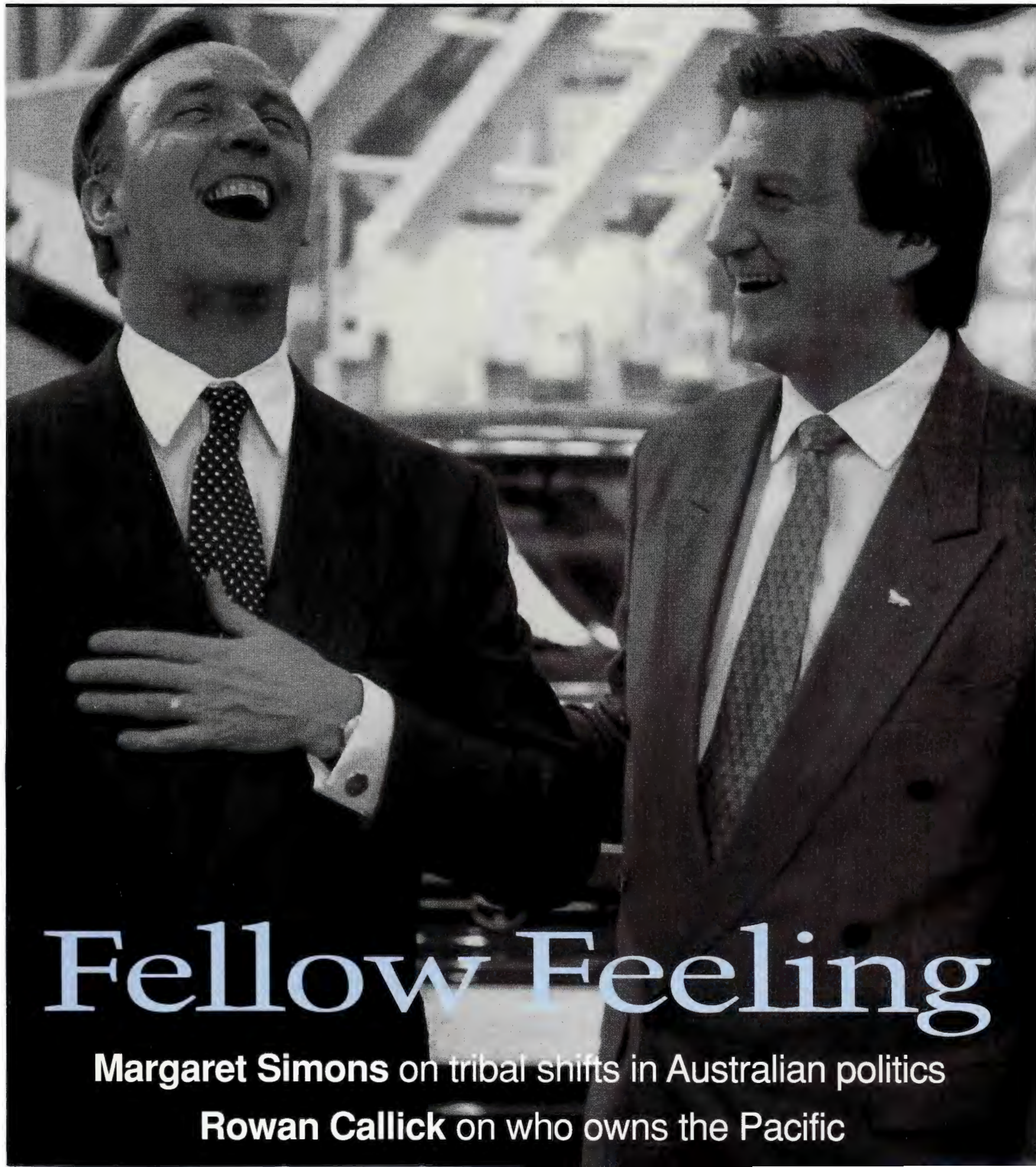


# EUREKA STREET

Vol. 5 No. 6 August 1995

\$5.00



## Fellow Feeling

**Margaret Simons** on tribal shifts in Australian politics

**Rowan Callick** on who owns the Pacific



**New!**



**Dale Spender's  
Nattering on the Net:**

**Women, Power  
& Cyberspace**

*Is it true that women use technology  
but men fall in love with it?*

Dale Spender promises to change  
the way we think about computers.

ISBN 1 875559 09 4 pb \$24.95

■ **ANTI-NUCLEAR POLITICS**

**Daughters of the Pacific**

*Zohl dé Ishtar*

This book breaks the pattern of silence and disinformation about the nuclear industry, tourism and other political issues that threaten an area covering one-third of our planet – home to almost six million indigenous people.

ISBN 1 875559 32 9 pb \$24.95

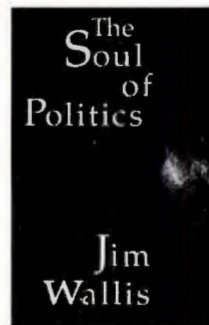


**SMALL PRESS, BIG ACHIEVER**

Tel. 03 9329 6088 • Fax 03 9329 9238

504 Queensberry St (PO Box 212), North Melbourne, Victoria 3051

**The Soul of Politics**  
*Author Tour*



Jim Wallis, one of the leading Christian activists of our time, raises his voice against the oppression of the weak by the powerful, in his first book for several years, *The Soul of Politics*.

Responding to signs of cultural breakdown in Western societies such as poverty, racism, violence, sexism, and the absence of community, Wallis shows why both left and right visions are inadequate to the challenge of our major social problems.

A sharp reminder of the reality behind the deterioration of politics on a *global* scale, *The Soul of Politics* generates opportunity where there is otherwise crisis.

**Jim Wallis will be touring Australia on the following dates:**

**Sydney 16 - 21 August** (Contact Denis Doherty 02-267-2772)

**Perth 21 - 24 August** (Contact Philip Matthew 09-458-1618)

**Melbourne 24 - 30 August** (Contact Michael Henry 03-467-1777)

**Canberra 30 August**

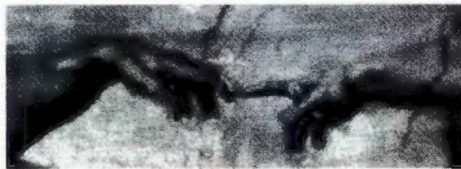
**The Soul of Politics 0006279384 \$22.95**

is available from

HarperCollinsReligious

**Tel: (03) 9895 8195 Fax: (03) 9895 8182**

RF003



**HOFBAUER CENTRE INC**

Psychotherapeutic Clinic and  
Training Institute for Psychotherapists

*A PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC CLINIC FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT COMBINED  
WITH A TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR PASTORAL PSYCHOTHERAPISTS/MARRIAGE  
AND FAMILY COUNSELLORS/PASTORAL WORKERS*

**Professional Counselling and Psychotherapy are available** to those people who are experiencing difficulties in their life, either at a personal level or in their relations with others, in their marriage and family.

Welcome are people of all ways of life, of all and no religious views but the centre operates in the context of Christian values. The fees are very

moderate to offer help to people who experience financial difficulties.

**The Hofbauer Centre training Institute offers different courses:**  
—a three year full time Course in *pastoral Psychotherapy Marriage and Family therapy.*

This is for people with an academic background, preferably in psychology, or its equivalent, and maturity of development. the program sets out to ground stu-

dents in theory, practice and experience in individual and group psychotherapy and marriage and family counselling.

—a one year part-time Course in *Pastoral Studies/supervised Pastoral Education.*

This is for people who wish to work in a parish or other pastoral setting. It offers theory and supervision in practical work.

**For more information contact the Information Officer  
Hofbauer Centre, 93 Alma Road, East St Kilda, Phone (03) 529 7861**



## CONTENTS

4  
COMMENT

9  
CAPITAL LETTER

10  
LETTERS

16  
PICK A CARD, ANY CARD  
Margaret Simons examines the shifting face of allegiance in Australian politics.

22  
OBITUARY  
Ray Cassin pays tribute to Dominican theologian Yves Congar.

23  
COCONUT REPUBLIC  
Moira Rayner reviews the conditions of independence in the Cocos Islands.

25  
ARCHIMEDES

26  
TAKING LIBERTIES WITH FRATERNITY  
Renewed nuclear testing is only the latest in France's complex relationship with the South Pacific, writes Rowan Callick.

29  
GONE TO THE DOGS  
Peter Pierce checks the pedigree of greyhound racing.

30  
LIFTING THE LID  
Anne O'Brien finds politics in the polite culture of Australian piano-playing.

34  
BOOKS

Max Teichmann looks into the background of the controversy over Helen Demidenko's *The Hand That Signed The Paper*.

Paul Collins reviews Ronald Modra's *The Catholic Church and Anti-semitism, Poland, 1933-1939* (p36); David Oldroyd is intrigued by Christopher Badcock's *Psycho Darwinism: The New Synthesis of Darwin and Freud* (p37).

39  
EXHIBITIONS  
Michael McGirr goes to a show of mortal dread in Melbourne whilst Beth Gilligan baulks at immortal light in Sydney (p40).

42  
FOOD  
Catriona Jackson and Rosey Golds get their fill at foodie conferences.

45  
THEATRE  
Geoffrey Milne reviews the work of playwright Nick Enright.

47  
FLASH IN THE PAN  
Reviews of the new-release films *Priest*, *Death and the Maiden*, *Ed Wood*, *Tank Girl*, *Batman Forever*, *Mushrooms*, *Braveheart* and *First Knight*.  
Ray Cassin and Tim Stoney interview the director of *Priest*, Antonia Bird (p49).

50  
WATCHING BRIEF

51  
SPECIFIC LEVITY

Cover:  
The not so odd couple,  
Paul Keating and Jeff Kennett  
Photograph courtesy *The Age*.  
Photograph p5 by Bill Thomas.  
Cartoons pp7, 29, 30-33 by Peter Fraser.  
Cartoons pp11, 12, 28, by Dean Moore.  
Graphics pp16-21 by Catriona Jackson.  
Photographs pp16-21 courtesy *The Age* (for Elizabeth Proust); Peter Singer; the offices of Peter Collins, Bob Debus, Wayne Goss; The Liberal Party of NSW (for John Fahey, Barry Morris, Brendan Nelson & Jennifer Scott).  
Photograph p37 by Reimund Zunde.  
Photograph of Antonia Bird, p49, courtesy Roadshow Film Distributors.

*Eureka Street* magazine  
Jesuit Publications  
PO Box 553  
Richmond VIC 3121  
Tel (03) 9427 7311  
Fax (03) 9428 4450



Publisher

Michael H. Kelly SJ

Editor

Morag Fraser

Consulting editor

Michael McGirr SJ

Editorial assistant: Jon Greenaway  
 Production assistants: J. Ben Boonen CFC,  
 Paul Fyfe SJ, Juliette Hughes,  
 Catriona Jackson, Chris Jenkins SJ,  
 Paul Ormonde, Tim Stoney.

Contributing editors

Adelaide: Greg O'Kelly SJ

Brisbane: Ian Howells SJ

Perth: Dean Moore

Sydney: Edmund Campion, Andrew Riemer,  
 Gerard Windsor.

European correspondent: Damien Simonis

US correspondent: Thomas H. Stahel SJ

Editorial board

Peter L'Estrange SJ (chair),

Margaret Coady, Margaret Coffey,

Valda M. Ward RSM, Trevor Hales,

Marie Joyce, Kevin McDonald,

Jane Kelly IBVM,

Peter Steele SJ, Bill Uren SJ

Business manager: Sylvana Scannapiego

Advertising representative: Tim Stoney

Patrons

*Eureka Street* gratefully acknowledges the  
 support of Colin and Angela Carter, the  
 trustees of the estate of Miss M. Condon,  
 A.J. Costello; Denis Cullity AO;  
 W.P. & M.W. Gurry; Geoff Hill and  
 Janine Perrett; the Roche family.

*Eureka Street* magazine, ISSN 1036-1758,

Australia Post Print Post approved

pp349181/00314

is published ten times a year

by *Eureka Street Magazine* Pty Ltd,

300 Victoria Street, Richmond, Victoria 3121.

Tel: 03 9427 7311 Fax: 03 9428 4450

Responsibility for editorial content is accepted by  
 Michael Kelly, 300 Victoria Street, Richmond.

Printed by Doran Printing,

46 Industrial Drive, Braeside VIC 3195.

© Jesuit Publications 1993

Unsolicited manuscripts, including poetry and  
 fiction, will be returned only if accompanied by a  
 stamped, self-addressed envelope. Requests for  
 permission to reprint material from the magazine  
 should be addressed in writing to:

The editor, *Eureka Street* magazine,

PO Box 553, Richmond VIC 3121.

# A Toxic waste

AUGUST MARKS THE MOST TRAGIC misdirection of the century. In July 1945, the science of the Manhattan Project revealed a deadly face with the detonation of the first atomic bomb in the desert of New Mexico. In August 1945, the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were destroyed by atomic bombs. The horror of these events leached away trust in science and confirmed the growing sense of human powerlessness in the face of catastrophe.

The death camps of Europe were a revelation of human bestiality. The explosions in Japan showed to an awed and frightened world that we now had a matching technology with which to destroy ourselves. It has proved hard, during the remainder of the century, to maintain hope or ardent purpose.

So it was surprising and heartening to see the extent of protest at the French Government's decision, under Jacques Chirac's new Gaullist regime, to resume nuclear testing in the Pacific. In the short term, protest may not change French policy, directed as it is towards balancing its own internal domestic tensions. But it has invigorated a cynical world polity. Perhaps some of the flow-on energies can be put to good use here at home.

Australia at present has a double-edged policy on anti-personnel landmines. It supports and is a signatory to the United Nations Convention banning long-life, or 'dumb' mines—the kind that do not self-destruct within a designated period. It does not, at present, support a total ban on landmines. It argues, with some regret and not much conviction—if one is to go by Senator Gareth Evan's tone in replying to questions in the Senate—that the so-called 'smart' mines, the ones that do have inbuilt self-destruct mechanisms, are a legitimate weapon of war and important in forward defence.

There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that 'smart' mines, which are more expensive to produce, are not reliably smart and their use will be inhibited by cost. A total ban is the only sure way of bringing to a halt the by-now well-documented civilian terror that landmines generate.

Defending Australia's current stance, Senator Evans appeals to pragmatism. He argues that in the present climate it is better to go for bans which have some chance of obtaining international support.

But maybe it is about time to work on that climate of opinion by supporting instead the many organisations, and individuals, including United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Pope John Paul II, now calling for a total ban on the use and production of anti-personnel mines. It was possible to obtain international consensus on chemical and biological weapons. Why not on land mines?

There are no landmines laid in Texas or Oxfordshire or Provence, or the Black Forest or the Blue Mountains. Landmines are a third-world scourge. The profiteers are first-world countries. It is time to press for change. ■

—Morag Fraser



# War's common denominator

JAMES PATRICK LYNCH IS BURIED in Burma. He died there in November 1943 as a prisoner of the Imperial Japanese Army. Not much is known about Jim Lynch. His family came from Forbes in western NSW and moved to Sydney, where Jim, the youngest son, went to the Christian Brothers' College, Waverley. He played rugby, represented the school in athletics, was a prefect, and won a university exhibition. He took his LL.B. and began practice as a barrister. When war came he joined up and was posted to an artillery regiment of the Eighth Division. So he was in Singapore when the island fell in February 1942 and he became a prisoner of war.

Like many POWs, Jim Lynch kept a diary, brief annotations which he wrote up later when time and paper became available. Many of his pages were confiscated by guards. What survived was brought back to Australia by his mates and given to his family.

Although it has never been published, the Lynch diary offers an irreplaceable view into what it was like to be a POW. Fifty years after the Pacific war, Australians are coming to appreciate that this may be one of the peak experiences of the war. Milestones in the growth of appreciation have been the reassembling and dedication of a POW chapel at Duntroon and a mounting of a POW exhibition at the Australian War Memorial.

Visitors to the War Memorial exhibition may be surprised to have myths dispelled. In popular imagination Changi, the holding camp for most World War II POWs, is a sinister, deadly antechamber to hell. Certainly it was no holiday camp—as a terse text on the War Memorial wall recounts: 'Of nearly 22,400 Australians captured by the Japanese, over 8,000 died. Why did so many die? Essentially it was because they were starved'. Elsewhere a survivor estimates that in three-and-a-half years of internment, they got no more than a pound of meat each. Every prisoner thought about food often, as Jim Lynch's diary attests. (Anxiously he watched his weight fall until the chubby man of his enlistment photograph had been reduced to 60 kgs.)

Nevertheless, normal life went on in Changi. Murray Griffin was an official war artist who was a

POW there and his pictures record the normality of life inside the prison town. Here are concert parties, pantomimes, gardens, a duckyard, threadmaking machine, a sandal factory, malaria control, artificial limb

workshops, beds being debugged, rice cakes cooking and vitamin supplements being processed from grass. There are chapels where Mass is said (wine and hosts from the Singapore cathedral) and a hospital ward with pillows on the bed and pannikins on bedside tables. Even though the POW patients are noticeably thin, Changi was not a death camp.

It was otherwise on the Burma-Thailand railway, where 35 per cent of

Australian POW deaths occurred—a death for every railway sleeper, as someone has said. Jim Lynch was one of these. He was in the first detail of POWs sent to Burma to build an aerodrome and then to be put to work on the railway which, a few weeks before he died, would join the line pushed through from Thailand. His diary is a laconic, often ironic, record of this experience. Alongside the inhuman demands for more work and the brutality of the guards—he reports that he was bashed daily—sit his enjoyment of camp social life and warm appreciations of the kindness of local people who offered food. There were Sunday night concerts, debates twice a week, quiz shows and lectures. In the earliest weeks there was even enough stamina for football. Religion was one of his constants too; although undemonstrative, it was a normal part of his life—several Sundays carry a bare report, 'Communion ...poker'.

AS A SERGEANT, LYNCH KEPT an eye on morale. He noticed how Aussie humour kept the troops going; when, for example, they were ordered to sing on the way to work they would coin lyrics that mocked their captors. In captivity everyone was on the same level. University lecturers and stock exchange johnnies wore lap-laps and herded cattle just like coolies. Passing through one camp, he saw a Sydney solicitor hawking ginger beer through the huts. Their universe had concentrated to a tiny ball and they must live for the moment. From his school days at Waverley a Latin motto came to him, *Carpe Diem*. 'One day,' he wrote, 'I'll



*Modes of remembrance: The Avenue of Honour, Ballarat Victoria, which commemorates those lost in the Great War.*

*Photograph: Bill Thomas*



## A TIME TO SPEAK

### WOMEN RECLAIMING PRIESTHOOD

Second National Annual  
Gathering of Ordination of  
Catholic Women

**Saturday August  
25, 1995**

St Aloysius College  
47 Upper Pitt Street  
Milsons Point 2061

**Cost \$25  
(conc. \$15)**

For further details:  
(02) 361 6546/363 1749

*Ordination of Catholic Women* is a group of women and men who advocate the ordination of women, believing that an ordained ministry of both men and women would make the Church fuller and richer and more able to bring the love of God to a wounded world.

### THE CHURCHES: NATIVE TO AUSTRALIA OR ALIEN INTRUDERS?

Collected papers of a 1994 seminar bring together issues arising from post-Mabo legislation and presents alternative views to those fashionably expressed on national reconciliation.

Contributors include former Chief Justice Sir Harry Gibbs, Professor Geoffrey Blainey, Pastor Paul Albrecht.

from: **The Galatians  
Group**  
PO Box 226  
Armadale Vic  
3143

return, my palate cleansed, revitalised, whetted to savour to the full the joys of a life in the happiest land in the world.' Alas, it was not to be.

No one knows exactly how Sergeant Lynch died. Cerebral malaria, the notification to his family read, and that may be so. The final pages of his diary record the outbreak of cholera after they were moved to a diseased camp. Non-stop rain, ulcerated feet and work speed-ups resulted in fever. As he grew weaker, he noticed how many of his comrades were dying. His last sentence recorded the death that month of 125 men in another Australian force. Then he himself joined them.

Ignorant of further details, we can be sure of one other thing: he did not die alone. Another railway diarist, Stan Arneil, wrote: 'When a man died, he died in an aura of love and brotherhood ... you died with your head in the lap of a mate, with somebody holding your hand, with somebody with a hand on your forehead saying a little prayer, and people actually feeling sorry to see you die.' The POW camps saw the finest flowering of that old-time Australian belief in mateship. Those who survived have asserted that what kept them alive was mateship. They

pointed to how Australians had shared their food; how they had worked together to keep camp sites free from disease, by contrast with other national groups; and how they sold their possessions (as the Lynch diary also attests) to buy comforts and medical supplies for mates who were ill. As Paul Keating said last year, mateship was never tested so much as in the POW camps and nowhere was the triumph of mateship so emphatic. So commemorations of the end of the Pacific war should focus on the camps, however undiplomatic that may seem.

Celebration of mateship is also a celebration of the common man. There are glorious names associated with the POW story, who will be forever famous for their qualities of self-denying leadership. Nevertheless, the search for something to say 50 years later should not allow a cult of personality to develop. This pinnacle of Australian experience belongs equally to all who have stood, and maybe died, there. This story belongs to the unknown soldier. That is why it can be told by recalling the diary of an ordinary Sydney man, now almost quite forgotten, Sergeant Jim Lynch. ■

**Edmund Campion** is a contributing editor of *Eureka Street*.

COMMENT: 3

MICHAEL PUTNEY

## I This stumbling block

IN 1982 I HEARD A LECTURE at the University of Fribourg, given by Metropolitan Damaskinos of Tranoupolis, the Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Geneva. In it he described a lunch he had had in Rome with Pope John Paul II during a conference on 'the Holy Spirit'.

He had been a keynote speaker with the recently deceased, great ecumenist, Yves Congar OP, and the influential Protestant theologian Jurgen Moltmann.

The conference marked the 1600th anniversary of the First Council of Constantinople and the 1550th anniversary of the Council of Ephesus.

During lunch the Pope remarked

that the conference, which he also had attended, seemed to have resolved the major issue which kept the Eastern and Western churches apart. This was the issue of the 'filioque', or the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son, as found in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. His conclusion was that the Churches of the East and the Roman Catholic Church ought now to move rapidly towards reunion.

Metropolitan Damaskinos then offered the opinion that there was still one major obstacle keeping the two communions apart. When the Pope asked what this was, he replied: 'It's you, Holy Father.' The Pope, he



explained, then laughed and said he hoped that issue might be able to be resolved as well.

Now thirteen years later, one reads in Pope John Paul II's 12th encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint*, the following words: 'As Bishop of Rome I am fully aware, as I have reaffirmed in the present encyclical letter, that Christ ardently desires the full and visible communion of all those communities in which, by virtue of God's faithfulness, his Spirit dwells. I am convinced that I have a particular responsibility in this regard, above all in acknowledging the ecumenical aspirations of the majority of the Christian communities and in heeding the request made of me to find a way of exercising the primacy which, while in no way renouncing what is essential to its mission, is nonetheless open to a new situation'(95).

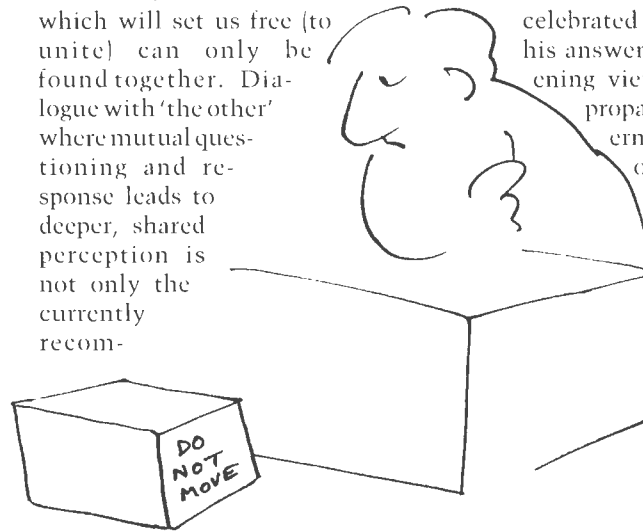
The Pope goes on to refer to an exchange he had with the Patriarch of Constantinople, Dimitrios I, in 1988, when he confessed that the papacy which should have been a service to the unity of the church sometimes 'manifested itself in a very different light' and that he prayed for the Holy Spirit to enlighten all pastors and theologians of the two communions so that they could seek together ways in which his ministry might accomplish 'a service of love recognised by all.'

Finally he calls again for church leaders and theologians 'to engage with me in a patient and fraternal dialogue on this subject, a dialogue in which, leaving useless controversies behind, we could listen to one another' (96). In these two short paragraphs this new encyclical has gone to the very heart of the problem of division and pointed the way forward to a more hopeful future.

At the heart of the division between the other great Christian world communions and the Roman Catholic communion is the role of the Bishop of Rome. This was made clear in the Anglican-Roman Catholic international dialogue and, in one way or another, in all the major dialogues involving the Roman Catholic Church. Even on the local level here in Australia, the dialogues the Catholic Church has with the Uniting, Anglican and Lutheran Churches all highlight that one day the

question of the papacy will have to be faced. In a sense the participants wait in hope that the international dialogues will solve the problem for them.

The way forward to deal with this question can only be the way of ecumenism. The Roman Catholic Church can never explain its understanding clearly enough or reform its practice of papacy decisively enough on its own. The fundamental truth of the ecumenical movement is that the truth which will set us free (to unite) can only be found together. Dialogue with 'the other' where mutual questioning and response leads to deeper, shared perception is not only the currently recom-



mended way to undertake inquiry or research in a postmodern world, but it is also a theologically sound way, given the Christian belief that the Holy Spirit is at work in everyone.

What is most heartening about this recognition that the exercise of the papal ministry will need to change, is that the interpretation and recommendation comes from Pope John Paul II himself. Some who do not approve of him might doubt his sincerity. Others will be surprised because they do not perceive him as really committed to ecumenism.

I do not believe his stance in this encyclical is inconsistent. It is only the clearest expression of a profound dimension of his papacy which has been steadily growing since the beginning.

It is always dangerous to try to be too sure about what is really going on in the heart of a leader, secular or religious, and to distinguish this from what he or she has to say because of their public role and what are really the thoughts of their minders and not their opinion at all. Certainly on

the level of public utterance and gesture, Pope John Paul II is unequalled in his commitment to ecumenism. It is hard to imagine that all these have been but empty words and actions.

Perhaps the best context for understanding the positive tone of his new encyclical is a document of November last year entitled in English 'As the Third Millennium Draws Near.' There is an urgency in this document about what needs to be done if the year 2000, is to be celebrated as a Year of Jubilee—his answer to the crazy, threatening views of the year 2000 propagated by some modern sects, Christian and otherwise. Within the wide ranging and demanding renewal he wants to see, leading up to the year 2000, are 'ecumenical initiatives so that we can celebrate the Great Jubilee, if not completely united, at least much closer to

overcoming the divisions of the second millennium' (34). Given that there are only five years to go to the Year of Jubilee, I think this new encyclical is an attempt to provoke those ecumenical initiatives he considers essential to its celebration.

There is much else to reflect on in the encyclical, e.g. his call for a common martyrology. One noticeable feature is its emphasis upon the Eastern Churches. This is not surprising because the division between East and West is the most profound of all and overcoming it seems to be a particular desire of John Paul II. This becomes obvious when one glances at another letter, *Oriente Lumen*, which also came out in May.

This is a letter on the Eastern Churches and may well be the most positive statement ever made about them by a Western pope. The title translates as 'The Light of the East' and that light is praised for twenty-eight paragraphs.

Ecumenism is not easy work these days. Changes in society and in intellectual life have raised many questions about the enterprise. The



difficulties of taking the hard steps seem to have stalled so many dialogues that many participants have just lost interest or given up.

