

Oxford's approach is strikingly different from Blackwells' (to the relief of both parties, no doubt). Where Blackwell's have 30 weighty chapters of consecutive exposition, ranging across the major fields and themes of philosophy, Oxford have gone for the quick reference format. More a philosophical Dictionary, or one-volume Encyclopedia, a *vade mecum*, not a full treatment *ab initio*.

It's none the worse for that. It positively encourages dipping and browsing. It can set you right on those little matters you never quite learned, and have been afraid to ask: what Arrow's voting paradox is, for example, or the Prisoner's dilemma, or just which of Euclid's theorems is the *pons asinorum*.

On the whole, Honderich and his writers have done a splendid job. The range of topics for which there is an entry is vast, the standard high, if not quite uniformly so, and the tone engagingly cheerful. No one with a lively mind can fail to learn from this book—and that certainly includes philosophy's professionals. Two small scale specimens: who Alcmaeon of Croton was, and why he should be remembered, or why Hobbes' *Leviathan* has that title.

This Companion can also serve as an indispensable source for would-be Bluffers in Philosophy: Plato's Cave, Descartes' *Cogito*, and the Tree in the Quad are no longer adequate; pick up here on the Brain in a Vat, Twin Earth, or Cambridge Changes, and stay in the game.

Apart from its range and accessibility, the major strengths of

There are also substantial entries on the philosophy of regions or nations. This is fine, especially for what will be, for most of the readership, exotic territory—Chinese, Indian, even Soviet philosophy. But the idea is carried a little too far. New Zealand philosophy is at the edge of a credible entry, but we also get Croatian and Serbian (separately of course).

The end matter is particularly praiseworthy. We are offered maps and charts of Philosophy as a whole, then in more detail, its various branches. Diagrammatic representations of the relations between the branches of this inchoate intellectual enterprise can prove of great value to the newcomer to its exploration. The diagrams are followed by a Chronological Table pairing notable events in the history of philosophy with contemporary occurrences. This runs to twelve pages: for the chart-minded, to present this as a single lift-out folded sheet, for sticking on the study wall, would be a highly attractive addition.

The philosophy of God, of religion, and of theology all get ample and fair treatment. Paul Edwards' entry on God and the Philosophers is a noteworthy example. The attitude to philosophy in languages other than English is, on the whole, eirenic. The editor has been able to enjoy the services of some very senior authors, notably Tony (now Lord) Quinton, who provides a splendid series of entries on philosophy's trajectory, institutions, local variations, and influence, besides much else, and Ronald Hepburn, authoritative and lucid on many themes in religion and ethics. Of younger authors, Alan Lacey and E.J. Lowe caught my eye again and again.



the work lie in the full dress treatments of significant topics. There are well presented accounts of the major branches of philosophy; epistemology, the philosophy of the social sciences, and so forth. These themes are in fact offered in two distinct manners—there is both a history of the subject, and a review of its contemporary budget of problems. This strikes me as a well-judged sense of a distinction between two different readers' needs.

And there is a similarly valuable duality in the treatment of the great figures: first a discussion of the philosopher—Aquinas, as it may be—then a discourse on Thomism's career, influence, and current state. The choice of the great figures is a conservative one. No large-scale canon revision is afoot. I am assuming that it was editorial tolerance of authorial loquacity, rather than a judgment of relative significance, which gives Heidegger a longer entry than Hegel or Bertrand Russell.

Faces in philosophy,
above, from left,
David Lewis,
David Armstrong,
Jean Baudrillard and
Iris Murdoch, from
Philosophers,
by Steve Pyke.

This *Companion* is also to be commended for an inclusive view of the subject, and of the interests of likely users. Many a person figures here who would be thought of, in these days of excessive division of intellectual labour, as primarily scientists, or theologians, or political figures.

So much for the solid virtues, what of the beguiling ones that make this an enjoyable book to use? The tone is generally cheerful, even light. We are treated to entries disclosing literary allusions (to the 'bubbles of philosophy' which sustain drowning intellectuals, for example), entries on both tarwater and slime, from Honderich himself on unlikely philosophical propositions, on Dennett's *Philosophical Lexicon*, which makes joke dictionary entries from the names of philosophers, living and deceased, and, from Quinton, *con brio*, on the deaths of the philosophers. This last strangely omits Empedocles on Etna, denied his apotheosis, the story runs, betrayed by his sandals bespeaking a mundane departure through drowning in the crater lake.

Only once did I find the tone taking on a jarring flippancy, where the author of the entry holds that marriage is 'to taste "made in heaven" or instituted by human societies.' Only one author spoiled his entries—on pseudo-science and psychoanalysis—by an impenetrably indirect and polysyllabic style.

A professional's enjoyment of the work is also enhanced by the decision to include entries on living philosophers. The editor's preface disarms criticism of the choices, so I say nothing, but note that of the Australians, Anderson, Armstrong, Smart, Frank Jackson, and Peter Singer get guernseys. There are one or two I would have added.

SOME ENTRIES HAVE AN agreeably forthright air: the discussion of Lyotard, for example, concludes: 'What this amounts to, in short, is a *mélange* of Wittgensteinian, post-structuralist, and kindred ideas presented in an oracular style that raises bafflement to a high point of principle.' And in the entry on Ordinary Language and Philosophy we read

that (contrary to a vast body of mid-century analytic doctrine)' ... whereas close attention to language is essential in philosophy, the ideas that all philosophical problems are problems in language, or that they can be settled by grammatical analysis, are quite different and quite absurd.'

This is a work edited and published in Britain, though by no means entirely written there. To what extent does it display any provincialism? Quinton writes on philosophy at Cambridge, Oxford and London. Does his entry on Harvard redress the balance? Or his explicit concession that the leading journals are now published in the United States? Another insularity: the entry on the persecution of philosophers manages to make not a single reference to Eastern Europe in the twentieth century.

More seriously, the continuing resistance to metaphysical and scientific approaches, characteristic of much post-Wittgensteinian philosophy in Britain, sometimes makes itself felt. The article on French philosophy claims that on both sides of the Channel the post-Kantian critique of metaphysics enjoys near consensual status. The entry on Thinking supposes a few casual armchair reflections on the relation of thought to speech, with the implications for animals, rather than some genuine cognitive science, will satisfy the enquirer. The article on the Language of Thought is superficial and misleading. That on Individual Properties is thin and out of date. Discussions of Matter would profit from a more contemporary appreciation of physics.

The rather impatient discussion of the Meaning of Life displays the narrowness, the refusal to meet the enquiry, reminiscent of analytic philosophy a half-century ago. Ordinary folk rightly expect philosophers to have something useful to say about what it has been found does, or can, make life worth living. Sermons on infelicities of expression are not to the point.

Most of the entries, it should already be clear, are at least adequate. Many are more than that. The discussion of Being, for example, is a paradigm of the lucid and enlightening ideal which many approach. For

the most part, the editor has chosen his contributors well, and been well served by them. There are exceptions: Burke is damned with off-hand semi-praise, while Wittgenstein is given a hagiography. The entry for Newton is, to my mind, a disgrace the editor should have rejected: its few lines give no hint of why Newton deserves an entry at all. There is no mention of his views of Space, or Time, or Action at a Distance, no discussion of his methodological pronouncements, nor of his inventory of unsolved problems at the end of the *Opticks*.

This book provides an intellectual feast, and it often presents that wealth of matter in attractively useable form. So it is churlish to complain that there is not yet more, and profitless to exchange opinions on which marginal figures should, or should not, have received the entrée. Nevertheless, no reviewer of this sort of volume resists the temptation to point to omissions.

Of the scientists whose contributions to natural philosophy entitle them to an entry, we have Gassendi and Priestley. What a pity we do not have either Boscovich or Faraday, pioneers of point particle physics and field theory nor Maxwell and the electromagnetic synthesis. In the philosophy of law, the great Montesquieu neither has an entry to himself, nor even a mention in the general history of that subject. To my mind that is the most grievous sin of omission to which this admirable compendium must answer.

One last word: in Britain, *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* of over 1000 pages, sells for £25. That comes to less than tuppence ha'penny a page. Dull would he be of soul who could not get value for money from such a work! The pricing for Australia translates into seven cents, still a bargain. ■

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Some entries have an agreeably forthright air: the discussion of Lyotard, for example, concludes: 'What this amounts to, in short, is a mélange of Wittgensteinian, post-structuralist, and kindred ideas presented in an oracular style that raises bafflement to a high point of principle.'

Getting it right

THIS BOOK IS AN ESSAY ON meta-ethics, not concerned with the abstract or philosophical moralising that is called normative ethics. Meta-ethics is concerned with the logic and methodology of normative ethics.

Michael Smith holds that clarity about meta-ethics is a necessary preliminary to normative ethics. I think that he is right. Certainly most scientists need no expertise in meta-science (philosophy of science) to do good work. This is because the methodology of science is well understood and absorbed into the culture. Ethics is much in the position of the renaissance when the rules for scientific investigation were very fluid and investigators such as Galileo and Descartes did need to engage in methodological thought. So Smith's book is important not only for meta-ethics but also for normative or practical ethics.

The central question in meta-ethics is that of the so called naturalistic fallacy. The term was introduced by G.E. Moore who taught that ethical terms such as 'good' and 'right' referred to special 'non-natural' properties. The issue perhaps had been better stated by David Hume, who held in effect that 'ought' cannot be deduced from 'is'.

Naturalism in this sense has thus nothing to do with naturalism in metaphysics. As Moore recognised in his chapter on metaphysical ethics, someone might have a spiritual view of the world and yet hold that 'ought' can be deduced from 'is'. (Conversely a philosopher might be a naturalist in the metaphysical sense but not in the ethical sense.)

As it happens Smith is a naturalist in the metaphysical sense, but this is irrelevant to the concerns of the book, in which his concern is to

The Moral Problem, Michael Smith,
Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1994.
ISBN 0 631 19246 8 RRP \$34.95

propose a viable form of naturalism in the ethical sense.

Moore argued that no naturalist definition of 'good' or 'right' will do. Thus suppose that (as was done in the nineteenth century) 'good' was defined as 'conducive to human evolution'. This definition will not do because it is still an open or contestable question as to whether conduciveness to evolution is good. Moore concluded that no naturalistic definition will do and that 'good' stands for a non-natural property. This is mysterious and also leaves unexplained the oddness of sincerely saying that something is good and yet having no favourable attitude towards it. Nowadays non-naturalists tend to be non-cognitivists, denying that the universe contains moral facts and asserting that our use of moral sentences is to express attitudes or is analogous to that of imperatives which do not state facts. ('Open the door' does not tell you whether the door is open or shut.)

