EUREKA STREET

Vol. 5 No. 8 October 1995 $5.00

Frankly Geraldine

Evans on Evatt

EUREKA STREET

Volume 5 Number 8
October 1995

A magazine of public affairs, the arts and theology

CONTENTS

Cover: Geraldine Doogue, Gareth Evans and H.V. Evatt.
Graphics pp7, 12, 13,17, 23, 35-36, 42-43, 48-49, 51, 54, 57 by Siobhan Jackson
Cartoon p6, by Dean Moore.
Cartoon p60, by Peter Fraser

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

EUREKA STREET

A magazine of public affairs, the arts and theology

Publisher
Michael H. Kelly SJ

Editor
Morag Fraser

Consulting editor
Michael McGirr SJ

Assistant editor
Jon Greenaway

Production assistants:
Paul Fyfe SJ, Juliette Hughes, Catriona Jackson, Chris Jenkins SJ, Paul Ormonde, Tim Stoney, Siobhan Jackson, Dan Disney

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

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; 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.

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.

COMMENT: 1

MICHAEL MCGIRR

Festschrift

NOT SO LONG AGO, I spent a morning talking to sixteen-year-olds in a school in Braybrook, more or less the centre of Melbourne's western suburbs. One of the teachers lamented the poor shape of our reading culture.

'When I started teaching,' he said, 'it was hard enough to get kids to read books. Now you can't even get them to read newspapers.'

It was strange, then, that in the afternoon I happened to be interviewing Simon Clews, the director of the Melbourne Writers' Festival. It's not easy to describe quite what a writers' festival is or how it works, but on the bottom line it is a gathering of people who either for reasons of work or leisure are at home in the world of books. It is an assembly of the literate. I asked Clews how many tickets he is likely to sell in Braybrook. He told me that the depth of culture in the western suburbs is underappreciated. He lives in the west himself.

'Everyone wants to point to the huge shopping malls like Highpoint and tell you what a blight they are,' he says. 'But right behind Highpoint is Melbourne's *Living Museum Of The West*. They are doing some of the most interesting museological stuff around. You don't hear a lot about it. When it comes to culture, everyone in Carlton is talking about it but in Maribyrnong they are actually doing it.'

I offer the thought that in most minds the Maribyrnong is wider than the Yarra and Clews returns that this wouldn't be a bad panel title for a future festival. To some extent, I discover, this kind of banter is how a festival takes shape. The event has been going for nine years and Clews has been involved for four.

'I had never been to a writers' festival when I got the job,' he says. 'In my first committee meeting I didn't know what was going on. I was used to a meeting having an agenda. But basically I found half a dozen fairly intellectual, erudite people just chatting: people who are exceptionally well networked among writers and publishers. Gradually, a few names and ideas start to filter out.'

There is also a more aggressive side to the festival. Clews came to it from a background in events-management and was hired, he says, to make what had been an artistically successful venture into a financially viable one. In his first year, the festival swung from a $20,000 loss to a $33,000 profit and has remained in the black since. It started under the umbrella of the National Book Council but has outgrown the Council and is now independently incorporated. It is part of the program of the Melbourne International Festival of the Arts but Clews is quick to point to an invisible line in the door of his office separating the Writers' Festival from the rest of the Arts Festival premises.

The Writers' Festival draws thousands. Research shows that they tend to be older, female and regular users of public

libraries. Part of the secret is to have a peppering of big names. This year the drawcard is Ruth Rendell, whose visit is funded by two publishers, the British Council and the festival itself. 'She'll fill any hall so we'll do anything to get her,' says Clews. Some of the big names, however, are notoriously elusive.

'Every year, for many years, we've sent a letter to Susan Sontag saying please come to the next festival. She's written back saying she couldn't possibly come on only twelve months' notice. So we got clever and invited her to come in two years' time. She told us that she couldn't possibly plan so far ahead.'

Clews has also been keen to attract Isabel Allende.

'Apparently she makes decisions based on her dreams. So her publishers sent her a great delivery of Australian fluffy toys, thinking that if she went to sleep with a stuffed koala she might dream of Australia and come here.'

Brisbane's Warana Writers' Week, also held in October, is not similarly laced with overseas visitors. According to its director, Wendy Mead, Warana simply hasn't got access to the support that would make this possible. 'We don't get much help from the publishers because they are mostly based in Sydney and Melbourne, ' she says.

'There is another side, however. They must be aware down south that most of the young literary prize winners come from Queensland. Three of the last four Vogel winners are from here. We're proud of our regional writers and are quite consciously celebrating them.'

When Mead took over the 1994 program, she brought to the job 20 years' experience in arts administration. She is aware of a challenge in maintaining the relaxed atmosphere of Warana while keeping visiting writers on their mettle.

Australian writers' festivals steer a middle course between the two styles which predominate overseas. At the Toronto festival, apparently, writers wait backstage before the curtain rises and they go out to do a reading like a singer performing an aria. The reader and writer don't intersect. But there are other extremes: Clews found himself this year at the celebrated Hay-on-Wye festival in England and was astonished at how slap-dash it was.

'We sat in badly erected tents which were blowing everywhere in an English summer gale. The Women's Institute had spelt out "Hay-on-Wye-Literary-Festival" in ivy across the back of the tent.' Clewes might have added what *Eureka Street*'s editor learned when she visited it this year: Hay-on-Wye has a few problems adapting to the literary tourists. The 'foreigners' who descend in their thousands to spend time and money in this tiny village with its famous bookshops are treated like carriers of a mild form of Black Death, and quarantined, as far as possible, in the windy tents in the paddocks. Don't bother asking the locals for directions!

Australian festivals, by contrast, are amiable, often casual occasions. 'We're trying to bring readers and writers together in a way that makes them both happy,' says Wendy Mead.

Many people do come to gawk at their favourite writers. But there's more. Clews says that people who come for facile reasons sometimes make important discoveries.

He speaks of the difficult but important task this year of devising panels that deal with history, with the responsibility of writers and the interplay between fact and fiction. These are issues that continue to burn, both in newspapers and in books. ■

Michael McGirr is *Eureka Street*'s consulting editor.

COMMENT: 2

DOROTHY LEE

Missing the point

IT WAS A WARM WELCOME for a cold Friday night in winter. A procession of women escorted the Professor in. When she reached the front of the hall, a folk-singer sang a welcome and a dancer danced, celebrating women's spiritual and theological awakening—an awakening symbolised in the unassuming figure of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Professor of Divinity at Harvard Divinity School, and author of *In memory of her:A feminist theological reconstruction of christian origins* (1984), now a classic of christian feminism.

After such a beginning, the lecture itself was an anti-climax: prosaic and hard work. The audience, mainly women, filling the large lecture theatre of the Pharmacy College and spilling upwards to the balcony, listened with grave attention, wending their way through long sentences, heaped-up adjectives, and Germanic neologisms. Though few understood words such as 'kyriarchy' or complex phrases like 'multipli-

cative structures of oppression', the vision nevertheless emerged for the patient listener: a vision of a community committed to liberation and radical democracy, without hierarchy or priestly caste or structures of subordination.

For Professor Schüssler Fiorenza, this vision was grounded in the notion of a 'discipleship of equals' which, she argued, lies at the heart of the *basileia* (the kingdom of God) in the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. As a Jew among Jews, Jesus formed a movement around him which included women, the poor, and the outcasts of society. Equality and inclusiveness were the key features of the Jesus-movement. Its challenge

was directed against the structures and ethos of Roman imperialism, down to and including the patriarchal family.

After Jesus' execution by the Roman political powers, the movement lived on—symbolised in the resurrection—creating 'dangerous memory', which by and large the church lost. Christianity all too soon replaced the vision with 'kyriarchal' (patriarchal) structures that weakened and eventually suppressed the memory. 'Kyriarchy' means literally the 'rule of the lord/lady', a term Schüssler Fiorenza prefers because white, Western feminism focuses too narrowly on 'patriarchy'—men's domination of women and their greater access to rights and privilege. A feminist critique, she concluded, dismantles all forms of rule and privilege, whether male or female, thus embracing issues of race and class as well as gender.

After the lecture, opinion was divided. A few admitted candidly that they hadn't understood a word. Many applauded the challenge to the ruling élite by a feminist theologian within the male enclosures of church and academy. The vision was undeniably appealing. For women (and men) trying to transform exclusive and hierarchical structures that deny equality, especially to women, it acted like a clarion-call for justice and renewal within the church. Grounded in the teaching and practice of the founder of Christianity, the vision presented an embarrassment to an unheeding church, revealing how easy it is to domesticate the 'dangerous memory' of Jesus of Nazareth. Not a few commented on the small number of church leaders and theologians actually present at the lecture.

And yet, for others, there were mixed feelings: a sense of dissatisfaction we could not easily account for. We discussed it long after the lecture was over. Was the vision of God's reign and the discipleship of equals just another Utopia? Another way of tantalising us with a future we could never attain? Well, the world was full enough of such visionaries, evoking endlessly the human longing for justice and freedom, though often omitting women entirely from the equation. Nothing unique to Christianity in such a vision—not even its exclusion of women. And no guarantee that this one, even granted that it were unique (and at this point was by no means established in the lecture), would bring us any closer to the real thing.

Our doubts seemed to resolve themselves around the figure of Jesus of Nazareth. For Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (her views reflecting her latest publication, *Jesus, Miriam's child, Sophia's prophet*) there was no problem and no mystery to this man: a visionary, a prophet among many, a Jew in a long line of Jews faithful to the hope of God's liberating justice. To claim anything more was inadmissible: it meant participating in 'kyriarchal structures' privileging one human being above others. Traditional titles for Jesus, such as 'lord',— some of them going back to the dawn of Christianity— were intolerable and by definition anti-feminist. Because in this new religious democracy we were all equal, and while there could be grudging recognition of the need for leaders, none of the equal members could be singled out, not even the founder. So, it would seem, as Christians we were disciples of a movement, not a person.

Other contemporary feminist writers—from the same Catholic stable as Professor Schüssler Fiorenza—have argued differently. Theologians such as Elizabeth Johnson (*She who is. The mystery of God in*

feminist theological discourse) and Catherine LaCugna (*God for us.: The Trinity and christian life*) have presented the same vision of mutuality and liberation in more personal terms. At the centre of their writings is a transformed understanding of the classical christian doctrine of the Trinity. For them God represents a communion of persons, a profoundly personal inter-relationship without hierarchy or domination.

The language these feminist writers have used to describe this trinitarian God—all of it ultimately inadequate—draws on feminine as well as masculine imagery: God as Mother, God as Lady Wisdom, Hostess, Nourisher. In this alternative feminist vision, Jesus of Nazareth is not just the founder of the movement, but also its living heart. In Jesus, God has become human, gathering the whole creation into wholeness and freedom, into the love and mutuality that already exists in God. In this interpretation, Jesus is not just one among many, and his vision is not Utopian. Jesus of Nazareth represents the incarnation of God, the entry of the Creator into creation. His death and resurrection are the key-stones of the *basileia*, the means by which God's beneficent reign comes to birth: through pain and struggle, through death to life.

Without such an understanding of divine presence in creation, Schüssler Fiorenza's theological vision, however attractive, finally leaves us at a stand-still. The 'dangerous memory' vanishes, because its heart has been cut out, that deep centre sustaining passion and feeding hope. There are more ways than one to destroy a memory: totalitarian structures and hierarchical caste-systems have undeniably had a spectacular success rate. Yet, by letting go the centre and starving ourselves of the rich content, we employ a less dramatic but equally effective means of achieving the same thing: enfeebling the memory until it fades into a desert of ideality and wishful thinking. Patriarchal, kyriarchal, and hierarchical structures unquestionably need to be replaced in the church by openness, mutuality, and the sharing of power. However, only a belief in the humanity of God revealed uniquely in Jesus can establish the *basileia* in mutuality and intimacy. In the end, women (and men) need a realistic vision and a living movement grounded in incarnation, paschal mystery and an embodied spirituality.

Professor Schüssler Fiorenza has no place for theology in this sense, no time for the rich resources that spirituality brings to women's struggle for freedom and self-esteem. The singing and dancing at the beginning of the session, to my mind, articulated that lively, poetic incarnate heart of the gospel which, for all its worth, was ultimately lacking in the lecture itself. ■

Dorothy Lee is Uniting Church Minister and a biblical scholar.

Taking liberties

LEFEBVRISTS, AND OTHER ENEMIES OF THE CHURCH in the modern world, commonly point to the Second Vatican Council's *Declaration on Religious Liberty* as one of the lines of fissure between the pre-Conciliar and the post-Conciliar Church. And surely they are right.

The 1965 Decree caught the editors of the 1967 *New Catholic Encyclopedia* napping. For although Eric D'Arcy's long and fine entry under 'Freedom of Religion' took the *Declaration* as its starting point, the entry under 'Tolerance' knew nothing of it at all, and needed re-writing for the supplementary volume published in 1979—a volume intended expressly to acknowledge that the Church shaped by Vatican II was 'a changed Church and a Church in change'. The new entry begins 'Vatican Council II gave the theory and practice of tolerance a meaning quite different from that of the formerly common Catholic position'.

But the *Declaration on Religious Liberty* did not break an unbroken tradition stretching back to the Apostles. In the days when the Church was persecuted by the Roman state its members routinely protested that it was unfair that they should be punished for their beliefs when their actions were blameless. No sooner had Constantine pronounced himself in favour of Christianity than he had bishops queuing at his door to ask for a loan of Roman arms to suppress religious dissent within the Church (first things first: the suppression of paganism outside it would come a little later). Augustine of Hippo was aware of this *volte face*, but had a simple explanation: that was then, he said, this is now.

Not everyone jumped on the bandwagon, at least, not at first. Ambrose of Milan was outraged when Priscillian of Avila became the first Christian to be executed for his religious views by a Roman Emperor at the behest of Catholic bishops. Martin of Tours had done all he could to prevent it. Augustine himself had at one time believed that words, debate, and reason were the only weapons the Church should use against schismatics and heretics. Later he allowed himself to be persuaded by his fellow bishops that coercion also was a handy tool. The clinching argument was extraordinarily simple: coercion worked.

No doubt it made life simpler for bishops who lacked anything like Augustine's powerful intellect, or his extraordinary talent for and love of persuasion, and had little to fall back on but blunt pragmatism. Even so, Augustine's acquiescence hardly seems a good advertisement for solidarity on the episcopal bench. The sad irony is that we know the history of his views on this matter because he wrote a long and not unfriendly letter to a schismatic bishop, trying to *persuade* him that force was justified. ■

Denis Minns OP is Master of Mannix College at Monash University.

Hate mail

From Noel Turnbull

Paul Ormonde (September) is characteristically perceptive in raising the issue of why Oliver Cromwell 'seems to remain in Irish memory even more strongly and bitterly than the famine'.

The question of why Cromwell is so hated —particularly when compared with any number of English monarchs—has been the subject of much research by Toby Barnard.

A short summary of his work can be found in *Images of Oliver Cromwell: Essays for and by Roger Howell Jnr*, edited by R.C. Richardson (Manchester University Press 1993).

It seems probable that the uniquely venomous view of Cromwell dates largely from the 19th century and appears to be a product of the uses to which the works of Prendergast, Lecky and Froude were put. The Unionists projected their own contemporary agenda on to Cromwell and provoked an unsurprising reaction.

Cromwell was only in Ireland from 15 August 1649 to 29 May 1650. Without justifying Drogheda one cannot help but wonder with Barnard why Cromwell—rather than Grey, Essex, Sidney, Mountjoy, Schomberg, Ginkel, Duff or Humbert—came to personify English oppression.

As I mentioned to Paul Ormonde recently, the most hated Cromwellian contemporary was probably Ormonde [*James Butler, Duke of Ormonde, 1610-1688, considered to be a founder of the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland*] rather than Oliver. Perhaps in a year which encourages reassessment of 150 years ago we should also review our attitudes to those of 350 years ago.

Noel Turnbull
Port Melbourne, VIC

Bottoms up

From Vivian Hill

Regarding *Fed up Eireann* Paul Ormonde (*Eureka Street* September '95): my grandmother Mary Gallagher was born in Donegal in 1848. She came to Australia when she was 16. Over 50 years ago, when in my early teens, I read her copy of *The Great Irish Struggle* by T.P.O'Connor, published 1886. It contained graphic descriptions of the Irish famine in the year of her birth. Ever since then I have been conscious of, not to say haunted by, the thought of the suffering of her parents and relatives. Congratulations then to Paul Ormonde and his committee.

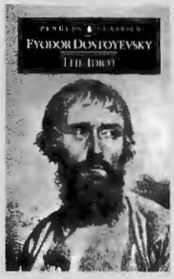
At the same time I challenge his assertions and inferences from them when he writes 'most Irish in Australia started at the bottom of the social pile, and even now, having clawed their way to respectability in what was until recently a predominantly Anglo-Saxon culture, are still under-represented in the social and financial structures on the nation.'

Apart from the few who bring money with them, all new migrants have found themselves on the bottom of the social pile. The Irish were no worse off than the others, be they present-day Timorese or Italians of the Thirties. They were certainly not as low as the reluctant migrants from England who came on the convict ships. All the families of Irish background I grew up with had no sense of grievance and assumed they were respectable. An examination of the Government survey plans will show that many persons with Irish names took up the opportunities offered by the Settled Land Acts of the 1870s. In John Ritchie's social history *Australia As Once We Were* there is a photograph of teachers and pupils of St. Patrick's School, Wahring, a farming district north of Nagambie, Victoria. All of the pupils are children of Irish migrants. The children are well dressed. They look well-fed and healthy. In less than 20 years their parents had established farms and were so successful that apart from the ordinary expenses of daily living they could afford to build and maintain a school without government help. This enterprise was reproduced throughout Australia. Irish migrants not only supported themselves and families, they kept an otherwise non-earning clergy. They had a separate education system, ran hospitals and orphanages and built large churches and magnificent cathedrals. These are matters of pride, not anguish.

In all occupations which determine social policy Irish migrants and their descendants have been significant, if not dominant. Of the 29 Prime Ministers elected since Federation at least seven have been sons of Irish migrants (Bruce, Scullin, Lyons, Curtain, Forde, and Chifley). Our present Prime Minister is of Irish descent as are members of his Cabinet. Victoria has had numerous elected members of Parliament with Irish origin or parentage, including Premiers O'Shanassy, O'Loghlen, Gavan Duffy, Hogan and Cain.

As solicitors, barristers and judges Irish migrants or their descendants have been more than significant. One has only to look at the judgments of early and present-day members of the

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



This month,
courtesy of Penguin Books,
the writer of each letter we
publish will receive, with
no offence intended,
a copy of
The Idiot
by Fyodor Dostoyevsky.
Penguin Classics,
RRP $10.95

High Court to recognise that decisions made by persons with Irish backgrounds have shaped Australian society. Henry B. Higgins, Irish-born of poor non-Catholic parents, altered the relationship between capital and labour when he adopted the ethical concept of the basic wage.

His decision as President of the Arbitration Court in 1907 in *The Harvester Case* when he looked to the needs of a family in fixing a wage changed Australian society.

Examples are available from our writers, teachers, academics, journalists, union leaders, social reformers and indeed all professions.

As to finance, apart from the numerous bankers and financiers of Irish origin one can easily point to the members of public administration such as Sir Henry Sheehan, the son of a railway worker whose parents migrated from Cork. He became secretary to the Treasury 1932 and Governor of the Commonwealth Bank 1938.

But, perhaps the greatest influence of the Irish immigrant was their habit of entering into so-called 'mixed marriages' so lamented by Bishop Carr in his reports to the Vatican. Despite the Catholic hierarchy adopting a more severe approach to the 'lamentable abuse' than that recommended from Rome, the practice continued. Scratch a third-generation Australian with an English, Scottish, Italian or German name and with a bit of luck you'll find an Irish grandmother.

Vivian Hill
Drysdale, VIC

Not my type

From John W. Doyle
Many popular books printed forty years ago and more are easier to read than contemporary ones of the same kind from the same publishers.

Part of the explanation may be typological: in the older books lines were often set more widely apart, with more even spacing between words and a thin space between punctuation marks and the words they followed. In recent publications, colons and full stops can be almost invisible and quotation marks are often characterless, even in traditional book fonts.

Punctuation and other diacritical marks are a vital aid to understanding printed matter without undue difficulty. They should always be easy to see and identify— 'clear and distinct'.

John W. Doyle.
Kew, VIC

Paying the piper

From Michael D. Breen
Father Bill Uren's comment piece in *Eureka Street* (May 1995) is inspiring in its global perspective on social problems facing the world. It provides valuable sharing of the thinking and deliberations of the Jesuits' 34th General Congregation. It reflects the work of men of concern and conscience. Father Uren highlights a primary triad of life, freedom and truth.

At a similar time (March 1995), further north in Copenhagen, met the United Nations Summit for Social Development. It was the largest-ever meeting of world leaders. They, too, were a concerned group covering the planet. The Summit came to a different conclusion about an underlying issue leading to a host of other problems. They said it was poverty. They saw that poverty was a problem for highly industrialised nations in Europe, North America and Australia as well as a problem facing poor countries. It's not just a world problem because it's a nice way to offer charity to the 'poor unfortunates' in poor countries. It is a problem because the inequities are leading to stealth, violence, the arms trade and other illegal trading, in rich countries. Poverty is becoming a threat to the affluent. It is the difference between the

haves and have nots which make security, once an abstract noun, a huge industry today. Greed and its shadow, poverty, threaten the quality of life of this and future generations whose inheritance will be a depleted environment, messes of dangerous waste, depleted forms of life, so that survival will need to be sought before there can be quality of life.

Australian poverty is the problem recently documented by Bob Gregory's discussion paper on the widening gap in Australia between the rich and the poor: *The Macro Economy and the Growth of Ghettos and Urban Poverty in Australia* (Address to the National Press Club, April 26 1995).

It is worth wondering why the two thoughtful world summits, the General Congregation of the Jesuits and the United Nations, came to different conclusions or didn't join forces. Could it be that the social environment of the Jesuits led them to a particular diagnosis? The more we study people and organisational problems the more we become aware that these problems have many causes, attended by many stakeholders with vested interests. All stakeholders in a social system need to be able to reflect on the total system in order to begin to improve the system.