*Ut Unum Sint* is a shot in the arm for weary ecumenists if for no other reason than its sheer enthusiasm. Some passages are less exciting, others will be found disappointing by some ecumenists, but

the call by Pope John Paul for help in working out how to exercise his ministry is enough for me to keep going. For me it is a sign again that God will still surprise us whenever we feel like giving up. ■

**Michael Putney** is a systematic theologian. He was recently ordained a Roman Catholic auxiliary bishop in the Brisbane archdiocese.

protracted: Gielgud will probably plan the programs to be presented in the first 12-18 months of her successor's reign.)

The board's announcement set the rumours going again, and at this year's annual general meeting the chairman, Tim Cox, tempered his praise of Gielgud with the comment that if she stayed there could be 'a continuation of friction throughout the company'. His frankness was astonishing by Australian Ballet standards, especially since it concerned someone who still had 19 months to serve in the company's top job.

Comments from the anti-Gielgud forces imply that her single-minded absorption with ballet isolates her from the real world in general and the 'Australian ethos' in particular.

By contrast, Ross Stretton, a Golden Age principal often mentioned as her successor, is seen as not just formally qualified—someone to bring new perspectives to artistic policy—but attractively close to being your average Aussie bloke (he and his wife, former AB dancer Valmai Roberts, have three children). After leaving the AB he danced with a British provincial company and the Joffrey Ballet before becoming a principal with the USA's leading company, the American Ballet Theatre. For the past few years Stretton, now 42, has been the ABT's assistant artistic director and has at times been virtually in charge of policy.

The Melbourne-based AB is our only truly national performing arts company. It tours regularly around Australia. As our main cultural flag-waver, it goes overseas at least once every 18 months. This pleases the dancers and, through travel allowances, boosts their incomes. But the company's finances are showing the strain. The AB's increasingly desperate pleas for more help from the Federal Government would hardly get a less sympathetic hearing if the company was led by an Australian—especially one born, as Stretton was, in Canberra! ■

**Neil Jillett**, a Melbourne writer, has been reviewing the Australian Ballet's performances, on and off stage, for more than 20 years.

#### COMMENT: 4

NEIL JILLETT

## Ballet, hai!

**T**HE AUSTRALIAN BALLET has promised to name a new artistic director some time between December and March.

At the company's last general meeting, in May, the semi-retrenched incumbent, Maina Gielgud, defended her record in a way that could be interpreted as a job reapplication, and some of her fans cling to the hope that she will stay put. But a more likely outcome is that our national dance company will, for the first time in its 33 years, have an Australian man setting its artistic policy.

Yes, the Australian knight Robert Helpmann did stints, as a soloist and in *pas de deux* with Peggy van Praagh, as artistic director, but his contribution was little more than a token.

The Australian Ballet was founded as an antipodean reflection of Britain's Royal Ballet. It will remain that way, although the company has imposed its own vigorous character on the basically British shape. The advertisement for a new director (applications closed at the end of last month) confirmed that a main requirement was to 'present an exciting and balanced repertoire of new and existing classical and contemporary ballets'.

For most of the company's 35 years, that brief has been largely in the care of three English women with backgrounds in British and European ballet—van Praagh, Anne Woolliams and Gielgud. The women haven't had it all quite their own way. Peter Bahen, chief executive from 1966 to

1983, not only built the company's financial base; his participation in artistic decisions helped to spur the dancers into a strike in 1981.

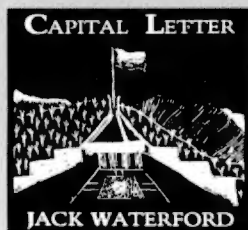
Bahen left the company soon after Gielgud arrived in 1983, and his successors, Noel Pelly and Ian McRae, have let her formulate artistic policy, within the bounds of financial responsibility.

No one seriously denies that by 1990 Gielgud had restored the demoralised post-strike company to something like the standards of its golden age in the mid-1970s. But she has also been accused of eccentricities that supposedly contributed to unhappiness among the dancers.

Like many beleaguered institutions, the Australian Ballet pretended it had no problems of its own creation—it and Gielgud were the innocent victims of maliciously instigated media speculation. The pretence was maintained by the board at the annual general meeting last year, soon after the announcement by the company's star partnership, Lisa Pavane and her husband Greg Horsman, that they were joining the English National Ballet because of disagreements with Gielgud.

Last December the board mysteriously announced that Gielgud was to take a slow ride on the skids; she would leave at the end of 1996. (Matters could be even more





# Go go Gareth Gareth

**S**CENE: A COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT meeting several years ago. Australia's Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans, comes out of an intense closed session and into the Australian office, where stenographers stand by. To the first he dictates, off the top of his head, the draft communiqué. Moving quickly to the second, he dictates an account of everything which has taken place, the deals, the concessions, and the understandings not on the official record. Not a little horse-trading has taken place, and, by this account, the person who has negotiated the agreement is Gareth himself.

To the next stenographer, Senator Evans dictates a warm personal note to Zimbabwe's Prime Minister, thanking him for his interventions and assistance, reiterating some of the understandings and promising he owes him one. A fusillade of further letters to other heads of state follows.

The head of his department and of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and some other officials stand by. When the torrent of words comes to a halt Gareth pauses. 'Well, what do you think?'

His secretary is nothing if not effusive. 'Foreign Minister, that was a masterly performance. May I say what a pleasure it is to work alongside a person so thoroughly on top of his job, and what a great benefit Australia derives from having a person so conscious of its interests...

The Secretary of Prime Minister's comes out with like praise. 'Senator Evans, I think you have covered the field admirably. And a good result too. Well done.'

'What do you think, Sandy?' asks Gareth of the Prime Minister's adviser, Sandy Holloway, these days a permanent head in his own right.

'You know Gareth, if you put your mind to it, you could probably make assistant secretary in Foreign Affairs on merit'.

Nobody doubts that Gareth Evans is staggeringly clever. What people doubt is whether he is smart. He has probably one of the most sophisticated understandings of the international scene, of where Australia's long-term interests lie. What people doubt is whether his massive command of the detail and his deep interest in policy make him a real politician, either in the local or the international sense. A real politician, like John Howard, knows something of ambush and of the right moment to posture.

But poor old Gareth does not seem to be able to take a trick. When the French announced, quite predictably, that they were about to resume nuclear testing in the Pacific, our Foreign Minister made mild deprecatory noises but explained the context of it from the French domestic political point of view. He might have done better to understand Australia's domestic politics. Fancy the Labor Party, arch-posturer on issues nuclear, being out-postured, and from the Left, by the Liberal Party on an issue such as this. Fancy it being manoeuvred to the point where, in Gareth Evans' own Suez, he ends up leading a forlorn delegation of Pacific non-powers to be humiliated and ignored in Paris.

Then he gets in trouble again over Indonesia. It is a country which has been assiduously wooed by a number of leaders and ministers, not least Senator Evans himself, long before Paul Keating had ever heard of it. There are, of course, a number of prickly issues between the two countries, such as the question of East Timor. But one of the achievements of people such as Senator Evans and Kim Beazley is that they have put government relations

on such a broad plane that they even exchange sharp words with each other from time to time. And one of the features of that understanding is some official Australian realisation of the subtlety of Javanese politics and language, where circumlocution and the hint substitute for plain speaking.

Senator Evans appears to have done everything within his powers to drop the hint that its nominee Ambassador, General Herman Mantiri, would be an embarrassment to Australian-Indonesian relations. But no one seemed to understand his Javanese subtlety. Perhaps a little exasperated by suggestions that he had gone wimpish, he made Australian opposition known loudly and publicly. Jakarta was forced to react. After several days it withdrew the appointment, making its displeasure, particularly at Gareth Evans, quite clear.

And, although the move is unlikely to have serious effects on a fairly stable relationship it should occasion little surprise if Indonesian statesmanship finds scope for retaliation—like at the next APEC talks, for example. Or in ASEAN politics.

For the press, of course, it is all grist to the mill. Even the most charitable observer would not think that Senator Evans had been having a wonderful year, since he stumbles over the Australian Secret Intelligence Service or his less-than-overwhelming success over Indian Ocean regionalism. There is no doubting, however, that it has a rather bleary eye upon him since he announced an intention to change the Commonwealth Crimes Act to make it easier to jail journalists for disclosing national security information. The pressure has not helped.

Nor, probably does it help any of his other ambitions. At the domestic political level, he has to rate as candidate for next Leader of the Opposition, but the doubts about his political instincts have emerged anew.

He would like his options open for the next High Court vacancy, though that will probably not occur during a Labor government, unless a High Court judge agrees to be the last Governor-General. And his UN hopes, forlorn once the incumbent decided he wanted another term, have hardly been improved by some of his recent diplomacy.

The problem is that the errors of political judgment he has displayed were not really errors of principle. Gareth Evans has a pretty sensible long-term view when it comes to foreign policy, and usually, when it comes to the nation's real interests, (as opposed to the interests of those who feel the need for a parade of their consciences to little effect) is a better judge than most of his critics. One reason he has become somewhat maladroit of late, indeed, is that he actually *does* command some significant international respect. He has been around for a long time. He knows most of the actors pretty well. His appreciations of what is going on command attention. In many forums, he (and Australia) are fairly disinterested players, actually keen on good outcomes, and recognised as such.

These bring him, and Australia, some goodwill, and, in forums where interests are not threatened, some credit it can draw on. But when interests are actually at stake, the weight Australia can bring to bear is a measure of itself, not the personality of its Foreign Minister—something an array of usually competent Australian foreign ministers have always tended to forget. It might be time for Gareth to move on. ■

Jack Waterford is editor of the *Canberra Times*.



## Press gangs

*From John Collins, former Managing Director of Jacaranda Wiley.*

Frank Stilwell (*Eureka Street*, June/July 1995) may have devised a slightly awkward OzEcon but he certainly made a point that is far too often forgotten or avoided. That point was that decisions, key decisions, are made in foreign boardrooms regardless of Australia's national interest. National interest, whether the 'nation' be dominion, commonwealth or republic, is the very last thing on the mind of the so-called multinational or global corporation whose only interest is its own!

And 'Yes' again, Frank Stilwell. Cultural imperialism is very much the result when the globals control so much of a country's publishing industry. I watched from close quarters as first the UK and then the USA took over financial control of Jacaranda Press in Brisbane.

Local publishing gets squeezed and then is turned off so that the needs of Global HQ can be met.

At least the Jacaranda name still exists. What would Andrew Fabinyi think if he returned to find the name Cheshire erased from the Longman shingle?

So, much and all as I'd like to read Marvell afresh, I would have to accept it from global Penguin and so the sad cycle is reinforced!

**John Collins**  
Moggill, QLD

## The Waste Land

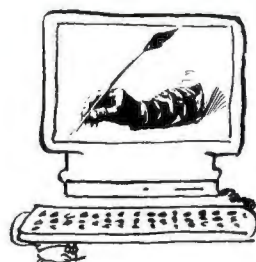
*From Robin Arnold*

I enjoyed Frank Stilwell's article (*Eureka Street*, June/July 1995) and only regret that I shall not live long enough to migrate to OzEcon, his hypothetical country.

I too have an imaginary country. It lies to Australia's north; perhaps it's more of a region than a country. Let us call it Himalaysia.

Exhaustive logging of the upland forests of Himalaysia has destituted the forest people but brought unexpected benefits elsewhere. Soil washed from the denuded forest areas has re-deposited in the lowlands, producing large areas of rich silt plains. This, together with climatic changes brought about by the enhanced greenhouse effect, has produced ideal conditions for cereal crops. The uplands, now devoid

*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.



of trees and people, appeared barren, but enterprising agriculturalists have developed pasture plants that grow well there. Cattle and sheep are thriving.

The Himalaysia region can now produce wheat, rice, meat and wool at a fraction of what these products cost Australian farmers. Not only has this eliminated Australian farm products from export markets, but even the domestic market has to be supplied by imports. After the enthusiasm with which the GATT agreement was greeted, Australia can hardly put up barriers to these imports. Remember the indignation in Australia when the Japanese actually wanted to grow their own rice.

There is now virtually no work for Australian farmers, and the countryside has been devastated. In the big cities shanty towns are beginning to appear.

It couldn't happen? It couldn't happen to Frank Stilwell's OzEcon, because that country has a policy of self reliance and only modest overseas trade.

## Counselling

If you or someone you know could benefit from professional counselling please phone Martin Prescott, BSW, MSW, MAASW, clinical member of the Association of Catholic Psychotherapists. Individuals, couples and families catered for:

St Kilda, (03) 9534 8700  
Bentleigh, (03) 9557 2595

But it is happening to many countries in the Third World, not only under GATT agreements, but also in accordance with the World Bank's 'structural adjustment programs'. It is now happening to Mexican farmers, as cheap grain from the USA is allowed into the country under NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Free Trade is great—for the winners.

**Robin Arnold**  
Hampton, VIC

## I never said that

*From Edmund Campion, Catholic Theological Faculty, Catholic Institute of Sydney.*

*The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism* edited by Richard P. McBrien is now in Australia. Its price and quality are likely to make it popular with *Eureka Street* readers. May I therefore advise that in my own article on Catholicism in Australia there are two strange sentences laudatory of the church's presence among Aborigines. I neither wrote those sentences nor even saw them before my own copy of the encyclopedia arrived. I would ask readers not to attribute them to me.

**Edmund Campion**  
Manly, NSW

## Curing some ills

*From Dr Paul Dignam*

I welcome any article that alerts the community to the plight of the mentally ill, and Peter Collins was obviously pushed for space to cover a massive subject (*Eureka Street*, June/July 1995) but even so I think some subjects require further elaboration. I would make three points.

While there have never been enough services, it is ironic that the predicament of Sue, who could not get help till she grabbed a knife, is perhaps more common now than 10 years ago: 'Community' psychiatric services, flooded with cases of common human misery and chaos as well as their 'core' psychiatric caseload, have had to develop simplistic criteria to help their relatively inexperienced staff ration services; the 'inpatient' services have lost beds and staff, and are back in the revolving-door business, and the public health system overall has lost a wealth of medical and nursing experience as, state by state, the

economically driven 'de-institutionalisation' has tramped clumsily through carefully built teams and systems and demoralised a generation of professionals. Fifteen years ago Sue would have been seen by her home-visiting GP (remember them?) or collected by an alert cop not neurotic about infringing liberties, delivered to a hospital that always found another bed, and treated by an experienced psychiatrist. The conditions were not ideal, to be sure, but there have been winners and losers in the new deal.

There are winners and losers in new legislation too. It is one thing to highlight the shortcomings of mental health legislation by comparing it with the UN ideals. It is another to document large numbers of actual case infringements, and still another to assume that new laws will prevent them. There have been small if dramatic exceptions in recent decades, but as a rule far more people suffer from not being treated for their illness than from any infringements of their rights when they are treated. Ask them and their relatives!

On the subject of tardive dyskinesia, Peter lapses briefly into tabloid journalism ('disturbing evidence ... unspecified number ... cruelly afflicted') when his factual base is a little off. Tardive dyskinesia (involuntary writhing movements of the lips and tongue) is a known side-effect of the anti-psychotics, occurs with a known prevalence (perhaps 15% of patients on long term therapy) and only very occasionally reaches the disabling state to which he refers.

For most patients on anti-psychotics there has, until recently, been no alternative treatment, and non-treatment is only occasionally a viable option.

In Australia it has been recommended practice that informed consent be obtained as soon as practical, but in reality this is usually weeks after the crisis, when the patient regains the ability to realistically review their predicament without the intrusion of psychotic material and the derailment of thinking that the drugs have contained.

Most patients then choose to stay on medicine. In America, of course, the civil-liberties capital, you can be certified but refuse treatment, and stay in an asylum untreated for weeks: I

know where I'd rather be.

But with Peter's central theme I have no argument: despite the reports and the grandstanding, the range of services is still abysmal. The mentally ill are ill-equipped to represent themselves, their carers are too burnt out to take up the political cudgels, their therapists are run ragged, and the general public remains frightened and ignorant about a range of disorders that will affect one in five Australians. It is this fear and ignorance that is our greatest enemy, and we will have to keep striving to dispel it.

Paul Dignam  
Hampstead Gardens, SA



## Dimmed visions

From Peter Hunt

I read James Griffin's 'Darkening the Church Door' (*Eureka Street*, April 1995) with fascination.

Having grown up an avid reader of *The Catholic Worker* and *News Weekly* which both espoused the wide distribution of property in small, mixed farming, small businesses, and co-operatives, I would have liked to have seen more attention to the 'distributists' mission of the Melbourne laymen who were associated with these papers. *The Catholic Worker* lost this mission in about the early '60s and, as Paul Ormonde records, Santamaria felt that he had to concentrate so much on mere survival for Australia during the Cold War that he gave less attention to, though he still supported, his original distributist vision. Patrick O'Farrell was not only 'not as conversant with the Melbourne scene as he later became'; he also was

not aware of the developments in the '60s in which Santamaria and D G M Jackson were under criticism for being too supportive of the Menzies-big-business forces which seemed so patently to contradict the radical questioning of big capitalism that *The Catholic Worker* and the Movement both engaged in during the '40s and '50s. Thus, O'Farrell wrote of Santamaria in the sixties as though he was as obviously engaged in the distributist struggle as he had been in the decades before. The apparent 'wedding' of the Movement (transformed into the National Civic Council) with the Menzies government was one of convenience in the main, though I was surprised by an article last year which recorded Santamaria's Sunday visits to the home of Menzies.

*The Catholic Worker* lost its way by adopting the shallower 'left-wing' policies of US 'liberal' thought and 'New-Left' attitudes, and so we underwent in Australia a partial eclipse of the strong traditions of Catholic social teaching. By this I do not mean merely the Encyclicals which were often not as richly informed as they should have been, but the enlightened anti-bourgeois and decentralist crusade of Belloc and Chesterton, and the personalist philosophy of Jacques Maritain.

Permit me to make a final comment. Arthur Calwell was harshly judged, as Griffin relates, and I must say that because of a personal experience which my wife and I had of his kindness many years ago, I know that he was a gentleman. However, like many others, he was naïve about Communists.

In 1967 in Collingwood Town Hall he took part in a public meeting of the James Connolly Association, along with Vincent Buckley and a few other luminaries. None of those speakers seemed to realise that this was a Communist organisation using the Irish cause as a front for Communist influence; though, it must be added that Connolly, a very brave man, was a Marxist.

With so much of our life today dominated by Corporate concerns (as 'Nugget' Coombs has said), and a growing gap between rich and poor, it's time for a return to the earlier vision of *The Catholic Worker*.

Peter Hunt  
Winmalee, NSW



## Tell the truth

From David Griffiths

Thank you for printing my letter about the need for reform of science (April) but I was puzzled by the editorial note that Professor Ian Plimer (author of *Telling Lies for God*, a polemic against 'creation science') 'is not a committee member for the Victorian Skeptics, and so far as he is aware there is no organisation of that name (but) he does subscribe to the *Australian Skeptic* ...' As this apparently reflects on my credibility may I briefly reply: is Prof. Plimer sceptical about the Skeptics?

The November 1994 Australian Skeptics Victorian Newsletter states that Plimer is 'a member of the Victorian Committee'. An advertisement for *Telling Lies for God* on the same

can Steel, while conceding 'Ian does an excellent job as a skeptic', is highly critical of some 'ill based (and flagrantly wrong) statements' in Plimer's paper. Even skeptics can be wrong, it seems.

Finally, while skepticism is part of the analytical process, in my view its importance is exaggerated. Skepticism, as a goal, is a cult of negativity. Science should be the pursuit of Truth.

David Griffiths  
North Fitzroy, VIC

## No, father

From K. P. Curry, chief administrative officer, St Vincent de Paul, Victoria.

For some months, we suspect since the Society of St Vincent de Paul's Victorian membership elected to withdraw financial support from his ambitious and well-intentioned magazine, *Australian Catholics*, Fr Michael Kelly has been 'in turmoil' with us. But we're grateful at least that he's given us equal space to respond to his 'What's the matter with Vinnies?' (*Eureka Street*, May 1995).

Michael states 'John O'Brien, Victorian state president, criticised the development of public advocacy on behalf of the poor as part of the Society's service ...' This is not true. Take as one recent example the Victorian branch aggressively and successfully challenging banks charging fees for accounts of under

\$500.

The assertion that John O'Brien accuses the national council of the Society of 'financial mismanagement' is not correct—the concerns expressed by state presidents (not only Mr O'Brien) queried the value being obtained from such expenditure.

It is most unfair for Michael to credit only one person with the 'object of reform to be a renewal of the SVDP that concentrated on the spiritual formation of members...' The Victorian branch has two full-time employees engaged in formation, training and recruitment plus a most active committee driving this important portfolio.

Michael states 'the antiquity problem is a real one for the Society ... with

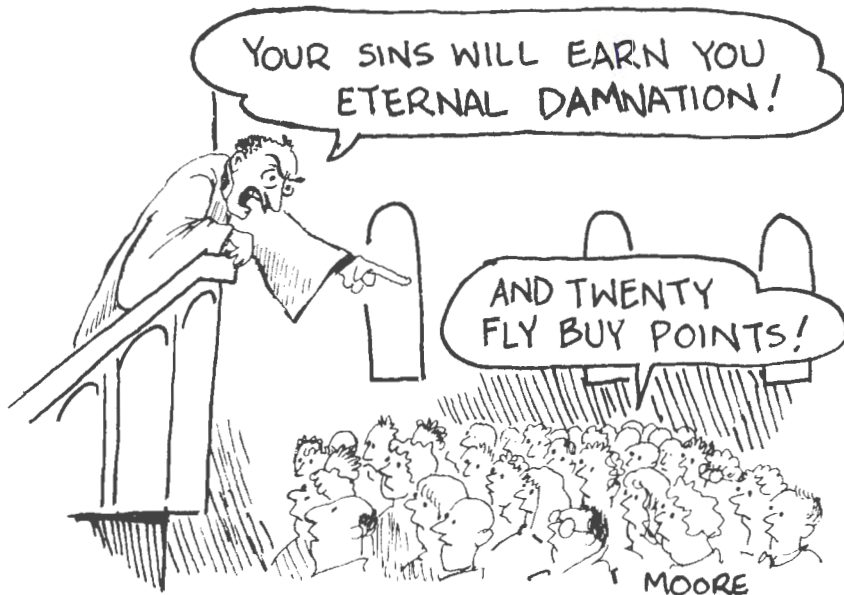
an average age in the high 60s ...'. In fact, the average age of members in Victoria is 61. However, there is a positive campaign to encourage younger people to join and to increase the female membership, which has grown to 45 per cent in recent times.

Michael's accusation that the Society 'increasingly resembles a welfare bureaucracy that gets life from government money and policy priorities' could not be further from the truth in Victoria. In 1994-95, the Victorian branch provided assistance in cash and kind worth \$6.8 million, of which less than one per cent was provided by governments. In terms of policy in Victoria the priorities are very clear: conference members visiting people where they live, be that in their homes, in hospital, in institutions, even on the street, dispensing spiritual and financial assistance to those in need.

It also is untrue to say that in Victoria 'its state-based administrative structure siphons power and resources away from the local level and blocks action at a national level'. In fact, conference members in Victoria via a state-wide network of regional and diocesan councils, can communicate effectively with the parent body which is legally responsible for the work of the Society in Victoria, the state council. To service State Council and the large conference network in Victoria there is a central administrative group, a small group of dedicated staff which is, quite literally, 'overworked and underpaid'. Michael Kelly and others to whom he refers might well prefer to see a number of bureaucracies at diocesan level, but in our view such a network would likely be cumbersome and extremely expensive.

It is equally untrue to assert that we 'block actions at national level'. The current administration under John O'Brien has always been keen to support an effective national council. Regrettably, however, decisions on appointments (of increasing number of staff) and other expenditures began to be taken against the wishes of the majority of the states which, after all, were responsible for supplying the bulk of the funds.

Perhaps the greatest distortion is Michael's claim that 'NCC influence has been active at crucial points. Its presence in the membership of the executive of the Victorian State Council has been decisive in that council's action over national issues and its



page states that autographed copies are available through the Victorian Skeptics. The publication was previously titled *Victorian Skeptics Newsletter*. Prof. Plimer's name has appeared in several but not all editions as a member of the Editorial Committee, e.g. February 1994.

He certainly does a little more than subscribe to the *Australian Skeptic*. Vol 14 No. 3 of that Journal has the text of a paper presented by Prof. Plimer at the Skeptics National Convention titled: *A Sceptical Look at Greenhouse*. The paper contains interesting data on the rise and fall of land masses relative to sea level, and the contribution of volcanoes to emission of carbon dioxide. However, in Vol 15 No. 1, astronomer Dr Dun-

dealings with other individuals or groups attached to *AD2000*. The facts are—the Victorian state council comprises 15 members on its executive, none of whom has any connection with the NCC and we totally deny any influence on decisions made by state council by the NCC. In fact, it might be said that the Society of St Vincent de Paul's connection with the Society of Jesus, via *Australian Catholics*, has been of greater influence.

We in the Society of St Vincent de Paul strive to be obedient to the teachings of the Catholic Church and respect the views expressed in encyclicals. However, we stand accused in *Eureka Street* of 'stubbornly refusing to examine at any depth issues of theological and spiritual renewal'. On this score we can say only, so be it.

There are additional broad and unsubstantiated statements and innuendo in the publisher's editorial in the May edition of *Eureka Street*, which are not to his credit nor worthy of a response. The truth of the matter is, many of the published goals of the national council may well have been achieved had consensus decision making been the bottom line.

**K. P. Curry**  
Melbourne, VIC

## Hijacked

*From Brian Murnane, President, national council of St Vincent de Paul Society 1991-1994.*

I write in response to the article 'What's the matter with Vinnies?', *Eureka Street*, May 1995.

The members of the Society of St Vincent de Paul have for the past 20 years been urging their leaders to undertake wide-ranging reform and renewal of the society, specifically in the areas of:

- \* Spirituality.
- \* Being a compassionate presence with marginalised people.
- \* Developing structures that facilitate service, human development, and address the causes of poverty.
- \* Youth involvement.
- \* Transforming the Society into a post-Vatican II lay association.

These issues have continually emerged from all the national assemblies: Minto 1973, Eastwood 1984, Regional Council Presidents Assembly 1988, and member consultations such as the membership survey 1987, the Simons review 1990 and Society vision

and structure 1991.

In 20 years the members' desire for reform has been stalled by the protracted resistance of a few state council presidents.

During my term it was a group of state council presidents who rejected the stated goals for reform. To restrict and control the reform agenda, they abandoned consensus in decision making and replaced it with voting. When their attempt to restrict voting on national council issues to state council presidents only, failed, the Presidents of Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia decided to destroy the reform and renewal process and the national council by seceding.

The seceded State Council Presidents have now been successful in restricting the vote for my successor to nine (State Council Presidents and two National Administrator Committee members) out of a total society membership of forty thousand.

What's the matter with Vinnies? The members' desire for reform and renewal has been hijacked by a powerful minority.

**Brian Murnane**  
Eschol Park, NSW

## Call ignored

*From Richard McMahon*

As a member of the St Vincent de Paul Society I have become increasingly angered and dismayed with our Society's infighting over the past 12 months. Your article entitled 'What's the matter with Vinnies?' (May 1995 issue) came as a welcome appeal for the urgent reform needed within our Vincentian family.

I believe that the reform of the Society must start in the hearts of individual members. Conversion is a necessary part of renewal, summed up in Jesus' call to 'repent and believe the good news.' Before we can change our ways there must be recognition, accountability and above all forgiveness for past errors. All Society members share in this painful split, all Society members must look inward at our own culpability. Our leaders have been entrusted with the greatest responsibilities, and therefore bear the greatest potential culpability for this crisis. Have our leaders been brought to account?

The initial conflict was between the seceded state presidents and the

rest of the national council—consisting of the national president, board and two state presidents. The President General of the Society was called in by the seceded state presidents to resolve the conflict. His decision was that the national and seceded state presidents should step aside. The national president complied and the seceded state presidents refused. Consequently, the national board has been effectively removed.