The non-cognitivist clearly has no problem with what Smith calls 'the practicality requirement'—that if you assent to a moral judgment you have a tendency to want to act in accordance with it. Smith agrees with the practicality requirement, other things being equal, but agrees with Michael Stocker that someone, because of depression or acidic, genuinely might believe that an action is right (not just believed by others to be right) and yet have no motive to do it. I think that I would say that such a person must have some tendency to do the action, even though it was overwhelmingly out-

weighed by the desire to do nothing. The non-cognitivist must reject the common sense belief (if it is a common sense belief) that moral values are objective features of the world. The problem of reconciling this objectivity requirement (and another requirement which I won't bother with here) with the practicality requirement is what Smith calls 'The Moral Problem'. Smith ably defends Hume's view that actions are explained by a combination of belief and desire: this combination constitutes the motivating reason for an action. A motivating reason is a state of the mind of an agent and is explanatory of the action in question. Distinct from motivating reasons are normative reasons. These are the propositions which an agent will give as the reasons justifying his or her actions.

SMITH THINKS THAT CITATION of motivating reasons and of normative reasons can render an action intelligible, but in different ways. I would agree, I think, though I do not regard the citation of normative reasons as other than indirectly explanatory. We can deliberate in a certain way and guess at another's motivating reasons by assuming that the other would have deliberated similarly: I use myself as a sort of analogue computer.

Now I think that if the analysis of 'moral' depended on the use of normative reasons in the analysis, then a naturalistic account of obligation would be beyond us. However talk *about* normative reasons might be naturalistic in the required sense. This is part of Smith's strategy. Also Smith needs a naturalistic sense of (practical) rationality. Given these two things, his naturalistic account

of 'ought' is as follows: We ought to do action A in circumstances C if and only if we would desire to do A in C if we were fully rational. According to Smith, this subjunctive conditional states a naturalistic fact about the world.

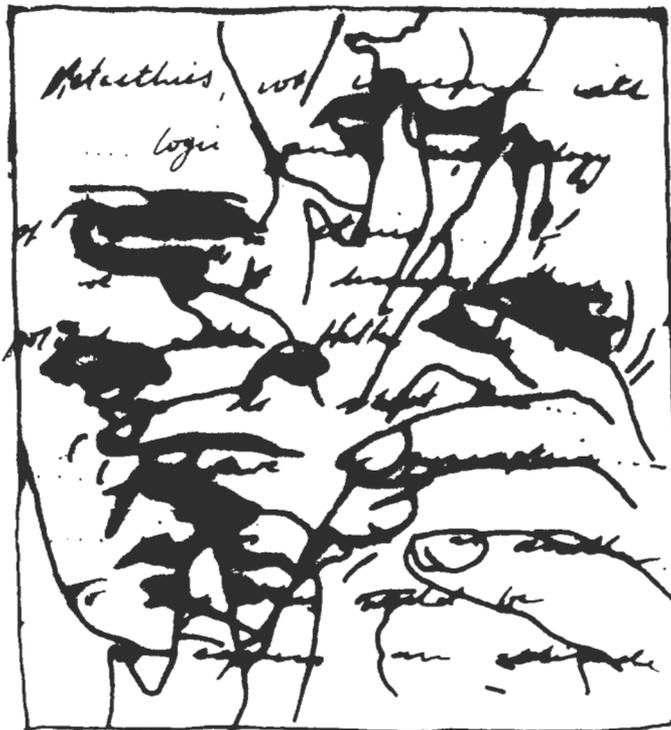
Here I have simplified Smith's theory by omitting a clause to the effect that A in C must be of an appropriate substantive kind, distinguishing moral from non-moral reasons, implicitly defined by various platitudes about the moral. I have my doubts about whether these supposed platitudes are all really platitudinous. And if they were, would this render them factual? A non-cognitivist could regard them as common expressions of attitude, or commonly accepted imperatives. Consider Smith's example of a non-moral reason, to drink beer rather than wine to relax after work because he enjoys beer more than wine. I would say that this gives a moral reason, even though one of very little importance. Drinking the beer is best for his own happiness, which is part of the happiness of all sentient beings. Moreover even non-utilitarians in ethics will agree that enjoying more leads to relaxing more, which leads to more ability to do good works later.

More importantly, Smith uses a number of platitudes corresponding to John Rawls' method of reflective equilibrium (that is, thinking about moral principles where they seem to conflict and altering them so they balance out) in order—in effect—implicitly to define practical rationality. I use the word 'practical' here to distinguish moral rationality, if it exists, from the two sorts of rationality allowed by Hume (some of the time), namely logical rationality and inductive (scientific) rationality. This reflective equilibrium is supposed to obtain between our own considered attitudes and also those of others. The last clause here rules out egoism as a possible morality. Of course a clever egoist will

pretend to others that he or she is not an egoist. But the fact that egoism should be kept secret does not rule it out as a possible plan of life. (The great nineteenth century moral philosopher Henry Sidgwick had great trouble here, because he thought that Self Love and Benevolence were equally rational supreme principles, but that the apparent contradiction would be contingently—though not logically—resolved by rewards and punishments in an after life.) However, leaving egoism to one side, one can still wonder whether the platitudes that according to Smith define practical

with an agreed expression of attitudes or an agreed system of imperative sentences. We might have simply a one outcome non-cognitivism. Notice that Smith's objective fact is a funny sort of fact. It is expressed in a subjunctive conditional. So ethics is still different from science, and the usual worries about the naturalistic fallacy may be on the way back, despite Smith's ingenuity.

It may be said that the canons of scientific rationality can be disputed. It is well known that one cannot convince a determined anti-scientific ratbag, for example a flat earther or a so-called creation scientist. Nevertheless we know that out in the world there is a spherical earth and that long ago there were dinosaurs and pterodactyls and our ancestors the first mammals. That ratbags deny the platitudes of scientific rationality does not impugn the facts in which scientific rationality with good fortune has often led us to believe. It may be that the canons of moral rationality in which Smith, and you and I believe, would be denied by those who by our lights are wicked. But are there the moral facts out there in the world? Smith has given us only a subjunctive conditional. If there is a fact to correspond to it (and this can be doubted) it is a fact only about



rationality would pin down options in normative ethical theory uniquely, however long we deliberated and discussed our attitudes and tried to put them into reflective equilibrium. How do we know whether one person or group of persons might not end up with, say, a Kantian respect for persons ethic and another person or group of persons with a utilitarian ethic? Or to different compromises between these two positions?

Suppose, however, that Smith's platitudes and methodology would indeed ultimately constrain us to a single normative ethics. I do not think that this gives ethics the objectivity that Smith desires. A non-cognitivist could argue that we would end up

human nature, idealised to the nature of perfectly rational beings with perfect empirical knowledge of relevant natural facts.

What if the canons of rationality would lead different rational beings with all relevant empirical knowledge to two or more different ethical systems? Smith holds that if this were so there would be no objective moral facts. He gives some optimistic reasons for hoping that in fact there would be convergence of moral beliefs. My view is that if the pessimistic outcome would show that there are no objective values, perhaps equally his naturalistic objectivism should rather be seen, on the optimistic view of convergence, as a one-

outcome non-cognitivism. I would like to stress that if there is no convergence, this is no reason for mealy-mouthed ethical relativism. Even if (say) 'Nazis are evil' is not a statement of fact but an expression of attitude, it can be and usually is a passionate expression of disagreement in attitude with the Nazis. If we can't discuss ethics politely with Hitler we can hope to shoot him. The emotivist or prescriptivist position is very far from the view that one ethical position is as good as another. To say this would be to express an attitude of insipid relativism.

THE PROBLEM FOR READERS of Smith's book is to think about whether his definition is really naturalistic or whether non-natural or prescriptivist elements are smuggled in through the platitudes whereby 'reason' and 'rational' are analysed.

Moreover if Smith's theory is indeed a naturalistic theory it is naturalistic with a difference, and perhaps the distinction between naturalistic ethics (remember the peculiar sense of 'naturalistic' that philosophers use in this context) and non-naturalistic (i.e. prescriptivist or emotive) ethics is not a clear one and Smith's is somewhere on the border. Smith's theory, as it is worked out in detail in the light of contemporary controversies, is an original and subtle one. For historical precedents I would see some relationship to the 'ideal observer theories' which go back to Adam Smith and were revived in 1952 by the American philosopher Roderick Firth. Smith's theory has subtleties which make it, to say the least, harder to argue against.

The solution to 'The Moral Problem' comes in the final two chapters, and the non-technical reader might like to skim through these first, before reading the technical and controversial chapters leading up to them. Smith writes in a clear and readable style, and so the book also can serve as an exciting introduction to the present state of meta-ethical discussion. It is sure to be much used and much discussed. ■

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Dear Abbess

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AN EAGER reader of published correspondence: many biographies tell us far more about the biographer. The recent flurry of Mary MacKillop publications showed that her letters, and most likely she herself, were much more interesting than the stolid, chatty or pious recountings that were on offer. And yet, there can be a sense of guilt: reading private letters can be dangerous to our sense of decency, however we might rationalise the desire. Who knows whether the subject would have wanted such scrutiny?

It's different when reading the correspondence of Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179). In her time letters were very public documents; their composition was hedged with many conventions and formulae, though there are tantalising glimpses of the person behind the form.

She was an extraordinary woman, born to nobility near Mainz, and was given to the religious life by her parents at the age of eight. She became a Cistercian abbess, a visionary, a seer in the apocalyptic tradition, a medical scientist, a musical composer of genius, a doughty politician, and was first brought before the English-speaking academic tradition by Peter Dronke in 1968.

Her descriptions of her visionary experiences have enthused many: The fans are a motley group ranging through historians, musicians, musicologists, theologians and their divers clients. Oliver Sacks, the pioneer of L-dopa treatment for brain dysfunctions, was sufficiently inter-

ested to publish a paper asserting that her visions were classic examples of migraine aura. Matthew Fox was responsible for popularising her writings among contemporary Christian readers. Some readers were concerned about Fox's uncritical approach; I had problems with his

translation of *Kyrie eleison*: 'Lord, draw compassion from us'.

She was enlisted as one of the (literally) five-star players in his Creation Theology pantheon. Only a few thinkers scored as highly: Meister Eckhardt, Francis of Assisi

and, if my memory serves me rightly, Jesus. Fox's was a very selective reading that has made her achieve a superstar status among many followers. It is a following that much of her work richly deserves, but she has been celebrated loopily by New Agers until an interest in her work often has to be qualified, just as Wagner's music was once (with greater reason) tainted with Nazi associations.

Her brilliance and attractiveness have sent some fans off on solipsistic tangents. The resulting fragmentation has been exacerbated by competitiveness in academia: there isn't quite the open camaraderie among some Hildegard researchers as there is in other fields. In the English-speaking world this has amounted often to a failure to contextualise her properly as are, say, Aquinas, Abelard, Erasmus and suchlike. There has often been a rush to publish because she sells well.

There is no such problem in Germany, where her work and music have always been part of the histori-

The Letters of Hildegard of Bingen Volume I, Translated by Joseph Baird and Radd Ehrmann, Oxford University Press, New York, 1994. ISBN 0 19 508937 5 RRP \$75.00

Hildegard of Bingen and Gendered Theology in Judaeo-Christian Tradition, Julie Barton and Constant Mews (eds), Centre for Studies in Religion and Theology Monash University, 1995. ISBN 0 7326 0870 8, RRP \$15.00

an's frame of reference, as she belongs intimately to that culture.

