

# EUREKA STREET

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## **Shadows over the Sunshine State**

Margaret Simons and Campbell Thomson

## **Hong Kong's imperial democrat**

Robin Fitzsimons



**An interview, not a point of view.**

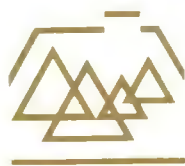


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# The Bethlehem Games

**I**N THE SMALL HOURS of Friday, 24 September, I was at Sydney's Circular Quay, waiting to hear the announcement of the city to host the 2000 Olympic Games. The night was alive, the crowd humming. Only one other cause had ever brought me out to the Quay at such an ungodly hour—a man called Franky.

Franky used to live in the public toilet under Circular Quay railway station. He was confined to a wheelchair, which he occupied like a throne, and he used to bark mercilessly from it at the few stray people who might still be out and about. The schoolkids who came with me on these occasions used to cope with Franky much better than I did. They called him 'Cranky Franky' and simply got on with the business of changing his clothes, giving him a wash and then taking his mug over to one of the trendy cafes. The young waiters would recognise the chipped mug, ask after Franky and send the mug back with a cappuccino and three sugars. No charge. Then the railway attendant would lock Franky in the toilet for the night and he would be safe. I'm sure this must have been against the rules. In the midst of such attention, Franky was impeccably rude. But all these people seemed to have warmed to him.

There was no sign of Franky on the night of the big announcement. The quay was a different place. John Williamson got up and sang *True Blue*, and then told the crowd that most of them were younger than his next number, *Old Man Emu*. He was right. It was a young crowd, mostly teenagers. It was not a crowd that expected to win. At 4.15am, the presenters were pleading with us to behave ourselves if the announcement went against us. 'The world will be watching,' they said. Sure enough, the escalators on my left were banked with the TV cameras of the world. Suddenly their lights burned in my face. I guessed that a camera had already whisked me away from my private hole in the crowd and flashed my face before an audience somewhere in Malta or Brazil. By this time the big screen showed the Chinese vice-president of the IOC taking the stage in Monaco. He was booed. They expected him to win. The crowd disregarded all instructions and hissed like a punctured lung.

I'm not sure why the crowd finally erupted as it did. Maybe it was the surprise. Maybe it was the prospect of 155,000 jobs and a \$7.3 billion boost to the economy. Maybe it was the



fireworks already breaking overhead. At all events, people were lifted out of themselves. A kid near me turned on a poor hot dog seller and demanded green and gold sauce. It wasn't a joke. He was *demanding*. He could have anything he wanted now. A grey suit on the terrace of the Park Hyatt, the hotel that snakes strangely around the harbour foreshore, shouted that the Australian dollar had gone up. I think he was joking but he was brandishing a mobile phone to suggest otherwise. Perhaps he'd been in touch with somebody somewhere. The balconies of the Hyatt were becoming dotted with guests, all of them wearing identical white terry-towel bathrobes. They looked like acolytes at a concelebration.

But I'm still not sure what they were cheering about. What *we* were cheering about. And, after an interval of several months, after seeing a forest of shredded paper swept off George Street in the wake of the conquering delegation, after unseemly wrangling about management of the games and the funding of the 2000 Paralympics, and after the appointment of only one woman, Sally-

anne Atkinson, to the 15-member Sydney organising Committee of the Olympic Games, I'm even less sure than I was then.

The Olympics may seem to eclipse the celebration of yet another Christmas. There's a lot more tinsel around the Sydney Games. But in seven years between

now and then, every young person in that crowd at the Quay will know disappointment. They will follow stars that splutter and fade. At times, they will be numb in heart. They will be lonelier than the Quay at dawn in winter.

With any luck, they will also find unlikely friends. Please God, they will thaw in the company of people as

unlovely as Franky. Then they might find a place for themselves in the story of Christmas, a place that no card, no wrapping, no gaudy promotion can crowd.

When everyone else has gone home, Christmas remembers the worst-funded, most clumsy, the rudest bid on earth. It was Franky's bid that caught God's eye. At Christmas, it is Franky's turn to host salvation. ■

Michael McGirr SJ is a *Eureka Street* staff writer.



## Three years up

**W**HEN WE FIRST BEGAN PUBLISHING *Eureka Street*, in 1991, there was formal talk about 'where we'd be in three year's time'. The talk was muted, because there was a war going on and we were all too aware of the ironies of five and ten year plans and great leaps forward. After all, the 20th century dance has been the confident two-step forward followed by the deep collapse backward. So there were plans but no clarion calls.

This issue marks the end of our first three years. With the support of an increasing and diverse readership, they have been successful years. And during the last four months we have received more encouragement and—the crucial measure—a higher subscription rate than at any other stage of the magazine's brief history. The interest has been generated by the issues we have covered extensively, among them Mabo, constitutional reform and proposals for a Australian Republic, econom-

ic justice, Australia's war history and ways of identifying what we hold sacred, the Papal encyclical, sexual equality and the response of Australian churches.

But the other factor has been the sheer quality of writing, photography and graphic art we have been able to publish. *Eureka Street* began with a commitment to independent journalism in a market that was shrinking and dominated by monopoly players. We have been overwhelmed by the response of Australian writers, journalists and graphic artists, all seeking an outlet for their work, all wishing to have a voice in the conversation about this nation's culture.

For Australia, this has been one of the most important years since Federation, and the matters set in train by the High Court and by Government require sustained scrutiny and informed public debate. That is our role. ■

—Morag Fraser

Photo: Andrew Stark

## Finding room to disagree

From Philip Ahern

I was extremely concerned with some of the comments made by some people on the *Four Corners* program that discussed the recent papal encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*. My concern is not with the encyclical itself, as I have not read it and I understand that it is, on the whole, a beautiful document.

My concern was with many comments that the auxiliary bishop of Melbourne, George Pell, made. He implied, if not explicitly stated, that there was little room for discussion and debate concerning any part or all of this document. It was revealed that he had 'warned' a Jesuit priest about ever disagreeing with the document, and in one part of the program even said that the faithful simply 'must conform their conscience' to the teaching contained in this encyclical.

Bishop Pell must surely see that if the role of the conscience is nothing more than a psychological rubber stamp for church teaching what need is there of a conscience at all? If conscience is nothing more than a carriage that is to be pulled along by the train of the hierarchical church, where does that leave free will, one of God's greatest gifts to his people? If the Christian is always obliged just blindly to submit to church teaching, this would be taking the responsibility of moral decision-making away from the individual and giving it to an external institution. Surely Bishop Pell does not subscribe to this view. The Second Vatican Council made it quite clear that real teaching authority comes from the whole Body of Christ, for we are all the 'People of God'. Authority in the church is more properly understood as 'power with' as opposed to 'power over' the faithful.

This attitude to teaching authority is best exemplified in the person of Saint Cyprian, an early bishop, who wrote to his priests: 'I have made it a rule, ever since the beginning of my episcopate, to make no decision merely on the strength of my own personal opinion without consulting you and without the approbation of the people.' By listening to the laity it may be said that the hierarchical church is alerting itself to any movement prompted by the Holy Spirit.

A papal encyclical is not merely to be treated as a personal opinion by the

*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.



head of the church but nor is it to be seen as infallible (immune from error), contrary to popular opinion. Church teaching and an individual's conscience must be seen as partners in a relationship. They should dialogue with each other and respect each other. Both must be given serious attention. According to Catholic social teaching, however, it is conscience that must reign supreme.

Pope Pius XII stated emphatically in 1945 that the dictates of one's conscience were 'clear and incontrovertible' and that the church held in honour 'the laws of individual and social living written in the hearts of men'. Vatican II, in its *Declaration on Religious Freedom*, also upholds the value and primacy of conscience. How does Bishop Pell reconcile this with what he was saying and doing on *Four Corners*?

There are many principles of Catholic social teaching that appear to conflict with Bishop Pell's stance. The Catholic Church acknowledges the principle of personalism. This teaching upholds the dignity and independence of every human being. It states that any institution (and presumably the church is one such) exists to promote the growth of its individual members, and not vice versa. This includes the right to freedom of thought, of speech and of criticism. In trying to stifle discussion and debate on the encyclical Bishop Pell seems to be displaying scant respect for this principle, which our current Pope has reaffirmed time and time again (the speech he gave to the UN especially comes to mind here). A natural follow-on from this basic principle is the value the church places on pluralism. According to this principle, unity is created not through the imposition of uniformity but through the integration of diversity.

I sincerely wish to point out to Bishop George Pell and others who share his view that Jesus himself criticised the church authorities of his day if he believed they were placing harsh burdens (however sincere they may have been) on the people of his day. The Catholic community in Australia will no doubt be celebrating the first Australian to be raised to the stature of sainthood in the very near future. Does Bishop Pell realise that Mary McKillop criticised the church of Adelaide in her day to the point that she was silenced and excommunicated? Yet history, and indeed the church, has vindicated her.

The New Testament tells how the religious authorities felt threatened by a new group that had emerged within Judaism. But a wise Pharisee named Gamaliel advised his colleagues not to silence these first Christians. He said 'I tell you do not take any action against these men. If what they have planned and done is of human origin it will disappear but if it comes from God you cannot possibly defeat them. You could find yourselves fighting against God.' Perhaps Bishop Pell and people of like mind could take these words to heart next time they state that there is little or no room for discussion concerning non-dogmatic teachings of the church.

Philip Ahern  
Glenunga, SA

## How the Pope reads his letter

From Fr Tony Kelly CSSR, lecturer in theology, Yarra Theological Union.

The Holy Father gave a talk on Sunday, 7 November (see *L'Osservatore Romano*, 45/1315, 10 November, p1), which provides an interesting gloss on some aspects of *Veritatis Splendor*. He stresses—had someone been supposing otherwise?—that he 'had not failed to emphasise the central value of conscience'.

He goes on to say, 'In fact, the moral law and conscience are not alternatives' (his emphasis). True, this is not an unusual inference among those not accustomed to think too deeply about ethical issues. It is supposed that the more one exalts conscience, the less one can share a common or public system of values. Or, alternatively, the more we recognise a shared moral order, the less room there is for personal conscience.

In other words, it is not a question of



either/or, but of both/and: if you start with conscience and proceed to a moral law—from 'the inside out', so to speak, or treat morality more from 'the outside in'. This latter, I would suggest, is what most would presume to be the emphasis of the recent encyclical.

But here is the important point. The Pope goes on to say: 'Conscience is the proximate norm of conduct, and as such it should be followed, even in the case of error due to invincible ignorance' (my emphasis). It seems that a greater dignity is being accorded the confused conscience than was the case in the encyclical. This is a point worth pondering, and one likely to have marked pastoral consequences.

Certainly, 'conscience needs to be nurtured and educated' (original emphasis) since it is a 'delicate voice', often 'overpowered by a noisy, distracted way of life', to say nothing of its being 'suffocated by a long-lasting, serious habit of sin'—as, presumably, we all know.

But, another point: How should conscience be nurtured and educated to live up to fundamental dignity? The answer given in the Pope's talk is rather disarming, compared with the more stentorian pronouncements of the encyclical: 'the preferred way to form it, at least for those who have the grace of faith, is to relate it to the biblical revelation of the moral law, authoritatively interpreted with the help of the Holy Spirit, by the magisterium of the church,' (my emphasis).

A minor gloss, some might think. But it does indicate how the Pope himself is reading his own huge letter to the bishops. Hence, a handy reference.

Tony Kelly  
Kew, VIC

## Catholics and their church

From John Benecke

On a recent *Four Corners* television program it was encouraging to hear someone of the status of Fr W. Uren SJ, dissent from some aspects of *Veritatis Splendor*. On the same program Bishop Pell supported the encyclical without reservation. Some of the points the bishop made were:

1. What the Pope wrote should be accepted as true by all Catholics.
2. That the Pope is repeating what Jesus Christ taught.

3. That 90 per cent of the encyclical would be agreed to by Catholics.

The reaction of many Catholics to these observations is:

1. Since Vatican I (1870) the position of the Catholic Church has been that what a pope states about morals and dogma is certain to be free from error if he formally declares it *ex cathedra*. *Veritatis Splendor* has not been issued *ex cathedra*. The degree of solemnity attached to a statement by a pope should be matched by the degree of seriousness with which it is received by Catholics. But a statement which is not *ex cathedra* cannot be presented as infallible, and to propose a category of 'nearly-infallible' is both silly and dangerous.

In any event, many Catholics do not now accept that the phrase 'infallibility of the pope' has any useful meaning when taken literally. They regard it as a phrase that is being transmogrified, by a tortuous shift in interpretation, into something rather different from its original meaning.

2. Bishop Pell asserted that the Pope is simply repeating the message of Christ. Concerning contraception, to call this assertion naive would be the most charitable option available. The question being asked is, 'How should Christians apply the message of Christ to this matter?' The bishop begged this question. Such episcopal teaching is one facet of what alienates many present-day Catholics. Most Australian Catholics do not believe that 'artificial' contraception is intrinsically evil or immoral. The recent encyclical is unlikely to change their opinion.

3. Virtually all Catholics would agree that more than 90 per cent of the encyclical expresses the Christian way of life. It is the remaining small percentage that may need further thought rather than blunt assertion.

I was deeply disappointed when I heard Bishop Pell say that matters such as the Catholic view of contraception should not be discussed within the wider Australian community, but only within the church organisation. For one thing,

the majority of Catholics have no significant voice within this organisation and, perhaps more importantly, the policy of keeping Catholics' beliefs privy only to Catholics has all the hallmarks of the cult, the ghetto and the siege mentality.

Bishop Pell previously appeared on another television panel, which discussed the concept of women priests. Listening to his words I felt sad that my voice of Christianity (the Catholic Church) should be represented by someone whose vision seemed blinkered. His reliance on arbitrary legalisms and traditions contrasted sharply with the type of Christianity expressed by several senior Catholic nuns who also spoke.



Many Catholics feel alienated from their church because of the functioning of the existing Vatican administrative system. Unfortunately, this sense of alienation can easily progress to alienation from Christianity. Such problems do not arise from the contraception debate alone, they have roots in the Vatican's administrative/theological/philosophical 'mindset', which Fr Uren referred to on *Four Corners*. Much of this mindset is not an integral part of Christianity but only an historical coincidence which is, regrettably, often presented by the Vatican as if it is Christianity itself.

Matters such as the prohibition of

women priests or married priests are arbitrary rules of an organisation. These rules may or may not have had adequate reasons in the past and such reasons may or may not still be cogent. But such prohibitions have no essential part in the Christian way of life; they have to do with the running of an organisation, and these are two quite different things. Perhaps unavoidably, a large part of the Vatican mindset has been determined by the need to acquire, retain and devolve power within an organisation. Many Catholics also consider that the theological/philosophical mindset of the Vatican is still linked to some ideas that have been largely superseded, but such a proposition is beyond the scope of this letter.

It has been mentioned above that the majority of Catholics do not have a real voice in the administration of their Church. Most of the Catholic clergy are similarly affected in that they risk criticism or sanctions if they express an opinion, about any aspect of Christianity, that does not match the Vatican's point of view. Lay Catholics are very conscious that their clergy are often in this difficult position.

**John Benecke**  
Fairlight, NSW

## Living with past mistakes

*From Ross Saunders*

When I was working for the ABC in Melbourne in 1965, I was co-ordinator of the religious TV program *Dialogue*. We had a Roman Catholic theologian reporting on Vatican II from time to time.

After one Monday morning's taping, I asked him why the Catholic Church was so opposed to any form of artificial contraception, and why the church was so opposed to the population control so desperately needed in many parts of the poverty-stricken world. Over a cup of coffee in private he then enlightened me about the problem that months and years of consultations had been unable to resolve.

It was all due to the encyclical *Casti Connubii* of 1930. In this, he said, Pius XI had defined a natural act of human sexual intercourse in so comprehensive a manner that the possibility of conception must always be present. The result of such a definition was to brand as 'inherently evil' any sexual activity that

did not have as its final outcome the possibility of a male sperm fertilising a female ovum.

From this I began to realise that the only alternative to the moral dilemmas posed by this encyclical for a world so changed since 1930 was to declare that Pius XI had erred in his definition of a natural act of human sexual intercourse. I kept this clue in the back of my mind until the release of *Veritatis Splendor*. I was fortunate to find a copy of *The Christian Faith: Doctrinal Developments of the Catholic Church*, (ed. J. Neuner SJ and J. Dupuis SJ, 5th edition 1991). Here, for the first time, I read the momentous words of *Casti Connubii* in an authorised English translation.

Here are the critical lines: 'The conjugal act is of its very nature designed for the procreation of offspring; and, therefore, those who, in performing it deliberately deprive it of its natural power and efficacy, act against nature and do something which is shameful and intrinsically immoral ... the Catholic Church, to whom God has committed the task of teaching and preserving morality and right conduct in their integrity, standing firm amid this moral ruin, raises her voice in sign of her divine mission to keep the chastity of the marriage contract unsullied by this ugly stain, and through our voice proclaims anew that any use of marriage in the exercise of which the act is deprived, by human interference, of its natural power to procreate, is an offence against the law of God and nature, and those who commit it are guilty of grave sin.' (3716, 3717, emphases mine).

Earlier we find these words, 'Matrimony was not instituted or restored by man, but by God; not man, but God, the Author of nature and Christ our Lord, the restorer of nature, provided marriage with its laws, confirmed it and elevated it; and consequently those laws can in no way be subject to human wills or to any contrary pact made even by the contracting parties themselves.' (3700).

Now, although a papal encyclical is not itself an infallible utterance, the way the words above have been formulated makes it clear that the author believed what he was declaring was not a personal opinion but the formulation of a natural law of God as revealed to the Catholic Church. Thus, there is only one way to circumvent this formulation of the natural law of God and of nature: to declare that in this particular formulation Pope Pius XI had erred.

Just imagine what that would have

brought upon the papacy as a whole! If a Pope had been mistaken in so basic a thing as a law of God, how on earth—or in heaven—could the papacy ever get anything right? The whole doctrine of the infallibility of the papacy when speaking on matters of faith and morals would have been in tatters.

So, there you have it. Because of a papal definition that claims to represent a law of God and of nature, obedient Catholics are locked into a system of moral conduct that prevents them from linking contraception to issues of justice, compassion and responsible parenthood. They are prevented from enjoying much mutual sexual pleasure during marriage. The loving wife who wants to masturbate her husband during her menstrual cycle or her fertile period is committing an intrinsically immoral act, as is her husband who wants to respond in kind. On the other hand, condemnations of sexual intercourse outside of marriage seem to be dealt with in non-definitional terms.

I personally share Karl Rahner's wonderful but unattainable dream of a pope admitting that he and the church had made a mistake or two over the centuries. But I also indulge in the perhaps futile hope that the church as a whole will give up its passion for watertight definitions that will continue to place legalities ahead of mercy and compassion. The Christian gospel is both judgment and compassion, held together in a dynamic balance that focuses attention at different points along the spectrum, depending upon the circumstances and challenges of the moment. The tragedy is that encyclicals like *Casti Connubii* and *Veritatis Splendor* keep the faithful locked into the judgment end.

I wonder what such popes have made of Jesus' words, 'You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.' I find little in the way of divine freedom in these encyclicals.

**Ross Saunders**  
Newtown, NSW

## Roma locuta est ...

*From Anthony Cappello*

After watching *Four Corners* (October 11, 1993), I don't know what case the dissenters have, if they have a case. If the Pope doesn't speak the 'Truth' then who does? Perhaps Peter Singer!

**Anthony Cappello**  
Burwood, VIC



## Verbal differences

From George Ringer

I am writing to complain of the vulgar, coarse, ribald language that is on p39 of *Eureka Street*, vol. 3 no. 7. I know you did not write the article, but you printed it. Surely this magazine is above the use of those sorts of words.

**George Ringer**  
Pooraka, SA

The 'language' referred to was used in quotation and reference to the poetry of Philip Larkin. *Eureka Street* does not seek to shock, but neither does it make a habit of bowdlerising. —Ed.

## 'Just wars' just aren't on

From Paul Mees

Michael Tate's concerns about the morality of the Gulf War sit more easily with Christian teaching than Peter Collins (*Eureka Street*, October 1993) appears to realise. That a war be fought to prevent evil is only one of the conditions of the 'just war' doctrine; the other requirements include proportionality and not harming non-combatants.

Although church authorities have frequently only meekly asserted the traditional teaching, it has appeared over the centuries in, for example, the medieval papacy's attempt to outlaw new killing technologies such as the crossbow, and Pope Pius XII's condemnation of the killing of non-combatants at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The circumstances of modern warfare make it impossible to fulfil the requirements for a 'just war'. With the advent of conscription at the time of the French Revolution, the size of armies and thus casualties has escalated, and even soldiers can be unwilling participants in a war (when the just-war doctrine was formulated, soldiers were mercenaries). Modern killing technology also ensures widespread casualties, and makes it impossible to exclude civilians from this toll.

This was clearly illustrated by the high death toll among the largely conscript Iraqi army. Remember the 'turkey shoot' on the road out of Kuwait City, and the thousands buried alive in their trenches? And the civilians incinerated by a 'smart bomb' in the infamous Baghdad bunker?

The church's 'just war' teaching has become a 'no war' teaching, a classic illustration of Newman's concept of doctrinal development. The fact that no modern war can fulfil the requirements of the 'just war' doctrine was confirmed by Pope John Paul when he condemned the Gulf War and has, I understand, been incorporated into the new catechism.

Michael Tate's conversion to non-violence in the late 1960s was part of a centuries-long pilgrimage by the whole church that has now received official confirmation. I suspect that Tate's unease about the Gulf War is related both to his well-known personal integrity and his excellent knowledge of church teaching.

I am awaiting with baited breath the full and joyful submission to the magisterium on this issue by certain high-profile Catholics who strongly supported the Gulf War, but whose disdain for dissenters from papal teachings is well known. In fact, I have been a little surprised at the tardiness so far shown, but doubtless the release of the English edition of the catechism will be the occasion for this public act of fidelity.

**Paul Mees**  
Fitzroy, VIC

## What really made up the Gair affair

From Paul Rodan

Peter Collins (*Eureka Street*, October 1993) is inaccurate in his recollection of the Gair affair and the consequences in the Senate. Gair resigned in April 1974, to be ambassador to Ireland, not the Vatican. (Posting Gair to the Holy See may well have prompted a papal encyclical, *Pro repulso Gairi*.)

Whitlam's strategy was that the half-Senate election in Queensland would then be for six senators rather than for five, and that Labor would win three seats (rather than two out of five). Bjel-

ke-Petersen foiled the plan by advising the Governor to reissue the writs for five Senate vacancies before Gair's formal resignation could be accepted. The Gair vacancy would thus be filled as a casual vacancy, by the Queensland Parliament.

The matter became academic when Whitlam, armed with the necessary legislative grounds, called a double dissolution in response to Senate threats to supply. In the ensuing full-Senate election, Labor won only four out of 10 places in Queensland and one of those four, Bert Milliner, died in June 1975.

It was then that Bjelke-Petersen, ignoring convention (as usual), nominat-



ed the wretched Albert Field. Field's right to sit in the Senate was challenged and he was unable to participate in Senate proceedings. Hence, he never voted for the coalition's budget deferral (as alleged by Collins), but the absence of that one Labor vote (*vice* Milliner's) ensured the success of the coalition's strategy.

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## On the subject of Manning Clark

*From Ross Fitzgerald, associate professor of history and politics at Griffith University.*

Let me put my cards on the table. Apart from Geoffrey Bolton and Donald Horne, I admire Manning Clark more than any recent historian of our nation.

Quite unusually in Australia, Clark combined the writing of fiction and of history. In all his works, and especially his great six-volume *History*, he constantly supported the realm of freedom and the spirit against the petty people who often inhabited Australian industry, politics, bureaucracy and, most of all, academia.

Clark manifested a keen interest in the frailties and fallibilities of creative souls like Adam Lindsay Gordon, Henry Lawson and Christopher Brennan, who were cursed with an addiction to alcohol—that fatal flaw in so many Australians. Hence his stress on those who overcame what he called ‘this strange infirmity’, and who no longer imbibed the demon drink. These included the visionary Labor publisher William Lane and John Joseph Ambrose Curtin, whose life histories Clark canvassed so magnificently.

Clark was rightly suspicious of those proponents of the essentially male Australian legend who falsely associate the consumption of alcohol with radicalism and creativity. Despite our current Australian mythology, the reverse most often applies: as Clark knew, the excessive use of alcohol dulls and diminishes, if not denies, radical action and creative activity.

A key to Clark’s *History* is in the preface to Volume VI where he thanked

those people who gave him the strength and faith to persist until his monumental work was finished. Among those mentioned were Patrick White, Helen Garner and David Malouf, that energetic iconoclast Humphrey McQueen and, significantly, Geoffrey Blainey. Although Clark dissociated himself from Blainey’s views on immigration, it never occurred to him to deny Blainey’s great contribution to the study of Australian history—as disgracefully happened with many members of the profession.

Clark’s courage, humanity and ability to forgive were linked with a lifelong struggle to understand our national identity, and his own. He had a great love for Australia and Australians. The past, present and future of our beloved, exploited and abused country was his enduring passion. Although he made many factual mistakes and in his early volumes significantly downplayed the role of Aborigines and women in Australian history, Manning Clark was a person of great vision and hope. Hence the opening quotation to his final volume came from Dostoevsky: ‘Everyone would tremble for the life and happiness of each; they would grow tender to one another ... and would be as caressing as children. Meeting, they would look at one another with deep and thoughtful eyes and in their eyes would be love and sorrow.’

Volume VI traversed the Great War through the hungry years of the Depression to the 1930s. Predicated on a Manichean opposition between radical optimism and pessimism, puritanism and pleasure seeking, Mr Money Bags and Our Nation’s Poor, the contrasting political lives of Billy Hughes, T.J. Ryan, ‘Red Ted’ Theodore, Daniel Mannix, Ben Chifley, John Curtin, Jim Scullin, Enid and Joseph Lyons, Stanley Bruce, Earle Page, Jack Lang and Robert Gordon Menzies were assessed, especially as they related to ‘British-mindedness’ or ‘loyalty to the old Empire’ vis-à-vis a sense of ourselves as Australians. Hence, Clark’s reliance as a motif on Lawson’s *Song of the Republic*:

*The Old Dead Tree and Young Tree Green.*

*The Land that belongs to the Lord and Queen.*

*And the Land that belongs to you.*

That is to say to us, to all of us—as Australians.

The story of the past, Clark said, ‘should have the same effect as all great stories. It should increase wisdom and

understanding. It should make the reader aware of what previously he had seen ‘through a glass darkly’. It should turn the mind of the reader towards the things that matter’. In this sense he was not an empiricist, but an historical polemicist, like the great Thomas Carlyle. Clark saw himself not merely as a propounder of historical truths but, as Michael Cathcart recently pointed out, ‘an artist who posed those fundamental questions about the human condition that defy easy resolution. His purpose was both to enrich and to trouble a new society by giving voice to its tragedies, to tell his fellow Australians who they were, and what they might become’.

As befits a person who wrote fiction and non-fiction with equal facility, one of the many devices Clark employed was to mix up tenses: past, present and future interchange in ways that to the unseeing eye appear arbitrary. But there is no such thing as certain or objective history. Even given ‘the facts’, all history is a story told from a personal point of view, with a particular point in mind.

Manning Clark made clear the essential subjectivity of history as a discipline. As he unashamedly said of his opus, ‘It is one man’s vision of the past’. Unlike some unreflective contemporary historians, Clark did not claim that his histories were objective or unbiased. As Russel Ward explains ‘Every historian, like every other human being, carries in her or his head a unique grab-bag of ideas, passions, beliefs and presuppositions, often quite unconsciously held. Every historian worth the name strives mightily to write the truth, undistorted by private prejudices, but none can ever succeed.’

It is enormously important for historians to make these beliefs and biases conscious and to spell them out for the reader. Thus, as Clark taught us, the aim is good history but not ‘objective’ history: ‘The very questions historians ask of their documents are determined by their characters and so, necessarily, are the kind of answers they give. That is to say, a good history will tell us quite a lot about its author’s character as well as about our country’s past. A history which does not may be good in the sense that it is unusually free of factual mistakes, but it will also usually possess all the riveting interest of a correctly itemised butcher’s bill.’

In his epic history of Australia, Manning Clark did us proud.

Ross Fitzgerald  
Nathan, QLD

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# Dropping the grand plan

**H**AS LABOR ABANDONED ITS REFORM PROGRAM? The obstacles, not least the Senate, have made some in the government think that everything is 'too hard' and not worth the agony of consultation and negotiation. Their instinct is to skip hard issues, such as the necessary economic restructuring of Australia, in the hope that the economic recovery and the Opposition's internal contradictions will take Labor across the line in 1996.