What I continue to find incredible in the entire episode is that no action was taken against the secessionists. When will these actions be accounted for? Their dramatic act of secession generated an international incident and ruptured the Society.

I would be very interested to learn what alternative steps were taken before they decided to secede. Was there no other solution? If some of the state presidents were unhappy with the national president's leadership, could they not at least have appealed to the national membership first for a solution before seceding? When did members hear that the state presidents were going to secede? Were the reasons made clear? Did the other side of the story get told? I believe that the seceded state presidents 'rushed in where angels fear to tread.'

Five state presidents seceded stating their disaffiliation from the Society. One would have expected by definition—that by seceding they withdrew all involvement from the organisation. But they continued to meddle in the upcoming elections when the President General clearly directed that they should not interfere. They continue to withhold state levies to the national council at a time when the national office is desperately short of funds. They continue to remain seceded. Surely, after successfully appealing to the President General to keep their positions intact, why did they not humbly appeal to be returned to the fold in the interests of unity? What prevented their immediate return? Have they placed conditions upon their return, or do they not deem it necessary to be reunited with the Vincentian Family?

As far as I know, neither their initial act of secession nor their continued interference has been addressed. But their acts of secession must be challenged, otherwise a precedent is set for the future. If, after the July national election, they become dissatisfied with the new national president,



# The Philia Prize

For Creative Initiatives in Religious  
Work in Australia



**Nominations for the 1995 Philia Prize  
are now open.**

*The Prize will acknowledge those who in  
practical and effective ways have enhanced an  
appreciation of religion and spirituality in  
contemporary Australian life.*

**For further details and application forms contact:**

The Philia Prize, PO Box 108, Malvern VIC 3144  
Telephone: (03) 9531 1383 Facsimile: (03) 9525 6841

An initiative of the World Conference on Religion  
and Peace (WCRP).

Sponsored in 1995 by the Commonwealth Government as a  
project for the International Year for Tolerance.

Internationally Renowned  
Catholic Feminist Theologian

## Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza

Krister Stendahl Professor of Divinity, Harvard  
Divinity School. Author of *In Memory of Her*,  
*Jesus: Miriam's Child*, *Sophia's Prophet* and  
other acclaimed books and articles.

will speak on

### Discipleship of Equals: Reality and Vision

Friday 18 August 1995  
at 8pm Pharmacy College, Royal  
Parade (Tramstop 16), Parkville  
**Cost \$10**

Arranged by Women and the Australian Church (WATAC)  
Victoria in Co-operation with Christian Feminists Groups in  
Melbourne.

**PUBLIC LECTURE**

what is to stop them from seceding again? What is to now stop conferences, regional councils or diocesan councils from seceding or withholding funds?

Love demands us to be both charitable and just. Too much charity has been served upon the seceded state presidents and not enough justice. They hold positions of responsibility and when they shirked this responsibility, loving justice demanded accountability to the Society. It is not enough that they should be reinstated and the incident forgotten. Their secession has cost us in money, in damaged reputations to both individuals and the Society's public image. It has also caused disillusionment and pain to many members, but most fundamentally it has caused harm to the poor and to the Body of Christ in which the poor are served.

The positions of the seceders should be made vacant and calls for new state president elections should be made. They must be made accountable for the secession.

When will our leaders be brought to account? It is only when they repent, that forgiveness, conversion and renewal can follow.

**Richard McMahon**  
Drummoyne, NSW

## Sizing up

*From P.B. Godfrey*

The articles by Glanz and Greenaway (*Eureka Street*, May 1995) make some pertinent points on the future prospects of the union movement. I write to contribute to contemporary thinking.

Many of the individuals currently working in and for the labour movement could do well to reflect upon Australia's labour history for guidance in addressing the current challenges.

The labour movement was born out of struggle and from courage, effort and commitment, directed at democratising and dignifying the working lives of Australians. Through the movement's industrial and political arms, this democracy and dignity was to translate into all spheres of family and community life. Without doubt, admirable, legitimate and achievable pursuits, that by international standards have been overwhelmingly successful.

Against this background, what can be done by the labour movement's

incumbents to meet the current challenges? A few suggestions follow.

In a post-Fordist era, where there is a micro focus upon the individual enterprise, and upon reducing conflictual employee relations, empowering the workforce, and participative decision-making, union structures, in response to this, through the amalgamation process, have become more centralised and bureaucratic. I recently read a report where, through amalgamation and internal power sharing arrangements, a union with 200,000 members has, at a Federal level, three Executive Presidents and seven Assistant Federal Secretaries. What does this say about effective utilisation of union resources, the priorities of some unions, and the negative consequences of the amalgamation process? It says that much of the amalgamation process has been based upon political allegiance, the pursuit of discredited ideological agenda, and power sharing and job protection among union hierarchies. It also says that the industrial, and broader social interests of union members—the working people of Australia—have been relegated to a poor second.

Many that have passed through, and that remain in, the labour movement, must be called to account for their roles in developing the stigma that often accompanies unionism. These are the fringe-dwelling ideologues who, through the years, have facilitated and provided a ready vehicle for the anti-union mantra, so evident in the popular press, that continues to plague both the general perception of unions in society, and the legitimate work of the more responsible and effective unions.

There are three initiatives that may aid the reversal of current membership trends, that is, to promote union membership among the previously non-unionised and the so-called 'new' industries.

Firstly, we should ensure those employed in the labour movement are of sufficient intellectual rigour, equipped with the necessary skills, and fundamentally committed to the dignity and well-being of Australian working people, within the current economic and social order, so as to advance the prosperity of this country.

Secondly, we should ensure union structures are lean yet efficient, well directed and well managed, and that their resources are directed to indus-

trial pursuits in the field and on the shop floor. An industrially sound union will reap its own strategic rewards.

Thirdly we should influence the policy makers and the legislature, in the post-primary education sphere, so as to develop curricula that educate and train current and future generations of Australians about the complex world of Australian work.

Further, future generations of workers need to understand that most products of the education system will be employees in some form, and that such employees have collective interests albeit at enterprise, industry, national or international level.

These curricula must also educate about active, responsible, and legitimate unionism, and the achievements and influences of the labour movement historically and currently. This



This month, thanks to Penguin, the writer of every letter we publish will receive a copy of *Lady with Lapdog and Other Stories* by Anton Chekhov. Penguin Classics RRP \$8.95

alone will raise the understanding and appreciation of the union movement's role in Australia's democracy.

An anticipated corollary of this is that—feeding into union recruitment strategies—new workers will see union membership as relevant and essential, and actively seek it out, just as a new worker actively seeks out a first credit card, a new bank account, or basic health insurance, etc.

Further, a new worker will have a reasonable comprehension about industrial and employment matters, which will warm the hitherto cold sell for a union recruiter.

There are few, if any, in any sphere of blue collar, white collar or executive employment anywhere along the political continuum that could validly argue against educating future employees about unionism, as there are few, if any, working in Australia who have not been touched by, and benefited from, the positive contribution of Australian unions.

Reinforcing this last point, I quote the MHR for Bennelong, Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Howard, who is widely portrayed as totally anti-union, (which I do not seek to refute, however):

'We have no argument with the normal activities of trade unions in the industrial affairs of Australia. We acknowledge the social contribution made by the trade unions in the past and the continuing social contribution of trade unions in Australia at present.' (Hansard Wed. 23 May 1994 pp 2008)

This statement, although cast from an anti-union paradigm, acknowledges the legitimate place that unions occupy in a democracy. Thus the democracy owes it to itself, and the education system within the democracy has a responsibility, to educate about this legitimacy.

In conclusion, this third initiative is the key thrust of this letter. However, it can only be successful in the context of the union movement restructuring itself and its priorities to ensure its relevance to the mainstream of Australia's present and future workforce.

P.B. Godfrey  
Reservoir, VIC

## East Timor '95

*it's time to lead the way*

*Timorese people speak out about exile, resistance and identity.*

Conference details:

Saturday 12th & Sunday  
13th August

Australian Education Union  
(formerly Teachers' Federation of Victoria)  
112 Trenerry Crescent, Collingwood

For further details contact:  
Salustiano Freitas 9317 7202  
Lisa Rasmussen 9489 4665



## Melbourne Writers' Festival

.....for readers

"Australia's premier literary event"

Sydney Morning Herald

October 16 to  
22, 1995

CUB Malthouse, South  
Melbourne and other city  
venues

Melbourne's ninth annual celebration of books and writing will see a stunning line-up of international guests rub shoulders with the cream of the local literary community. This year's overseas guest list includes Ruth Rendell, Peter Ackroyd, John Berendt, Jack Hodgins, Joseph O'Connor, Shobha Dé and Tom Robbins who will join with, amongst many, many others, Helen Garner, Frank Moorhouse, Kate Grenville, Robert G. Barrett, Elizabeth Jolley, David Malouf and Paul Davies in seven days of frenzied literary activity.

Full programme in *The Sunday Age* on August 27

Information: (03) 9820 0042

Bookings: (03) 9685 5111

from September 1



# Pick a card, any card

TEN YEARS AGO I INTERVIEWED MIKE GORE, a Gold Coast property developer. Gore was responsible for building Sanctuary Cove, a residential enclave with gates and security guards. The advertisements for Sanctuary Cove read: 'the streets outside are full of cockroaches, and some of them are human'.

I asked Mike Gore why he supported the Queensland Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke Petersen, and the National Party. I expected him to talk in the usual terms: to say that they got things done, that they got off the back of business. That they rewarded effort.

But Gore said: 'Well it's like football teams, isn't it? You pick one you like, or your family pick it for you, and it's yours. You back it. It isn't any more complicated than that.'

Gore also said to me that sometimes, when he was driving, his mind would feel as though it were dissociated from his body. Gore had been told that this was an early sign that the boundaries of the self were blurring. It was a sign of nervous breakdown.

I thought he was trivialising politics by comparing it to football. I felt morally superior, with my firm ideas. Since then I have learned more about football, and perhaps more about political allegiance as well.

OVER THE PAST 10 years, many political boundaries have blurred. Nevertheless, we still hunger to belong to a tribe. We need to know who we belong to, and what we believe. Us and them is an important distinction. We don't want the boundaries of self to blur.

Arguing about these issues in a pub, I suggested that allegiance to a political party was no longer a rational thing, but rather was a tribal urge. A friend replied: 'There are still people in the Labor Party who would never, ever, be in the Liberal Party. Decent people.'

'Laurie Brereton? Bob Hawke?'

'Oh God, yes I know.'

Is it irrational? Is faith in a party, no matter how it shifts, a thing of reason, or is it like religious faith: a trust in an ultimate purpose, an ultimate good, however mysterious the moves?

The philosopher Peter Singer, a former Labor Party member now running for the Victorian Greens says: 'The Labor Party was founded on the idea of class

warfare. Now the sharpness of class war has been blunted, so the party becomes a thing which exists to occupy office, to manage. There is no longer a common ideological basis for beliefs.

Having said that, I don't think the days of political belief are over. A lot of people thought that in the '50s, then got a rude shock in the '60s.' Singer believes the Greens, and other non-mainstream political groups, have the potential to change the face of our political duopoly.

Let us consider the blurring of the boundaries. Victorians, living under a Kennett government all too confident about what it stands for, may miss the extent to which boundaries have blurred. Kennett had little in common with the Fahey government in New South Wales, which was blamed for doing too little.

New South Wales' new Labor Premier, Bob Carr, has gone on the record as saying he admires Kennett. Kennett gets on better with Keating than Keating does with Goss. Goss is more conservative on social issues than most small 'l' liberals.



In recent months, the senior bureaucrat Ken Baxter has gone from heading the Kennett Government's public service to working for the NSW Labor Government. Elizabeth Proust, one of the most talented administrators in Victoria, used to be a lefty. Now she is working for, and supporting, Kennett. These moves apparently haven't caused either Baxter or

Proust any trouble, however much their former tribal mates, on the outside, wail and condemn.

**D**URING THE NEW SOUTH WALES ELECTION campaign, I attended a Liberal Party dinner in one of the most marginal seats: my new home, the Blue Mountains. I was there on behalf of an arts institution on the lookout for more funding.

This was meant to be a dinner to allow the sizeable Blue Mountains arts community to meet the Minister for the Arts, Peter Collins, but the Liberals had not been able to get many artists to attend. My companions were writers, and the rest of the room was full of the greying heads of the party faithful.

Collins' record as a minister was so good that the day before our dinner, David Williamson and oth-

er assorted art heavyweights had been prepared to publicly state their support for him. Two decades before, Williamson had been a Gough Whitlam supporter. Williamson could cross the tribal divide. Most of us could not.

We were out of place. We were the group down the end of the table, the ones in jeans and jumpers and in need of haircuts—slightly belligerent, sending people up, feeling that we were the only real people there (an unusual feeling for writers). 'This is why we don't vote Liberal,' we said to each other, seeing the grey heads, hearing the accents, watching our fellow diners give the waiters an unforgivably hard time.

The only problem is that some of us did. Vote Liberal, that is.

(Remembering the awfulness of that dinner now, I narrow my eyes and try to imagine the room full of members of the New South Wales Right of the Labor Party. I imagine them loud, aggressive, giving the waiters an unforgivably hard time...)

Also during the election campaign, I visited the drought-stricken west of New South Wales. It was a rock-solid National Party seat. I argued with the locals. I told them that whatever their personal convic-

*The shuffled deck, from left: John Fahey, Peter Singer, Elizabeth Proust, Peter Collins, Wayne Goss.*





tions, they should vote Labor. Until rural seats become marginal, I said, they would be ignored. I told them that in the city I had seen real estate agents advertise houses 'Close to transport, schools, shops. In marginal seat.'

Not many of the farmers could stomach the idea of voting for the rather gormless sacrificial lamb the Labor Party was putting up. Also, I realised as I drove back home, I am a hypocrite.

Most of my life I have lived in safe Labor seats, and I have always voted Labor. This time, though, I had moved. For the first time in my voting life, I was in an extremely marginal seat, and in a state with a hung parliament. For the first time, there was a chance that my vote might just matter.

The NSW election was so close that the result wasn't known until almost a week after the vote. After years with a hung parliament, there was no overwhelming swing, no real will to make a choice. Labor won, narrowly picking up the Blue Mountains among other marginals, but for at least two days after the vote it looked as though Clover Moore, an independent, might be kingmaker, holding the balance of power in the lower house.

Meanwhile, other old loyalties were also in confusion. Murdoch started to buy the game of Rugby League. Politics looked very much like football indeed.

The successful candidate for the Blue Mountains, Bob Debus, says the seat is a political barometer, and a social laboratory. The Blue Mountains describes itself as the City in the Park. Villages are strung along a highway that still follows the route taken by Wentworth, Blaxland and Lawson when they first managed to cross the mountains and begin the conquering of the inland. On every side of this causeway, there are sheer cliffs and wilderness. Tenuous settlements cling to a narrow strip, with the great silence all around. 'This is a microcosm of Australia,' says Debus.

The lower mountains are really outer suburbs of Sydney—a mortgage and commuter belt. Higher, near Katoomba and Leura, the air is thinner. The industries are tourism and retirement, the population a mix of old age and New Age pensioners. You can get your aura balanced for a song. As well, knocking up against the tie-dye T-shirts and the Doc Martens, there is a phenomenon known as the Leura lady—well-heeled, blue-rinsed and conservative. On weekends and holidays the yuppies arrive, bringing Sydney money. This

is one of the few places in the world where it is possible to die in the wilderness within a few kilometres of a really good cappuccino.

Further up, now more than a 1000 metres above the sea, and you are above the snow line. In the upper Blue Mountains, people look west to the coal-mining country around Lithgow. They are unionists and they vote Labor. Further west again and you have the old farming families whose ancestors took up their land before anyone had thought of National Parks.

Debus says: 'There isn't a social class or a lobby group that doesn't have representatives in the Blue Mountains.' The City in the Park seemed as good a place as any to ask about allegiance and ideology.

**W**HEN WE TALK ABOUT POLITICS (or about football) we talk about fighting. Fighting for what we care for. For the right to contest a grand final. For the things in which we believe.

But nobody really fights. The battles take place in the ring or on the field. Political bodies fly through the air. Immense damage is done. But, cartoon-like, the people usually pick themselves up, regain their previous shape and the story goes on.

Australia is a country where almost all our violence is intimate. We are bruised by the people we know best. Political violence is so rare that it is almost always either a joke, or cause for a Royal Commission.

Barry Morris, the former Liberal member for the Blue Mountains, is therefore unusual in that he is associated with unproven allegations of threatening violence. He has been charged with making death threats against John Pascoe, a Blue Mountains city councillor and long-term political enemy, and of threatening to bomb the council chamber itself. Morris has vigorously denied the charges, claiming that he is the victim of a political conspiracy.

The threats over which Mr Morris has been charged were allegedly made by telephone. During Morris's committal hearing, the court was told the calls had been made in fake Chinese and Italian accents. The caller to Pascoe said: 'Hello you fucking mongrel. I Chinese. I going to fucking kill you.' The allegations have gained an extra, if unfairly added, frisson from the fact that a few years ago the offices of the Blue Mountains City Council were indeed bombed. The culprit has never been found.

Although Morris did not face court until after the election, the charges were too much for the Fahey Liberal government. Morris was pushed out, deeply resented it and decided, after some shilly-shallying, to stand as an independent. His posters proclaimed him as 'Your Independent Mountain Man'. Morris is a very big man. Graffitiists crossed out the word 'man'.

To talk to him, I drive down the western flank of the mountains, over the rolling hills that were some of the first territory settled on this side of the range,

*'I used to be a good girl. Obey the school rules. Be a good girl. Obey the system. I was one of those kids who if I did well, I expected to be rewarded.'*

—Jennifer Scott

and up his circular gravel driveway to an ordinary, suburban-looking brick house. You would not guess from this house that Morris is a multi-millionaire. His home is surrounded by the sort of rose garden that only love can grow, set off with blue spruces and a view down the slope to a new housing development.

Morris looks like a panda: round body, white hair and caramel brown eyes. We talk gardening for a quarter of an hour. He tells me his family is one of the oldest in the mountains. He tells me this three times.

Inside, the house is crowded with slightly daggy, comfy furniture. There are macrame pot-hangers. A smooth-haired ginger cat jumps on Morris every 10 minutes, and is stroked, then put down. In the lounge room is the most elaborate scratching post I have ever seen. It has three tiers, with platforms, and is covered in carpet.

Morris is an easy interview. He follows his own track, barely pausing to allow questions. He swears, excuses his French, touches my forearm from time to time to emphasise a point, brings his face uncomfortably close to mine.

Morris's father was a Labor man, forced into the coal mines during the Great Depression, but Barry has always believed in free enterprise. The crystallising event that drew him into party politics was when the Labor government put a tax on truck loads to protect 'the lazy bludging sods' in the railways.

Morris knows the Blue Mountains. Town by town, even street by street, he talks about its people.

We come to the Leura ladies. 'Oh they get together for their garden parties, all piddling in the same pot, and they say,'—he draws his mouth into cat-bum lines—' "That Morris, well he is a bit rough isn't he? A terribly rough man". But I go down to the pub and I talk to the bloke in the singlet, because I tell you his scratch of the pen is as good as the garden-party lot, and if you get his vote it's the vote you never bloody had.'

He moves on, to the unemployed in Katoomba: 'They make me bloody weep. Great strong blokes, they could lift me and throw me, some of them, just getting the dole. I am not against these people, but they're bloody fleas on a carcass.'

'You always get one end of a paddock that won't grow anything. You have got to put fowl manure on it or something to get it to grow, and it's still not much bloody good. Well it's like that with people, too.'

And the conservationists: 'Well we're all bloody greenies. We never knew...that's why we couldn't have kids. We never knew when I was using DDT, it left me barren. And here's my wife desperate to have kids...' Morris draws breath and carries on 'But you've got to live on this planet and get food...'

Three more times, unprompted, he refers to his lack of children.

He tells a story about patrolling with the Blue Mountains police. They find a boy vandalising prop-

erty. Morris asks: 'Why do you do this, son?' The boy says his father is having a homosexual affair, (Morris uses more graphic terms) and his mother has taken another married man as a lover. 'I come home and I tell my wife this and she just about cries. And us not able to have kids. That just breaks her heart.'

The smooth-haired ginger cat leaps onto Morris's lap again, nuzzling the buttons of his bulging shirt. 'You behave,' Morris says. 'Or I'll have to put you on your post.'

When Greiner first went for re-election, Morris was told that it was going to be a presidential campaign. He draws himself up and imitates a party minder: ' "You won't have to be high profile, Barry. Nick and Katherine are so good. They'll be up the front in the red Ferrari, you will be the old T-Model Ford coming up the rear." "Pig's arse", I said.'

Morris ran his normal campaign: doorknocking, pushing local issues. He won the seat in spite of a huge swing against the government that left it without an absolute majority. Had Morris not won the Blue Mountains, Greiner would not have been able to form government.

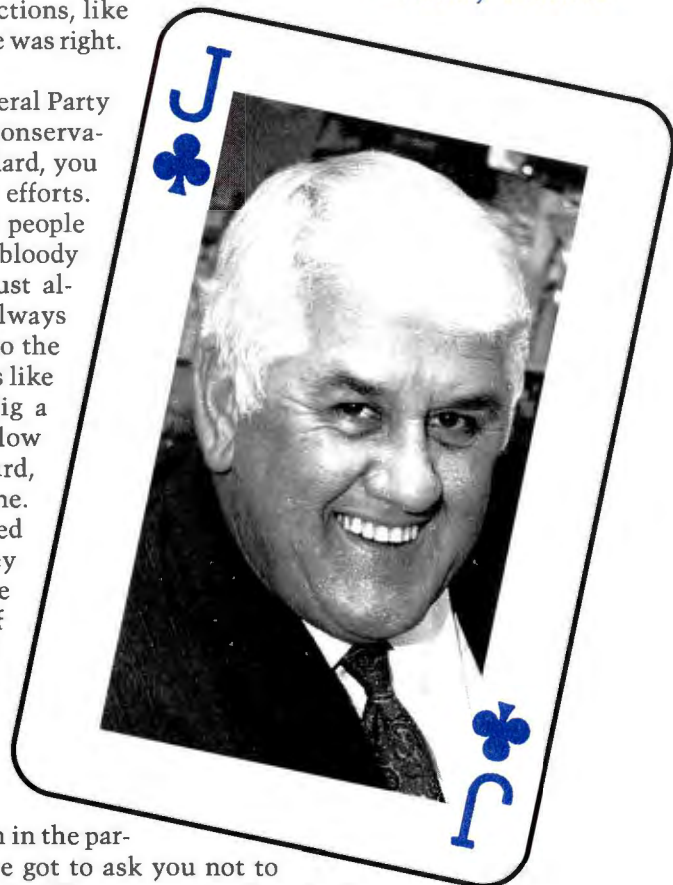
GREINER AND MORRIS GOT ON. Greiner is Morris's sort of man. 'He'd talk to us. He'd say "When you go doorknocking, wear a suit but don't have your coat on." Put your coat over your shoulder, casual, you see. "Politics is perceptions", Greiner said, and perceptions is reflections, like a wall of mirrors. And he was right. People are like that.'

'I belong to the Liberal Party because I believe in conservatism, and if you work hard, you are rewarded for your efforts. You should help other people but leave them a bit of bloody dignity. Capitalism must always work. You must always hang out your shingle to the world. Making money is like digging drains. You dig a drain and the water'll flow down it. You work hard, and the money will come.'

'When they wanted me to go, when Fahey pushed me, it could have been handled better. If they'd come to me, if John Fahey had come to me, and we'd gone out together, him and his wife, me and my wife, and he'd said to me, "Barry, you've been in the party for 45 years, and I've got to ask you not to run, but after the election I'll put you on a board of one of these privatised bodies or something ..."

*'You always get one end of a paddock that won't grow anything. You have got to put fowl manure on it or something to get it to grow, and it's still not much bloody good. Well it's like that with people, too.'*

—Barry Morris





*'I will never live in a \$5 million house, but I will fight to the death for any Australian to feel that they may one day be able to do that.'*

—Brendan Nelson

'If he'd said that, well I'd have said yes. That's what Labor would have done. They would have managed the situation. But our blokes, they're all worried about the ICAC. Oo-er, corruption! Bloody bullshit, bloody bullshit. If you've been in power then there's got to be a few lollies along the way. Labor understand that. Our lot don't.'

Morris sees me off at the door, saying rather sadly: 'You can like me or not, but I'm a sincere man. Your body is your front door. The man who tills the soil is a humble man. I get my living where the bull gets his breakfast. Off the bloody grass.'

Am I inventing it, or was there a stillness about Morris's home? A barrenness. A frustration and a raging at the things that might have happened, should have happened, but didn't.

The oldest family in the mountains. No children. And, probably, no future in the push and pull of political ideas.

To my great surprise, I had found Morris hard not to like: but quite probably this was only possible because his teeth had been drawn.

WHEN MORRIS ANNOUNCED that he would run as an independent, winning the seat of Blue Mountains was regarded as Mission Impossible for the Liberal Party. In fact, the battle went very close. The woman who almost brought it off was Jennifer Scott.

Had the election been a comedy, it would not have been possible to find a more startling opposite of Morris. Scott is so tiny one fears tripping over her. She is also very much a small 'l' liberal: a 39-year-old with the ability to listen, and with no historical connections with the mountains.

Her office is painted apricot, and her 'shingle', as Barry Morris would put it, describes her with equal prominence as a mediator, a conveyancer and a solicitor. She specialises in family law.

She tells me she believes in the social safety net. She believes in eliminating discrimination against homosexuals. Her friends tell her she is a feminist, but she isn't sure. She is a greenie, of sorts, with a masters degree in environmental law. She points out that she actually knows more about environmental issues than any of the other candidates in the

election, including the Greens.

Many of her friends are Labor. Why, then, is she a Liberal?

Scott says: 'I used to be a good girl. Obey the school rules. Be a good girl. Obey the system. I was one of those kids who if I did well, I expected to be rewarded. If I got 70 per cent for an essay and I thought I should have got 90 per cent, I'd go up and ask why.'

She also used to argue in class, once with a socialist teacher who claimed that crime was the fault of society. 'I used to say "Well at what point do individuals take responsibility for themselves?" and my views were just rubbished. I suppose those experiences confirmed in me a view that Labor thinking was about uniformity and mediocrity—that individual difference was not tolerated, and people in Labor did not think for themselves.'

Jennifer Scott regularly deals with battered wives, and sometimes battered husbands as well. She sees de facto couples who did not realise the level of their legal commitment when they began living together. 'Marriage is better,' she says, but then claims this is not a moral but a legal judgment.

Later in interview, almost in passing, she says she is a Christian. What sort of Christian? For the first time she hesitates momentarily and looks a little awkward in answering. Softly, she says 'Born again. Which would make you think I should be a conservative.'

I am surprised. Normally one can pick born-again Christians. I had not picked her. How, then, can she support homosexual law reform? How can she claim her judgment about marriage is legal, not moral? What does she actually believe in?

'I suppose I am just non-judgmental. People are responsible for their own lives, and the law is there to protect third parties.' Later she says: 'I suppose I am on a journey, like everyone else. I am working out how my political beliefs square with my religious ones.'

I decide to ring Brendan Nelson, a political cross-dresser, recently converted from the Labor to the Liberal tribe. What made him fall from one camp into the other? Or perhaps not: 'I've never voted Liberal in my life,' he said publicly, to his subsequent embarrassment.

Nelson told me his father had been strongly Labor, and his mother a Catholic, and DLP supporter. 'My mother brought us up as Catholics, but my father had ownership of us politically. He was not a Catholic,' Nelson says. 'He said to me "You are Labor" and I saw no reason to question that.'

His father took him along to party meetings, paid his first membership subscription, and in later years would regularly ask 'How you going? You still in the party?'. Nelson says: 'I'd say "Yes Dad". You know how it is. You never quite get around to telling him that you're not.'