In fact in Germany, Hildegard is as much a focus for conservative Catholicism as she is a field for academic inquiry. She is a local patron, created so at the behest of the German bishops during World War II. A recent conference there opened with a reading of a letter from Cardinal Ratzinger, commending her as a 'beacon of light' during the war. She attracts the pious—there is suspicion of scholars, who are considered too modern and scientific in their probings into her history—but then Hildegard attracts all types.

There are theologians who claim her as the prophet of a green new age and translate her writings fancifully to serve that purpose. There are medical practitioners who prescribe rigorous adherence to her dietary advice (peaches, leeks and strawberries are poisonous, fennel cures nearly everything). There are musicologists who claim to find 'fractals' in her musical structures and who presumably think that she had these on her mind rather than the neat turning of a musical phrase in the ear. There were curators who sent her paintings away for safe-keeping during World War II. (To Dresden. Luckily there were photographic copies made in the twenties.) And there are historians who forget why people want to read the letters of such a person.

The biggest, but by no means the only, disappointment in the Baird and Ehrmann book, then, is the fact that the letters are not arranged in chronological order. The reason is that they are following a scholar, Lieven Van Acker, who has begun work on a definitive edition of the letters. Van Acker decided to arrange the letters *in order of the status of the recipient* and published the first volume (of an envisaged four) in Belgium. Baird and Ehrmann's introduction of their English version of this curious piece of work contains a quasi-apology:

The arrangement of the letters in descending order of importance of the correspondents has a certain neatness about it, al-

though it does, as Van Acker himself noted, present problems even for the textual editor. It also causes, one must candidly admit, serious difficulties for the reader, since such a classification does not allow for a smooth flow of themes.

Why Van Acker conceived the hierarchical arrangement of letters is anybody's guess, probably having something to do with a desire to do things in a more authentically medieval way. (I have come across this attitude to her music, too. Despite all the enthusiasm she expresses in her writings concerning harmony and the use of various instruments, there are early-music aficionados who insist that all of her songs should be done unison and unaccompanied).

But if Baird and Ehrmann admit such difficulties, why are they perpetuating them? It was a most annoying read, to say the least. And if their judgment in accepting Van Acker's structure instead of initiating a completely independent version is questionable, their commen-

tary frequently lacks insight or even common sense, particularly in their treatment of her letter to St Bernard of Clairvaux. In it she begs his support for her work. She is not asking for discernment of the spirits behind her visions; she is completely assured that they come from God. So it is not, despite the humble posture of the writing, the letter of a soul needing guidance; we sense she has plenty of that. Hildegard seems always to have been surrounded by more clerics than you could shake a stick at: one monk, Volmar, was at her disposal as an amanuensis for most of their lives, which were very long by medieval standards. No, the purpose of this letter is sophisticated, diplomatic. It would have been perilous in those times to have embarked upon a prophetic career without a guernsey from the most orthodox of the clerical power bloc.

She tells him that she is able to understand the scriptures because of the visions given to her by God. She informs him, most importantly, that she has kept these things to herself and to Volmar, whom she praises for his worthiness. She also tells Bernard that she knows that there are many schisms or heresies and asks for his reassurance. The rest of the letter concerns a vision about Bernard himself as a man 'looking into the sun' unafraid. Then she exhorts him to continue in the fight for God, an obvious reference to the Second Crusade, of which he was a major supporter, but also to the work he was charged with by the Pope at that particular time.

In Baird and Ehrmann's notes following the letter there is a reference to 'the various schismatic sects with which the twelfth century was rife'. As an example of this, they note that Pope Eugenius III commissioned Bernard to 'deal with' France's numerous heretics in 1147: this is noted discretely and is not related by them to the business of the letter. The date of Hildegard's letter is circa 1146-7, a short time before the Synod of Trier, over which Eugenius was presiding, and which was attended by Bernard of Clairvaux, who supported her work there. Her work *Scivias*



('Know the ways') was read to the assembly and she was duly commanded to continue her work.

The note completely fails to connect the dates, to apprehend that she had the political nous to lobby the most influential man of the time: according to Baird and Ehrmann it was a 'happy coincidence' that Pope Eugenius 'just happened to be presiding' over the synod!

Constant Mews, in his chapter in *Hildegard of Bingen and Gendered Theology in Judaeo-Christian Tradition*, is far more informed and astute when tracing the path of powerful contemporary influences supporting the work of Hildegard of Bingen.

This is a small but valuable look at one of the threads in her thought. It is refreshing to read work about Hildegard that is neither prissy nor

loopily speculative. There is a reassuring sense of links to the solid German tradition through such scholars as Mews, who is able to contextualise his subject simply by being a polylinguist as well as a palaeolinguist. In future, any serious Hildegard scholar will need fluent German just to keep up with developments.

And while we are on the subject of language, there is one other aspect of the Baird and Ehrmann book that grates, although they are by no means alone in this: the translation of the word *viriditas*. It is a word that does not go very easily into English, unless one counts the rather archaic 'viridity', which I think should be pressed into service, if only to give English readers the important resonances that occur when Hildegard uses it.

Baird and Ehrmann do use 'virid-

ity' sometimes, which for me only raises the question of why they don't do it all the time.

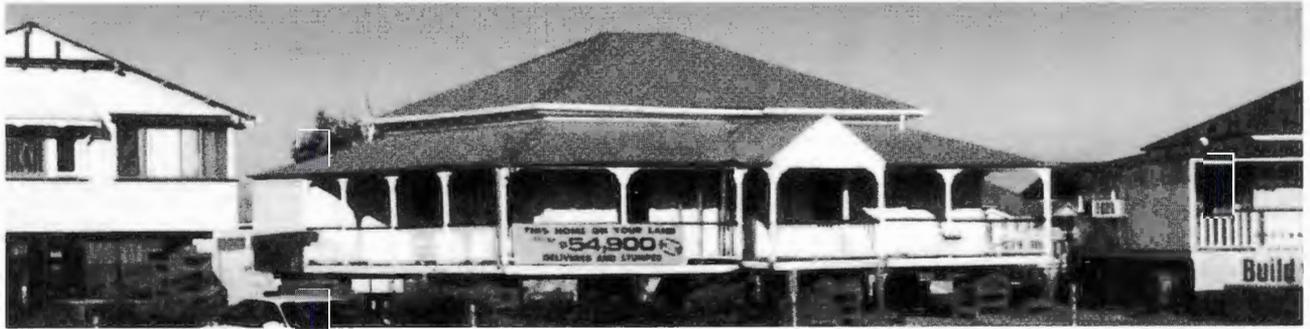
Hildegard's translators fall back on phrases like 'greening power' or 'life force' or 'fruitfulness', all of which contain shades of the meaning of *viriditas* but not enough. In the absence of anything better we should use 'viridity' or even *viriditas* itself and stop all the periphrastic nonsense.

And the world still waits for a properly edited text of the letters of Hildegard, arranged in chronological order so as to make sense to late 20th century readers. Perhaps the 900th anniversary of her birth in three years' time will see a flowering of good scholarship. But it's just as likely to end up in a mess of fractals. ■

Juliette Hughes is a freelance writer.

BOOKS: 5

MICHAEL MCGIRR



Boys' own Brisbane

Over the Top with Jim Album, Hugh Lunn, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1995. ISBN 0 7022 2563 0 RRP \$34.95

ONE OF THE FEATURES of modern Brisbane is the used house lot. As you join the Pacific Highway, whose congestion weighed so heavily at the last Queensland election, and inch towards the mushrooming suburbs of Logan City, you may notice that a number of vacant allotments have been fenced. Behind the cyclone wire are a dozen or fifteen old wooden houses, perched on pallets and waiting patiently for sale. Signs read: 'This home on your land from \$45,800, delivered and stumped.' The houses have character. They are known as Queens-

landers, a style of architecture redolent of another time and place.

The most recent volume of Hugh Lunn's memoirs, *Spies Like Us*, tells of his departure from Brisbane in the early 60's to make his career as a journalist overseas. Towards the end, the young Lunn finds himself in conversation with an American architect who is amazed to hear about a city of wooden houses, many of them on stilts. She tells him 'reverentially' that, if unspoiled, such a place might one day become one of the few unique cities in the world. Lunn dates his own appreciation of Brisbane

from that moment when he saw it through a pair of foreign eyes.

Lunn is not alone in his hankering for an older, slower, unique Queensland. His reminiscences of growing up Catholic in post-war Brisbane have found a vast audience. The first volume, *Over The Top With Jim*, has sold 180,000 copies, helped along by its serialisation on Ian MacNamara's Sunday Morning Radio program, *Australia All Over*. There were parishes which had to delay the start of Mass until the weekly instalment was over because people sat in the carpark listening to it while the

priest had his ear glued to a transistor in the sacristy.

The book has the kind of enthusiastic following which has now resulted in the *Over The Top With Jim Album*, a large format collection of photos and memorabilia from baby-boom Catholicism. The compilation was a slow labour. Lunn advertised for material in church newsletters. 'We'd drive across town to look at stuff. People would have cooked sponge cakes and prepared incredible feasts which I couldn't eat. Then you'd find that you couldn't use their curiosities and treasures after all.' Nevertheless, the album which has resulted is a wonderful diversion.

Over The Top With Jim had an uncertain beginning. Some people thought they were hard done by in the book. One of the Christian Brothers, known as Basher, who appears in it, rang Lunn to say that he was portrayed too harshly. 'I am a victim of your book,' he said. 'You exaggerated how much we gave the strap.' According to Lunn, the brother used an 'old-fashioned phrase' to threaten to come around and 'rock your roof', meaning he would throw stones onto his roof to terrify anybody inside. The phrase dates from a time when every roof in Brisbane was made of tin. Fortunately, relatives of the brother warmed to the book and eventually Basher was won over. Despite the gruelling classroom culture recalled in *Over The Top With Jim*, Lunn is appalled by the current demonisation of the brothers. 'They left me with a great love of words, of poetry and of writing in general, and a great ability to do arithmetic.'

Over The Top With Jim was launched in the old Boomerang Theatre at Annerley, a building that figures prominently in Lunn's childhood but which was pulled down last September. Both the launch and the demolition were overlooked by journalists.

Lunn says that this is unsurprising when the local media is entirely controlled from the south. 'Apart from half an hour a day, our commercial TV all comes from Sydney and Melbourne. So they try to convince you otherwise. The commercial breaks will always tell you

this is 'Queensland's own Channel 9', but that announcement is itself the only discernible Queensland content. *Head Over Heels* tells of Lunn's days as a cadet on the *Courier Mail* when the paper had a parochial flavour. More recently, Lunn decided to have *Spies Like Us* launched in Goondiwindi because it was one town in which the local paper was locally owned.