Some may observe that the focus on truth, life and freedom will not affect the property, status and security of members of religious orders.

However, it must be an enormous challenge for religious orders to educate 'leaders' from privileged sections of society and develop students in a way that inspires a social poverty-lessening conscience.

It must be difficult to challenge or confront fee-paying parents within a range from just enough to those with more than enough to pay for private education, without endangering sales of education to that market segment. How does a religious organisation influence government policies in a time of economic rationalism where the bottom line is the major value, where there is a rampant myth of a level playing field and where privatisation endangers service standards to the poor and disabled? How does a group educating those with more resources influence senior management of organisations who engage in brutal euphemistic 'downsizing'?

If religious orders were to be exemplary in the matter of equity (commutative justice) their sharing of goods, once owned in common, would be much closer to settlements in relationship breakups before the Family Court than the charity handouts given to those who depart religious life. But how can those with a vow of poverty understand the actuality of poverty for those who no longer have the vow?

There is an enormous challenge for those leading lives of privilege to give more than notional assent to the real hardships of the poor whose vow they share. Even for those who are world leaders in the processes and practice of spiritual reflection it is difficult to reflect on one's own context so as to seek greater life, truth and freedom.

Michael D. Breen
Shenton Park, WA

Faithful urges

From Pat Muntz

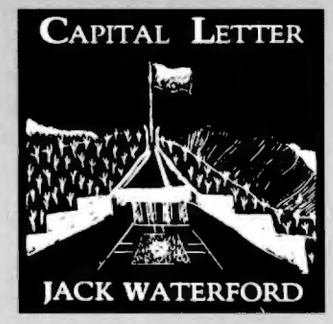
I did enjoy Margaret Simons' article, *Pick a card, any card*, (*Eureka Street*, August 1995.) The nub of my basic political belief ('tribal urge'?) was in there, from Jennifer Scott: ' ... that Labor thinking was about uniformity and mediocrity—that indidvidual difference was not tolerated, and people in Labor did not think for themselves'.

And yet, like Ms. Scott, I believe in eliminating discrimination against homosexuals. I believe in Brendan Nelson's brand of social justice. I believe I am a small 'l' liberal. I earn my living in Industrial Relations, so I suppose I have, like Jennifer Scott, an ability to listen and I must be a 'fair' mediator. Like Ms. Simons' friend, who changed his voting habits to Liberal, I have experienced feelings of discomfort at the social gatherings of my (many) Labor friends ... 'This is Pat Muntz,' I was once introduced, 'she votes *Liberal*'!

Like Scott and Nelson, the Christian faith has hung loosely around me all my life: a comfortable old garment which has been relegated to the back of the wardrobe, is brought out periodically in times of need and worn with a reticent air and slightly ashamed demeanour.

So too with liberalism: it is what was handed out to me at birth by 'my tribe'. I trust in it, God forbid, beyond rational thought!

Pat Muntz
Heidelberg, VIC



The man behind the curtain

A curious fatalism appears to have taken over the Government, standing probably six months away from an election with an opinion poll lag it so far shows little sign of fixing. The electorate seems sullen. The Prime Minister seems more so. Admittedly he is a great campaigner, superb in his opportunism and his ability to polarise people around an issue, but, if he has a strategy for winning the election he is keeping it to himself. His Cabinet colleagues, his campaign committees and his backbenchers do not know.

The Prime Minister seems very confident in the good judgment of the Australian people. He thinks that they will, at the end of the day, vote only for people with a vision, parties with policies in tune with their real needs, personal and national and that they will readily sort out the differences between the 'substance' of Keating and his team and the 'vacuum' of Howard. But even by his own criteria the Government looks weak.

The vision—such as it is—seems fairly remote from the ordinary voter's experience. People have learnt to be cynical about Keating's lights on the economic hill: national superannuation and APEC may be good things but are not about the here and now. Aboriginal reconciliation and a republic say little about what government could or should be doing in the next term. If Labor has a next-term agenda, it does not as yet have it on the table. And it is so distracted by a host of political brush-fires—whether Carmen Lawrence, the future of the Australian National Line, federal-state finances, particularly on health, nuclear testing or the like—that the simple work of policy planning and development is not taking place.

In one sense, Labor does not need policies. It has policies in place. And even where it is not clear what their future directions are, the electorate has a feeling for the way it will do things. John Howard, even when being coy about his actual policies, has also done considerable work, through his headland speeches, to create a similar sense of the future style of the coalition. On Keating's side is a history of some Labor guts and initiative in bringing forward policies, even unpalatable ones; against him is the fact that Keating's prime ministership has involved very little attention to detail or routine government, a fact that has been showing for ages.

What is also very dangerous for Labor is that little of the polling demonstrates that the electorate is yearning to have the idealism strings tugged. The electorate is worried about interest rates, the balance of payments deficit and foreign debt. They may not be convinced that Howard has a breakthrough solution, but they are far from convinced that Labor has the problem under control.

There is very clear polling evidence that Labor is on the nose in Queensland, NSW and Western Australia, and I cannot see any Keating pyrotechnics changing that. At the moment, I have been told, Labor's private polling shows that it could not even hold the seat of Oxley—the Bill Hayden seat which was the only survivor of Labor's 1975 debacle—in Queensland. And Labor's problems in Western Australia have very little to do with the Lawrence debacle, and are unlikely to be much affected by evidence that some of the Liberals are a little unappetising as well. Moreover, there are electors in Sydney, where Labor has a high number of fairly marginal seats and people who are itching to be heard on issues such as airport noise.

Keating has not only so far failed to get a grip on Howard, but even if he catches him on a point of weakness, he is unlikely to do so in the way which worked so successfully with Hewson. Personally, I think it a little unfair that Howard is perpetually cast as uninspirational, but the image may do him no harm, because it underlines the fact that he doesn't frighten the horses either. The problem with John Hewson was that he genuinely did frighten people.

Howard has effectively narrowed the field by making it clear that in many policy areas he will behave exactly like a Keating Government, or indeed, like any professional administration. Ideological and other flushes will be kept to an absolute minimum. It is not part of the Howard plan to open himself for flank or frontal attacks on issues such as Medicare, education or foreign affairs.

With labour market deregulation, Howard has pitched his policies only marginally to the right of the government and kept the alarm levels down. One problem the government has in attacking him, of course, is that so many of its own moves have been in his general direction, making it more difficult to attack him from point of principle.

There are tacks the Government could take which the Opposition policy could probably be attacked more successfully, if not more honestly. Most Australians are heartily sick of workplace reform and constant change. Even many of those who accept the need for change, or admit that new economic circumstances give little choice either, do not see that any improvement in their lifestyle as a result or feel pretty bloody about it anyway. It will be very difficult to arouse any enthusiasm for yet more change. A conservative push by Labor, in short, could better seize a mood. But Labor's capacity to make much of this is heavily compromised by its own shifts in this direction, and by the Liberal approach, rather more sensible this time, of not pretending that its push for further deregulation will be exciting and thrilling.

One interesting sphere of this will be in relation to the public sector, which has probably undergone more change than most. They are, on the whole, pretty cranky about it and not just in Canberra. It is with just such people that Labor cannot pretend that it is the natural conservative force which will not upset workplace security or job satisfaction.

In the past decade, being governed by Labor has become such a natural thing, with Labor increasingly smug, arrogant and, to a degree, corrupted by taking power and the electorate for granted. One reason for this is that it has usually been able to portray the Liberals as the radicals with wild ideas, the people who might upset one's settled comforts. Alternatively, they have been able to portray the other side as a disorganised rabble and themselves as competent and steady administrators who do not flinch from hard decisions.

Keating needs something better this time, and he has not much time left. ■

Jack Waterford is editor of the *Canberra Times*

Neither a borrower, nor a lender be

***Bill Garner** looks at new regimes for public libraries*

Libraries have a curious and unfortunate characteristic: They are natural victims. They attract violence. This has been going on for at least four thousand years. In uncertain times, libraries try to lie low and stay very still, but it doesn't work. They always seem to catch the eye of the conqueror.

At the very least they have to be censored, but sacking and burning have also proved efficient. So, the Romans stole the libraries of Syria and Greece, and then the barbarians sacked the libraries of Rome. The Crusaders burned Islamic libraries and Henry VIII tore into the monastic libraries, and so it went on until the present century, with its bonfires of books and rampant ideological control over information.

Victors all behave the same way in this. They all know intuitively: get the libraries! Force them to reflect the new dominant ideology, the culture of the new order.

And the victors are right: libraries do threaten the new order because they contain the history, the ideas, the imagination, the very independence and identity of the old order. So they must be dealt with, firmly. They must be brought into line.

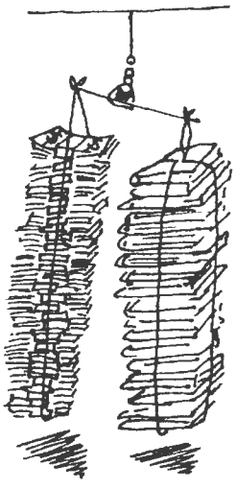
This has been the relentless passage of history, so we must not be surprised that in Victoria, with the advent of a government determined to re-structure the very role of government, that libraries are getting the treatment. They stand in a direct line with the libraries of antiquity, and will, unless they are actively defended, share a common fate.

As we now realise, it wasn't democracy which emerged as the victor in the Cold War—it was business. The dominance of the market is so complete that even the few remaining communist states are embracing it. Rarely has any idea so completely swept the globe as has the idea that the free market should be allowed to determine all social outcomes. It is absurd to imagine that our libraries will remain untouched.

At this time it is not so much the books and the information which will be reformed (but ask any librarian or educator how resources have already been moved towards the culture of business), it is the 'service'. The service—that is, the librarians—is supposedly something that can be separated off from the books and the buildings, although in what sense remains unclear: acquisition policies and technological development blur the distinction.

Nor is it clear why privatisation, so central an ideological commitment of the new rulers, would not, in the future, be extended to the books, equipment and buildings. There seems no (ideo)logical reason not to do so.

After all, the purpose of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) is to bring libraries (as all municipal services) into accord with the dominant ideology.

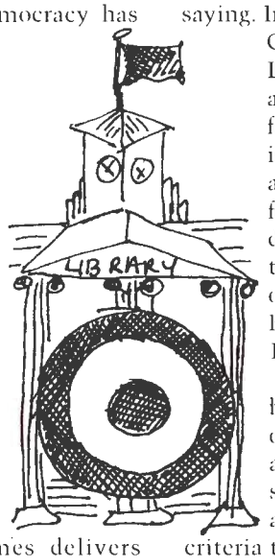


The problem is that, when one is dealing with free public lending libraries, business principles seem to come into direct conflict with democratic principles. Something is being given away for free: information. That is anathema to business (except as a marketing ploy) but central to democracy.

Commercial principles also cut across the culture of librarianship. Here is a true example: Management consultants brought in to the State Library identified rare books as not paying their way and advised that they could be sold off to buy books which would be more productive in terms of user service.

What is most worrying in Victoria is the Kennett Government's promotion of the idea that democracy itself should be assessed in terms of efficient business practice. The alarming thing about this is that it suggests that democracy is no longer the fundamental basis on which our society is being imagined, constructed and judged. Democratic values are being replaced by the values of business. This is why it was so easy

for Mr Kennett to think of postponing the return of even limited democracy to Melbourne City Council. That it was a notion from which he backed away can give little comfort. For him, democracy has clearly become something you can take or leave.



But the libraries issue is especially closely intertwined with the reform of local government because it was via the democratic machinery of municipal government that the free lending libraries were introduced in the first place. And without that machinery in place the libraries are left undefended—except by direct action.

Business sometimes delivers services efficiently. But one thing that business is not efficient at delivering is democracy. At the Victorian level, life under the Commissioners has demonstrated that beyond doubt. The democratic concept of 'representation' is rarely found in their statements of purpose. In the city of Port Phillip it doesn't even feature in the new electoral proposals. It just doesn't fit into the preferred model of a 'board of directors' running an enterprise servicing 'clients'. Commissioners put forward artificially manipulated 'consultation' processes as a sop, but that has now been revealed for the charade it is.

NO, THERE REALLY IS a contradiction here. And yet democracy remains, at least in lip service, the basic value system in Australia. It has certainly been, until now, an ideology to which all parties are committed. Has the citizenry voted for a change to this?

It has been an axiom of democracy that it requires an informed citizenry. Free access to public lending libraries has become a prime indicator of a functioning democracy. They have become repositories of democratic wisdom and an expression of democracy in action.

Together with free public education, free publicly-funded libraries have been generally regarded as the most efficient means to achieve an informed and democratically able citizenry. This used to go without saying. In 1976 in the Report of the Committee into Public Libraries it was stated: 'No argument needs to be made for the criticality of the existence of public libraries ... and the importance of an informed citizenry, which understands and is able to contribute to the development of democratic principles'. But, what was obvious in 1976 is no longer obvious.

The immediate question, however, is: will tendering out the function of librarians enhance existing library services or will it, by the application of commercial criteria to library operations, inevitably lead to further privatisation, restrictive management practice, and the global imposition of user-pays?

By what right do people question the government in this matter? They voted them in. Democracy is satisfied, at least at the state level. At the municipal level it is, demonstrably, a withdrawable privilege. Libraries are publicly owned [which, these days, means owned by the incumbent government]. It is the government's responsibility to manage them efficiently. Trust us, they say, we know what we're doing.

But do they? They haven't presented any convincing arguments that CCT will be better for libraries. People are being asked to take it on faith. And anything they do is ignored if it criticises the proposal. Nor are there any precedents. Even in the Mecca of privatisation, the UK, tendering out of libraries was rejected *in principle*.

Citizens have a special right to be concerned about the fate of their libraries. They belong to them in a concrete way which cannot be written off as the sentimental expression of an abstract idea of public ownership. Free local public libraries owe their very existence to citizen action.

Public lending libraries are not some sort of gift of the state. There is no legislation which requires municipal authorities to provide public libraries at all. Indeed, historically, many municipalities initially resisted the idea. That they exist at all is testimony to the hard work and determination of small groups of citizens, not of the benevolence of governments, state or local.

The story of the St Kilda Public Library is just one example. There are many others. In 1947, fed up with the poor service provided by the privately run subscription libraries which were the only places from which books could be borrowed, citizens lobbied the St Kilda Council for a free public library. The suggestion was rejected out of hand. In 1954 the Council again refused. As Anne Longmire writes: 'The town clerk prepared long reports which showed that a library would be an unwarranted administrative and financial burden'.

Clearly, providing a library was not a 'core business' then, and who would be foolish enough to think, in the present climate, that it might not be so regarded again? In 1961 the idea was again rejected. The Council refused to conduct a poll on the issue. In the end it became a bi-partisan political issue, but it was only when councillors actually began losing their seats over the issue that, in 1967, the proposal finally got the nod and the library was eventually opened in 1973. It had been a twenty-year struggle. All of this is within living memory. No wonder people are angry that an unelected body should presume to change the fundamental structure of the library service.

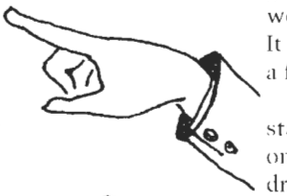
But this only partly explains the intense passion this issue arouses.

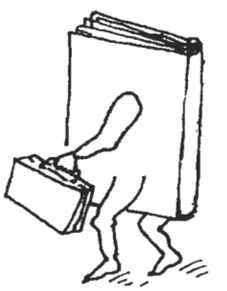
Politicians should beware: actual library usage is only the tip of the iceberg. Just as the benefits of libraries accrue to a much wider range of

people than can be calculated by looking at the numbers of direct users, large as that is, so the political support for libraries is buried deep in the hearts of the citizens. For even those who rarely use public libraries believe they should exist: they are our only guarantee of free and equal access to the store of common knowledge. It is an issue that touches the core of our shared democratic beliefs.

CCT, by imposing commercial principles on a public institution, will initiate an inevitable drift towards user-pays. But user-pays is not a concept which can, with integrity, be applied to libraries and other human services because the benefits extend so far beyond the direct users as to render any sort of cost-benefit calculation completely specious. Compare education. Many benefit from the fact that someone else studied nursing. That is why we publicly underwrite the cost.

A basic level library and information service is as important as basic level education and health care and equally impossible to attach any precise value to. A government concerned with promoting democracy has a responsibility to see that changes to the library system do not widen the gap between the information-rich and the information-poor. Free libraries exist solely to bridge that gap. To widen it is to contradict their purpose. And this applies to electronic databases, too.





Libraries are not, cannot be, and should not be, static institutions. And today they will and must provide access to the databases on which so much public knowledge is now stored and only through which it can be accessed. But who, we are asked, do you think will pay for all this hardware and software? The government? The answer is 'yes!' Who else would you expect? Because exactly the same argument applies to electronic access as applies to printed page access. Lending libraries came into existence because no ordinary person, desiring to be well-informed, could possibly afford to buy all the books they might need access to. Electronic data is in exactly the same boat. It contains too much of the store of common knowledge to remain inaccessible.

Whatever the expenditure of public money on these things, it will return incalculable benefits. Ignorance is, in the end, far more costly to maintain than is knowledge. I wonder if any economist has done a cost-benefit analysis of ignorance? The cost, I suggest, is enormous, while the benefits accrue to very few.

THE ISSUE BROADENS beyond libraries. Is the stock of public knowledge going to remain a common possession, or is it going to become once again a privilege of wealth? People who wish to limit the availability of information are precisely those who use secrecy as a tool of social control.

The calculated denial to citizens of information on which they can make informed decisions about matters which affect the quality of their lives is quite simply, anti-democratic. That anyone associated with a public library should go along with such tactics would be mind-boggling. It would be a violation of a fundamental trust.

Librarians should stand up and be counted on this issue and not be drawn into a conspiracy of silence. We expect librarians to be guardians of our access to the store of public knowledge. We want them to be well-paid, well-trained and secure in their employment. Achieving this was one of the main benefits of replacing the private system by the public system. We believe that public ownership and control has proven over and over to be the way to guarantee a high quality service.

The history of privately run lending libraries is that they were inefficient, expensive, narrowly focused and that they exploited their staff.

What has changed such that we should believe that this will now be reversed? But does any librarian, other than one aspiring to a senior managerial position, really think that they will be better off in terms of salary and conditions under a tendered-out arrangement?

If such an arrangement is going to save money, not to mention enable the successful tenderer to rake off the fee, isn't the only way this will be done by cutting staff, employing casuals, increasing work loads? That's what happens everywhere else. Does anyone really think it won't happen to public libraries?

The only place librarians can look to for support in this matter is from the public, their borrowers. We have a deep common interest in this. In the absence of democratic machinery at the local level, direct citizen action is now the only guarantee that free public lending libraries have of their continued existence.

The issue is profound. If you violate free public libraries, you violate democracy. But democracy, we are now being reminded, is not something we can take for granted. It can atrophy unless it is constantly and vigorously exercised.

Whether democracy survives at the local, or any, level is ultimately, up to the citizens. The direct attacks on democracy being experienced in Victoria are having the effect of reinvigorating it. The defence of democracy is just beginning and, as the library issueshows, it can draw on deep wells. Business may be a wily, infinitely mutable phenomenon, but democracy, too, can take a thousand forms: if it is pushed in at one place it will certainly pop out at another. ■

Bill Garner is a Melbourne playwright and screen writer. His plays include *Sunday Lunch*, for the Melbourne Theatre Company.

Spread the word

LAST MONTH ROBYN WILLIAMS CELEBRATED 20 years of broadcasting *The Science Show* on ABC Radio. A few weeks later, a fledgling organisation known as Australian Science Communicators held its second Annual General Meeting. It already boasts about 500 members. The fact is, as Williams noted, there are few other developed nations which devote as much time to reporting science, especially on electronic media.

Archimedes took a quick look at the radio and television guide for a typical week in Melbourne. About 20 hours of television was devoted to science-related topics—not including *Star Trek* and *The X-Files*. Five-and-a-half hours of science were broadcast between 5.30 pm and 10.30 pm. On radio still more science was aired—a further 11 hours. Besides the programs put together by the ABC Radio Science Unit, two of Melbourne's community stations broadcast a series of weekly science programs. And that is excluding talkback radio, where at least five programs have regular spots for science commentators—again, not all on the ABC.

Although the US, for instance, has a cable network devoted to documentaries and educational science programs, there is very little weekly reporting of science on radio or television.

The past decade has also seen a vast expansion in the coverage of science in the Australian print media. The *Sydney Morning Herald* at present employs six reporters covering topics related to science and technology. Both the *Canberra Times* and the *West Australian* run extensive weekly science sections. Most papers have sections on computers. In 1990, the UK-based science news weekly, *New Scientist*, decided to begin printing an Australasian edition of its magazine because, despite a six-week wait for copies, Australia had the highest per capita readership in the world.

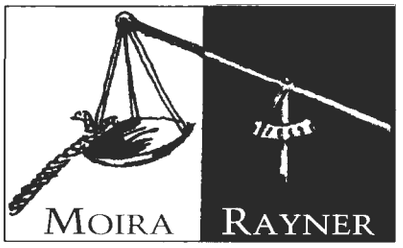
Australia also compares well in other areas of scientific activity. It is responsible for about two per cent of the world's output of research in terms of scientific papers produced—not bad for a country with less than half a per cent of the world's population. Australians also have a great capacity to soak up new technology. They are among the highest per capita owners in the world of gadgets such as fax machines and video recorders, and are the heaviest users of the Internet outside North America.

Yet despite all this scientific activity, information and all-pervasive technology, our Asian neighbours do not have an image of us as a scientific nation. To the people of Japan and Singapore, according to a string of surveys, Australia represents beaches, kangaroos, tourism and philistines. Part of the reason for this is Australia's failure to capitalise on its own research. The stories of its failure to invest in its own ideas are legion. Next year, for example, pharmaceutical companies in the US, Europe and Japan, will earn about US$3 billion from products developed from a group of blood-cell hormones discovered at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute in Melbourne. Only a trickle of royalties will flow back to Australia. The development of the new drugs occurred overseas.