That view is held by at least one faction in Cabinet, led by the Treasurer, John Dawkins. Fresh from the Budget debacles, the Treasurer is now gloomy about whether his colleagues have the fibre for the fight, whether they are still willing to gamble that good policy makes good politics, and whether they retain a fundamental commitment to the messy task of reshaping the nation. This pessimism—which Dawkins must have unguardedly discussed with some journalists, since it led to several sympathetic and virtually identical think pieces by some of the opinion formers in the press gallery—may prove to be the start of a useful alibi.

The Treasurer's attitude was prompted by the defeat in Cabinet of proposals for the reorganisation of science policy and administration, which were being promoted by Dawkins' factional ally, Chris Schacht. The Schacht plan would have combined the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation with the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, and merged hived-off sections of the CSIRO with other groups to form a new marine-science institute.

By Dawkins' account, most of the Cabinet was intellectually convinced of the merit of these proposals, but they jibbed because they were afraid that they could not get it through the Senate. Well, it's a useful alibi, but one is entitled to a bit of scepticism: there is precious little evidence that the Schacht plan was central to microeconomic reform.

To most observers, it looked rather more like a naive but ambitious minister trying to leave an impression and to assert some power. The scheme was his alone, developed in the face of bureaucratic advice and without consulting those affected. It dealt rather casually with the portfolio responsibilities of ministers bigger and uglier than Schacht. His claims that savings were possible convinced no one, and the minister's case that the component parts of his organisation were inefficient or incompetent was based on anecdotal information. Not a few of the 'pragmatists' in Cabinet who voted against it did so because they thought Master Schacht had made a goat of himself.

Perhaps just as significantly, the plan looked suspiciously as if it were on the Dawkins' model for reform. It's the toss-everything-up-in-the-air model. Take any organisation or policy function—education, say—and completely reorganise it: centralise anything which is decentralised, decentralise anything which is centralised, and assert political control or patronage over any area of funding or policy discretion. The procedure does

have some advantages: the process of picking the pieces up from the floor is good for shaking up the complacent and for reviewing the conventional wisdom.

But, as some of the pragmatists who no longer have the zeal for this type of 'reform' have learnt, it also has its costs. The massive disruption, wasted energy, and ill will caused by a decade of almost continual reorganisation in the public service (including the destruction of some careers) have probably more than balanced any supposed gains in efficiency.

Labor in government, thanks to John Dawkins as Minister for Finance, now has a 'more responsive' public service, but not a few of his colleagues are now worried about the quality and objectivity of some of the advice they get from people who have learned that they don't get rewards if they do not please. Those same reforms have given the government a model of publicly owned trading enterprise that has caused more than a few problems, especially in transport and communications.

There are now few in the government who will praise the Dawkins 'reforms' of education or the universities either. And, if some will salute in him a persisting naive idealism, there are not many, after the Budget debacles, who have much respect for his judgment.

Both cynics and true believers might be forgiven for wondering what has happened to Labor's wider agenda for reform, rather than for mere reorganisation. The republic may be a light on the hill, but the reinvigorated economic advisers are trying to lock the government into strategies which assume that only 'natural' growth can produce jobs, and that we will have to live with the unemployment rate of at least eight per cent until the end of the decade, and perhaps beyond. Has a decade of Labor rule made welfare function effectively, especially for that eight per cent and their families?

One of the little-noted decisions of the Budget was the establishment of more than 20 interdepartmental committees to conduct reviews of almost every area of health, education and welfare spending and policy. The reports of these committees should be appearing in January, as preparations for the next Budget get under way, and the betting is they will be rather more focused on saving money than on improving opportunities for all.

And this is happening at a time when even senior bureaucrats in the Finance Department, that traditional scourge of government spending, say that the era of cutting spending should be over and that the primary way of repairing the government's finances should be by raising taxes, particularly indirect taxes.

The problem may be that Labor has so long been confusing rearrangement for reform that it might have forgotten what real reform is. ■

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





## School's out

*From one Northland to another: former Northland Secondary College student Lindsey Callaghan, at Northland Shopping Centre.*

*Photo: Bill Thomas (this photo and the photo on p15 were taken outside of school hours.)*

**T**HERE ARE TWO NORTHLANDS IN PRESTON.

One has fountains, indoor gardens, 200 thriving specialty shops, and big plans for expansion. This Northland is owned by the Gandel Group.

The other has empty classrooms, disused workshops, a silent playground, and a 24-hour vigil of occupying students and teachers who believe its forced closure as a secondary college a year ago was an act of officially sanctioned racial discrimination. This Northland is owned by the Victorian government.

The shopping centre and the secondary college that share the same name are neighbours, joined and separated by a vast swathe of asphalt, and, like any neighbours, their relationship is more subtle, complex and diffuse than merely geographic. A year ago, it was around the Northland Shopping Centre's public-transport hub that the school's 500 students revolved, often travelling considerable distance to seek out its special programs. It was the centre's shops that provided them with work experience and where they found part-time employment, where they shopped after classes and took in movies at the weekend. And now that their school has been closed,

it is to the centre that many of the education system's Missing In Action have gravitated, spending their days hanging out at Time Zone with the other demon wagers, blowing their time and their dole on cappuccinos and muzak.

And although it remains to be seen whether or not Northland's displaced Koori students will succeed in their legal efforts to force the re-opening of their college, their gigantic neighbour looms large as a symbolic model of the philosophy that now guides the Victorian public education system.

Education, Northland's scattered students have been told, is a service like any other: measurable, comparable, driven by the exigencies of the marketplace. All you 12 and 14 and 16-year olds, you are now customers. Shop around, like we do in the private sector. Pick and choose. Come and get it. You can have any colour you like, except black. And if you don't like it that way, if you have special needs or don't quite fit, you can just take your snotty nose off the window, kid, or you'll be ejected from the whole glittering arcade. Judges' decision final, no correspondence entered into.





Kylie used to go to Northland, the school. She was doing Year 11 when the first round of closures came. According to the plan announced at the time by the Education Minister, Don Hayward, she would be slotted effortlessly into a nearby school. Two schools later Kylie has dropped out, one of the more than 1300 students lost in the wash in the inner-western subregion alone, according to the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association.

Kylie now spends a lot of time at Northland, the shopping centre. She is young-looking for her age, quietly spoken, almost shy. She doesn't know much about these union statistics, but she knows a fellow former Northland student when she sees one.

'There's one, and there, and there.'

Six in ten minutes she spots, ambling through the mall at two on a Tuesday afternoon, mid-term.

Back at college Kylie had done the retail skills program, run in collaboration with several of

the shopping centre stores. It went well and she landed a part-time sales job, a little pin money on the way to tertiary studies. Now it is her career, the Reject Shop, \$75-a-week, less \$40 for board.

'At Northland if we had a problem at home affecting our work we could always discuss it with the teacher. But these other schools had a different culture. If you had a problem, that was your problem. We were seen as outsiders, coming in from a closed-down school, not knowing anyone, potential trouble. They didn't give us a chance.'

Not that she blames the teachers; well, not entirely. When you're facing increased class sizes, the administrative overload of ingesting dozens of staffing changes, the withdrawal of traditional remedial support programs, the possibility of being named 'in-excess' and packed off to join the 4000 of your colleagues already jettisoned, your tolerance for problematic new students is likely to be low.

**M**AYBE THE SPECIAL WILLINGNESS of the teachers at Northland to deal with the domestic aspects of student's lives, often cited by the Northland MIAs, is an example of what the Victorian Treasurer, Alan Stockdale, means when he refers to 'wasteful and unproductive teacher work practices'. It was certainly a key element in the school's attraction and retention of Koori students, feeding in turn the state's top position nationally in

Aboriginal participation in tertiary education.

At the time of closure, 62 of Northland's 500 students were Kooris. Of these, 14 are now enrolled in the unofficial classes being run at the school by volunteer teachers as part of the continuing occupation of school premises. Twenty are estimated to be attending other local schools. A handful have left Melbourne. 'The rest,' says Dedrie Bux of the Melbourne Aboriginal Education Association, Incorporated, 'are AWOL.'

**A**LL OF WHICH was quite predictable, according to the group of parents and students who have approached the Equal Opportunity Board in an attempt to force a rescinding of the closure decision. They argue that the specific educational needs of Aboriginal children are by now so well established and documented that for the Victorian Department of School Education to have closed the one school in the state catering to them constitutes a racist act. Professor Colin Burke, dean of the faculty of Aboriginal and Islander studies at the University of South Australia, put it to the board like this. 'Urban Aborigines share common Aboriginal cultural characteristics—extended family structures, high mobility, the involvement of many different relatives in the children's upbringing, the use of Aboriginal English, attitudes to mutual responsibility and sharing—which can create difficulties for children in regard to school attendance and work, which in turn requires a particular sort of educational environment.'

Or, as Brian Derum, a former Northland teacher put it, 'you don't call yourself the student welfare coordinator when to a substantial part of your community "welfare" means people who steal your children'.

Among those who did what was required of them by the government were 14-year-old Eban and 16-year-old Amos, sons of musicians Ruby and Archie Roach. The Roach family are high achievers by anyone's standards, their lounge-room mantelpiece a trophy cabinet of sporting, music and community awards, not all of them by any means won by the adults. The kitchen cupboards are tagged with identifying words in the boys' mother's language. When Northland was shut down, Eban and Amos were duly enrolled at Kingsbury, their allocated replacement school, a bus trip away.

'I did the right thing by the government,' says Ruby. 'But there was always this feeling that the Aboriginal kids had to be watched all the time, like they were more likely to be trouble.'

Ten months later, Amos and Eban are back at Northland, illegal students at an illegal teach-in.

The official response to such attitudes is unforgiving.

In September, when music teachers from the region were organising this year's annual Grand Youth Concert, an annual showcase for music programs in northern and western suburban schools held in the Concert Hall, they decided to invite Northland's Koori dance troupe. The group had appeared last year; North-

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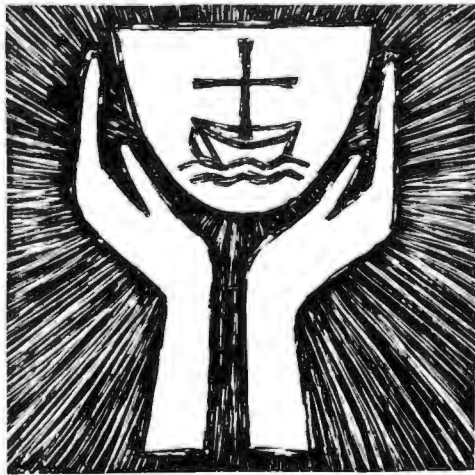


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land at one time had 15 per cent of the state's VCE dance students, and it was, after all, the International Year of Indigenous People. The Directorate of School Education's reaction was swift and to the point. Northland was no longer a school. If the dancers appeared, all funding for the concert would cease.

The dancers did not appear. At the culmination of the concert 700 young students sang a song in an Aboriginal language, not a Koori among them.

Of course, it is not only Koori students who have special needs, nor Northland that caters to them. The historic increase in retention rates past the legal school-leaving age means that literally tens of thousands of kids are staying on at school well beyond their parents' level of education—and not always with a home environment attuned to their needs. As well, considerable motivation is needed by specific groups of students—girls from particular ethnic backgrounds for example—to undertake the workload of the VCE.

Whatever their backgrounds, exact numbers for those Missing In Action as a result of the first round of school closures remain elusive. According to Education Line, a telephone information service featured in full-page newspaper advertisements placed by the Victorian government, 'all students from closed schools are now enrolled elsewhere'. Any information to the contrary is 'rumour-mongering.'

Clearly, no one from the Directorate of School Education has played pinball in the northern suburbs on a weekday afternoon lately.

**I**T IS UNLIKELY that this rigorous optimism will be challenged by the arrival of empirical data from the field. Schools, after all, have a vested interest in maintaining the fiction of their nominal enrolment figures, since it is total student numbers that determine staffing levels. The reality is that nobody seems to know the real drop-out rate, and few, aside from the parents and kids concerned, seem to care.

The only real hard MIA research done to date was the monitoring of 300 students dispersed by the closure of Coburg North Secondary College, by a group of parents describing themselves as 'six mothers of 14 school-age children'. According to surveys carried out by the group since the school was closed down in November 1992, almost 40 per cent of the displaced students have dropped out of the education system entirely, some too young even for the dole.

When you're in the middle of your teens and your school is eliminated at the stroke of a pen; when your peer group is broken up and you are shunted off to a new institution with an unfamiliar ethos and values, where your presence is easily construed as the incursion







## Double Pioneer

**N**INETY YEARS AGO THIS MONTH, Marie Curie and her husband, Pierre, along with Henri Becquerel, were awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics for their discovery of radioactivity. Eight years later, Marie won the Nobel Prize for Chemistry for her discovery of radium.

Marie Curie was the first person to win two Nobel prizes, the first woman to hold a professorial chair in France, and the first woman nominated to France's Académie des Sciences. Unlike her daughter Irène, who was also a Nobel laureate, she did not set out to pave a way for women in science. Marie was a deeply private person, delighting in intellectual challenges and, particularly, in scientific knowledge.

She was born in Poland in 1867, and grew up full of nervous energy and possessed of exceptional talent. As a teenager, she questioned the Russian oppression of Poland and, at 16, declared herself a positivist and was active in an underground 'floating university'.

In 1891, having spent six years as a governess to pay for her studies, Marie entered the Sorbonne. She had been barred from university entrance in Poland because of her lack of proficiency in classical languages. Despite having to live as a pauper, she attacked her studies with single-minded zeal. Although she barely spoke French, she came first in physics and, a year later, second in mathematics.

In 1897, soon after the birth of her first child, Marie began work on her doctorate in science—a degree which at the time had not yet been awarded to a woman in Europe. Her thesis concerned the strange 'rays of unknown nature' spontaneously emitted by uranium salts. They had been first observed a few years earlier by Henri Becquerel. Marie had trouble obtaining laboratory space and worked in terrible conditions: the temperature often dropped to near-freezing, healthy neither for an experimental physicist nor for her sensitive equipment! Naming the phenomenon they were studying 'radioactivity', Marie and Pierre claimed to have discovered the existence of two new elements—radium, now used in treating cancer, and polonium. Their Nobel prize was awarded six months after Marie received her doctorate.

The Curies' claims, like most great discoveries, were initially received with scepticism. The notion of spontaneous emission of radiation challenged existing theories of the composition of matter, and the new elements had not yet been isolated. But in 1902, after another six years working in an old shed, Marie and Pierre isolated a precious decigram of radium and determined its atomic weight. Even the avowedly empirical chemists were convinced.

Marie Curie gave much to science and to humanity. Tragically, after surmounting obstacles as a woman and as a scientist, when she died in 1934 it was as one of the first victims of radiation poisoning. Pioneers always seem to have to pay a price, and Marie was doubly a pioneer. ■

—Sascha Surgey is this month's guest columnist.



Amos Roach, Anthony and Chris Welsh Photo: Bill Thomas

of an uninvited loser, where the teachers are hard-pressed and unfamiliar with your home set-up, and where the dole beckons, or where you can wag it with impunity, chucking it all in starts to look like an informed choice.

'If you're a girl,' says Kylie, 'having a baby can begin to seem like a good idea. You don't lose your sense of the future like you do on the dole, but the money's better. It's valued work, you feel like there'll be something to show for the effort. There's somebody to love and to love you back. And at least you're seen as having a role. Not just being a nobody with nothing.'

'There's one now,' she points. 'She and I used to be in Year 10. Cute baby, eh?'

Shane Maloney is a freelance writer.

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# Wayne's world

**I**N DECEMBER 1989, after the Queensland ALP's first victory in 32 years, Wayne Goss addressed his victorious MPs. The mood can barely be imagined. There was no one in the room who could remember the taste of power. What was Goss' message? 'You should all go away and take a cold shower,' he said. Some would suggest that the Goss government has yet to emerge from that cooling torrent. There has been no rush of blood to the head, and no fire in the belly.

At 42 years of age, and after a mere 10 years in Parliament, Wayne Goss is now the country's longest-serving political leader. He is also one of the most popular. Only a few months ago, his satisfaction rating in the polls was at 68 per cent. His constant refrain has been that if his government is to achieve lasting change then it has to take the electorate with it, rather than getting too far ahead of community aspirations.

Many of those who had pinned their hopes to the new government feel deeply betrayed. Conservationists and civil libertarians, who were the main force of opposition in the state for much of the Bjelke-Petersen era, are rarely consulted, and when they are consultation tends to be peremptory.

On the other hand, industry, in particular mining, boasts that it has never enjoyed such good access to government. Michael Pinnock, the head of the Queensland Mining Industry Council, gives the Goss government strong endorsement. 'Goss

gives better access and more attention to mining than did Bjelke-Petersen,' says Pinnock. 'There is almost an open invitation on any issue for us to go in and say what we think.'

Pinnock says the Goss government came in on a 'green' ticket. That, combined with its declared policy of introducing land rights, worried the industry but now: 'One of the key issues on Mabo was mining leases, and the government generally moved to accommodate us. We'd want to give full marks to them.'

'It upsets a lot of people here when I say it, but in the last three or four years of the Bjelke-Petersen government we had considerable difficulties and some quite nasty situations because we weren't involved in the consultation process. The National Party saw they had a constituency in farming and in mining and sometimes the two collided. The cooperation we got was great from some ministers and awful from others. We had a lot of run-ins with the National Party in the last few years. We have had fewer with the Labor Party.'

**G**OSS' CLOSENESS to mining interests, and the conservative bent of his government in general, recently became issues on the national stage when he and the Prime Minister, Paul Keating, got involved in a slanging match over the Queensland government's response to the High Court's *Mabo* decision on native title. In the subse-

quent negotiations, the Queensland bureaucrats who were handling the matter were accompanied by Comalco lawyers when they arrived at meetings with Canberra bureaucrats. The Comalco representatives were allowed to sit in on the discussions.

Goss supporters put the best face on his closeness to industry. They describe it as a movement in his personal politics from a concern with 'lawyers' matters', such as civil liberties and constitutional rights, to 'traditional labour concerns', such as jobs. A backbencher put it differently. 'He seems to be quite fascinated with the process by which jobs are created, and he listens to winners and those with money to invest, rather than to the wider community.'

People who know both Keating and Goss suggest the bad chemistry between them is at least partly because they are each other's equals in arrogance. But whereas Keating believes it is a leader's role to have vision, and to lead community opinion, Goss was quoted immediately before the last state election as saying: 'I think this vision stuff is for prime ministers and people who shop at expensive stores.' Government, he said, was about managing the economy,





*'I think this vision stuff is for prime ministers and people who shop at expensive stores': Wayne Goss and his wife, Roisin. Photo: The Age.*

and keeping things on an even keel.

In the same interview, by *The Australian's* Roy Eccleston, Goss said that one of the main strengths of his government's first term was that it had managed to introduce some reforms—freedom-of-information legislation, a legally recognised right to public assembly and changes to the police force structure—without 'scaring the horses'.

**T**HERE IS ONE THING that anyone with an interest in Queensland politics should keep constantly in mind. Goss has never allowed himself to forget it. More than any other state, Queensland is a collection of regions. To those in the big regional centres north of the Tropic of Capricorn and west of the Darling Downs, Brisbane is a remote and largely irrelevant capital, and the southern cities of Canberra and Sydney seem like the centres of a foreign power. More than half of all Queenslanders live outside the capital. If a party in Queensland wants to gain power, it must win over the voters in the bush. Gerrymander or no gerrymander, lose the bush and you lose government. Tasmania is the only

other state of which this is true.

There is another, new, thing about Queensland that marks it out from the rest of Australia and which has big implications for politics. Each week, more than a thousand people are migrating to Queensland—and that is the net figure, after those travelling in the other direction have been deducted. This means that each year, Queensland is taking in the equivalent of a city around the size of Albury. More on this later.

Labor came to power on the backwash from the Fitzgerald inquiry. Within the party, there was a deep conviction that the bush was naturally National Party territory, and that if Labor wanted to be more than a one-term government it would have to move cautiously. Hence Goss' instructions about the cold shower.

Land-rights legislation was introduced after maximum consultation with mining and pastoral representatives, but with minimal input from Aborigines. Not a murmur was heard from industry when the legislation went through Parliament, but blacks rioted and knocked down the gates of Parliament. It was a measure of the

*Industry, in particular mining, boasts that it has never enjoyed such good access to government.*

*Michael Pinnock, the head of the Queensland Mining Industry Council, gives the Goss government strong endorsement. 'Goss gives better access and more attention to mining than did Bjelke-Petersen,' says Pinnock. 'There is almost an open invitation on any issue for us to go in and say what we think.'*

degree to which Goss' reforms had disappointed their electorate. The way Goss pushed through the landrights legislation was, as landrights activist Frank Brennan SJ has commented, the point which marked Goss' 'formal abandonment, or at least selective use from now on, of the Fitzgerald processes of public consultation, discussion and accountability.'

Homosexual-law reform was achieved, but in a half-hearted way. New anti-discrimination legislation has loopholes that, unions believe, could be used to prevent gay teachers from holding their jobs. Abortion law reform is not on the Goss government's agenda, and in spite of a strong recommendation from the Criminal Justice Commission that prostitution should be legalised, Goss has ruled it out.

Even before the CJC had released its report, Goss had made it clear that brothels would remain illegal. Under the laws he passed, it is legal for women to work singly as prostitutes from private premises, but brothels and organised prostitution are illegal. The significance of this issue should not be underestimated. It was prostitution and the corruption which attached to it which sparked off the Fitzgerald

inquiry. The new laws are as much of a laughing stock as the ones presided over by the Bjelke-Petersen Government, when the notorious Bubbles Bathhouse in Fortitude Valley had an illegal casino on the top floor and a brothel on the ground floor. (If you lost a lot of money upstairs, you got a freebie downstairs.) The establishment was at a major city crossroads, and had flashing lights and lurid billboards. Yet the police said they couldn't find any illegal casinos or brothels in Brisbane.

Now, one of the most notorious pimps in Brisbane, Warren Armstrong, is running a flashy nightclub in Spring Hill, just opposite the National Party's headquarters. Prostitutes, supposedly legal 'lone operators', pay Armstrong for the right to pick up clients at the club, but then take them off the premises for sex.

Goss's approach to prostitution is generally acknowledged to be a dismal failure—something which, as a former criminal lawyer, he arguably should have been able to predict. Yet pragmatism alone doesn't explain his stand. Public opinion polls indicated that decriminalised prostitution would be accepted by the electorate. A Goss watcher comments: 'He is a bit of a puritan. I think he is genuinely shocked by prostitution.'

Ask people who work closely with him what Wayne Goss is like, and the same words tend to recur—discipline and conservatism. Goss is a jogger and a hard worker. He does not drink heavily, or smoke. As

one of his former staff says: 'He actually doesn't have much fun at all.'

Goss' attitude to the media is said to be at least as insidious as the old Bjelke-Petersen 'feeding the chooks' days, although a supine media is largely to blame. Last year the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission (EARC) compiled a report on the government's use of the media, and

found evidence of journalists being rewarded and punished with information. The extraordinary thing about the inquiry was the parliamentary press gallery's complacent submission, in which gallery head Tony Koch, of the *Courier Mail*, said that journalists were far too experienced and professional to be easily managed.

**I**RONICALLY, THE INQUIRY examined one of Koch's exclusive stories, about the revocation of the knighthood and other imperial honours of former police commissioner, Terence Lewis.

*The Australian's* Brisbane bureau chief, Roy Eccleston, was displeased about this leak. *The Australian* had been checking regularly about when the information would be released, and had been told there would be nothing for a month. In a letter of complaint, Eccleston suggested that this selective leaking had been because *The Australian* had carried, more prominently than had *The Courier-Mail*, several articles about problems being experienced by Attorney General Dean Wells.

There is a lighter side to Goss' personality. This is the man who once used to boast about his collection of Phantom comics, and his membership of the Phantom Club. In the days when he was a breath of fresh air in a parliamentary party made up of tired and factionalised old men who had cut their teeth amid the sweat and singlets of the Australian Workers Union, Goss had a cutout of Superman, fist raised, in full flight on his office wall.

In those days, Queensland's factional warfare made the rest of the Labor Party look like best buddies. Goss was out of the mould. At the time, I wrote in a report for *The Age*: 'It is likely that in the southern-states Labor parties, Wayne Goss, with his legal background and civil libertarian commitments, would not appear to be exceptional. In Queensland, he stands out. As well, he is free of factional baggage. He is not the most liked potential leader, but he is probably the least hated.'

But time has shown Goss to be a different sort of person from the southern yuppie lawyers. His personality was forged in a battle to escape his

background. Wayne Goss grew up in Inala, a western suburb of Brisbane that gives the lie to the sunny personality Queensland would like to project. Underserviced and full of resentment, Inala is the sort of place where going down to the shopping mall is the only entertainment, and young people either lapse into despair or spend every waking moment making plans for escape. Goss was one of the latter.

The son of a Labor Party official, he was one of six children. His parents were poor but had ambitions for their children. The house was full of books. The young Goss wanted to be an engineer, but the limited range of subjects available at the local high school meant that by the time he was ready for university his only real options were law or medicine.

He chose law, mostly because he could work as an articled clerk while studying, and so relieve the financial pressure on the family. Like many other leftish lawyers, he worked for the Aboriginal Legal Service, but private practice bored him. He re-entered university and tried to study economics, but was disappointed by the lecturers. Then, in 1983, two ALP officials, Peter Beattie and Dennis Murphy, urged him to run for a state seat. Politics appealed as a way out of law.

Ironically, Beattie, once one of Labor's most influential officials, has suffered under Goss. Beattie chaired the parliamentary committee that oversaw the work of the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC), which was set up to continue the work of the Fitzgerald inquiry. Goss' relationship with the CJC during his first term was abysmal, largely because the government was wounded by a commission report which showed that Labor MPs had, in opposition, misspent parliamentary funds.

Beattie vigorously defended the commission at every turn, taking a principled, if tactless, stand. He paid for it. Once a strong contender for the ministry and even, one day, for leadership, he has been sent to the backbench.

One of the MPs named in the CJC report, former Police Minister Terry Mackenroth, is back in Cabinet, however, in spite of concerns over his integrity and what can only be described as disgraceful behaviour, fun-

*Time has shown Goss to be a different sort of person from the southern yuppie lawyers. His personality was forged in a battle to escape his background ... Inala is the sort of place where going down to the shopping mall is the only entertainment.*



damentally damaging to the Fitzgerald reform process. Mackenroth resigned after the CJC found that he had used taxpayers' money for his private expenses. Apparently intent on bringing others down with him, he made a series of allegations against the police commissioner, Noel Newnham, who had been brought in as an 'honest cop' to reform the force. Mackenroth's allegations proved to be groundless, but the ensuing investigation showed up other discrepancies in Newnham's travel expenses. Newnham's career was gutted.

Later, Goss revealed to Parliament the origins of the feud between Mackenroth and Newnham. Newnham had come to see Goss privately with a transcript of conversations between two men regarding a donation to Mackenroth's 1989 election campaign. Goss later wiped his comments from the Hansard record on legal advice that the matter was before the courts.

Mackenroth is back, unscathed and highly influential. Newnham is gone, Beattie is in the wilderness and the local media, fed regularly so long as they don't get out of line, have hardly raised a peep. The idealism that followed Fitzgerald has taken a battering.

**O**NE OF GOSS' ELECTORAL STRENGTHS is that Queensland's economy is stronger than that of any other state. In keeping with his conservative style, Goss has refused to increase the already low level of government debt. He wants the state to build its reputation as a solid, low-tax place to invest.

The southern states have nothing to be smug about—most Premiers would give their eye-teeth to be running a state in as good financial shape as Queensland. But even in that respect, Goss' conservatism could serve the state badly in the long term. Queensland's massive population growth has big implications for government. Jon Stanford, a member of the University of Queensland's economics policy unit, says the enormous migration will drastically increase the need for basic services—schools, roads, hospitals and the like. Traditionally, government has borrowed money for these things but Goss refuses to borrow, and instead is hoping the Commonwealth will come to

the party. His poor relationship with the federal government is unlikely to help.

In a generally optimistic background paper written for a conference on the Queensland economy, the chief economist of the Queensland Industry Development Corporation, Hamish Bain, said that in other states, paying interest on debt was stifling growth because it meant less money was available for basic services. But too much conservatism might mean that Queensland lost its advantage. 'The need is to believe that Asian-style growth is within reach of Queensland, providing the state can be administered with a sensible degree of flexibility ... Queensland will have to lose some of its extreme conservatism in administration, but this is a small price to pay,' Bain said.