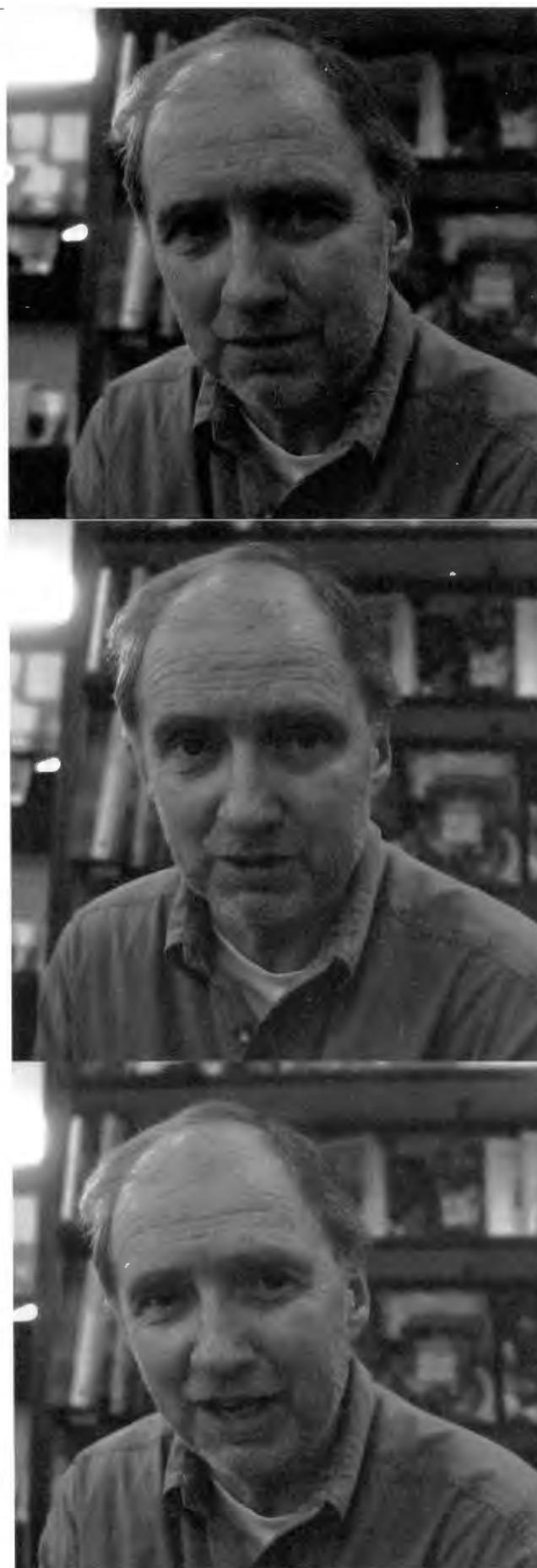
Lunn speaks a lot about the loss of distinctive architecture and the ways in which such loss is disguised. The firm which removed Cloudland, the nightclub in which many Brisbane couples became engaged and which figures in his work, use the elegant dome of the building they demolished in their advertisement in the Yellow Pages. The shopping village at Toowong was replaced by a concrete and glass skyscraper which took over the name 'Toowong Village'. 'Would you believe,' says Lunn, 'that when we got rid of our trams they just burned them in the streets.'

IT'S HARD TO KNOW, however, where nostalgia ends and escapism begins. Another renowned chronicler of Brisbane boyhoods, David Malouf, has said that he grew up in an Australia which believed that everything real happened somewhere else and history happened while you were asleep.

The past maybe another 'somewhere else'. In the trendy Fortitude Valley, an old fruit shop has been turned into an outlet for 'ethical arts'. A young man with blue eyes and freckles stands behind the counter, his red hair in dreadlocks. The store has retained its original fittings: a refrigeration unit from the 1960s is used to display second-hand toys from the same period.

This time round, they are not being sold to innocents. Hugh Lunn finds that as he goes around schools and recounts some of the adventures of *Over the Top*, he asks children who they think had the better childhood and invariably they answer 'you did'. Neither Lunn nor the kids, of course, is really in a position to answer the question. ■

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



Behind the Curtain

A Companion to Theatre in Australia,
Philip Parsons AM with Victoria Chance
(eds), Currency Press, Sydney, 1995.
ISBN 0 86819 3577 RRP \$95.00

HOW DOES ONE REVIEW an encyclopaedia? asked Max Charlesworth in last month's *Eureka Street*, speaking directly to my condition as I struggled with this volume: weight, 1.8 kilos; thickness, 4 cms; print, small. Another question: who is qualified to review it, given that its contributors, 'more than 200 specialists around Australia', must be ruled out. Doesn't it follow that anyone with even the faintest pretensions to competence may be an excludee, liable to spleen and backbiting. We shall see: *caveat lector*.

The first thing to say is welcome, welcome, welcome. This is the first compilation of its kind; it makes available a mass of information much of which has been sealed in the pages of theses, learned articles or recondite books. It is comprehensive, in that it contains all kinds of theatre, from Sophocles to the circus, and all kinds of participants: actors, directors, designers, playwrights, companies, entrepreneurs, magicians—and even critics. There is extensive (and long overdue) coverage of amateur theatre, treated here, not as a poor relation but as a site where important work has been done, and of that most fugitive of forms, community theatre. In such a localised activity as theatre, the tyranny of distance is particularly grim. The volume at last recognises, in exten-

sive articles on theatre in all the major centres, that there are six states in Australia—yes, and the Northern Territory, too.

The contributors have diverse expertise, so that, although the academic presence is strong, we also hear the voices of those who made the stuff. Jon Hawkes, ex-strongman, writes about Circus Oz, which he helped to found. Here, too, are those who have diligently kept the records without benefit of tenure, people like Leslie Rees and John West. The 19th century is particularly well served by such scholars as Veronica Kelly, Richard Fotheringham and Harold Love.

THE COMPANION IS ALSO enriched by new approaches and changing attitudes. Stand-up comedy, which would once have been thought too low for a serious work of reference, takes its place here alongside *Stalwart the Bushranger* ('verse drama in five acts by Charles Harpur'). There are pieces, as one would expect, on the Australia Council and the fabled Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust but also on J.C. Williamsons ('The Firm').

All this, so far, suggests that the most welcome characteristic of all is the volume's catholicity, its projection of Australian theatre as a complex, intricately inter-related,

continuous field of activity. Until very recently, the history of the performing arts, in Australia as elsewhere has tended to separate out the Drama, which has been written up as a series of playwrights, from that flashier place, the Theatre. Drama and theatre, high and low, legit and musical, product and process—these distinctions, whatever their original or present usefulness, can easily become sources of distortion. Wandering or weaving through these pages, this reader, at least, started to see a different, more colourful and generous vision of our two hundred years of theatre.

The historiography of Australian theatre has tended to reflect the breaking and receding waves of theatrical practice. Theatre people, like other creators, often find it necessary to reject the past—and this perennial tendency was elevated into doctrine by modernism. So for most serious-minded people in mid-century Australia, theatre was something evermore about to be. One day we would have our own homegrown O'Neill, our Yeats, our belated Ibsen, even. (All blokes, of course.) Hence in this period (roughly 1945-1968) there was an outbreak of theatrical amnesia. From 1968 onwards there were conscious and deliberate efforts to reach back to the older theatres, in particular the lively popular forms

*Peter Carroll, above,
who created the role
of the lonely,
ageing teacher in
Ron Blair's*

*The Christian Brothers
for the Nimrod Theatre
Company in 1976.*

of vaudeville, melodrama and farce. This is the moment of the APG and early Nimrod, of *The Hills Family Show* and *The Legend of King O'Malley*. Then, as a new internationalism emerged with a younger generation in the 1980s, this moment in turn came to be thought unduly narrow and nationalistic. Out with the larrikins; enter the yuppies.

The new *Currency Companion* marks the beginning of a further phase, I believe, one in which the development of Australian theatre can be seen as a continuous, if many-sided story. Even twenty years ago, the critical mass of scholarship needed for such a project would not have been available. In these pages, the 19th century is a powerful (rather too powerful) counterweight to the modernist myths of advancement. Here, at last, we begin to hear from and about the women, so long shaded and effaced, and about the many playwrights and companies whose history has been obscured by the partisan, the specialised, or the golden-moments versions.

In its breadth, in the sheer ambition of the volume, anyone who knew him can detect the shaping hand of Philip Parsons. Dr Parsons died (the Preface tells) in 1993, 'seven years after laying the foundations of the project, and a few weeks after receiving the last contribution'. Victoria Chance saw the project through, which cannot have been easy.

This is the first of three volumes from *Currency* which together will cover the whole field of the performing arts in this country. There are to be a *Companion to Australian Film, Radio and Television* and a *Companion to Music and Dance in Australia*. Rivals are unlikely. And that being so, it is all the more important to record one's reservations about the present volume.

The *Preface* carefully explains the criteria for inclusion and exclusion. It is not a *Who's Who*, they say, so there will be omissions. To decide some borderline cases, the editors asked 'Would you expect to find this name in this book?' Well, here are some individual entries for which some friends and I looked in vain: performers Genevieve Picot, Julie Forsyth, Peter Cummins, Jaecq

Koman, Robert Meldrum, Margaret Cameron, Sarah Cathcart, Jon Finlayson, Lyndall Jones, Rod Quantock; directors Robert Draffin, Barrie Kosky, Douglas Horton; companies Whistling in the Theatre, Chamber Made Opera, Magic Mushroom Mime Troupe, Melbourne Writers Theatre.

What have these in common? One is our judgment that they 'have made a notable contribution to the theatre in Australia': the second is that they are all identified with Melbourne theatre. It may be that some of them are ruled out by such other criteria as '15 years on the professional stage' (though I doubt it). But if the editorial criteria for a *Companion* manage to exclude all of the above there is something wrong with them, and it is not just Sydneycentricity.

ARGUMENTS ABOUT WHO'S in and who's out are inseparable from reference books, and this one is (as I have said) uncommonly capacious. But the omissions point to a more general problem. A *Companion* (witness the celebrated Oxford series) does not aim at the comprehensiveness proper to an encyclopaedia. Yet here is this volume, as long as many of the Oxford series, devoting as much space to Australian theatre as those do to the whole of English Literature, Western Music, or the Mind. What on earth could the *Currency* volume possibly *exclude*?

There are too many minnows from earlier periods in this close-knit mesh, and too much inert information within articles which only specialists could possibly require. This applies particularly to the coverage of 19th and early 20th century matters. The style adopted for many of these articles is leisurely, detailed, almost at times the manner of the formal history.

As we approach the present, the entries tend much more to reference-book-condensed. Thus the entry on Janet Achurch's tour begins with a (misleading) generalisation about modern drama and winds its way along the itinerary, quoting reviews, even finding space to tell us where they played on the way home. By contrast, the article on Australian Nouveau Theatre (ANT), one of

Melbourne's major companies from 1981-1994) is less than one-third the length. Towards a general reader, this is not companionable behaviour.