And that's exactly what the Government is attempting to come to grips with in its Innovation Statement due to be delivered by the Prime Minister in November. The Government says it wants to foster a culture of innovation, including research and development; protection of intellectual property; knowledge and use of new technology; and improvement of technology already in place.

Let's hope for once the government gets it right. ■

Tim Thwaites is a freelance science writer.



Home truths

LAST YEAR MORE THAN 20,000 confirmed cases of children who had been thrashed, bashed, starved, raped, abandoned or neglected by their parents were reported to Australian welfare authorities. The report rate went up by 20% in the following 12 months, and is being maintained this year.

The rising tide of child maltreatment, and our unwillingness to admit that we have dismally failed to protect children, is a national disgrace. We have done enough fiddling with the system: it is time to try something radically different.

'Child abuse' is a generous and imprecise term, covering everything, from torture to nagging, in a context. Over the last couple of decades our army of child protection experts has become much more aware of the possible harm to children from certain behaviours, and much more willing to describe it as maltreatment: being exposed to severe violence against others, for instance, and 'discipline' which causes pain, humiliation and fear.

That knowledge has not, however, been transmitted to parents. According to a recent report commissioned by the National Child Protection Council, but not released, 80% of their survey believed that it is not harmful to hit a child with your hand, half believe that 'it is every parent's right to discipline children in any way they see fit' and almost half that no child could be really damaged by anything that a 'loving' parent might do. Yet most of them also believed that child abuse is very widespread across Australia, affecting 20% of families.

The experts know very well that child abuse is a growing national problem. At the same time, knowing the possibly damaging effects of removing children from their natural environments, and (paradoxically) because the child protection systems are so over-taxed by increasing referrals, child protection workers are in fact intervening less, and certainly less zealously, than was the case 10, 20 or 30 years ago. One example, in a Victorian case-tracking study in 1994, spells it out.

Two boys aged three and one had parents with severe alcohol and drug problems. They lived with their Mum who lived in fear of Dad's severe violence towards her. She wasn't coping: her doctor was concerned about verbal abuse, neglect, inadequate medical care and nutrition and developmental delay.

He referred them to a hospital which released them when it could find no immediate evidence of physical abuse. Hospital social workers and the police were alerted because of the grave concerns about their safety. Welfare authorities refused to accept a referral 'possibly because of the lack of evidence substantiating the case'.

So the police handed over the kids to the father, a man with criminal convictions for physical violence, to alleviate the possibility of emotional abuse and neglect by his primary victim.

In other words, even the experts draw arbitrary lines. They are afraid that the law won't validate intervention because the situation doesn't fit the increasingly restrictive definitions of 'child protection' laws. They are reluctant to report suspected abuse because they do not trust the appropriateness of the response.

On present research we know that no single strategy will completely protect children from further harm, nor enhance the general quality of their lives. We would prefer to 'prevent' it, but we don't know how, because we cannot predict harm, and only have experience of late intervention.

There is a great deal of woolly support for 'primary prevention' programs—parental and community education through media campaigns. They have their place. We do have a National Child Abuse Prevention Strategy, and a Commonwealth National Child Protection Council, whose job this is. I have been provoked into writing this article by reviewing the details of such a proposal, which will cost millions: a national advertising campaign telling us that child abuse is a community problem.

In the US, national media campaigns did appear to have influenced explicit attitudes and parenting practices, but serious abuse and fatalities seemed to increase; in Victoria a 1993 campaign increased people's tendency to blame the *non-offending* parent for the abuse; and Gillian Calvert's report of the efficacy of the four-year NSW Child Sexual Assault Program mass media campaign found there was a slight *decrease* in public awareness of the problem—and a dramatic increase in those favouring capital punishment—at its end.

I looked at this during National Child Protection Week and shortly after reading that NSW, where 19 children died of maltreatment in the preceding two years, was to cut its funding for services to children and families; and after seeing publicity over a leaked report from a Victorian child protection agency about grave problems in responding to the hugely increased volume of reported abuse after the introduction of mandatory reporting.

WHAT *ARE* WE DOING? Why can't we *prevent* child abuse instead of picking up bodies? Our governments have, I think, become so accustomed to the 19th century response to abuse and neglect—the criminal justice model of surveillance and swooping—that they won't put their resources into any other response. This is how state governments 'protect' children: by authority and threat, yet we prevent child maltreatment if we support all children in all families. You don't do that by snooping on the possibly 'deviant' ones. That's how we justified the notorious 'round-ups' of Aboriginal children.

The *U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child* which Australia signed in December 1990, is premised on the assertion that the child's natural environment is the family, where they may be prepared to live an individual life in society 'in an atmosphere of love and understanding.' The trouble is that many families can't provide it, not because they are deviant and uncaring, but because they are under stress, homeless, jobless, poor, or damaged by their own upbringing, or sick, or isolated, or desperate, or simply uninformed: they don't know what to expect from their children, and can't meet their needs. They need help, not blame.

In March 1994 the Minister for Family Services asked me to write a report on what the Commonwealth's role should be in child abuse prevention, while I was acting Deputy Director (Research) of the Australian Institute of Family Studies. My report was given to the Minister in December 1994. It was released in June, 1995, on a busy news day, and the rest is silence.

My recommendations were that the Commonwealth must accept that it has primary responsibility to prevent child abuse because it has accepted an international obligation, the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, as well as a moral one.

Commonwealth policies and programs which affect children and their carers are scattered across portfolio areas, and none of them is predicated on children's rights. Child care, for instance, is seen primarily as the right of women, or associated with labour market programs. There are even three, distinct, anti-violence programs, each calling for a 'nationally coordinated approach'. Commonwealth policies and program areas have different policy bases and priorities, and often operate independently of each other.

As it has done for services for people with disabilities, and for the same ethical reasons, the Commonwealth must develop a co-ordinated children's policy, across portfolio boundaries. It should establish a policy co-ordination unit— either within a major department or reporting to the Prime Minister—such as the Office of Multicultural Affairs, which can oversee and report upon it to Parliament. The Commonwealth must get its act together.

There is, I said, little value in making a symbolic appointment, such as a Commissioner for Children, unless that office possesses real resources and authority. The Commonwealth should develop a statutory and administrative basis (a 'Children's Services Act', perhaps) for planning and negotiating with

the States for their delivery of children's and family services, predicated on the human rights of, not platitudes about, children.

Preventing child maltreatment is not a job for the police. *We* are responsible for the societal conditions which are associated with child maltreatment—poverty, homelessness, social inequalities and injustices, all of which are clearly associated with the misery of children.

This is the responsibility of the Commonwealth, which delivers social security, housing and other generic community services, none of which is focused and coherent enough to achieve a 'child abuse prevention' objective, because the Commonwealth doesn't have a policy about children. When we have a non-abusive society you look at maintaining non-abusive communities, and healthy family environments—parental support, education, and other family-specific policies. There are very few of them at a Commonwealth level, and State services are scattered, inconsistent, and inappropriately channelled through child-protection laws.

Preventing child abuse is not, I believe, the States' task. Their traditional responsibility is to intervene at a much later level, where preventive programs have failed and children are at risk, or damaged.

However, the States' and Territories' eight, distinct, child protection systems, are forced into service as 'gateways' to what child and family support systems there may be through their different and narrowing definitions of 'abuse' or 'risk'.

There is not much point in introducing national definitions or child abuse laws, as many have suggested, unless there are nationally high quality, accessible child and family support services which are not coercive, and do not stigmatise the families that need them.

We have failed to prevent child abuse because we have no overview. We are chained to a 19th century response which does not work in 21st century Australia.

If we persist in treating children's human right to special protection as some kind of optional 'need', which can be addressed whenever a state government has money left over from a Casino, or the Olympics, or a tollway, they won't get their entitlements as human beings. They will be irreparably damaged and the harm can never be fully undone. ■

Moira Rayner is a lawyer and a freelance journalist.

GERALDINE DOOGUE

Frankly Geraldine

THOMAS MCNEVIN VEECH WAS NOT A POLEMICIST, nor a Church ideologist. His was very much the spirit of this lecture series: the idea that faith and culture need to be discussed as if they overlap, as if there are rich pickings for the person who goes in search of new approaches.

Fundamentally I believe in that quest. For some time now, I've been concerned that the Church seems frightened of the modern world in which it toils. Consequently, it stands back from it, bewildered, overwhelmed by the questions and by the answers. Sometimes there is the sense that it expects to re-enter the picture *after* the community has whirled out of control, and be there to pick up the pieces and re-administer the traditions to the exhausted survivors. I just don't think that's going to be nearly good enough. I want to see the Church standing right in the middle of the world, amidst its turmoil and pace *as it's unfolding*.

That's where Vatican II wanted to position it. 'We can speak,' it said, in *The Church in the Modern World*, 'of a true social and cultural transformation. Caught up in such numerous complications, very many of our contemporaries are kept from accurately identifying permanent values and adjusting them properly to fresh discoveries. As a result, buffeted between hope and anxiety and pressing one another with questions about the present course of events, they're burdened down with uneasiness. This same course of events leads men to look for answers. Indeed, it forces them to do so.' It is interesting to see how much the Church in theory has diagnosed this with eloquence, but the 'how' to is always harder to discern.

I want to see the Church yield some of its old institutional structure in order to free up energies and discern new institutional styles. I will try to find precise words to attach to these, because specifics are needed now, not just rhetoric. Exuberance, too, in the knowledge that maybe a key part of the Church's new role is to facilitate a much wider-ranging conversation within our community about adapting Christ and Christ's values to the 21st century.

'I have come to bring you life and bring it in abundance': one of the most glorious promises on offer from Jesus Christ in the gospels. If we really believe that's His legacy to the Church, why don't we behave as if we do? Why don't we take the risk of jumping in at the deep end, where it's not comfortable; at the murky area where work-places are evolving; where intimate relations within Catholic families are being re-defined; where technology is racing ahead of ethical guidelines; where new trade-offs between development and the environment are being worked out; where wholly different cultures are determining what they share and where they will forever differ?

The pace of change, the nature of choice, has overwhelmed me from time to time. I made the decision to leave a marriage, with my one-year-old child, wrestled with my conscience, formed firmly within the Catholic tradition. I set up house and made a new family with the man I've now married; put parents and others through a lot; went through a lot myself. And ten years later, I have been profoundly shaped by having stepped outside the rule-book of my Catholic community, which I passionately loved, and still do.

I was highly indignant about the degree of change required of me, and fought like hell. It may seem odd to you, given that I instigated the major moves, but of course one can never plot all that follows, when every single arena of life—work, children, parents, one's God even, maybe especially—seem to become quicksand. The God I'd thought would protect me from confusion seemed strangely silent, unreachable; certainly not offering refuge. Nothing was safe, not even my personal conversations with my God.

But step-by-step, ingloriously, hesitantly, I hung on to a tradition and an institution that mattered to my very bones, and forged something new for myself, at peace with my own conscience. Oddly enough, it was a place where many of the imageries seemed rather vague but where my sense of purpose grew. Quite a paradox, but wiser people than I, like Redemptorist mission fathers, suggest this is a familiar pattern, known to people like St Teresa of Avila, among others: of less sense of connection with the Divine, but more sense of activism.

I never left the Church, either the formal or informal one. And while I received considerable support from individual priests, I couldn't say I felt that way about the institutional Church. I simply pressed on regardless. I was conscious that, being in the public eye, I might appear like a classic Catholic rebel, when in fact I felt anything but. I can't remember ever hearing a sermon which proved to me that the priest understood the nature of the titanic internal struggle I felt myself to be undergoing. I was just one of many sitting before him.

Which is not to say I haven't heard some excellent sermons from some very decent and game men, or that I imagine it would be easy for them to march, full speed ahead, into some of these areas. If it was hard for some of our forebears to talk about politics from that pulpit, just ponder the challenge posed by feminism! If Helen Garner is having trouble, pity help your average parish priest!

This brings me to one of my central points: how could an average priest *possibly* enter debates that preoccupy women these days, women trying to live a life of spiritual integrity, trying extremely hard to chart their own course and perfect their purpose? Would he even *know* the language, the nuances, the momentum that characterises the broad debate among women? How many modern women would the average priest, or bishop, systematically meet in the course of a working month? I mean *meet* in the sense of genuinely converse, be exposed to some of their dilemmas, 'lock horns', as H.G. [Nelson] would say! Precious few. Are the institutions in place to allow him exposure to messy debates among his parishioners? In my opinion, the answer is no.

Of course there are bodies at both parish and diocesan level which meet regularly. Each parish is mandated to have a Parish Council or Parish Finance Committee, which often becomes the proxy Council. There are no figures collected on a widespread basis, but obviously they are open to both women and men and this is always a lay body. Similarly, at the next level, the diocesan bishop is served by a Diocesan Finance Committee, almost always male, I'm told, which meets monthly. The gender position is usually the exact reverse with education committees. In other words, it reflects roughly the position within the population, of segregated work-areas. In Cardinal Clancy's office, for instance, his Administrator is male but his accountant is now female, as of fairly recently.

Most bishops are peppered with constant requests to 'interact.' So it's not as if they're not exposed to the world of busy-ness. But ironically, it's all done quietly, as if that's an attribute, drawn from humility. I think it's got to be more rather than less obvious.

I suspect too that the bishops *et al* are mostly exposed to people more or less like themselves. It was the very criticism hurled at us in the ABC, eight or ten years ago and still is. We knew we were working extremely hard, giving of our best, but the allegation was that we'd failed to see that our sphere of influence was shrinking; we were not being *disturbed* enough.

Does the Church really speak to the practical ethical problems people face in their modern communities? Rarely, I'd say.

A couple of 'for-instances'. Where is the beautiful language emanating from the Church, giving new codes or benchmarks by which an individual, seeking to be good, can measure his or her personal conscience when faced with, say, large-scale retrenchment of staff; being part of a hostile take-over that involves asset-stripping; when a huge executive salary is on offer concurrently with downsizing; when the work culture is palpably hostile to any sense of balance with family; when survival of the fittest is peddled as a legitimate response to the latest budget cut? When you know that you're going to be all-right-Jack but pity help the others.

This is the stuff of everyday life for contemporary workers. Yet somehow, the tried-and-true moral tests—is this greed or dishonesty or uncharity?—seem feeble, certainly not helpful. New means of describing these old verities need to be found so that they are useful in helping educate a contemporary conscience.

The Church's voice may well be clear—nay, strident—on sexual morality. But there's a stunning abyss when it comes to the murkier areas of business, politics and science. And it's in these arenas that we so desperately need to re-emphasise qualities like kindness, tolerance, forbearance, to rehabilitate and give them real clout again.

I think it could be done differently: I heard Fr John Usher, head of the Centacare social selfare arm of the Church in Sydney,tackle a topic we'd set him, called *Consumerism: can Australia move beyond it?* He, of course, gets to see the fall-out from the mad pursuit of consumerism in our society; the people who fall through the net and are unable to keep up.

He had two interesting and demanding tests by which he urged people to gauge the worth or morality of their individual actions: The first was does this action lead to more *connectedness* with other individuals? The second was does this action lead to a situation of dependence or inter-dependence? (A different spin on the same concept, I suppose, but tackling the issue of power differentials between people.)

In other words, his diagnosis of the present day was that there is a tendency for individuals—himself included—to be 'balkanised', to be alienated, even while working within the same office or living within a household. He felt many of the trends towards this were insidious and that circuit-breaking was really quite hard.

I found his two litmus tests very helpful in re-assessing some of the decisions I'd made at work and elsewhere. Far more helpful than, for instance, having some arcane area of the Gospel quoted at me, out of context; or more likely, to have this sort of discussion limited purely to safe areas like mother-child relationships, about which the Church feels much more secure.

On that same night that John Usher spoke, Geoffrey Cousins, head of Optus Vision, challenged us to get real, as it were, and get into 'the hard stuff', into the world of business which was right now devising new codes of behaviour. He suggested that one of the gravest challenges to good ethical formation within business was the notion that if it was legal, it was ethical. But where was the discussion about this?

AUSTRALIAN BUSINESSES ARE NOW COMING INTO CONTACT with altogether different ethical styles within our region, challenging many of the rubrics that have governed behaviour in our community. But most of this was happening in a void, Cousins asserted. Where was the Church when people within business tried to sponsor a debate about morality? Where were the signposts drawn from the great Christian tradition?

The Church, one of the truly great institutions of our society, has to renovate itself, and do it visibly. That was the message *The Australian's* editor-in-chief, Paul Kelly, delivered to the Bishops' Conference that he and I addressed two years ago.

Every big institution in Australia has had to turn the lens on itself in the last 20 years. The Church won't escape, Kelly said. And I believe this is so. A nun I know describes it this way: the institutions that worked in the 19th century and until last 30 years may well not work now. Is that such a shocking thing?

No, except that I'm reminded of my own journey of change, that I talked of earlier, and the indignation I felt about the collateral damage to my life, even when I wanted change. So I am very respectful about what I'm asking. I sometimes feel people are very cavalier when they blithely

demand 'wholesale change'. It's bad enough inside the ABC, let alone the Church!

But without it, we avoid asking the really obvious question: do we have the best government structure to meet current needs as opposed to current systems? Is it the most *pro-active* structure to seek out new relationships with the community?

My personal motto, as a woman of my times, is to construct a life that *resembles* the past but doesn't necessarily reproduce it exactly. My aim is to make decisions about this, not just to drift. That's my version of continuity. I have to be prepared, of course, to see my own children make the same sort of decision and re-invent things I thought were absolutes. That can be hard.

But this is a model I'd like to see the Church adopt. To grasp afresh the meaning of the Latin verb 'tradire'—to hand over. That has been interpreted in the strictest ideological sense of 'repeating' that which went before. I think it could be seen as *enabling* life within the next generation. Enabling new ways of saying old things: new ways of saying new things. Enabling new structures to emerge, side-by-side if necessary, with old structures, but designed to position the Church as a *sign* rather than a *sanctuary*.

FOR ME, THIS IS THE CORE OF IT. I want the Church to be the convenor of a bold, energetic, questing conversation within a community . I sense from my work in the media and plenty of interaction with the public, that there's a yearning for some new discussion about mores and codes. And after the discussion will come more clarity, my real hope for the next century.

But at the moment, the Church is barely there. Not only is the secular community missing its influence, so are those within the Church: it's loss-loss everywhere, with priests and religious communities fossilised, grappling with a sense of pointlessness. Because life, in all its messiness and challenge, is elsewhere.

The hunger I described earlier is often filled by half-developed notions, with a bias towards self-indulgence and no outward focus, no emphasis on mature faith. Feral spirituality, as someone put it to me on *Life Matters*.

As another colleague of mine, Fr Michael Whelan, suggests, our contribution is as much in exemplifying what it means to be an honest searcher as it is in candidly and forthrightly sharing the wisdom of our traditions. The more we are honest about our own doubts, fears, ambiguities, the more respect flows. Because, he suggests, such honesty implies great faith.

The mood signalled by the Second Vatican Council might be a good guide: 'Let there be unity in what is necessary, freedom in what is unsettled and charity in any case.' (*Gaudium et Spes*).

So how to be a searcher? How to institutionalise this? I believe there must be six features present in anything that is set up: Conversation; Collegiality; Devolution of power; Modern-ness, that is speaking in language intelligible to each generation (*Vatican II*); Regularity; Respect.

I want to overhaul the givens about the nature of dialogue between the hierachy and the laity; I want to see Church governance transformed, drawing from society's models. I want, therefore, to see the Church run by a Board of Management, set up within each archdiocese and modelled on the best-functioning government departments or authorities.

In my plan, the Archbishop or his delegate would always sit as Executive Chairman, amidst a committee of diverse contributors, drawn from the lay and clerical community. I see this as a Board of Management of the Church in the Community, with the Archbishop having right of veto—I'm not a complete Utopian, nor a fool!

I also see the need for sub-committees, just as in any good, modern progressive organisation, which operate on a mutual support basis: information and support drawn from the Church's scholars and officers back to the communities: they, in turn, would inform Church authorities of issues contested within their sphere.

I recognise that Catholic advisory bodies do exist, but at the behest of the bishop, and, effectively, no-one knows about them. Which brings me back to visibility.

I would suggest that just as the Governor-General does, every single bishop should be convening regular gatherings at his table, where he listened, in a spirit of co-operation and curiosity, to the conversation or dialectic underway within society; thus informing himself and acting as a conduit for the passage of ideas between people: of being pro-active on behalf of Christ in a breathtakingly simple way. And I would urge bishops to be game rather than cautious in their invitation lists. And I would never again have a biennial Bishops' Conference without a parallel meeting of broader groups, drawn, I'd suggest, from the various Boards of Management.

People would be revitalised. The institution would be bolstered. I'm not about tearing down institutions. They're invariably the repositories of surprising resources and talents. The Church would put itself in the midst of the people whom it must serve, and not be distrustful of them and

their experience. The Church would set up a process of listening. For those afraid of the impact on Church as authority-figure, Church as preacher, I say this can hardly undermine that: it would probably boost it, by providing it with modern data.

And at all times, I would stress the importance of including women as contributors. I did a search of the Church's formal bodies and, after considerable effort, found, outside the schools and welfare organisations, no systematic structures to include women. They may exist—no-one could tell me exactly. But it was clear they were at the behest of individual bishops. This won't do. It must be much more of a given than that.

My own experience of a new structure within the Church is something called Spirituality in the Pub, which I want to briefly discuss. Several of us were drawn together by John Menadue, to see whether there was a need to develop new ways of being Catholic.

Out of eight months of intermittent talking and quite rigorous debate and mission-statement discourse, we came up with a simple, unfussy and modest model of SIP:we wanted Religion in the Pub, but RIP wasn't quite the image we wanted to send! The idea was to promote a new forum, new conversation within the Church, of a kind most of us didn't feel we got within parishes.

We wanted to talk about issues of relevance to our lives, raw-edged issues on which there frequently was no longer consensus: issues that the Church—in our view—dodged. And sometimes I could quite see why.

We found that there was no short-cut. There had to be much discussion on themes for the year. We meet every six weeks or so in a pub in Paddington, and to complete the metaphor, it's in the Upper Room! It's free. Drinks from the bar. Two speakers: one always representing the institutional Church and therefore informed by the tradition; one representing modern dilemmas, in a sense. Our topics have been modern conscience, when is it right to play god—the euthanasia debate, and consumerism. Our next two are the challenge of science, and the ethics of modern wealth creation. We're finishing with the conscience of those arriving from other faiths.