Nelson had become disillusioned with party meetings and their talk of class struggle. 'There was this attitude, this very easy mode of thinking among people on pretty high incomes, chardonnay socialists



if you like, that said that doctors were the class enemy. It really stuck in my craw.'

So began his long drift towards the Liberal Party. Nelson claims his core values have not changed much through all this. He believes people are put on the earth to help others. He says he believes in that much-touted phrase, social justice.

So what does it mean, social justice?

He says: 'I will never live in a \$5 million house, but I will fight to the death for any Australian to feel that they may one day be able to do that. What is social justice? Well in the Labor Party the view is that if a person has wealth, then you must get it off them and redistribute it. In the Liberal Party the idea is that no matter where you come from, you should have the same opportunities and access to education and resources as everyone else, but there is an acceptance that the outcomes will not be equal.

'The problem with liberalism is that not enough people practise it. Liberals have forgotten what they really stand for. Yet in other countries people are dying for what is basically the liberal philosophy.'

I HAVE TO WAIT THREE WEEKS to get an interview with Bob Debus, the successful candidate for Blue Mountains. He is the new Minister for Corrective and Emergency Services—responsible for every prison riot and bushfire, and also trying to hang on to one of the state's most marginal seats. One wonders whether Labor is rewarding or punishing him. One of the green independents in the campaign, Carol Gaul, has suggested to me that he will shortly move to a safer seat. 'He's very polished and presentable,' she says.

She is right. Debus is running late, and has to cut short the interview because others are waiting to see him. Nevertheless he does not seem flustered. He looks like a spunky sort of headmaster or a thinner version of Dr Finlay. A former ABC journalist, he has taken over Barry Morris's old electorate office. There are no pictures on the wall or desk, no sign of regular occupancy or commitment.

The Blue Mountains community, he says, expects personal contact from its MP. 'For the most part I enjoy it. A few functions I go to really bore me, but generally if I go to four or five a week rather than 30 or 40, it is all right.

And which are the functions that bore him?

'I'm not going to tell you,' he says smoothly, leaning back with his hands behind his head.

Debus was brought up a Methodist. 'The Methodist church was quite a good substitute for politics,' Debus says. It was in church, he claims, that he learnt his commitment to social justice. Asked whether he is still a believer, he borrows some words from Gough Whitlam and says he is a religious 'fellow traveller'. He agrees with the sentiments, but has lost the faith.

I put it to Debus that there is little to choose between a small 'l' Liberal and a pragmatic Labor per-

son, and that the allegiances are no longer a matter of reason. Naturally, he disagrees.

'Certainly, there has been some convergence on economic policy, but the Carr Labor government will still be very different from Fahey.'

How?

'Fahey was going to massively privatise public utilities. We won't do that.'

But isn't this also Labor Party policy?

'No. We will not privatise. We will certainly look at corporatising.' He sees my smile, and jumps in. 'But we will not let go of the basic principle of social responsibility.'

We move on to talk about social policy. Here, he says, there is also convergence, but that isn't the Labor Party's fault. 'The Liberals find it necessary to converge with us.'

'So why should I vote Labor rather than Liberal on social policy?

'Well, I am always left with the impression that their heart isn't really in it.'

Well, he would say that, wouldn't he?

Recently, one of my writer friends who broke the habits of a lifetime to vote Liberal said to me: 'I find I just can't pluck up the courage to admit it to most people. It is extraordinarily difficult. I almost feel ashamed. As though I have broken a taboo.'

Taboos belong to tribes, and so, in a sense, that is exactly what he had done.

Back to that Liberal Party dinner. One artist had been approached by the head of the institution I was supporting to come along and talk to Peter Collins.

'Who is Peter Collins?' she said.

'He's the Arts Minister.'

'Oh. All right.'

But a day later she rang back to say she really could not come. 'It's against my principles. They are Liberals, you see...'

She knew which tribe she belonged to. She couldn't kick against her own side. Her scratch of the pen would go where it had always gone—to Labor. This she called principle, as though it were a choice between good and evil. As though it were a choice.

When Labor won, Peter Collins became the Leader of the Opposition. And one of the first things Labor did was cut the Arts budget by more than half. ■

Margaret Simons is a regular contributor to *Eureka Street*.



*'Fahey was going to massively privatise public utilities. We won't do that ... We will not privatise. We will certainly look at corporatising.'*

—Bob Debus



**W**HEN YVES CONGAR WAS BORN, in the same year as Karl Rahner and Bernard Lonergan, the Catholic Church was embroiled in the Modernist controversy. Within three years, Pius X would issue his encyclical *Pascendi Dominici*, repudiating the concoction of ideas dubbed 'Modernism' as 'a meeting place of all the heresies'. When Congar died, in June this year, the Church had not long been digesting another sternly reproving encyclical, Pope John Paul's *Veritatis Splendor*.

There are curious parallels between the two documents. Consider, for example, this verdict on *Pascendi* from a dictionary of theology that can be found on the library shelves of even the most narrowly orthodox of Catholic educational institutions: '*Pascendi* presents the historically sensitive theologian with insuperable problems today. Its view of Modernism as a coherent, organised movement with the intentionally concealed purpose of overthrowing Catholicism from the inside is historically unsustainable ... Historians of the period can show without difficulty that no individual Modernist subscribed to the system set out in the encyclical.' Readers of *Veritatis Splendor* may infer that Rome's fondness for knocking down straw men (and women?) has not diminished in the past nine decades.

It is a sad irony that the life of Congar—who will forever be remembered as a leader of the theological renewal that marked the church in the middle decades of this century—should have ended as it began, in a time of suspicion and repression. 'Historically sensitive' theologians do not have much use for woolly notions such as progress, but they will at least allow that sometimes things change for the better. One undoubted change for the better is the fact that mainstream theological opinion now accommodates judgments such as the assessment of *Pascendi* just quoted, and this change is in large part attributable to the life and work of Yves Congar.

It was a life marked by upheavals secular as well as ecclesiastical, and each kind fed on the other. Congar's birthplace was Sedan in the Ardennes, scene of the German military victory



Yves-Marie Congar OP,  
1904-1995

in 1870 that ushered in the Third French Republic and its bitter conflicts between church and state. He himself witnessed the even greater debacle of the German victory in the Ardennes in 1940, and as a military chaplain was sent to Colditz with other French prisoners of war.

But, like his Dominican teacher Marie-Dominique Chenu, Congar distanced himself from those within the French church who hoped for favour from the collaborationist government of Pétain, and supported the resistance instead. They encouraged the worker priests and the Jocists, or Young Christian Worker movement, and through them helped to wean French Catholics from a politics of reactionary nostalgia, and to seek reconciliation with their republican compatriots.

**R**ECONCILIATION, IN ALL ITS SENSES, was a keynote of Congar's thought. Sedan was historically a centre of Protestantism in France, and as a boy he and other Catholics in the town for a time celebrated Mass in the local Reformed Church, by courtesy of an indulgent pastor, because their own church had been destroyed. He remained in contact with Protestants (and later with the Orthodox and Anglicans) throughout his theological formation: in a Paris seminary from 1921, after entering the Dominican novitiate at Amiens in 1925, and after ordination as a priest in the order in 1930.

The insights he gained into other Christian traditions informed the major task of his life, the recovery of an understanding of tradition as the bear-

er of revelation that would be authentically Catholic, but free from the polemical presentations of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. This required a better understanding of the church's patristic and medieval heritage, and realisation of that project gained him powerful enemies.

Congar and Chenu became frequent targets of their fellow Dominican, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, who taught at the Angelicum, the order's university in Rome. The Parisians argued that St Thomas's writings had to be understood in their 13th-century context, rather than treated as a timeless fount of wisdom, and this historical perspective threatened many, for reasons that had little to do with the merit of Thomism itself. In 1954 Congar was forbidden to teach, and he spent two years in exile, in Jerusalem, Rome and Cambridge. Officially the condemnation was related to his support of the worker priests, but few believed that this was the whole story.

The terms of the debate now seem quaint, and the banner of orthodoxy has passed from Garrigou-Lagrange to Congar himself: the Second Vatican Council's documents on the church and on divine revelation, *Lumen Gentium* and *Dei Verbum*, reflect the views he developed in books such as *Towards a Theology of the Laity* (1953), *The Mystery of the Temple* (1958) and *Tradition and Traditions* (1960, revised in 1963).

Indeed, his elevation to the cardinalate last year, though an honour richly deserved, seemed to be a kind of declaration that Rome now regarded him as 'safe'. Especially, perhaps, since he was too incapacitated by multiple sclerosis to write and too old to vote in papal elections anyway.

The work he began, however, has not finished. Yves-Marie Congar OP taught Catholic theologians to think in what is now tactfully called a 'historically sensitive' manner, and the chief legacy of that change has been the officially endorsed ecclesiology. But, as *Veritatis Splendor* so painfully shows, the officially endorsed moral teaching could do with a little historical sensitivity, too. ■

Ray Cassin is a freelance writer.



# Coconut Republic

The Quarantine Station on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands has an operating table big enough to take a rhinoceros. The designer must have read Ionesco. This is Theatre of the Absurd.

Thousands of kilometres of Indian Ocean separate these islands from the Australian mainland that they joined in 1984, in a UN-supervised, 'act of self-determination'. Cocos is a coral atoll with a Robinson Crusoe past: this is the land once ruled by 'Tuan John' Clunies-Ross, the last of the white rajahs.

Cocos' cultural and geographical isolation is acute. Its colonisation began, as Australia's did, with involuntary immigration, though the first Cocos Malays were slaves or indentured labour, not convicts. It developed under the paternalist rule of a Scottish-Malay family which issued its own currency, devised its own laws, and vigorously discouraged trade and intercourse with other communities. The 19th century Cocos culture was preserved, like a fly in liquid sunshine, until the late 20th century.

The governance of Cocos is its present-day obsession. This community is learning what representative democracy means.

Once, anyone who left—and two-thirds of its population has been forced to emigrate over the last 40 years—would have required 'Tuan John's' permission to return. Now, scores of emigrants want to come home, and the twice-weekly planes are filled with public servants on fact-finding missions.

The islands are a Commonwealth Territory, the responsibility of the Department of Environment, Sports and Territories (DEST). The Governor in Council also appoints an independent Administrator with the powers of a 'Sanders of the River', though he is, not always subtly, encouraged not to use them. As a statutory officer he occupies that poised space—between the institutions of the professional public service and the Crown—so detested by all bureaucrats. Martin Mowbray, and his predecessors, weigh local knowledge against central policy in a balancing act familiar to any colonial administrator of the late, unlamented, British Empire.

Since July 1992 Cocos has had a further level of government, with awesome responsibility but limited real power: an entirely male, entirely Cocos Malay, 'Shire Council' was elected, under Western Australian-derived Local Government legislation. Under a

Memorandum of Understanding, WA laws will be applied in the islands after 'full consultation with the community'—and possibly modified by Commonwealth mirror legislation.

Since many of its adult members are not functionally literate in English, a DEST law reform section monitors WA enactments. There is no real capacity for Councillors to do so themselves.



The Shire Council is deemed to be the voice of the people, though it has no more authority than any mainland, rural shire council. It is consulted on economic growth and development, under the rubric of competition policy of both Commonwealth, and WA government policy. But 'State' government functions—transport, the environment, assets and services—are still basically performed by Commonwealth agencies.

The islands are extraordinarily well-served, with an international airport, a full mess (capable of serving hundreds of troops), and free public transport. Soon they may even have a seismological station. The region is not known for its earthquakes.

The three-tiered regime of law and administration follows the 1991 Report, *Islands in the Sun*, of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. That report recommends that the Cocos be brought to resemble equiva-



*One of the more recent arrivals at the Quarantine Station on Cocos was a cargo of goggle-eyed ostriches. As they were being driven to their temporary home they twisted and turned those extraordinary necks 360 degrees ... as if to say, 'These folks can't be for real!' They [the ostriches] are still there, their past and future in doubt.*

lent remote mainland communities. The question must be asked, whether this community can stand, or withstand, such a simulation?

No shire council has ever had such complex responsibilities, or so little capacity to address them. No shire council has been thrust, immediately, into such conflicts of interest as this one. A special amendment to the Cocos version of WA local government law allows shire councillors to be its employees as well.

One councillor is deputy shire clerk (and, recently, took part in a vote to extend his superior's contract of employment), and the council (all Cocos Malay men) holds its property on Home Island on trust for only part of its constituency: Cocos Malay, rather than European, residents—arguably past as well as present—are its beneficiaries.

Though the quality of life is, for now, probably higher than in an equivalent mainland location, there is revolutionary change ahead. From being a society of full employment dependent entirely on copra production under a generally benevolent dictator, Cocos Islanders have become 'business' for scores of government agencies.

These have not yet adapted their expectations to the unique milieu. The islands' (Western Australian) teachers, for example, are driven 700 metres or so to their school from the ferry on Home Island, in a land cruiser which will rust out before it needs refuelling: a four-wheel drive, long-range, diesel-tanked Toyota with 1200 kilometre range, provided according to WA Education Department 'remote conditions' entitlements appropriate to a desert posting. The golf course, on West Island, has been maintained by the Commonwealth since it happens to be the runway verge. (A five-minute warning is sounded when a plane is due.)

With the introduction of mainland currency, came raised prices. It is possible that the relatively new housing stock on Home Island might be privatised. Some Cocos Malay occupants see this offering them security: Council tenants in Thatcher's Britain had similar hopes. There is no agreement on just who may acquire land in the future.

'Normal' award and employment conditions, introduced since 1991, have, according to the Commonwealth response to the *Islands in the Sun* Report, resulted in sharply increased disparities in standards of living among Cocos Malays 'requiring large social adjustments'—an understatement. In 1979 all Cocos Islanders were employed by the Co-operative and shared the dividends. Now, 30 per cent of the population is unemployed and a significant proportion is dependent on social security and other benefits.

There is considerable Commonwealth pressure on the community to become 'self-supporting'. How to do this is unclear, given the loss of the islands' traditional industry, copra production, and finite market (fewer than 700 residents). The Commonwealth, of course, markets its own services to itself in paper transactions in a market of its own creation.

The saddest achievement of the capital works program is the recently completed combined courthouse/police station and cell facilities which, chillingly, comply with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into the Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and WA standards, though there is only one AFP officer on the island and as yet no prisoners.

The people of Cocos have now consciously faced significant social change three times. First was after a 'social contract' in 1837 with the original Clunies Ross when, as a group, they committed their obedience in exchange for housing, a garden, and employment. That regime began its slow collapse in 1936 with economic, natural and public relations disasters.

The second, which began after UN surveillance and intervention and culminated in the 1984 referendum, began the recognition of Cocos Malay as a community, albeit a community of citizens.

The third, which is fully in evidence as the community is pushed towards privatisation and entrepreneurial development, looks to a future of individual citizenship, fragmentation and the possible loss of the sense of community identity and

purpose. It threatens to overwhelm this neo-colonial Camberran outpost.

**T**he elected councillors are struggling with huge responsibilities. It is not made easy for them. There is a paucity of information, news and current affairs. Cocos Island residents generally seem relatively unaware of political and social issues beyond the atoll. Amateur local radio announcers regularly override even Radio Australia news and current affairs to play music, sometimes on random selection, to each other, from a collection which is first approved by the volunteer station manager.

Is 'local government' capable of protecting the Cocos lifestyle and culture, its ecology and economy? In no other Australian shire would we expect such elected representatives, with so little experience of self-determination and such limited understanding of Australian political and social life and history, to assume a responsibility to 'speak for' the entire community. Nowhere else would shire council decisions have quite such a direct impact on quality of life and the social fabric. Australian local government has never been a real form of governance, though it is a cherished symbol of local choice and priority to local issues.

Local government has always been a small concern, the bastion of reaction, of little empires, ritual and personal rivalries. Yet local government is



important: by its design and regulation of the daily environment of its citizens it sets the tone of daily life.

Historically, Australian local government activity has been constrained by state government, with limited policy areas and financial capacity—rubbish collection and street lights, not family law, health and education. On Cocos, local government was introduced from above by the Commonwealth, and a small sign that the host may be rejecting the foreign tissue has already manifested. Recently, Cocos Malay residents formed a broad ranging 'Cocos Congress' seeking a voice by which to comment on policy and, explicitly, to represent the interests of the Cocos Malay people. The shire's professional staff already oppose this sign of popular sentiment, seeking to portray the group as a kind of ratepayers' association. It is much more: it is a warning.

Can this model of two-tiered governance, imposing *de facto* responsibility for state-like services on a Council neither designed nor equipped for it, actually work? Cocos' isolation, history, natural environment, historical buildings, natural resources and income earning public enterprises are directly interrelated with personal loyalties. Council decisions—or failure to make decisions—affect far more than those of orthodox local government. They influence social relations as well as economic ones.

The future of this community depends on co-operation and a sense of collective responsibility, combined with citizenship. As a community, to preserve their minute, fragile ecology, the Cocos Islanders cannot merely pursue economic growth, as government would wish. Nugget Coombs proposed in *The Return of Scarcity* (1990), that the community be responsible for protecting and improving the whole quality of life; husbanding its resources with an eye to the future; ensuring the community benefits from the 'rent' charged for their use, and using it for public facilities and services, distributing the balance equally to all its members. The present arrangements do not look sturdy enough for this task on Cocos. The islanders' present information about and experience of citizenship certainly seem too frail.

One of the more recent arrivals at the Quarantine Station on Cocos was a cargo of goggle-eyed ostriches. As they were being driven to their temporary home they twisted and turned those extraordinary necks 360 degrees, as if in astonishment, peering at jungle and sky and onlookers, diving beneath the truck's tray, heads shaking, beaks agape, as if to say, 'These folks can't be for real!' They are still there, their past and future in doubt.

Anyone who thinks these islands are, will become or might remain, a paradise, without the long-term plans for their governance being entirely revised, might well be shoving their heads in the sand. ■

**Moira Rayner** is a lawyer and freelance journalist.



## I Symbiotic storytellers

IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA at the time. But it rapidly degenerated into one of those media circuses that unnerve scientists so much.

Officers of the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service were wondering how to generate excitement over World Environment Day. Someone at ABC-TV got wind of a community of strange creatures found in the Port Davey estuary in Tasmania's remote south-west. Could the ABC perhaps do a segment and use it to publicise Environment Day?

The Port Davey community is a kind of 'lost world' where many of the species are yet to be named. The animals are significant not because of their looks but because of their location. Shallow water of no less than 20 metres has become home to representatives of groups normally found at depths of more than 50 metres (and seldom seen by anyone but marine biologists).

Many of these species—sea pens, corals, sea fans and the like—attach themselves to the sea bed and filter food from the surrounding water. They live in waters disturbed only by the movement of passing sea slugs and skates, and are delicate enough to be damaged by the currents generated by a diver's flippers. The marine biologists who found the community were so concerned at its fragility in the face of human disturbance that they had kept it quiet for 12 years.

But within days of the TV segment going to air in Hobart, the story had been broadcast in Paris and all points in between. The Australian press ran stories which smacked of a marine equivalent of Jurassic Park full of 'prehistoric' creatures. Parks and Wildlife began receiving calls from photographers and researchers requesting access to the area.

No wonder scientists are so suspicious of the media. And yet, perhaps if the researchers from the University of Tasmania and the CSIRO had been less secretive, and had enlisted the aid of the media, the public could have been safely introduced to these creatures. With judicious use of the press, perhaps the Tasmanian Government could have been pressured into full and considered protection. There is a danger now that the responsible authorities will be stamped into something more hurried and less appropriate.

Scientists and journalists seem to share a natural antipathy. Journalists tell stories to interest their readers. What is interesting, however, may have little scientific import. So journalists are often accused of trivialising science. The Port Davey community is significant because of the opportunity it affords to study typical 'deep sea' interactions in accessible shallow water. All the media wanted to talk about was 'strange species new to science'. The Port Davey creatures are only 'prehistoric' in the same way that Australian cockroaches, crocodiles and lung fish are pre-historic—they are animals whose form has not changed markedly for millions of years, but they are little different from modern relatives in other countries.

The irony is that scientists and journalists now need each other much more than ever in the past. All over the world, a greater and greater proportion of research funding is being handed out on a competitive basis. To gain access to those funds, scientists must show the worth of their research, and widespread publicity is a huge asset. On the journalists' side, almost every big story nowadays has a scientific angle—wars, famines, disasters, greenhouse effect, French nuclear testing, the future of the forests.

It's time that both sides learned the rules of both games, for everyone's benefit. ■

**Tim Thwaites** is a freelance science writer.



# Taking liberties with fraternity

*Where are your monuments, your battles, martyrs?  
Where is your tribal memory? Sirs,  
in that gray vault. The sea. The sea  
has locked them up. The sea is History.*

—Derek Walcott

**M**URUROA IS A NAME that murmurs of unsolved mystery.

For what can explain either President Chirac's hubristic announcement of renewed French nuclear testing at Mururoa atoll, or the extraordinary outpouring of Australian anger that has followed?

The virulence of this reaction stunned Canberra, and surprised the rest of the South Pacific, where the response was otherwise, except in a New Zealand marking the tenth anniversary of the sinking of the *Rainbow Warrior*, subdued.

strongly by the Cold War—have been casting around for new post-Soviet, post-Yankee Imperialist villains. The French, whom many (by no means all) Australian tourists appear to believe rude when encountered in Paris bistros or galleries, fit the bill. They form a safe, if impervious (unlike the atoll) therapeutic target: white, remote and relatively rich; their crime, the most heinous to a generation educated by engaged environmentalists.

And, of course, the ocean that separates Australia from Mururoa also binds it to Mururoa. By no mischance, the Pacific.

Perhaps also, Mururoa fits a paradigm of a paradise lost. Bernard Smith, in his great work *European Vision and the South Pacific*, writes of how Tahitian chieftains became sentimentalised Greek heroes for the European explorers of the late 18th century. The French navigator Louis de Bougainville, after whom the tragic island and the excessive plant with its lurid flowers and rampant thorns are both named, said of Tahiti: 'One would think himself in the Elysian fields.'

A century later Paul Gauguin, whose paintings of Tahitians are both melancholy and celebratory, wrote: 'Close to the *parau* hut the forest and the coolness begin, and there men and women may be seen in scattered groups, some busy, some already taking their ease, drinking and chattering, with frequent bursts of laughter. On the beach lie two sisters who have been bathing, stretched in unconsciously voluptuous attitudes...'

Such utopias remain powerfully evocative to the Western, perhaps especially to the Australian, consciousness. Bengt Danielsson, a Swedish anthropologist who sailed with Thor Heyerdahl on the *Kon-Tiki* expedition and stayed in French Polynesia, has written books not only on Eros and Polynesia (*Love in the South Seas*) but also on nuclear testing and Polynesia



Those few Australians who have retained an interest in the islands, a region regarded as passé in the '90s, decade of the thrust into 'Asia', have even been quietly gratified to find the Pacific back on some agendas, even under such distasteful circumstances.

But what has transformed the news of impending events 7000km from Australia's eastern shores, into such an emotive issue?

Perhaps to a degree, Australians—whose perception of international events has been shaped so

(*Mururoa Mon Amour*): paradise and purgatory.

Those frog bastards! Nuking paradise! The loss is somehow personal. A dream life, however seldom visited, is being expunged.

The chorus swells: 'If it's such a great idea, why don't you go do it in France?'

And here the mystery, the mutual incomprehension, thickens. For not only does Jacques Chirac view Mururoa as much 'France' as Marseilles, he sees the new program of eight tests as a demonstration of his country's very commitment to the Pacific region, rather than as a gesture of defiance.

France's own imaginative history has been massively informed by its encounter with the South Pacific. It was only chance and the brilliance of James Cook that saw Australia become a British rather than a French possession. And New Zealand was an even closer-run affair, with an embryonic French colony established at Akaroa near Christchurch before the British claim was concluded.

From Rousseau through Picasso, the French sciences, arts and philosophy have been affected considerably by the impact with Oceania.

Today French Polynesia, which includes the atoll of Mururoa, is one of ten *departements et territoires d'outre-mer* (DOM-TOMs) scattered strategically around the globe, the remains of the glorious day of empire, now comprising 1.5 million people and covering a land area of 120,000 sq km.

They range from Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, off Newfoundland, to islands scattered through the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean, to French Guiana on the mainland of South America. In the Pacific, the DOM-TOMs comprise the tiny Polynesian islands of Wallis and Futuna just north of Fiji, the Melanesian territory of New Caledonia between Fiji and Australia—like the latter, originally founded as a convict colony—and French Polynesia, containing Tahiti, to the far east of the Pacific islands.

**R**OBERT ALDRICH AND JOHN CONNELL, in *France's Overseas Frontier*, describe the DOM-TOMs as 'either the vestiges of an outdated and rapacious colonialism or, conversely, trump cards which France can play to maintain its diverse political, economic, strategic and cultural influence in world affairs'.

Metropolitan France largely sees its remaining colonies as a success story, a demonstration of the generosity of French culture—not only through the massive cash transfers that make the inhabitants, at least on paper, much wealthier than their decolonised neighbours, but also through granting the people of the DOM-TOMs the right to vote and appoint representatives in French elections, for which it claims moral superiority over Australia, say, which 'only' allowed Papua New Guineans to vote for their own parliaments, not for Canberra.

All the remaining DOM-TOMs, except Guyana, are archipelagos or islands, mostly small, and exports

## MASTER OF LETTERS IN

# PEACE STUDIES

### BY DISTANCE EDUCATION

The M.Litt. is normally taken externally over two years and involves three units of coursework and a dissertation of 20 - 25,000 words. External students are required to attend the University for five days each year. Entry requires a relevant first degree at an above average level of performance. Preliminary studies are available for students with other backgrounds.

For the coming year, the central themes will be:

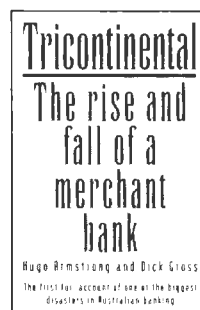
- peace, justice and development
- peace education
- peacemaking and conflict resolution

Enquiries: Geoff Harris, Coordinator of Peace Studies, UNE, Armidale 2351. Telephone (067) 73 2414 or 73 2781. Fax (067) 71 1076. Applications close September 30.

## TRICONTINENTAL

### *The Rise and Fall of a Merchant Bank*

Hugo Armstrong  
and  
Dick Gross



The first full account of one of the biggest disasters in Australian banking. Filled with the personalities and extraordinary business dealings, this gripping tale recounts the alarming and bizarre circumstances that brought about this massive debacle, the like of which should never be seen again.

RRP \$39.95



HARDCOVER

MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY PRESS

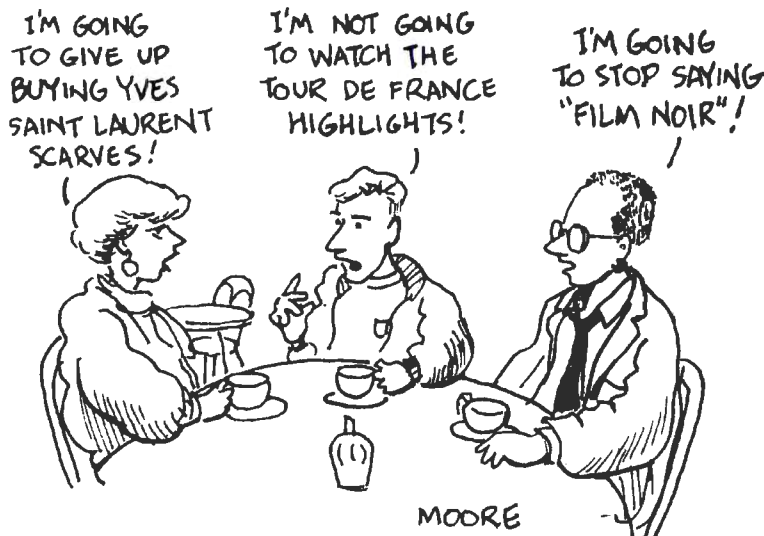


on average cover only 15 per cent of imports (though the extent of the latter is boosted by the lavish spending of the French public servants stationed there, largely exempt from tax, and their 'suffering' at being so far from Paris mitigated by generous hardship allowances).