The editing hand has not been firm enough, especially in the matter of proportion. It is difficult to see why one community theatre company, in Narracoorte, S.A. should get substantially more space than another, rather similar one in the western suburbs of Melbourne. Examples of puzzling space allocation abound. Sometimes one has the impression that the entries passively reflect the depth of scholarship in the particular subject, rather than having been determined by a judgment as to the interest and worth of the subject itself.

But to revert to the intended readership. Many articles here seem to be original contributions to knowledge, not just reworkings from more specialised sources. (Often, there will be no 'further reading'.) This is of course a great strength. But the opportunity of publishing this wealth of new information has obscured the question of who will want to use the book, and why. For specialists and intending specialists, it is a paradise. My colleagues in the field are immensely enthusiastic, especially about the abundant cross-references which encourage the reader to follow out threads and in so doing make new connections.

Perhaps, especially at the price, this book will mostly be consulted in libraries. If so, *Currency* might consider shaping two different sorts of book for a second edition (and for the *Companions* to come). One version, the more compendious, would aspire to the condition of an encyclopaedia; the other—say, half the present size—would consist of a selection of entries from the larger volume addressed consistently to an enquiring non-specialist. This is not condescension: it is commonsense. Serious musicians don't go to the Oxford Companion except for a quick check or reminder; they go to the New Grove. One volume cannot do both jobs. ■

Bruce Williams is head of the School of Arts and Media at La Trobe University.

Hitler's architect

Albert Speer: His Battle with Truth, Gitta Sereny. London
MacMillan, 1995. ISBN 0 333 645 197 RRP \$39.95

THIS IS A BOOK ABOUT the life and times of Albert Speer; of Hitler, his court and his war, and the effects and aftermath of that war. There have been, methinks, too many tomes on Hitler and the Nazis already; perhaps more than enough on the Holocaust, and probably quite enough on Speer. Indeed, Speer wrote a bit, in his last great role—the penitent insider.

So any new books should break unfamiliar ground—either proffer fresh analyses and explanations of Nazism and its practitioners, or else, new information which could change our attitudes or judgments on matters of some import. Otherwise they are upmarket pot boilers; or worse, sponsored by some pressure group. Sereny's study *does* succeed, in a way, for she tells us new things, and raises some quite crucial questions about the nature and possible ubiquity of denial, and hypocrisy, in human affairs: questions which in her hands remain rhetorical. But Erich Fromm and Robert Jay Lifton (E. Fromm: *The Anatomy of Destructiveness*; Robert Jay Lifton: *Nazi doctors and the psychology of genocide*, and with Eric Markusen: *The genocidal mentality: Nazi holocaust and nuclear threat*) have tackled these questions. The psychoanalytically oriented writers, in my opinion, are probably among the few innovators in this whole horrendous business.

Sereny keeps asking, was Speer, (one of those who beat the death penalty at Nuremberg) —was he lying, deceiving himself, or suffering from one of those varieties of amnesia with which we are becoming increasingly familiar in contemporary political life, and which we had

hitherto associated with the criminal classes, or else disturbed persons?

The author prefaces her book with a quote from Vessir T Hooft: 'People cannot find a place in their consciousness... their imagination... or finally have the courage to face an unimaginable horror. It is thus possible to live in a twilight between knowing and not knowing.'

The Nuremberg judges were interested in some of this. They decided that, while not being involved personally in the holocaust and possibly ignorant of its basic character Speer *had* been closely involved in making and executing policies which deserved a twenty-year sentence. Speer maintained, till the end that he had not known about the fate of Jews and Gypsies, nor the real conditions of slave labourers. He should have, and he blamed himself—poor fellow. But his were sins of omission, not commission.

Speer became Hitler's architect in his early thirties, via a mutual infatuation—erotic but not sexual, the author insists—and a shared passion for cold, derivative but grandiose structures. Todt's death pitchforked him into running the economy, building and construction, and arms production—at 36. A recipe for disaster? Instead, Speer did brilliantly, despite Hitler's hallucinations, the bastardries of Himmler, Borman, and the SS. He kept his head and his reality-sense till the end, and beyond.

Sereny takes us through Hitler's war. After their repulse before Moscow, the dreadful winter of 1941-2 and Hitler's idiotic declaration of war on America, any German victory seemed unlikely. Todt, the great engineer who built the West Wall and planned the *autobahnen*, told Hitler in three stormy private conversations that the war was unwinnable—(this was early 1942). Peace *must* be obtained, another big offen-

sive into Russia would finish Germany. After the third interview, Todt's plane mysteriously crashed, and Speer replaced him.

Speer demanded full mobilisation, as in Britain and Russia, women into the workforce, the 1.5 million domestic servants redirected, and civilian austerity. Hitler refused: Kinder, Küche and Kirche were too important, and the public might think things were going badly. Workers from occupied countries would suffice. Thus slave labour was born, and Speer and Sauckel were deeply involved.

ROSENBERG, THE COMMISSIONER for Eastern Territories, protested at the treatment of Jews, Slavs and just about everyone by the SS. Three million Jews were already dead, the remainder were to be killed by the SS. They should not be killed, but put to work. Three million Russian prisoners of war died in six months because of SS maltreatment. Even staunchly anti-communist non-Slavs, such as Muslims, were being killed. If this continued, Rosenberg totally dissociated himself from the whole business. And *very large* numbers of anti-communist East Europeans had wished to join the Germans but been rejected by Hitler, and were now being persecuted by the SS and turned into partisans, or 'freedom fighters'. Did we want to win this war or not? Rosenberg wrote to Hitler and Himmler to this effect—and was sidelined for the duration. Speer's deputy, Sauckel, supported Rosenberg, and was told to shut up.

Speer said nothing, but insisted at Nuremberg that he didn't know about the Jews or the treatment of the other East Europeans or his slave labourers. Sauckel and Rosenberg were hanged, and Speer said that he felt bad about that.

Hitler, Himmler and the SS want-

Speer was the New Man—a technocrat, an organiser par excellence, a negotiator of great skill and subtlety; a man uninterested in wealth, desirous of being at the centre of power, and determined that everyone should like him, and respect him...

ed to win the war, but also to kill as many Jews, Slavs and other inferiors as they could. Speer and most Germans just wanted to win the war; genocide was not on their minds, nor was it widely known. Hitler and Co. wouldn't face that they might have to choose between winning and genocide, but when the penny dropped, *very* late, they continued the killing and cruelty. They couldn't stop: for that was their *raison d'être*.

Those, like Speer who knew or suspected, felt (probably rightly), that the horrors were impossible to stop, dangerous to oppose or even to discuss, so...best forget it, live your own life, and try to win the war. *Ohne mich*.

What of Speer the man?

Speer is generally described as undergoing a moral transformation in Spandau partly through the help of a young French pastor—an ex-Resistance man—and a Rabbi, Robert Geis. Subsequently, he was described as the most tortured, guilt-stricken man on earth. Maybe. I can't help seeing him as a consummate game-player, a great actor, a man with immense self-control and steely nerves, whose very coldness and self-absorption saved him from many of the contacts which reeked of savagery, vice and strong sadistic feelings. Speer was the New Man—a technocrat, an organiser par excellence, a negotiator of great skill and subtlety; a man uninterested in wealth, desirous of being at the centre of power, and determined that everyone should like him, and *respect* him. Everything came down to technique, organisation and order. He appears remarkably unreflective. Born a little before his time—for the IMF and the Pentagon would have loved him. He was not attracted by violence, cruelty or persecution—but if others were—and they were—that was their affair. He *didn't* want to know about it. He is the only Nazi leader with whom so many in the West could identify. He seems normal—*really*.

Speer saw the Cold War coming, even before War's end, and capitalised on it at his trial, and later, so as first to survive, then prosper. Very early on in the trial, he requested a private interview with the US Prosecutor General's office, for he had

important information to impart. Concerning, for example, Allied blunders in the Air War, big mistakes that shouldn't be repeated in any future conflict.

He specified that he did not wish the Russians to benefit from any of this. He got *two* private interviews. At the trial itself Speer denounced Nazism and all its works, and his creator and former idol, Hitler: to the consternation and contempt of his co-accused. But he wasn't hanged.

Although sentenced for his role in the foreign labour program, Speer, by harping on his contrition over the Jews, whom he hadn't harmed, diverted attention from the Slavs, and the slave labourers, *whom he had*. And was allowed to get away with this red herring. After all, Cold War, meant falling silent about the heroism of the Russians and the *enormous* contributions they made to Allied victory.

Or the refuge they gave to so many Jews, and the terrible suffering and loss of life of Slavs in general. After all, we might have had to nuke them, and what the Russians could regard as unacceptable damage—given the endurance shown against the Nazis—was the killing of one-third of their population and two-thirds of their industry. So let's not feel too sorry for them, *or* for that matter, the victims of Mao and his successors. News about the Gulags and the 40 million Chinese dead was strangely delayed, and even now, is a mere footnote to history. As is the wartime Golgotha of the Slavs.

INSTEAD THE HOLOCAUST took centre stage, where it has remained. Speer for one was happy at this. And attention to the comprehensive evils of the Nazi State has declined, just as what the Thousand Year Reich



would have *meant* to the human condition, is no longer interesting—as Martin Borman's son has observed. (*he* became a priest and latterly a teacher). Even the distinctions between Nazism, Fascism and right-wing extremism, and their differing appeals, have been all but erased.

So Speer and Von Braun became respectable: a hundred thousand of the one hundred and fifty thousand identified war criminals 'escaped'. And the old ruling groups in Italy, Iberia and the West were preserved or reinstalled—that is, those who had supported, or collaborated with the Axis. And many of those who had fought the tyrants were politically marginalised, or worse.

So concentrating too long on the case of Albert Speer might be to take a wrong turn. ■

Max Teichmann is a Melbourne writer and reviewer.

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Bring a rug, food, water and dress for the weather. Worship will proceed regardless of the weather.

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Information: Carol Rowley Hirt (03) 9818 2321

A great descent

To Solitude Consigned: the Tasmanian Journal of William Smith O'Brien 1849-1853, Richard Davis (ed.), Crossing Press, Sydney, 1995. ISBN 0646 22784 X RRP \$49.00

AFTER 140 YEARS THE DIARY OF William Smith O'Brien (1803-1864), Van Diemen's Land's most famous convict, has been published. Perhaps, as his only crime was to take up arms for self-rule for Ireland, he was more appropriately a transportee. The meticulous editing by Richard Davis and his team represents a formidable piece of scholarship.

Unlike most other O'Briens, William seems genuinely to have been a patrilineal descendant of Brian Boru, Ireland's version of Alfred the Great, who annihilated the Danes at Clontarf in 1014 A.D. A later ancestor accepted British suzerainty and his descendants 'absorbed the Protestant religion', says Davis, himself from Northern Ireland, gently. With it went the barony of Inchiquin, which later devolved on William's elder brother. But it was William who would become 'the O'Brien'.

Educated at Harrow and Cambridge, he acquired an Irish rotten borough in 1828 and remained in the British Parliament until excluded in 1849, the only elected Irishman to lead an uprising. Although 'a shadowy figure' today, O'Brien in the 1840s, after O'Connell, became Ireland's most influential politician, but split from the 'Liberator' to join 'physical force' Young Irishers in the Irish Confederation in 1847.