Mining, which has always underpinned the Queensland economy, is on the decline. Mount Isa Mines is actually closing or trying to sell off some of its operations. And there are some flies in the ointment of Queensland's other big earner, tourism. Professor Bill Faulkner, from Griffith University's tourism management department, says that Queensland depends heavily on one market—Japan. The state gets proportionately fewer visits from Australians on holiday, and those visits are declining. Since domestic travel still accounts for three-quarters of the overall tourism market, in the long run this fact might leave Queensland gasping for the dollars it now takes for granted.

The bright spots are that small industries, many of them export-oriented, are growing strongly in Queensland. Boat building is one example, with small companies exporting to Hong Kong and Indonesia. In the past 18 months, Stanford says, half of the state's employment growth has come from such small enterprises, which are starting to displace tourism as the main earner of export dollars.

'The Bjelke-Petersen regime tended to do favours for its mates,' Stan-

ford says. 'That meant you didn't get the really good people coming here. Now we attract companies here because they want to be here and they know the government will help them on a fair and square basis.'

Queensland's rate of growth for the past six years has consistently been ahead of other states, and Queenslanders looking south can only make comparisons that are favourable to the Goss government. Brisbane seems destined to become Australia's second-most important city, after Sydney. After the shame and upheaval that accompanied the end of the Bjelke-Petersen regime, Queenslanders feel they have something to be proud of again.

There are rumblings of disquiet about Goss' failure to consult—particularly over plans to close down country railway lines. But, for the moment, the Goss gloss is likely to remain. ■

**Margaret Simons** is a freelance writer. Her novel, *The Ruthless Garden*, won the 1993 Angus and Robertson Book-world prize.



*'Goss is a jogger and a hard worker ... As one of his former staff says: "He actually doesn't have much fun at all".'*

—Photo: The Age

## Best buys and home brands

**T**HE 1980s SHOWED that it is indeed possible to go broke running a brewery in Australia. The Seven and Ten television networks also slumped into receivership and Bond Corporation's mountain of debt forced the sale of Nine. Australia's economy is fragile and television faces increased competition from direct marketing, but the networks still won \$1.2 billion of the \$2.7 billion spent on advertising in Australia last year and they are on the up.

The best local performers are our home-grown soap operas, which earn at least \$50 million a year in exports. The leader is *Neighbours*, which is sold to 52 countries. It has a British audience of 18 million viewers a day, and *Home and Away* has 10 million. Bruce Gyngell, executive chairman of the Nine network, attributes this success to the cast being bronzed, blond and sunny. 'Both (shows) represent a society which existed in Britain in the 1960s, before people began arriving from the Caribbean and Africa. The Poms delve into it to get their quiet little racism fix.' Donald Horne reckons *Neighbours* may be rubbish but that 'at least it's our rubbish'.

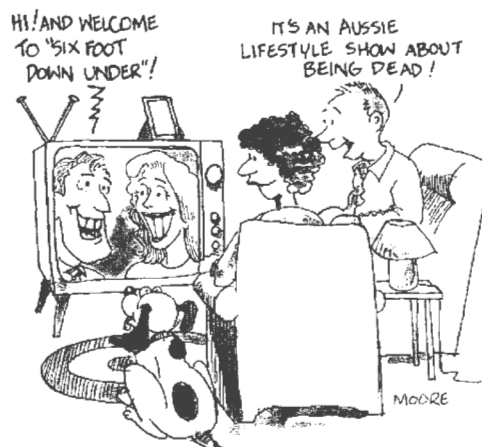
Australia's non-soapie drama is the worry. The generous 1980s tax concessions, which paid for quality mini-series such as *Bodyline*, have been wound back. Funding of the Film Finance Corporation—which backed shows such as *Brides of Christ*—was cut by \$5 million to \$57 million this year, dropping to \$50 million in two years. FFC funding also requires pre-sales and the newly-frugal networks are loath to match the high prices they paid in the 1980s. The cash-squeezed ABC is still in there, making new shows with co-production partners, but most people still watch commercial television most of the time.

The commercial networks are required to broadcast at least 50 per cent Australian content, including repeat programs, between 6am and midnight. There are also minimum requirements for first-release drama/diversity programs and children's drama. 'Diversity' programs include social documentaries, arts, science, news and current affairs specials, variety shows and new concepts.

Movies, like *Pretty Woman*, *Ghost* and *ET*, were the top-rating shows this year, but Australian programs rate better

than imports. The catch is that they also cost more. A five per cent increase in the cost of the Seven network's Australian programs reportedly takes \$10.3 million off its operating profits, while the same increase on overseas programs only takes \$3.4 million off the bottom line.

David Lyle, presenter of *The Golden Years of Television*, says the start of *Homicide* in the early 1960s was a turning point for local content. 'Ever since then Australians have made it quite clear with the ratings that they like to watch Australians. Now, as non-soapie drama be-



comes too frighteningly expensive, by and large, each station has one mini-series a year ... and I think "infotainment" has gone up at the same time.' Lyle, executive producer of Nine's *Our House* and *Getaway*, believes the infotainment trend has yet to peak.

Many industry observers expect the networks to cry poor once pay-TV starts and seek a relaxation of the local content rules, despite the fact that the Australian Broadcasting Authority's role in enforcing local content has been strengthened by the new Broadcasting Services Act. The authority's chairman, Brian Johns, says the networks know that Australians prefer local programs if they have a choice, but that broadcasters have to be shown how to do this economically. He suggests 'creative co-operation' within the film and television industry, with more emphasis on exports.

The Nine and Seven networks also insist that their Australian-ness is their trump card over pay-TV, although Nine was badly burned by the moderate rat-

ings of the expensive *Snowy*. The network is still above the quota for drama, in part because of the truly dreadful *Paradise Beach*, which has overseas sales and investment. Seven, the leader in commercial drama, has a cop show with a bush flavour, *Blue Heelers*, to replace *A Country Practice*. The network's director of broadcasting policy, Sean O'Halloran, says Seven does not want to reduce Australian content, but the drama quota should be relaxed so that new series such as *Blue Heelers* do not have to be 'rushed through'. The Ten network appears happy with *Neighbours* and its line-up of tabloid US shows and the odd telemovie, and even lined up *A Country Practice* after it was axed by Seven.

A survey by the Australian Film Commission has found that independent TV production was almost static in 1992-93. Interestingly, given the hype surrounding *The Piano*, local film output was down 30 per cent.

There are also imponderables, like what happens to the local-content quota if the GATT agreement is signed. The draft guidelines that require 10 per cent local content on pay-TV reportedly have more holes than Swiss cheese. The Grundy Organisation—producer of *Neighbours*, *Australia's Most Wanted* and numerous game shows—is helping to make a New Zealand soapie called *Shortland Street*, which may have to be classified as local content in Australia under the 'closer economic relationship' between the two countries.

The ubiquitous Reg Grundy, 70, who lives in Bermuda and is reputedly worth \$140 million, has a thriving business repackaging US game shows for European nations, but are these shows then 'local'? The Grundy Organisation also replicates US-style soapies in countries like Holland and Germany, using local actors and locations, and is looking to start up elsewhere.

Bob Wells, president of the Screen Production Association of Australia, says that the world-wide trend is towards local programming. 'The global village that McLuhan talked about is true, to an extent, but there is another movement, another feeling, that we should not ignore.'

Mark Skulley is a freelance writer.



# Living with the land

*Recognition of Aboriginal title is the legal reflection of changing attitudes to the land among white Australians. But beyond this is the deeper question of what Aborigines may have to teach other Australians about caring for the land itself.*

ON 16 AUGUST 1975, Gough Whitlam went to Wave Hill, in the Northern Territory, to hand the pastoral lease back to the Gurindji people. Vincent Lingari, a Gurindji elder, said in response: *Ngura ngu-ngala—ngkudu ke-nya ngu-lu linkara ka-nya lurpa ...* ('They took our country away from us, now they have brought it back ceremonially').

In the north-east, in Cape York, the Director of Aboriginal and Islander Advancement ceremonially agreed to the terms of a mining lease on 4 December 1975. The lease allowed mining companies to enter the Aboriginal reserve at Arukun to mine bauxite, without Aboriginal approval.

On 11 November 1975, I flew home to Cairns from Melbourne, after my first year at university. I learnt of Kerr's dismissal of the Whitlam government from a *Sun* poster at the airport. My father had recently won National Party preselection for the seat of Leichhardt. In 1974 Gough Whitlam had planned his May election campaign at the Reef House, a rambling bungalow on Palm Cove, north of Cairns, which my family had converted into a hotel. My father made no secret of the fact that he had voted for Whitlam in 1972 and admired the man. But he felt the Labor government was out of control.

Soon after arriving in Cairns, I was on a light plane flying round the electorate, which ran from Innisfail north to Papua New Guinea and west to the Northern Territory. It was bigger than Texas.

Eighteen years later, in August 1993, having been overseas for seven years after leaving university and then

back in Melbourne, I went to Port Douglas for a holiday.

In February, George Quaid Holdings had placed an advertisement in *The Wall Street Journal*, announcing that 460,000 acres in eastern Cape York were for sale for \$US18 million. Local Aboriginal people had joined forces with the Wilderness Society to prevent the sale and pressure the government into handing back the land to its original owners. This essay reflects on the mining, ownership and use of land in Cape York.

## Some history

In March 1606 the Dutch ship *Duyfken*, commanded by Willem Jansz, made a land-fall at Cape Keerweer on the west of Cape York. Keerweer is Dutch for turn around. That is exactly what the local Wik people made them do. This victory is still part of Wik oral history. There were further Dutch landings, which led to the capture of some Aboriginal people in 1623 and 1756. There is no record of what happened to these captives.

In 1788 James Cook was forced to beach the *Endeavour* at what is now Cooktown. Joseph Banks recorded the Guugu-Yimidhirr word *Gunguru* as 'kangaroo'. The Guugu-Yimidhirr thought the white visitors were the ghosts of the dead, and lit fires around Cook's camp to purify the country. This action was misinterpreted as aggressive and led to the shooting of some Aboriginal people.

Another cross-cultural misunderstanding occurred when local people wanted to share meat from turtles cooked by the English sailors. To the

English, the turtles were their property. The locals may well have felt that they had allowed outsiders to fish their waters and the rules of reciprocity meant that the catch be shared.

For 204 years the ideas of reciprocity received no official acknowledgment in Anglo-Australian law. The *Mabo* decision permits the writing of another history.

The European conquest of Cape York really began with the discovery of gold in the late 1860s. Guerrilla warfare alternated with pitched battles. About 500 Aboriginal warriors were killed at Battle Camp in November 1873. But Aboriginal resistance led to the abandoning of the mining town of Gilberton by both Chinese and European miners. The local MLA, Hodgkinson, asked the government for compensation. The motion failed.

Hansard records that on 11 June 1874 Hodgkinson said: *The manner in which (his motions) had been received would show the people in the North—those people on whom the prosperity of the country so much depended—that they must shoot every black fellow they found, in spite of the pseudo-philanthropists.*

In 1874 the police magistrate and the land commissioner at Normanston, in the Gulf country, reported continuing warfare. In language like that of American commanders on kill ratios in Vietnam, they estimated that 30 blacks were killed for every white.

They also reported that: *The stealing of gins and children from the blacks ... the running down and forcible detention of (them) is a matter of frequent occurrence and a recognised*

*Mossman Gorge, Far North Queensland.*

*photo: Campbell Thomson*



custom in this district.

An ancestor of mine had a gold mine at Georgetown in the 1890s, called the Bobby Dazzler. His letters plead with the government to build a railway so that he could transport ore. There is no mention of his relations with the local people.

In March 1892 the Cooktown magistrate reported that two drunk *bêche-de-mer* fishermen were seen fighting over an Aboriginal girl kidnapped from Hinchinbrook Island.

The prospectors did not have it all their way. Aboriginal oral history records the exploits of an Aboriginal warrior known as Old Paddy, who speared several miners north east of Coen. The Rocky River goldfield was abandoned as a result.

After the miners came the pastoralists. By this time, syphilis and the Snider .577 breechloading rifle had devastated the Aboriginal population. Missionaries gathered those they could persuade onto missions such as Trubanaman on the Mitchell River.

In 1896 part of the Bowman pastoral lease was excised to provide land for the Trubanaman Mission. In 1910 Frank Bowman was boundary riding with a stockman, James McIntyre. They saw grass burning on the mission boundary. Some Aborigines from the mission were hunting tortoises in the swamp, which was just on Bowman land. Bowman and McIntyre shot some of the Aborigines' dogs and chased the people back towards the mission. From court documents, it is possible to reconstruct what happened. A pistol shot from Bowman hit a black known to the court only as 'Jimmy'. Jimmy hit Bowman in the eye with a spear. McIntyre killed Jimmy with his rifle. Bowman died three days later. McIntyre was never charged.

I have a photograph of my grandfather, jackarooing in the Gulf country before World War I. He is holding a magpie goose which he has shot.

The Arukun Mission was founded by Moravian missionaries in 1904. The most important European figure at Arukun has been the Reverend W. MacKenzie, who was superintendent from the 1920s to the 1960s. He learnt Wik-Munkan, the local language, and was traditionally initiated. He is apparently remembered with respect, if not affection, for strenuously working

to keep Europeans out of the Arukun reserve which was created in 1921.

In September 1972, this was Queensland government policy: *The Queensland Government does not view favourably proposals to acquire large areas of additional freehold land or leasehold land for development by Aborigines or Aboriginal groups in isolation.*

All of the above is fragmented, white man's chronological history. The Aboriginal story is yet to be told. With the death of the last speakers of many languages, it may never be fully told. A spatial history, in Paul Carter's sense, would create a further perspective.

### Campaign fragments

I was the campaign photographer in December 1975.

One snap is of my father in mole-skins, short-sleeved shirt and bush hat walking with the then Queensland Minister for Aboriginal and Islander Affairs up a dusty orange road towards the Doomadgee Mission. The minister wears a safari suit. He calls the locals primitive. My father quotes Blainey's *The Triumph of the Nomads* on the sophistication of barter trade routes across the continent.

At Edward River a quietly-spoken black guides us round the crocodile farm. In my memory are more recent television images of crocodiles leaping out of rivers to chomp lumps of meat suspended from tourist boats. I sense that there is no enthusiasm for the crocodile farm project, which no doubt initiated in Brisbane or Canberra.

At Weipa, dusk, drinking with the blacks at their canteen. Someone is explaining how the mining operation has relocated two disparate communities together so that there is continual low-level conflict. The mine employs only a token couple of blacks.

Mid-morning, dazzling sun, Mornington Island. Dick Roughsey, (Goolbalthaldin) artist, writer and respected elder, wears a big grin and a Bill Woods T-shirt. Woods is the Labor candidate for Leichhardt. We are picked up by a truck at the airstrip and taken to the school. I wander off to the creek with some children and take a whole Polaroid film of them jumping, screaming, and laughing in the brown

water. Film which is meant to record meetings with local dignitaries is stuffed in the wet back pockets of carefree kids.

I am reminded of the stories of Killoran, an Aboriginal and Islander Affairs bureaucrat, tossing sweets to both adults and children on visits to reserves. Flo Bjelke-Petersen was handy with scones, Jo dispensed crumbs to the media chooks.

In Normanton, my father is bailed up by a cow-cocky who has heard that Malcolm Fraser is sympathetic to Aboriginal land rights. He can't believe that anyone could think of giving land to those drunken bums on sit-down money. He resents the fact that greater welfare resources seem available to blacks than whites.

At Port Douglas, in the Court House Hotel, a bloke with long hair and beads asks me if I know where I'm at, when I tell him I'm studying politics. Down the road, at the cemetery, a tombstone reads 'killed by blacks'.

At the Mitchell River Reserve, we wander around trying to talk to local people. A group of blacks sit under a tree playing cards after lunch. They do not even look up when we try to introduce ourselves.

Election day is wet. My brother and I hand out how-to-vote cards at Yarrabah, the Aboriginal Reserve near Cairns. During a quiet moment, the young black scrutineer for Labor shows me around. A bare house, scrupulously clean, reminds me of Walker Evans's photographs of the houses of share croppers in Oklahoma in the Depression.

### Quaid and Starcke

On 26 February 1993, George Quaid Holdings advertised in the *Wall Street Journal*, offering '60,000 acres coastal freehold land plus 400,000 acres 40-year government leases' of eastern Cape York for sale at \$US18 million. The land 'would suit a frontier tourist development based on hunting, fishing, adventure tours and possible world standard game park' and is 'virgin forest': land as a female to be hunted and ravished.

The advertisement prompted an inquiry by the Trade Practices Commission. Goss appointed a QC to investigate the transfer of 24,200 hectares of leasehold to Quaid as freehold

for \$30,275, during the dying days of the Bjelke-Petersen government on 21 September 1989. The Wilderness Society has independent legal advice on the propriety of the deal, having obtained relevant documents under the Freedom of Information Act.

Another area of contention is Occupational Licence 573, 18,500 hectares on the coast between Cape Melville and Altanmoui National Parks. This land was severed from the Starcke lease for assessment as a possible national park. The Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage recommended its acquisition as a national park. However, the Lands Department seems willing to reinstate this land as part of the Starcke pastoral lease. It could be resumed as crown land with 3 months notice.

The original Starcke holding contains a rich variety of habitats: mangrove, melaleuca forest, freshwater wetlands, tidal floodplains, sand dunes and patches of remnant rainforest. To the east lies the largest seagrass pasture off Australia's eastern coast, with Australia's largest dugong population. Fringing coral reefs hug the coast. The traditional lands of two Aboriginal groups, the Guugu-Yimidhirr and Guugu-Gambiil-Mugu, lie within the Starcke lease.

Because most of the land has been alienated from the crown, and the people shifted from it to Hopevale Mission, most areas cannot be claimed under mooted *Mabo* legislation that will amend the Queensland Aboriginal Land Act. The national parks are available for claim. Elders from the two groups still visit the land to 'care for country' by voluntarily policing vandalism and poaching. The four park rangers who are responsible for the whole of Cape York cannot do this. The local people hunt and fish on the land as they have always done.

Some conservationists regard the hunting of dugongs with horror. But because this hunting is not for profit, there is little likelihood of the species being threatened, as would be the case with, for example, a commercial whaling operation.

Quaid's record in 'caring for country' speaks for itself. He subdivided rainforest in the Daintree area for housing blocks. He built the Bloomfield to Daintree Road through World Herit-

age rainforest. He built another road, from Wangetti to Southedge, through World Heritage land. At Southedge, he clear-felled the land and shovelled the timber into the Mitchell River. The Queensland government passed an act to stop anyone doing anything like this again.

### Land as resource, or womb

North Queensland has been used by Europeans to mine gold and bauxite, graze cattle, grow sugar and tobacco and marijuana, and provide timber for housing frames, woodchips and chopsticks.

The land is valuable only for its utility in the market place. As Eric Rolls has described at length, the agricultural practices brought to Australia in the 19th century have led to salinisation, erosion, the disappearance of top soil, rivers full of phosphates, the extinction of many flora and fauna species and problematic fire regimes.

North Queensland has its own unique ecological disaster in the cane toad. Introduced to devour the cane beetle, it is spreading south and west, destroying native amphibians, reptile and marsupial species.

The Wilderness Society advocates return of the Starcke holding to its original owners. These people see themselves as part of the land, not separate from it. Jimmy Jacko, a Guugu-Yimidhirr elder, says that his people will run cattle on the land if it is returned to them, but in a sustainable way, in consultation with environmental groups.

### Ecotourism

In his letter in response to inquiries about the Starcke sale, Quaid said that, 'George Quaid Holdings has held the land since 1971 as a future land-bank for eco-tourism or eventual residential development'.

Being a tourist in Port Douglas made me question the notion of ecotourism. My partner and I went with our baby son on a small boat to Low Island, where we snorkelled, and Snapper Island, where we walked through the forest, and then on a piece of reef exposed at low tide. There were no big fish off Low Island, where fishing is supposedly prohibited. When I asked our skipper why, he said that once the

fish became used to a non-predatory human presence, they were easily speared by the unscrupulous. Walking through the forest on Snapper Island, it was obvious that boot traffic was causing erosion.

While taking care not to tread on live coral on the reef, it was obvious that in walking over it to examine it, we were breaking up its fragile structure. It is a dilemma for the environmental movements and one that could be solved by greater consultation with Aboriginal people who have lived in this country for 50,000 years.

There is a tourist park on the edge of Port Douglas where a rainforest habitat has been created artificially and covered with mesh to stop the birds flying away. Walkways enable visitors to wander through the high canopy. During 'Breakfast with the Birds', rainbow lorikeets wander across the tables, and small wallabies nonchalantly hop around.

As a theme park, it is akin to the Japanese construction of a miniature Eiffel tower and other monuments on the outskirts of Yokohama. Perhaps the building of simulacra allows the 'originals' to be preserved.

Perhaps virtual reality machines will make tourism obsolete.

The Queensland government is enthusiastic about ecotourism. Michael Lee, the Tourism Minister, quoted in the *Cairns Post* of 15 May 1993, said that the Cairns region was 'at the forefront of demonstrating that environmental protection and tourism could profitably co-exist'. With 'for sale' signs prominent along the Bloomfield-Daintree Road, this remains to be seen.

### Conclusion

Cape York is one of the world's last wildernesses. The Bjelke-Petersen government was happy to let developers and miners do what they like to make a profit from it. The Goss government's position is not clear. History shows that Aboriginal knowledge and title has been ignored.

The next decade will show if we are able to learn from history and be more careful with our country and its first owners. ■

**Campbell Thomson** is a freelance writer.



# Nugget

**L**ONG BEFORE DAD RETIRED FROM RELIGION and became a connoisseur of human eccentricity, he was part of what he called The Great God Rush. His first wife, Rosa, sent him an ecstatic card and invited him in on it. She said they were virtually kicking converts over as they walked the streets. You didn't have to dig for them at all.

'She was lonely,' dad said later, 'that was all. She just wanted me there.' Dad went anyway and promised Rosa that he would call his first convert Nugget as a sign that the highways were ready to be paved in gold as the first fruits of The Book itself.

When I met Nugget, 22 years later, he was already an old man, or he seemed old for his years. I got off a broken-winded bus in Mandaya, the largest town in the hills, and separated myself from the crowd until I could cast an eye around and see if anyone had got my letter. Nugget approached me from the other side of the street, doing up the buttons on his shirt as a mark of respect or misgiving in the presence of my father's heir. I recognised the hero and the villain of all dad's stories.

'Nugget?', I asked.

'Peter, Andrew, James and John Nugget,' he owned with a slip of a grin as he manhandled my pack into the sidecar of an ancient motorbike. Dad had quite possibly just stepped out of the saddle. Without another word, Nugget pointed to my place and kicked the motor over like it had never been cold. It then grunted and squealed for three or four hours as he fought a route up into the hills behind Mandaya where the road was suddenly amputated by a river. All the nerve ends of traffic were caught up into a small stump of a town.

This was Dandon. It was as far as Rosa had accompanied dad. Much to his surprise, and in later years to his amusement, she stood on the bank to supervise the safe passage of 200 roneoed copies of The Book across the water. She then reminded him that every living creature upstream on the other side had been entrusted to his care. But before he had struggled half way over himself, she was already thundering back towards Mandaya without so much as a backward glance. She had cut him off. I suppose that news came back to her from time to time like sensations from a missing limb, but Rosa disciplined her mind. She dealt only in matters of hard fact.

There was a rope bridge now at Dandon. Nugget and myself threaded ourselves over and began the 15-kilometre hike along the other side to San Isidore. Dad spoke often of these 15 slow kilometres. It was along here, passing to and fro with supplies, that he had panned for ideas. He had planned his lessons here as well as designed the temple, the assembly hall and the ark of renunciation. He had also pondered some of the more oblique pages of The Book. 'The problem was,' he said, 'that whole pages had been omitted from the roneoed copies and some parts were smudged. So I had to make stuff up. I turned around virtually the whole of San Isidore without even knowing what the seventh to fourteenth prophecies were about. That took some doing.'

I was hoping as we went along that Nugget would find something to say. But he held his tongue. Now and again I was on the point of recognising some place or other that dad had sketched during his regulation quiet time and I would have liked to have asked Nugget for confirmation. But I was uneasy. I had no idea yet where I stood with him.

Dad felt safe, I know, pushing on for the first time towards San Isidore. There had been missionaries through here before, the travelling sales folk of a thousand lifestyles, and the word around was that they could expect a pretty good reception. Plus crime was totally unknown in the area. Dad knew that he could get away for a few hours and always come back and find his house as neat as a pin. Even during the early weeks when they left him well enough alone, two or three of their boys would go through the place when he was out, sweep it and leave a meal prepared for him. They wouldn't come near the house when he was in it, that was all. Otherwise, you couldn't fault them. Admittedly, they were hardly falling over themselves to enter in upon The Book and dad was concerned that the coarse

paper of his 200 copies would decompose in the humidity before they could be received and understood. 'But what could I do? A prospector needs patience. You have to be prepared to work the same seam over and over again, going back to the places you think you have failed.'

Nugget was a breakthrough. One day, as dad told it, he came back to the house ahead of time to escape a storm. The young men had been and gone but Nugget was loitering, turning over the pages of a copy of *The Book* which dad had left like flypaper on his table. He was rubbing the pages between his fingers and smelling the black stuff that had come off onto his skin, unsure as to whether it was some kind of drug or poison. Dad's wits had been honed to a keen and angry edge by nights of sharing his loneliness with mosquitoes. He caught at once the sharp glint in Nugget's eye. It was not a glint of curiosity or wonder. It was covetousness. The first experience of greed, of wanting not what belonged to another but of wanting to be what the other was. It was the basis, while it lasted, of their shared faith.

I followed Nugget along the river to San Isidore with the silent good faith of a disciple. After a while, he took off his shirt and I watched the way that sweat worked along the corrugations of his back. It gathered in the nape of his neck and fell from contour to contour like rain running along the branches of a dead tree until it drops to the next level and finally to the ground. He also had crosses tattooed onto his biceps, two on each arm, and these shone under a patina of sweat. I became more absorbed in the way Nugget moved than in following the details of the Isidore Valley. Sure enough, dad had built shrines along here, had piled up stones, and maybe some of them still stood. But I was following Nugget, cornered by his muteness, at the same time wondering if I were trusting too far.

**D**AD TAUGHT NUGGET TO READ. 'He took time learning his letters,' dad said, 'he learnt them hard.' Dad used to close Nugget's fist tight over the burnt stump of a pencil and push it hard into the paper until Nugget got the idea. Dad wanted him to be able to sign his own name on the passenger list for the ark of renunciation and persevered with him until he had mastered it. The yellow card was the first permanent place Nugget had ever left his name properly—as opposed to the artwork he had always called his signature for government purposes. When Nugget had finished carving into the card with the pencil, he looked at the words and could hardly recognise them. They weren't familiar to him. He kept staring at them, hoping that some aspect of his name on the page would come out of hiding and give itself up to him and say, 'OK, I'm yours.' Like he was giddy and waiting for the landscape to slow down and right itself. But once his hand lifted from the card, which

was as soft as leather under the sweat of his palm, his name eddied and swirled for a moment in print, broke up beyond recognition and finally disappeared under a skin of water.

'Even so,' said dad, 'I managed to get the basic ideas of *The Book* through to young Nugget.' He went on sardonically: 'He ended up holding them much firmer than I did myself.' He paused breathlessly like he did when he was explaining the facts of life. 'As you must know yourself by now,' he said. But I didn't know.

At the end of the day, when we got to San Isidore, I felt that I had reached the white perimeter of one of the small snapshots that dad used to send back to the centre in Sydney. He sent them principally to gladden the heart of the chronic depressive whom he revered for having composed or taken down *The Book* years before. By the time dad got around to sharing the photos with us, however, he used to chuckle at the up-tempo mes-

sages he had emblazoned rather innocently on the back. 'From small beginnings,' said one. 'Rome wasn't built in a day,' said another, perhaps more pointedly. I half expected the town to be built in black and white and mostly blurred, such was the hold of these photos on my imagination. I expected orderly groups to be sitting in front of the temple or the ark, the men wearing black ties and the women black scarves. Instead, the place was a chaos of vivid colour and deserted. Even at dusk, the brightness of San Isidore burnt the eye. There were odours of cooking

rising above the small number of houses. But not a sound. Not so much as a barking dog.

Nugget lived alone in the very house that dad had built with the help of the townsfolk. I recognised it, of course. It had been on the cover of a magazine called *The Book* that used to circulate among adherents. Nugget, it appeared, lived alone. He pointed me to a screened-off section where I could sleep in private and then worked on the fire so we could have something to eat.