The territories also commonly feature relaxed racial mixes—with Indonesians, Vietnamese and Chinese having worked for long in the Pacific. And in New Caledonia, some European settlers date back six generations.

**A**ldrich and Connell again: 'In some respects the DOM-TOMs are 'little Frances' across the seas, microcosms of the post-industrial, multi-racial society that is emerging in France itself. In other respects they are quite different worlds, each unique, with a sense of identity and interest that often challenges the ties that bind France to these remote corners of the world.'

**AUSTRALIA'S MIDDLE CLASS RALLIES AGAINST THE FRENCH!**



French Polynesia itself eluded the full metropolitan French embrace, from early contact when English Protestant missionaries made more impact than French Catholics; its leading, Protestant church is today outspoken in its opposition to testing, and its advocacy of greater autonomy.

The relationship with Paris was reinforced, however—and encumbered with a new, ominous characteristic—in 1962, when France began to shift its nuclear testing sites from the Sahara, following Algeria's gaining independence, to Mururoa. The first of 42 tests came in July 1966.

The announcement of eight more explosions came as France, after a decade of Socialist government-promoted *détente* and greater engagement with the independent South Pacific nations—including Australia and New Zealand—was starting to reap diplo-

matic rewards for reinventing its regional role.

It has enhanced its aid program—especially important for the Noumea-based South Pacific Commission—at a time when the USA and Britain were pulling out and Japan and New Zealand were treading water, leaving Australia feeling somewhat exposed as the dominant remaining donor.

It was co-operating in an Australian program to build closer links with New Caledonia, as the 1998 referendum on the territory's status, provided for under the Matignon Accords that sealed a ten-year peace pact between Kanaks and settlers, begins to loom. There had been discussion of a joint moderate platform for the referendum, postponing but agreeing on eventual autonomy-cum-independence.

This renewed French enmeshment with the wider South Pacific also came as, in the '90s, the previously relentless move across the region towards adoption of those democratic structures that tend to promote a self-confident nationalism began to falter, with traditional élites—which have historically been ready to treat with colonial authorities—consolidating their roles in Fiji, Western Samoa and Tonga. And fast growing populations, stagnating economies, governance crises and increased pollution have prompted the inevitable questions within the decolonised Pacific: how did those bright Independence Day hopes turned sour?

**V**anuatu, the former French-British condominium (or 'pandemonium') of New Hebrides, has, under the francophone-dominated Government of Prime Minister Maxime Carlot, become the most outspoken advocate of French interests from within the independent Pacific. Carlot, for instance (following in the authoritarian footsteps of predecessor Walter Lini) recently forbade publicly-owned Radio Vanuatu from covering the regional opposition to renewed testing by France. The French embassy in Port Vila is effectively organising the establishment of TV in the country. The president of the governing Union of Moderate Parties has even suggested that if France found Mururoa too hot to handle, Vanuatu might offer itself up as a new host for *La Bombe*.

This is a story which, like France's whole historic and imaginative engagement with the Pacific—the engagement that helped conceive the still potent myth of the noble savage—will not dissolve overnight. It will continue to haunt and taunt Australians as they gaze cast from Bondi. ■

**Rowan Callick** is Victorian bureau chief of *The Australian Financial Review*, and the paper's Pacific specialist.

Reading: *France's Overseas Frontier* by Robert Aldrich and John Connell (Cambridge University Press), *France and the South Pacific* by Stephen Henningham (Allen & Unwin) and *Your Flag's Blocking Our Sun* by Helen Fraser (ABC).

# Gone to the dogs

On those Saturday nights when the dogs were racing, it seemed that snow-laden winds, straight off Mount Wellington, always drove across Hobart's TCA Ground. Exposed on a hillside on the Domain, this was also Tasmania's premier cricket oval. Here I saw Peter May make a century in a session; Bob Simpson hook Wes Hall for three sixes that clattered onto the roof of the greyhound catching pen; Rohan Kanhai score a double hundred against Victoria. Forever subbing his wage to punt, the

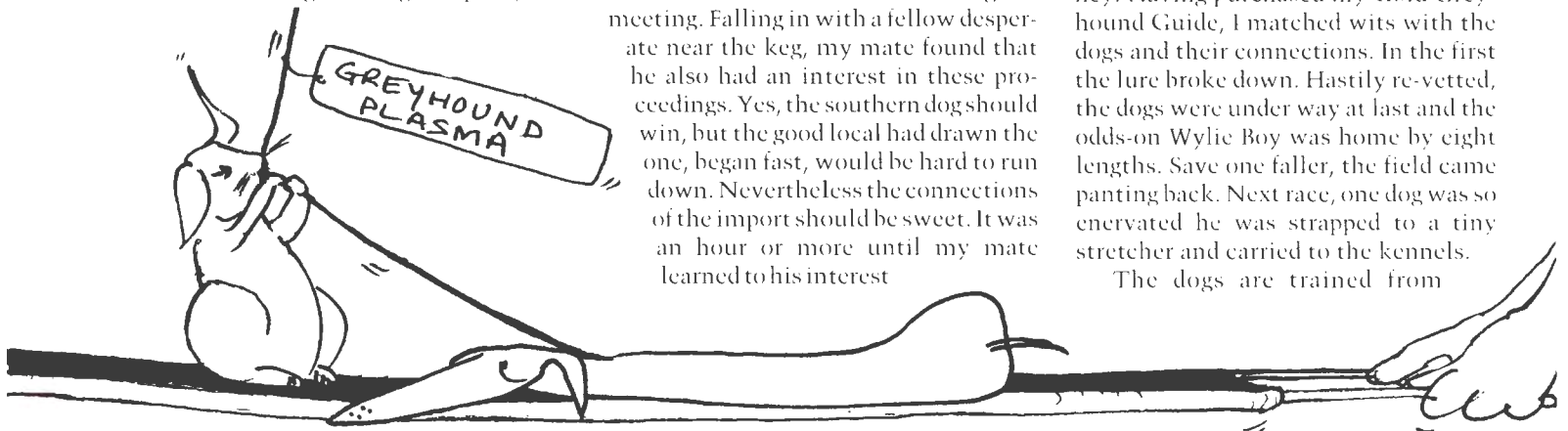
cream regularly slow down these overgrown ferrets, while they were perhaps the first racing animals to be built up and hurried along with steroids. Although making dogs keen with live kills occurs still, other antics are more properly the stuff of legend.

Having worn out his welcome on the bauxite at Grootte Eylandt, a mate of mine headed to Darwin. There he found himself at a friend's barbecue. This individual had brought a dog up from the south and fancied it at the next night's meeting. Falling in with a fellow desperate near the keg, my mate found that he also had an interest in these proceedings. Yes, the southern dog should win, but the good local had drawn the one, began fast, would be hard to run down. Nevertheless the connections of the import should be sweet. It was an hour or more until my mate learned to his interest

in hues never to be found in thoroughbreds—fawn, brindle and strangely chequered in white and black, brindle and white. Their trainers are uniformly clad in sky-blue coats, often donned over suits, as they lead the dogs to their stalls. In its miniaturised way, dog racing is as punctilious as the gallops.

If crowds have all but vanished, they were still racing that night in Bendigo and Launceston, at Angle Park in Adelaide and Wentworth Park in Sydney. Having purchased my Gold Greyhound Guide, I matched wits with the dogs and their connections. In the first the lure broke down. Hastily re-vetted, the dogs were under way at last and the odds-on Wylie Boy was home by eight lengths. Save one faller, the field came panting back. Next race, one dog was so enervated he was strapped to a tiny stretcher and carried to the kennels.

The dogs are trained from



West Indian is the most improbable of the handful of great players to represent the state. International cricket is now played at Bellerive, and the dog track shares the Showgrounds with harness racing. Punters no longer hunch over braziers in the TCA betting ring on chill nights and gone ages ago are the bookmakers who accommodated them.

In Melbourne, one of the two greyhound tracing tracks, Olympic Park, may be doomed, a casualty of the Kennett road tunnel. The new eight million dollar stand will have been built in vain; perhaps already has been, to judge by the meagre crowd that turned out on the late June night when I made my first excursion to the dogs for a quarter of a century. Notwithstanding I soon ran into acquaintances. One of them, no sentimentalist, said that however attached he became to the dishlickers which once he trained, money ruled: 'when the dog was dead, the dog was dead'. Another, having solemnly averred that his brindle bitch had no chance, led it back a winner at long odds.

According to Australian folklore, greyhound racing is even more bent than 'the red hots'. Water, butter and ice-

cream regularly slow down these overgrown ferrets, while they were perhaps the first racing animals to be built up and hurried along with steroids. Although making dogs keen with live kills occurs still, other antics are more properly the stuff of legend. Having worn out his welcome on the bauxite at Grootte Eylandt, a mate of mine headed to Darwin. There he found himself at a friend's barbecue. This individual had brought a dog up from the south and fancied it at the next night's meeting. Falling in with a fellow desperate near the keg, my mate found that he also had an interest in these proceedings. Yes, the southern dog should win, but the good local had drawn the one, began fast, would be hard to run down. Nevertheless the connections of the import should be sweet. It was an hour or more until my mate learned to his interest

that the bloke whom he'd met was the judge at the Darwin dogs. This meant he drove the lure and adjudicated any disputes. So it was that when the local dog jumped, railed and led by four with the import trailing, the hare momentarily slowed. The leader paused to pounce, the interloper grabbed him in two bounds and raced away. That night in the tropics there was an ugly demonstration, but the smarties (including the judge) collected.

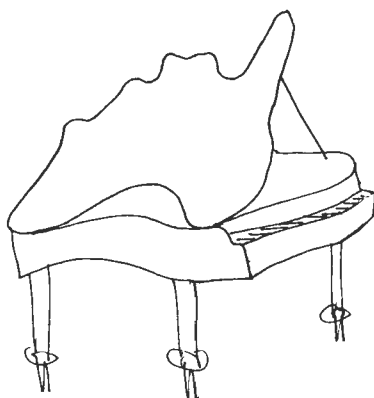
Dog racing is literally a backyard industry, sustained by middle-aged men walking their strings in frosty dawn; setting them for the right event in town or the bush, waiting until the odds are right. A couple of dogs at Olympic Park had each won more than \$100,000, but this is a game where the money comes from gambling. It is also, pre-eminently, an affair of colours: the red of box one (favoured alley at Olympic Park), the blue, pink, black and white stripes, the green and white of the nine dog, or first emergency, reputed to be a top chance if it gets a run because owners of another dog may have been induced to scratch. The scrawny animals themselves come

Arcadia to Reservoir, Drouin to North Ringwood. They perform for a crowd of slippered greybeards, bangle-clad escapees from the care of the state, professional punters who are masters of the sideways glance and more lost children than you'd find in the Brothers Grimm. When Whatta Card from Quambatook won the distance race (732m), the podium sagged beneath our weight owners. Bookmakers alternately combed and tore their hair, one of them a former rails fielder at Caulfield now reduced to betting the concession at the dogs. Clad in livery from some misbegotten dream of Aboriginal art, barmen poured decent red wine by the glass (Flemington take note).

One was moved to a circular argument. The dogs survives as an institution because there is an Australian proletariat, while the existence of greyhound racing proves that the working class still exists, however huddled in stereotype as shrewd, resilient, hard-bitten, battling, arid-witted. ■

**Peter Pierce**, *Eureka Street's* turf correspondent, began his punting career in Tasmania.





# Lifting the Lid

**I**t is likely that over the years between about 1880 and 1960 more Australian girls played the piano for some time in their lives than girls anywhere else in the world, a seemingly innocuous observation, but one which has implications for the histories of both femininity and the culture of religion in 20th century Australia. As Jane Campion's film *The Piano* has shown, piano-playing can be a political activity. In her film it is a surrogate voice for those 19th century women who were unhealthily restrained. Although it could hardly be claimed that there is a thriving industry of historical writing on piano-playing in this country, it has cropped up every now and again and Campion's optimistic perception of it stands out against this stream.

Humphrey McQueen, in *A New Britannia*, saw the piano as epitomising a cloyingly nasty kind of desire for status; Roger Covell, in his general history of music in Australia, sees it as typifying the derivative nature of Australian culture—its ubiquity a symbol of immigrant grief; historians of women's education have tended to include music as an 'accomplishment', training women for ladyhood, both symptom and cause of women's restriction.

But Campion is not entirely on her own: back in 1984, Marjorie Theobald called for a reassessment of 'accomplishments' education, seeing it as a significant precondition of late 19th century Australian feminism; more recently Penny Russell has described the way the piano allowed Grace Rusden a form of self-expression in 1860s Melbourne, at a time of her life when she was particularly entrapped. Perhaps the popularity of Campion's film stems not only from its own artistry but also from the resonances it invokes in Australian audiences. Using the piano as a symbol of personal liberation when, in a dominant strand of our culture it has been projected as the opposite, is a natty device. The film touched a chord: perhaps the Campion perception is closer to the historical experiences of Australian women than most historians have acknowledged.

The abundance of pianos in colonial Australia was well attested by contemporary travellers. R.E.N. Twopeny thought in 1883 that 'almost every working-man has his girls taught to strum the piano.' Frenchman Oscar Comettant, a member of the International Jury judging art at the 1888

Centenary Exhibition in Melbourne, and well-placed to make the European comparison, wrote in 1890 that music was more widespread in Australia than anywhere else in the world: 'even the humblest farmer will have the inescapable piano.'

The plethora of pianos was at least in part a product of that long period of economic growth lasting from the 1850s to 1890, which reached its height in Marvellous Melbourne in the 1880s, during which decade, Graeme Davison has found, the number of pianos imported into Melbourne increased from 1248 in 1881 to 5170 in 1889. Local entrepreneurs responded to demand. In Melbourne George Allan, and in Sydney WH Paling, set up shop, aware of the fortunes to be made by selling sheet music, pianos and tuition. By the turn of the century the most popular pianos were still German—relatively cheap—but in Sydney in 1902, sewing machine manufacturer and piano maker Octavius Beale, founding President of the Federated Chambers of Manufacturers, patented his all-iron tuning system in his piano factory at Annandale and made a sizeable fortune.

But the continued presence of the piano in the lives of so many Australian women during the 20th century can also be traced to its institutionalisation within Catholic girls' schools. Comettant thought in 1890 that piano teachers were legion: 'you only have to tap your foot on the ground and they come out', but although private music teachers remained, their impact was swamped by the convent industry.

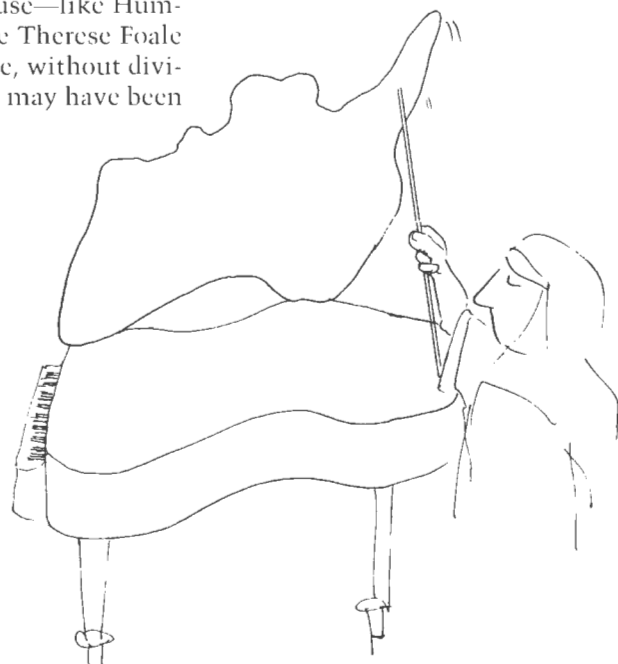
For the orders of nuns imported into the colonies to staff the separate system of Catholic education from the 1880s, music teaching was their financial survival—and their independence: without it they would be 'thrown upon the kindness of the Bishops in order to pay their way' as one nun put it in 1911. But independence had its price, particularly in the rural diaspora. In *Roads to Sion* Rosa MacGinley traces the fate of two convents of the Presentation order established in rural NSW in the 1920s, one at Urunga 200 kms south of Lismore and one at Dorrigo 30 kms inland from Urunga. Their financial hardship—kept under control by long hours of listening by the keyboard—mirrored that of the selectors whose children they sought.

Not all orders readily embraced the teaching of piano. The original rule drawn up by Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods expressly forbade the teaching of music because—like Humphrey McQueen a hundred years later—they saw it as essentially divisive. As Marie Therese Foale has pointed out in *The Josephite Story*, Mary wanted to create an egalitarian institute, without division between choir sisters and lay sisters (in the climate of the time, music teachers may have been more highly regarded than others) and without division between fee-paying piano learners and the very poor who could pay nothing. This indigenous order, founded to teach the poor, shared a distaste for piano-playing with the first French Sisters of the Sacred Heart, imported to teach the rich. Mère Verucrysse, founding Superior, wrote home in 1882 that the colonials 'seem to attach value solely to appearances and what is external', citing music lessons as the evidence, horrified at the amount locals were willing to pay for lessons for their daughters.

Mary MacKillop's fears of the socially divisive potential of music seem not to have haunted the Irish-founded orders that dominated the Catholic education system in Australia. It was so lucrative they could not—in that near century without government funding—afford to reject it. Furthermore it was perceived by the more combative bishops particularly in the heated and structurally formative 1870s—as a drawcard for winning pupils away from the state system. One of the most important sources of conflict between Mary MacKillop and Matthew Quinn, Bishop of Bathurst, was that of music teaching. He wanted to capitalise on the colonial desire for piano-playing daughters to win pupils for the parallel Catholic system then taking shape. Like many Catholic bishops, he wanted the state system to fail.

**B**y 1889, the Sisters of St Joseph resolved that music could be taught by the sisters 'where necessary or advisable'—in short, for the money to be made. But music remained an ambiguous blessing—lucrative teaching on the one hand, but slightly suspect educationally on the other. A resolution was passed at a Catholic Educational Conference in 1911 stating that, in the secondary curriculum, 'too much time should not be devoted to music and to preparation for examinations in music as thereby the general education of the child may suffer.' But relative to the state education system, music was given much greater importance in Catholic girls' schools. Even into the mid-20th century there were those within the liberal reforming state who still associated music with that elitist and frivolous accomplishment education which its pioneers had tried to eradicate at the end of last century. In 1952, Arundel Orchard, a former Director of the NSW Conservatorium of Music, was pleased to

*As Jane Campion's film The Piano has shown, piano-playing can be a political activity. In her film it is a surrogate voice for those 19th century women unhealthily restrained.*





write in his classic *Music in Australia*, that 'the old fashioned ideal of music merely as "an accomplishment for young ladies" is rapidly passing away.'

The systematic examination of instrumental proficiency from the late 19th century can be seen as part of the move away from music as an 'accomplishment', a trifle, an amusement for the well-to-do idle. An examination system had been run from Trinity College, London, from the 1870s, which had the effect of formalising the teaching of music to some extent, and, as Beverley Kingston has pointed out in the *Oxford History of Australia vol 3*, of providing girls with their first experience of competitive entry to the professions. But after 1906 when Allans and Co. started publishing examination pieces set by the newly established Australian Music Examination Board in easily obtainable form, that formalisation was democratised further and the daughters of aspiring bourgeois families could play pieces of Mozart ('Rondo alla Turca') and Beethoven ('Für Elise') as well as 'reveries' and nocturnes by a variety of lesser-known composers.

**N**uns won a reputation for being fine teachers of music. Each state or region had its champion convent: 'The Shield', the annual prize given to the school with the highest grades by the AMEB in NSW, was awarded 22 times between 1929 and 1952 and 19 of these times it was awarded to one of the schools of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy. It was a reputation sustained by self-advertisement: Catholic newspapers printed the numbers of examination honours and distinctions won by students at Catholic schools. And it was a reputation which promoted inter-convent rivalry: 'It was not easy', writes Madeleine Sophie McGrath in *These Women?*, 'for those not educated within the Parramatta musical tradition to be accepted as competent teachers by the congregation'.

None of this is to claim that the systematic, exam-oriented music teaching which dominated the convent tradition was exclusive to it. At MLC Melbourne, Miss Ruth Flockhart was a legend in her own time, comparable with any of the famous nuns at Parramatta. Given the class background of both Catholics and Methodists in Australian history, their common aspiration for piano-playing

daughters is perhaps not surprising, though Church of England girls' schools also claimed excellence: Arundel Orchard commended Perth College as having 125 piano pupils in 1952. It was in the small, very exclusive non-denominational schools like Frensham, that competitive examinations of any kind were thought demeaning; single-mindedly determined piano practice, by extension, was non-U.

While Catholic schools, then, were not the only non-state schools to promote music among their pupils, their parochial system allowed them to do so far more comprehensively. They took piano playing into the suburbs and the country towns of every Australian state. They built and sustained the closest thing to a mass market in the performing arts which our history can boast. We cannot begin to estimate the boredom those nuns must have felt as one after another, little girls—many of whom must have been at least tone-deaf—filed into their rabbit warren cells. One of the most memorable moments in Thea Astley's *Reaching Tin River*, has one of the nuns to whom her heroine writes (in quest of a list of the names of all convent-educated girls who learnt to play 'The Rustle of Spring' between 1945 and 1960) writing back, 'I hope I never have to hear 'The Rustle of

Spring' again. At my age that is a joyous possibility'. In the light of their unremitting daily routine the nuns' reputation as purse-lipped knuckle-whackers is not surprising.

To some extent Bishop Quinn's desire to use music to attract Protestant pupils was successful. In rural areas the convent was the only place to go for piano lessons. One consequence of this was that the convent acted as a link between the often separate worlds of Protestant and Catholic over periods of fluctuating sectarianism—paradoxical given that most orders were semi-enclosed. Protestant girls would penetrate the fortress—even if only for half an hour in the afternoon—to learn scales and arpeggios. The musical convent acted as a bridge of sectarian division in other ways. The exam system ensured the presence of (usually) male Protestant examiners within convent walls at least yearly, sometimes twice yearly, and sometimes productive relationships based on patronage developed between fine music teachers and examiners, fostering connections with conservatoria and beyond.

The practice of holding recitals of visiting greats in convents was also common. The final pages of Clare Percy Dove's history of the Sacré Coeur convent in Melbourne, details recitals at the school by Percy Grainger and 'the great Paderewski'. The links between houses of religion and secular culture call for a modification of understandings of the sectarian bitterness which contaminated



relationships in so many other areas. Of the many romantic stories told about pianist Eileen Joyce, it is true that she was given her first important start after the Loreto nuns who took her into their school in Perth invited Percy Grainger to the convent to play—and to hear young Eileen.

What did all this piano-playing mean? While the autobiographical responses of convent educated girls to their schooling has ranged over a wide spectrum, from rage to earnest defence, few have committed their musical education to paper. But if you accept even a diluted version of Campion's representation of femininity and music, it can mean that convents were potential seed-beds of personal empowerment.

Convent girls got Bach and Beethoven and a sensual engagement unparalleled in other subjects. They also got 'The Rustle of Spring' and 'Bells across the Meadows' as Astley's novel shows. But the high/lowbrow divide is of limited usefulness when understanding the significance of music to young women. Astley's fabulously eccentric character Bonnie retrospectively reviles 'Rustle' in conversation with her daughter—'all those pieces were gentle nature scenes, tralala, English, non-Australian in flavour and with pastoral evocations unlikely to arouse our senses. This is sex instruction, darling'—and yet, as a young girl she had learnt it on the sly and in a later conversation refuses to make fun of it. When Henry Handel Richardson was a student at PLC Melbourne in the 1880s she was 'made to feel very small' for bringing with her from the bush the 'Carnévals de Venice' and similar 'extravagances' and was soon schooled in Bach and Beethoven. It was that music which she took with her to Leipzig, but her early exposure to 'extravagances' in rural Victoria had kindled her love of music.

To the 14 or 15-year-old girl with either talent or tenacity or both, piano-playing allowed the possibility of total absorption in a private world, a world whose tone and character one had power to shape. Closer to home, the world of high and lowbrow was straddled to her own satisfaction by Joan Esmonde, whose daughter Claire McCoy has documented her mother's life as part of an MA at UNSW. As a promising young convent-trained pianist in the 1930s and 40s, Joan Esmonde gave recitals for the ABC and the Conservatorium, until marriage and children forced her to quit—except she didn't quit. She spent the rest of her life playing the piano, adapting her talents and training, alleviating domesticity. She played music at home with the kids, at their schools, for charity and local musical societies. Her musical life straddled not only the high/low divide, but, like so much of mid-20th century women's experience, the perceived gap between public and private.

This is not to suggest the empowerment of music as exclusively female. In his autobiography, Geoffrey Dutton writes that after he started music lessons with William McKie at Geelong Grammar 'suddenly there seemed to be a future': 'What I glimpsed in my own efforts, and in singing in the choir, opened into the huge landscapes of the works of the great composers.' But Dutton was exceptional, as indeed Geelong Grammar under J.R. Darling was exceptional—not least for having as fine a teacher as McKie, later organist at Westminster Abbey, on its staff. Indeed one of the great tragedies of Australian patriarchy, particularly as fostered in private boys' schools, has been the oppositional nexus between sport—always victor—and the arts. Over the formative modern period in

Australian history it was girls who, in the main, have played the piano. And it is nuns who, in the main, have taught them.

**P**erhaps the piano fostered a particular kind of feminine aesthetic suitable for Australian conditions. The Australian girl at the end of the 19th century, as Beverly Kingston has shown, was thought to be a 'good sort', a natural. Her prototype was Norah, Mary Grant Bruce's 'Little Bush Maid'. Growing up in the masculine world of a prosperous station in northern Victoria, motherless, but with her father as her 'principal mate', she had grown up 'just as the wild bush flowers grow—hardy, unchecked, almost untended'. Naturally musical and thus self-taught, piano-playing was compatible with her unchecked activities while also essentially redeeming of her femininity—her 'one gentle passion.'

For generations of Australian girls the 'Little Bush Maid' was their own version of the Australian type. In many ways Norah's piano-playing encapsulates that tension between the lady-like and the liberating which has made it such a widely-practised home industry in 20th century Australia. ■

*In rural areas the convent was the only place to go for piano lessons. One consequence of this was that the convent acted as a link between the often separate worlds of Protestant and Catholic over periods of fluctuating sectarianism—paradoxical given that most orders were semi-enclosed.*

**Anne O'Brien** teaches Australian history at the University of New South Wales. Author of *Poverty's Prison* (MUP, 1988) she is currently researching the historical links between religion and secular culture.



# Fault lines

**H**ELEN DEMIDENKO, a Queenslander of Ukrainian-Irish descent, published *The Hand That Signed The Paper*, a novel which last year won the Australian Vogel Literary Award, this year the Miles Franklin Award and the ASAL Gold Medal. After the Franklin, Australia's richest literary prize, all hell broke loose, and Demidenko, the book, and the Franklin Award panel, have become the centre of a fierce and generally cantankerous argument.

The accusations of the critics are these: covert anti-Semitism, falsifying or just being wilfully ignorant of history, and of seeking to defend, if not the actions, then the persona of war-time Ukrainian genocidists and collaborators with the Nazis.

One question asked by onlookers has been, why jump on her now, when the book had been quietly drifting away? One answer is, the Miles Franklin Award made it mandatory to expose the author, book etc., for silence would suggest she'd got it right. Further silence would legitimise her. So, the Jewish community, and they are the ones most affected, *had* to speak out. Another suggestion is that the timing of this campaign—for it quickly developed into one—just happened to coincide with the second reading of the Racial Hatred Bill in the Senate.