It is very convivial, non-Churchy, with a small organising committee. Next year, we'll set a new theme for 1996. Speakers have been extremely willing to participate, no matter what their frantic schedule, bearing out my view that there are people of immense goodwill, dying, in fact, for the Church to assume a new sort of leadership role in this moral debate and willing to do all the messy, bureaucratic work of setting this up.

It seems to be working and filling a need. It's small, the leaven in the lump, but we're quietly quite proud of it, and I might add that we've kept the hierarchy informed and have received encouragement, notional but significant, I believe. It doesn't seek to circumvent or undermine existing structures. It's an addition, and nails its flag to the mast: it is Catholic and works within what I'd say are the portals of the Church, whether or not that's on Church property.

The spirit of Vatican II is alive and well within it. I want to close on some beautiful words from *The Church in the Modern World*. You'll have to tolerate the exclusive language which is a touch confronting. But the sentiments carry the day.

'THOUGH MANKIND TODAY IS STRUCK WITH WONDER at its own discoveries and its power, it often raises anxious questions about the current trend of the world, about the place and role of man in the universe, about the meaning of his individual and collective strivings and about the ultimate destiny of reality and of humanity. Hence, giving witness and voice to the faith of the whole People of God gathered together by Christ, this Council can provide no more eloquent proof of its solidarity with the entire human family with which it is bound up, as well as its respect and love for that family, than by engaging with it in conversation about these various problems.

'For the human person deserves to be preserved; human society deserves to be renewed. Hence, the pivotal point of our total presentation will be man himself, whole and entire, body and soul, heart and conscience, mind and will.

'Therefore, this sacred Synod proclaims the highest destiny of man and champions the god-like seed which has been sown in him. It offers to mankind the honest assistance of the Church in fostering that brotherhood of all men which corresponds to this destiny of theirs. Inspired by no earthly ambition, the Church seeks but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ Himself, under the lead of the befriending Spirit. And Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not sit in judgment, to serve and not to be served.' ■

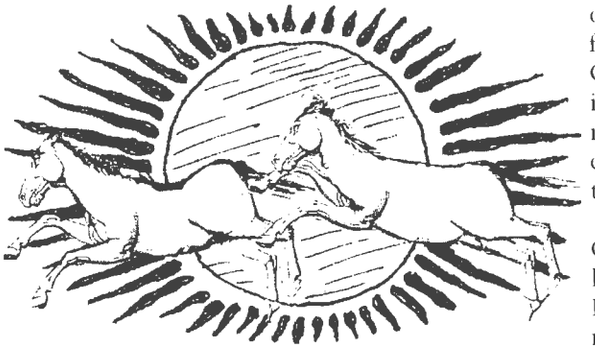
This is an edited text of the Catholic Institute of Sydney's Veech Lecture for 1995, delivered by **Geraldine Doogue** at the State Library of New South Wales.

Peter Pierce

Right on track

In Sydney, it had not rained for forty days and forty nights. Rosehill racecourse, where I'd not been for half a life-time, baked in record August heat of 31.3°C. Track records, besides tempers, were at risk.

Before travelling there, we visited the superb new Museum of Sydney. Soon the treasures of the Maritime Museum in London would be packed and the 'Fleeting Encounters' exhibition closed. But we were able to view its 'Pictures and Chronicles of the First Fleet', together with a cornucopia of remains of the earliest years of European settlement in Australia. Here were sets of ships' cutlery, ceramic dolls, pipe stems, coins, accidental survivals like a puppet found in the Macarthurs' cellar. There were also documents seeking to exude authority—such as the Standing Orders for New South Wales—and others mocking it: the notebook in which Frank the Poet inscribed 'A Convict's Tour of Hell'.



There were propitious items for the afternoon's jaunt: gaming pieces fashioned from slate found in the ruins of the guards' quarters of this first Government House. In the exhibition was a view of Rose Hill, 'a spit upon rising ground ... ordered to be cleared for the first habitations' as David Collins wrote in November 1788 of the farm on fertile land by the Parramatta River. Just under a century later, a proprietary racetrack opened at Rosehill. Coming under the control of the Sydney Turf Club in 1943, it has since made much of limited natural assets, as I was shortly to be reminded.

First to get there. Forget the train, the helpful PR staff of the STC informed me. Take the River Cat. Thus I boarded the 'Marlene Mathews' at Circular Quay, thence to pass beneath the Harbour Bridge, stop at renovated Luna Park, skim by yacht harbours, jutting apartments, an Olympic site-to-be and St Ignatius, Riverview, before container terminals, decaying factories and the RAN arms depot edged down to the river. By now the boat had slowed to a walk, not only to let sister vessel 'Shane Gould' get by in the narrowing stream, but because the momentum of catamarans is eroding muddy banks and stirring residues of heavy metal.

In an hour we were hard by Parramatta. The STC had provided free transport and racebook. To enter the course, the bus travelled four sides of a square, revealing the giant Rosehill Gardens sign that proclaims the track's new, presumably American-style misnomer. Looking back to the city, one descries the bridge and skyscrapers in the distance, but in the foreground an ugly cluster of oil refinery buildings. And the track is cramped, with famous out-of-sight starts for middle-distance races, endlessly turning 1200 metre circuit for its great attraction, the Golden Slipper (a preposterously rich two-year-old race) and dangerous run out of the straight just after the winning post.

Not Flemington? Indeed not: from the considerateness of its staff to the quality of the catering, Rosehill Gardens showed not only that the STC is the Australian racing club most interested in its patrons, but how service at Flemington has passed from local joke to national disgrace. On Manikato Stakes day at Flemington, a thimble-full of red sold for $3.50. At Rosehill, a bumper retailed at $1.20. A variety of well-stocked food outlets at the Gardens happily contrasted with the gut-rotting fare hard by the Healthy Diet-Try-It Diabetes caravan at the headquarters of Victorian racing. The STC has been aggressive about the value of its product, not resentfully defensive over falling race crowds. Given a course as grand as Flemington, or Randwick, the entrepreneurial flair of the STC could be exhibited to the embarrassment of the 'principal' clubs.

Nevertheless, at Rosehill Gardens, there was racing to delight such local sponsors as the Rooty Hill RSL and Lidcombe Sydney Markets clubs. Unfortunately the free bus delivered me in time to back I'm A Freak, which missed the start and ran near last. Two races later, top jockey Mick Dittman's mount was second. Remarkably, he had ridden only one Sydney winner in eighteen months. That changed, but not before the Premier's Cup went to Tom Cruise look-alike, 'born-again' Darren Beadman, on Ardeed. Meanwhile in Melbourne, at once despised Sandown, Grand Baie ran an Australian record for 1000m and the fine grey Baryshnikov won the Liston Stakes from the Hayes-trained Western Red and Jeune. With the thankless task of inheriting a famous name and stables from father and brother, P.C. Hayes not only has the afore mentioned two well forward, but also Manikato place-getters Seascay and Blevic. Watch for them in the spring, and for Hawkes' Octagonal.

And for Flying Spur, a lovely bay colt, last year's Golden Slipper winner, who showed staying scope by winning the Peter Pan Stakes, with Dittman up. Back in the glassed-in public area, signs pointed distractingly to the Longchamps and Chantilly bars. The STC guesses that tradition, in racing as in much else, is mostly in the brand name. After a peerless day, clouds gathered, but no rain fell. This is a lucky club. Ask Moonee Valley, which is still hoping that a newly-laid track will be ready for racing on 1 October and that it can host the Cox Plate, rather than seeing the national weight-for-age championship go down the road to Flemington, as the smarties have long predicted. ■

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

JIM DAVIDSON

Scholars on the loose

AT A TIME WHEN THE UNIVERSITIES are being remodelled in the corporate style, a similar impulse towards tighter organisation can be seen at work elsewhere. In August the newly-founded Australia Foundation for Culture and the Humanities announced its concern to connect the Australia Council with all forms of cultural activity in everyday life, and also to try to effect another linkage, between the private sector and culture.

The week before a meeting was held in Canberra to launch an Independent Scholars Association of Australia. To some people this felt like a roll call of mavericks, steppenwolves and ratbags, with the touted idea of a special Academy of Independent Scholars being a clear contradiction in terms; but there was, nonetheless, a decided consensus that an association was necessary.

The term 'public intellectuals', meaning people who contribute to public debate and who may or may not be academics, has had some currency in recent years. But the term intellectual has always carried a heavy load of embarrassment in Australia, as Max Charlesworth felt constrained to confess in a 1991 issue of *Meanjin* published in his honour.

Clearly much of the reason for that has been the feeling (a legacy from pioneering days) that we are a kind of secondary growth, perhaps parasites. It is therefore important that, whether a scholar makes a statement on particular public issues or not, there is a sense of engagement with society in general, and that there is seen to be one. Once the notion of intellectual or scholar is de-academicised, then of course it must include curators, librarians, some journalists, and all manner of people; intellectual work might then be seen as vital in maintaining some of the infrastructure of society. Otherwise, the independent scholar is seen as an isolate, or, as Peter Cochrane colourfully put it, 'a bit like a busker—constantly having to attract attention and to change the tune'.

To some extent many do, having developed immense resourcefulness. One such is Humphrey McQueen, whose ten books have been partly financed by journalism and partly by Literature Board grants. (These he sees as suitable subsidies for an 'infant industry'.) But the point he makes now is that independent scholars are like small businessmen setting up shop: left to their own devices, most would go broke in the first year. One thing the Literature Board should do, says McQueen, is to give every aspiring writer a copy of Gissing's New Grub Street. This would give them an idea of what they are letting themselves in for, and indicate how much energy is going to be spent grubbing around for ideas and piece work to pay the bills. Never go into debt, he sternly advises all independent scholars.

Traditionally, the Anglican Church sustained many random intellects; the universities were likened to a contemporary church in this sense. For many present, though, they were more the god that failed. The academic archipelago is no place for mavericks now; as Alison Broinowski pointed out, it has become a haunt of the grey suits with their performance indicators. Sydney University now has two administrators for every one academic. Whereas ten years ago it seemed possible that there might be more regularised job-sharing and part-time work, now such things are often opposed because they are seen to compromise commitment to the institution. To the institution, noted Peter Cochrane; not to the profession.

All of this has implications for the kind of writing which goes on in universities. As is well-known, it is increasingly directed to colleagues only, and is (at best) technical and often impenetrable. Joy Hooton analysed the new research culture—with its over-reliance on research assistance—and pointed to the way competition between institutions has become so intense that one university offers a $1000 grant just to assist its members to make ARC applications. A Fordist model is in operation here, as though intellectual productivity can be increased endlessly.

It is not surprising, then, that the universities should engage in product control. As is well-known, Melbourne University recently attempted to assert copyright over all work produced by its academics; and while there has been a retreat from this position, there is no guarantee that the claim will not be made again. (It has since been emulated in other institutions.) What we are dealing with here, after the palladian openness of the old library-based culture originating in the Enlightenment, is a new sense of knowledge as a commodity, legitimately open to privatisation.

Certainly academics rarely regard their posts now as a public position, with resposibilities to the community in general; consultancies are more the order of the day. Nugget Coombs has spoken of the decline in the moral responsibility of the intelligentsia, while Donald Horne, at this conference, likened the universities to 'a kind of black hole for some of our best minds'.

INDEED, MANY ACADEMICS HAD BECOME so self-involved that, until the recent reforms and a greater pressure to justify themselves, it never occurred to them to see themselves as only one tribe of intellectuals in Australia. Many, in fact, would cheerfully attack (as some still do) the Australia Council grant system, seeing that as public funding while ARC grants were theirinalienable right.

It was therefore interesting that the Canberra independent scholars, instead of wishing to remain separate from academe, were rather more interested in bridgebuilding. Many of the one hundred present were very much aware of a disempowering sense of isolation. Suggestions of excluding most academics, in the interests of a more effective trade unionism, did not strike much rapport. But these were older people, Canberra folk, many of them retired; one wonders what would have emerged from a similar meeting in one of the big cities. ■

Jim Davidson teaches Humanities at ther Victoria University University of Technology.

JAMES GRIFFIN

Neighbours

'WHERE ELSE CAN YOU FIND A WIFE who will give you a pedicure with a toothbrush', asked the near-sexagenarian squatter from Johland—rhetorically, one hopes, as Australians have not been so conspicuous in the flesh trade outside the Phillipines yet.

Not that recruiting wives, even on that basis, is the worst of it. Many marriages of convenience work benignly enough for the brides, and often for their indigent extended families. Bartered brides are not invariably battered.

The pits is, of course, not the arranged marrying or the whoremongering but the paedophilia. And that will not cease when Australians are blocked from sleaze holidays. The Filipino male has ultimately to look to that, as President Ramos indicated during his recent visit, the first by an incumbent Philippines head of state.

There is not much point in exaggerating the degree of Australian infamy as Meredith Burgmann MLC (NSW) has done. Nor in dressing up as murdered (by Australian husbands) Filipino brides or even branding Ramos as the Philippines' 'biggest pimp' as was done by some at the University of Melbourne when Ramos was to be given an honorary degree. Just to show there are no facile nostrums, the president warned sex offenders that he will now look at applying the death penalty for 'heinous crimes' to foreign paedophiles. The demonstratorsmay not relish a situation, where another Australian prime minister feels he has to call another Asian government ' barbaric' for executing Australians, as happened with Bob Hawke over our drug pushers.

It might be wiser to accept the extension of the Federal Crimes Act to sex tourism and the sending of police officers to help with sex and drug surveillance.

Nothing is going to be simple in our relations with Asian cultures, and the root causes of the most exploitative aspects of the flesh trade are obviously poverty, overpopulation and obscurantism. No doubt Ramos will welcome any suggestions as to how these can be quickly overcome.

It seems incongruous that, when we are trying to gain acceptance as a compatible neighbour in South-East Asia, there should be a muster at a University to protest at a leader who was vital to the overthrow of the Marcos kleptocracy. While being much more decisive, Ramos retained the confidence of Cory Aquino and, although a soldier, has upheld democratic forms in a country that provides the sort of bridgehead into Asia that Australia needs. The Philippines has a predominantly Christian culture (80 per cent Catholic, 9 per cent Protestant, 5 per cent Muslim, 3 per cent Buddhist) and 51 per cent understand English (although only one per cent speak it at home).

With the fraying of our separate American alliances, which forestalled the need for close bilateral security arrangements, the time has come for increased defence cooperation. While we have no urgent defence issue at present, Chinese activity at the well-named Mischief Reef in the strategic Spratlys is unnerving in Manila and, in the long term, a matter of concern for Canberra. The sort of anti-insurgency aid given in the past, that suggested obsessive anti-Communism and could be construed as a prop for Marcos, can now be seen serving the Filipino interest rather than that of a particular regime. Moreover, Australian racism such as was perceived and bitterly resented in the Gamboa (1948) and Loesin (1966) entry visa cases, has been dispelled by immigration which increased between 1981 to 1991 from a total of 15,500 to 74,000 (roughly 2:1 female to male), making Filipinos the third largest non-European group after Vietnamese and Chinese.

After the inert years of Aquino's presidency, Ramos has deregulated the financial system, promoted investment in manufacture and raised the annual growth rate to 5.12 per cent. This is lower, certainly, than in the so-called dragon and tiger states but still very positive. There are opportunities for increased trade, very much in Australian favour at the moment (over 3:1), but representing only 0.4 per cent of our total trade. During the Ramos visit a number of deals were done, including eleven joint ventures in power and waste-water infrastructure.

In 1971-2 Foreign Secretary, Carlos Romulo, urged a closer relationship between our two countries and noted the paucity of Philippine studies here. It is extraordinary that so little literature is generally available. Only the ANU, Canberra, and, very much to its credit, James Cook University, Townsville, have taken our neighbour of nearly 70 million people very seriously.

ASIDE FROM ARTICLES IN LEARNED JOURNALS, the only monograph on Australia-Philippines relations published for decades that I can recall was edited by two JCU scholars, Rey Ileto and Rodney Sullivan, significantly as *Discovering Australasia: Essays on Philippines-Australia Interactions* (Townsville, 1993). The bibliography provided by the University of Canberra's Mark Turner yields much that is interesting on the Philippines but little of an Australian bent.

However, what these essays reveal is a relationship which goes back to the 1850s. when Australia took a quarter of Philippine exports. By 1900, Australia was the fifth largest source of imports. There was at the time vigorous Filipino immigration to Northern Australia (including Torres Strait) and Papua.

Both American hegemony in the Philippines and the White Australia Policy (1901) caused a promising relationship to lapse precipitously from then on. *Discovering Australasia* explores these early relationships and proceeds to a searching examination of the Gamboa cases, a curious Foucaultian conflation of the press reportage of the activities of Juni Morosi and an earlier Filipino victim of 'patriarchal oppression', and an enlightening analysis of current Philippine immigration.

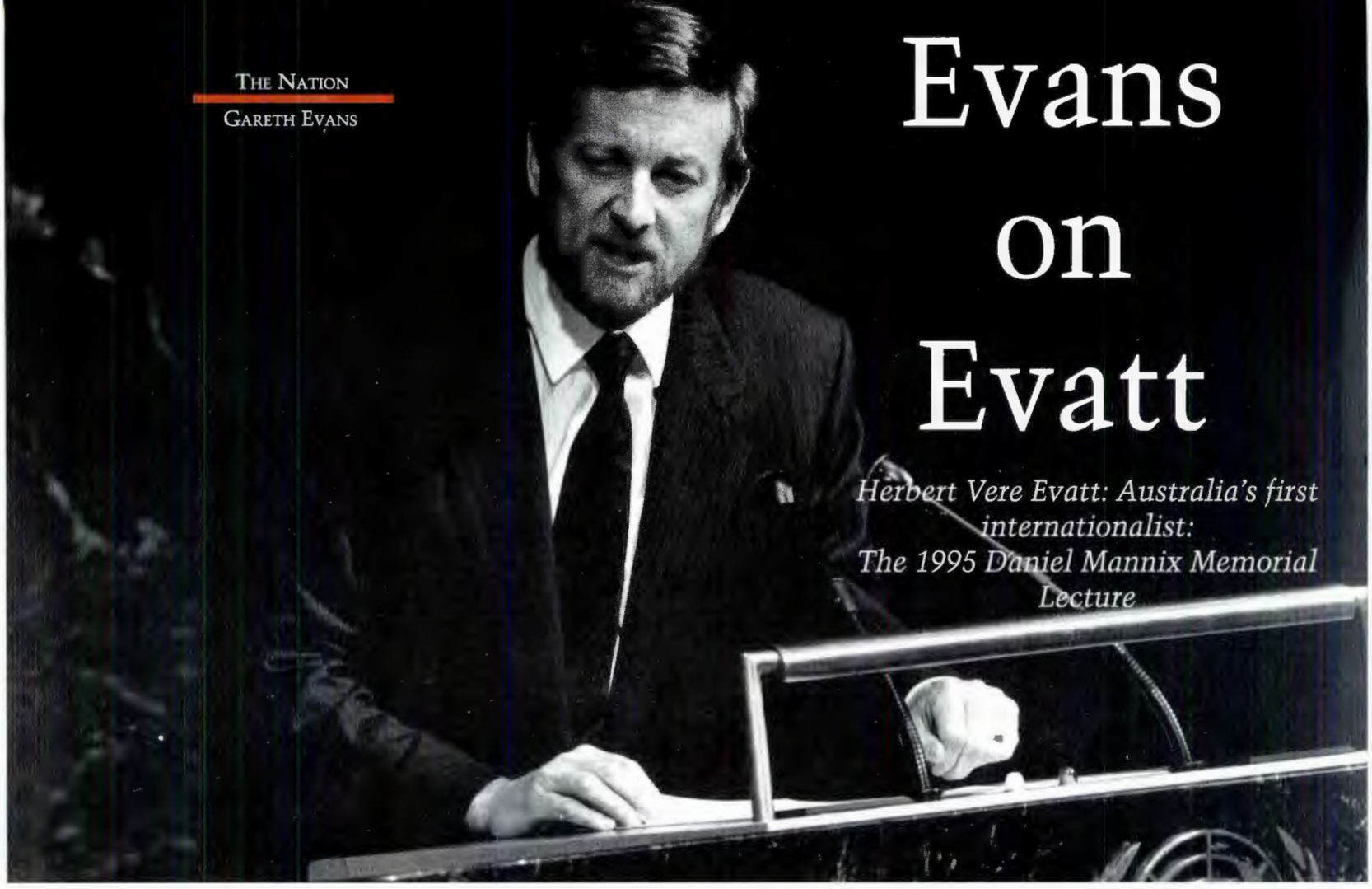
Perhaps the Ramos visit will inspire other scholars to follow up these overdue 'discoveries'. ■

James Griffin is a freelance critic and historian.

GARETH EVANS

Evans on Evatt

Herbert Vere Evatt: Australia's first internationalist: The 1995 Daniel Mannix Memorial Lecture



Gareth Evans, above, on another occasion, speaking in a forum familiar to Dr Evatt.

At first sight, it might seem positively mischievous to honour the memory of Daniel Mannix by honouring the memory of Herbert Vere Evatt. After all, while Dr Mannix, the son of an Irish farmer, and Dr Evatt, the son of a Hunter Valley publican, were both men of intellectual refinement, while both were loathed by the Protestant establishment of their day, while both were more fervent in their nationalism than their imperialism, while both spoke for essentially working-class constituencies, and while both played roles in the dramas of the Australian Labor Party, they were undeniably political enemies in that great cataclysm of the 1950s, the Labor split.

In an earlier cataclysm which had divided not just the Labor Party but the whole country, the conscription campaigns of 1916 and 1917, Dr Mannix had emerged as the political enemy of another Labor leader, William Hughes. In later years, Dr Mannix made his peace with Hughes—not just because Hughes, expelled from the Labor Party, became more conservative with every passing year, and certainly not because Hughes was ever to show much regard for Mannix's beloved Irish Australian community, but because Dr Mannix was sympathetic when, in the 1930s, domestic tragedy struck Hughes with the death of his daughter. To my knowledge, Dr Mannix never made his peace with Dr Evatt.