'Your father?' he asked at last. His eyelids moved like butterflies, breaking the tension of his face. For a moment, he was no longer absent.

'Dead. Long dead.'

'Good.' It was final.

I had difficulty reconciling the loneliness of these circumstances with dad's stories of Nugget. I had imagined somebody whose life would be as tangled and vibrant as the jungle itself. Dad spoke with real warmth about the time Nugget had landed himself in jail. 'He got carried away at fiesta time,' said dad. 'That was the beauty of *The Book*. It never stopped anybody being human. He had his pranks, same as any kid.'

I had always seen Nugget's time in jail as the unravelling of dad's faith. That was why, on the other side of belief, he spoke with such delight about the unac-



*Graphic by  
Waldemar Buczynski*



countable pulse of life that ran through the cells. They were crowded, mostly with young men who had lost their thread somewhere in Mandaya and been picked up. Petty thieves and vandals. Nugget was the only tribal. The only one from way up there. Even so, he was popular. He was good at telling stories. Missionaries used to hunt in packs around the prison, scavenging for the remains of human souls that had stuck like bits of dust in the bright eyes of the law.

In Mandaya prison, Nugget had been baptised four different times by four different Christian sects. Each time he took a new Christian name and scored himself a T-shirt and five pesos, the standard reward at the time for accepting the indelible impress of salvation under one's flesh. Plus Nugget delighted his cellmates with the dramatics of each conversion, always culminating in the moment at which he planted his new name at the foot of a written pledge. All this happened quickly, before his case came to trial. 'He was Peter, Andrew, James and John Nugget before he even knew where he was,' said dad, carrying on with his stories manfully in the face of absurdity. I always imagined that once dad had seen the funny side of Nugget's conversions for himself, his own commitment started to fray.

I was caught out, therefore, by the loneliness of Nugget's present life. I had hardly expected a parson's study, but there was barely a thing in the house. As a mark of hospitality, I was offered the only cot. When the time came to sleep, I went off behind the screen and Nugget curled up in a pair of torn shorts in the middle of the floor of the big room. He didn't want a blanket or a mat. His skin was as pliable as linen. As the moon rose and defined the shapes on the other side of the screen, Nugget's skin seemed to bunch up on his chest like bed covers. Later he turned over and I waited for the pattern pressed into his buttocks to iron itself out with the returning circulation. But it stayed as it was. It set hard. His flesh had been somehow rubbed out of shape or eroded. His mouth swung open and let odd words out past a few dark teeth, rolling them over the wide expanse of floor. I also counted seven toes on him. Total. That was all he had. There must have been an accident or gangrene at some stage. I wondered how far I could ask.

**B**ACK IN MANDAYA, three days later, I had an appointment with dad's first wife, Rosa. She met me in her office under a ceiling fan that had long since given up the ghost. There was an awkwardness between us.

'I really came up to meet Nugget,' I said, wanting to shift the focus. 'And I just wondered if you were still around.' I eased her out of her suspicion.

'Oh, Nugget,' she said. 'Did your father ever tell you about Nugget?' Rosa entered into the full story like a mathematician demonstrating every theory she had ever held about dad and being pleased at the outcome. Nugget had been taken in at fiesta time, that was right. But not for any prank. He had murdered his sister. Nugget's sister had refused to adhere to The Book. She had scoffed at the idea.

'Your father was greedy and impatient,' said Rosa. 'He wanted to make his fortune quick. The Book doesn't work like that. He forgot the golden rule.'

Dad had told Nugget that the people of San Isidore would be better off dead if they rejected The Book. It was only a way of speaking. But, when the fiesta came around, Nugget lost his mind to the local rice wine and turned on his sister. He savaged her with a coconut knife. He had taken dad at his word and sacrificed his sister in her own best interests. He believed she was better off dead. In all his endless prattle, it was something dad had never mentioned. Rosa had been sent for and arrived next day to see the village, gathered and speechless, wondering what to call this kind of thing. She hadn't just been killed, she had been butchered. The murder was the first crime ever listed from San Isidore, from the whole of the area on the other side of the river.

'At first,' Rosa said, 'Nugget revelled in his celebrity.' It was even better when dad explained that 'better off dead' was only a way of speaking. He hadn't meant it. Dad kept at him and at him and gradually closed his mind around that stump of an idea. So each time Nugget was baptised, the new name became his only in a manner of speaking. His signatures were, as he'd always suspected, nothing to do with him at all. When the police advised him to give himself up and brought him a confession to sign, he worked his name into the paper with the meticulousness of a goldsmith padding his existence with elaborate and finely wrought fictions.

If I do believe anything, I believe now that dad's humour, his stories, were a form of grieving. He was sad not for Nugget, nor for Nugget's sister, but for the faith he'd lost. And mine with it. There was never a copy of The Book anywhere in our place when I was growing up. It was often spoken of. But I never saw it. There wasn't even much belief in matters of honest fact. Everything was irony, evasion and escape. Dad's word was as slippery as worms. But I did take one hard image back with me down from San Isidore. Old Nugget, turning over and over like a well thumbed book, keening all night in a pair of paper thin shorts, was a vision of dad's guts. This was what he was like inside.

'I don't suppose you still keep a copy of The Book around these parts?' I asked in the morning as Nugget breathed life into a can of hot ashes.

As one of his final gestures towards me, Nugget led me out behind the house, beyond the half-dozen other houses that remained of the town, to where he'd piled up a large cairn. A spasm of pain passed along his back as he lifted the first few rocks. There, between the stones, were the mortal remains of 200 roneoed copies, unreadable now, turning to mulch, creepers and grubs competing for the few last words of life.

'That's them,' said Nugget, with a slip of a grin, regaining his balance on uneven feet.

'Nugget had it rough after the trial,' said Rosa later as a matter of fact. 'Did you see the signs of torture in his hide?' It was true enough. He'd been blooded and scourged. His flesh had been mined until real was real. ■

# Unperformed experiments have no results

**Y**OU COULD SAY IT BEGAN with the man in the canoe rather than with the dream, though I can no longer be certain of the sequence of events. It is possible, after all, that the letter arrived before either the dream or that frail and curious vessel, though I do not think so. I used to be without doubts on this matter. Chronology used not to be even a question. But since the disappearances, trying to catch hold of any kind of certainty has been like catching hold of water.

Sometimes, when a tradesman or a parcel delivery man comes to the door, I have to restrain myself, by a fierce act of the will, from grabbing him by the lapels or by the denim coverall straps and demanding: 'What do accidents mean, do you think? Do you have an opinion? Are you a gambling man? Have you ever been spooked by coincidence?' The truth is, I have become obsessed with the patterns of chance—the neatness of them, the provocation such neatness gives—but chance is a subject that very much resists scrutiny, and the more I ponder random conjunctions of events, the more intensely I try to focus my memory, the hazier things become. You cannot, as the physicists keep telling us, engage in the act of close observation without changing the thing observed. Of course I resort to such analogies because it is Brian who is dying.

Nevertheless, though it may or may not be the first cause, I will start with that afternoon on my dock and with the man in the canoe. It was a late summer afternoon and very humid, and the forecast—for thunder storms—was sufficient to keep most boats in marinas. There were white-caps on the lake and the river. When I looked east, I could see the pines on the tip of Howe Island bending like crippled old men in the wind. Westward, past the Spectacles, past Milton Island, I thought I could just see one of the ferries, veiled in great fans of spray, crossing the neck of the lake. Wolfe Island, directly opposite, was invisible, or almost so, behind a billowing indigo cloud that threw the whole head of the river into twilight, although it was only about four o'clock in the afternoon.

I was right at the end of my dock, and I had a book propped on my knees, but the wind kept buffeting my light aluminium deck chair to such an extent that I began to wonder if it was aerodynamically possible to be lifted up on a gust and dumped into the water. I kept looking up over the page, partly to assess my chances of staying dry, but mostly to enjoy the extravagant theatre of wind and water. And then, startled, I thought I saw a canoe emerging from the bateau channel between Howe Island and the shore.

I'm imagining things, I decided, rubbing my eyes. Who would be so foolhardy on such a day? Or so strong, for that matter. Here, the currents are swift and ruthless. Every summer, bits and pieces of our ageing dock disappear, and end up, no doubt, somewhere around Montreal; every winter the pack ice



brings us splintered paddles and fragments of boats bearing registration marks from Toronto, Niagara, and even, once, from Thunder Bay. I shaded my eyes and squinted. Nothing there. Wait ... Yes, there it was again, a canoe, definitely, with a solitary paddler, heading upriver against all this mad seaward-running energy.

It is by no means impossible to paddle upriver—I have done it myself—but even without a headwind it is very hard work and is rarely tried solo. Astonished, I kept my eyes on the paddler. He must have muscles like steel ropes, I thought. His chances of capsizing seemed extraordinarily high. Clearly, he was someone who liked danger, someone who was excited by risk, perhaps even someone who got a certain kick out of pain, or at any rate, out of enduring it. But for how long, I wondered, could his arms take so much punishment?

*Do not undertake anything unless you desire to continue it; for example, do not begin to paddle unless you are inclined to continue paddling. Take from the start the place in the canoe that you wish to keep.*

Old advice, three centuries old, but still sound: that was Jean de Brébeuf, writing home to Paris with tips 'for the Fathers of our society who shall be sent to the Hurons'. I always think of them, those French Jesuits, *voyageurs*, when I see a canoe pitching itself against the current. I think of them often, as a matter of fact, since I moved out here onto the river. I frequently browse through their *Relations*, those lively, detailed, sometimes despairing reports to their superiors. Paris, Rome:

it must have seemed as uncertain as prayer, dispatching words by ship.

**T**HE *Relation for 1649* to the Very Reverend Father Vincent Caraffa, General of the Society of Jesus, at Rome: *I have received, very Reverend Paternity, your letter dated 20 January 1647. If you wrote us last year, 1648, we have not yet received that letter ...*

*The Relation for 1637: You must be prompt in embarking and disembarking, and tuck up your gowns so that they will not get wet, and so that you will not carry either water or sand into the canoe. To be properly dressed, you must have your feet and legs bare: while crossing the rapids, you can wear your shoes, and, in the long portages, even your leggings.*

I imagine them with their blistered European hands and their cassocks hoisted up around their thighs, paddling full pelt up their *Great River St Lawrence* (they wrote of it with such affectionate possessiveness, with such respect for its stern powers), dipping their paddles toward their deaths, skimming past these very rocks that buttress (and will eventually smash) my dock, heading west with their mad cargo of idealism, dedication, and wrong-headedness.

*You must try and eat at daybreak unless you can take your meal with you in the canoe; for the day is very long, if you have to pass it without eating. The Barbarians eat only at Sunrise and Sunset, when they are on their journeys.*

I could see the flash of the paddle now, knifing into the water, keeping to the right side, pulling closer to

shore. His arms are giving out, I thought. He is going to try to beach on this stretch. Now that the canoe was close enough, I could see that it was neither fibreglass nor aluminium, but birchbark. It wasn't until the next day that I was struck by the oddness of this, and by the fact that I had never seen a bark canoe before, except in photographs and museums. At the time it seemed quite unsurprising, or at least, not significant. I merely noted it, wondering exactly where the canoeist would reach shore, and if he would manage this before capsizing.

And then, gradually, it became clear to me that the paddler had no intention of trying to land. He's crazy, I thought. Shoulders hunched forward, head slightly down, eyes on the prow of his craft, he was bent on defying the current and continuing upriver, parallel to shore and now only about 30 feet out. It seemed incredible. He was all manic energy and obstinacy, and I fancied I could hear the pure high humming note of his will above the general bluster of the wind. His strength, which seemed supernatural, was oddly infectious. It was as though infusions of energy were pumping themselves into my body, as though the paddler's adrenalin was an atmosphere that I inhaled. I couldn't take my eyes off him. *Go, go, go*, I urged, weirdly excited.

It is odd how certain body shapes, certain ways of moving the body, are retained like templates on the memory. So we recognise a voice, a face—we take this as unremarkable—but so also a gesture or a way of walking can be recalled. I could still see only the outline of the figure (though I'd assumed from the start the paddler was male), and he was wearing a hooded windbreaker so that he (or even she) could have been anyone. And yet, watching the way the shoulders hunched forward, the way the arms dug into the water, the sharp thought came to me: *This reminds me of someone. Who is it? Who? Who?*

It was maddening. It was like meeting someone at a party and knowing you have met that person before somewhere, but being unable to summon up a name or a context. This sort of incomplete recollection can drive you crazy. The canoe was drawing level with my dock now and I wished I'd brought my binoculars down. The plunge and lift and dip of the shoulder blades, oh, it was at the tip of my mind, who did that movement remind me of? Now the canoe was level with the end of my dock, but the hooded head kept its eyes resolutely on the prow and the water, the paddle flashed.

*Oh please look up*, I willed.

And he did.

'Good God!' I cried out, thunderstruck. 'Brian!'

Brian—no, of course not Brian, I was aware almost instantaneously that it couldn't possibly be Brian, who was either in Australia or Japan—not Brian, then, but the man in the canoe simply sat there, resting his paddle and staring at me, startled, which naturally meant that he scudded back downstream very swiftly. He dug the paddle furiously into the water, dip, dip, dip, until he drew level again, closer this time. He rested his paddle and stared. I felt, as the current again bucked him backwards, that I had to do something potent and in-

stant to stop time unwinding itself, but I could neither speak nor move, the resemblance to Brian was so eerie. I was experiencing something like vertigo, and a pain like angina in my chest. Shock, I suppose.

I was dimly aware that my book had fallen into the water and that I was on my hands and knees on the dock. I watched the canoe draw level a third time, and the paddler and I stared at each other (he was very pale, and there seemed, now, to be no expression at all on his face), and then he, Brian, I mean the man in the birch-bark canoe, turned away and lowered his head, and resumed paddling more fiercely than ever.

I watched until he disappeared from sight, which seemed to take hours. I have no idea how long I stayed on my hands and knees. I know that when I tried to climb the steep steps up our cliff, my legs felt like jelly and kept shaking so badly I had to stop and rest several times.

★ ★ ★

**P**EOPLE CLIMBING MOUNTAINS and cliffs hyperventilate, this is common knowledge. They see things. Visitations alight on them.

Between the fiftieth step and the fifty-first, the past distended itself like a balloon and I climbed into it. I could feel its soft sealed walls.

*Trapped*, I thought. And simultaneously, pleasurably: *home*. I could smell the rainforest, smell Queensland, feel the moist air of the rich subtropics. *I am here again. Home.*

Brian is a few feet ahead of me, both of us drenched, both feeling for handholds and footholds, both of us (I realise it now) equally scared, but too proud to admit it.

(This would have been our last year in high school, and this was something we did every year, spend a day in our own bit of rainforest—we thought of it that way—on the outskirts of Brisbane, climbing the waterfall. But our last year in high school was the year of the floods. I think we both gulped a little when we saw the falls, but neither would ever have been the first to back out. We were both given to constant high anxiety, and both temperamentally incapable of backing away from our fears.)

So. Every handhold slips, every foothold is algae-slick. My fingers keep giving way. My heart thumps—thud, thud, thud—against its cage. Delirium, the salt flavour of panic: I can taste them. Just inches above my eyes, I see the tendon in Brian's ankle. If I were to touch it, it would snap. I tilt my head back and see his shoulder blades, corded tight, lift like wings, pause, settle, lift again. He reaches and pulls, reaches and pulls, he is a machine of bodily will. The energy field of his determination—pulses of it, like a kind of white light, bouncing off him—brush against me, charging the air. This keeps me going.

At the top of the falls, we collapse. We lie on the flat wet rocks. We do not speak. Our clothes give off curls of steam that drift up into the canopy, and creepers trail down to meet them. We float into sleep, or perhaps it is merely a long sensuous silence that is sweeter

than sleep. I dream of flying. I have languid wings. I can feel updrafts of warm air, like pillows, against my breast feathers.

'Mmm,' I murmur drowsily at last, 'I love this heat. I could lie here forever. How come the water's so cold, when it's so hot here on the rocks?'

'I'm not even going to answer that, Philippa,' Brian says lazily. 'It's such a dumb question.'

'Piss off,' I say. I inch forward on my stomach and peer over the lip of the falls. I can't believe we have climbed them. I watch the solid column of water smash itself on the rocks below. I feel queasy. I can see four years of high school shredding themselves, all the particles parting, nothing ever the same again. 'Where do you reckon we'll be five years from now?' I ask him. I have to shout. My voice falls down into the rift and loses itself in spray.

Brian crawls across and joins me. Side by side, we stare down ravines and years, high school, adolescence, childhood, we've climbed out of them all. There is just university ahead, and then the unmapped future.

'Where will we end up, d'you reckon?'

'Not here,' Brian shouts. 'We won't be in Brisbane.'

'But even if we aren't, we'll come back. Let's do this every year for the rest of our lives.'

'Not me,' Brian says. 'After uni, I'm never coming back.'

The shouting takes too much energy, and we crawl back to the relative hush of the flat rocks ringed with ferns.

'So where will you be?'

'I don't know. Cambridge. Japan, maybe. There's some interesting research going on in Tokyo. Wherever's best for the kind of physics I'm interested in.'

'What if you don't get into Cambridge?' I ask, although I know it's another dumb question. It's like asking: what if you don't get to the top of the falls?

Brian doesn't bother to answer.

'I'll probably still be here,' I say.

'No you won't.'

'You're such a bloody know-it-all, Brian.'

'I know you and me.'

'You think you do.'

'Philippa,' he says irritably, with finality, 'I know us well enough to know we won't stay in Brisbane. You'll end up somewhere extreme, Africa, Canada, somewhere crazy.'

'You're nuts,' I say. 'Anyway, wise guy, wherever I am, you can bet I'm going to stay close to water.'

'Yes,' he says. 'You win that one. We'll both be near water.'

★ ★ ★

**I**N THE DREAM, I am at the end of my dock, reading, when I notice the most curious light over Wolfe Island. The whole island seems burnished with gold leaf, and there is an extraordinary clarity to things, to individual trees, for instance, as though each detail has been outlined with a fine-tipped black brush. I can see vines,



orchids, staghorn ferns against the tree trunks. I can see that Wolfe Island has gone tropical, that it is thick with rainforest, that lorikeets and kingfishers are flashing their colours on the St Lawrence banks.

Then I note that there is a suspension bridge, the catwalk kind, with wooden planks and drop sides, the kind sometimes strung a hundred and fifty feet up in the rainforest canopy to allow tourists to see the aerial garden running riot up there. This bridge starts at the end of my dock and crosses the river to Wolfe Island, but it is submerged.

What catches my eye first are the ropes tied to the end of my dock, just below water level. I lie flat on my stomach and peer down. I can see the arc of the bridge, little seaweed gardens swaying on its planks, curving down and away from me.

There is someone lying on his back on the bridge, or rather floating with it, just above the planks, just below the rope siderails. It is Brian. His eyes are open but unseeing, his skin has the pallor of a drowned man, algae spreads up from his ankles, tiny shell colonies are crusting themselves at all his joints. Seaweed ferns move with him and around him. He looks like Ophelia. *There with fantastic garlands did she come ...*

'Alas, then,' I say to him, 'are you drowned?'

'Drowned, drowned,' he says.

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**N**O ONE WOULD BE TOO SURPRISED by the fact of my dream. First I see a man in a canoe who reminds me of someone I know, and that very night I dream of Brian. A canoeist in a storm is at risk; I dream of death. There is a simple logic to this sequence of events; anyone would subscribe to it.

Nevertheless, I woke in a state of panic. I woke with the certainty that something was wrong. I hadn't seen Brian for, I had to count back ... well over a year, it must have been. It was always hit or miss with Brian. Luckily, childhood friends had a slightly better chance of making contact with him than ex-lovers or his ex-wife, but no one alive could compete with the sharp scent of a new hypothesis. I used to picture him literally *living* in his research lab, Melbourne or Tokyo, either city it was the same. I used to imagine a rollaway bed tucked under the computer desk. The last time we met for dinner in Melbourne he said, sometime after midnight: 'My God, the time! I've got to get back to the lab.'

'You sleep there?' I asked sardonically.

'Quite often,' he said.

On principle, Brian never answered his phone. He kept it unplugged (both in his lab, and at the home address he rarely used) except for when he was calling out. I knew this. Nevertheless I called, Melbourne and Tokyo, both; and of course got no answer.

I sent faxes and got no response.

I called the secretary at his research institute in Melbourne. 'Professor Leckie is in Tokyo,' she said, 'but no one has seen him for weeks. We still get his e-mail

though, so he's all right.'

E-mail! I never remembered to check mine, I used it so rarely. I plugged in the modem on my computer, keyed in my password, got into the system, and opened my 'mailbox' on screen.

There was only one message, undated.

*Philippa: I'm going away and wanted to say good-bye. Remember the falls? Those were the good old days, weren't they, when nothing could stop us? I often think of you. Of us back then. Pity we can't go backwards. Take care. Brian.*

I sent a message back instantly.

*Brian, I typed onto my screen. Had a disturbing dream about you last night. Are you okay? I miss you. Take care. Philippa.*

\*\*\*  
**B**ACK THEN, on the day of the message on my screen, the order was still beyond question for me. First the man in the canoe, then the dream, then the message. I began to be less confident of this sequence after the letter from my mother in Brisbane. Not immediately, of course. But a few weeks after the letter, I had to make a point of reminding myself that the terrible thunderstorm weather had begun in late August, that my mother's letter was postmarked September, and that I could not anchor (by any external proof) either my dream or my e-mail to a date.

*I bumped into Brian's mother in the city last week, my mother wrote. She says something's the matter with Brian, some nervous-system disorder. I think she said, something quite dreadful, there was some Latin-sounding word but I can't remember. She said she flew down to visit him in the Royal Melbourne, and he looked like a skeleton, he'd lost so much weight. He's not taking it well, she said. He's never been able to tolerate any kind of interference with his work, not even his marriage, as you know. She's terribly worried. He refused treatment and checked himself out and flew*





to Tokyo, can you believe that? You know he used to phone her once a week from wherever he was! Well, he's stopped doing it. She's quite depressed and quite frightened. I thought maybe you could get him to phone her, poor dear. Or maybe you'd like to write to her yourself? She must be awfully lonely since Mr Leckie died. We thought perhaps we should invite her for Christmas, but it's hard to tell whether she'd enjoy this or not. Maybe you should write to her, Philippa. You know her much better than we do.

Every day I would begin a letter in my mind.

*Dear Mrs Leckie: Remember when Brian and I used to go on rainforest treks and get home hours later than we planned! You used to worry yourself sick, and my parents too. But we always did show up, remember! Brian's just off on another trek, he's lost track of time, that's all ...*

No. Begin again.

*Dear Mrs Leckie: Brian's gone on a journey, as we always knew he would, from which (both you and I have a hunch about this), he might not return. He carries everything he needs inside his head, and always has. In his own way, he misses us. I promise I'll visit when I'm in Brisbane next year. How is your frangipani tree? Remember when Brian and I ...!*

I never sent these unwritten letters.

I began to ask myself whether I'd imagined the man in the canoe. Or whether I'd dreamed him. Or whether I'd dreamed the e-mail message which had vanished into electronic ether without a trace.

For my night-time reading, I followed records of lost trails. The *Relation of 1673*, for example, written by Father Claude Dablon: *He had long premeditated this undertaking, influenced by a most ardent desire to extend the kingdom of knowledge ... he has the Courage to dread nothing where everything is to be Feared ... and if, having passed through a thousand dangers, he had not unfortunately been wrecked in the very harbour, his Canoe having been upset below sault St Louys, near Montreal ...*

In Brisbane (two years ago? three?), on the verandah of the Regatta Hotel, a mere stone's throw from the university, a jug of beer between us, Brian said: 'D'you ever get panic attacks that you'll burn up all your energy before you get there?'

'Get where?' I asked.

'I shouldn't even answer that, Philippa. God, you can be annoying,' Brian said. 'Get to where you wanted to go.'

I couldn't concentrate. I stared across Coronation Drive at the Brisbane River. I could never quite believe that the present had inched forward from the past. 'Look at those barges,' I said. 'I bet they haven't replaced them since we were students. They're decrepit, it's a miracle they're still afloat. I could swear even the graffiti hasn't changed.'

'It hasn't,' Brian said. 'We come back younger because we're in orbit, that's all. Brisbane gets older, we get younger. A clock on a spaceship moves slower than clocks on earth, don't you know that, Philippa? If we



Graphic by  
Waldemar Buczynski



went on a journey to Alpha Centauri, a few light-years out, a few back, we'd come back younger than our great-great-grandchildren. Got that? And we've moved light-years from Brisbane, haven't we? So it figures. The trouble with you arty types is you don't know your relativity ABCs.'

*Dear Mrs Leckie, I could write. Brian's in orbit. He's simply lost track of time, it's all relative. We could go backwards, and swing on your front gate again. We could unclimb the waterfall. We could go back through the looking-glass and watch the future before it comes.*

★ ★ ★

**I** SENT OUT DAILY E-MAIL MESSAGES to Brian's number. *Past calling the future, I signalled. Brisbane calling Far Traveller. Please send back bulletins. I miss you. P.*

I tried to goad him into verbal duelling: *Which clocktime are you travelling on? Please report light-year deviation from Greenwich Mean.*

Every day I checked my 'box'. There was nothing.

I called Brian's secretary in Melbourne again. 'When you said you were still getting his e-mail,' I asked, 'how often did you mean? And where is it coming from?'

'You never know where e-mail is coming from,' his secretary said. 'Actually, we haven't had any for several weeks, but that's not so unusual for him. Once he went silent for months. When he gets obsessed with a new theory ...'

'How long has he been ill?' I ask.

'I didn't know he was ill,' she said. 'But it doesn't surprise me. We're always half expecting all our researchers to drop dead from heart attacks. They're all so driven.'

I think of the last time I saw him, in Melbourne. 'Why don't you slow down a bit?' I asked. 'How many more prizes do you have to win, for God's sake?'

'Prizes!' He was full of contempt. 'It's got nothing to do with prizes. Honestly, Philippa, you exasperate me sometimes.'

'What's it got to do with then?'

'It's got to do with getting where I want to go.' I could hear our beer glasses rattling a little on the table. I think it was his heartbeat bumping things. He couldn't keep still. His fingers drummed a tattoo, his feet tapped to a manic tune. 'I'm running out of time,' he said. I would have to describe the expression on his face at that moment as one of anguish.

'You frighten me sometimes, Brian. Sometimes, it's exhausting just being with you.'

Brian laughed. 'Look who's talking.'

'Compared to you, I'm a drifter. Wouldn't it be, you know, more *efficient*, if you just, even just a little, slowed down?'

'When I slow down,' he said, 'you'll know I'm dead.'

★ ★ ★

**B**ETWEEN THE SOUP and the main course of a dinner party, my mind elsewhere, I heard these words: *that*

*birchbark canoe that washed up ... and police inquiries ...*

I had a peppermill in my hand at the time, and I ground it slowly over my salad. I took careful note of the sharp pleasing contrast made by cracked peppercorn against green leaf. I looked discreetly around the table. Who *had* spoken the words? Had they been spoken?

I could hear Brian say irritably: 'Honestly, Philippa, you never *verify* things. You live inside this vague world of your mind, you make things up, and then you believe they're real.'

'But so do you. You make up a theory, and then you set out to prove it's real.'

'*There's* the crucial difference,' he says. 'My hypotheses are verifiable, one way or the other. I chase details, I nail them down. I won't stop until my theory is either proved or *disproved*. If I can't do either, I have to discard it.'

'Same with me,' I say. 'I put riddles on one side, and come back to them. I do realise the birchbark canoe could have been a figment of my mind and my bedtime reading. I'm checking around. What's the difference?'

'I'm not even going to answer that question,' Brian says.

'But don't you ever come back to your discards?'

'Of course I do. Some problem sets have been passed on for generations. The trick is, you have to approach from a new angle every time. Half the battle is how you frame the question. Unperformed experiments have no results.'

'Exactly,' I say.

And over the candles on a dinner table at the other end of the world, I hazarded cautiously, flippantly: 'Did someone just say something about a birchbark canoe, or did I imagine it?'

Seven pairs of eyes stared at me.

'Sometimes, Philippa,' my husband joked, 'I swear you put one part of your mind on automatic pilot, and the other part is God knows where.'

'It's true,' I said disarmingly. 'So did I hear something about a birchbark canoe, or didn't I?'

'The one washed up on the ferry dock,' one of the guests said. She waved a ringed hand and smiled, courteously tolerant. ('Bit of a flake, isn't she?' I could imagine her saying to someone later. 'Where *does* she get to, between the crackers and the cheese?') 'The one the police are making inquiries about. I was just telling everyone that I'd had to go down to the station and make a statement. And John did too, didn't you, John? Didn't you see him? Yes, I thought so, I was talking to Milly on the phone. So that makes two of us. I mean, who saw the canoe when there was someone in it. Paddling.'