I said the Jewish community was the group most affected, but of course Australia's Ukrainian community are equally concerned. They feel they are being stigmatised, as they felt they were during the war crimes trials, and as they were when they came here, straight after the war. So Ukrainians too have broken their silence, protested, and supported Ms Demidenko—a disaster! So much for multiculturalism, which is supposed to make this sort of thing less likely. I happen to believe that multiculturalism makes it more likely, for we get, in practice, multi-nationalism, often compounded by the makings of a *Kultur Kampf*. And sometimes,

as a bonus, a religious *Kampf*. Thank God Dr Tudjman only stayed here for six days. And don't ask which God.

The work being fought over is a novel, not an historical essay or a political tract, so should be evaluated as a novel *per se*. But it is a funny sort of novel. A faction Demidenko calls it: part fact, part fiction. An historical novel, maybe? But the history cannot be made up—it needs to conform to the historical 'facts'. Otherwise we call it something else—a Romance, for example. Some romance, this one. But there are also political implications and moral issues at the core of Demidenko's novel.

**T**HE PLOT LINE TAKES US from contemporary Australia, and the young girl whose Ukrainian uncle is to be charged as a war criminal, and a father who just might be, then to war-time Ukraine where the atrocities occurred. That is, the destruction of so many of Ukraine's Jews, by the Ukrainian S.S. and the German S.S., as part of the Holocaust, of the Final Solution. (This will be news to those still denying the Holocaust, but then they'll say it's just a novel. As were the Protocols, before the Black Hundreds fixed them up.)

There are flashbacks to the dreadful Ukrainian famine of the early 30s, and the deportation of the kulaks. Millions of Ukrainians died of starvation, and this was either planned or allowed to happen by Stalin, through his henchman, the Jew Kaganovitch, so Demidenko's characters claim. The whole repressive under-structure was dominated by Jewish Communists, who hated the Ukrainians. So when the Nazis hit town the Ukrainians were allowed or encouraged to take revenge on the Jews and Communists. Local boys were then enrolled—and volunteered willingly—to join the S.S., and carry on the work of wiping out Jews and Com-

munists elsewhere. Their motive? Revenge for the Jewish-caused famine and the persecutions under Stalin. Everybody had treated the Ukrainians as animals—the Russians, the Jews, even the Germans, behind their eyes, saw them as savages, as animals. So ... that is how they behaved—the Legion of the Lost. There is truth in this, but is there enough?

Some corrections and additions to Demidenko's history:

- Anti-Semitism was present in the Ukraine for three centuries. The Czars condoned, but controlled it. When the Civil War occurred, with total chaos in parts of the Ukraine, massive numbers of Jews were killed, by the Ukrainians and White Russians. The Cheka killed White Russians. The Ukrainians and political opponents.

With the imposition of firm Communist rule, the age-old sport of killing Jews, (*pogrom* is a Russian word), was stopped, only to resume when the Communists left. When they returned, chasing out the Nazis and the Ukrainian S.S., the killing and the revived anti-Semitism stopped once more. (Incidentally, contemporary Ukraine seems pretty free of anti-Semitism.)

- The Czars ruled by playing their minorities off against one another. Poles came to abhor Russians, Ukrainians, Jews, Lithuanians, and Germans. Ukrainians didn't like Russians, Poles, Jews, had little time for Tartars and Kalmuks—but liked Germans. The Balts ... why go on? Then there was the Turkish question. The whole empire seemed like a laboratory for producing racism, anti-Semitism and religious hate—traditions very difficult to erase.

- There was virtually institutionalised anti-Semitism in post WWI Poland, Hungary, Romania, and powerful anti-Semitic cultural formations in the Baltic States, Austria and Slovakia. (Don't blame the Czar!) When governments were collapsed

and the Nazis took over, those who'd hated Jews had their chance to do it themselves, or help the Germans. More than half the Waffen SS—39 divisions in the field in 1945—weren't Germans. There were three Dutch, three Hungarian, two Belgian, two Russian, two Latvian divisions. Groups from Serbia, Croatia, Albania, Bohemia, Estonia, Italy, France, Finland. Danes, Norwegians, Bosnian Muslims, and Ukrainians. No Polish SS. Why do we only get Ukrainian war criminals; why are *they* the great monsters? Has someone had it in for them? Is it like the search for a scapegoat in the film *Colonel Redl*, where the spy for the Russians has to be someone from the Habsburg Empire's most vulnerable minorities—people who can't talk back, who are marginal. A Jew? No—Franz Josef protects them. Ah—a Ruthenian! Has it perhaps gone like that in sunny Australia, with these potentially divisive war crimes proceedings? No wonder Frank Knopfelmacher, who knew Europe so well, saw these trials as a trigger for race libels.

The novel is broken into bits, cameos, happenings, with enough sex and violence to suit any habitué of splatter movies and totally violent video games, upon which many of our children and young people now feed. *They* might read this book unmoved—assuming they read books—but I found it harrowing and slightly repetitive. She doesn't leave her uncle hero/anti-hero a feather to fly with. He bayonets babies, is trigger-happy, and could put Charles Manson to shame. But he's handsome, great in bed, generous, gets killing fatigue and increasing remorse at the end. On the way, he has lost family and the two women he loves. A burnt-out killing machine, he escapes, to end as a model citizen in Australia.

Had life treated him differently, he would have behaved differently, argues the author, for he had the makings of a fine man. He was a puppet of malign forces, a victim, like so many of the others. True—but so were those they killed and tortured, in the quite straight-forward sense of victim.

What should we do, what can we say, about such men? At this stage, we should *do* nothing. It's 50 years too late, as I think Isi Liebler said. The belated decision to go for them now is like letting this book alone for a perhaps unconscionable time, then suddenly collecting a posse from *The Age* and The Sydney Institute. A bit sus?



What to say? Perhaps a quote from a lecture given by Norman Davies at the Polish Consulate in Montreal, in conjunction with the local Polish-Jewish Society, August 16, 1994, could suffice. 'All communities (in Eastern Europe) suffered appallingly. Bystanders in one operation became victims of the next. A community that was victimised in one round could spawn murderers later on. To confine one's sympathies to just one group is to miss the essential truth.' Perhaps the whole thing should stop there.

Demidenko sets one nice moral problem. If you discover a loved or respected parent has, in the distant past, been a criminal—a murderer, a mother, a camp follower, a collaborator—what should you think, or feel? Or, a Jewish father a *kapo*—and there were many? What *would* you think? I imagine you'd deny it; then say there were extenuating circumstances. Finally, you'd say the others were just as bad. You might even

start thinking of ways of shooting the messenger. Maybe something like that happened here.

We are likely to get more of these books from ethnic citizens—getting it off their chests, telling us how it really was, trying to clear the communal name, or someone's name. Or saving another community's past. Talking about events of 50 years ago, maintaining the rage—for example, making the Holocaust seem the most central, topical and urgent issue—what Knopfelmacher called the Holocaust industry—guarantees a permanent supply of race libels. And that *doesn't* call for a Racial Hatred Bill, which under present circumstances might seem like setting the wolves to look after the sheep, in order to drive away a few mangy dogs. It means addressing the present day, and *its* horrors.

I remember a conversation about the war with Shimon Peres in the Southern Cross Hotel in the early '70s. I said there were 73 million dead from the last war. He corrected me, pointing out, rightly, that the true number was 38 million—73 was the total war dead for the century so far. Early in Robert McNamara's new book, he says there have been 160 million dead as the result of this century's wars. Progress! Isn't this perhaps more important—the killings going on *now*?

**F**INALLY, I ALSO REMEMBER, not so long ago, when an unspoken condition of settling here was leaving all your old country's quarrels and feuds and grievances behind. And a feud carried on over generations is a vendetta. You did not expect your hosts to either take on or listen to your old causes. We are *not* the wastepaper basket for other people's pasts—the meat in other people's sandwiches. If they want to fight, let them leave the pub. Or join the army—any army except ours. ■

**Max Teichmann** is a Melbourne writer and reviewer.

*The Hand That Signed The Paper* is published by Allen and Unwin.

*Painting  
by Marc Chagall  
courtesy of the  
Jewish Museum*



## How hate was learned

**T**HERE IS AN INTERESTING parallel between the argument over Helen Demidenko's book, *The Hand That Signed The Paper*, and a recent major study of Polish Catholic anti-Semitism by Ronald Modras, a leader in Catholic-Jewish dialogue in the United States and Professor of Theological Studies at Saint Louis University.

Poland had been restored as a nation after the First World War after almost 140 years of partition. In 1920 the new nation was invaded by the Soviet Union, but under the leadership of Marshal Josef Pilsudski the Poles were able to gain much Russian territory in the East which brought White Russians, Ruthenians and Ukrainians (5 million of them) into Poland. There was also a sizeable Jewish minority: 'The Jews, numbering some three million, were dispersed throughout Poland (though least in the west), concentrated, in

*The Catholic Church and Antisemitism, Poland 1933-1939*, Ronald Modras, Harwood Academic Publishers, Chur, Switzerland, 1995 ISBN 3 7186 5568 3 (Available through Harwood Academic Publishers.)

small towns and cities'. Pilsudski's aim was to reconcile and integrate the minorities, but this was thwarted by political and economic problems. Poland's population was then 27 million.

Given that Poland was the main locus of the Holocaust, it's easy to forget that throughout the Middle Ages the country had been a refuge for Jews expelled from Western Europe. After the Reformation this continued and it was the secular authorities, especially the Polish monarchy, who protected them.

So by the time of the formation of Poland after the First World War, the Jewish community was an important minority and was the largest Jewish community in Europe. How then did the Polish Catholic majority in the new state deal with this Jewish minority? Were the Poles as anti-Semitic as they are often accused of being?

**M**ODRAS ARGUES THAT the answer to this is complex. Despite the vast majority of Jews in Poland being Orthodox, they were often identified by Catholics as proponents of secular, liberal values that undermined the identification of Polish culture with Catholicism. Liberalism was seen as the product of a Masonic-Jewish 'alliance' and the myth of Jewish world dominance was often mentioned. Jews were also cast in the role of socialists.

The origin of these attitudes is not Poland but right-wing French Catholicism and, to a certain extent, the Vatican itself, with its anti-liberal and anti-communist stance. It is the type of view expressed in English by writers like Hilaire Belloc.

This was communicated in popular terms in Poland by casting the Jews in the role of 'Christ-killers';

they were the enemies of Christians. Church leaders stressed that 'so long as Jews remain Jews, a Jewish problem exists and will continue to exist', but that this should not be used as an excuse for attacking Jews.

The essence of this Catholic ambivalence was expressed by the Polish Primate, Cardinal August Hlond, Archbishop of Gniezno-Poznan, in a pastoral letter (29 February 1936). He says:

It is a fact that Jews are waging war against the Catholic Church, that they are steeped in free-thinking, and constitute the vanguard of atheism, the Bolshevik movement, and revolutionary activity. It is true that Jews have a corruptive influence on morals and that their publishing houses are spreading pornography.

But, emphasised the Cardinal, 'not all Jews are this way'.

There are very many Jews who are believers, honest, just, kind, and philanthropic. There is a healthy, edifying sense of family in very many Jewish homes. We know Jews who are ethically outstanding, noble and upright.

He continued by warning against the moral stance that is imported from abroad 'that is basically and ruthlessly anti-Jewish'. This, he says 'is contrary to Catholic ethics'.

But, as Modras points out, the problem was that the caricature had already entered popular Catholic consciousness. As Modras puts it: 'Catholic leaders and journalists called for a nonviolent war on behalf of a Catholic Poland'. In a Catholic Poland, Jews had no place. Emigration was the only solution to the Jewish question.

Perhaps the most revealing remark of all was also uttered by Cardinal Hlond: 'One may not hate anyone. Not even Jews!' ■

**Paul Collins** is a Catholic priest, writer and broadcaster.

### Jesuits in Australia

David Strong SJ

*A comprehensive history of the Australian Jesuits 1930-1970, written from the 'inside'.*

*A must for community and school libraries and for everyone curious about Jesuit history.*

**RRP \$34.95**

**JESUIT PUBLICATIONS**

PO Box 553, Richmond 3121  
Tel: (03) 9427 7311, Fax: (03) 9428 4450

# Minds, monkeys and machines

**F**REUD AND MARX have been surprisingly comfortable bedfellows in the metaphysics of many intellectuals. Darwin and Freud have not been such obvious companions. Authors such as Frank Sulloway have shown that Darwin had a profound influence on Freud. But that's just an historical fact, and not likely to shake one's metaphysics. The idea of an interesting, perhaps persuasive, synthesis of Freud and Darwin didn't strike me as a possibility before reading this book. Now I'm not so sure. At least I'm persuaded the idea isn't cranky.

Badcock is a prolific and attractive writer. According to the blurb of *Psycho Darwinism*, he 'teaches psychoanalysis and evolutionary science to psychologists and social scientists' at the London School of Economics. I suppose this would have distressed Sir Karl Popper, who taught at LSE and thought Freudianism was the paradigm case of unfalsifiable, pseudo-science. But Popper died last year, and things move on. It's a nice question whether Badcock's synthesis is falsifiable science or metaphysical pseudo-science. Either way, it's interesting.

Actually, there's a third component to Badcock's synthesis: the current hypothesis, popular among cognitive scientists, that the intellect is analogous to a computer. Brain as hardware, mind as software. On this, more below. (One should note the mind has long been compared with contemporary bits of technology: bells vibrating as resonators, telephone exchanges, now computers.)

Badcock takes his Darwinism seriously, in modern sociobiological form of the brand favoured by Richard Dawkins of *Selfish Gene* fame, and Helena Cronin, a colleague of Badcock at LSE and of Dawkins at

*Psycho Darwinism: The New Synthesis of Darwin and Freud*, Christopher Badcock, HarperCollins Publishers, London, 1994.  
ISBN 0 002 553 328 7 RRP \$39.95

Oxford. Cronin has written recently on the theory of sexual selection in her book *Ant and the Peacock*. And she, Dawkins, and Badcock all subscribe to the hypothesis that genes (not individuals or groups) are the true units of natural selection. Like Cronin, Badcock likes the idea of sexual selection in the form stated by the great geneticist, R. A. Fisher, referred to further below.

Darwin thought the individual was the entity towards which natural selection is directed. But for Dawkins, individual bodies are mere 'vehicles' for the carriage of genes. Successfully surviving and propagating bodies do the job that the genes therein 'intend'. Evolution is the outcome of the successful or unsuccessful transmission of genes from one generation to the next. It came as a surprise to be informed by Badcock that Freud had actually written: 'The individual ... is the moral vehicle of a (possibly) immortal substance—like the inheritor of an entailed property, who is only the temporary holder of an estate that survives him'. Perhaps there's a stronger connection between Freudianism and Darwinism than I'd realised!

One of the major problems of Darwin, for ethicists, and for sociobiologists, is altruism. Turning the other cheek is *not* sensible, as Nietzsche pointed out long ago. Far better is the policy of 'Tit-for-Tat', as can be shown by computer simulation in the so-called problem of the 'prisoners' dilemma' (exemplified dramatically in the plot of *Tosca*).



Such simulations have been performed, notably by Robert Axelrod (not to mention an excellent honours student of mine last year, Lee Borkman). Following Axelrod, Badcock describes his own computer simulation of the 'game', and shows that a policy of Tit-for-Tat can be more successful than being a perpetual 'sucker' (always turning the other cheek), or a totally uncooperative player who always 'defects'. So perhaps, a Dawkinsian sociobiologist might say, we have genes that impel us 'vehicles' to play Tit-for-Tat in our everyday interactions. In fact, that is how most of us live. First cooperate, but if that co-operation is not reciprocated, turn nasty! Such Tit-for-Tattish 'vehicles' may facilitate the transmission of their genes into future generations.

**B**ADCOCK THEN DEVELOPS his argument somewhat as follows: Language supposedly originated as a means to assist us, as social animals, to survive—for example by indicating where food might be found (as bees are said to communicate with their waggle dances). And language might be a 'pre-adaptation' to consciousness, first developed for such simple communication and subsequently taking on another aspect/function:

*'But do not chimpanzees exhibit some self-consciousness?'*  
—David Oldroyd

*Animal photograph, one of a series, by Reimund Zunde*



*It came as a surprise to be informed by Badcock that Freud had actually written: 'The individual ... is the moral vehicle of a (possibly) immortal substance—like the inheritor of an entailed property, who is only the temporary holder of an estate that survives him'. Perhaps there's a stronger connection between Freudianism and Darwinism than I'd realised!*

consciousness. (Likewise, an elephant's nose was adapted and modified so that it became a kind of limb.) This is a substantial just-so story, but Badcock makes it seem at least plausible—more so than Kipling's story of the Elephant Child. (But do not chimpanzees, for example, exhibit some self-consciousness?)

Now, with language and consciousness there is of course the possibility, or likelihood of deceit. And in playing games of 'Prisoners' Dilemma' (i.e., living our everyday lives) there is a perpetual 'arms race' between deceiving and detecting the deceptions. But some actions are best performed unconsciously. A consciously told lie may be recognised as such more easily than one told inadvertently or unconsciously. So perhaps the possession of an unconscious dimension of the mind may confer advantage in the struggle for existence. Those selfish genes would 'like it' if their vehicles had a peculiar quality of an unconscious mind that helped them perpetuate themselves!

So perhaps Freud was on to something after all.

**B**ADCOCK NEXT INVITES US, as do cognitive scientists, to compare the brain and mind to a computer and its program. This analogy is congenial to him, since there can be so much going on within a word-processor that's 'out of sight and out of mind'. There are documents up there on the screen before you. These supposedly correspond to the conscious awareness.

There are other documents that can be called up to view when required. This might be like a telephone number which we know but don't think about all the time; yet we can transfer it from the 'preconscious' into consciousness when required.

To carry further the analogy with the computer, there are other documents that have been 'trashed' and

can't be accessed easily or immediately when required. There's also the word processor's operating system which the user doesn't require to examine directly and in fact cannot normally do so. Or there's 'hidden text'. Freud would surely have loved to possess a Macintosh!

Freud discussed the *id* (instincts, drives, the unconscious including the repressed unconscious), the *ego* (the self), and the super ego (the conscience, which monitors the ego). Badcock ingeniously offers as computer analogues the ID ('internal drive'), the EGO ('executive governing organisation', or computer operating system), and the SUPERVISING EGO. The third of these analogies is constructed by reference to computer file names and words. If a file name is erased, the file disappears from view, though the text is still there in the machine (and can be recovered with some difficulty), at least until subsequently overwritten. Rather neat, I think.

With his computer model for the mind and its unconscious, Badcock proceeds to use it to account for some of the well-known—and sometimes ridiculed—aspects of Freud's theory, such as the Oedipus complex, penis envy, narcissism, libido, etc. The ego-libido, he suggests, reflects the 'interests of the genes in their vehicle'; and narcissism is the 'emotional expression of genes' self-interest in the survival of their vehicles'.

Badcock further deploys ideas from the sociobiologist Robert Trivers about reciprocal altruism and parent-offspring conflict. It is pointed out that *frequent* suckling and nipple stimulation has a contraceptive effect. So narcissistic 'oral behaviour' may assist young children to ward off sibling competition and thereby enhance survival. The child manipulates its mother's fertility in its own interest. To promote its genes the child has an interest in prolonging breast feeding. By contrast, for the mother, the production of additional children is needed to further replicate her genes. So she has an interest in weaning her child sooner rather than later. This is the root of Trivers' theory of parent-offspring conflict. Also, the child can perhaps get more milk by being 'anal reten-

tive'. For a breast-fed child, 'what comes out' can only have gone in as milk! So the child can perhaps gain a bit more food by not excreting. Later, it may gain some advantage by intruding on its parents' intercourse: Freud's infantile voyeurism. This needn't be an indication of precocious sexuality, but simply a device to try to deter the advent of a rival sibling.

**D**ARWIN PROPOSED A THEORY of sexual selection to account for the seemingly disadvantageous structures such as the male peacock's tail. He thought that the females 'chose' the ones with the biggest and best tails, giving the well-tailed males a reproductive advantage. According to Fisher's hypothesis, this aided the female's reproductive success if her male offspring were well-tailed, and thus also likely to attract mates. (Helena Cronin develops this idea at length in her *Ant and the Peacock*.) By (a somewhat strained) analogy, in humans, a sexually precocious son might appeal to his mother, and be favoured by her, if she thought (unconsciously) that he was likely to be reproductively successful.

Now, if, in accordance with sociobiological theory, mothers tend to show preferential treatment towards their sons (as seems to be the case in many cultures, notably China)—weaning them later, and so on—it would hardly be surprising if daughters were jealous of their brothers. In a tribal culture, where the children in many cases run naked, the only visible difference between young boys and girls is the presence or absence of a penis. This bit of anatomy is, then, an indicator of likely preferential treatment on the part of the parent. Penis envy, and tom-boy behaviour, should come as no surprise, therefore!

Much of the later part of *Psycho Darwinism* is devoted to the problems of incest and its avoidance, which have been treated at length by modern sociobiologists as well as Freud. Badcock refers to the theory of Edward Westermarck, that children reared together from an early age aren't sexually attracted to one another. This is the preferred theory of E.O. Wilson's sociobiology. But



Badcock draws attention to some evidence, favourable to Freudian theory, which suggests that sibling incest is by no means unknown historically, and that marriage between cousins is favoured in some societies, even being prescribed by marriage rules in several traditional societies such as those of some Australian Aborigines.

Whether Badcock or Westermarck is correct is a question which remains open, and I won't pursue it here. For the present purposes, I will dwell on the attempt made by Badcock to vindicate Freud by means of modern sociobiology and the computer model of the mind favoured by many cognitive scientists.

A lot of *Psycho Darwinism's* arguments are persuasive if one accepts sociobiology and if one likes the computer model of the mind. But sociobiology (of the form favoured by Badcock) is highly contentious so far as the selfish gene hypothesis is concerned and philosophers of biology continue to argue whether genes, individuals, groups, species, or even ecosystems are units of selection.

As for the computer model of the mind deployed by Badcock, some respected authors such as Gerald Edelman think it quite wrong. Edelman favours an evolutionary process for the development of the mind, but it works by a form of associationism in a manner very different from that implicit in Badcock's theory. The Macintosh model is by no means the only one on cognitive science's supermarket shelf.

Such caveats notwithstanding, I found *Psycho Darwinism* an audacious and engrossing book. It's an ingenious synthesis. Darwin, Freud, and the sociobiologists all come out of it quite well. So too does Badcock. He has now launched his synthesis. It'll be interesting to see whether it sails successfully, founders, is sunk by enemy fire, or simply gets lost up a creek. Have a look and see what you think. ■

**David Oldroyd** is Professor of History and Philosophy of Science at the School of Science and Technology Studies, University of NSW.

EXHIBITIONS: 1

MICHAEL MCGIRR



## Shop of Horrors

**I**N THE SILENT CLASSICS, when someone collapses into a swoon there's often a letter in the picture. The letter falls to the floor and the friends rush off for smelling salts. At least the letter is out of the envelope before it does damage. The current exhibition at Australia Post's Philatelic Gallery in Melbourne, 'Little Horrors', (until 22 August) wants your brow to furrow as soon as you look at the stamp.

It's hard to imagine. The stamp in the corner used always to attract the attention of collectors. This is seldom the case these days. Australia Post has drenched the gentle, slightly obsessive, art of philately with consumer products. We philatelists used to be gatherers. We've been turned into hunters.

Take the recent issue to celebrate the centenary of cinema. Australian stamps tend to be conscientiously patriotic. On this occasion there are five stamps, featuring five Australian films: *The Story of the Kelly Gang*, *On Our Selection*, *Jedda*, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and *Strictly Ballroom*. With the stamps come not just presentation packs and first day covers, but also displays, postcards and, in this case, an exhibition. Towards the end of 1993, an issue of stamps featuring the Australian Dinosaur Era rode the success of the film *Jurassic Park*. 'Stamapasaurus' month was declared. There was a wall chart, a book and a video all aimed at young people. Australia Post's publicity declared candidly that dinosaurs were the flavour of the month and that their research showed that 65% of collectors took up the hobby by the age of ten. Meanwhile, another survey showed that last year's issue depicting our home-grown spooks, the bunyip, was the least popular of the year. Doubtless it needed a bunyip movie to kick it along.

'Little Horrors', curated by Elizabeth Gertsakis, does get you to look twice at stamps. It treats them as miniature works of art and mixes and matches various ones from around the world with stills from Australian horror films. So you see the body of an aboriginal lying on a table (*The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith*) next to a stamp from Cameroon which features Rembrandt's painting, *The Anatomy Lesson*. You see paintings featuring aboriginal rock painting next to the ersatz cave paintings that appeared in *The Last Wave*. You see a wartime German stamp, depicting a tank, next to the Volkswagen which grew spikes in *The Cars that Ate Paris*. A forerunner of cinema called the zoetrope has been used to turn a couple of stamps into moving pictures. There is a resume of Ned Kelly's legacy to film, including the suit Yahoo Serious wore in *Reckless Kelly*, before you come across Ned's incarnation in the latest issue.

Of course, part of the purpose of an exhibition like this is also to promote the current stamp issue, an event which is now akin to the release of a book or, dare I say it, a movie. No harm in that, I suppose. The quality of our stamp design is so high that it deserves to be bragged about. But imagine paying \$11 for a movie ticket and not going in to see the film because you want to keep the ticket. This is what philatelists do. Then imagine that the movie house gets wise and produces tickets in many shapes and sizes. The price of a stamp is, of course, not the cost of the stamp. It's the cost of sending the letter or parcel which the stamp covers. When you take the stamp home and put it in an album, someone makes a killing. So we philatelists need to be enticed. Stamps used to be produced as a matter of necessity. Now they are slightly anachronistic. They are kept alive as a form of entertainment. And profit. ■

**Michael McGirr SJ** is *Eureka Street's* resident philatelist.



# Thoroughly postmodern Mary

**I** WONDER WHAT THE POPE thought of Mary MacKillop's knickers?' Together with a number of other visitors to Mary MacKillop Place I gaze into the perspex case at the calico singlet and underpants which hang there, surrounded by four pairs of dangling rosary beads. Rather like an exotic prize captured and given asylum on religious grounds. But are they really Mary's knickers?

Mary MacKillop Place is one of Sydney's newest museums, opened in January to coincide with the founder of the Josephite Order's beatification by Pope John Paul II. One miracle short of being Australia's first saint, Mary MacKillop might muse about the way her historical significance and contemporary status has been interpreted in the Mount Street Convent and former Josephite Novitiate in North Sydney. It is billed as 'More than a Museum, it's a Miraculous Journey.' Historically, it's a very problematic journey.

The museum is the product of collaboration, or the lack of it, between the Sisters of St Joseph's Congregational Leadership Team; Elizabeth Fowler, senior curator, who wrote the exhibition brief; designer, Peter England, and Wintergreen, a production company headed by Tony Sattler of *The Naked Vicar Show*, *Kingswood Country* and Graham Kennedy's *Blankety Blanks*.

Why was a television script writer/producer hired? According to Sattler, who has never 'done' a museum before: 'It was very dry and dusty—a dead nun—albeit a saint. There's lots of beads and Mary's sock. It was clearly going to die in the arse.'

Sattler has approached Mary MacKillop Place as he would any other production, as a piece of theatre, with emphasis on scripting the conflict and tension, highlighting the humour and creating the set and atmosphere to make it work.

Historical accuracy sometimes gets lost among the gimmickry and gadgetry. If it didn't work, the rule, it

would appear was to improvise and be creative. When areas of inaccuracy are pointed out to curator Elizabeth Fowler, she laments that the design dominated. Fowler, the curator of the now defunct St Mary's Cathedral Museum, says that Sattler's approach has meant that 'important things are made insignificant and insignificant things are made important.'

The museum begins in a cosy vestibule with a magnificent sliced polished ring of River Redgum. The tree is used because it was from the South Australian township of Penola where Mary MacKillop established the first Josephite school in 1862. Sattler found it and aptly refers to it as a 'contemporary of Mary MacKillop's'. The rings of the tree's growth are used to signify major events in the life of the tree, Mary MacKillop and the history of the world.