Thirty years, however, have passed since the deaths of these foes of the 1950s, and it does not seem to me inappropriate to honour both the Catholic prelate and the Protestant layman and, indeed, to honour the one in honouring the other. For, whatever their differences late in their lives, Dr Mannix and Dr Evatt shared one trait: each was his own man.

I want to stress Evatt's confident distinctiveness because, while it is true that in the Labor Party we are jealous of our heroes' reputations, we are as prone as others to dubious labelling. The fact is that Evatt defies easy labelling. Certainly, it would be a travesty to say that this scholar-lawyer-politician-statesman, with a personality to match both the extraordinary successes and extravagant failures of his career, was this or that sort of man and to leave it at that—which is precisely what too many of his admirers and detractors tend to do.

That Evatt's father was a country publican, that he died when Dr Evatt was six, that his widow then had six sons to raise, that he stormed through Fort Street and the Arts and Law faculties of Sydney University on an extraordinary succession of prizes and scholarships, and that he then became a Labor man, has allowed for a legend of the poor scholarship boy battling his way to the top, a working-class hero. There is some truth to the legend, but not much.

His father might have ended his days as a country publican in the colonies but he had begun them as a schoolboy at Charterhouse, and his father's brother, Sir George Hamilton Evatt, became Surgeon-General in the British Army. The Evatts, in fact, were Anglo-Irish Protestant gentlemen given to producing soldiers for the crown and parsons for the established church. Dr Evatt's mother was also of Irish-Anglo-Australian Protestant stock and, by all accounts, a formidable lady who demanded much of her sons and gave them a solid grounding in evangelical Anglicanism. A strong streak of puritanism was to mark Evatt for the rest of his life. In his mid-twenties he married the daughter of a wealthy American.

Given that background and his own intellectual brilliance, it is not too surprising that the young Evatt did not lack confidence. This could show itself in unimportant ways: outraging the Rugby Union gentlemen by bringing Rugby League into the university, for example. (He even flirted with proper football, visiting Melbourne in 1910 with a Fort Street team to play what was then called Victorian Rules.) It could show itself in more important ways, as in 1927 when, after one term in the State Parliament, he publicly damned his leader, Jack Lang, stood successfully as an independent and was expelled from the State branch of the Labor Party complaining of Communist infiltration.

In a prize-winning undergraduate essay which was later published, Evatt argued that in Australia the party differences were minimal: Whig liberalism had triumphed completely and rightly. In his view, however, there was a division, and it is worth quoting his youthful description of it: a division 'corresponding to that of minds conservative by nature and minds progressive by nature'. He continued:

> In all domains of life and art we find one class desiring to press forward, to experiment, to find in any change a bettering of present conditions, and a second which clings with veneration to whatever is traditional and ancient, and which distrusts the dangerous and unnecessary proposals of what appear to it a shallow empiricism.

There is not much doubt about the side of the divide on which he saw himself, but it remains that he supported conscription in 1916 and, in his essay, he questioned the Labor pledge and Labor caucus solidarity as inimical to true liberalism. Nor was he much taken with the notion of employment preference for trade unionists.

IT IS ALSO TYPICAL OF EVATT that, apparently not fully extended by the High Court's demands, he turned to history in the 1930s with two pioneering books—one defending Governor Bligh, till then generally seen as a tyrant properly deposed, and the other a defensive biography of W.A. Holman, generally seen in the Labor movement as a 'rat'. That other great rat in Labor lore, Hughes, was also admired publicly and privately by Evatt.

Evatt had a brilliant legal career by any standards. From the University of Sydney, he graduated with a BA (triple first), obtained an MA (first) and took a doctorate in laws (which later became his path-breaking study of the reserve powers, *The King and his Dominion Governors*). In 1916 he became Secretary and Associate to the Chief Justice of NSW, Sir William Cullen. He went to the Bar in 1924 and took silk five years later. In 1930, at the age of 36—the youngest-ever appointee, and likely to remain so—he was placed on the High Court by the Scullin Government. There he served for the next decade, before succumbing at the age of 46 to the siren song of politics—leaving the Court younger than the age nearly every other Justice has arrived.

As Commonwealth Attorney-General after 1941 he went back frequently to the High Court as an advocate—even arguing for the Government before the Privy Council in the Bank Nationalisation Case at the same time as being President of the UN General Assembly in 1948.

On the High Court bench, one of Evatt's most distinctive qualities as a Judge was his concern with social consequences and civil liberties; in his own words, he 'always searched for the right with a lamp lit by the flame of humanity'. His models were Holmes and Cardozo in the United States and Lord Wright in Britain.

The best known example of this was probably his dissenting judgment in *Chester v Waverley Corporation*—the 'nervous shock' negligence case in which he eloquently took the part of the mother whose child had been drowned in a Council trench, and in which his statement of the law came soon to prevail. In constitutional cases he came down on the side of the States, more often than the Commonwealth Labor politicians who appointed him would have liked, although more for reasons of legislative efficacy rather than any conceptual 'States' rights' perspective.

That he saw legislation as a medium for social reform, and had been a member of a reformist State Government when the Federal Bruce/Page Government was conservative, may also have coloured his views.

Certainly no Commonwealth power enthusiast could quarrel with his interpretation of the external affairs power in the Burgess case—which eventually became orthodoxy in the *The Tasmanian Dam* case in the 1980s.

Probably the closest he came to a friendship in the ministry was with Jack Beasley: it is somehow typical of Evatt that he should cultivate Beasley, who rejoiced in the nickname of 'Stabber Jack' and had been one of the Lang group which brought down the Scullin Labor Government in 1931—another 'rat'.

Speaking in 1965 of Dr Evatt's term on the High Court, the then Chief Justice, Sir Garfield Barwick, said this:

> To the decision of such of these cases in which he participated, Herbert Vere Evatt made great contributions. His judgements in many of them provide forceful and lucid expositions and applications of the law. Many of such judgements examine and relate to each other in a masterly fashion the precedents of the past with which he made himself so precisely conversant as he applied himself so unstintingly to the pursuit of the answer to the problem which each case in its turn posed for decision. They disclose extensive and penetrating scholarly research which illumines the aspects of the law with which they deal. These judgements will long be used by students and teachers of the law, by practitioners and by courts of law ... (they) expressed views of the law which were well in advance of his Honour's time and received acclaim from lawyers throughout the British Commonwealth including the Privy Council.

This was a very gracious tribute from Barwick, given not only all their obvious differences of outlook, but also their personal history. David Marr's biography of Barwick retails a story from their days at the Sydney Bar together which says much about their respective personalities. Evatt believed that logic would carry the weight of his argument, and never worried much about whom he was appearing before. Barwick, by contrast, believed in working the man, and urged Evatt to study a particular earlier decision of the judge in question about which—whatever its merits—the judge was inordinately fond. Evatt ignored Barwick's suggestion. Inevitably the judge asked him why he was not relying on his earlier decision. Evatt replied that his junior had not drawn his attention to the case. At that point, Barwick said 'Go to buggery' and left the court.

STORIES LIKE THIS, OF WHICH THERE ARE MANY, are perhaps the reason why Evatt found himself something of a political loner when, after stepping down from the High Court bench and entering Federal parliament in 1940, he became a member of John Curtin's Government in 1941. While he had made some friends in the leftish artistic and literary worlds of the time, mainly through his wife, Mary Alice, he was too highly strung, abrasive and egotistical for much in the way of political friendships. Probably the closest he came to a friendship in the ministry was with Jack Beasley: it is somehow typical of Evatt that he should cultivate Beasley, who rejoiced in the nickname of 'Stabber Jack' and had been one of the Lang group which brought down the Scullin Labor Government in 1931—another 'rat'. Despite courting men as diverse as John Wren in Melbourne and Clarrie Fallon in Brisbane, he did not have a personal power base in the party when he arrived in the Federal Parliament, and never subsequently acquired one.

Evatt entered the NSW Parliament as the member for Balmain in the 1925 election when the Lang Government took power on a platform of extensive social and labour market reform. He managed the preselection hurdle partly by relying on the then multi-member character of constituencies, which made it rather easier; and secondly by making a successful pitch for trade union support by writing a series of influential articles about the victimisation of workers after the 1917 railway strike. He immediately earned Lang's displeasure by defying the party's conventions on seniority and nominating himself for Attorney-General—he obtained two votes in caucus. He was, nonetheless, an energetic contributor to the Lang Government's pioneering social legislation. This was the first government in the world to provide pensions for widows on a non-contributory basis, through the 1925 Widows' Pension Bill which the Opposition described as 'the most soul-destroying, poisonous bill'. Seventeen years later the Commonwealth introduced similar national legislation. Evatt played a large part in framing both bills. His drafting skills were also applied to the 1926 Workers Compensation Bill which he piloted through the NSW Assembly and the 1927 Family (Child) Endowment Bill, the model for Commonwealth legislation in 1942.

Evatt returned to politics, becoming the Federal member for Barton in August 1940, with the help of an invitation from the ALP's National Executive, and his willingness to contest a UAP-held seat when no one in a safer seat would withdraw for him. When Curtin formed a government in October 1941, Evatt became both Attorney-General and Minister for External Affairs.

Even with the preoccupations of the war, which saw Evatt work to a schedule that even modern ministers would regard as extraordinary, he retained his commitment to social reform through legislation. The defence power allowed the Commonwealth the latitude during the war to manage the economy in areas like labour market regulation and prices policy. Evatt, keen to build on these gains, led the efforts of successive Labor governments to extend the Commonwealth's peacetime powers. Ever the legalist, he saw constitutional reform as the means for this: between 1944 and 1948 he proposed and supported five measures for amendment of the Constitution, only one of which, on social services in 1946, was successful. The motif of most of the proposals was post-War reconstruction, retaining or building on powers which Canberra had exercised in wartime, although Evatt also added to the wide-ranging reform proposals of the 1944 referendum a proposal for constitutional guarantees for freedom of speech, expression and religion.

Evatt's passion for civil liberties was actually never more finely demonstrated than in the battle he

led not in favour of a constitutional amendment but *against* one—the 1950 referendum on the abolition of the Communist Party. It is worth mentioning this achievement—which I would regard as the finest of Evatt's political career—at this point, although to do so is to jump forward in time to his period in Opposition. When the Menzies-Fadden Government was elected in 1949, it was against the backdrop of fears of a world communist revolutionary movement, and the new Government's first major legislative initiative was the 1950 Communist Party Dissolution bill which, once passed, was immediately subject to a High Court challenge. Under fire from conservatives and some in the ALP, Evatt accepted the brief for the Waterside Workers Federation, one of the plaintiffs mounting the case alongside the Communist Party. The High Court held the act was *ultra vires* the Commonwealth Parliament. Menzies then called a double dissolution, was re-elected, secured control of the Senate, and announced a constitutional referendum to overcome the High Court decision. Throughout an intense and bitter campaign, Evatt brilliantly, tirelessly—and almost single-handedly—dwelt on the potential for abuse if government could ban a political ideology, condemning resort to totalitarian methods to fight totalitarianism. His argument eventually won the day in enough States to defeat the referendum. It was a wonderful victory for Evatt, but it came at a huge political cost: the mantle 'defender of communism', reinforced when he leapt headlong into the Petrov affair three years later, was to hurt Evatt badly, in subsequent polls and in the internal politics of the Labor Party. But as Justice Michael Kirby has written, this 'libertarian warrior's ... leadership in the defeat of the referendum campaign, against all odds, was a wonderful and lasting contribution to the political ethos of this country'.

If the referendum campaign was Evatt's finest domestic political achievement, it was as foreign minister that he made his most enduring contribution to the course of Australian history, and to Australia's place in the world. I think it is accurate to describe him as Australia's first genuine internationalist. Although John Latham and Stanley Melbourne Bruce were both seen in Geneva as friends of the League of Nations, there were no Australian political leaders before Evatt, and have been very few since, with anything like his commitment to the building of cooperative multilateral institutions and processes to address both security and development objectives.

FOREIGN MINISTERS HAVE TO DEAL with governments, personalities, circumstances and policies in constant flux, and their lasting monuments tend to be few. Evatt's successor, Percy Spender, was a lucky exception, leaving behind him after only two years in the job both the Colombo Plan and the ANZUS treaty. In Evatt's own eight years in office, there are really only two lasting monuments that really stand out, but what significant landmarks they were! The first was to swing Australia behind the Indonesian Republic and contribute significantly to its effective independence from the Netherlands. And the other was his contribution to the founding of the United Nations. Evatt's contribution to the San Francisco Conference of 1945 was the stuff of which legends are made—especially in his fight for the rights of the smaller powers against the greater in the roles of the General Assembly and the Security Council, and in his faith in the UN as an agent for social and economic reform and as a protector for human rights.

The Big Three—the US, the Soviet Union and the UK—were interested in a successor to the League of Nations as an international peace-keeper only if it met their needs, was their creature and threatened them with no embarrassment. It was the Big Three—supplemented by this time by China—who drafted a charter for a United Nations. It was the Big Five—by this time with France included—who invited the other forty-five states then comprising international political society to discuss their draft at San Francisco. If a small power like Australia wanted to see changes made to that draft charter, it would clearly have to force those changes on very reluctant, not to say intransigent, great powers. And the great powers so organised the conference as to stack the odds against small power impertinence. The conference lasted for three months—and it comprised some four commissions, twelve technical committees of the whole, a steering committee of the whole, an executive committee and a host of sub-committees!

It was in that maelstrom that Evatt made his mark. Assisted by a handful of very able officials, Evatt daily raced from committee to committee in a performance of energy, brilliance and judgment rarely seen. The United States sent a delegation of 174, for example. Evatt had a delegation of 45, but he used only a handful; it was largely a one-man band. By the end of the conference, he was accepted by all there as the leading voice of the medium and small powers, the one with whom the great powers had to treat.

Given that background and his own intellectual brilliance, it is not too surprising that the young Evatt did not lack confidence. This could show itself in unimportant ways: outraging the Rugby Union gentlemen by bringing Rugby League into the university, for example.

One of his campaigns concerned the role in the organisation of the great powers, who envisaged a Security Council which would handle threats to the peace, and on which each of them would enjoy a veto right on all matters except purely procedural questions (though that left a veto on what would be re-

garded as a procedural question) and also peaceful settlement procedures where they were parties to disputes. Evatt accepted that the wartime great power concert had to underpin a post-war system, but he wanted the veto limited to decisions on the imposition of sanctions against aggressors. Although Evatt is perhaps best remembered for his fight on the veto question, he was in fact locked out of much of the politicking on that question, and the fight tended to be carried by liberal elements in the large United States delegation unhappy with the prospect that even investigation or discussion of an issue could be vetoed. In any event, he and those who thought like him lost the fight: the Soviet Union, which feared Western use of the United Nations against it, was immovable, and the great powers retained virtually a blanket veto right.

Evatt's greatest success was in forcing very reluctant great powers to accept a wide role for the entire United Nations membership in the General Assembly. The great powers would have made of the Assembly a talking shop, and one limited to vague generalities at that. In a stubborn, wearing campaign which lasted for months, Evatt succeeded in winning for the Assembly the right to discuss and make recommendations on any matter covered by the Charter with the single exception of security questions actively before the Security Council. In this campaign, he was drawn into direct negotiations with the representatives of the great powers, and they accepted him as the *de facto* representative of the middle and small powers.

A VITAL PREREQUISITE for any international organisation is that member states accept some loss of domestic jurisdiction. While Evatt was a convinced internationalist, he was also a nationalist and, a child of his time, a stout defender of White Australia.

Projecting his experience of Australian industrial relations, where disputes could be manufactured on the expectation that subsequent conciliation or arbitration procedures were likely to provide some concessions for a professedly aggrieved party, he was concerned that a state could force Security Council discussion and recommendations on White Australia merely by threatening to go to war on the issue.

As he put it, there would be a premium on violence. For once, he was on-side with the Soviet Union, which was the first to seek to have a domestic jurisdiction guarantee inserted in the Charter, but Evatt can be given the credit, if such it be, for having its ambit widened to cover everything except actual enforcement action by the United Nations. He was not especially hypocritical on this matter, though accepting that any number of later international conventions could remove questions from domestic jurisdiction.

Evatt also led a successful and worthy campaign, this time mainly against the United States, to have a full employment pledge written into the Charter. At the time there was widespread fear of a world economic recession after the war. This did not happen. But the pledge also reflected Evatt's view and that of his government that economic and social issues must rank with more explicitly military issues as central to international harmony and, therefore, as United Nations business.

The last of his campaigns I would mention related to colonies. Although Evatt was determined that Australia should retain control of Papua and New Guinea, and although he believed that some colonial societies would need indefinite tutelage by Western imperial states, he was anxious to have all colonies brought within the scope of the United Nations and not just the few mandated territories taken from Germany and Turkey back in 1919. He was concerned mainly to guarantee humane and progressive administration of colonies and to remove them from the context of imperial conflict. But in pursuit of this, he was responsible for having written into the Charter a requirement that all colonial powers report to the United Nations on their administrations. Rather to his chagrin, this clause later was to serve as the platform for the whole revolutionary decolonisation process at the United Nations.

As I have said, the United Nations was established on the assumption that the great powers' War-time alliance would continue into the peace: that they would police world security by means of United Nations procedures, and in appropriate association with other United Nations members. In fact, the Cold War had already begun in 1945, and the result was that the United Nations would be largely paralysed in conflicts involving the great powers and their clients. As Evatt complained in 1947, 'the old order is dead, while the future order is powerless to be born'. This disheartened him. So did the frequent preference of United Nations members for political processes rather than the legal processes enshrined in the Charter and congenial to his temperament and training. Informal charter amendment by Assembly resolution scandalised him.

It was not that he was naïve. He could play politically hard himself when he thought Australian interests were at stake, whether in defending South Africa, forcing through the kind of trusteeship agreement he wanted for New Guinea, or in refusing to submit an agreement for Papua at all. Nor was he at all pacifist: he valued the United Nations security system precisely as providing for the forceful suppression of aggressors. But he still saw the United Nations as the best hope for world peace in the 1940s and 1950s if only states could be persuaded to use its processes. For this reason, he had Australia continue as a busy, constructive member of the United Nations. In 1948, he was delighted to succeed representatives of Belgium and Brazil as President of the General Assembly.

He had other reasons, though. One was that Australia, a barely emerging British dominion at the time, had made its presence felt at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference in which the League of Nations was established, but had later drifted back to the margins of international society. He saw the survival of the United Nations and Australian busyness in its councils as not the *only* way of keeping Australia involved in international affairs, but as one very important way—a view to be shared by his conservative successors.

The other reason was that Evatt, while aware of the need for regional security arrangements and of the unequal distribution of power among states, was never quite the complete devotee of power politics. In his view, states like Australia could exercise influence through the quality of their representatives, by the value of their ideas, and by the persistence of their diplomacy—and that is very much a view I share.

Evatt's conviction that Australia's national security interests would be served by developing an international system of security through the United Nations clearly has a resonance in contemporary Australian policy. I can't put the point more succinctly than it was made in our 1994 Defence White Paper:

> Our national interests are served by ensuring the existence of effective UN mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution. As a middle power, we have a particular interest in fostering an orderly international system in which agreed norms of conduct constrain the use of force, and in supporting international institutions which give us important opportunities to shape that system. We support UN and other multinational peace-making and peace-keeping endeavours because we consider that institutions which are effective, and are seen to be so, in crises today are more likely to be effective in helping to protect Australia's interests should they be challenged in the future.

It is interesting to observe that Australia's recent proposals to strengthen the UN's role as an instrument of co-operative security seem to have struck a particular chord with countries such as Argentina, Brazil, the Nordics, Poland, Japan and Jordan, who share our interest in building an international system which does not rest solely on neo-realist theories of 'great power balance'. Evatt, writing in 1948, pointed to the explanation for this:

> The truth is that Great Powers are inevitably preoccupied with questions of prestige and spheres of influence, whereas lesser powers whose interests in lasting peace are just as great, if not greater, are more detached in their outlook on many issues and are in a better position to make an unbiased judgment on the justice of any proposed settlement.

For Evatt, the UN was to be an agent of *collective security*, based on the concept that its member states would agree to renounce the use of force amongst themselves and collectively come to the aid of any member attacked by an outside state, or by a renegade member. I have argued, by contrast, that the central sustaining idea for contemporary efforts, in the UN and outside it, to maintain international peace and security should be the larger one of *co-operative security*. This concept embraces not just collective security, but two other ideas as well—common security and comprehensive security—which have been current in thinking about international security cooperation for some time. *Common security* was first articulated as a concept in the 1980s: essentially it is the notion of states finding security *with* others, rather than against them. *Comprehensive security* is simply the notion that security is multidimensional in character, encompassing a range of political, economic, social and other non-military considerations as well as military capability.

Party politicking was almost entirely beyond him, and it may be that his ineptitude here made the great Labor split of the 1950s worse than it need have been.

Co-operative security is a useful term not only because it brings these three approaches together, but does so in a way which emphasises prevention and at the same time encompasses the whole range of responses to security concerns, both before and after the threshold of armed conflict has been crossed. At one extreme this would involve long-term programs to improve economic and social conditions which are likely to give rise to future tensions; at the other it would include enforcement of peace by full scale military means.

Evatt in fact did foreshadow in his own thinking some of these 'new' concepts in arguing, as he did, at San Francisco for a Charter that paid more than lip service to economic and social issues, not just for their own sake but because these represented the root causes of conflict.

A priority theme of our activity at the UN in recent times has been to urge that the Secretary-General and member states give greater weight to preventive approaches, by putting more priority on preventive diplomacy and addressing the underlying causes of tensions and disputes through peace building—by which we mean both international laws, régimes and arrangements on the one hand, and on the other hand in-country strategies aimed at economic and social development and institution strengthening. All this would have met Evatt's approval, not least because of his lawyer's faith in international arbitration and other legal procedures for the peaceful settlement of international disputes.