'I saw him several times, as a matter of fact,' John said. 'Came within 10 feet of my boat once, when I was fishing. I waved—well, it's customary—but he didn't wave back. Funny, I only ever saw him paddling upriver. Beautiful canoe.'

'The Burketts,' someone else said, 'the ones who live on Howe Island, you know?—they said there was a hunter camped there most of July and August. No one

knew where he was from, and no one was very happy about it, but that's who it must have been. I mean, they said he had a birchbark canoe and it's not as though you see them every day.

And then he just up and disappeared. The Burketts gave the police a full description and they're putting out a trace, you know, for next of kin.'

'I expect they'll find the body eventually,' John said. 'I wouldn't mind buying the canoe, she was a real beauty. I suppose she'll go up on police auction sooner or later.'

'Won't they have to hang onto it as evidence until the body is found?' someone asked.

'I expect so,' John said. 'Yes, I expect so. Still, sooner or later. The police boats are out dragging every day.'

'I hope they don't find him,' I said.  
Everyone looked at me.

★ ★ ★

**S**OONER OR LATER, I think, evidence of one kind or another will cast itself up: a dream, a letter, an item in the newspaper. Every day, I read the 'Police and Fire Watch' column in the local paper. Every day, I am relieved that no body has been found. Of course this is ridiculous, and I know it. There's a name for it: *sympathetic magic*.

And there's that other matter too, for which Brian had a word: *synchronicities*.

What do they mean? I ask myself. What do they mean?

In the evenings, I read of doomed voyages.

*The Relation of Christophe Regnaut concerning the martyrdom and blessed death of Father de Brébeuf ... captured on the 16th day of March, in the morning, with Father Lalemant, in the year 1649. Father de Brébeuf died the same day as his capture, about 4 o'clock in the afternoon ... I saw and touched the top of his scalped head ...*

*The Relation of 1702: Father Bineteau died there from exhaustion; but if he had had a few drops of spanish wine, for which he asked us during his last illness ... or had we been able to procure some Fresh food for him, he would perhaps be still alive. Father Pinet and Father Marest are wearing out their strength; and they are two saints, who take pleasure in being deprived of everything ... But they do not fail to tell me and to write me that I must bring some little comforts for the sick ... For my part I am in good health, but I have no cassock, and I am in a sorry plight, and the others are hardly less so ...*

I read also of survival against all odds.

*The Relation of the First Voyage made by Father Marquette toward New Mexico in 1673: ... his Canoe having been upset below the sault, where he lost both his men and his papers, and whence he escaped only by a sort of Miracle ...*

I check my e-mail every day, I send out messages, I wait. I spin theories and discard them. I shuffle sequences as I might shuffle a pack of cards.

The joker comes up every time. Any riddles for recycling? he grins. Any letters for uncertain destinations? Any unperformed experiments to go?

I'm not even going to answer that, I say. ■

## Author's note on the *Jesuit Relations*

**T**HE 'JESUIT RELATIONS'—reports from the missionary priests in North America—began in 1611; they were published annually in Paris from 1632-1673, for fundraising and recruiting purposes; and continued more sporadically until the late 18th century, when French power in New France was broken first by British conquest (Wolfe defeated Montcalm in the Battle of the Heights of Abraham at Québec City in 1759); and then by papal suppression of the Jesuit order, 1773.

I first became aware of the *Relations* when I was teaching a course on Canadian literature in a federal prison here. There are extracts from the *Relations* in Canadian literature anthologies at both high school and college level. The stories, especially the martyrdom of Brébeuf, described in vivid and gruesome detail, have a strong hold on the Canadian imagination. The poet E.J. Pratt wrote a lengthy narrative sequence in blank verse: 'Brébeuf and his Brethren'. More recently Canadian novelist Brian Moore used the *Relations* as the basis for his novel *Black Robe*, now a feature film.

Various translations and selected editions of the *Relations* are available. Since they are detailed accounts of what was frequently the first European contact with indigenous peoples, they are of extraordinary historical and anthropological interest. They are also, quite simply, very lively reading. The *Relation* of the martyrdom of Brébeuf was actually written back in France 30 years after the event, though the writer, Christophe Regnaut, was indeed in Québec at the time and did observe Brébeuf's mutilated body. Nevertheless, it is clear that mythologising has set in, and that iconography and hagiography have imposed their formulaic shape on memory. For example: *The barbarian ... took a kettle full of boiling water, which he poured over (Brébeuf's) body three different times, in derision of Holy Baptism ...*

*During all these torments, Father de Brébeuf endured like a rock ... His zeal was so great that he preached continually to these infidels ... [this after being beaten hundreds of times; doused in boiling water; branded with hot tomahawks, wrapped in pitch-coated bark and roasted] ... His executioners were enraged against him for constantly speaking to them of God ... To prevent him from speaking more, they cut off his tongue, and both his upper and lower lips...* ■



# The cat, the goose and the educated youth

*Adapted and translated from a tale told by Chen Shen*

‘G<sup>AO YONG</sup>’ IS NOT MY FRIEND’S REAL NAME. Rather typically, he started calling himself this some time ago, when he was contributing articles to Chinese-language journals in Sydney and Melbourne. I don’t know if he was being cryptic because of a lifetime Chinese habit of keeping his head down, or whether he fancied himself with a *nom de plume*. In any case, he couldn’t resist coming up with a clever-dick sort of name—so much so that any one who knew him would recognise his style immediately. But then the name backfired on him. He chose ‘Gao Yong’ because it means ‘high wall’, and I suppose he thought he was not only hiding himself, but encoding himself in a way—being highly literary. But unfortunately, the editor of one of his magazines left a radical off the character for ‘wall’ and the meaning was transformed into something like ‘vulgar’—so my highly abstruse friend became a highly vulgar friend. And to add salt to the wound, one of his stories was rejected. So I asked him to learn a lesson from this, abandon his allusive, lapidary technique and simply tell me the story in a natural, colloquial manner. Then we would see which style worked best. Now a good Chinese dish has all kinds of attributes, including sound, and Gao Yong’s Changzhou accent is as stimulating as the hiss and spatter of rice crusts splashed all over with a steaming hot broth. Unfortunately, you can’t hear all that in translation, but the aroma may still ‘tug at your nostrils’ as the Chinese say.

‘Chairman Mao said that all us “educated youth” must go down to the countryside and up to the mountains, to be re-educated by the poor and lower-middle peasants. So, what choice did we have? I was just a kid in 1969, after graduating from high school, and with three other kids like myself I ended up in a little village in Northern Jiangsu, a place where even a demon would not lay an egg, as my mother used to say. Every day we planted or ploughed, ploughed or planted, on the slopes of a barren, rocky hillside. In this place almost no rain fell in summer and we had drought; then in autumn the heavens opened and we had floods, and all our poor dirt washed away down the hill and into a mosquito-infested marsh. One way or the other, you couldn’t get crops out of that hillside any more than you could get ivory out of a dog’s mouth. We toiled like water buffalos, just for a few work points to be allocated by the commune administration—it worked out at about ten fen a day, 10 cents in Australian money.

‘The worst of it was hunger. On that kind of money there was no way we could buy much food, and certainly not meat, even if we had the time to walk 10 kilometres into Chrysanthemum Village to buy it. So we ate qingcai, a sort of green vegetable, a leafy little cabbage that tastes like the baby spinach you get here. We had a chicken—but it was in no danger at all from us. We depended on it to lay an occasional little nugget of hope in our path. Every day we watched that hen’s arse like hawks, waiting for an egg to appear. But we couldn’t even eat all the eggs, since most of them had to be exchanged for salt and soy in Chrysanthemum Village. The commune kept a few pigs, but only the cadres got to eat pork, and then only for the Spring Festival. So we ate our wretched qingcai and dreamed of spicy bean curd, batter twists, eels, pickled snails and greasy, fat slices of pork.

‘You know, the work was exhausting, but none of us really minded that. We got used to it pretty quickly. It was the hunger—we were young, and still growing. So, at night after work, in our hut, we

talked and talked about food, about ways to come up with something else to eat. During one of these desperate little plenary sessions someone suggested that, instead of waiting to accumulate enough cash to buy a half-grown rooster, in order to wait for it to mature and sire some spare chickens which might in time consume enough of our miserable grain rations to be worth eating, we might persuade the production team leader to part with a goose, in exchange for a mortgage on our future work points. The plan was greeted with acclaim.

'So we did a deal, and bought ourselves a goose, which we fattened up for months, for New Year and the Spring Festival holidays. It spent its days without care in a little flock composed of every one else's New Year banquet, watched over by one of the younger commune members and fed with precious grain collected from the various households. Every one knew his own goose by sight and was able to point it out, like a proud father watching children in a playground. For weeks before the Spring Festival holidays almost the only topic of conversation in our hut was this bird. We were all looking forward to our holiday so much.

'Chairman Mao had said we should have a "revolutionary" Spring Festival that year, and go out to work, just as usual. Any peasant could tell you there was nothing to do at this time of the year, but we prayed for snow to cover the ground—and in the process provide us with a cover for staying indoors. Finally, the night before New Year's Eve, we killed our goose. By now it was a fine strong bird, not easy to kill, so we gave it plenty of sorghum liquor first, to slow it down a bit. Then we gathered around it, fussing and chattering all at once, and lingering over every moment of its cleaning, cooking and salting. We drained the blood into a pan of cold water and salt, then steamed it for soup. And to make our joy complete, snow began to fall outside the window! We put the goose in a great cast iron pot on the table in the middle of our little kitchen and store room, and just sat around by the light of our kerosene lamp, staring fondly at it.

**T**HE SNOW KEPT UP THROUGH THE NEXT DAY, and we came home early, laughing and singing and throwing snowballs at each other. As one, we headed for the pot and peered down into it—only to find that our goose had one less leg than it had the night before. Chairman Mao had taught us well about the likely sources of strife in any human community. In his great essay *On the Correct handling of Contradictions Among the People* he had analysed two sorts of contradictions—those which were 'internal', that is between the people, and those which were between the people and some external enemy, like landlords or US imperialists or Nation-

alist reactionaries. I mention this because, for a little while at least, we all suspected each other of the crime, and regarded it as a contradiction between the people. But then, as the panic subsided and reason prevailed among us highly sophisticated secondary school graduates, we thought of the scrawny white cat that hung around our hut, hunting for mice. We decided there was an external enemy to be dealt with, and so, throughout our long-awaited banquet, for which we used the liver, feet, intestines and blood, we discussed nothing but the best method for catching cats. So began a vigil which lasted throughout the entire five days of our holiday.

But there was no sign of a cat. By the time we went back to work we had relaxed, and the discussion turned to the best place for hanging the goose for curing, so that we could cut an occasional slice to supplement our pickled vegetables

throughout the cold, hungry weeks ahead before the 'Waking of Insects'. For the time being we left our treasure in the pot.

'The first day after the holidays, when we returned from the fields, we went straight to the pot again. Aiya! Another leg missing! This sent us into a frenzy. How did that thieving bastard of a cat get in? We'd carefully locked our doors and windows before going out that morning, just in case he came back. Then we remembered our old dog. We used to have a black dog with a tiny little curly tail, a very loyal, helpful, old fellow. We taught him to fetch our key for us when we were about to lock up the hut. One day we locked ourselves out, and old shrimp-tail jumped through the window and got our key. After that we made a small hole in the side of the hut and he used to nip through and bring out our key every night when he saw us trudging back from work. I don't know what ever happened to our little mate, he just went missing one day after he followed us out to cut bamboo—but the hole remained, and that obviously explained how the cat made his entry. So that night we patched the hole. We also decided it would be safest to hang the goose from the ceiling, because we thought the cat could not possibly get up there, even if he found some new way into the hut.

'But next night, we found the goose's head was gone!—it had not only been hung, but decapitated! By now this devil-cat had left us with scarcely half a goose. But before we could get over our outrage and humiliation, a white furry blur made a dash for our half-open door. Xiao Wang flung himself at the door and slammed it shut, and then we all took to chasing the creature round the room, flailing at it with a broom, a shoulder pole, a fire poker, and a shovel. It screeched and wailed and hissed and spat, and flew round the room, and even up the walls, while we yelled and cursed, missing with every wicked blow we aimed at it. Finally it darted into



Graphic by  
Waldemar Buczynski



the small noise in our brick stove where we fed in the wheat straw for the fire. We thought we had our tormentor at last! But he wriggled his way up the flue, climbed out onto the roof and leapt gracefully to freedom, like a Shaolin monk doing a martial arts demonstration.

'After that, several days passed without any further mutilation of our goose—but we could think of nothing else but this arrogant, marauding, dare-devil bandit of a white cat. In fact, come to think of it, it had taken our minds off our hunger altogether! Then one day when we came home, we heard a rustle in the stove. Without even checking the state of the goose, we all grabbed our weapons, ran outside, and waited for the cat to descend from the tiles. I will draw a veil over the grisly and shameful scene which followed—let me just say we fixed that little 'contradiction', good and proper. Then we took a good look at the object of our fury. By now it was not a white cat at all, but a very black one, after spending so much time up our flue. In fact, it was not even white underneath, but yellow—'ginger', you would call it. The White Raider had not only escaped but had created another problem for us, a much more serious one than the shrinking goose! The production brigade leader had a ginger cat, and very fond of it he was, too—said it was the best mouser in Liyang County. Obviously the word had got around among the local cats and our goose had been entertaining more than one admirer.

'Well, late that night we wrapped the ginger corpse up with a couple of bricks in an old newspaper, tied the bundle with string and slunk down to a nearby pond. We tossed the cat out into the middle and went home, feeling very relieved. But two days later, while we were working in the fields, a little girl came running towards us, shouting something about a cat, and the production brigade leader wanting to see us immediately. Appar-

ently something odd had been seen floating in the pond and the peasants had fished it out to have a look. Obviously there had been foul play, because the cat had been found with string dangling round it. Well, there were some very nasty moments with the brigade leader, I can tell you. He didn't care much for these smart-arse city kids, and he was not at all swayed by our passionate declaration of innocence. Everybody knew we'd been at our wits' end about some cat or other for some time now, and things looked very grim indeed when the little boy who tended our geese said he'd seen four educated youths beating a cat to death with farm tools outside their hut. But to our great relief, he said the cat he had seen was a black one. Years later, when I was back in the city, in political study class, I laughed at Deng Xiaoping's saying "It doesn't matter what colour the cat is, as long as it catches mice". I puzzled my colleagues by adding, "That's right, but it certainly does matter what colour the cat is if it catches geese"!

I GAVE GAO YONG a nice old second-hand copy of Robbie Burns some time after he told me this story, just to show how much poetry there is to be found in commonplace and vulgar things. Now there was a poet for you, a man who could write immortal words about a toothache, or a haggis, or a louse on a lady's bonnet in church - and, like Gao Yong himself, he was a ploughman. To my delight, next time I heard Gao Yong tell his cat story to a group of Chinese friends, he ended it not with Deng Xiaoping but with Robbie Burns. Scots dialect and Changzhou dialect are about as rough and confusing a blend as the liquor they gave that poor goose, but I think this is what he was struggling to pronounce:

*I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;  
What then? poor beastie thou maun live!* ■

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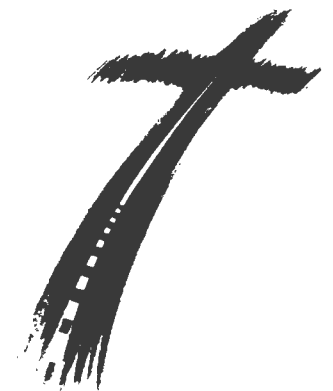
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# Retrospectively speaking

'SHE WON'T LAST. Not with a death's-head smile like that. In fact, smiles of any kind are a bit of a liability for Australian politicians, even when they're kissing babies. Or especially when they're kissing babies. In this country a politician's smile is about as credible as a used-car salesman's handshake.'

'Or a journalist's word?'

The old man grins, managing to produce a reasonable likeness of a death's head himself. He tilts his swivel chair so that he can place both feet on the subeditors' desk, and then produces a cigar. He is about to light it when he remembers that he is now working in a smokeless office, which is something he manages to forget at least twice a night. He enjoys brandishing the cigar, even though he can't smoke it. It irritates the modish young reporters who are glowering at him across the newsroom.

They resent him because he is anything but modish, and because he is usually right. He is one of very few Australian journalists to have correctly predicted the result of the last federal election, and he was right about that because he relied on the folk wisdom of old hacks rather than the gallery gossip of young hacks. He is also much too old ever to have taken notice of such modishly silly things as opinion polls. His prediction, delivered after reading a report of a speech by the hapless Dr Hewson, had been announced thus: 'You can always tell which party is going to lose an election.'

'Yes?'

'Yeah—it's whichever party criticises the media first.' He had chuckled at his own cynicism, enjoying the disapproval of others on the subs' desk who remembered that he had once edited a newspaper noted for its partisan coverage of events. They shouldn't have sneered. For one thing, although he and his former newspaper favoured the party now led by John Hewson, allegiance had never made the old man describe a failure as a temporary set-back. And for another thing, he had been right. Again.

So I am not disposed to dismiss the old man's judgment on the presumed rival to John Hewson's leadership of the Liberal Party, the senator with the death's-head grin. This grin and its wearer adorn the cover of a glossy magazine propped up in front of the old man's VDT. He is flicking through its pages, harumphing at all the corny lines that he first heard—and probably used—more years ago than even he is prepared to admit.

He tilts back in his chair again, staring at the ceiling. It is the quiet time of the night, with the first edition already on the presses and the changes for the second still a matter of haggling between the night editor and the printer. The old man begins to speak, knowing that he has an audience even though people are pretending to be otherwise occupied.

'It's all just a political version of ... what's that word she uses about music?' he said, jabbing a thumb in the direction of the chief sub.

'Retro.'

'Yeah, retro.' The chief sub, who tries to dress and talk like the modish young reporters but is a little too old to do so credibly, looks up from the blank layout sheet over which she is puzzling. She has risen through diligence rather than flair, and she hates the old man even more than the reporters do. She also depends on him to push copy through when there is a late-breaking story, because he is faster and more accurate than the rest of us. He stares her down and repeats the word, with distaste. 'Retro. Senator Death's-head is a recycled Antipodean version of that other Death's-head with pearls, the one who was Pommy PM. And everyone knows it, which is why she's a damn fool for inviting the comparison. People will just look at her, think "Maggie" and then think "Yesterday".'

He tosses the magazine into a wastepaper basket. 'That's the difference between packaging politicians and packaging musicians, Sonya,' he says, addressing the chief sub. 'In politics, retro never sells.' She ignores his comments and offers him work instead: 'I've just dumped a story into your queue, Bob. Could you do it now, please?'

The old man smirks at me and taps away at his keyboard. 'I think your mob will be in for some time, mate, if the best our lot have to offer is Dr Foot-in-Mouth and Senator Death's-head. Mind you, I expect that hideous grin will be with us for some time, too. We've nothing left to play with. But it's all a commentary on how bad things are, not on how they might improve.'

He hooks his head around the side of the terminal so that the chief sub won't see him slacking off, and adopts his truant-schoolboy look. 'In fact, y'know, I wouldn't be surprised to see ol' Death's-head show up in all sorts of odd places. Like with your other mob, for instance. She'll go chasing votes there.'

'My other mob?'

'The micks, mate, the micks. Look, you lot are trying to get someone up as the first Australian saint, right?'

'Mary MacKillop, yes.'

'So there's going to be lots of functions and ceremonies, pamphlet-and-book launches, that sort of thing. And I'm sure Death's-head would be more than happy to go on inviting comparisons—"I'm an Australian woman pioneer, too." Something like that.'

'Mmm, maybe.' Bob may be right most of the time, I reflect, but sometimes he is just a garrulous old man.

Across the newsroom someone chortles. It is the literary editor, on his way out of the office. 'Just look at the bizarre invitations I get,' he says, tossing a letter in front of Bob. The old man reads it and then passes it to me without comment. It is from a publisher, who 'requests the pleasure of your company at the launch of *Mary MacKillop, An Extraordinary Australian* by Paul Gardiner SJ, to be launched by Senator Bronwyn Bishop'.

Damn. The old bastard was right *again*. ■

Ray Cassin is the production editor of *Eureka Street*.



# Willow Patten

*Dean Inge remarked that 'the nations which have put mankind most in their debt have been the small states—Israel, Athens, Florence, Elizabethan England'. Hong Kong deserves a place in that pantheon.*

—Margaret Thatcher, 9 December 1992

tropical garden; very Somerset Maugham. The governor's two terrers, Whisky and Soda (she who famously was lost and found), guard the door.

He is variously described as 'a master of the English language' (by Margaret Thatcher), 'the most consummate communicator that has ever been in Government House' (by former Hong Kong Governor Lord MacLehose), 'the most gifted politician of our generation' (by numerous British commentators), and a 'whore and a prostitute' (by the Chinese media).

The liberal-democratic beliefs that Patten has brought to Hong Kong are spelt out in his prolific writings—the manifestos, the speeches (Thatcher's included), the sermons, the journalism and the book (*The Tory Case*, 1983)—published since he became MP for Bath in 1979.

Oxford trained him as an historian. He is deeply aware of the influence of the past, both personal and national, and of the constraints placed on his present job by the 'ink of international agreements'. Quotations from T.S. Eliot and Karl Popper are scattered throughout his essays.

The 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration and the consequent Basic Law (promulgated by China in 1990) affect Patten's every move, but, most especially, his modest plans to increase democratic participation in Hong Kong.

His own initial proposals—and invitation for alternative proposals—

were announced to the Legislative Council on 7 October last year. China denounced them. Hong Kong people supported them (so too did people in southern China, who heard his speech on television). But many businessmen, worried about Chinese reprisals, were wary. The Hong Kong Business and Professional Federation opposed Patten, and argued for 'convergence' with China's policies. Other business people and the *Hong Kong Economic Journal* supported Patten. In Australia, both Labor and the coalition strongly support moves for democracy in Hong Kong.

Threats to Britain's China trade in response to Patten's plans have been overt and covert. Their use imputes to Britain a peculiar system of ethics. For Britain to use her trustee status to her own financial advantage at the expense of the rights of those she is charged to protect would be to commit what, in fiduciary context, defines major crime.

MUCH THOUGH IT UPSET the many liberals who believe he has kowtowed to China, Patten ingeniously crafted his proposals for vastly expanding the electorate for indirectly elected Legco seats in a way that would be consistent with the controversial Basic Law. But China still claimed that Patten's proposals caused 'the three violations'—of the Joint Declaration, of the Basic Law, and of secret 1990 Sino-British 'understandings'. The Australian Foreign Minister, Gareth



inset photo: Chris Patten

EARLY THIS YEAR newly minted coins, minus the Queen's face, appeared in Hong Kong. I used some in a coffee shop. Suddenly, laughing young waiters and waitresses gathered in excitement. Then their faces turned to sadness. The new coins were a poignant symbol of a coming and disturbing reality—the changing sovereignty of Hong Kong.

But how disturbing will the 1997 change be? Hardly at all, if Hong Kong's Governor, Chris Patten, achieves his twin goals of maintaining Hong Kong's way of life and creating a lasting democratic polity. But first, he must soothe the ancient Chinese suspicions of the British.

I had last seen Patten in action as the thoughtful and formidable operator who master-minded last year's Conservative election victory—a victory, he says, that 'everyone thought as impossible at the time.'

The scenery is now different, the task before him even greater. Patten, arguably Britain's most reformist colonial governor since Lachlan Macquarie, occupies Hong Kong's Government House. It resembles a comfortable English country home set in a

Evans, was one of many western lawyers who considered such objections to be legal nonsense.

Patten's community consultation and subsequent announcement to the Legislative Council—without much warning to Beijing—was a response to criticisms that Hong Kong people had been excluded from discussions about their own future.

A furious China, feeling snubbed, declared it would not tolerate a 'three-legged stool'—i.e. a voice for Hong Kong as well as for Beijing and London in talks on the colony's future. The metaphor is an odd one, given the instability of two-legged stools. When, in April, China finally agreed to (so far unsuccessful) talks with Britain on elections in Hong Kong, she tried to prevent representation from the unwanted 'third leg', Hong Kong itself.

To understand the conflict, and the magnitude of Chris Patten's challenge to Beijing, it is necessary to consider how Hong Kong's hopes for democracy have waxed and waned in tandem with historical agreements and misunderstandings, especially since 1984.

Many people ask why democracy has been delayed for so long in Hong Kong. 'More than anything else,' says the economic historian Robert Skidelsky, it is 'the result of the mind-set of the old colonial system.' No one doubts that, until recently, paternalist colonialists have been alive and well in the Foreign Office in London. When the colony's Legislative Council refused to accept a decision by the Sino-British joint liaison group on the composition of the post-1997 Hong Kong Final Court of Appeal, Sir Percy Cradock (former ambassador to Beijing and chief foreign policy adviser to Margaret Thatcher) complained: 'The two pilots agreed', and then 'the crew' rebelled.

Another reason for delay was that the relatively benign British regime meant that few people in Hong Kong actively demanded the additional protection of democracy. All that changed after Tiananmen Square, and as Chinese will to interfere in Hong Kong became apparent.

Many Sino-British traders felt that cosy relationships might be threatened by Hong Kong democracy and, in the 1970s, Governor MacLehose wor-

ried that democracy would create instability by polarising Kuomintang and Beijing supporters. But, after an apparently humiliating trip to Beijing in 1991 to sign a memorandum of understanding for a new airport, the British Prime Minister, John Major, is believed to have resolved that Hong Kong's last governor should be a pro-democracy politician, not a British mandarin.

**T**HE JOINT DECLARATION guarantees Hong Kong a 'high degree of autonomy', meaning that it will trade as an entity separate from the Peoples' Republic. Hong Kong can be an independent party to GATT and the Multifibre Agreement, for example.

It also guarantees that Hong Kong's legal system will be based on English common law for 50 years. But there are fears that the power of the legal system will be lessened by negotiated attrition or Chinese misinterpretation. Once the distant support of Westminster is removed, an effective and independent Hong Kong legislature will be essential to prevent the courts and the common law being countermanded by executive action.

Martin Lee, the leader of Hong Kong's United Democrats and a Chinese *bête-noire*, points out that if he were now to be locked up without trial, there would certainly be questions asked in Westminster. But members of China's National Peoples Congress never question the treatment of dissidents in Tibet. The concept of a separation of powers between the executive and the judiciary has no place in Chinese thought or government.

So, however strongly some business elements resist democracy in Hong Kong and lobby against it in Westminster, there is also a formidable array of business and political figures (including Margaret Thatcher, Jocelyn Chey and a prominent Legislative Councillor, Christine Loh) who argue that Hong Kong's prosperity will depend on a stable rule of law, democratically maintained.

Christine Loh does 'not see the call for greater democracy as a romantic exercise. There are sound business reasons for ensuring that we can indeed have "one country, two systems". The debate on democracy is about autonomy. A legislature which is less demo-

cratic, which is elected by a narrow base, will be susceptible to China's influence. We are fighting for the legal and judicial systems, for human rights, which includes the right to freedom of expression and free interplay of market forces. These are fundamental pillars of our free enterprise system.' Robert Skidelsky agrees. 'Why I support Chris Patten is because it is prudent to have a stable political system in place [after 1997]. Too many Hong Kong businessmen are political innocents'.

George Orwell and the inhabitants of *Animal Farm* would have recognised the strange coalition of big businessmen and Chinese 'Marxists' who oppose a Tory democrat. Nor would they have been surprised by T.S. Lo, a former executive councillor and possible future chief executive, whose pro-Beijing magazine, *Window*, complains that Patten's democracy proposals will lead to 'blue-collar dictatorship'.

Business concerns are not the sole determinant of Patten's beliefs. He has been much criticised by such establishment figures as Lee Kuan Yew and Lord Geddes for bringing 'an Occidental mind and a Westminster approach' to 'an almost entirely Oriental situation'. Patten's response, typically, has been to paraphrase Shylock, as when he recently told an audience of *Tablet* readers in London that 'If you're beaten by a policeman, it feels the same in Asia, in Africa, in America, in Europe. If you're locked up without trial, the results are the same wherever you are'.

He told a London Tory meeting that 'we should not drop our own value system on the assumption that they (in Asia) don't share those values. Do we make a distinction between the woman (Aung San Suu Kyi) who won the Nobel prize for leading civil resistance in Burma and those who have been applauded as dissidents in Eastern Europe?'