The connection with place goes askew however when the potted history of the world is given as an exclusively masculine world. Violence and destruction, or its perpetrators, are the key signposts of time. The birth of Buffalo Bill Cody, the capture and hanging of Ned Kelly, the birth of Hitler and Van Gogh's suicide are specifically highlighted, '1909—Mary MacKillop dies here in the convent in Mount Street. The tree survives its 249th year, the same year saw the birth of Errol Flynn, Chips

Rafferty, Reg Ansett and Robert Helpmann.'

**M**ARY MACKILLOP is strangely disconnected from her socio-economic, political and cultural context. What was it about her time and world and her as a person that drove her relentlessly to form a religious order in 1866 and to teach in the bush and start working with the poor? What did it mean to be poor in the latter half of the 19th century anyway? The basic question of who was Mary MacKillop, and the rich layers of narrative which could answer this, seem buried beneath

booming male voices and video screens of saints coming alive.

Instead of a dynamic and creative contextualization, we have Aboriginal TV and film personality Ernie Dingo warming his hands over an open fire, espousing the greatness and love of Mary MacKillop: 'Mary MacKillop was a fair dinkum Aussie and now she's a fair dinkum saint.' The footage serves the ideological purpose of positioning Mary MacKillop among famous Australians. Fowler says: 'It's an attempt to be seen to be politically correct. Mary MacKillop never even taught Aboriginal kids.'

One of the functions of Mary MacKillop Place, like other museums, has been to assemble objects and to use them to educate. The relics of Mary MacKillop—pocket watch, rosary beads, handkerchiefs, darned stocking, her writing case and the pieces of china she gave as gifts—have been divorced from their functional contexts. The haphazard way in which many of the objects have been displayed is ultimately a reflection of power relations at the museum. The decisions about space and visibility were Sattler's. The objects are merely props around the set but not essential to the 'show.' As Sattler comments: 'A watch is a watch, a set of beads is a set of beads. They're only important by association.'

The visitor assumes that what is housed in the museum is 'real'. Generally replicas in a museum are labelled as such. At Mary MacKillop Place there is no distinction between what is real and what is replicated. For example, Mary's signature on a receipt of a printing company which once employed her is a fake.

The designer, Peter England, has a degree in landscape architecture and wrote a thesis on sacred symbolism in nature. Like Sattler he has never been involved in a museum before. According to Fowler, the designer never did a plan of the objects. It shows. 'It's a mish-mash,'

says Fowler. In the section of the exhibition on Mary's early life, for example, there are family photographs, the mitre of her confirming bishop, a missal, a plate and a vase all jumbled together—some with labels, some without. A few supposed 19th century toys and a sewing sampler are given spatial prominence and their inclusion suggests an association with Mary MacKillop. In fact, they're props. Who knows if they are even of her time?

A close inspection of the descriptive wall panels and labels often reveal them to be out of sequence, or incorrectly located. Sattler says: 'We tried to cut the reading stuff right down.' But instead of editing the panels the decision was made to shrink them. The point size of the type on the labels is so small the visitor can hardly read it.

The haphazard design of the exhibits regularly fail to meet basic preservation and security guidelines of museum practice. Don't be surprised if Mary's pocket watch is pocketed by a tourist or relic-seeking spiritualist. With the substantial funds sunk into the project, skimping on such basic areas seems an anomaly.

The entrance into the re-created Penola classroom is a lovely theatrical set. There's a snake under the veranda, a scary possum on the roof and lizards in empty milk buckets. Lots of wonderful objects are scattered on the veranda—marbles, a school case, a box of ducks and a young lad who looks as though he's sneaking a fag. With the lighting and painted backdrop, it's a visual delight. But here lies the repeated problem of Mary MacKillop Place: because it is positioned within the context of a museum, visitors assume accuracy or at least credible recreation. It is neither of these. It's just a stage set.

**T**HE MODEL OF CHILDREN and nuns playing outdoors in the generic 19th century bush school yard wasn't based on authentic sketches. The frozen action of the nuns playing

cricket, skipping and chases is an anachronism. Without a label, it is left to speak for itself.

In Alma cottage where Mary MacKillop spent her last years and died, an elaborate full wall of a kitchen has been constructed complete with oven, cupboards and domestic objects. There was no kitchen in Alma cottage.

According to Tony Sattler, the sisters weren't keen to pursue the miracle theme in the exhibition. And historians might have taken a rather 'earthly' approach. Designer Peter England went for a *son et lumière* show without the customary ruins.



A 2-tonne block of granite balances on a piece of River Redgum and a shaft of light beams on it. There is the standard 'atmosphere' music and the woman cured of leukaemia by the intercession of Mary MacKillop speaks and tells her story. Most visitors believe it is the woman herself speaking—wrong again. Her story was recorded, edited and the voice is that of Tony Sattler's wife, actress Noelene Brown.

The star of the Mary MacKillop show is really Sister Monica. She features in the film screened in the Penola school room. Sr Monica delivers a stand-up comic routine and a song about Mother Mary, written by Tony Sattler. As Sr Monica struts her stuff, I can't decide whether it's a parody of *The Flying Nun* or *The Singing Nun*. Sattler argues: 'Nuns have always been figures of fun. It's a strange lifestyle and increasingly rare.' This view is certainly reinforced at Mary MacKillop Place.

One room in Alma Cottage, entitled by Sattler 'nuns having fun', is devoted to recent history; it contains a few enlarged photographs without labels or dates. The final exhibit 'Today's Sisters keep up the Work' is an attempt at staging continuity. Mounted black-and-white photographs, unlabelled and left to speak for themselves are entitled 'A Day in the Life of a Sister of St Joseph'. They are meant to be representative of the 1300 'Brown Joeys' in Australia today. The last 80-odd years of the order's work have been rendered invisible. The exhibition is a political statement of the owner-

ship of the MacKillop tradition and the service work still going on, but it completely misses the opportunity to construct displays relevant to the contemporary issues of injustice and poverty that these women are involved with and passionately concerned about.

'Curators don't understand' says Sattler 'They are ultimately in show business. They have to be as much in

show business as I am.' On one level Sattler is right: exhibitions are productions not unlike theatre and increasingly the tools of the theatre are used in museums. However, there are rules of historical creation, and creation within the conventions of exhibitions and expectations of visitors. Once the title 'museum' is placed on the front door these rules cannot be so lightly dismissed.

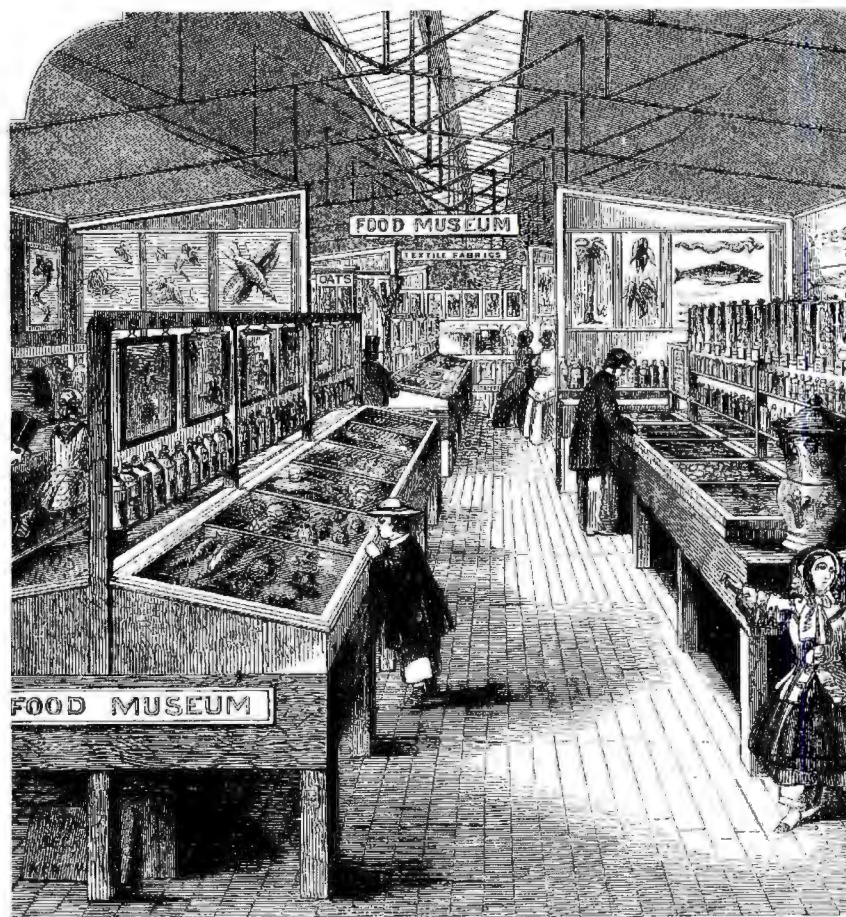
This member of the popular audience spent a long time pondering that pair of knickers in the perspex case. Somehow I knew that if Donald MacKillop had ended up a saint instead of his sister Mary, his drawers wouldn't have been showcased. Perhaps it's all part of showbiz. Just another unlabelled replica, points out the curator. Mary MacKillop Place is a much poorer museum than it should have been. I can't help but feel duped. ■

**Beth Gilligan** is completing a masters thesis in applied history at the University of Technology, Sydney.

*Mary MacKillop as she appears on the first day cover issued by Australia Post.*



# Angst over antipasto



**T**HE MOMENT Trevor's vegetarian antipasto was placed in front of him he began muttering, 'This is terrible. Oh no, this *really* terrible.' He hopped up and down in his seat, trying to attract the waiter's attention, his eyes riveted on a small hill of olives at the centre of the dish. Others at the table were mystified. But I knew what the problem was.

Trevor and I were neighbours at table. After a polite exchange of names he told me that the three senior men in his family had died from heart disease due to high blood pressure. At 75, he had normal levels, due to abstinence from salt. Trevor signalled his ongoing vigilance by detailing the sodium content of every item on the table.

'Thank God there's no salt in red wine', I thought as I ordered a bottle to share with my statuesque female friend. But wait, said Trevor, hadn't he better go thirds with us, given the latest research on safe levels of alcohol consumption for women, and had we realised that just before a woman's period, her tolerance and capacity halved!

This was *Food, Diet and Pleasure*, my first conference dinner, and my first food conference. If I hadn't known quite what to expect, I was

continually surprised by what I got!

For a start, everyone was thin. To keep things that way lunch consisted of 'gourmet' croissants with alfalfa, and tinned orange juice, followed by instant coffee. The lady on my left opened conversation by announcing she'd yesterday baked her first sourdough loaf. On my right, a girl clad from head to foot in leopard skin explained she'd just completed a four-year degree in Food Technology. One of her projects had been to produce eight cans of cream of celery soup. 'It was disgusting,' she said. In the speakers' pavilion a clutch of sleek ladies laughed uproariously at some poor sod's assertion that, 'there are no calories in vegetables'.

The papers began and my uncertainty dissipated. Writer Marion Halligan had us all agreeing that not even foodies actually *make* the impossibly fiddly recipes in the glossy food magazines—we consume merely by reading them. A lone dissenter said she had indeed attempted a *Vogue* orange and arborio rice tart, and ended up with crunchy yellow rice pudding.

Halligan was followed by tax lawyer, Jonathan Todd, who briefed us about food, class and the role that


emerging theories of nutrition played in the formation of the basic wage. He explained that energy was broken up into what were called 'man units', and the amount of money required for food was based on the cost of enough 'man units' needed to perform a day's work. He also touched on the social control that went with growing central ownership of the food supply. Newcastle was one of the few places bosses couldn't strike-break, because the locals were able to stay out, feeding themselves out of their back-yard vegetable plots.

**C**ULINARY HISTORIAN Barbara Santich continued the historical theme, focusing on the history of Australian dietary advice drawn from her new book, *What the Doctors Ordered, 150 years of Dietary advice in Australia*. Santich's book is a comprehensive and amusing account of Australian nutritional 'wisdom', stretching from the days when shearers put away over a kilo of meat a day, to the calorie-counting 1990s.

In the nineteenth century there was no 'science of nutrition': instead food was studied as a branch of chemistry. Chemists soon broke food

*continued p44*

# Land of the licorice penguin



**D**ARLING HARBOUR resembles what I imagine a UFO car park might look like. And, there's no doubt, it would be satisfying for urbane Melbournites who want all their notions of Sydney as a vulgar, empty city confirmed.

A rather striking yet intangible feature of the urban design of Darling Harbour is that wherever you are, you're somehow not where it's happening. 'It' in my case was the *Family Circle* (Entertaining and Appliance) Cook-

ing Show. My sister and I trudged through what seemed like a thousand auditoriums, artificial lakes, circus performers and record shops until we came closer to something called Exhibition B.

Exhibition A, incidentally, was hosting the Australian Travel Show. It featured over 140 countries encapsulated in 140 tiny petitioned rooms. Bulgarian folk singers danced to taped music on the outdoor stage near the entrance in a moving attempt to entice people to visit Bulgaria. Peering suspiciously at them from back stage were two Papua New Guinea men, dressed in national costume—grass skirt, tribal beads and feathers etc—smoking cigarettes. Passing through Auditorium A, I was somehow sorry I wouldn't be writing about it.

But as it turned out, the *Family Circle* Cooking Show was no less extraordinary. One of the best things about going somewhere you wouldn't ordinarily, is that you're introduced to whole sub-cultures you never knew existed. I met, for instance, a rather inspired man, from the North Shore Beekeepers' Association who, was keen to demonstrate the diverse uses of bees-wax. After listening politely to his detailed explanations, my sister and I bought

some pure beeswax hand-cream. As we said good-bye the man called out cheerfully in the distance, 'Watch out for the bees with that cream. It's like a magnet for them!' We looked down at our purchases with less enthusiasm.

Around the corner was the NSW Cake Decorators' Association. This group displayed the most remarkable, detailed miniature landscapes sculpted out of sugar. When I approached the display stand, two plump, industrious, middle-aged ladies were sculpting miniature penguins for a South Pole cake. When I asked them how they made the tiny birds they illustrated their exceptional dexterity with liquorice. 'You use icing sugar for the eyes', they told me blandly. What struck me about the NSW Cake Decorators' Association was the skill, commitment and imagination with which they approached their work. Yet when you referred to their sugar sculptures as art they were amazed. In no way did they consider themselves artists. They were just putting into practice their enthusiasm for a skill which had been passed on to them from a mother or an aunt. I was reminded briefly of the French conceptual artist Duchamp and his theories about intentionality before moving on to the adjacent stand.

Next up I spoke to a young woman about vegetables. Not just any vegetables but certified organic vegetables! Their emphatic flyer screamed: Unlike some 'organic' deliverers, we will never substitute with non-organic produce! Contrasting with their militant leaflet, the young woman I spoke to was softly spoken and held. Despite her passionately held convictions, she was sympathetic to her ideological enemies. 'I understand why farmers are so reluctant to turn away from chemicals. After all they have such a tough time as it is. It's just that these chemicals are killing people.'

After this sobering encounter I

picked up a few leaflets from the 'Eating Out in Singapore' display. I've noticed that usually at these kinds of shows there's at least one group who are somehow out of kilter with the rest. Perhaps they got wind of the *Family Circle* Food Show through a friend and somehow got the wrong end of the stick. Perhaps they took the wrong turn at Auditorium B.

Enter the celebrity cooks. First up was Geoff Jansz, the handsome young chef from Channel Nine, who offered a thousand dollars to anyone who could lend him a small box of tissues (apparently he had mislaid this vital tool in the creation of meringue puffs).

**G**LOFF TOLD US THAT a man in the previous session had complained, 'You TV people are all the same. When you're on TV you smile all the time. But you didn't smile once during your demonstration. Not once!'

Geoff was followed by Lady Flo Bjelke-Peterson and her famous pumpkin scones. Lady Flo is a gifted performer. She has a remarkably unaffected manner, exemplifying the golden rule that to communicate to a large audience effectively, you must pretend that you're only talking to one person. We all felt like Joh. No kidding. She told us that she preferred to cook scones with a Mixmaster (apparently this is quite unorthodox) and that she had often mentioned this in previous cooking demonstrations. Recently, to her delight, the Mixmaster people had presented her with a brand new Mixmaster. 'When I was in politics they would have screamed Corruption! Corruption! But that's all over now,' she explained cheerfully.

Finally, Bernard King, connoisseur on all matters of refined living, demonstrated his flambé of strawberries. The interesting thing about Bernard King is that while he has a go at almost everyone in the

*continued pg 44*





**Islam**  
*Modernity, Globalisation*  
**29 & 30 September 1995**

MODERN  
RECONSTRUCTION  
TRADITIONAL  
GLOBALISATION  
INTELLECTUALS  
CIVIL SOCIETY  
ORIENTALISM  
SOCIAL EQUITY

Speakers  
from  
Australia  
Europe  
Southeast Asia  
Middle East

**Stonnington Theatre**  
**Deakin University**  
(Toorak Campus)

To register  
or for further information  
please contact:  
**Siew-Mee Fong**  
Conference Co-ordinator  
School of Social Inquiry  
Faculty of Arts  
Deakin University  
Geelong, Victoria 3217  
Tel: (052) 27 2262  
Fax: (052) 27 2018

CORE— Centre of Religions, Cultures and Social Change DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

## PSYCHOLOGIST- SOCIAL WORKER

### CENTACARE, DIOCESE OF CAIRNS

Seek to appoint a person with the following attributes:

1. a professional background, for example in social work or psychology
2. two to three years experience in counselling, pastoral/ community activity and groups work (support, therapy and educational)
3. a demonstrated capacity to deal with issues such as grief, trauma, domestic violence, child protection, depression, stress and conflict in relationships.
4. a willingness to travel, as required, to rural and remote areas in Far North Queensland
5. a commitment to the philosophy and mission of Centacare, a Catholic welfare organisation.

The appointment could be negotiated either as a short, fixed term appointment or as a permanent appointment, subject to the appropriate probationary period.

The position will be remunerated at a level appropriate to qualifications and experience.

Applications should be forwarded, together with the names, addresses and telephone/facsimile numbers of three nominated referees, to:

**The Director, Centacare Cairns, PO Box 201 Cairns, by  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16th 1995.**

from p42

down into components we now call proteins, fats and carbohydrates. It wasn't until the discovery of vitamins, well into the the century, that world-wide nutritional deficiencies were identified, and taken seriously by governments, their concern later translating into agricultural and education policy.

In addition to the historical fact (most of which has not been put down on paper, or even gathered together before) Santich enriches *What the Doctors' Ordered* with quirky cultural information. In 1877 Marcus Clarke speculated on the effect our diet would have on the nation's emerging politics: 'All carnivora are rash, gloomy, given to violences ... Red radicals are for the most part meat eaters. A vegetarian ... is a conservative. Fish eaters are invariably moderate Whigs.' The result is an original and entertaining work of Australian history.

Writer and broadcaster Alan Saunders provided a spoken (and briefly sung) finale. Like Santich, Saunders drew his material from his just-released, *A is For Apple*. The book (Saunders' first) is a natty little green volume which takes us on a romping tour of Saunderson's epicureanism. The book's structure is borrowed from M.F.K. Fisher's *An Alphabet for Gourmets*, which uses each letter of the alphabet to head a discussion or story of the author's choosing. While *An Alphabet for Gourmets* is largely written in the style of a personal memoir, *A is for Apple* is a more an eclectic gathering of fact, theory and food trivia. One of the most impressive things about Saunders, as writer (and broadcaster), is his ability to make his formidable breadth of food knowledge accessible and fun.

In his chapter 'C is for Camel', (and in his conference paper), Saunders makes his contribution to the debate over whether Australia has, or needs, a distinct Australian cuisine. Saunders believes that if we're grown up we shouldn't need such symbols. Wine writer and academic Graham Pont says an Australian cuisine is important but only if it serves to speed our escape from British food!

But while foodies are talking

themselves red, or perhaps purple in the face, it seems that the Americans have had the last word. In Hungry Jack's outlets across Australia, an 'Aussie Burger' is being promoted. The sole feature that distinguishes it from all the other burgers, its 'Australian-ness' so to speak, is a slice of soggy canned beetroot. ■

Catriona Jackson is a freelance journalist.

## GREAT MOMENTS IN EUREKA STREET HISTORY: VOLUME 1

What John F. Kennedy really said at the Berlin, Wall in 1963.

"Free men around the world are proud to say  
*Ich bin ein Eureka Street* advertiser."

If you want to be part of  
*Eureka Street* history by  
advertising call:

Tim Stoney  
Tel: (03) 9427 7311

Fax: (03) 9428 4450

from pg43

audience—one woman was called a 'poor North Shore housewife deprived of interesting conversation and with a penchant for the drink'—there is nevertheless something uplifting about this diatribe. His philosophy seems to be that no matter who you are you can redeem yourself through the inherent cultural value of putting effort into preparing something for someone else.

And I guess, in some ways, this pretty well sums up the ethos of the *Family Circle* Cooking Show. In the words of Lady Flo, 'Even if you're nobody you can have somebody for dinner.' ■

Rosey Golds is a Sydney freelance writer.



## Have faith in good works

**L**AST DECEMBER I COMMENTED ON a couple of recent plays by Nick Enright, a Sydney playwright whose national exposure in recent years has rivalled that of the prolific Louis Nowra.

His 1980 documentary drama of the depression years, *On the Wallaby*, was given a lively revival some six years ago by students at Melbourne University; then the Ensemble Theatre in Sydney had a big hit on its hands when it premiered *Daylight Saving* in 1989. The following year, the Melbourne Theatre Company mounted a new production at Russell Street of this highly entertaining comedy. The production proved so popular that it toured widely and was repeated early the next year at the Comedy Theatre. The South Australian touring company, Harvest Theatre, also sent a

production of *Daylight Saving* around in 1990.

In the same year, the RQTC's revival of the musical adaptation of *The Venetian Twins*, which Enright had co-written with Terry Clarke back in the heyday of the Nimrod theatre a decade earlier, toured all over the place with a marvellous cast, including the likes of Drew Forsyth and Helen Noonan. *The Twins* enjoyed another revival in 1993, thanks to the Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Tasmania; also in 1993, *Daylight Saving* had yet another outing, this time courtesy of the Q Theatre at Penrith. There were two further new plays in 1992. The first was *St James Infirmary*, (a Q Theatre premiere) about a young boy growing up in a Catholic boarding school, especially in the gloomy infirmary of its title; this was also

produced the following year by the MTC at Russell St. Next was *Property of the Clan*, which premiered for Freewheels Theatre in Education in Newcastle (the text was reviewed in *Eureka Street* last December).

In the meantime, the Ensemble had staged another Enright premiere, *Mongrels*, in 1991, then it was back to the Q for the first performances of *Good Works* (last July) and of yet another new play, *The Quartet from Rigoletto*, (in March of this year).

Even this impressive list does not exhaust Enright's recent good works: a re-jigged version of *Property of the Clan*—under the new title of *Blackrock*—is to open for the Sydney Theatre Company in August, while *Good Works* itself was performed earlier this year by Eureka Theatre in Canberra and the QTC

*'Tough when it counts':  
Jan Friedel as  
Mother John and  
Janet Andrewartha as  
Mary Margaret  
in Good Works.*

*Photograph: Jeff Busby*



will give it yet another separate production in October. Along the way, there have been film and television writing (*Come in Spinner* and *Lorenzo's Oil*), commissions for NIDA (*Summer Rain*) and translations and adaptations (including a fine *Marriage of Figaro* for Lighthouse in 1983).

Nick Enright is a busy writer, and a very good one: reviewers of the Playbox Theatre Company's *Good Works* have almost unanimously approved. One reviewer's 'Best new play for the year so far' was topped by another's 'finest new Australian play seen in years'; another suggested 'it has few rivals, if any, in the 1990s.' Even the *enfant terrible* of Melbourne theatre criticism, Guy Rundle—whose rampaging tirades in *The Age* of recent months normally include words like 'awful' and 'disastrous' as a matter of routine—was 'utterly swept away by it' and only just stopped short of calling it a classic.

IT CERTAINLY IS A PLAY TO SWEEP one away, as much through technical accomplishment as through emotional impact. Kim Durban's production has a lot to do with it, as well (although Rundle couldn't help sinking the boot into it) but more of that later.

*Good Works* is set mainly in a large Australian country town, with a number of crucial scenes in a major city and it spans five decades: from 1928 to 1981, which is 'the present' for the purposes of the play's reflective, almost cyclic, structure. It begins in the country in 1928, with two little girls playing with a peg-doll, then snaps abruptly to two men playing a kind of trivia-quiz game in a city gay pub in 'the present'.

They are interrupted when a slightly mysterious third man calling himself John accosts the one called Tim, but not before a very brief flashback to a middle past—1962—where Tim, now obviously a young boy, is practising the piano under the supervision of his mother (Mary Margaret), whom we fleetingly recognise as one of the girls of the first scene.

Tim suspects he knows this 'John' from his past, but before we get to explore this possible relationship,

there is another flashback to 1962. The other little girl from the opening scene (Rita) comes back to stay with her mother after an absence of some years, with her son in tow. Rita has been offered a job at one of the town's leading pubs but her mother (Mrs Kennedy) is not pleased to take her in; that it has something shameful to do with the boy is all we can gather at this stage.

The boy's name, by the way, is Shane, and he is played—intentionally—by the same actor we have just met playing the 'rough trade' John in the gay pub of the present. Presently, we cut to another scene in the same era as Rita's unwelcome homecoming: Brother Clement, a teacher in the local Marist Brothers school, is introducing new boy Shane Grogan to Donovan, easily recognisable as the Tim of the gay bar. They strike up an instant friendship.

In the space of barely 10 minutes of playing time, Enright introduces us not only to his principal characters and their extremely distant time-frames, but also to the cyclic nature of their inter-relationships. The remainder of the plot turns on crucial incidents in all of the play's time-frames and among all of its participants: incidents that are credibly built-up and crucial, especially one involving the two boys and the distinctly sadistic Br Clement. Enright has the capacity to place his characters in positions from which it is practically impossible to turn back.

THIS IS DAZZLINGLY brilliant plotting, although it makes demands of concentration and requires flexibility on the part of actors. But there's more to it than this. Enright has also entangled us, in the play's opening moments, in the emotional web of an extremely complex, almost archetypal Irish-Australian Catholic family-drama that is a more than worthy descendent of a line stretching from the 1970s, with Peter Kenna's Cassidy family dramas and fellow-Novocastrian John O'Donoghue's O'Mahons in *A Happy and Holy Occasion*. (Enright's Br Clement takes over where the title character of Ron Blain's *The Christian Brothers* leaves off—and then some!)

The quirky, temporal play of

memory is one of the greatest joys in *Good Works*. Some of the scenes are extremely brief, but they have an powerful impact, especially through some judiciously repeated moments from the past juxtaposed with moments in the present. Similarly, the thriller-plot 'get us in' in a way that Agatha Christie would have been proud of.

KIM DURBAN'S PRODUCTION of the play for Playbox (which is enjoying sell-out status and for which there is popular demand for an extended season) captures the spirit of the play, as do Hugh Colman's set and costumes and Rachel Burke's sumptuous lighting design.

The production manages the play's transitions of time, place, mood and atmosphere better than anything I've seen at the Malthouse since it opened.

The cast features Janet Andrewartha and Helen Morse (as the little girls who become devastatingly credible feuding mothers), the very stylish Paul English and the almost unrecognisable Greg Stone (as the two boys). These receive tremendous support from Jan Friedl (as a succession of difficult-to-differentiate mothers) and Michael Bishop (especially as the vicious Br Clement).

The sense of ensemble—rarely seen nowadays—is becoming something of a trademark of Playbox's best productions. It is worth commenting, in particular, on the principal female roles. Too often, when actors are required to span several generations, we see casting that is suitable to the youthful end of their acting spectrum but risible for the older end.