At San Francisco, Evatt was acutely conscious of the balance to be struck between establishing an *effective* world body, necessitating the backing and participation of the great powers, and at the same time keeping within bounds the extent of the influence which those powers would wield through the organisation. This remains a pressing issue in 1995. A feature of the period of Security Council activism since the end of the Cold War has been the concern of many countries about domination of UN decision-making by the five permanent members of the Council, and more specifically by the three Western members, the so-called P3. One result of these concerns is that, for the first time since 1945, there is now a real possibility that new Permanent Members will be added to the Council. Australia has strongly supported such a change. Our reasoning is drawn from the same pragmatic national self-interest that inspired Evatt; we do not aspire to permanent membership ourselves but we have a strong stake in an effective Security Council. To retain legitimacy and a guarantee of international support in responding to the range of new and difficult situations which now confront the international community, the Council must represent the broad range of interests and perspectives of UN member states, and it must reflect the realities of power at the turn of this century, not those prevailing fifty years ago.

One of the crucial elements in any expansion of the Security Council's permanent membership is the veto power. The fact is that those who have it cannot be forced to give it up—indicating how far-sighted Evatt was in trying to remove the great powers' ability to veto Charter amendment. But if the veto were extended to all serious aspirants for permanent membership, we would have an unworkable Council, with up to ten countries able to block UN decision-making. One alternative approach would be to revive Evatt's own proposal that the veto be excluded in its application from all aspects of peaceful settlement procedures, or even confined solely to Council action taken under Chapter VII (that is, the enforcement provisions of the Charter) but no doubt that is an even more quixotic aspiration.

I expect it will take considerable further negotiation before the question of Security Council structure is resolved. The point here is, as Evatt would have appreciated, that some compromise will have to be struck if there are to be new permanent members at a time when the overall UN membership will not support an unqualified extension of the veto power.

But the point is also that both the overall membership (the majority of whom, like Australia, want an effective, representative Council), and the existing permanent members (who will otherwise face the risk of erosion of the authority of a key body in which their influence is wielded), have reasons to find such a compromise.

It was not only the global but regional security environment that occupied Evatt's attention at San Francisco. He had no illusions that the UN could offer any absolute guarantee of protection against armed threat to Australia, and recognised that if collective security was found wanting, Australia would need to 'fall back on regional arrangements and ultimately upon those of its own defence forces and those of its allies'. His starting point was to seek to keep the U.K. and the United States engaged in maintaining security and order in the South West Pacific.

Evatt's insistence on including specific language on co-operation on economic and social issues in the Charter was motivated by the Labor Government's goal of maintaining full employment after WWII. Under the terms of the UN Charter as it eventually emerged, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) shares with the General Assembly responsibility for the UN's promotion of international economic and social co-operation. Largely due to his persistence, UN member states pledged to take 'joint and separate action in co-operation with the [UN] organisation' for the achievement of goals specified in Article 55 of the Charter, including 'higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development'. Indeed this undertaking, in Article 56, became known at San Francisco as 'the Australian pledge'.

Some Americans, including Nelson Rockefeller, then a State Department adviser, suggested at the time that Evatt wanted language in the Charter which would allow the Government in Canberra to use the external affairs power to legislate on matters outside the federal powers listed in the Australian Constitution—an interesting forerunner to some of the claims we hear to this day from sceptics and cynics on the Opposition benches! But it is far more likely that Evatt was sticking to a brief which reflected the common policy assumption in Australia at the time, which was that full employment in Australia would largely depend on the major economies' willingness to pursue that objective.

One of the few positive effects of the paralysis of the UN Security Council during the Cold War was that the social and economic goals set out in Article 55 became for the most part central concerns of the UN. Ironically, one of the exceptions was full employment, as multilateral co-operation on employment policies and related financial and trade policy were discussed in the International Labour Organisation, the international financial institutions and the OECD rather than the UN itself. In contrast, the UN's role in such Article 55 areas as technical development assistance, poverty alleviation, children's welfare, refugee problems, international health and human rights has been very substantial—and the member states' pledge in Article 56 has taken a very concrete form through support for multilateral aid funds and programs and through bilateral assistance.

The 'pledge' in Article 56 has come to be one of the features of the UN that distinguishes it from the League of Nations. It has been the basis for initiating a range of programs and a variety of roles that have helped the UN endure its setbacks and retain the faith of member states when the League failed to do so. A major debate is currently taking place—in which Australia is a central participant—about the UN's role in economic and social development, and about making ECOSOC a more effective body for developing and implementing programs for international co-operation in a more co-ordinated and effective way.

A further element of continuity in our foreign policy from Evatt's period as Foreign Minister is our commitment to the promotion of human rights. As President of the UN General Assembly in 1948, Evatt presided over the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This was much more than a symbolic act for him: throughout his career there was evidence of his basic attachment to civil and political and economic, social and cultural rights. In the 1920s in the NSW Parliament, he introduced abolitionist legislation and argued for minimum labour conditions. At San Francisco, he backed Jessie Street's efforts to obtain gender equality within the UN as part of the Charter. As a lawyer he defended freedom of speech in numerous cases, with the struggle over the Communist Party dissolution act no more than the icing on the cake in this respect.

The Universal Declaration remains the foundation for the standards of human rights and fundamental freedoms accepted by the UN Member States—the basis for the six major human rights instruments and all the machinery and expert bodies associated with them. Two Australians, Professor Philip Alston and Justice Elizabeth Evatt—Dr Evatt's niece—serve with distinction on two of these bodies, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Human Rights Committee respectively.

Dr Evatt was not content, however, with establishing and articulating standards in the UN; he also sought effective ways of implementing them. In 1947 Australia proposed that an International Human Rights Court be established. This was an idea well ahead of its time, and even in 1988 when we revived the idea on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration, the notion of a single supervisory body was too bold for many. Several developments since, including the establishment of tribunals to consider extreme and outrageous human rights violations in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, and the growing realisation that six parallel treaty bodies is a cumbersome arrangement, suggest that the option of a single body to monitor observance of basic standards may be an idea whose time has come.

As we all know, Evatt's career after his days as foreign minister, which ended with electoral defeat in 1949, was not a very happy one for him or his Party. Opposition was not his forte. Parliament was not his preferred forum. Domestic politics did not come easily to him, although no one should ever forget his inspired leadership of the constitutional referendum campaign in 1951. Party politicking was almost entirely beyond him, and it may be that his ineptitude here made the great Labor split of the 1950s worse than it need have been.

Probably we will never know to what extent declining health contributed to his difficulties in those years. By the time he retired from politics and became Chief Justice of New South Wales in 1960 his condition certainly was sad indeed.

Evatt's memory has been tarnished in this country because of events in the 1950s and the embarrassments of his final years in public life. But for all the controversy and criticism he generated, Evatt was one of the defining figures in our nation's history. It is an ambiguous legacy, true, for those of us in the Labor movement. His setbacks as Labor leader in the 1950s and his contribution to the ALP split contributed mightily to keeping the Party out of power for twenty-three years. But on the more positive side, Evatt has left us with an invaluable legacy in our law, our institutions and elements of our policy, because of his vision for Australia as a social democracy, because of his fight against a proposal for constitutional change which would have worked tragically against this country's fundamental freedoms, and because of his far-sighted pursuit of our interests in collective security and international co-operation.

It is above all the Evatt of San Francisco who deserves to be remembered, and remembered with bipartisan pride. As Paul Hasluck, who worked with him at San Francisco (and had very mixed feelings indeed about his personal qualities), wrote: 'at the conclusion of the San Francisco Conference ... Evatt ... was recognised as a figure of moment on the world scene'. At the conclusion of the Conference, the American Secretary of State, Edward Stettinius, declared that 'no one had contributed more to the Conference than Mr Evatt'. The Peruvian delegation went so far as to move a resolution that the small powers 'pay homage to their great champion, Mr Evatt'. And the *New York Times* said of him, in perhaps the finest tribute of all, that there were two kinds of power, that exercised through crude national muscle and coercive methods, and that purveyed by the force of ideas, argument and intellectual effort, and that Herbert Vere Evatt epitomised the latter. ■

Gareth Evans is Minister for Foreign Affairs and Leader of the Government in the Senate. The 1995 Mannix Memorial Lecture was delivered by Senator Evans at Melbourne University in August, 1995.

The Tenor Is Too Close

Don't visit a factory or an abattoirs
if you wish to enjoy pasta or pork chops.

Our tenor's stumpy, stout and spitting as he sings.
No wonder Doriano, who ran for Italy

at the Olympics, whispers to us softly,
'Il povero, che brutto'. Mozart was small

but rather vain of his good looks. The beautiful,
we tend to think, does well to stay aloof

and just exist. The actions of the world
deliver up like Faberge

that ruinous perfection Czars desire,
loving most its pointlessness.

So if you aren't a gracious object
(however subject to time's overlay)

you go down coughing mines or boil your eyes
in lapidary drilling, milled with slaves.

While memory continues there'll be art
but think of Heaven where we had

blank space of everything potential
and revelled in iconic nothingness

which childhood was the first to smirch.
One day we'll be adult and then we'll know

that truth is comparable to Shakespeare,
miraculous for being possible.

But distancing stays difficult, so we duck—
the tenor now is right in front of us

And Mozart's notes survive a hail of spittle.
You need, like Doriano, to know you're loved.

Peter Porter

Il lacerato spirito

Refreshment of life
is the principle which damns us all

Nature or Nurture? The lamb trots after its mother
up the ramp and into the waiting ship

Death cannot bear its own company,
it creates life to go on killing it

The peace of nescience is the dream
of plants and stars and parallel lines

Spirit, being God's intake of breath,
constantly astonishes its maker

Such insubstantiality restricts
Paradise to the interface of time

Emerging unsorted in the world
we have to learn to tolerate our shapes

And that is why the spirit's torn
from the body to be eloquence

Then let my cry go out and let my fear
inseminate the measured elements

Peter Porter

San Pietro A Gropina

What spaceship, UFO, gantry movie hulk
has beached along the silvery Val d'Arno
ready to show what's left when gods below
return to heaven? Their starry sinews sulk
in passionate resentment of our slow
but forcible commandings—tripwires go
to the pagan in us but we buy in bulk
any baptised hope. Louche or chaste,
bold carvings of the seminal devout
will hold us here a while, then tourist haste,
which by the stoop observes the suckling church
as sow and farrow, seeking God's check-out
for special offers, finds its eye enticed
by vines replenishing the blood of Christ.

Peter Porter

Fafner's Needlework

I wanted to control the universe
but now I'm buried in a mass of notes
and night by night my dreams are getting worse.

That selfish genius took me from a myth
and kitted me out with steam-age harmonies,
anachronisms I can't be bothered with.

So I'm embroidering the history of mankind:
power corrupts etc., and which came first
the healthy body or the healthy mind?

You might say I'm that peerless Trinity,
Das Ich, Das Es, Das Uber-Ich, and who'd
be master must decapitate all three.

And he'll be stupid, natural and cruel,
hear forests murmur and translate their birds,
then challenge me to fight a bloody duel,

Horns v. Tubas. My enchanted gore
will introduce the simpleton to fear
and start the whole shebang up as before.

Let's call a halt—back to my needlework,
bring up the lights, tell the audience to go home
before the music drives them all berserk.

Bayreuth itself is just Beirut freeze-dried
and all that Early Warning Systems do
is sprinkle holy art on genocide.

Peter Porter

Bones and Blancmange

Even the title is old-fashioned—
where now do they serve that pink or brown
soft pudding baked from arrowroot,
so over-sweet you welcomed
unsieved lumps and cocoa grains?

We all start somewhere humble—
blancmange is the password
back to childhood innocence
and to the certainty which old age loves
that youth is overtaken by inheritance.

'Bones and blancmange', a friend inscribed
on an album of bright red seventy-eights
of Fauré's Requiem *I'd lent him—*
how stark the bones seem now,
the In Paradisum *spun from sugar.*

The past is cruel and fitful,
teasing an ageing mind.

'Run! Run!' a girl's voice on the street
giggling with the hopefulness of starts—
I couldn't tell her I'm just starting too.
No similarity, she'd say,
you're into ending, Grandad!

But life will go on breaking down into
what it always has—bones and blancmange.
The bones remain for centuries
when love and art and occupation
rot away: blancmange is what
I write in tepid ink or seek to find
in concert halls and libraries.
The sweetness passes
with the need to be consoled.

Peter Porter

Mrs Laszlo's torte

As a child I was a monocultural Catholic—as well as a thorough-going Australian. A pupil only ever at a Catholic school, discouraged from roaming and making friends in the neighbourhood, I had the barest experience of a system of belief or a tribal identity other than my own. 'Barest' is, in fact, too strong. What could I claim? I retrieved balls from the boarding house next door, and the owner, Reg Thompson, had no religion that I could see. He was a gentle, sun-spotted single man who chatted to my mother through the fence. I remember their relaxed, animated faces in their brief moments of idling, and their easy hanging on the boundary wire. But I had little to say to Reg Thompson and I hardly ever entered his boarding house. He had characters and long-term residents there—John Long with a beard and a constant girlfriend and a motorbike, and elderly Anne who also had a beard as well as terrible arthritis and a red setter. But it was my brothers, who grew up in the 1960s, who got to know these people. Reg Thompson was simply a non-Catholic: when his niece was married at All Saints, Woollahra, I was stood outside the porch to watch her emerge from her bridal car.

At school, in the regular spin of the competitive sporting year, I brushed past numerous non-Catholic boys. Only once, however, did I witness what I presumed was the clash of beliefs. I was watching a cricket match at Riverview. It was against Kings. A group of the visitors, already dismissed or waiting their turn to bat, were passing remarks about what were then called boxes, but are now referred to as protectors. One imaginative boy suggested it was useful to have a box in place if your girlfriend turned up to watch you. The boys amused themselves with other angles on this possibility. Then a Jesuit scholastic strode over and withered them. 'This sort of talk might be acceptable at Kings,' he said, 'but it certainly has no place here. Keep it at least till you get home.'

Twice I was jolted less predictably by an alien world. My sister and I were staying with a great-aunt in Crookwell, and as part of her policy of divide and pacify, my aunt had me spend a day out on the property of some friends of hers, Anglicans. My Auntie Peg's own father was Irish, but she affected a disdainful and sceptical air towards things Irish and notably the Church and its pastors. Her husband was the Catholic doctor in the town, and either in spite of or because of that she had such friends as the Carters, long-time graziers on 'Lake Edward'.

My day's outing was extraordinary. I witnessed two events and they both dazed me. I saw a lamb being born—violently, with the help of human hands.

'Where did it come out of?' asked my sister later that night. 'The tail?'

'Yes,' I said.

'I thought so.'

The second event was no less destabilising. Dinner was eaten in the middle of the day, in the dining room of the old homestead, and Walter Carter, grazier and father and husband, sat at the head of the table. When the dishes had been brought in and the roast set before him, he bowed his head and said Grace and everyone else, his wife and his three sons and the men working on the place, bowed their heads and listened. I was shaken. My own family didn't say Grace. Nor did anyone else—Catholics—that I ever had a meal with. We had our prayers, and maybe there were special occasions like a First Communion breakfast, but not just at an ordinary meal. Grace was taken as said, as it were. Now here were people I liked, warm, kind people, practising their own religion, having a service—and I had never seen a service before. I was confused and awed. I didn't tell my sister about Grace.

It was my mother who was responsible, inadvertently, for these sudden arrivals at lookouts into other worlds. One school holidays she booked me in to tennis lessons at some courts in Bellevue Hill. The teacher was a leathery, late-middle-aged pro with that requisite ability to flip half-volleys over the net at you all day without error and without pause. He was the real thing—could have been an uncle of Hoad or Rosewall. I knew none of my fellow pupils, and in between my own turns on centre court I said little to them, nor even took much notice of them. Many of them however, knew one another and talked freely, and there were girls as well as boys, and as the morning wore on I moved closer to the circle. I remember only one thing, one word, of what I heard. I was looking for the topic, for a way into their grouping, and a very ordinary boy said, without either subservience or contempt, that Rabbi someone or other had said something or

other. Another boy, or maybe a girl, responded to him and quoted the Rabbi again—or perhaps it was another Rabbi—and the conversation went on while people came and went to face their quota of the white balls springing endlessly over the net. I only heard the one word, but I paused on the edge of the group, tense, not wanting to intrude, knowing in fact that I could not get in there in any case. A shiver of awkward fearfulness flickered inside me: I did not want to be exposed. I did not belong here.

There was one boy at school, at Riverview, called Zions, and somewhere, sometime, I had heard he was Jewish. But I saw no manifestation of this; he was one of us, a Riverview boy, as his father had been before him. He was less distinctive than Albert Chan or Thaddeus Zlotkowski, and even they, because they shared the conversation and the religion of the rest of us, were only intermittently marked off by their features or their name.

So my experience of those outside my tribe was minuscule. Yet there were beliefs or prejudices I could inherit or acquire about such people. Enough of the old saws and rhymes had their place in the ragbag of my childhood. I caught niggers by the toe and didn't put coins in my mouth because an old Chinaman had held them God knows where, and I heard from other boys that a mean person was a jew. I learned slabs of *The Merchant of Venice*. I watched Fagin entering hell. I read *Chums* and I got its sense of the flotsam and jetsam of the human race. Yet these stained characters never stepped out of the confines of folklore and idiom and actually visited me. I did not meet Jews or blacks any more than I met Tuaregs or Huns, and the stereotype was the only representative in my imagination.

So I thought, in hindsight, it was fair to acknowledge that during my childhood there was just a whiff of anti-Semitism in the air. I said this to my mother.

'Not from your own family,' she retorted sharply.

'Well rhymes and jokes,' I said.

'Not from any of us,' she said.

What were the rhymes I was thinking of? I could remember only one. 'The Lord said to Moses, "You all shall have long noses".' Where did I hear that? At school, a boy called Thorpe, years older than I, had a beaky nose, and was nicknamed Moe or Moey. He was a good winger and when he was on the field smaller boys used to chant this ditty as a kind of personal war cry for him.

I mentioned my mother's mother, and some big retailer that she had business dealings with. 'What about Marm and all the references to Sammy Cohen?'

'You never heard Sammy,' said my mother. 'It was always Sam. Old Sam Cohen.'

'Well he was always referred to as a tough businessman, was that it?'

'He was more of a father to her. She went down to Newcastle from Murrurundi to buy for the store, and he was always very good to her, looked after her.'

'She used to tell how Major-General Cullen had changed his name,' I tried. 'From Cohen.'

'Well?' said my mother.

I wasn't sure what.

My mother firmed her grip on the armrests.

I came from another angle. 'Maybe we knew and talked about the pushy ones?'

'Mrs Laszlo,' she said.

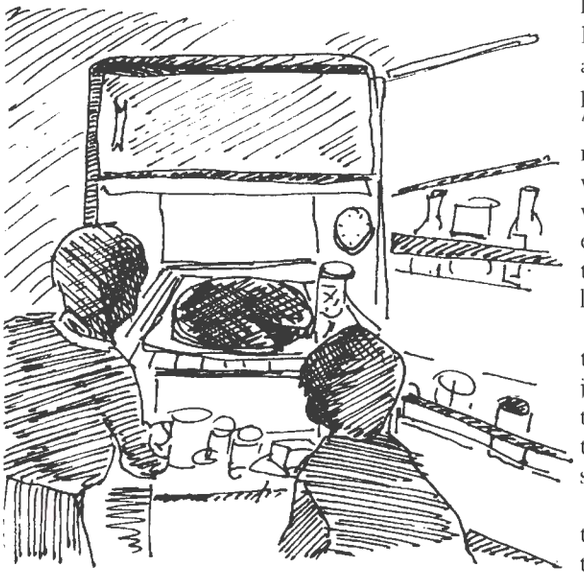
'All right,' I conceded.

MY FATHER HAD A GRATEFUL PATIENT, Mrs Laszlo. Once a year, at Christmas, she made a Hungarian torte for him and his family. When it was ready she rang and asked if somebody could call to pick it up. She was brief and to the point. She was, we were told, very nervy. I don't know that I ever set eyes on Mrs Laszlo, but I knew her. My father or my mother and sometimes my brothers went to Mrs Laszlo's home at Bondi, and they stood at the door and she handed over the torte. I could see her standing there, her back to her home, in her light summer clothing, and stretching her arms to hold out the torte.

Our father had told us about Mrs Laszlo's arms. The blue tattooed number on the soft flesh below her elbow. My father spoke of this with awe, just as if it were a stigmata, wounds all right, but signs of election and holiness. I saw the discoloured numerals rolled up as she held out the torte for the Windsors. I think we reverenced that offering. Silver-foiled, tight and heavy, it stayed in our fridge for weeks, perhaps a month. It was alien riches beside the opened tin of condensed milk and the leftover lemon meringue pie. We made it last, the eight of us, slicing and prising away each one's fair portion of its nutty, velvety strangeness.

I understood Mrs Laszlo from *The Scourge of the Swastika*. My father showed a special respect for Lord Russell of Liverpool's account of the crimes tried at Nuremberg. It was in with the other war books, *Enemy Coast Ahead* and *Boldness Be My Friend* and *Carve Her Name With Pride*, and we all read them. But it was *The Scourge of the Swastika* I went back to most often, I suppose for the photographs. Mug shots of the major criminals, and bodies being bulldozed, and, most memorably, naked women running past guards, captioned 'photograph taken from a captured German soldier.' These were Jews.

Otherwise it was the Scriptures. I presumed that was the definitive book on the Jews. The gospels were what I knew best, and I knew enough of the scholarship of the time to understand that the Gospel according to Matthew recorded the promises to the Jews. It recorded the promises, and their fulfilment—in Christ. Matthew was the set text for one full year at school, and I heard his account of the passion of Christ every Palm Sunday each year of my life. Numerous phrases were known to me, but there was one that made me shudder, even as a boy. The Gospel that plotted, with such relentless precision, God's squaring off each promise to the Jews, had one terrible verse: 'The whole people answered Pilate and said, "His blood be upon us and upon our children".' The force of this temptation of fate rocked me. It was the whole people, not just the chief priests or some representative who had assumed the fearful responsibility. It was not just on their own behalf they were wagering such stakes. Even worse it was not just for their descendants but for their children. Their children. They were shouting this challenge in a work that detailed all the other contracts between God and themselves and that ticked off every one as having been observed to the letter.