Dr John Wong, a Sydney University historian, educated in Hong Kong and Oxford, reminds those who claim that democracy is a peculiarly Western concept that Mencius, the greatest disciple of Confucius, held that emperors must obey the government, and that the government must listen to and obey the people. Deeply Confu-



cian societies such as Taiwan and South Korea, Wong points out, are also evolving democracies.

But he adds a rider: Confucian ideals, or perversions of them, have also led to the Chinese concept of 'rule from above' by the all-powerful 'virtuous'. The 'virtuous' officials have been deeply distrusted by ordinary people.

plethora of successful women in Hong Kong public life, for example, hardly tallies with Chinese tradition.

The very novelty of recent resolute British opposition to Beijing policies has apparently confused the Chinese. Combined with ancient nationalisms, it has prompted reflex hostility and talk of betrayal. Martin Lee sees

it as 'the first fight (which, as in a marriage) is always the most terrible fight, because it then determines the future'. It is why he believes that unwavering support for Hong Kong democracy is now crucial.

China supporters who argue that Patten's proposals have not 'converged' with the post-1997 provisions of the Basic Law cannot ignore the far more serious charge, brought by lawyers, legislators and historians that the Basic Law itself is incompatible with the Joint Declaration.

For the Joint Declaration came with promises of democracy, from both Britain and China. Richard Luce, a Foreign Office minister, told the House of Commons in December 1984 that 'we fully accept that we should build up a firmly-based democratic administration in Hong Kong (by) 1997'. And Martin Lee told me that when in 1984 the Hong Kong University Students Union asked China's then Prime Minister, Zhao Ziyang, whether Hong Kong would be rule by democracy after 1997, he replied 'Of course by democracy. How else can you do it?'

'The Basic Law has effectively wiped out the possibility of the existence

of democracy and the rule of law as provided in the Joint Declaration,' argues Wong. 'The sophists in Beijing now contend that the word "elections" (in the declaration) do not imply one-person, one-vote elections.'

The International Commission of Jurists, which sent a delegation to

Hong Kong in 1991, detailed reasons why it believes the Basic Law to be incompatible with the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, which is incorporated into Hong Kong law by virtue of the 1991 Bill of Rights. The Basic Law provides that the chief executive of Hong Kong will be accountable in part to China, and that the National Peoples Congress (not Hong Kong courts) will determine final interpretation of this mini-constitution.

JOHN DOWD, a former NSW Attorney General, was a member of the delegation and wanted Patten to push for more democracy. Unlike the governor, he does not see the Basic Law as immutable. 'That is an assumption of two colonial governments, namely Great Britain and China, that you can ignore democracy.' Dowd believes that the Basic Law could be open to legal challenge within Hong Kong.

Dowd worries because Patten has said nothing about electing a government, and has merely talked about how to elect a legislature. Patten told me that he was trying to increase his personal accountability, and that of the colony's government, to the legislature, especially in response to questions asked in the Legislative Council. This is ironic, considering the way many Western politicians have attempted to diminish the accountability of the executive to Parliament.

In 1972, at the behest of China, which had just been welcomed into the UN General Assembly and Security Council, Hong Kong was quietly deleted from the UN's list of colonies to be granted self-determination. Britain did not object. Dowd and Wong believe that Hong Kong's history might have been very different if Britain had objected. The news filtered through to Hong Kong people some time later.

Chris Patten has come under sustained and vituperative attack from China. I asked about the relevance of his past ministerial experience, particularly in the Northern Ireland and Overseas Aid portfolios, to his current job in Hong Kong.

'All of us are an aggregate of the experience we have had in previous jobs. And I think those two jobs did mark me—particularly those two jobs. The Northern Ireland job involved me

## The colony that kept on growing

IN 1840 BRITAIN WENT TO WAR with China because of a dispute over the opium trade. Britain won.

Captain Charles Eliot persuaded the Chinese to cede in perpetuity a tiny island called Hong Kong. The British government promptly dismissed Eliot for acquiring a useless rock, inhabited by a few fishermen. Treaty misunderstandings and more wars followed, and Kowloon peninsula was ceded to the British in 1860. The northern, agricultural 'New Territories' were leased to Britain in 1898.

That 99-year lease expires in June 1997. Meanwhile, the once-despised rock has become a centre for world trade. Hence Britain's dilemma. How can she honour both her property dues to China and and her moral duty to protect the rights of the people of Hong Kong? The 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong appeared to solve the problem. Britain agreed to return to China not only the New Territories, but also Hong Kong island and Kowloon. In exchange, China guaranteed that for 50 years Hong Kong would retain her freedoms and her way of life. She would enjoy a 'high degree of autonomy'. China would be 'one country, two systems'.

Hong Kong would be governed according to English common law, which has so successfully oiled the wheels of commerce. Only defence and foreign affairs would be matters for Beijing. The British Government promised a democratic Hong Kong. So too did the Chinese Prime Minister.

But democracy did not come. In 1990 Beijing promulgated 'the Basic Law', a mini-constitution for post-1997 Hong Kong. It specifies democratic goals, but places constraints upon the pace of democratic development. Many lawyers think that it conflicts with the Joint Declaration, and profound concerns were expressed about excessive Chinese influence on Hong Kong.

Nevertheless, Britain established policies that would 'converge' with the Basic Law. Democrats argue that 'convergence' meant 'appeasement'. China had expected to take over Hong Kong with the British colonial system intact. Last year, Chris Patten arrived in Hong Kong. His moves towards democracy have revived all the hopes and all the fears of the past. ■

But, because Patten is a Western politician his instincts will be to consult and to seek legitimacy from the people. To the Chinese government this is demeaning; it is 'looking down' and cannot be comprehended. China is Marxist in name only.

However, societies change. The

in some pretty sensitive and exposed work. I had quite a tough time for one period when I was the subject of rigorous campaigns and denunciations from the extreme Protestant Unionists. So that was a preparation.'

So too was the Overseas Aid job. 'I negotiated the last major concessional financing agreement between Britain and China. In those days I used to get a better press from the pro-Peking newspapers.' Nor are rumours that he is a closet socialist correct. As he told Hong Kong's business community, his 'own past includes being chairman of the Conservative Party in a general election which we won largely because we argued the case for low taxes'. Low taxes are, he believes, one of the best incentives for business investment. Ploughing some surplus cash back in to the community is desirable; spending money not yet earned, a grave mistake.

Patten's strong support for a market economy comes with caveats, as he explained in a 1991 sermon in Great St Mary's Church, Cambridge. 'The market is not an end in itself. It provides the best way for increasing and allocating resources. (It) is a means, no more. A framework of laws within which market forces are allowed to apply is affected by our sense of community—of fairness'.

In the same sermon, Patten, who is a devout Roman Catholic, quoted the Anglo-Catholic T.S. Eliot: 'Whatever reform or revolution we carry out, the result will always be a sordid travesty of what human society should be'. A politician might simply 'try to make the travesty a bit less sordid'.

Vituperation is not part of the political weaponry of this particular politician. Candour is, and the 'trained by Thatcher' label clearly shows, even if the two leaders' policy differences are obvious. In 1990, after Patten's initial support for Thatcher in a first-round Prime Ministerial vote, he advised her to resign. She appeared deeply bitter, but they have since been reconciled.

**B**y 1998, and safely back in London, Chris Patten will be a man of Asia and of Europe; perhaps he is already. His views on internationalism as opposed to regionalism have altered, and any notion of 'Fortress

Europe' is clearly obnoxious. Patten no longer talks about Britain and the European Exchange-Rate Mechanism, but about linkage of the Hong Kong and US dollars.

Hong Kong reflects the evident success of 'one country'/two cultures—the hint of classicism in the Orient, the barristers' chambers that look and feel like those in Oz, the tunic-and-tie-clad schoolchildren, the Tea Museum. But learning, to borrow a Patten metaphor, is 'a two-way street'. The governor, his wife Lavender and their daughter Alice have immersed themselves in Hong Kong life: they have a love of Chinese art, and Lavender and Alice Patten are learning Cantonese. The governor hopes to do so, too.

Patten avoids comment on his future career. But should he find his way to Downing Street, expect to find Number 10 kitted out with the 'Chinese furniture, Chinese art, Chinese pots' that so delight him. It will be the Orient which he brings to the Occident. ■

**Robin Fitzsimons** is a physician and writer.

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## Carnival of cliché

**T**HE RACE THAT STOPS A NATION' became in the space of 200 seconds an 'international race', when the 'hit-and-run' horse from Ireland, Vintage Crop, won the Melbourne Cup. Punters were given much besides cliché to ponder. According to an earnest official who monitors power consumption for the NSW Electricity Commission, the nation certainly slows down for the Cup, if it does not actually stop. And what of the transformation of a race known since 1860, with splendid parochialism, as the Melbourne Cup? For a start it has been sponsored by an international brewing group for almost a decade. Overseas horses have won on a regular basis. Most have been New Zealand-bred, but others (such as the very ordinary 1980 winner, Beldale Ball) were foaled in America. Dermot Weld, trainer of Vintage Crop, exaggerated pardonably when he said that no horse had ever come further to win a race, but appeased a generous crowd by mentioning 'Banjo' Paterson in his victory speech.

For once, the Melbourne Cup was the genuine climax of racing at the spring carnival. In the past it has been upstaged by the demented over-promotion of the Cox Plate, by great racing on Derby Day and by what looked to be an irreversible decline in the quality of fields for the race. Crucially, that last factor has changed. Weights have been compressed and the Cup is now a 'quality handicap' within the scope of the best horses, rather than being run to the advantage of average performers with light weights. Once again it is a race often won by top gallopers, such as Alma-raad, Kingston Rule, Let's Elope and Vintage Crop. The latter had won nine of 15 coming into the Cup, including the Irish St Leger at his previous start six weeks before—and a couple of hurdle races. This preparation, strange to Australian eyes, ensured a start at over the odds.

The spring carnival is a tale of courses, as well as clichés. First is

Caulfield. Traditionally dogged by bad weather, its three days in 1993 were held on fast, true tracks. There was an arctic shower on Guineas Day, news of an impending hail storm before the Caulfield Cup was run, but nothing to interfere with the worthy, but not very exciting racing which took place. Splendidly refurbished, Caulfield houses the Australian Racing Museum. There, before the first, one can wander among evocative remains: the skeleton of Carbine (a New Zealand-



bred champion who went to England and sired a Derby winner, an international escapade as noteworthy as Vintage Crop's); the pocket watch used by Fred Foulsham to time his gallopers; the blacksmith's hammer of Harry Bamber, who owned and trained Rivette, given to him when he enlisted in the Light Horse; one of Bobby Lewis's lead-bags; and the umbrella that Walter Hickenbotham opened and shut to get the cantankerous Carbine to move along.

The centrepiece of the first day's racing was the Caulfield Guineas, a venerable event which has ceased to be won by high-quality horses. Abaridy, Centro and Chortle hardly went on to that dream place which race-caller Bill Collins styled 'equine immortality'. The 1993 Guineas result promised better. Lee Freedman trained the quinella: Mahogany won authoritatively from the fine-looking colt Port Watch. Maybe these were horses whose names would be spoken a year hence without derision. The second Group One event of the day was not 'the time-honoured' Toorak Handicap but a race ingloriously renamed 'the Quick-Eze'. The indignity and travesty of tradition that sponsorship

almost always occasions was compounded by the indigestion commercials sent out over the course broadcasting system.

Merciful relief of a different sort came in the Caulfield Stakes, as so often a greater weight-for-age contest than the much-vaunted Cox Plate, or the Mackinnon Stakes. Another Freedman horse, the supposedly wilting Naturalism, drove between two brothers—The Phantom (aged eight) and The Phantom Chance (four)—to win.

Their turns were soon to come. First the Phantom, which was returning after three years' absence through injury, was unluckily beaten in the Caulfield Cup by the 30/1 shot Fraar. Trained by David Hayes to prove that the stable could win big races at Caulfield, 'the moody galloper' Fraar was bred in America and is owned by a sheikh. He was ridden by Peter Hutchinson, in disgrace with the stable after narrowly losing the Coongy on Maraakiz, but now restored to favour as the winner of a race that eluded his father, champion jockey Ron Hutchinson. A few days later Hutchinson was in hospital, out of the spring carnival, out of the saddle for three months with a cracked vertebrae from a fall during track work.

The carnival shifted to the amphitheatrical Moonee Valley, and the tiresome Cox Plate routine began. A new jingle—'Valley People'—stained the airways. Familiar questions were posed: would top handicapper Golden Sword (winner of the Epsom and Toorak at his last two starts) be given a place in the field without weight for age form? This was tough on a horse that had never started in such an event, but the field fell away, Golden Sword took his place and ran a fine third. We watched the race from the top of the straight, in front of the charmless Tabaret, not far from that famous 'school' (Moonee Ponds Central) where many jockeys commence their runs. From this vantage last year we saw head-on the fall that put the favourite, Natu-

ralism, out of the race. He was back, but perhaps spooked by the memory, only plugged on for fourth. His old rival Veandercross, who finished further back with each race he contested in the spring, was sixth. The New Zealander, Solvit, set an honest pace and held on for second. The Phantom Chance gathered him in near the turn and won with conviction. It was anticlimactic, although the best horse on the day won before the biggest crowd since 1977.

To Flemington, where Derby Day's 50,000-plus attendance was the largest since 1960. At last the spring racing generated the true chill of excitement. 'International' jockey Brent Thomson won the three-year-old sprint on Dancing Dynamite, in time nearly as fast as the Hayes horse Alishan, in the Gadsden Rheem. This is hardly a name to conjure with, but as the Craven 'A' this great race down the Straight Six was long ago one of the first sponsored events. Next the Derby, a race whose quality, like the Caulfield Guineas, has appeared recently to have fallen away. Mahogany enjoyed the lavish support in the ring of his part-owner Kerry Packer, and started favourite. Since the Guineas, Mahogany had run an unimpressive third at Moonee Valley. Now he raced handy to the lead, kicked seven lengths clear in what seemed an instant, was eased down by Greg Hall to cane a line of horses by six lengths. While beating little of quality, he'd won like Sobar.

This was Freedman's first Victoria Derby.

**T**HE WAKEFUL STAKES FOLLOWED. Down from Hong Kong for the Flemington stage of the carnival, Darren Gauci rode a superb front-running race on the poorly performed Alcove, only to be caught on the line by Arborea, which had come from last. Many Cup horses now met in the Mackinnon Stakes. Reputations punctured. Veandercross failed again. The Phantom Chance and Solvit had been flattened by the Cox Plate. Naturalism finished honestly, but Fraar came again to beat him for second. Both were well adrift of The Phantom, which won commandingly by three lengths. Now he would be among the favourites for the Cup, a race in which he was fourth in 1989, second the following year. Mick

Dittman, whose long run of outs had prompted the usual malicious interpretations, finally broke through and took the Dalgety (Hotham Handicap that was) on the Cummings-trained Tennessee Jack, thus securing for it a start in the Cup.

Before the stopping of the nation, however, another serial reached its climax. The Freedman-trained 'international' horse Runyon had returned a positive swab after winning the Craiglee in September. On Cup eve the inquiry concluded. Freedman was suspended for two months with a stay to allow his horses to compete on Cup Day. What had looked like an inexorable progress up the ranks of trainers had received its first severe check.

And then it rained. Two inches 'in the old' fell on the track. Car parks flooded. The Maribyrnong rose. Fast-track form assessments were ditched. Bob Hawke came on television to change his tip. But the track swiftly dried to no worse than slow. Before the Cup the plunge came for the other imported horse, Drum Taps, but Vintage Crop always had the race in control. Lengthening stride sharply, it gave Te Akau Nick five lengths start at the furlong and beat it by three. The runner-up, trained by Tommy Smith's daughter, Gai Waterhouse, started at 160/1, the third horse, Mercator, at 125/1. It was almost the longest-priced finish in history, and the trifecta paid \$56,000.

Next morning clichés clotted talk-back radio. Callers whinged about unfair advantages, of losing 'our' Cup to invaders, of a Keating plot. Meantime, Vintage Crop was being readied to go home, in preparation for an improbable second tilt at the Champion Hurdle at Cheltenham. Dittman began a suspension. Freedman looked to appeal. Retired jockeys such as Ron Quinton and John Letts breathed easily, for it would be many months before they would have to don *My Favourite Martian* headgear and mount up to interview winning riders for the benefit of television viewers around the world. Reassured by the rhythms of a Melbourne spring, the recurrent patterns of loss, punters just looked hopeful, and ahead. ■

**Peter Pierce** is *Eureka Street's* turf correspondent.

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## Ask not what your constitution can do for you ...

**M**ONARCHISTS HAVE CLAIMED that an overhaul of the Australian Constitution would be unwarranted and even risky, because the constitution has served Australians well. These are very dubious claims, yet they have scarcely been challenged.

It would be churlish to deny that there was something public-spirited and worthwhile about the nation-building movement of the 1890s, which culminated in Australia's federation. That does not mean, however, that the constitution-makers got it right for all time and in every particular, especially considering the massive social and technological changes

affecting the activities of government that have occurred since then.

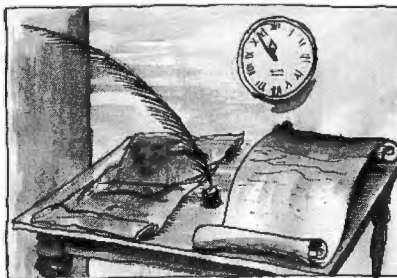
In fact, if federation had occurred only a dozen years later our constitution would have been significantly different. By that time, the great tussle in London between the House of Lords and the elected chamber, the House of Commons, had been decided, with the Lords being deprived of their power over money bills.

As outlined in the Republic Advisory Committee's illuminating report—which includes an extensive and useful coverage of other nations' governmental structures—since 1911 the House of Lords has been 'an upper house with very little power'. In view of the all-embracing British influence then prevailing over the Australian way of government, it is inconceivable that we would have established a powerful upper house in our own national parliament after a crisis that had such a profound and permanent impact on Britain's governmental institutions.

Moreover, by 1912 Australian politics has been transformed by the rapid rise of the Australian Labor Par-

ty, which had by then proved itself capable of governing effectively in its own right. During the 1890s' debates about Australia's constitutional structure, Australian Labor was in its infancy as a political force, and there was no tradition here or anywhere else of ordinary working people having an accepted role in activities like legislating and constitution-making.

The constitutional conventions during the 1890s included only one delegate who could be arguably classi-



fied as a Labor representative, W.A. Trenwith from Victoria, and he was only elected because his drift away from his Labor origins to a more conservative position was sufficiently advanced for him to be recommended by the pro-Liberal campaigners. (Clear confirmation that Trenwith had disowned his initial political orientation came in 1900, when he became a minister in a Liberal government in Victoria.) Genuine Labor representatives, then, did not get elected to the constitutional conventions, and they were critical of the draft constitution that emerged from the delegate's debates.

Their criticisms were spot on. They contended that the proposed constitution would prove too inflexible because the mechanism for changing it was inadequate, and they highlighted other shortcomings, including the Senate's excessive power. By 1912, with Labor already forming or about to form governments all around the nation, the Australian people would have been more receptive than they were in the 1890s to Labor's criticisms of the draft document that became Australia's Constitution.

So it is very likely that if federation

had taken place after the crisis over the powers of the House of Lords, and after Labor had fully emerged in Australia, the Australian Constitution would have been significantly different. As well as overlooking the fact that the constitution was shaped by a quirk of historical timing, monarchists have adopted a conveniently shallow view in assessing its effectiveness. It has given us 'stability', they argue, trying to make a virtue of the constitution's notorious inflexibility, which has not been conducive to effective government in Australia.

Having been saddled with a defective Constitution, Australians have at various critical times indicated their dissatisfaction with it.

The best-known instance occurred in 1975, when the warnings about the Senate's excessive power made by Labor representatives in the 1890s were clearly vindicated. In October 1975, for the second time in 18 months, opponents of the Whitlam government sought to use their majority in the Senate to force an elected government out of office, even though it possessed a secure majority in the lower house. In no other parliamentary democracy in the world could an upper house have taken such action, asserted the then Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, who refused to call an election.

Instead, he embarked on a campaign to intimidate the Opposition into backing down, and evidence then and later indicates that he was on the verge of success when the Governor-General intervened. Although the Whitlam government was very unpopular with uncommitted voters in mid-October 1975, opinion polling during the constitutional crisis revealed around 70 per cent support for Whitlam's stance on the fundamental question at issue.

It was the shortcomings of the Australian Constitution that enabled that crisis to arise, and under that constitution another 1975-type crisis is still possible. Nevertheless defenders of the status quo are eager to propagate the notion that Australians have

*When Robert Menzies was Australia's Attorney-General, he felt so frustrated about the national government's inability to govern effectively, because of the constraints imposed by Australia's cumbersome three-tiered governmental structure, that he made several public statements decrying the 'vigorous clanking of the parish pump'.*

been well-served by their constitution. Would the 70 per cent of Australians who supported Whitlam during the constitutional crisis in 1975 have agreed with this dubious notion? Of course not.

Another revealing episode occurred during World War II, when the very existence of Australia as an independent nation seemed under threat. At that critical time, when political perceptions in this country were stripped back to essentials and the decisive measures in the crisis were taken overwhelmingly by national political figures like John Curtin and Bert Evatt, a Gallup poll investigating attitudes to the abolition of state governments found that no fewer than 60 per cent were in favour of abolition and only 22 per cent wanted the states retained.

Some years earlier, when Robert Menzies was Australia's Attorney-General, he felt so frustrated about the national government's inability to govern effectively, because of the constraints imposed by Australia's cumbersome three-tiered governmental structure, that he made several public statements decrying the 'vigorous clanking of the parish pump.' 'In great vital issues', said Menzies, 'there was no room for the purely state outlook.'

Half a century later, the national interest is still being undermined by blinkered provincialism at state level. The most glaring contemporary instance, of course, concerns *Mabo*, but there are other recent examples. The obvious need for uniform national educational standards had almost been met, after a lengthy consultative and deliberative process, when it was scuttled at the last minute by parochial upholders of 'states' rights'. And there was the Victorian government's notorious backdown after nationwide agreement had been reached on the issue of health warnings on cigarette packets.

This sort of conduct, together with the proliferation of overlapping bureaucracies that so frustrates the business sector, makes it easy to appreciate why many Australians, aware that they are over-governed, feel that the states are an anachronism. Although the useful functions they facilitate, like state-of-origin football and Sheffield Shield cricket, could be retained,

a compelling case can be made for the states' removal from Australia's governmental structure. Consider the vast savings to be made, not just in the salaries and pensions of the politicians and their advisers, but in the legal and other costs incurred whenever one government uses the Constitution to take action in the courts (or obtains advice about whether to take such action) against another government in order to achieve its political objectives.

When Bob Hawke called for the abolition of the states recently, there were some predictable responses. Jeff Kennett declared that no politicians would ever vote themselves out of a job, yet that is precisely how Queensland's Legislative Council was abolished. Queensland has been without an upper house for over 70 years now, and has managed perfectly well without one. There is a lesson there for government in the rest of Australia.

In the debate on the republic, conservatives are fond of saying 'if it ain't broke don't fix it'. But they can't have it both ways: the shambles in Canberra over the Budget is ample evidence that the Senate certainly needs 'fixing'. The Senate long ago gave up even the pretence of representing the states, which is the role it was created to perform.

Richard Court's response to Hawke's call was some hearty Canberra-bashing. 'We want to get decision-making back closer to the peo-

ple,' he said. But this old catchery 'no more power to Canberra'—although the Constitution has in fact endowed our national government with much less 'power' than is exercised by comparable national governments overseas—essentially reflects hostility to a remote government, which applies with no less force to the capital cities where state governments are based. Coming from a Perth-based politician, it would have sounded pretty hollow to residents of Broome—and their counterparts in Cairns, Cobar and Casterton no doubt feel much the same.

The debate should be about what is the best system for Australia, not about spouting hackneyed slogans like 'no more power to Canberra'. Having a two-tiered structure, with the national government supplemented by beefed-up councils or authorities at the local or regional level, would surely be a more effective system. Its similarity to the two-tiered structure in England should appeal to those Australian traditionalists who are fond of British ways of government.

But even if that sort of change is unlikely to be politically feasible for some time, let's have no more of this specious cant from anti-republicans about the Constitution being a flawless jewel that has served us well. It isn't, and it hasn't. ■

**Ross McMullin** is the author of *The Light on the Hill: The Australian Labor Party 1891-1991*.

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# Chile: out of sight, never out of mind

**T**HE FOUR-YEAR TERM of President Patricio Aylwin of Chile draws to a close this month. It has been a self-styled 'transitional government' that has had to tiptoe between the promise of popular rule and the requirements of *Realpolitik*. The country continues to be governed under a constitution drafted by Aylwin's predecessor, General Augusto Pinochet, the parliament includes a bloc of Pinochet appointees and the general himself remains at the head of the army.

These obstacles notwithstanding, Aylwin, an avuncular 70-year-old, has secured the political prestige of his office and his centrist Christian Democratic Party's claim on it. The electorate is expected to transfer the mantle to his party colleague, Eduardo Frei, in elections on 14 December. Business is also impressed. With annual growth rates of about 10 per cent, Chile is busy projecting itself as the 'Asian-tiger' economy of Latin America.

In October Aylwin flew into Australia as part of an Asian tour, and while here the president staked a vigorous claim for Chile's future in the region. Like Paul Keating, Aylwin has geo-economic designs: Chileans speak of the 'Pacific basin', nominating themselves as necessary members of it, and Australia is Chile's fourth-biggest source of foreign investment.

There are 30,000 Chilean immigrants in Australia, dotted around the suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne. Many of them were political or economic exiles, and the president's visit no doubt kept them musing about the paradoxes of the past.

The aftermath of Pinochet's 1973 coup has been well documented: the Socialist president, Salvador Allende, was murdered, and thousands of his supporters 'disappeared'. By decree of the new president, many more were bundled onto planes leaving the country. Others took refuge in foreign embassies in Santiago, seeking asylum.

By the early '80s, however, the visa applications were motivated as much by economic as by political concerns. The regime placed the economy under the direction of a group of Chicago-trained technocrats, and Chile became a laboratory for the kind of monetarist experiment that advocates of Reaganomics elsewhere could only dream about. Industries closed down, and unemployment soared.

The people took to the streets, and on protest days up to a million converged on Santiago's main park, united in the *lucha*, 'the struggle'. Pinochet's security apparatus kept him in power, but the opposition forged a coalition of 17 centrist and leftist parties that ultimately triumphed in a 1988 plebiscite on Pinochet's rule, and again the following year, when Aylwin was elected president.

No doubt to Pinochet's chagrin, the economy was by then offering a payback in profits, if not in jobs. In the post-Cold War world, the Aylwin government, pursuing the regime's rationalist policies, has had less in common with Allende's socialist dream than Keating has with Whitlam's.

**M**ISALE ('MICHEL') PACHECO comes from what in Australia would be called 'Labor heartland': a dusty *barrio* (the Chilean word is *poblacion*) on the southern outskirts of Santiago, and he was part of the *lucha*.

He now lives in a one-bedroom flat in the Melbourne suburb of Springvale.

We first met in the *poblacion* on a bitterly cold and wet Monday night in 1987. I shook his hand in the darkness—the area was blacked out—as we packed into a weatherboard hall.

Despite the conspiratorial air, this was a history class: 20 or 30 exuberant local kids wanting to supplement the schoolroom by turning out in numbers for a weekly session with the local youth *pastorate*. In discussion groups they debated the Spanish con-

quest at full voice, then returned to a plenary session with short dramas or pencil drawings: 'We use the dynamics of Paulo Freire,' Michel remarked. He was the coordinator, and worked his way through the group, mucking around with kids and making sure that any new faces were brought in from the cold.

The following Saturday night the hall was filled again, this time with the strains of banned poets and songwriters. *Sapos*, lookouts, kept guard for signs of the cops. An older couple gave a testimony of the loss of their three sons in skirmishes with security forces. When they finished speaking, Michel made his way to the platform and led a slow, pregnant chorus of *We shall overcome* in Spanish. Later, in a lighter mood, the hall ventured into a favourite ditty: *Adios, General!*

These were the dark days of Pinochet's military regime. Unemployment in Michel's *poblacion* was about 60 per cent. Of those with work, a significant percentage was engaged by the municipality on a work-for-dole scheme, breaking rocks to build roads, and bringing home about \$30 a month. Not much, but enough for the regime to acquire some forced loyalty.