The casting of Andrewartha and Morse is inspired; they are wistful and joyous as kids, but they are really tough when it counts in this play—in their maturity. *Good Works* is more than its name suggests. This is a master-work of contemporary Australian drama. ■

**Geoffrey Milne** is Head of the Department of Theatre and Drama in the School of Arts and Media at LaTrobe University



## Clerical error

*Priest*, dir. Antonia Bird (Village). That endangered Catholic species, the parish priest, continues to fascinate writers of fiction and makers of movies. The latest offering, *Priest*, was heralded in Australia by reports of critical acclaim from the ecumenical jury at the Berlin Film Festival, mute toleration by the Catholic hierarchy in England, the film's country of origin, and open hostility from several public figures in the United States, including Cardinal O'Connor in New York and the Republican presidential contender, Senator Robert Dole.

Reaction has varied in Australia, with many simply choosing to view the film in the light of their own ecclesiastical politics. If you think all's well with the Church and its clergy, then *Priest* is a gratuitously offensive attack on both; if you think rather less well of them, it becomes an attack on institutionalised repression and hypocrisy. Such reactions are predictable in a polarised Church but they caricature the film, revealing more about what people bring to their viewing of it than about what they may find in it.

*Priest* is a subtle and, for the most part, plausible reworking of themes familiar from other films and novels about Catholics and their priests: What happens when the seal of the confession forbids the naming of a criminal? (*I Confess*, *A Prayer for the Dying*.) When the loneliness of celibacy seems unendurable? (*The*

*Power and the Glory*, *Diary of a Country Priest*, *The Cardinal* to name a few.) When an individualistic interpretation of the church's moral teachings means acquiescence in the injustices of the wider society? (*On the Waterfront*, *Romero*, *Raining Stones*)?

If *Priest* has struck a raw nerve in some Catholic circles, it cannot be because raising such questions is a novelty. (Though this film pushes each of them a tad further: the confessor's dilemma becomes not just naming the criminal but naming the crime, and thereby saving the victim; celibate anguish becomes homosexual as well as heterosexual; the fundamental injustice treated in the film concerns the wielding of power within the church, not outside it).

But *Priest* does offer something that its predecessors have often lacked—an absorbing attention to detail. Each scene in the film's gloomy Victorian presbytery will resonate with audiences who have grown up in the Irish diaspora, whether it be in Liverpool or London, Booligal or Boston. As you watch you realise that you've been there and met these men, and that the filmmakers have too. Perhaps this shock of recognition is what has upset so many. —Ray Cassin

## Tortured, torturer

*Death and the Maiden*, dir. Roman Polanski (Village). Once again Polanski puts his reputation on the line; once again it holds up. In this powerful, probing adaptation of Ariel Dorfman's much acclaimed stage play, allegedly the most performed dramatic play in the world, the hidden world of terror and torture is explored with an intensity rarely matched by the big-budget, gore-filled, Hollywood blockbusters.

The story is set in an anonymous South American country recently emerged from dictatorial rule. Paulina Escobar (Sigourney Weaver) is married to radical lawyer Gerardo (Stuart Wilson), who has been appointed to head a commission exploring allegations of torture and human rights abuses by the previous

dictatorship.

Late one night Gerardo arrives at their remote home accompanied by Roberto Miranda (Ben Kingsley). Paulina is panic-stricken, believing she recognises Miranda's voice as that of a sadistic doctor who some fifteen years previously had tortured her while she was blindfolded, to the accompaniment of Schubert's *Death and the Maiden*.

What follows is a beautifully scripted piece of drama, with the action compressed into one night. Paulina assumes the role of righteous avenger and puts Miranda on trial; probing and tormenting the doctor to force a confession. The film is as much a morality play about redemption, judgment and forgiveness, as it is a study of the horror of torture and the way in which power and terror corrupt.

The trio of actors work together beautifully. Weaver is totally believable as the obsessed and driven victim; Wilson equally so as the bewildered husband trying to reconcile his personal and professional emotions, and Kingsley superb as the terrorised prisoner; his fear is palpable. —Brad Halse

### Eureka Street

#### Film Competition

Lana Turner, the original 'sweater girl', pictured above in the 1945 film *The Postman Always Rings Twice* with John Garfield, died last week aged 75. Tell us Lana's real name and we'll award two tickets to the first correct entry. Send entries to: Eureka Street Film Competition, PO Box 553, Richmond 3121. The winner of the May competition was Jackie Tse of Oodnadatta, South Australia who thought Susan Sarandon was thinking 'driving off a cliff was much easier than this.'



#### Correction:

In Tony Coady's review of Fred Schepisi's film, *IQ* (*ES* June/July), Kurt Gödel appeared as Kurt Gobel. We miscalculated. Oops!



## Edifying

*Ed Wood*, dir. Tim Burton (Village). The story of Edward D. Wood Jr is perhaps the most unlikely subject for a film. It's a bizarre story of incompetence and angora, made even more so because it's true.

Burton resists the temptation to romanticise Wood's career. There is nothing of the talented, tragic genius, nor any suggestion that Wood was chewed up and spat out by big bad Hollywood—the stuff of so many Hollywood biographies. Ed Wood was simply an extremely bad writer and an even worse director. His most 'famous' production, *Plan 9 from Outer Space*, sponsored, according to the film, by the Baptist Church no less, is described by *Halliwells Film Guide* as 'the worst film ever made'.

Johnny Depp is excellent as Wood. He portrays him as a likeable, effervescent and enthusiastic young man, with a fetish for angora sweaters, and a great belief in his creative calling, but who lacked meaningful insight into his passion.

Shot to good effect in black and white, *Ed Wood* is a bit like watching Michael Crawford in 'Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em', as Wood bungles his way through such gems as *Glen or Glenda?* and *Bride of the Monster*.

The direction and supporting cast are first rate, but the great highlight of the film is Martin Landau's portrayal of the ageing, drug addicted, former horror star, Bela Lugosi. Rarely was an Academy Award so deserved. —**Tim Stoney**

## Tanks a lot

*Tank Girl*, dir. Rachel Talalay (Hoyts). There couldn't have been too many youngsters left at home with their noses stuck in comic books during the last holidays. The comic books were all in the cinema: in Melbourne alone, *Casper* and *Batman Forever* were showing on almost fifty screens between them.

At least for the time being *Tank Girl* has the edge, in that there are people to whom she still needs to be introduced. Sometimes known as Rebecca Buck, Tank Girl (Lori Petty) belongs to a futuristic community

which has survived an environmental holocaust. Their currency is Water. A mob of nasties called Water and Power destroy the community and take Tank Girl prisoner. But Tank Girl takes nothing lying down. 'The year is 2033,' she begins with characteristic verve, 'the whole world is screwed.' Tank Girl makes a nice friend though, Jet Girl (Naomi Watts), and falls in with a mob of goodies called The Rippers.

There's lots of fun in *Tank Girl* and, unlike many films of this ilk, it doesn't make the mistake of underestimating the subtlety of young people's humour. Intriguing, however, is the kind of brinksmanship it plays. Plenty of the brown word but never the F-word. Plenty of talk about sex but never anything untoward. Plenty of flirting with the issues of the day (environmentalism, feminism, homosexuality) but nothing that would be worth taking up the space in even the most lacklustre school project. The film is as opportunistic as Tank Girl herself.

Like all the comic book greats, Tank Girl pays scrupulous attention to her wardrobe. She is a mistress of the grunge look, complete with tattoos and close-cropped scalp. If your kids have already started to look like this, you'd better get out and see the movie for yourself. Be consoled that by 2033 most of the audience will be struggling through their 50s. —**Michael McGirr SJ**

## Gotham retails

*Batman Forever*, dir. Joel Schumacher (Village). The problem the viewer has with this film is how to tell the difference between the ads and the actual movie. The pre-show trailers promote the Batman merchandising machine and when the movie opens with a scene that has been used in an advertising campaign by McDonalds, the transition is seamless. You're about 15 minutes in before you notice the absence of product logos and twig to the fact that the movie has started so it's time to stop grumbling about the bloody ads.

And the film? Dark as pitch. With nearly every scene shot at night, Joel Schumacher has taken the baton from Tim Burton, and has remained true to the form Burton established

in the first two. The only change is that Schumacher's Batman is joined on the wing by his traditional sidekick, Robin, in the battle against Twoface and the Riddler. But whereas the '60s version of the caped crusaders was as outwardly fresh and wholesome as a Lichtenstein print, the '90s version is psychologically disturbed and vengeful.

The problem this film has is that it doesn't push the buttons like its predecessors. The gothic charm has worn thin the third time round, the plot is limp, and there is a lack of tension. The restless antics of the youngsters packed into the Saturday matinee session was proof of that, as was the chip residue I had to fish from my car outside the cinema, courtesy of a misdirected salvo in a particularly vicious food fight.

If only the film had as much energy as school kids on holiday.

—**Jon Greenaway**

## Fungicide

*Mushrooms*, dir Alan Madden (independent cinemas) This is one of the first Australian films from the recent Melbourne International Film Festival to gain commercial release, and it's a little gem.

Flo (Julia Blake) and Minnie (Lynette Curran) lead a rather unusual life. Since their husbands' deaths, Flo, a kleptomaniac, keeps the pantry full, while Minnie's agoraphobia forces her to stay indoors and tend their deteriorating pawnshop.

Then one day a criminal called Grubb (Boris Brkic) bursts into their shop while on the run from the police, only to die in Flo's bedroom. This sets off a bizarre chain of events which sees them negotiate with Lynch (Brandon Burke), an over zealous sergeant determined to nab the two women for handling stolen property; Corris (George Shevtsov), a corrupt local inspector; and Sgt. Harry Instep (Simon Chilvers), a clever, honest cop, investigating Grubb's disappearance, who moves into the women's spare room. Amid all this, Minnie falls for Harry, and Flo becomes increasingly jealous of their relationship. Sgt Harry Instep gets closer to solving the case of the missing Grubb.

*Mushrooms* is a wonderful



# New direction

Priest has made some Catholics feel uncomfortable, some angry, and others relieved that at last it's all being said. **Ray Cassin** and **Tim Stoney** spoke to the film's director, **Antonia Bird**.

*Arsenic and Old Lace*-style comedy with an outrageous twist. Suffice to say you'll never look at Christmas dinner in quite the same way.

—Tim Stoney

## Brave Knight

*Braveheart*, dir. Mel Gibson (Hoyts and independent cinemas) and *First Knight*, dir. Jerry Zucker (Hoyts, Village and independent cinemas). The past is this season's vogue locale and Gibson and Zucker have used it as film often does—to dramatise the preoccupations of the present.

Gibson has caught the energy of Celtic revival. Trouble is that, as both director and star, he can't decide whether his 13th century Scots hero, William Wallace, is a kilted buddy who does national liberation on the side, or the Avenging Angel. So he runs him as both. It doesn't work. A pity, because Gibson has a great story on his hands. William Wallace was the pivot of Scots nationalism, with a clutch of friends and foes evil and noble enough to carry a whole set of Shakespeare histories. Patrick McGoochan (King Edward 'Longshanks') could have gone the distance, but the film itself skids between comic realism and bloody myth. It is also tediously, intestinally violent. You see every hanging, flensing, racking, and disembowelment. When the credits rolled with their pious 'no animal suffered in the making of this film' I wondered whether the world had gone mad.

*First Knight* is a much less ambitious film. It retells the Arthurian legend and story of Camelot without quirk or innovation. But its screenwriter, William Nicholson, knows exactly what he is doing. He doesn't mess with one of Christianity's most compelling myths. He does invest its players with the dignity of potent speech.

Sean Connery is matched by his Guinevere (Julia Ormond) and Richard Gere is a maverick, convincing Lancelot. Malagant (Ben Cross—Harold Abrahams in *Chariots of Fire*) has his lair in a desolate Welsh slate mine. *Bladerunner* didn't do evil any better. And *First Knight* understands the moral ambivalence of sexuality.

—Morag Fraser

**Cassin:** *How did Priest come to be made?*

**Bird:** 'It's very much Jimmy McGovern's story. It was originally commissioned by the BBC as a four-part series... Jimmy wanted to write about a priest who fell in love with a woman but was torn between her and his vocation.'

'Then he started researching and spent hours talking to priests, mostly in Liverpool. He met a man whose story broke his heart. This priest was homosexual, and he really opened up about the torment in his life, and Jimmy thought "I have to write about this, this is more important than what I was trying to deal with".'

'The BBC decided not to make a series and the script sat on Jimmy's shelf for a year but he eventually decided... they could raise the money to make it if he wrote it as a feature film. The BBC has begun to fund feature films so they took it on, and I got involved at that stage.'

**Stoney:** *Did you have any reservations about taking it on?*

'Yeah, one very big reservation, which I made clear to everyone else involved—unlike Jimmy, I wasn't Catholic. But they saw this as a good thing, because at least half the audiences around the world wouldn't be Catholic, and anything I wouldn't understand, they wouldn't understand. The people saying this were Catholics, so that made me feel better. And I made sure we had a Catholic adviser while we were working—we had two priests with us.'

**Cassin:** *Was their cooperation on an official basis?*

'Yes. I'm a little bit hazy about where the various permissions came from because they were arranged by the producers at the BBC, but people were officially involved.'

**Cassin:** *That's interesting, given the hostile reactions reported from the 'States. Has that sort of reaction been largely confined to America?*

'In Britain it's been a much more considered, cautious response. Even in America, so far as I know, Cardinal O'Connor has been the only person with an official position in the church to speak against the film. The criticism came mainly from the Catholic League, or the League of Decency or whatever they call themselves. Then it moved on to politics—we had Senator Bob Dole speaking against it, because he has been attacked by the Right of the Republican Party for being too moderate. So it was a good way of proving what a great family guy he was.'

**Stoney:** *Greg (the homosexual priest) is very rigid most of the time, about most issues. Every bit of flexibility he eventually achieves comes after great struggle, and yet the scene in which he 'comes out' shows very little of this. He just takes his collar off, goes to a gay bar and picks up the man who becomes his lover. For me, it didn't quite ring true.*

'It was meant to show—and obviously it failed in some respects—that he was lonely. We don't really know how the character knows what he's going to do—maybe something happened to him in the seminary, and he's been pushing it away for a long time.'

'A reaction the film has only really got in Australia is that people say "He's a homosexual priest, and a practising homosexual." But he spends most of the film trying to deny it. And at the end of the film what's happening, I think, is that he's going to go on trying to be a good priest and that he's not going to have sexual relationships. He pushed that away. And as a result he's probably going to be a very repressed and rather sad human being.'

**Stoney:** *At the end there was almost a sense in which he was apologising for being homosexual. Was that deliberate? And if it was, isn't there a problem with the politics?*

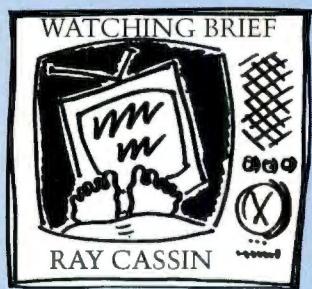
'That is what he's saying, and the reason it's there is to get exactly the sort of reaction I think you're having. The audience come out saying "Why is he saying he's sorry? He hasn't done anything wrong." They've travelled a journey with him.'

**Cassin:** *As a Catholic, it struck me as a strongly sacramental film. It endorses all the things the church does in blessing people's lives. If they're going through struggle or misery, in some way blessing helps, and not always in a way that's immediately apparent to the people involved. Even the way the confessional dilemma is worked out—the way what the priest can't reveal is revealed, and the reconciliation at the end—fit into that sort of understanding of how grace operates.*

'It's strange for me, but one of the things I learnt to enjoy while we were making the film was going to Mass. It's bizarre, because I'm not Catholic. I used to go seven times every Sunday, at different churches, and try to soak it all in. It was wonderful.' ■







# Vicarious pleasure

**T**he runaway success of *Four Weddings and a Funeral* appears to have tripped up someone's career. Someone other than Hugh Grant, that is. Richard Curtis, who wrote the screenplay for *Four Weddings*, is arguably Britain's best writer of comic material for the screen, large or small. He is responsible for the *Blackadder* and *Mr Bean* series, and neither Rowan Atkinson nor, dare one add, Hugh Grant, would be what they are today without Curtis. As that underrated American comic actor, Gene Wilder, has sagely observed, comedy, more than any other genre, remains script-driven. 'If the words don't sparkle,' opined the man who courted a sheep in *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex But Were Afraid to Ask*, 'ya got nothin'. One would have to qualify that a little to explain the success of *Mr Bean*, which is wordless, but we know what Wilder means. In other genres, the collective abilities of actors, directors, and directors of photography can push lacklustre material a little further than it might otherwise have gone. But comedy simply has to be funny, and if the script is not funny nothing else will be, not even if you have the schoolboy-nerd face of Rowan Atkinson animating the schoolboy-nerd humour of *Mr Bean*.

So where has the high-flying Richard Curtis come precipitously to earth? Sadly, with a series that one wants to be much better than it is, for reasons that go beyond the expectations raised by Curtis's previous achievements. *The Vicar of Dibley* (ABC, Mondays at 8pm) ought to be earning more than wry smiles and indulgent chuckles; it should be wickedly funny—for religion, with its celestial aspirations borne by earthen vessels, is just about the most wickedly funny thing there is. As Gene Wilder, Woody Allen and all good Jewish comedians have amply demonstrated, religion is even funnier than sex. So when the formula combines religion and sex in a topical fashion—*The Vicar* is about the trials of those Anglican arrivistes, women priests—a writer like Curtis should be, well, laughing.

It is not as if the subject matter is foreign to him. One of the deft minor touches in *Four Weddings and a Funeral* was its breakdown of British religion on party lines: Broad-Church rural parish for the first wedding, high-camp Anglo-Catholic city parish for the second, dour Presbyterian service for the third, not-so-campy Anglo Catholic service for the fourth, and an evangelical service for the funeral. With *The Vicar*, we are back in another rural parish, where the liturgy and the theology (such as it is) are most decidedly Broad Church. And maybe that's the problem. We are not dealing with Anglicanism in general here, but with the Church of England, and Curtis (or whoever hired

and briefed him) has been unable to shake the notion that, in England's green and pleasant land, perhaps not Jerusalem itself but at least something sugar-frosted is slowly being assembled.

The vicar in question is played by Dawn French, who, as one half of the French and Saunders team that wrote *Absolutely Fabulous* (and, of course, *French and Saunders*) deserves better material for her talents. The plot is basically the same each week: she must overcome the dastardly plans of the chairman of her parish council, a Tory misogynist who wants her transferred out and wishes that all this women-priests nonsense had never happened. She always wins, of course, with the support of a giggling blonde verger and a clutch of rustic simpletons who comprise the rest of the parish council. The chairman, though he does represent All Things Bad, survives his defeats with his dignity only slightly ruffled; after all, he and the vicar are the only two people in the village who have an IQ in three figures, and there is just a hint of mutual sexual attraction.

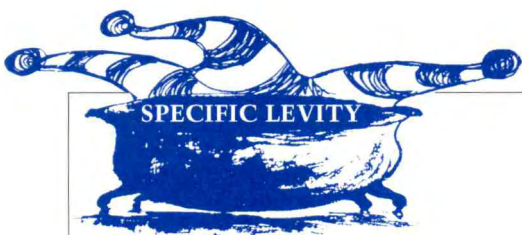
**W**HILE THE DEVIL MAY NOT always have the best songs, in this case he certainly gets all the best lines. The sort of banter at which Curtis excels is quite cruel (remember the speeches in which *Blackadder* abused an uncomprehending Baldrick for his congenital imbecility?), and in *The Vicar* these all go to the misogynist chairman. It's all right to find oneself applauding the villain in *Blackadder*, because there the villain is also the hero, but it's not supposed to work that way in *The Vicar*. All French is left with is a series of hearty—and sometimes bosomy—vicar jokes. O Trollope, where is thy sting?

To be fair, though, there *is* a sting in *The Vicar's* tail. I sit through each episode partly to savour the chairman's venom and partly for the one instance in which the vicar herself is allowed to take the viper's part. After the closing credits there is a stock scene in which she tells a joke to her giggling blonde verger; it is always an old joke, though new to the verger, and usually it is a slightly risqué one about nuns. The joke in the sequence is that the verger doesn't get the joke, and the vicar is almost allowed to treat her with *Blackadderish* derision. And, there are layers upon layers: both the naughty nun joke and the closeted complicity between vicar and verger send up rotten the fears of lesbianism that underly some of the more paranoid reactions to the idea of women priests.

If only the whole show could be like that. ■

Ray Cassin is a freelance writer.





## Eureka Street Cryptic Crossword no. 35, August 1995

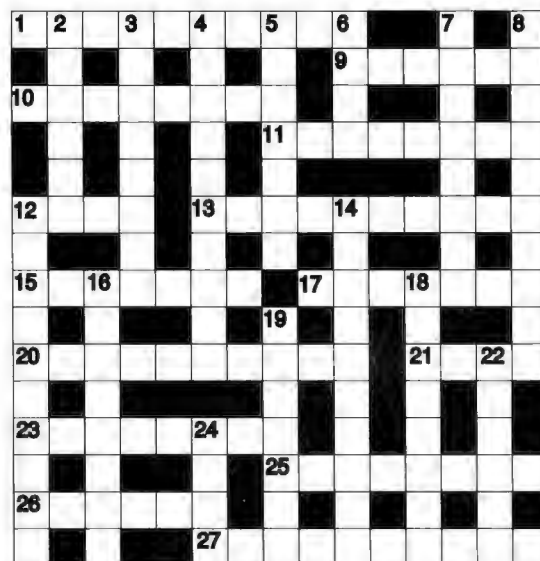
Devised by Joan Nowotny IBVM

### ACROSS

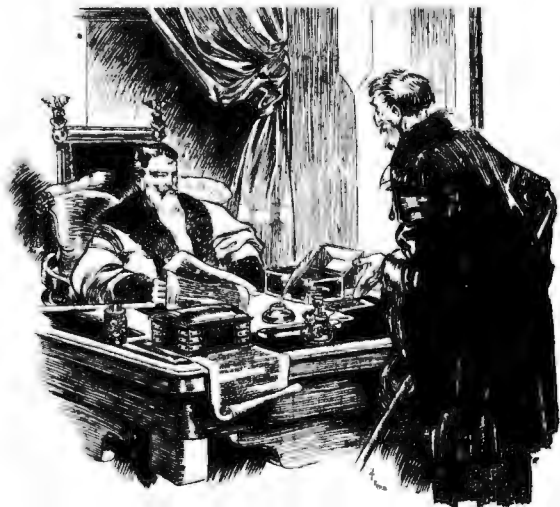
- 1 Call about key newspaper exercising censorship. (10)
- 9 Stick to the present time, not all over the place. (6)
- 10 Do bird routes follow the train tracks? (8)
- 11 Stripper mimics his own action? (5,3)
- 12 Bubbly like tea on the boil, it seems. (4)
- 13 Descant Sal arranged for a concert in a chateau by the sea? (4,6)
- 15 Choice morsel in Wales? (7)
- 17 You should stress a back injury vindicates claim for compensation, perhaps. (7)
- 20 Wild mob rob, pelt stones, hurl incendiary. (6,4)
- 21 Just a jiffy! Headless scheme sounds a bit uncertain. (4)
- 23 Work the problem out, so a conic section can bring about an opportunity. (8)
- 25 The needy can't change without a propensity for novelty. (8)
- 26 Sounds as if a pub consumed essential constituents. (6)
- 27 For the most part, farmer can, tiler can't, trade on a commercial basis. (10)

### DOWN

- 2 Politician, altering stance, decrees new statutes. (6)
- 3 Aunt, perhaps, may leave it right in proportion. (8)
- 4 Endures until complete cessation of movement. (10)
- 5 Pre-cooked on-the-spot! (7)
- 6 Some clodhopper gaping awkwardly! (4)
- 7 Journalist speaks about wine with some hesitation. (8)
- 8 Acts disinterestedly, if foolishly; feels silly as A1 classification is lost. (10)
- 12 As I'm climbing high over the porch, a boa I vaguely see fills me with great fear. (10)
- 14 Could it be the Spanish White House in Morocco? It will become clear as time goes by, perhaps. (10)
- 16 Tear about ice before end of August? Mum's the word! (8)
- 18 Going off stage without a gun and surviving. (8)
- 19 Abacus in the shop works in the opposite direction? (7)
- 22 The tax system may fail because of mix-up with South Carolina (6)
- 24 Some thing to deposit, emerald included. (4)



### Solution to Crossword no. 34, June/July 1995



*'If President Suharto's latest fax is giving you headache, subscribe to Eureka Street'*

## EUREKA STREET subscription form

Please send me *Eureka Street*:

for one year (\$45 for 10 issues, or \$40 conc.   
for pensioners, students and unemployed.)

for two years   
(\$80, or \$75 conc.)

Name.....

Address.....

Postcode.....Country.....Tel.....Date.....

Enc. chq/money order  Or debit: Bankcard  Visacard  Mastercard

Card no:

Card expiry date ..... Signature .....

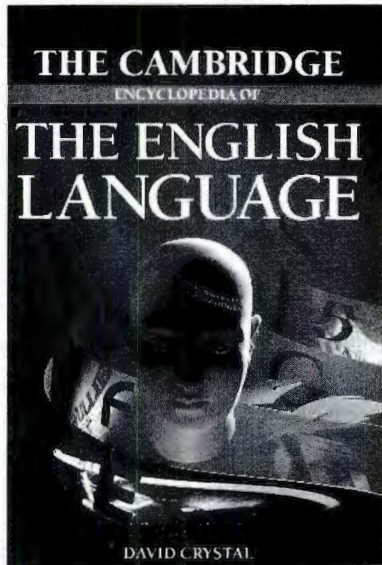
**Mailing List:** I would like you to remove my name from the mailing   
list when it is used for outside advertising purposes.

Post orders to: Jesuit Publications, PO Box 553,  
Richmond VIC 3121. Payments in Australian currency only.



# EUREKA STREET and Cambridge University Press

## The Cambridge University Encyclopedia of the English Language by David Crystal



The English language is a bit like the average computer: most people only ever use a fraction of its potential. So an hour or two with the Cambridge Encyclopedia may be slightly embarrassing. But it also guarantees the pleasure of spying on the entire colourful family history of the mother tongue. It's the kind of coffee table book that you may buy for handy reference and end up actually reading.

Thanks to CUP, *Eureka Street* has four copies to give away, each worth \$75. Just put your name and address on the back of an envelope and send it to *Eureka Street/CUP August Giveaway*, PO Box 553, Richmond, 3121.



CHARLES RINDOMA  
**SEIZE  
THE DAY**  
with Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Contains 365 reflections, pondering upon the essence of Bonhoeffer's writings.

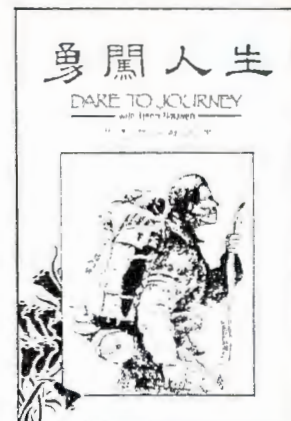
Concord Grange Pty Ltd  
PO Box 601  
Doncaster, Vic 3108  
Tel & Fax: (IDD + 613) (03) 9840 2699



CONCORD GRANGE PTY. LTD.  
和 諧 協 進 機 構

ACN 007 317 428

Chinese Editions  
Published by  
Concord Grange



CHARLES RINDOMA  
**DARE  
TO JOURNEY**  
with Henri Nouwen

Includes 180 reflections echoing the spirituality of Nouwen's writings.

H-K Central Council of Catholic Laity World-wide (Aust & NZ excepted)  
Distributor: 1 Tai Shek Street, Sai Wan Ho, H. K.  
Tel: IDD 852 2560-3800  
Fax: IDD 852 2569-0188



9 771036 175017