Mrs Laszlo was their child. From the vantage point of the 1950s, there was no doubt this last contract had also been carried out. Whether the text might ever have been the justification or the goad I had no idea. It never crossed my mind to ask. All I saw was that God had been dared and God had taken up the dare. This text was the word of God, the inspired account of the only story that really mattered. It recorded with absolute simplicity the price that the Jewish people had accepted for the execution of Christ.

I would have regarded as mad any idea that Mrs Laszlo had deserved what happened to her. In any case no one ever suggested it to me. I lived untroubled by any contradiction in a guiltless person's wearing the mark of Cain. I was born with original sin on my own soul. I did not know whether that was a Jewish belief too, but the Jews' own history seemed to me an illustration of the same doctrine. These were a people before any of them were individuals. The Old Testament made that clear. Jerusalem was destroyed and the entire people went to Babylon, into captivity, because there was a contract between God and a people, and the people had broken it. Ezekiel had said it was a proverb in the land of Israel that 'the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'.

Scholarship has moved on. Ezekiel says further that the Lord has no truck with the old proverb; rather, the man who has sinned is the only one who will die. David slays the killer of Saul for shedding the blood of the Lord's anointed, and Matthew seizes on that; death is the just fate for these latter-day slayers of the Lord's anointed. Had Matthew's 'whole people' really renounced that right to be heard one by one? Had Matthew libelled them for his own sectarian purposes? I don't know. If, as a schoolboy, I got some echo of what the scholars of the day were saying, the truth is that now, as a middle-aged adult, I am further away from what is being said. I would not be atypical, and such ignorance is not easily rectifiable. To access the story now is one step, to believe it another step again. All scholarship, all history is threatened by our greater readiness to prove what is wished for. As the least, surely, of its oppressions, the Holocaust has been a terrible burden to the Christian conscience. No scholar can come up with an interpretation of the gospel that sees anti-Semitism as anything but an aberration. Better condemn the very men who wrote the gospels. These are the Christian straits of faith, hope, charity, and of justice and integrity.

My Jewish people, when I began to meet them, were not a theological dilemma. Instead they shared the turbulence and illogicality of my own blood. There was one unaccountable quirk about Mrs Laszlo. Every year she gave us her torte on the same plastic tray. It was a rectangular kerbed object, violently pink. There were stacks of identical ones in Woolworths at Double Bay. But Mrs Laszlo was forever anxious about this tray. She fretted till it was returned to her. Then she sent it out again the following year under her individual, and priceless, torte. As a boy, even later, I could never understand all that. ■

Gerard Windsor's most recent book is *Family Lore*.

The Mortality Sub-Committee

The Mortality Sub-Committee has been in session
longer than anyone can remember.
For reasons opaque even to the Chair,
sundry faces grow dim before
disappearing, but so far there's always been a quorum.

Though nothing has ever been said on the matter, tacitly
it's understood that a dress-code prevails:
the ultra-bosky look—all wreaths and fig-leaves—
reported as having prevailed once
is no longer comme il faut. Power-dressing

in field-grey and cyanide-blue is the vogue,
accessories running to onyx and sable.
Many of the members affect a dapper air,
committees being, as is well known,
the zone of control in an uncertain world.

Recurrently, it's incumbent on this group
to address submissions from such other
quarters as the Commission for the Testing
of Morale, or the Ad-Hoc Working Party
on Unwarranted Yearning. So far, to judge by responses,

no one has been disappointed with those efforts.
Hard on the heels of the last appraisal
has been a suggestion that imminent cooptations
should include the Dalai Lama, a veteran
user of Semtex, and Madonna's younger sister.

It is claimed that someone may put up a question about
the Sub-Committee's deliberations,
hinting, it seems, at redundancy. Such folly
has been envisaged by the members, who,
amply persuaded of their pertinence,

have resolved to expand their endeavours to encompass
consultancies from China to
Peru. The issue of who should receive its reports
is under review. There is still hope
of something set out before the darkness sets in.

Peter Steele

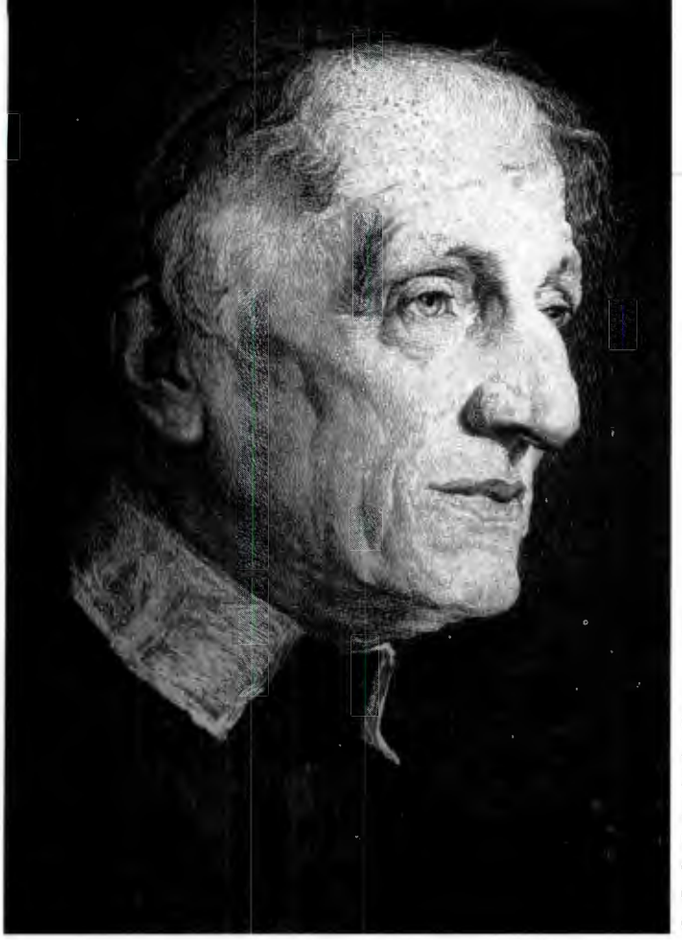
Mendacity's Brother

One of his strangest features is that he never
seems to feel the need for sleep.
Run into at a bar in the far reaches
of a long day, he sparkles as if
fresh from his own self-barbering hand. In August,
when the rest of us are slummocking
in shorts and fanning reality away,
he's a commercial for crispness, alert
as a road-runner or an Irish politician.

It goes, I guess, with his obvious commitment
to being a professional:
he has a good surgeon's instinct for
economy of movement, and loves
to make the smallest lie go a long way.
It was fear that started him out, but now
he has the essential moves by heart, and he works
with all the aplomb of a Grand Master
who's come by invitation to amateur night.

For all the skill, the ability to finesse
what's so into what might have been,
the rich rhythmic utterance, he knows
that he can't do it alone. Deception's
a game for any number greater than one,
and he's braced each time he remembers how
the hearts of the young and old go out to him
in the humid summer of desire
or on despair's unbounded frozen lake.

Peter Steele



Newman in manuscript

Edmund Campion looks at the ironies of private life uncovered in the letters of the great public churchman

THE DISCOVERY OF SOME LETTERS OF John Henry Newman in Melbourne has given a local focus to the sesquicentenary of his conversion to the Catholic church in October 1845.

Researching Newman's influence in Australia, Michael McGirr SJ, editor of *Australian Catholics* magazine, found a cache of previously unsuspected Newman material in a Melbourne flat. Handed down through the family of the Cardinal's sister, the manuscripts were unknown to Newman scholars until McGirr's journalistic legwork brought them to light.

The gem of the find is a short note to his one-time disciple and brother-in-law, the Reverend Thomas Mozley. Married to Newman's sister Harriett, Mozley was vicar of Cholderton on the Salisbury Plain. With only 200 souls, the parish allowed him time for journalism. He edited the Newmanist magazine *British Critic*, wrote leaders for *The Times* and was *Times* correspondent at the first Vatican Council. In 1843 the Mozleys took a long holiday in France, their first experience of the Continent. French Catholicism bowled Thomas Mozley over. Without warning, he informed his wife that he was returning to England in order to become a convert. At this news, John Henry Newman rushed down to Cholderton from Oxford and talked his brother-in-law around. Ironically, two years later he himself would make the move he had counselled Mozley against.

The Melbourne manuscripts have a note, written in an arthritic hand, which refers to this irony:

> Dear T[om] M[ozley]
>
> I ought to have reminded myself that before I became a Catholic I hindered you from becoming one. This leads me to say that I think my second judgement in all respects a better than the first
>
> Yours aff[ectionately]y
>
> JHN

On the reverse another hand has written: 'the last', i.e. the final letter from Newman to his one-time disciple. Judging from its watermark, the letter was written in 1884. Its contents were already known from a copy kept by Newman. The publication of Mozley's reminiscences of his Oxford days had led to a rift between them, because Newman judged that Mozley's memories of his family were full of errors. Nevertheless, he continued to refer to Mozley as an old friend.

Two unpublished letters from 1852 point to a sharper rift. They are Newman's replies to Mozley's announcement of the sudden death of Harriett. Brother and sister had not seen each other for nine years. Upset at her husband's leanings towards Rome, Harriett blamed John for unduly influencing him—although in fact he had dissuaded the vicar of Cholderton from converting. When Newman himself took the path to Rome in 1845, her decision to have nothing more to do with her brother was total. They never spoke or corresponded again.

Harriett's dismay at her husband's proposal to convert flames out in letters to her sister Jemima, published in 1962. The Melbourne cache includes her diaries from 1815 to 1851, but they reveal little of her inner thoughts. One turns in vain to the volumes for 1843, the year of Mozley's near miss, or 1845, John's conversion year. Instead of inner, personal life, over the years her spidery handwriting in thin ink records in these diaries the daily rounds of a vicar's wife. There are pencilled tallies of how few hours of sleep she achieved each night and what medicine she was taking. Ill health was a feature of this quiet life.

Nevertheless, Harriett's death shocked her brother. It came at the end of the week of one of his early triumphs as a Catholic, the 'Second Spring' sermon. Preached to the first synod of the restored hierarchy of England and Wales, the sermon is a marvel of English prose and ecclesial optimism, written in a single day. Then came the news of Harriett's death. Although he was invited, as things stood he decided not to attend her funeral. But letters to intimate friends register his shock, as well as his regret at the distance time had

put between them. In Melbourne the fair copy of a poem he dedicated to Harriett in 1830 attests to the bond between them which had once been close.

The poem and Harriett's diaries came to Melbourne with her only child, Grace, who married in 1864 and emigrated with her husband, William Langford. Grace Langford wrote two unremarkable novels and was known as a pianist. She kept in touch with the family back in England. Visiting England again 1890, she wrote to her famous uncle, now Cardinal Newman, asking to see him. His reply, which is in Melbourne, was the last letter he ever sent. Written for him at his own dictation, it is signed shakily with his initials. With the letter is a keepsake volume of the Cardinal's religious poems, again with his initials and hers and the date in his shaky handwriting.

When she visited him in August 1890, Newman had not seen his niece for 47 years. They sat upstairs in the Birmingham Oratory and he held her hand, which made her sorry she hadn't taken off her glove. He asked about her father's writings and spoke of her son's growing reputation and other things she couldn't quite follow. She told the Cardinal that years ago in Rome she had met one of his old friends, Maria Rosina Giberne. Miss Giberne fell ill and Grace Langford had nursed her through her illness. This kindness touched him deeply, he said.

GRACE WAS UNLIKELY TO HAVE KNOWN that many years earlier her Uncle Frank had fallen in love with the beautiful Maria Giberne. Twice he had asked her to marry him and both times had been rejected. An artist who has left candid sketches of the Newman family at home, Maria was infatuated, not with Frank, but with John. She followed him into the Catholic church, afterwards making her living as an artist in Rome; and in 1861 she joined a French convent, apparently at Pope Pius IX's suggestion. She was John Henry Newman's greatest fan and she had a tendency to be proprietorial about him. For his part, he was always gentle with her; yet he could become testy when she seemed to be wanting to collect souvenirs of him. He worried about her well-being in a French convent, writing solicitous letters about her health and the need for a good dentist (he had dental problems himself). On his way back from being made a cardinal in Rome the old man proposed detouring to visit Maria at Autun; but an attack of pneumonia and bad weather forced him to return directly in the care of a doctor. Her disappointment can only be imagined.

After the interview with his niece Grace, Newman went off to bed. That night he took a bad turn, which developed into pneumonia. A day later, he died. So the Australian Grace Langford was the last person to speak to him, apart from his fellow Oratorians. Indeed Michael McGirr has uncovered a jocular family tradition which suggests that Grace was the carrier of the virus that finished him off.

Grace Langford's collection of Newman family materials includes a handful of letters from a second uncle, Frank. Four years junior, he grew up in the shadow of John, who put him through Oxford. In academic honours Frank outstripped his brother, taking a double first. At his graduation the whole assembly stood and cheered, something unknown since Sir Robert Peel had taken his degree. But Frank had to abandon an Oxford career because he began to have religious doubts. He could not accept the Thirty Nine Articles. He was travelling in an opposite direction to John. Over the years their relationship would become distant but courteous.

LEAVING OXFORD, HE SET OUT as a Plymouth Brethren missionary to Persia. He was not a success there. So he returned to England and teaching, in time becoming Professor of Latin at University College, London, a post he would hold for 25 years.

Frank Newman was a man who took up causes. Religiously, he moved closer and closer to unbelief, ending his days on the outer reaches of Unitarianism. He was a dedicated vegetarian, who liked to hand out raisins and walnuts to school children in hopes of winning their interest; and he swapped recipes for nut cutlets and vegetable soups with their adepts. His dress sense was eccentric: in winter he would cut a headhole in a rug, which he wore as an overcoat. His unpublished letters to his niece Grace in Melbourne rehearse many of these enthusiasms. He attributes his good health, for instance, to lifelong teetotalism and two decades of vegetarianism. He was an opponent of British imperialism and suspected Queen Victoria of conniving with politicians to enlarge her own glory. He distrusted the military, who were happy to waste millions on war while people were in want. Frank's strongest sympathies were with victims of Victorian society. England's policy in Ireland, which pauperised the people, enraged him. He saw that wars, which brought fame to generals and politicians, brought only grief to ordinary soldiers and their families. He wanted Australia to strike an independent line in the world, not allowing English politicians to determine foreign policy. Above all, he urged Grace, Australians should keep clear of European conflicts. They should know that England, for all its promises, would offer no help if trouble came to these shores.

Michael McGirr's discovery of the Newman manuscripts is a happy find in this sesquicentenary year. The 1845 conversion has encouraged commentators to notice that John Henry Newman was a true ecumenist before the word was known. He saw the presence of the Holy Spirit on both sides of the Reformation divide. Yet the Melbourne papers are a reminder also that behind this public achievement there was considerable personal pain. ■

Edmund Campion's most recent book is *A Place In The City*, published by Penguin.

TREVOR HAY

Some desolate shade

I REMEMBER THE DAY a rumour went round Woodville High that Leon's dad was coming to sort out one of the teachers after a particularly brutal caning. A stupid idea, really—Leon needed no one to defend him, and would rather have had his hands shredded than create any impression that some gutless teacher had the power to make him acknowledge pain. Leon always stared unflinchingly, menacingly, into the eyes of his lictor, no matter how many cuts he got, while the rest of us held our breath and even the room next door fell silent to count the strokes.

Still, it was an exciting rumour, full of impotent hope for all of us, that one of these sadists would get their come-uppance. Leon's dad was reputed to be about six foot four and sixteen stone, with many great scars of hand-to-hand combat on his body, a man who had strangled Nazis with his bare hands and laughed. All of this was much more a tribute to Leon himself than his dad, who, when I met him years later, turned out to be a tiny, elfin man with thin golden hair, shining blue eyes and an eager, friendly face. His mum, on the other hand, was extremely formidable and might well have distinguished herself in feats of arms.

I was never of Leon's world, although I spent a lot of time visiting. We were both working class, but he was a migrant, a 'Balt' as we called all the New Australians in Adelaide in those days. School, whatever its atrocities, was always a place of opportunity for me, but for him there was a clash of wills at the end of every piece of homework, and every demand about school uniform, or call to 'school spirit'. He went to work for the railways after Intermediate Certificate and I stayed on with a teaching scholarship; but I always admired his nerve, and although I didn't know it, he respected the way I so often defended my point of view against the authority of teachers, the ridicule of classmates and the weight of all common sense.

After I started at teacher's college some years later, I began meeting him from time to time on a Friday night after he knocked off, in the front bar of the Strathmore Hotel, opposite the station in North Terrace. He introduced me to his friends, mainly Poles and Ukrainians. There was Babovich, a great solemn-voiced lad called Kaspersky and the lantern-jawed Pukhala—he would always introduce himself with enormous gravity as 'Pukhala of Croy-don Park' as if to distinguish himself from any pretenders.

After closing time we'd often end up in a shed at the back of Pukhala's vegetable garden, where Gene Pitney and Johnny O'Keeffe were played over and over, until three or four in the morning —'Today's teardrops are tomorrow's rainbows' and 'She wears my ring, to show the world that she-eee belongs to me'. Now and then, after a lot of talk and a lot of beer, Leon would begin to glare balefully at me, especially if he thought I was getting emotional about something I should keep to myself. On such occasions, as I held forth about Love and Truth and Reality, I would compose a whole dustjacket's worth of disinterested tributes to myself, in my head—'disturbingly passionate; lyrical yet stonily authentic; searingly honest; not since J.M. Synge...' but I'd be brought up short by a blast of 'Go on! Squeal like the stuck pig that you are!' and then I'd descend into a great and reproachful silence, shooting him an occasional accusing look.

You couldn't win though; he could wrestle you to the ground with his eyes.

Leon was quite short, but strong and well-proportioned, with a broad face—the face of Geronimo, I often thought. He had a touch of the Golden Horde about him and at times I fancied I could see how his handsome features had been collected like booty, on the gallop from Inner Asia to the Black Sea. His complexion was pitted ['open-pored' he used to say] and in one of his less guarded moments he told me he quite liked Richard Burton because he had a big, pock-marked face, like himself; not like those baby-faced American actors. I think he'd always fancied himself

as an actor, and he had a way of carrying himself, even when he was barely thirteen.

We were in *Macbeth* together once. He was Macduff, I was Malcolm and we had a sort of pact, a 'dare', solemnised over a bottle of Southwark on the oval, that we'd only learn our lines to a certain point and then extemporize. The theory was that an audience would accept anything if it was delivered with enough conviction. 'Let us seek out some desolate shade and there weep our sad bosoms empty', it all began, authentically enough. I think we might have pulled it off if only the prompter hadn't become desperate and tried to make himself heard above us.

On Saturday mornings, after staying over at his place, and being stuffed to vomit-point with some kind of fat-marbled sausage, giant pickles and boiled cabbage by his mother ('Eat! Eat my boy! Empty stomach no good for that, Australia best place in world for food!') and having vodka surreptitiously pressed upon me by his father, ('You reckon for Aussie boy orange juice better for breakfast time, eh? O.K. Sure, I know—*true* for that maybe, but orange juice and vodka just like this country—put together, little of this, little of that, everybody he-ppy!') I always felt terribly relieved to escape the clutches of the exotic and go home to my familiar world of the Port Adelaide Football Club, Norwood Town Hall dance, pie floaters at Cowley's Pie Cart and an esky of ice-coated beer. Leon's Saturday world, by sharp contrast, was the local soccer club, the Polish Club dance and an esky of beer in Pukhala's shed.

For years we met occasionally at the Strathmore. Once I wrote a poem, which I called 'Blowin' in the Wind', after Dylan. I showed it to Leon during one of these Friday sessions. He crumpled it savagely in his fingers, flung it to the floor and snarled 'Is this your idea of some smart fuckin' joke?' I was bewildered, but then the penny dropped. He thought it was about *him*, although it was supposed to be a mildly satirical, self-deprecating thing about myself and the romantic poses and gestures he was forever scourging me for. Of course I couldn't retreat or deny, or even explain. I could only try to stand my ground. So began the customary joust, in which Leon would use his audience as a favourite weapon. After about thirty seconds of glowering sideways at me and flicking his eyes up and down my face as if issuing a public challenge to a schoolyard fight, he bent down and retrieved the piece of paper from the aluminium moat than ran round the foot of the bar. He passed it to Kaspersky, Pukhala and the others, who shrugged their shoulders innocently and said 'What's all this about?'

'Ask the poet here', said Leon, with one of his terrible, corrosive sneers. 'I am only poor Ukrainian boy from Croy-don Park, English no good, idiot-bastard-cunt-rubbish New Australian English! Ask this educated teacher's college Aussie boy.'

The others joined in with a chorus of Croydon Park pidgin. I steeled myself to act as if nothing had happened, as way down the end of the bar, someone in a blue singlet yelled out 'Hey, what the fuck's this all about? Who wrote this shit?'

Later that night, in Pukhala's shed, I told Leon angrily it was about *me* not about *him*. He just said 'Are we really friends?' and I have never been quite sure just what he meant.

Leon was conscripted in 1967. I had a letter describing the Tet offensive of 1968 when I was at Puckapunyal myself, undergoing 'all that kindergarten stuff' as he called recruit training (all very well for him, it frightened the tripe out of me). Around the middle of 1968 he was discharged with some kind of wound. Again the rumours flew. He'd been 'stitched up' by the Cong, he'd been in a 'shit-hot' bar-room brawl with a pack of Yanks ... In fact, he'd cut himself somehow while on 'hygiene' duty in the Officers' Mess, and spent a few weeks in the base hospital at Vung Tau, before being sent back to Keswick Barracks in Adelaide.

We continued to meet on and off for many years while I was teaching in Adelaide. He got to know Jenny and we would occasionally meet him and Larrie after work in the Strathmore—in the Lounge, of course. They spent some weekends with us at Port Noarlunga, which he loved, and he gave me a real tongue-lashing about my perverted priorities when we moved to Melbourne in 1972. A few years later we went to his wedding. There must have been a wagon of vodka for every man, woman and child in the reception hall that night; there were faces fit to burst, like shiny red balloons, and everywhere people singing, dancing and shouting.