The carrot and the stick: there were nightly military patrols through the *poblaciones*, and protest days would inevitably mean bullets fired up and down the streets. One year they hit a French Catholic priest through the forehead; he had been praying in his home. In Michel's street, they hit a 14-year-old boy, Manuel Rodriguez, on his way to a football match. The following year we held a small roadside vigil, holding candles to remember him. That too ended up with the police firing shots, and Michel and I scrambled away over the fence, ending up at his parents' place.

'You can't get away from fear,' he told me. 'You just have to learn to live with it.' Michel, then 24, worked out of the chapel—an almost safe refuge

in Catholic Chile—as a remarkably energetic and creative presence in the area.

Fanny led the social justice discussion. Antonio had the political skill to get the funds together. Jorge organised the ‘baby football’: soccer played on small, dusty lots about an eighth the size of a normal pitch. Domingo could turn his hand to anything: he patched up houses before the winter wet; his artwork appeared behind the altar at the annual *Te Deum*, a patriotic thanksgiving service with a subversive message; and his guitar—plucked and strummed, and tapped on the wood like a drum—was brought out for *penas* in the hall or over the dregs of a *pisco* bottle.

Each summer they organised the *poblacion*’s ‘youth encounter’, gathering hundreds of school kids on their holidays for a week of games, classes, discussion, sport and workshops. Michel was a gifted leader, with the ability to animate the most lifeless groups. He came to be responsible for these *enjupos* throughout Santiago, working for the Youth Pastorate of the Catholic Church.

The work meant one pay day in four. For regular money, Michel had a mobile stall at the Saturday markets, where he sold glasses of fruit juice. Like most in the *pobla*, he got by on odd jobs. He scarcely earned enough to support his partner, Yvonne, and her son, even though the three of them lived with her family.

But, unlike his mates, he had an aunt in Melbourne and, with an offer of work in a Dandenong factory, enough points to emigrate to Australia. He decided to move for the family. The news that he was going came like a bolt of lightning to those who had regarded Michel as synonymous with the *pobla*.

Like President Aylwin, Michel Pacheco’s agenda was strictly economic. The Chilean image of Australia was of Alan Bond, INXS and the harbourside mansions featured on late ‘80s’ telemovies. Michel’s own expectations, he says, were modest but by the time he arrived Alan Bond was in decline and so was the Australian economy. The Dandenong factory was lay-

ing off staff. Michel spent 13 months sitting at home, an unenthusiastic English student, caring for a new baby and hoping for work. Yvonne took day classes and did better. They knew no one but Michel’s aunt and family, and the people they nodded to in class.

‘People live in their own world in Australia. You can spend weeks without even seeing your neighbours. Life



*‘People live in their own world in Australia. You can spend weeks without even seeing your neighbours. Life in the suburbs struck me as cold and individualistic.’*

—Michel Pacheco

in the suburbs struck me as cold and individualistic.’

Michel and Yvonne split up 12 months ago, so Michel is living alone. He has found work. He has two cleaning jobs, and starts one at 7am, one at 3pm, then heads off to English classes at 6pm. The weekends are spent with custody of the kids, or at home. He still does a bit of youth work, although he finds that he’s competing with apathy.

President Aylwin’s focus on growth, investment and trade, and Michel’s suburban life in Melbourne, are both a long way from the *lucha*. Michel told me that in Chile he had been a member of the MIR, the leftist revolutionary movement, a tightly organised group with a broadly Marxist agenda. Membership alone was an offence in Pinochet’s Chile.

We are at a small gathering in North Carlton, commemorating the 20th anniversary of Pinochet’s coup. In the fractious way of community politics, the North Carlton ‘action’—put on by the Chilean Human Rights Group in Victoria—was vying with a separate commemoration in a city church that evening by the local branch of the Socialist Party of Chile. Pepe Miranda is singing in Spanish to a darkened hall:

‘I know that I am alive, because your pain is running through my veins; because every person who is caged shortens my breath; each act of torture eats away at my body.’

There are about 30 people present, who wander to the canteen for beers and hamburgers. A couple attend a table of literature on human rights in Chile, mementos of Allende and pamphlets denouncing the failure of Aylwin’s government to bring the military to justice. Michel and I call it a day.

How to address the past is the running sore of Aylwin’s coalition government. The left—and the relatives of the disappeared—want the officers responsible to be prosecuted. The right wants to close the book and move on. Aylwin’s government has called for ‘truth and reconciliation’, commissioning an investigation into what happened and to whom, but conceding it is hamstrung by a 1978 amnesty law passed by Pinochet that it lacks the authority to annul. More than that, Aylwin foreshadows that prosecutions would unleash years of social trauma and political tension. The left is deeply suspicious of his caution.

It is perhaps the ultimate paradox that Aylwin headed the opposition to Allende in 1973, and welcomed Pino-



chet into office. It was only some years later, with Pinochet entrenched in power, that Aylwin changed sides and called for democracy.

'You gotta forget the past,' says Michel's uncle. He, too, has a story to tell. An active trade unionist, he was imprisoned for 12 months by the Pinochet regime before obtaining refugee status to emigrate to Australia in 1975. He is proud that his children are educated and 'doing well'.

'You need to be able to make a life for yourself. In Australia, you can still work and get ahead. You have to concentrate on that and leave all that other political stuff behind.'

And that might just be what is happening to the Chileans: unprecedented growth, the first taste of consumerism in the *poblaciones*, and a kind of psychic numbing to terms such as 'protest' and 'the past'. No one under 20 was alive at the time of the coup. The polls suggest human rights is now a relatively low-order issue.

I asked Pepe Miranda when the *denuncia* would finish: when would the Chilean left speak up for the future? 'How can we be free if we don't come to grips with the past?' he replied.

Maybe he is right. Eduardo Frei has no particular claim on the job, except that his father was also the country's president, from 1964 to 1970. There is a sense of security among the middle class, with a centrist Christian Democrat in power. Yet the last Frei government (which was supported by the right against Allende) is often credited, because of its inertia, with having stimulated the popular radicalism that brought Allende to power.

It is a drizzly Saturday in Springvale. At Michel's place, you can hear the noise of the crowd from the footy finals at AFL Park. Michel is inside, playing a cassette that has arrived from the *poblacion*. It was taped at Antonio's wedding. Interspersed with guitar music, there are greetings from old colleagues from the youth group. Domingo talks soulfully of their friendship. An update—pessimistic yet strangely matter-of-fact—on the political situation. And something new: the streets in the *pobla* have been paved. ■

**Greg San Miguel** is a lawyer and journalist who worked in Santiago, Chile, from 1986-1990.

## Normalised evils

*The Burdekin report and the dignity of the mentally ill*

**T**HE BURDEKIN report into Australia's mental health services has dispelled the 'post-institutional' myths of community-based mental-health care. The report tells a shameful story of the degrading and exploitative conditions under which many of the 'deinstitutionalised' mentally ill have to live, and of the lack of support by governments. But we all share the blame—governments, community organisations and individuals—for accepting the myths that have concealed the magnitude, and the terrible banality, of the neglect of the mentally ill.

Burdekin's account of community strategies for care and rehabilitation of the mentally ill contrasts starkly with the official version, which tells of a 'quiet revolution' in the treatment of mental illness since the mid-1950s.

According to the received myths, impressive developments in medication are supposed to have been accompanied by a change in social attitudes that has destigmatised mental illness. 'Community care' has replaced institutional care, supposedly resulting in 'empowerment' of the mentally ill. 'Normalisation' at all levels is the goal of mental health policy. The disabling effects of segregation, prejudice and fear are being replaced by a new tolerance and openness. That, at least, has been the rhetoric.

But good intentions and liberal rhetoric are not enough to make a



system work. In the real world, policies must take account of the fact that housing and professional services are delivered through markets. 'Normalisation' rhetoric presupposes that markets will be driven by needs of sufferers, and that community interests will dominate those of self-seeking individuals.

Yet Burdekin's account indicates not only that the official model is not working, but that something like

the reverse of it is true. Unregulated markets dominate and distort supply and demand for mental health care in both the city and the bush. Psychiatric services, subsidised by Medicare, are diverted to the lesser ills of the urban rich while 'deinstitutionalised' patients populate the streets and unsupervised boardinghouses. The mentally ill are circulated as commodities, and often exploited as cheap labour or abused as sexual objects.

Community organisations speak mainly for the middle class and the articulate, and governments prefer to listen to professionals, to well-placed community groups and to other governments. In much of rural Australia, mental-health services are virtually non-existent. The following cases, taken from the records of a capital-city men's night shelter run by the Society of St Vincent de Paul (with names changed), are typical.

*David*

David has a longstanding paranoid schizophrenic condition. He is either



treatment-resistant or insists on taking lower doses of medication than he actually requires. His condition is complicated by poorly managed diabetes. He uses a range of accommodation and rarely repays credit. As a consequence, he is frequently barred from services.

David chooses to live this way even when he is well. His transience has made it difficult for care providers to build a relationship with him. He uses at least three clinics or doctors for medication and his transience appears to outpace their ability to liaise. When he is at the shelters he often disregards house rules and can be aggressive and verbally abusive. One agency has considered taking out an administration order for David, in the absence of an identified case manager.

*Paul*

Paul is a 36-year-old man on an invalid pension. He has come from interstate. He has a psychotic disorder and can be very aggressive and unpredictable. He also has a history of IV drug usage. He is transient, denies having a psychiatric problem and refuses any medication. Hospitalisation has apparently been of little use in the past. During his stay at the shelter Paul was aggressive, occasionally screamed in the yard and became involved in fights with other guests. He was playing out a number of roles, and heard voices from God and the Devil. A community mental-health team was involved but they decided to leave him. They advised the shelter manager to call the police if he became a problem again.

*John*

John is a 38-year-old man on an invalid pension. He experiences persistent psychoses but has few acute relapses. He will not comply with his medication regime. Although rarely aggressive, he is typically restless and demanding of staff time. He tries to maximise his disposable income by staying at night shelters and sometimes walks all night if he has no cash and cannot get credit. He spends most of his money on food and cigarettes. John has a strong institutional dependence on the shelter and has lived there more or less permanently for five years.

Why have community-based policies so abysmally failed these and other mentally ill people? An effective

system would have to recognise at least two features of mental health provision: (1) Many mentally-ill people, because of their condition or because of years of institutionalised dependence, lack the self-awareness or sense of personal responsibility to maintain an effective regime of self-medication; and (2) unregulated markets do not serve the interests of the powerless, the poor and the inarticulate.

Such considerations do not, however, shape mental-health policies. Civil libertarian and radical consumer groups often take a 'politically correct' line that emphasises the formal rather than the actual capacities of the mentally ill to survive as independent citizens. And vested interests have compounded the problem by opposing moves towards greater market regulation or towards a diversion of resources from hospitals to community

services. Unless mental-health care is based on a prior recognition of the dignity of the individual, rather than on the utilities of profit and behavioural control, the contradictions of community-based schemes will soon become apparent.

Such a recognition involves more than a formal expression of human rights and more than a radical strategy of empowerment, although it is not inconsistent with either. It requires policies based on humane concern, and the allocation of priorities in accordance with such policies. The present machinery is clearly breaking down and, as Burdekin has shown, many helpless people are being crushed. ■

**Bill Tyler** is a member of the Society of St Vincent de Paul's national committee of support for the mentally ill.

### REPORT: 3

JACINTA FORBES

## Judge cautions politicians over refugees

**L**AST MONTH'S FEDERAL COURT DECISION in the test case for the Cambodian boat people would have given no solace to the Immigration Minister, Nick Bolkus. In his ruling, Justice Keely found that the public servant delegated to decide whether a Cambodian woman, Ms Mok, was a refugee, had misapplied the relevant law and had failed to obtain up-to-date material on developments in Cambodia that would affect the claim. Thus far, the decision is a textbook review by the courts of government conduct. But the sting in the tail, for the minister, is in the judge's comments on political influence on the refugee process. He said that statements by politicians had created in Ms Mok 'a reasonable apprehension of bias'—a concern that her claim might not be decided with a fair and open mind.

This was largely, the judge said, because of the comments that the Prime Minister at the time, Bob Hawke, had made on prime-time national television—that Ms Mok was one of a group who had simply decided to 'pull up stumps get in a boat and lob to Australia', and that he would be forceful in ensuring his views were followed. The judge said that it was 'grossly improper' for Australia's senior public figure to have made such statements before his government had considered any claims by the arrivals. Bolkus will have won no favours for drawing such judicial disapproval of Hawke and of the Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans, who expressed similar views.

Comments by the court also cast shadows on the Parliament's conduct in the matter. In this there are echoes of concerns previously expressed by the High Court that legislation to detain boat people compulsorily, passed the night before a release application, was an attempt to 'clothe with legislative authority ... a custody that might have been brought to an abrupt end once a court ascertained that the custody was unlawful'.

At the end of the day, courts cannot decide whether a refugee claim has merit. The government has reserved that role to itself. The court can suggest solutions, as Justice Wilcox did in a similar case in Sydney, outlining a humanitarian option that the minister chose to ignore. Justice Keely also points towards means for achieving a just result. One hopes his comments are given due consideration. ■

**Jacinta Forbes** is a solicitor and chairperson of the Refugee Advice and Casework Service.



# Syracuse too far away

**W**HEN FRANCO CAVARRA was a boy his mother baked special Christmas pastries in the shape of a hen. In the middle of each pastry she would put an egg and the thing was to eat around the biscuit so that the hen would do its bird-like thing. This year Franco will spend Christmas with his mother, his sister and her family but there will be no promising pastries. There haven't been pastries for many years: some traditions live on, others die.

It's almost 40 years since the Cavarra family came to Melbourne from Sicily, from Syracuse province on the eastern side of the island. Archimedes ('... have a look at him, he's in the bathtub learning how to swim') came from Syracuse, but so did Franco's late father (a nurse), his mother, his sister and himself. There is a link there, for certain. When Franco Cavarra turns to the west of Sicily it appears alien: the architecture, the music, even the attitudes, it seems, bespeak the centuries of Islamic influence.

Eastern Sicily looked towards the mainland. In the 'Greater Greece' that preceded the Roman empire, Syracuse was a Greek colony to which writers, poets and orators were drawn. You can tread in their footsteps in places like Syracuse and Agrigento, in the very forums where they lived their public lives. To Franco's mind the Graeco-Roman spirit lives on. It is tangible in the culture but not necessarily as rationality, empiricism, devotion to purity of line. Here we're dealing with pastries which lay eggs.

Traditions are curious things: what gives them continuity across centuries, and now, across continents? When the ancient Greeks colonised Syracuse, they brought with them their household gods. When postwar Sicilians came to Australia they carried the images of their local saints. While gods had reciprocated the loyalty of individual households, the saints were

located in places. Migrants have invariably an ambivalent relationship with place—either the one they have left or the one to which they have come—so inevitably the fate of their saints was dislocation, not just across the miles but in meaning and value.

There is a church in Melbourne which Franco Cavarra describes as looking like a Chinese joss house. In it a proliferation of cowed monks, shepherds, princes and



virgins have found uncomfortable sanctuary. They look as if they don't belong there, Franco says. Once upon a time they were, each of them, a rallying point. His mother's town, Pachino, rallied around St Joseph, his father's, Rosolini, around the Madonna Assunta, and the city of Syracuse honoured St Lucia. One or two 'Italian' churches in Melbourne maintain the traditions but in real life—second generation life—the saints are done for.

Was it distance that did them in? Do gods and saints travel badly? Is there a future for them that is yet undiscovered? Or was it simply that leaving Sicily in the 1950s was to leave the ancient world for the modern world? Whatever, the saints suffer

exile. Exile—to borrow a phrase—has become their home.

Exile is also the home of the second and the third generations. Franco Cavarra teaches stagecraft to tertiary drama students and when he comes across new students with Italian surnames he likes to play a kind of party trick. Oh yes, he will say, that's a Pugliese name and they say, how did you know? What is your mother's name, he will ask, ... Oh, so she is from ... (well, another part of Italy). It can only happen here, he says.

In the Italy of their parents' generation it would have been unlikely that a Sicilian woman would marry a Venetian man (even an Eastern Sicilian someone from the West). First, they would never have met and secondly the two cultures were so different that they were more likely to marry someone from another country. You married someone from your own area, Franco says, because you knew what you were getting. In the third generation names don't have the same carrying capacity. The associations and therefore the meanings have gone.

Christmas is actually not a very good time for an Italian to consider the burden of tradition. As feasts go it is not as notable as Easter; much more in the way of tradition hangs on Easter Day. (Not just food traditions either. They are not as long lasting as we are led to believe by the equation of culture with the way people eat. What's the point of cooking special foodstuffs in a country where you can get them every day of the year?)

**N**EVERTHELESS, THIS YEAR is a good year for Franco Cavarra to consider tradition. Early in the New Year he will enter the seminary. At the age of 45 he is leaving a career as a free-lance opera and theatre director to pursue an idea that came to him ten years ago.

## Federico Fellini, 1920-1993

He was sitting then in the 'Met' in New York. He had 'made it' as assistant to the composer—and Spoleto Festival director—Gian Carlo Menotti. (They were working on Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*.) In that holy of holies he was struck by the vanity of vanities—the lying, the cheating, the conning that got people places and the discovery that it wasn't really up to much when you finally arrived, quite tawdry in fact.

What a dark view of the arts, I said, when so much is expected of them in the way of spiritual insight and sustenance. But, it turns out, it is not that he gives them up as a dead loss—he is not going to give up opera, theatre or music. It is more that he expects something else out of life and it has taken 10 years to come finally to a decision not to pursue his opera career at all costs but to find out what that something else is. In entering the seminary, Franco Cavarra is not doing the traditional thing. For the same reason that Easter—the feast of fecundity—is major amongst Sicilians, priesthood is not, at least under current rules and regulations. To be 'complete', a man requires a wife and children

If Franco's parents had come from the long-industrialised north of Italy, their anti-clericalism would have been influenced by Marxism. As Sicilians, while they required the priest's ministrations for baptisms, weddings and funerals, they didn't want a priest actually in their own family. So says Franco Cavarra. Bear in mind, he adds, that the Sicilian experience of priests up to modern times was often of corrupt clerics who oppressed the poor and who used their spiritual authority as a hold on the people.

'Why do you want to throw away a good life', Franco's mother asked, 'and lock yourself in some monastery? I won't allow you to waste your life.' He can't say that he has entirely succeeded in convincing her but he has made the point that the priesthood is none of the things—remote, immured—which she imagines. That anyway, in these times the role of the priest is undergoing radical redefinition and 'who is to say what the priest of the future is going to be like?' ■

Margaret Coffey is an ABC broadcaster and producer.

**F**EDERICO FELLINI WAS BORN in the Emilian seaside resort of Rimini, but as a young man he moved to Rome to study law. The wide-eyed young provincial was fascinated by the Eternal City, which would feature significantly in his life's work. He was soon drawn into its bohemian fringe of performers, writers and actors—a world he found more congenial than any academic pursuit.

For a time he worked as a cartoonist for a satirical monthly, and collaborated on several screenplays with neo-realist directors, including Roberto Rossellini (*Rome Open City* 1945). In 1950 he was able to co-direct, along with Alberto Lattuada, *Variety Lights*, a film about provincial show people. A year later came his own first feature, *The White Sheik*, a classic neorealist tale of shattered hopes and dreams.

Fellini's third feature, *I Vitelloni* (1953), about a group of young layabouts desperately trying to fill the void of provincial life with all sorts of pranks, brought him critical and popular success for the first time. *I Vitelloni* (*The Wastrels*) won the Silver Medal at the Venice Film Festival. This was the first of many awards that Fellini would receive in the long career that followed.

*La Strada* (1954) which starred his wife, Giulietta Masina, won for Fellini an American Academy Award for Best Foreign Film. His next project after this international success was *The Nights of Cabiria*, a morality tale about pimps and prostitutes. The film was ready to go into production but the Italian censors would not approve the script, because someone in the Vatican objected to its subject matter. But the Archbishop of Genoa, Cardinal Siri, spoke up for Fellini and the completed film, again starring Giulietta Masina, went on to win yet another Oscar. Fellini was now firmly established as a leading international filmmaker.

As an artist, Fellini was fascinated by the bizarre aspects of popular Italian piety—fake miracles, superstitions and the more extreme forms of ecclesiastical eccentricity. But he came to depend on the continued support of more enlightened Italian Catholics who understood his genuine compassion for the human condition. During the furore unleashed by *La Dolce Vita* (1960) the Jesuits of the Centro San Fedele in Milan rallied to his support, bringing a more reasoned tone to the debate about the film's 'immorality'.

In the autobiographical *8½* (1963), about the mid-life crisis of a film director, there is a frail and remote cardinal, whose only counsel to the confused and bewildered director are the words, 'Outside the church there is no salvation'. The finale of the film, a parade of all the disparate elements in the director's life, seems to imply that he is not prepared to accept the cardinal's prescription.

With *Juliet of the Spirits* (1965), Fellini reached the pinnacle of his artistic and commercial success. *Satyricon* (1969), *Roma* (1972), *Amarcord* (1974), and *Casanova* (1976) are the classics of his artistic maturity.

*City of Women* (1980) ushered in the final phase of his career, which included the apocalyptic *And the Ship Sails On* (1983), and *Ginger and Fred* (1985), a nostalgic trip for two aging performers and an opportunity for Fellini to hit out at the outrageous vulgarity of Italian television. His last film, *The Voice of the Moon*, was a touching plea for silence amid the cacophony of distractions in contemporary culture.

Fellini was a religious man, though not in the conventional sense. He was vastly amused by the superficial trappings of religiosity—particularly the Italian sort—yet took other superstitions seriously. He was reluctant to go to Hollywood last July, to receive the special Academy Award for a lifetime of achievement; he felt certain it would be some kind of epitaph.

In his last illness, before he lapsed into a coma in the hospital at Rimini, Fellini asked to see a lifelong friend, Cardinal Silvestrini. We shall probably never know what they talked about, but some words of Fellini to a Jesuit priest a few years before may hold the clue: 'Beyond the sea and the sky, through terrible suffering, perhaps in the relief that tears bring, God can be glimpsed—his love and his grace not so much as a matter of theological faith, but as a profound need of the spirit.'

Addio, Federico!

—Franco Cavarra



## Showing the nation

THE NATIONAL FESTIVAL OF Australian Theatre began in 1990, when Marguerite Pepper and the doyen of Australian festival directors, Anthony Steel, approached the Canberra Theatre Trust with the idea of getting up an annual showcase of mostly small-scale theatre performances drawn from all over Australia. That first festival featured drama, dance and mixed-media events from every state and territory. *Bran Nue Dae* from Western Australia, the Queensland Ballet, and the then local Meryl Tankard Dance Company were among its better-known drawcards.

The festival was followed by a second in 1991 but there was a hiatus last year, partly because of uncertainties about funding. For this year, Robyn Archer was appointed artistic director, with funding support from the Australia Council (for certain specific projects), the federal government's arts touring fund, the ACT government's Cultural Council, from Playing Australia, and—crucially—from Optus Communications.

There has also been useful support from other state and territory governments (presumably to help productions from within their boundaries to travel to the festival), from the ACT's Health Promotion Fund and from other corporate sponsors. According to Archer, the 1993 National Festival of Australian Theatre was put together for about \$600,000.

Such has been the success—on all levels, apparently—of the 1993 festival that next year's is already going ahead, with Optus again kicking in money and with Archer again at the helm. All this is as it should be, for this is a very good initiative indeed.

This year, the festival stuck pretty closely to its 'national' identity, with work coming from all states and territories except Queensland and Tasmania. Rumour has it that at least one of these states will be featured again in

1994, so let us at least say that this is a national festival on a cyclic basis.

I stress this point for several reasons. The first is that a festival staged in the nation's capital clearly ought to reflect the nation in its content. There is also some chance that this sort of showcasing could well lead to greater possibilities for national and even international touring.

Thirdly, most of the festivals in state capitals tend to stress their international content, often to the detriment of the 'local', or other Australian, content. At least, publicists and marketing campaigns do so, and the public tend to buy tickets to international attractions in preference to some Australian ones. The Canberra festival, however, gives priority to Australian-made work and enables it to be seen in a purely Australian context. There is no need or opportunity for odious comparisons between, say, foreign Shakespeare productions and the inevitably doomed local versions.

Finally, the way programming has turned out, these national festivals are giving us a chance to evaluate where we are going as a theatre-making nation in an intense but intimate environment. I felt, during my four days at the second week of this year's festival, more as though I was at a peer-group conference than in the pressure-cooker atmosphere of a Melbourne International Festival or Adelaide Festival of the Arts. Robyn Archer has structured the events (as did Anthony Steel before her) in such a way that participants have every chance of seeing each other's shows and communicating with each other about their work as the days go by.

As luck would have it, the material she chose this year did not let the concept down. The diversity of work was fascinating, but there were some interesting trends to emerge as well.

From New South Wales came William Yang and his already widely-seen

*Sadness* (in the suitably intimate 120-seat Courtyard Studio in the Canberra Theatre Centre). Yang's solo show was followed in the second week by another in the same venue: Bronwyn Calcutt's *Disenchantment*, a sharply observed and stylish performance piece with music, about a woman's gradual decline into the well of disillusion and subsequent fight back towards self-esteem.

Maggie Theatre's *Funerals and Circuses* (from South Australia) arrived from the Melbourne International Festival to win many Canberrans' hearts and minds with its persuasive powers of script, performance and promenade-staging in the splendid little foyer and the suitably wide stage of the Playhouse.

At the same time, Melbourne's Playbox Theatre took Michael Gurr's award-winning *Sex Diary of an Infidel* into the Canberra Theatre, which is too big by about 300 seats for most of this kind of work. On the other hand, Western Australia's Chrissy Parrott Dance Company, with its eclectic—and often electric—mix of exciting contemporary dance styles, was very well suited by that large space. I find this energetic and intelligent young company increasingly impressive and *Life, Love and Beauty* was no exception. Similarly, I imagine the vigorous 'new circus' group of acrobats from Sydney, Legs on the Wall, would have looked very good in that same theatre with *All of Me*. The show, written by Mary Morris, is one I desperately wanted to see but it finished before I could get to Canberra.

EVEN CANBERRA'S CHILLY WEATHER smiled upon the festival: the local visual street theatre troupe, Splinters, had at least one balmy night (and a huge crowd) for its spectacular and (literally) explosive street theatre event, *Guardians of the Concourse*, performed by upwards of forty people on the broad concourse (and in the pools!) leading from the Civic shopping precinct to the Canberra Theatre Centre. Young Canberrans also got to strut their stuff over at Gorman House in an elaborate version of *Gormenghast*, while the Canberra-based Vis-à-Vis Dance Company gave performances of its *Knee Deep in Thin Air* in

the theatre of the ANU Arts Centre. In one of Robyn Archer's typically inspired choices, the Indian-English theatre director Jatinder Verma combined forces with Australian Aboriginal actors and other artists to explore, in a fortnight-long workshop, different approaches to retelling *The Odyssey*.

What is obvious here is that the program is composed of a mixture of new events special to the National Festival of Australian Theatre (though not only from local groups) and productions which have been pre-loved elsewhere in Australia and which clearly deserve a national showing. The two productions which stood out as my own festival highlights underline this point with some force.

*Emma* (from Deck Chair Theatre in Fremantle, WA) dates from 1990 and although it has been seen a number of times in the West, this was its first trip 'over east'. It certainly shouldn't be the last. Like all of the performances in this year's festival, *Emma* is hard to contain within any fixed generic boundaries. Its story (based on *Emma: A Translated Life*, by Emma Ciccotosto and Michael Bosworth, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1991) is portrayed in flashback as the eponymous Emma prepares for the wedding of one of her children.

As she prepares food, presents and decorations for the celebration, the onstage version of the central character (played with great presence and audience-engagement by Rosemarie Lenzo) is surrounded by evocations of her past life in the Abruzzi of her native Italy, during migration, and in the various parts of Australia to which she and her extended family came in the years before World War II.

This much of the action was played on different levels of a multi-layered but simple setting in the cabaret-style location of the Canberra Theatre Centre's club, adjacent to the Playhouse. And a remarkable story it is, involving a volatile marriage to the handsome but temperamental Pietro Ciccotosto, a quintessential love-hate relationship with his mother Concetta, and the inevitable difficulties of immigration and bringing up a family in a new country.

Something approaching super-realism (Graham Pitts' script calls for

the preparation onstage of *penne all'arrabiata*) is offset by an ever-present choir of Italo-Australian women, *Le Gioie della Donne* (including Emma Ciccotosto herself), who chime in with songs appropriate to the action. Out of this poignantly local utterance, Angela Chaplin's direction and the musical direction of Kavisha Mazzella forge a piece of theatre that addresses national issues with great clarity. This is community theatre in the very best sense of the term.