In March 1848, sensing another Anglo-French war following the declaration of a Second Republic in France, O'Brien formed a National Guard, following O'Connell's famous dictum: 'England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity'. In fact it was Ireland, in the depth of the Great Famine, which had the 'difficulty'.

There was little support for an uprising and more than something farcical in the failure of O'Brien's squad to rout 46 police from the widow McCormack's cabbage gar-

den and house at Ballingarry, Co. Tipperary in July. However, as Davis splendidly says, 'Whatever O'Brien's limitations as a revolutionary leader, he was superb in the role of martyr.'

In October 1848 (*not* 1849 as on p.12), O'Brien and three colleagues were sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered, a sentence which was commuted to transportation for life. Arriving in Van Diemen's Land a year later, O'Brien declined parole and a ticket of leave so as not to inhibit any possible escape.

Aside from the insights into Van Diemen's Land life at a time when the mainland gold rushes were changing Australia, the ruminative diary kept for his wife provides an interesting mindscape of a classically educated, 19th century-engaged liberal.

O'Brien enjoys it all: observing the 'craniology' of brutalised headshaven convicts, reading Gibbon and Voltaire on Charles XII of Sweden, reflecting on the significance of the Crystal Palace from exile, or writing copious verse. Sometimes it is choice doggerel:

The feathered tenants of the
sylvan grove
The finny tribes that through the
waters rove

In the bibliography there is actually a list of 'O'Brien's Reading,' but the 765 footnotes are occasionally too earnest, as when the term 'Elysian fields' is explained in f.n.167, and we are referred to f.n.443 for further information. Or when O'Brien has a 'weary, flat, stale and unprofitable' week and we are referred to 'Shakespeare, Hamlet, Scene 1, Act 2, Line 133.'

James Griffin is an historian and freelance writer and reviewer.

Go West

IF CYCLONE TRACY IS A PERENNIAL conversation-starter in Darwin, a calamity of human making is the collapse of the State Theatre Company of WA in 1993—the constant talking point among theatre people in Perth.

Prior to 1991, Perth's main adult theatre companies were the West Australian Theatre Company, the Hole in the Wall, Deck Chair Theatre in Fremantle and Swy. The four companies each followed different briefs, some nationalist, some experimental.

The West Australian Theatre Company began a review of its structure and of its impossibly demanding artistic policy in 1990, but before it could implement the review's findings, two events of some magnitude occurred.

First, Andrew Ross (the director who had premiered Jack Davis's plays and the musical *Bran Nue Dae* with success and distinction—mainly for the WATC and its predecessors) formed a new theatre company called Black Swan, with a commitment to regional work, including that of Aboriginal writers. It began production in 1991, with a very small grant from the WA Department for the Arts.

Next, the State Government stepped in and announced that the WATC and the Hole in the Wall would be amalgamated into a new, flagship-style theatre entity, to be called the State Theatre Company and to be housed at the Hole's home in the Subiaco Theatre Centre. Evidently (to quote from the WA Department for the Arts Annual Report of 1990/91) the government was motivated by 'strong industry pressure for the formation of a properly resourced flagship company which would become a genuine focus of excellence ...' and 'a perception that the two existing companies were competing for a similar audience profile with a similar repertoire and in similar sized venues.'

Accordingly, armed with State grants of \$857,000 (a considerable increase over the combined total of \$690,000 to its two predecessors the previous year) the STCWA embarked on its first year of operations

in 1992. Ominously, the fledgling flagship only got a project grant of \$100,000 from the Australia Council's Performing Arts Board, which did not approve of the venture. Given that the PAB had funded the Hole and WATC the previous year to the tune of \$268,330, the new company started off about square. Nonetheless, after only five productions in 1992, and despite the reported success of the last two, the company carried a deficit into its second year. Worse was to come: its two Festival of Perth productions (of new WA work) in February 1993 lost money badly, blowing its deficit out to more than \$100,000. In March, the State Government refused an application to advance another quarterly payment (not due until October);

concern was also expressed about the Australia Council project money that had apparently been spent on things other than those for which it was granted. The STCWA ceased operating just 13 months after its first season was launched.

Several companies volunteered to take over its mantle, but none has in fact done so, although some of the money notionally 'earmarked' for the State company has since been redistributed. Black Swan has prospered and probably enjoys the highest profile (and highest funding level) of Perth's adult theatre companies at present, but it does not aspire to the status of a flagship state theatre company. Swy has renamed itself the Perth Theatre

Company and occupies the theatrical middle ground, while Deck Chair continues with a successful mix of original local work and extant contemporary Australian drama.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT PLAYER IN WA theatre is the Perth Theatre Trust, formed in 1979 to manage Perth's major theatre buildings on behalf of the Perth City Council and the WA Government. The theatres it manages include the grand old commercial venue, His Majesty's, the Playhouse and the Subiaco Theatre Centre; the Trust was instrumental in the



negotiations to refurbish this latter venue into a home for the Hole in the Wall and, as it turned out, for the STCWA later on. Like venue managers all over Australia in recent years, the PTT has also become an active entrepreneur, with a new Programming Unit beginning its operation by bringing *Cats* to Perth in 1989 and *Les Misérables* the following year—both into its own theatre, 'The Maj'.

This year, the Perth Theatre Trust has taken a further step in becoming the city's major provider of mainstream theatre with an 8-play subscription season, entitled the 'Be Active Perth Theatre Season' and marketed over the slogan: 'The World's Best Live Theatre Comes to Perth'. Its collaborators in this venture are Healthway (WA's answer to Foundation SA and the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation and, like them, committed to health messages like 'Quit' and 'Be Active', funded through tobacco taxes) and Black Swan Theatre Company.

The 1995 Perth Theatre Season is based on buy-ins: from the Sydney Theatre Company (*Arcadia* and *Dead White Males*), the Melbourne Theatre Company (*Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*), Sydney's Burning House Company (*That Eye, the Sky*—a stage adaptation of WA author Tim Winton's book of the same name) and the English company Théâtre de Complicité's *The Three Lives of Lucie Cabrol*, which is also appearing in the Melbourne International Festival. The only Perth company involved in the season is Black Swan, which has provided a production of its own (Louis Nowra's ubiquitous *Cosi*) plus a pair of co-productions (one of them being John Romeril's *The Floating World*, with the State Theatre Company of SA, and the other a more local affair, Katherine Thomson's *Diving for Pearls* with Deck Chair Theatre).

THIS LOOKS LIKE A TYPICAL MAINSTREAM, 'flagship' state theatre company season, given that most of the plays in it have been part of the repertoire of the eastern states' flagships in the last couple of years. The problem is that only three of the eight productions employ Perth actors and designers. There is still some of the same 'industry pressure' that preceded the formation of the STCWA, for a genuinely WA-based state flagship company to take up the local employment slack in mainstream theatre. I would argue that a flagship company is not the answer to this problem. Firstly, why would such a company want to compete for mainstream audiences when Australia's (and the world's) best mainstream theatre is already coming to Perth through mechanisms like the PTT, the Festival of Perth and Playing Australia? Secondly, there is no guarantee nowadays of large-scale local employment in flagship companies who depend on a national pool of artists for the co-productions and buy-ins that dominate their repertoires.

A solution of a different kind lies in the collaboration and co-operation evidenced in another new in-

itiative seen in Perth this year. Titled 'The Season at Subiaco', this is a separate subscription season of ten different productions, from nine local companies, of a mixture of new and extant work (all but one of the plays is Australian and half of the season is Western Australian in origin). The companies range from the principal adult companies (like Black Swan and Deck Chair) and the major Young People's Theatre company, Barking Gecko, to a couple of smaller project companies (Theatre West and the last vestiges of the old Hole in the Wall) plus a couple of independent groups doing one-off projects. Another interesting participant in this season is the new regional company from the far north, Theatre Kimberley, with a black and white production of Michael Gow's perennial favourite, *Away*. The initiative for the season came from

Black Swan, while the major sponsor is (again) Healthway.

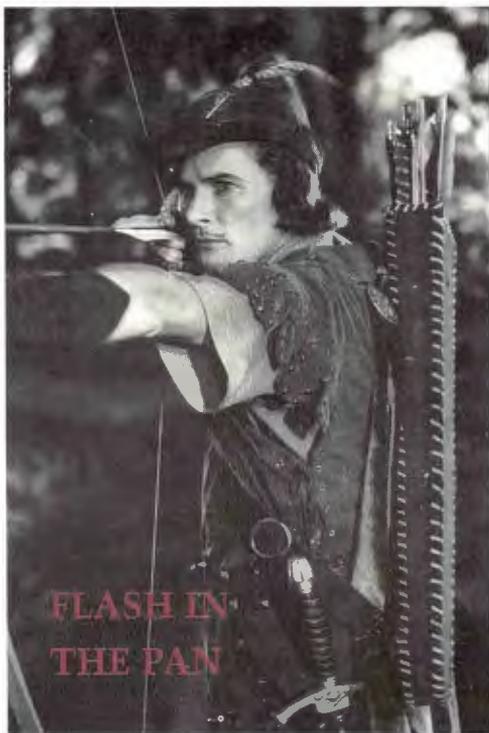
IF ANGELA CHAPLIN'S PRODUCTION OF *Diving for Pearls* is any sort of guide, then this kind of programming would seem to provide an excellent alternative to the PTT's mainstream season for subscription audiences, while providing useful work opportunities for Perth theatre artists. *Diving* was a fine production, with a set design by Kristen Anderson and performances from a cast including locals Robert van Mackelenberg, Helen McDonald and Steve Shaw, and interstates Victoria Longley and Claire Jones, that brought out the gritty realism of Thomson's text in a way that I hadn't seen in previous productions over cast. The other factors that shouldn't be discounted in these joint-season promotion schemes are that Perth's best venues get to be used regularly and that (in the case of the Subiaco season) some of the smaller companies get to use well-equipped venues to which they might not otherwise have access.

As if all that were not enough, Perth also has the unusual Effie Crump Theatre Inc., which performs middle-of-the-road material in an intimate upstairs room of football legend Ian McCulloch's Brisbane Hotel. The show I saw there in August was a welcome revival of David Williamson's *The Club*, a play I hadn't seen in years but which scrubbed up pretty well in Collin O'Brien's lively (and at times very funny) production with an all-local cast.

Effie Crump's major sponsor is Telstra, but there are no prizes for guessing that the principal production sponsor was Healthway, via the 'Kick Butt' message of the 'Quit' campaign: a very good message for a play about footy!

With this level of diversity, I suspect Perth is probably better off *without* a flagship theatre company... provided, of course, that the WA Department for the Arts continues to spread the failed STCWA's money around in equitable fashion! ■

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Bridging the gap

The Bridges of Madison County, dir. Clint Eastwood (Village cinemas). Based on the mega-best-selling novel by Robert James Waller, *The Bridges of Madison County* is an immensely satisfying and mature love story.

The story begins after the death of Francesca Johnson (Meryl Streep). Her son and daughter arrive at the family home to bury her but, while going through her personal effects, they discover that thirty years earlier she had a passionate four-day affair with a man called Robert Kincaid (Clint Eastwood), a photographer from *National Geographic* doing a story on the covered bridges of Madison County.

As her children work their way through Francesca's journals, they come to see and understand their mother and themselves in a completely new light.

Both leads give fine performances but, if you're a *Dirty Harry* fan, you'll be disappointed—Clint is at his 'snaggish' best and the only thing that gets shot are the bridges.

The really touching thing about this film is that, right from the start, we can guess the outcome of Francesca's affair. This means as the story unfolds we are free to concentrate on the dynamics between the two leads rather than holding our breath for a *Casablanca*-type ending.

The Bridges of Madison County is a love story about two people conscious of the price of love and the extent to which we are each the sum of our choices. —Tim Stoney

Lee's strike

Clockers dir. Spike Lee (independent cinemas). Spike Lee's eighth film is a chilling portrait of the crack scene in the black ghettos of America. Lee strips away the glamour of drugs, in the opening credits, by bombarding the viewer with shocking images of drug-related murders.

Clockers revolves around Strike, a naïve 19-year-old crack dealer who becomes involved with the slaying of a rival drug dealer, or clocker. His straight-laced brother takes the blame for the crime, to save Strike from a lifetime in prison. What seems like an open and shut case for most disillusioned and openly racist cops doesn't quite add up for Rocco Klein (Harvey Keitel), the streetwise cop who still gives a damn.

Lee succeeds in humanising the world of crack. He wisely avoids polemic about either the clockers or the police. The behaviour of both is symptomatic of a morally degraded society.

Ultimately, *Clockers* is an indictment of the forces that create the social conditions where 13-year-old children carry Uzis and sell crack, instead of attending poorly equipped schools.

Clockers is not bereft of hope, but it doesn't inspire much optimism that the living standards for poor, urban blacks will improve in the near future, especially when factors such as poverty and unemployment, largely responsible for the misery in black American communities, are ignored.

—Paul McCartan

Lethal dose

The Young Poisoner's Handbook dir. Benjamin Ross (independent cinemas) This film is a foray into the mind of Graham Young (Hugh O'Connor) a young man obsessed with toxic substances to the point of using those around him as guinea pigs for his macabre experiments.

Based on a true story, the film swings between black comedy and satire, as Graham's adolescent love of science goes wrong when he mistakenly creates a lethal poison with his chemistry set. His frustration

with his family leads him to poison them, which, when discovered after the death of his step-mother (Ruth Sheen), lands him in an institution for the criminally insane.

He is, supposedly, rehabilitated by psychiatrist Dr Zeigler (Anthony Sher), released and given a job in a photographic laboratory. He tries to go straight but can't resist the temptation to poison his workmates.

While the people he comes in contact with exhibit normal human frailties and traits, his is a cold and emotionless presence marked only by the one passion in his life. Since the story is told from Graham's perspective, the viewer sympathises with him, and the world is coloured by his contempt.

This film is a spoof, but the director's flirtation with matters of a more serious nature, through constant references to fascism, are more distracting than illuminating. This aside, *The Young Poisoner's Handbook* is worth a look if you're in the mood for a bit of gallows humour.

—Jon Greenaway

Connection made

Six Degrees of Separation dir. Fred Schepisi (Village and independents). Despite flawless performances, this film is dominated by an ingenious script. There are enough unexpected turns in the plot, based on a play by

Eureka Street Film Competition

The swashbuckling Errol Flynn is one of Hollywood's legends. Tell us where he was born and we'll send you \$30.00—enough for movie tickets and a choc top for two. Send entries to: *Eureka Street* film competition, PO Box 553, Richmond 3121. The winner of September's competition was, I. C. Hawks of Cardinale Qld, who correctly identified our star as the great Ida Lupino.



John Guare, to make its intellectual gristle not only appetising but irresistible.

Flan Kittredge (Donald Sutherland) and his wife Ouisa (Stockard Channing) deal in art. Their Manhattan apartment is filled with the spoils of successful careers, including a double-sided Kandinsky: one side represents control, the other chaos. One night, while entertaining a South African financier, chaos enters their lives disguised as control. A young black, Paul, arrives on their doorstep, having been mugged in Central Park and his thesis stolen. He explains that he goes to Harvard with the Kittredges' two children and identifies himself as the son of Sidney Poitier. For a few brief hours he thaws the atmosphere of the apartment: he cooks dinner and beguiles the gathering with the argument of his thesis; that imagination has become synonymous with style, when it ought to be a way of building bridges between people.

Paul is a con artist. He has pulled the same stunt on friends of the Kittredges. What follows is a kind of hunt. At the same time as the Kittredges relate the events of their encounter with Paul to a widening series of glittering New York social gatherings, their pursuit of him leads them to brush against an unfamiliar underclass. Ouisa discovers that only six links in a chain separate any two people on the planet. Her world becomes brittle and finally breaks: 'We turn him into an anecdote,' she says in a finely crafted dinner scene, 'But it was an experience'. She is weary of relating stories, of being a human jukebox, of being a collage of unaccounted-for brushstrokes. She leaves the table. She slaps the hand of God.

—Michael McGirr SJ

Coke and smoke

The Usual Suspects, dir. Bryan Singer (independent cinemas). A peaceful night is ripped apart by an explosion of a ship, rumoured to contain \$91m worth of cocaine. There are two survivors—a crippled small-time conman named 'Verbal' Kint (Kevin Spacey) and a Hungarian gangster, nearly dead from his extensive burns.

Later, Kint is interrogated by US

Customs Special Agent, David Kujan (Chazz Palminteri). Kujan believes Kint holds the key to the identity of a notorious international criminal, Keyser Soze.

Kint's story begins six weeks earlier, when five small-time criminals are arrested in New York City in connection with the hijacking of a truckload of gun parts. The five; McManus (Stephen Baldwin), Keaton (Gabriel Byrne), Hockney (Kevin Pollak), Fenster (Benicio Del Toro) and Kint, join forces for a one-off job.

Kujan's interrogation is relentless. Kint resists—but his tale reveals the group's activities over the previous six weeks which have led him to this point. Meanwhile, the FBI race to compile a sketch of Keyser Soze from the dying Hungarian gangster.

Rarely will you see a film with a more intricate plot than *The Usual Suspects*. Although the plot is at times complex, any confusion only adds to the pleasure as the tale unwinds. This is a film satisfying in every respect; superbly acted, entertaining and enthralling, right to the end.

—Tim Stoney

Let's dance

Showgirls, dir. Paul Verhoeven (General release). The controversy about *Showgirls* in the US is really a squall in a champagne glass. The US have recently introduced an NTC classification (those under 17 can't see the movie) and for studios, distributors and exhibitors, this is a commercial horror.

Showgirls is rated NTC and must be hot. Well...there is a lot of glitzy show-nudity and some scenes to give addicts a fix. However, as with the odd version of Anne Rice's *Exit to Eden*, with Paul Mercurio on a sex-therapy island resort earlier this year, it does show that the studios are trying to 'get away with' suggestions of soft-porn.

The movie itself is not much, although directed with visual panache by Paul Verhoeven. But the screenplay, 'written' by Joe Eszterhas (*Basic Instinct*, *Jagged Edge*, *Sliver*) relies on stock plot lines and cliché expressions of the crass kind.

We can tut-tut over how crude

Las Vegas life is, pity the poor girls who allow themselves to be victimised by grungy, as well as expensively-dressed, hustlers. But it's a fairly vacuous look at tawdry experiences.

Elizabeth Berkley gives her limited all, as Nomi Malone the would-be exotic star. As a statuesque actress, she is a vigorous dancer. Finally, she realises that though she has lost her innocence, there is more to life and, that despite everything, she has 'found herself'. We last see her provocatively hitching a ride to LA, where presumably, she will star in *Showgirls*.

—Peter Malone

Tsk tsk

Carrington dir. Christopher Hampton (Greater Union and independent cinemas). British moviemakers love recreating period, whether in finicky-postmodern style (*The Draughtsman's Contract*), silly-postmodern (Orlando), over-the-top outrageous-campy-postmodern (*Edward II*), or Merchant Ivory scrubbed-up-museum-piece-postmodern (*Howard's End*, *A Room With a View*). And they are obsessed by the epicene, whether contemporary or period (*The Crying Game*, *Orlando*, *Edward II*). *Carrington*, like these others, has mined this seam yet again.

The romantic twist of *Carrington* is an allusion to the Shakespearean heroine, with Emma Thompson (Bloomsbury artist Dora Carrington) doing her usual wonderful job of being a passionate, lively, witty English person against the equally bravura performance of Jonathan Pryce (Lytton Strachey), floridly bewhiskered and a touch Byronic. And the photography is glorious.

But I felt squeamish about the whiff of pederasty in Strachey's lust for the very young Dora Carrington, thinking she was a boy when he saw her playing football with the lads. I thought that there was probably a lot more to Dora Carrington than a hopeless passion for Strachey and I had an impression of being cheated slightly of the real tension in a life that was probably a lot more significant than one would gather from the film's account of this relationship.

—Juliette Hughes

YOU COULD NOT HELP but like Ivan Hutchinson. At Fawkner crematorium, Ivan's oldest son, Mark, read mourners a Somerset Maugham story, *Salvatore*, not only honouring his father's love of words and literature, but to highlight the key to the story: there are some people whom one can describe honestly as 'good'. Ivan Hutchinson was a good man.

And this was the opinion of everyone who spoke or wrote about him at his death. The man you watched on the television was exactly the same man you met in the street, a man who liked people, respected them and had a regard for them.

Ivan was buried from St Francis' church in the heart of Melbourne, a church that Ivan and his wife, Grace, had come to cherish for its liturgy, its choir and some stirring homilies. 1500 people attended. It was not a show-business occasion, rather a celebration of a life. However, many colleagues from television and movies were present. Ivan was Melbourne's 'Mr Movies' and the city paid tribute to him.

But this kind of celebrity was alien to Ivan. While at ease as a public figure, he was more comfortable with family and friends. He was often surprised at the range of people who would stop to speak to him because they considered they knew him. His daughter, Ruth, remembers him taking off his glasses when they walked through the city together so that he would not see people looking at him.

But, in the public eye he was. First as a member of a dance band and then, from 1960, as a pianist and music arranger. He then became musical director at Channel 7.

He enjoyed playing the piano and the excerpts from old shows in the collage-tributes to him screened on television show a young man playing with rhythm and vigour. Some have remarked that it is a pity that he did not write screen music. He did actually write a score for a '70s telemovie, *Barnaby and Me*, but it was the only one.

And, of course, Ivan enjoyed the movies. A Fitzroy boy, he went to the local movie-houses, The Adelphi and The Regent, in the 30s and 40s, wrote his own reviews for himself and began to build up a huge memory store of information but, more, a love for the moving images and the stories they told.