**I**F EMMA ALONE WAS WORTH every kilometre of the drive to Canberra, there was another treat in store and it came from the festival's home town. Skylark Puppet Theatre has provided brilliantly educative in-schools theatre, for mostly very young children in the ACT and southern NSW, for eight years or so. The company was taken over at the beginning of this year by Peter Wilson, a Handspan Theatre founding member and, while his vision for the company includes performances for children, he decided to widen its audience-base by scheduling a piece of adult puppetry for this festival. The result of this new vision for Skylark is *Inside Dry Water*, scripted by Beatrix Christian, designed by the Melbourne-based Richard Jeziorny, with lighting by Handspan's Philip Lethlean and clever, evocative music by Canberra's Cathie O'Sullivan.

It was a fine piece of visual theatre in the Playhouse of the Canberra Theatre Company—and, with any luck, in any other venue it may get to play in, if intelligent entrepreneurs elsewhere choose to pick it up. Inspired by Arthur Boyd's *Bride in the Bush* paintings (and were there ever characters in Australia's visual arts more obviously destined for a second life on the Australian puppet stage than these?), this remarkable production revealed a huge degree of innovation, imagination and skill.

*Inside Dry Water* portrays a young puppeteer whose pathetically limp little rod-puppets refuse to come to life until she travels to the dry bed of Lake Tatiara, in the Australian interior. Her journey to the 'dry water' of the title is accomplished, but she is haunted by the visibly present ghosts of her dead father's Punch-and-Judy show, which

is powerfully replicated in all its violence and misogyny in Jeziorny's brilliant design. Gradually, Tatiara's puppets (Boyd's tall, mysterious and handsome Aboriginal and his pale winsome bride with the parrot-mouth) come to life in their indigenous surroundings—especially in the stunning climax, when the dry lake floods and fills the land with life—and the Eurocentred Punch and Judy are banished forever from the Australian stage. This was the most exciting and moving piece of puppet theatre I have seen in 20 years of intoxication with that heady medium.

Driving back to Melbourne, I thought again about Robyn Archer's summary of her first National Festival of Australian Theatre, as she expressed it at a lively forum on the final Saturday. Archer's view is that what is exciting in Australian theatre at the moment is not contained by the conventional boundaries of dramatic forms; there has hardly been a single orthodox 'play', in the sense accepted by mainstream Australian theatre companies, at any of these festivals in Canberra.

I agree with her and so, obviously, do many of Australia's festival directors. But what differentiates this festival from many of the others (especially the Melbourne festival) is the showcasing of Australian work that has already been polished and honed to a readiness for public consumption. Too often, arts festivals in Australia pit world premieres of Australian works, and/or new productions of older, 'heritage' works by Australian companies, against tried and tested productions from visiting companies from abroad. In that unequal contest, the visitors inevitably win.

What's more, the National Festival of Australian Theatre in Canberra has begun to emphasise the work of women, Aborigines and Australians of non-English-speaking background in a systematic way, which to date no other major Australian arts festival has done. More power to its arm! ■

Geoffrey Milne is head of the division of drama at La Trobe University.



Migrant view: Emma Ciccotosto (Rosemarie Lenzo) in Deck Chair Theatre's production of *Emma* at the National Festival of Australian Theatre in Canberra, October 1993.





## Stop it, I like it

*Ethan Frome*, dir. John Madden (independent cinemas) and *The Age of Innocence*, dir. Martin Scorsese (Hoyts). Edith Wharton spent much of her life escaping Puritan American society, but carried it with her in her fiction. Madden and Scorsese scrupulously recreate the Puritan repressions that Wharton, who was a close friend of Henry James', understood so well. But while the two films may represent a change of pace in American movie making, they don't signal a radical shift. In past movies Scorsese particularly has explored explosive violence. These fables of constraint are the other side of American excess.

*Ethan Frome* is the simpler tale, a gift to a cinematographer. Filmed in Vermont, it conjures the New England world of Wharton's Starkville, a village where winter is the only season. There are few characters—a narrator, who is integral, Ethan Frome himself (Liam Neeson); and his two women—the wife Zeena (Joan Allen), and the aptly named Maddie Silver (Patricia Arquette), who brings Ethan his brief happiness. The other characters who fill out the plain world of Starkville are played with a kind of unobtrusive naturalism that makes the film a delight even when its matter is horrifying. The interiors are the stuff of childhood fears and imaginings—dark corners, ruby glass refractions, closed doors. The outdoors offer

exhilaration, liberty and death—the classic mix of American tragedy. The acting is startling, each character peeling back layers of surprise.

Scorsese's *The Age of Innocence* is a more ambitious film, more saga than fable. It is visually faithful to Wharton's taxonomies of social class. Scorsese spent a fortune reconstructing 1870 New York domestic ballrooms, drawing rooms, dining rooms; his characters are exquisitely clad and the acting suitably classy. What the film lacks is the filter of Wharton's irony. Joanne Woodward is dropped in as offscreen narrator but there is simply not enough of her to shade the spectacle. As the would-be, mustn't-be lover, Newland Archer, Daniel Day-Lewis overflows his part—as Sean Connery would play-ing Clark Kent. Michelle Pfeiffer and Winona Rider, as Archer's beloved, Ellen, and wife, May, are more contained and convincing New Yorkers.

—Morag Fraser

### Eureka Street Film Competition

In *Batman Returns*, she announced 'I am Catwoman, hear me roar!' As the Countess Olenska in *The Age of Innocence*, Michelle Pfeiffer does nor roar. Caption the above still with something as witty as the Catwoman line, however, and we will award two tickets, to the film or your choice, for the answer we like best. Send your answers to: Eureka Street Film Competition, PO Box 553, Richmond, VIC 3121. The winner of October's film competition was Chris Ridings, of Salisbury East, SA, who thought Bogie was telling Ms Hepburn: 'Don't look now but I think I see an autograph hound over there.'



## Roadworthy

*Red Rock West*, dir. John Dahl (independent cinemas). We accept coincidence more easily in life than in art, but some works of art succeed precisely because they play with our differing

expectations of life and art. *Red Rock West* is one of them. It uses all the elements of the road movie to spin an entertaining yarn about what happens when a series of coincidences narrows your options to a choice between the bad, the very bad, and the much, much worse.

The film is respectful of its genre: there is a taciturn good guy (Nicolas Cage), a psychotic killer (Dennis Hopper), a *femme fatale* (Lara Flynn Boyle) and the *femme fatale's* venal, scheming husband (J.T. Walsh). The good guy starts off as a poor drifter and ends up a destitute drifter, but of course, his is the moral victory. Everyone else gets their come-uppance, but the *femme fatale* is allowed to be morally ambiguous for just long enough to permit some dalliance with our hero.

Dahl and his brother, Rick, who co-wrote the screenplay for *Red Rock West* with him, are also careful to get their visual cues right. The poor-then-destitute drifter arrives in an old V8 and leaves in a railway freight car; the exhilaration of the opening frame, with its vista of prairie pierced by two-lane black top, is countered by the visually depressing pile that is the town of Red Rock; and the film's denouement, in an old cemetery, is a wonderful parody of *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. Watch out, Joel and Ethan Coen, the brothers Dahl are on your patch.

—Ray Cassin

## Family furore

*Lost in Yonkers*, dir. Martha Coolidge (Hoyts), is another comedy drama from the pen of Neil Simon. This sedate but substantial tale relates the troubles of the Kurnitz family in Yonkers, New York, in 1942. Through the eyes of two young brothers, forced to live with their grandmother and aunt while their widowed father heads south to make a living, we are given a Simon-esque perspective on individual foibles and family relationships.

Mercedes Ruehl plays the aunt, Bella, magnificently—it is clear why she received a Tony Award for her performance in the New York stage version of *Lost in Yonkers*. (Simon won a Pulitzer Award for the play.) Bella is different: troubled by a learning disability since childhood, she forgets things, her mind wanders, she is

childlike. She is also in love—with Johnny (David Strathairn), a simple-minded usher at the cinema where Bella gets her regular fix of escapist fantasy. And an escape it is, from a tyrannical mother who has learnt how to survive life's misfortunes but not how to love or laugh.

Grandma (Irene Worth), is the darkness against which the colours of Simon's characters shine. A sad figure who boasts that she has never cried, she is a powerful matriarch. Only one of her four surviving children has ever stood up to her—Louie (Richard Dreyfuss), a quirky, Cagney-like bagman who has stolen the goods from Hollywood Harry and has come home to the candy store to hide out.

The candy store? That's where the drama is played out, in Grandma's candy store where good things are displayed but never enjoyed. It's a potent symbol that underscores the story's fairytale nature, evoking Hansel-and-Gretel imagery with the witch-like grandma. It speaks of people searching for life and love, with some finding it and some losing it. It's a recurring story the world over. People get lost all the time, and not just in Yonkers.

—Brad Halse

## Solar eclipse

*Rising Sun*, dir. Philip Kaufman (Hoyts), which is based on but significantly departs from Michael Crichton's best-selling novel of the same name, has got into the wrong hands. Kaufman's involvement virtually guarantees a movie of more than two hours, and the editors must have gone to a protracted lunch during the final cut.

In a stylish opening a young woman is found dead, and apparently raped and murdered, on the boardroom table in a Los Angeles office tower owned by a massive Japanese corporation. The murder has been recorded by hidden security cameras, but the killer's identity is obscured by shadows.

The investigation becomes a confrontation between two cops, Japanese expert Connor (Sean Connery) and his assistant Smith (Wesley Snipes), and the all-seeing, all-knowing Japanese corporation as it tries to frustrate their efforts to identify the



killer. Although the film has some rousing action sequences, and titillates with gratuitous use of the naked female body, it becomes a talkfest, as Japanese know-all Connor explains everything to Smith, even when he doesn't want to know. Sherlock Holmes at his worst never patronised Dr Watson more.

Whenever the murder investigation gets the staggers, Kaufman mixes in Jap-bashing (in the mouth of tough-cop Graham, Harvey Keitel) and the utterly unnecessary cross-racism involving blacks and Japanese.

By tampering with the book's ending Kaufman causes some striking factual and philosophical inconsistencies. The female characters, except for a computer-whiz jingo played with style by Tia Carrere, are left as sex objects with no character development.

I suspect this movie won't do big business in Japan.

—Gordon Lewis

## Basinger 1, Fenn 0

*Boxing Helena*, dir. Jennifer Chambers Lynch (independent cinemas). I went to see this film with an honest effort at open-mindedness. After all, when an actor has ended up paying \$12 million *not* to be in it, you wonder a bit. The whole thing was complicated by the fact that the actor was Kim Basinger, not hitherto noted for her stern commitment to artistic quality.

Fifteen minutes into the movie I was hissing desperately to my companion. 'No, I can't leave now—I have to give the thing a chance.' We should have left then. There *were* some laughs, but none of them intentional,

and one feels slightly constricted about letting out a guffaw when the five other patrons, mostly rain-coated, are so grimly intent ...

The plot, for want of a better word, has a wimpy English surgeon becoming obsessive about a girl called Helena, who has all the charm and personality of a funnel-web with PMT. Sherilyn Fenn, looking more than ever like a descendant of Elvis, smirks, smoulders and snarls her way through the movie as though she were taking it seriously.

When a fortuitous traffic accident delivers Helena into the surgeon's power, he amputates her legs to keep her from escaping. When she gets understandably miffed about this and decks him, he removes her arms. It seems almost unnecessary to add that he owns a life-sized statue of the Venus de Milo. The only surprise is that there isn't a clock in its stomach.

The scenes with the truncated Helena shrieking abuse at her captor remind me of the scene in *Monty Python & the Holy Grail* when John Cleese, as the lunatic Black Knight, has all his limbs removed by King Arthur, but yells 'It's only a flesh-wound!' The main insult Helena hurls at the surgeon is about his sexual prowess—an excuse for some ludicrous soft porn along the way.

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Kim, it was worth the money. Even Greta Garbo's career wouldn't have survived a turkey like this.

—Juliette Hughes

## Sight-seeing

*Bad Lieutenant*, dir. Abel Ferrara (independent cinemas), is a crooked-cop-finds-redemption story that rises above its genre via an intriguing, and sometimes entrancing, operatic quality.

Like an opera by Leoncavallo or Mascagni, *Bad Lieutenant* has a barely plausible plot that depends heavily on stock characters. But, as with an opera, to quibble about such things would be to miss the point—they are merely a framework for what one hopes will be a bravura performance by whoever takes the role of the central character. And Harvey Keitel, as the bad lieutenant of this film, turns on one of the best performances of his career.

The lieutenant is deeply in debt to the Mob, with whom he has placed a series of unsuccessful bets on the results of a baseball championship series.

He is also deeply corrupt, abusing the power that his badge gives him in order to extort money; this in turn allows him to procure the drug-fuelled sexual adventures that are his chief distraction from menacing mundane reality.

The instrument of the lieutenant's redemption is a cardboard-cutout nun (Frankie Thorn), who is raped by two youths intent on trashing and looting the church in which she is praying. The lieutenant hopes that if he can catch the rapists, for whom a reward has been offered, he will be able to pay off the Mob and live, if not happily ever after, then at least a little longer.

To find the youths, he must induce the nun to reveal their identity. She refuses—she has forgiven her attackers—and only advises him to pray. He does so, in an astonishing scene that runs together personal breakdown and remorse-driven, hallucinatory religious anxiety. It is worth seeing *Bad Lieutenant* for this scene alone, which sets a new register of intensity even for the famously manic Mr Keitel. —Ray Cassin

**FINAL TAKE**

PETER MALONE

## Good 'ol celluloid Jesus

**T**he *Favour*, the *Watch* and the *Very Big Fish*—and a Jesus figure? Doesn't sound likely, but it's there. Jeff Goldblum plays a depressed musician who lets his hair grow longer in prison and, on release, looks like a holy-card Jesus; so much so that a photographer (Bob Hoskins) employs him for Gospel portraits. Eventually, the musician believes that he has healing powers and ...

This 1992 Ben Lewin film highlights how screen images of Jesus have changed in the 100-history of the cinema. We are all familiar with the reverent, pious images, enhanced by the postures of the Jesus of silent films such as Cecil B. de Mille's *King of Kings* (1927). After all, popular religious art at the time of the invention of the cinema was mostly of the plaster-statue type, so that is what audiences expected. Perhaps they still do.

In fact, the face of Jesus was off-

screen in English-language films for about 30 years, during the '30s, '40s and '50s, when reverence for the *divine*/human figure led to suggestions of his presence—long shots and back views, as in *The Robe* (1953) or *Ben Hur* (the William Wyler version, 1959).

The '60s brought many cultural changes, one of which was the freedom to show Jesus again, this time as the *human*/divine figure, e.g. Jeffrey Hunter in *King of Kings* (Nicholas Ray's remake in 1961) and Max von Sydow in *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965, dir. George Stevens). Pier Paolo Pasolini chose a non-professional actor to play Jesus in his starker *Gospel According to Matthew* (1964).

Whatever the relative merits of these Jesus figures, they were based on a quite literal interpretation of the gospels, although Zeffirelli's *Jesus of Nazareth* (1977) attempted a more nuanced view. By the end of the '60s,

however Jesus had turned into a *Superstar*, and more stylised figures became acceptable. *Godspell* was especially successful in encouraging Christians to accept that modern modes could dramatise the gospel Jesus.

During the '80s filmmakers favoured using images of Jesus, rather than offering presentations of the gospel story. Thus at the end of *A Prayer for the Dying* (1987, dir. Mike Hodges), the IRA gunman played by Mickey Rourke embraces a huge crucifix. (Remember Don Camillo, who, in a lighter vein, used to chat with the crucifix in his church?) But there were still retellings of the gospel story: Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) tried to present an earthy, fictionalised Jesus, and *Jesus of Montreal* (dir. Denys Arcand, 1989) offered some remarkably effective Passion Play sequences.

Recently Harvey Keitel, as the *Bad Lieutenant* (see review opposite), saw, in drug hallucination, the crucified Jesus standing in a church aisle, and desperately prays to/abuses him. Job, the *Lawnmower Man*, battles his scientist mentor with virtual reality games, placing him on the cross and attempting to destroy him. And in *Leap of Faith*, faith-healing huckster Steve Martin peddles his religion under a large crucifix.

There are many verbal Jesus figures—the discussions in *The Name of the Rose* (1986, dir. Jean-Jacques Annaud) for instance, about whether Jesus laughed or owned his own clothes. This perhaps, has an echo of the Pythons, whose *Life of Brian* (1979) reminded us of the pompously ridiculous side to biblical epics.

For most modern audiences, however, the credibility of Jesus on screen is stronger when characters are made significantly and substantially to resemble Jesus. An appropriate name for these characters is 'Christ figures'. Obviously, most writers and directors do not consciously intend this comparison, but the Jesus story, whether or not it is believed in Christian faith, is part of the culture. It provides symbols that are frequently used by poets, artists, writers and cartoonists—and audiences, appreciating the text and texture of the art, make the connections.

At the opening of Clint Eastwood's *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976), Wales' wife and son are killed, and his farm destroyed, by post-Civil War raiders. As Wales buries them, he kneels at the grave with stick cross and prays 'Lord gives, Lord he takes away'. He bows in grief, and the cross falls on his shoulder—the first of a series of gospel allusions that give a deeper meaning to this film in the form of a revenge western.

Taking our cue from the presentations of Jesus in the gospels, we can see Christ figures as redeemers, saviours or liberators.

The redeemers are those who are prepared to lay down their lives for others—even undeserving others—and sometimes do. Billy Budd is a classic redeemer figure and so are the martyrs. In *Hombre* (1967, dir. Martin Ritt), whose title might in English be rendered 'Everyman', Paul Newman plays an Indian stagecoach guide. The passengers are a motley lot, who don't seem worth saving when they are in danger. What is the hombre to do?

On the other hand, Jesus the Risen Lord is also a healer, teacher and saviour, someone who enables others to find new life. It is easy to see this kind of figure in the popular-myth movies of the past 15 years—*Star Wars* (1977, dir. George Lucas), *Superman* (1978, dir. Richard Donner), *Mad Max* (1979, dir. George Miller) and their numerous sequels, and *ET* (1982, dir. Steven Spielberg). One can find saviour figures in a lot of the popular films of recent years. What of Kevin Costner's soldier in *Dances with Wolves* (1990), Susan Sarandon's intense mother searching for a cure for her son in *Lorenzo's Oil* (1992, dir. George Miller), or Robin Williams eliciting poetry from the *Dead Poets Society* (1989, dir. Peter Weir)

But also in recent years, especially in Latin American settings, the liberator figure is emerging. The obvious examples are *Romero* (1989, dir. John Duigan) and *The Mission* (1986, dir. Roland Joffe).

Exploring the development of Christ figures offers a more credible religious dimension to the cinema. ■

**Peter Malone MSC** is the editor of *Compass Theology Review* and author of *Movie Christs and Anti-Christs*.

# PACIFICA

Australian Theological Studies

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# Barking up the wrong tree

**T**HERE ARE LOTS of fatuous ways to categorise radio shows, but the most useful division I find is this: programs consist either of someone who knows what he or she is talking about telling the listeners something interesting, or of the listeners trying to tell the rest of the world something completely inane.

Two different types of phone-in show make the distinction clear. One is the traditional vox-pop style, which gives the caller 30 seconds (or 30 minutes if it's late-night) to explain exactly where the government has gone wrong over Mabo, with predictably unenlightening results. The other puts the callers in what I would argue is their rightfully subservient place. Unfortunately, while any opinion about Aboriginal land rights is apparently taken to be as valid as any other in terms of radio time, respectful questions requiring an authoritative answer are generally restricted to topics such as pets, gardening, health problems and do-it-yourself house repairs.

The key to this second format is to prevent callers from indulging their natural inclination to reveal irrelevant and interminable information about their private lives. No one is more adept at this than the president of the RSPCA, Dr Hugh Wirth, who is the undisputed star of Saturday mornings on Melbourne's 3LO. He deals with any disobedience from his callers in much the same way as he instructs them to deal with their recalcitrant pets. Firm but fair, don't stand any nonsense, always keep them on a tight leash and, whatever you do, don't feed them from the table.

The opposite attitude—encouraging all and sundry to litter the airwaves with their opinions like a spoilt puppy—is common to most other phone-ins, but it also pops up all too frequently with some of the more esoteric guests during the ABC's mellow daytime book-plugging hours. Take an interview by Jennifer Byrne on Sydney's 2BL, with Elizabeth Marshall-Thomas, who has just published a book called, coincidentally, *The Hidden Life of Dogs*.

Marshall-Thomas followed her dog ('a very strong, capable dog') on a bicycle for several years to see where it went and what it did during the day, and developed the results into a global theory of dogs. They grow up, fall in love, get 'married' and have kids, she discovered. All they really want is 'friends and a nice territory and people to admire them and a bit of peace and quiet'. In fact, it's really only their lack of opposable thumbs that distinguishes them from humans.

Now for all I know that may be true (although personally I've never found that dogs make very satisfactory dinner-party guests) but it's scarcely a more valid opinion than that of your average eccentric who rings up to vent their spleen about the budget or the republic. It only gets more space because it's been worked up into a book which has sold 260,000 copies in America—which probably says more about America than the book does about dogs. I can't help thinking that Byrne's background (*60 Minutes*) should have given her a taste for harder stories, and for more incisive comments than 'I'm very excited to hear that your next book is going to be on cats.'

**S**OMEWHERE IN BETWEEN THE authoritative and the merely opinionated there is a third category of radio broadcasts. It's called Parliament. The relationship between Parliament and the media has always been a slightly uneasy one. Everyone agrees that run-of-the-mill parliamentary debates are a necessary thing, something that no civilised society should be without—but then so is a functioning sewage system. It doesn't mean that anyone actually wants to know how it works on the inside in any intimate detail.

As a result, the ABC's statutory obligation to broadcast Parliament has sometimes weighed heavily on an organisation that is increasingly unable to ignore the ratings. As Richard Ackland wrote in the *Sydney Morning Herald* earlier this year, the ABC went to a good deal of trouble 'devising ways of moving the parliamentary

broadcasts from station to station until it found one that nobody knew about'. But luckily they still make a note of the juicy bits and broadcast them on Radio National's *The Parliament Program*.

Most of the juicy bits come during question time. Or as the Speaker, Stephen Martin, put it recently: 'Often it seems in recent times in the heat of debate there are statements made ... which in some instances can cause great offence.' He asked the honorable members to 'have cognisance of those particular concerns in debates in this chamber'. Of course, as the presenter of *The Parliament Program*, David Barnett, drily noted, they did not. In the very same week Labor's Peter Duncan referred to National Party leader, Tim Fischer, as 'the Grand Wizard' (i.e. of the Ku Klux Klan) amid accusations of racism over Mabo.

The problem with question time is that in theory it's structured as though the government were Dr Hugh. The opposition is entitled to ask questions in order to elicit factual information on specific issues, and they should expect a concise and informative reply. In practice, of course, debate (if that's the right word for it) takes place on the same global level as Elizabeth Marshall-Thomas's flights of fancy. John Hewson doesn't *really* want to know how the government intends to stop Rover chewing carpet slippers—he's out to expose Labor's fundamental misconception of canine psychology as a whole.

Hence question time (as relayed by *The Parliament Program*) is only more entertaining than the average bigoted phone-in show because the antagonists are supposed to represent something other than just themselves, and because they're allowed to indulge in much more robust personal abuse than most radio stations would normally tolerate. As far as providing insight or information goes, there's little to choose between the two. ■

**Mike Ticher** is a Sydney freelance writer. His dog was expelled from obedience classes.





## Eureka Street Cryptic Crossword no.19, December 1993-January 1994

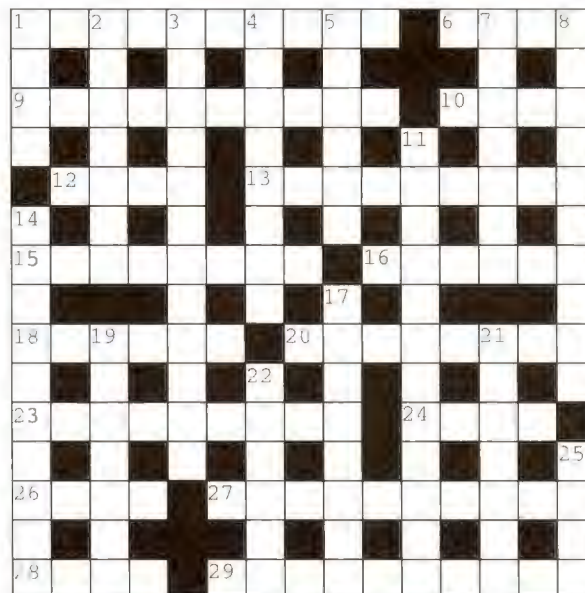
Devised by Joan Nowotny IBVM

### ACROSS

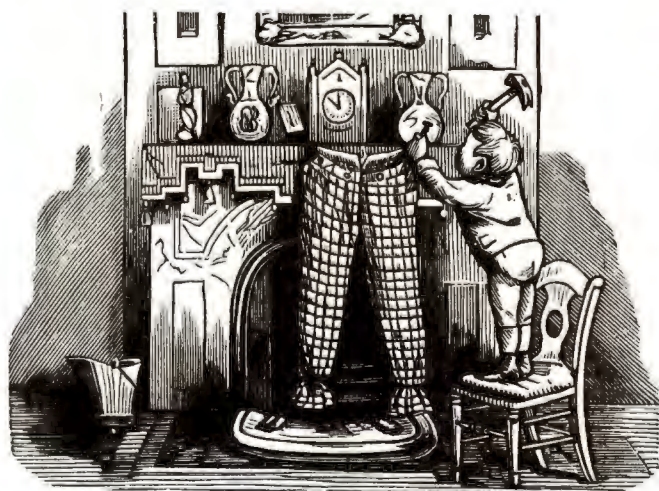
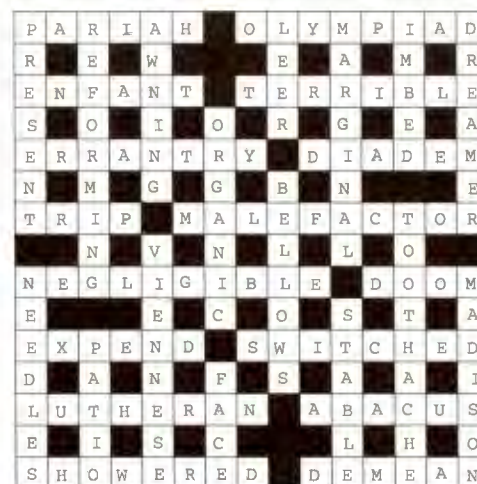
- 1 The sort of regime in which, for example, I have to iron again all my uniforms can be called despotic. (10)
- 6 Return drinks to bowl like this. (4)
- 9 Fresh enthusiasm, and the country appears. (3,7)
- 10 Sounds as if we control the weather. (4)
- 12 Paradoxically, the greatest can be worst. (4)
- 13 It's just no go! Smile, anyhow, at the new coinage. (9)
- 15 The picture of Liz and Ed beside the pig-pen was given conventional form. (8)
- 16 Rare steak, cooked about right, will go like a flash. (6)
- 18 Somehow, my open title was derived from my name. (6)
- 20 Right after the love affair, the story-teller recounted it. (8)
- 23 Even in emotional stress, we hear, purpose is manifested. (9)
- 24 I ran wildly in the downpour. (4)
- 26 By the sound of it, I'll go to the place of Dogs for my holiday. (4)
- 27 If tucker's a trouble, try these Christmas goodies. (10)
- 28 A month with love in the county. (4)
- 29 The decision to resign at 10, unfortunately, starts it off. (10)

### DOWN

- 1 To accumulate these this season is the aim of 9ac and 11dn. (4)
- 2 Dope mixed with wry expression can easily be sprinkled. (7)
- 3 In the competition for cooking, I choose frying as the most thrilling —and possibly shocking! (12)
- 4 The sort of group that could shatter the party. (8)
- 5 He requires that five finish or else 'caveat emptor'. (6)
- 7 The basic assumption on which you base your argument is mere persiflage to begin with. (7)
- 8 Monk's snore, unfortunately, became worse when he joined these socially aware people. (3-7)
- 11 Ah, if tours can alter the conditions in the country, this team will play 21dn successfully. (5, 7)
- 14 Hermit, for example, is mastering initially this abstemious way of life. (10)
- 17 Including addition, but not subtraction possibly (8)
- 19 The aim of 9ac and 11dn is to do this to Australia as well as each other. The outlay is about a penny! (7)
- 21 A game insect! It proliferates in the summer. (7)
- 22 Reflect the image. (6)
- 25 The goddess certainly exists. (4)



### Solution to Crossword no.18, November 1993



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