When the Seven management invited him to host a review show with his friend and colleague, Jim



Ivan Hutchinson 1928-1995

Murphy, *Two on the Aisle*. Ivan was pleased at the opportunity to watch and talk about movies and share his appreciation with the television audience. It lasted for several years during the '70s. It also led to his hosting specials each Christmas about holiday movies and hosting special screenings around Melbourne.

The Channel Seven vaults must have a large section devoted to the many interviews Ivan did for more than twenty years with stars, writers and directors, both local and those arriving to promote their movies. These interviews show us urbane and intelligent encounters.

Ivan also became the well-known host of Seven's, *The Midday Movie* which, with the buying and selling of the '80s,

meant that his programmes were eventually networked interstate.

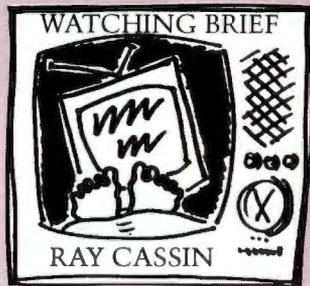
But what Ivan did, especially with *The Midday Movie* and his many written reviews in the Melbourne *Herald-Sun* for over twelve years and in *TV Week*, was invite audiences to enjoy the movies, certainly, but also to appreciate them. Ivan was, in the best sense, an educator. He could draw out from people deeper awareness of the ways movies worked. He offered information and background; he was able to highlight features that audiences might not notice; he could broaden interests and tastes.

Many reviewers get caught up in clever writing and pushing their particular bias. Ivan was a reviewer who 'mediated' the film culture to a wide public without lecturing them or talking down to them. And that was a strong contribution to popular Australian culture.

THE IVAN HUTCHINSON WHOM THE PUBLIC did not see was a man devoted to his family, to his wife, four children and seven grandchildren, a man who appreciated his friends. He was a devout man but with a strong sense of church and its changes over the last thirty years. And he was a man with a strong social justice sense, not a crusader, but a supporter of people and issues that cried for justice.

Just before Christmas 1994, Ivan was operated on for a brain tumour. The operation and the therapy were only temporarily successful. He will be missed by all who knew him and I feel privileged to have been one of his friends.

—Peter Malone M.S.C



Once a jolly gag man

THE TRIUMPH OF AUSTRALIAN TELEVISION, so conventional wisdom has it, is the soapie. Well yes, if international sales are the measure. *Neighbours* has its fans in Liverpool and Limerick, and re-runs of *Prisoner* are avidly watched in all sorts of outlandish places from Saskatoon to Stockholm. But the same measure generates a different conventional wisdom about Australian cinema, where our forte is deemed to be comedy. Or rather, so that salespersons can better position Australian movies on the American market, 'screwball' comedy. (No, I wouldn't liken *Death in Brunswick*, *Strictly Ballroom* and their ABBA-loving successors to *Wayne's World* and the *Police Academy* movies, either. But it just goes to show what the spivs in marketing will say in order to sell the product.)

It is odd that Australian television comedy has not yet found an international audience. Perhaps it is because much of the best home-grown satire has a political flavour, making it incomprehensible elsewhere—given that scarcely anyone north of Jakarta knows, much less cares, who governs Australia. So the work of Elle McFeast and her colleagues, whose return to the small screen is eagerly awaited by many of us, is probably destined to remain a local secret.

But, with a little repackaging *Full Frontal* could go to most of the places where people speak English, and *Roy and H.G.* could go to at least some of the places where people speak English and play cricket and rugby league. In other words, places in England north of the Trent. Slaven and Nelson would probably be understood in other parts of the cricketing world—in London, Durban or Trinidad, and perhaps even in Islamabad. But in those towns—though not for the same reasons in each case—the arbiters of taste are likely to conspire against any station or network rash enough to screen the variety show from *Club Buggery*.

Given the supposed wacky/screwball profile of Australian comedy, *Don't Forget Your Toothbrush* might find takers abroad. True, it is a game show, and like so many game shows is already an imitation of a foreign (in this case British) original. But, with the proliferation of cable stations on this planet there just might be someone looking for a show that will divert the socially maladjusted at 3am or thereabouts in, say, Murmansk or Montevideo. And what better than watching Tim Ferguson use a golf club to propel a noisome mix of pasta and cockroaches into the studio audience?

Or to hear him announce to various youthful male members of the audience that their girlfriends

are pregnant? (The announcements turned out to be a hoax, but on *Don't Forget Your Toothbrush* they might not have been.)

Despite its foreign provenance, *Don't Forget Your Toothbrush* revels in a mixture of malice and unashamed adolescent nerdiness that, I assume, is what the aforementioned American marketing types are trying to describe when they refer to Australian screen comedy as 'screwball'. As hosted by Tim Ferguson, it has acquired a distinct Australian flavour—just as *All in the Family* was more than just a pale US imitation of *Til Death Us Do Part*. It is a blend that has always characterised the local brand of humour. Remember the schoolteachers who spent dreary hours trying to explain it, with

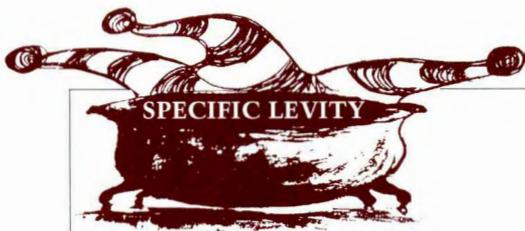
reference to Lawson's *The Loaded Dog*? They usually used the word 'sardonic' rather than 'screwball', emphasising the malice rather than the nerdiness. Perhaps they had been watching us in the playground.

Bordertown (ABC, 8.30pm Wednesdays) purports to be the story of a migrant hostel in an Australian country town shortly after World War II. Ostensibly it is 'drama' rather than comedy, and in the hands of some writers and producers this multicultural harmony might have been suffocated by the worthiness of its theme. But *Bordertown* manages to spoof the doctrine, while still endorsing the fact, of multiculturalism; and in doing so it reveals a distant affinity with last year's gloriously malicious ABC series, *The Damnation of Harvey McHugh*.

Like *Harvey*, *Bordertown* makes music carry its sharpest barbs. In one episode, a middle-aged Italian umbrella-maker waits for his wife to arrive in the new country. When she appears, it is obvious that she has become the lover of his former apprentice. It sounds silly enough to be the plot of an Italian romantic opera, and indeed the strains of Verdi, Puccini and Leoncavallo are to be heard, overlaying scene after hammy scene. The cuckold, the temptress and the seducer are ethnic stereotypes of the kind that less subtle bits of ABC moralising—*GP*, for instance—would never dream of ridiculing. But the point, of course, is that they *are* stereotypes.

I am not sure what they would make of *Bordertown* in Murmansk and Montevideo. But I hope it finds an audience somewhere outside this continent. If nothing else, it is a reminder of the perils of taking one's self-image too seriously. And that's not a bad lesson for a bunch of malicious nerds to teach the world. ■

Ray Cassin is a freelance writer.



Eureka Street Cryptic Crossword no. 38, November 1995

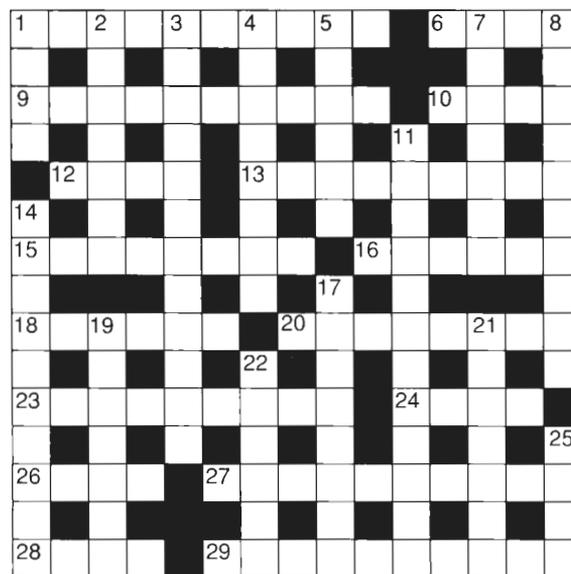
Devised by Joan Nowotny IBVM

ACROSS

- 1 Try air glue constituents for everyday routine. (10)
- 6 French pig goes back for the harvest. (4)
- 9 The gardens are unusual, since four o' the plants look like pine trees. (10)
- 10 Knocks up the box? (4)
- 12 Maria Callas without top note could hardly produce this. (4)
- 13 Strive to be extra prudent—or else! (9)
- 15 'Heard...are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter'. (Ode on a Grecian Urn) (8)
- 16 It makes peculiar sense—Eastern ancient sect member is discovered. (6)
- 18 Sheer bliss, note, in sanctuary! (6)
- 20 Worried New England couple move location to seek wealth. (8)
- 23 A mixture of fuel bait you seem to set to ensnare the lovely. (9)
- 24 If you haven't got this, you'll hardly do the crossword! (4)
- 26 Animal on inscription of famous University. (4)
- 27 Being like an Arctic bear, I give voice to an attitude that is causing division. (10)
- 28 Hurried to take part in this pedestrian way. (4)
- 29 Bolster your case by talking about the street and about New Guinea next. (10)

DOWN

- 1 Can the foundation sway? (4)
- 2 Reporter is a possible gleaner of information that is widespread. (7)
- 3 The issue about mortality, perhaps, is critical. (4-3-5)
- 4 The worried reasoner and the concerned thinker are uncommon specimens of humanity, possibly. (4,4)
- 5 Educated, but sounds tense! (6)
- 7 Salesman on the roof? What a snake in the grass! (7)
- 8 In spite of confusion, daughter *per se* always kept going. (10)
- 11 What the party branches might have been doing when Peg lit screen to reveal constituents. (12)
- 14 In this crazy ship I am bound (mostly) for land as well as sea. (10)
- 17 Wise man swallows medicine and produces overflow. (8)
- 19 Border, by himself, partakes of fish. (7)
- 21 Uri plunges into common food to provide sustenance. (7)
- 22 The AFL began offering Australian tours—and so they were launched. (8)
- 25 Paradoxically gain Government by not being for it. (4)



Solution to Crossword no. 37, October 1995



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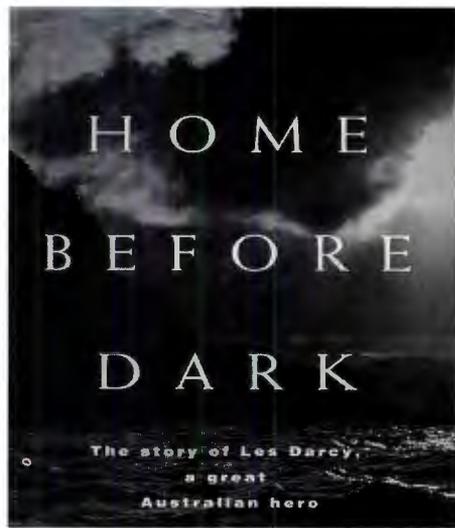


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