Naturally there were incidents, quarrels, recriminations, dark historical enmities, and a near-riot at the end when a certain traditionally-distrusted family was accused of liberating vodka intended for drinks back at Croydon Park. Leon saved the day. He mounted a table, sending the glasses and jugs flying, and made an impassioned speech in his native tongue. Suddenly there wasn't a dry eye to be seen in the hall—not even mine, although I had no idea what he was saying. Then he folded his arms imperiously, dropped to his knees and whirled on one leg like a cossack, until the hall itself was spinning with joy.

He and Larrie stayed with us in Melbourne for a few days of the honeymoon and he made Jenny laugh

and laugh with his strutting about like a peacock and his wonderful, preposterous guffaw, like a cross between the King of Siam and Oil-can Harry. He could alternate between a face like a sunbeam and that dreadful, belligerent look he used to give me, but I always thought I understood his act. Still, around that time I began to wonder if he'd crossed the line somehow. One day when he launched into one of his tirades, I said 'Who the hell are you talking to now? Is this one of your performances you've had saved up since we last met?' For the first and last time, to my astonishment, he apologised to me, and said, in a quiet, puzzled tone 'You were right to pull me up like that. Sometimes I just forget'.

One day in 1978, when I was sitting in my office, Jenny rang to tell me that Leon was dead. Some mental trouble, it had been going on for some time, he'd lost his job, put himself into care a couple of times, then gone into decline, taken an overdose of something mixed with alcohol and been found dead at home one afternoon. We went to the funeral. I was horrified to walk into the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the Port Road and find an open coffin, and Leon in a suit, staring at the ceiling. His forehead was swollen and square-looking, his nose more aquiline than I remembered, and sallow skin was stretched taut over the bones of his face, like a canvas. Somehow I had not really *believed* that he was dead. For the last time, he had forced me to an irrevocable admission.

His mother was crazy with her unutterable pain and grief, anchored in the world only by the weight of two women who held her by the arms and wept for her. She would not let them close the coffin lid when it was time to go to the cemetery, but propped it open again and again to moan and babble over Leon, and fuss with his suit. As I stared at this spectacle, bruised and shocked in a way I can never describe, a man standing next to me, an 'Aussie' who had apparently just wandered into the church out of respectful curiosity, addressed me very softly. I suppose he assumed I was a fellow outsider. 'Eh, mate,' he said, 'excuse me, but was this church built by, you know... out of funds collected by the New Australians, like?'

I was a pall-bearer. As we car ried the coffin out—me, Babovich, Kaspersky and Pukhala—Leon's dad caught my eye with the saddest, most eloquent look I have ever seen. At first there was a momentary glimmer of the old mischief, of recognition, of all those nights at the house in Croydon Park, of his pride in Leon and his educated Aussie friend; then the cast of grief as his mind returned to the dread present, and finally a helpless, pleading look, as if to say '*You* have come back. Can't he?'

At the cemetery, I tried to be the last to withdraw my hand from the coffin, to beat out a little signal for Leon on the lid with my fingers, but Babovich, Kaspersky and Pukhala all had the same idea. We all let go awkwardly, together.

Larrie gave me a letter before we left the Cheltenham cemetery. He'd written just before he died, but the letter hadn't been posted. He said he'd wanted to talk to me about some problems, and tried to ring, but he must have had the wrong number and 'an irate lady' had insisted she had never heard of me. In the letter he called me his 'dear friend' and added 'did you ever think you'd hear me say that?'

I often hear him say it. ■

Trevor Hay is a freelance writer.

Palms

Should you come up from the sea one day and wonder
where they are going in their reveries,
the wind sliding between their fronds, and the earth
dappled to match their motion: or,
if your snarling transport shudders at last and is quiet
in what for once is not a mirage,
and you hear instead their susurration, puzzled
at what might be on their minds: relax.
They are as ever in a brown study, pluming
themselves upon themselves.

Somewhere along the line, they caught the Arabian
fragment of sapience. 'It is good
to know the truth, but better to speak of palm trees',
and have kept faith as best they may.
They do not ignore their human mentors, who tell them,
'you bathe your feet in water, your head
in fire', and who echo love-struck Solomon,
'This thy stature is like to a palm-tree'.
So many older sisters of the vine,
they muse on fruit and pleasure.

True, they will lend themselves to victories—
a runner's fling at the tape, a Caesar's
brisk clip through the dying, a pilgrim's displayed
sprig on the hatbrim—but their heart's
not in it. The wind orchestrates their saying,
as Odysseus to Nausicaa,
'I am stunned in spirit: even so is the palm'.
A phoenix every one, they are fearless
amidst the burning and, watched or unwatched, they flourish:
unbowed, greening, and flaming.

Peter Steele

Black Dog

Get a Laplander to tell things as they are,
and in time out will come murmurs
of the Dog of God, which proves to be the bear,
'strong as ten men, and smart as a dozen'.
For all that even those children of fortitude know,
Nanook, the creature 'without shadow'
who bursts in a splashing blur from the lethal water,
is dog indeed to life's maker
and breaker, the stocker of seas and prowler of lands.

The adept of ice has the tincture of those nights
that seem endless—a devil's lull.
Away from the pitiless latitude, closer to where
Eve's brood expands and endures,
a dog from another planet, intent and tireless,
moves like a black swatch towards you.
To him, all seasons are biddable, each of them trimmed,
like a Victorian mute, with darkness.
When the sun limps up, he sees the day of the dog.

'To scare a dog away from a greasy hide
is a lost cause'. Laid-back Horace,
accepting squalor as one of the facts of life,
did not dwell on the feral rage
that drives incisors to worry quailing flesh
in a living creature. The black dog,
careless of rhyme and snarling at reason, bunches
himself for assailment, then wedges through air
a skull to propel someone to the place of the skull.

Peter Steele

JACK HIBBERD

Eight poems following Baudelaire

for

Dinny O'Hearn & Chris Wallace-Crabbe

L'Ennemi

My youth to my mind was a sombre storm,
greys spasmodically lit by bolts of sun.
Rain, thunder, more rain, demolished
all but some bright red fruit in its garden.

Now that I'm aware of a late autumn,
I suppose I should snatch shovel and adze,
attempt to fix this waterlogged domain,
where crevices, deep as graves, are burrowing.

For who can tell? Perhaps its rinsed-out earth
holds sufficient tilth, nutrition,
to feed the daffodils of my dreams.

Never. Never. Time eats life away:
the obscure enemies that chew at our hearts
feast on blood, bloat unrelentingly.

Spleen

I'm like the king of a drizzling continent,
rich but defunct, young yet old, a runt
and pupil who sneers at his snivelling teachers,
who bores himself with slugs, other creatures.
Nothing amuses: cock fights, ping pong, strappado,
spastics who crawl miles to flake beneath his throne.
The lunatic mimes of favourite buffoons
merely boost the illness's awful frowns.
His bed, swarming with lilies, smells like a grave,
while courtesans and wives, who ubiquitously parade
exposing, taste itself, a sleek breast or wild mons,
fail to win a glance from this pubescent skeleton.
Prodigious chemists, confectioners of gold,
cannot smelt the base elements of his soul,
and even baths of blood (a bequest from Rome)
where stymied tyrants still drown their sorrows,
cannot reheat this poor stunned cadaver
through whose veins dribbles Lethe's thin green plasma.

Don Juan aux Enfers

When Don Juan descended to the fens of Hell
he paid a ferryman with skin as brown as toast
and arrogant eyes peculiar to the cynical:
Charon vindictively whipped the oars of his boat.

Women, their breasts lolling out of gowns,
writhed beneath the underworld's ebony sphere:
like sacrificial beasts herded into a pound
they keened operatically when he sailed near.

Smirking Sganarelle demanded wages in cash,
while Don Louis' Parkinsonian finger pointed
out to the dead, meandering on shores of ash,
the cocksure son who had ridiculed his lime-white head.

Elvira, lean, pale, chaste, in widow weeds,
stood shuddering beside her false spouse, honeymoon
lover, seeking in his last smile some authenticity,
one glimmer of that first vow's radiant croon.

Upright in zinc armour, a giant of quartz
gripped the helm, lacerating the black ocean.
Our hero, however, leaned on his crimson sword,
watched only the frothing wake, disdained all emotion.

'Il aimait à la voir, …'

He sees with delight her rippling white dress
as she skips through the trees, pure carelessness,
awkward yet full of grace when she pushes
down its organza on legs exposed by bushes…

Épigraphe pour un livre condamné

Reader, beneath a roof of vines,
sunny, prudent, irreproachable chap,
fling this sullen book away,
it reeks of debauchery, death.

Unless a student of rhetoric
with cankered Redemptorists, lewd dons,
you would not catch a single thing
and damn me to stints of psychotherapy.

But should, scales peeling from eyes,
you plumb this discrepant world,
then read it, learn to love me,

for you too seek, suffer and curl
in search of paradise. Colleague,
show some compassion ...if not, drop dead.

Le Parfum

Have you, bookworm, ever inhaled
with intoxication, greed,
the smell of incense in a church,
a sachet's lingering musk?

Such wizardry recreates the past
in the present, and, drunk as Proust,
we snatch out of lovers' breasts
the fabulous blooms of memory ...

From her lush, elastic hair,
a living sachet of herbs and myrrh,
rose a savage, untamed scent,

from her skirts of seersucker,
imbued with impregnable youth,
emanated a smell of fur.

La Muse vénale

Hey Muse—devotee of Maxim's, the Ritz—
when January's Siberian winds assault
will there be enough embers pour réchauffer scraps
through long sleepless nights of gloom and ice?

Can you cloak those mottled goosefleshed shoulders
with moonbeams that squeeze through slats?
When all income and savings have withered
can you gild the sky's enamel vault?

No way—to ensure vin du pays-soaked crusts
you must snivel, like an acolyte,
chant Te Deums, whose sycophancies you hate,

or, like a haggard comic actress, show off your points,
tits, laugh dementedly while strangling tears,
to make the corpulent bourgeoisie split their ribs.

La Rêve d'un Curieux

Have you endured, like me, exquisite pain?
Do philistines glare, snigger, in the street?
I was about to die. My Proustian soul savoured
hope, horror, anguish, serenity, desire,

not a fleck of contumacity, anger, bile.
The more the Dance of Death dervished
the more acutely, sumptuously, I felt
my heart avulse, flee the commonplace world.

I sat as if a child waiting keenly for a show,
cursing the curtain's reluctance to lift.
At last the unadorned truth was revealed:

I had died unchanged. A terrible dawn
engulfed me. What? Can that be all?
The curtain had gone up. I was waiting for more.

PETER STEELE

Southern lights

Great Southern Landings: An Anthology of Antipodean Travel, Jan Bassett, (ed.), Oxford University Press Australia, 1995. ISBN 0 19 553582 0 RRP $39.95

A LEARNED PERSON points out to me that in A.D. 748 Pope Zacharias banned the idea of the Antipodes and their human occupation, and described it as a perverse and iniquitous doctrine. More people read Dante than read Pope Zacharias, and Australian readers will have noticed that he lodges the Earthly Paradise down here, though he does see it as vacant since Adam and Eve headed out for other parts. What might be called the anti-Zacharian posture is represented by Andrei Sinyavsky who, writing to his wife from a Soviet labour camp in the sixties, says, 'Whenever one sees Australia on a map, one's heart leaps with pleasure: Kangaroo! Boomerang!'

None of these gentry is mentioned in Jan Bassett's elegantly various sampling of reactions to the Antipodes over the centuries. What a troupe hers are, though, from the early seventeenth century to the present! Jonathan Swift and Jean Shrimpton, Herbert Hoover and Barry Humphries, Raffaello Carboni and Agatha Christie, Anthony Trollope and Zane Grey, Shiva Naipaul and Germaine Greer. Enough human variety to give Dante pause, let alone Zacharias.

Following ancient practice, I kept on opening the book at random, with some curious consequences.

> By incessant flogging he contrived to get us into the diggings before it was quite dark': 'The British section of the Teutonic race seems naturally inclined through the operation of its old interest-begotten prejudices, to rank women where Plato placed them in the 'Timaeus', along with horses and draught cattle: 'But how about your partner?' asked the others. 'Won't he tell the secret?' 'Oh no,' was the reply; 'he's safe enough for he's dead': When Australians talk about Culture they seldom mean honey and almond triangles.

Were I not an Antipodean myself, I should have thought the place fuming with peculiarity.

And so it is, of course, not because it is here, but because it is anywhere. Vivacious imaginations, or even alertly-keyed intelligences, are likely to divine the flair and flourish of originality as soon as boredom and languor are banished. Chesterton's Law states that death is more tragic even than death by starvation, the nose funnier even than a Roman nose; and this principle of startlement, this getting up and going out to be astounded, can be traced in almost every one of the ninety extracts in Jan Bassett's book

Graham Greene used to distinguish between those of his works which were 'entertainments' and those which were not, but nobody else is obliged to be so austere. *Great Southern Landings* entertains from beginning to end, even if sometimes by ironies which are grim enough. Therese Huber, in her novel *Adventures on a Journey to New Holland*, first published in German in 1801, offers us, at the end of her extract,

'Tomorrow one of the transports is going to Norfolk Island with all sorts of essential goods brought by our small convoy. I want to take advantage of the opportunity to get to know this island for it is supposed to be the paradise of this region.' That would have pleased Dante, the Dante of the *Inferno*.

For those of us inclined to wonder what on earth we are doing here, whether it be in the Mulga or in Manhattan, Dr Bassett has provided fragments which are by turns rueful and censorious, drastic and droll. Here is Barry Humphries' father in 1962 attempting unsuccessfully to book all the seats in the Assembly Hall for his son's performance; here, in 1926, is the British aviator Alan Cobham reporting of Australia that 'the continent is one vast natural aerodrome': here is the indeflectibly sententious Beatrice Webb, in 1898, to tell us that 'The low tone of all classes of colonial society in all that concerns private life is to my mind mainly the result of the lack of education, strenuousness and refinement of the women.'

Arthur Conan Doyle, come to straighten things out in 1920, reported that 'We found the atmosphere and general psychic conditions of Melbourne by no means as pleasant or receptive as those of Adelaide, but this of course was very welcome as the greater the darkness the more need of the light.'

EMILY SOLDENE, singer of comic opera, crossed paths with Mr Creswick the Tragedian, who married the keeper of his boarding house—'she first attracted his attention by bringing in his tea in silence, setting

it down the same, and retiring ditto. Such a woman, to a studious man, was invaluable. He felt he must possess her for his very own, and they were married.'

I would guess that, as many people in the past who learned the elements of writing took it for granted that they then should write, most of what was written was a mess—just as most drivers, conversationalists, and cooks settle for mediocrity, again on the Chestertonian principle that if a thing is worth doing it is worth doing badly.

Such worthies have found no place in the 315 pages of *Great Southern Landings*, which, life being short, is just as well. It is an expertly clipped, mounted, introduced and arrayed sampler of what people have had to say when they have for a while emerged from that invisible Ark which continues to cruise the oceans or the air, the dominant physical realities of our exceedingly odd little planet.

For reasons which need puzzle no Australian, the dust jacket is adorned, handsomely, by a post-Nolan, post-Tucker 1994 painting by Garry Shead, in which cockatoos cry about a well-kitted-out man who is tilting towards a bay: behind him a woman is holding on to her hat. God knows what Pope Zacharias would make of it all. I have, however, a suspicion that Dante would give it all a thumbs-up, accompanied by the equivalent, in the *dolce stil nuovo*, of 'She'll be right!' After all, it was his business, if it could be brought off, to get at least selected members of us into Paradise. ■

The Oxford Book of Exploration,
Robin Hanbury-Tenison (ed.),
Oxford University Press,
paperback edition, 1994.
ISBN 0 19 282396 5 RRP $22.95

A BOOKISH CHILD in harmless Perth during the Fifties, I became aware of some intricacies by reading a dead but vivid language, Latin. '*Explorator*', the dictionary said, 'a spy: a scout.' I stared with refreshed interest at local monuments to Australian explorers. What, I wondered, had they spied out, what masking surface had they peeled back, and how were they agents of disclosure? Their burly frames and spade-like beards had nothing to say in reply.

These days, of course, the air would be thick with replies, most of them reverberant with political agenda. The main thing divulged by this or that explorer would be personal or societal compulsion. Red-eyed, dark-hearted, white-nostrilled, they would stalk or clump or blunder through savannah, desert, taiga, sierra, notching up territorial conquests, blazing masculinist trails, striking out for the Fatherland or the Motherland, and mapping their own psychic terrains even while they put bread in the cartographers' mouths.

It may be so. And any reader of Robin Hanbury-Tenison's aggregation of explorers over the centuries will find plenty of material to bolster such a view of things. Although, surely, the last sort of personality one would want during prolonged exploration would be the excitable, the whole affair must usually be driven by tight-wound passion. Hanbury-Tenison, himself a much-exposed explorer, is just the man to finger the spirit's energies. These, sometimes, have to do with personal resoluteness, but often with the 'spying' propensity, the report-bearing, especially if it is oddities or frailties which are to be spied out.

Hence, for instance, the openings of many of the passages he quotes from his restless ensemble. William of Rubruck, a Flemish Franciscan friar, en route to a Tartar Khan in the middle of the thirteenth century, muses on 'the Tebet, a people in the habit of eating their dead parents, so that for piety's sake they should not give their parents any other sepulchre than their bowels.' In 1872, the distinguished English naturalist Alfred Russell Wallace, taking stock of the accomplishments of those he knows best, hovers between humility and complacency when he says that 'During the last century, and especially in the last thirty years, our intellectual and material advancement has been too quickly achieved for us to reap full benefit of it.' Dr David Livingstone—he of the presumption—offers us the heartening reminder, 'It is well known that if one in a troop of lions is killed the others take the hint and leave that part of the country.' And Theodore Roosevelt, out of politics at fifty-four, and tackling Brazil to avert boredom, reports, 'On 27 February 1914, shortly after midday, we started down the River of Doubt into the unknown' (things turned out well enough—the river was later named 'Rio Roosevelt'.)

Not the first or last to have made little jokes about the ways in which OUP can slice across human behaviours—the present volume refers to works on Card Games, Fly-Fishing, Nursing, and Sailing Terms—I am the first to grant that there are many ways of slanting in to the heart of the human affair. *The Oxford Book of Exploration* does this with efficiency,

and without too much irritating economy. The paperback's excerpts run for 520 pages; and although some are a little more than a *bonne bouche*, others go a distance with their frequently-exerted and always-engaged authors. It is by now commonplace, sometimes abused, to distinguish between the (admirable) 'traveller' and the (at best tolerated) 'tourist'. Nobody in this volume is a tourist, and I doubt whether a single one of them had travel-insurance.

In most cases, Lloyd's would have been mad to take the money. The strong impression one has, reading these excerpts, is that what is being 'spied out' is in large measure the terrain of the individual will—not an agenda calculated to make for prudence. This may have something to do with the fact that there are only a couple of women among the explorers represented here—itself food for thought, given the by-now copious array of selections from, and writings about, the accounts of women travellers. Can no more of them have warranted a place in the present gallery?

At all events, had they been there, they would presumably have joined in the chorus of hopes and fears which play about the hearts of the explorers sampled here. William John Wills, on his last legs during the expedition which he shared with Burke and others, says in a late journal entry, 'I can only look out, like Mr Micawber, "for something to turn up"; but starvation on nardoo is by no means very unpleasant, but for the weakness one feels, and the utter inability to move oneself, for as far as appetite is concerned, it gives me the greatest satisfaction.'

By contrast, Robert Edwin Peary—who supposed himself to have reached the North Pole, though his accuracy in calculation has been questioned—relates that 'After I had planted the American flag in the ice, I told Henson to time the Eskimos for three rousing cheers, which they gave with the greatest enthusiasm. Thereupon, I shook hands with each member of the party—surely a sufficiently unceremonious affair to meet with the approval of the most democratic.' Hot or cold, the country without bears on the country within.

Charles Montagu Doughty, whose recherché masterpiece, *Travels in Arabia Deserta* (1888) glowed in the imagination of T.E. Lawrence, says, of a tense time when he was trying to get his camel back from others in the desert, 'In this faintness of body and spirit ... I thought that a man should forsake life rather than justice.' The last entry in the book, from Richard Byrd's account of overflying the South Pole in 1929, concludes, 'One gets there, and that is about all there is for telling. It is the effort to get there that counts. We put the Pole behind us and raced for home.'

Between the two of them, they triangulate all the happiness and all the grief in the world. ■

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

Books: 2

Max Charlesworth

The gang's all here

Encyclopedia of Catholicism, Richard P. McBrien (ed.), HarperCollins, New York, 1995. ISBN 000 627 9317 RRP $69.95

The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia, Michael Glazier and Monika Hellwig, (eds.),E.J. Dwyer, Newtown, NSW, 1994. ISBN 085574 062 0 RRP $95.00

How does one review an encyclopedia? Some encyclopedias are like road-maps and one can only note whether or not they supply basic information about people, dates, places and issues. Others offer a more judicious overview of the state of the debate on various topics. Others, again, like Dr Samuel Johnson's dictionary, are idiosyncratic and opiniated: good fun but unreliable.

The two encyclopedias considered here fall roughly between the road-map model and the state of the scholarly debate model. They both give a vast amount of basic information about angels, saints, popes and great Catholic men and women, and about central doctrines and rites, and what might be called the paraphernalia of Catholic life. Any two-thousand-year-old institution gathers a gargantuan amount of furniture, curios, white elephants, abandoned clothing, and there are all kinds of odd and marvellous (and unmentionable) things in the attic.

On the other hand, the two volumes under review do not pretend to compete with the great French multi-volumed *Dictionnaires*—for example the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*—which provide definitive scholarly discussions of various topics. At the same time, they do provide enough discussion to put the reader in the picture about the main issues raised by each topic.

I made a list of five topics off the top of my head—angels, conscience, Meister Eckhart, fundamentalism, Karl Rahner—and did a simple minded comparison of the two encyclopedias. Having once translated part of Aquinas' treatise on the angels in the *Summa Theologiae* for the new English version, I began with 'angels'. Both encyclopedias do pretty well on the curious and chequered history of the idea of angels in the Catholic Church.

The article in the McBrien volume gives detailed information on the main orders of the angelic hierarchy—the splendidly named Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations etc.—but no mention, alas, of

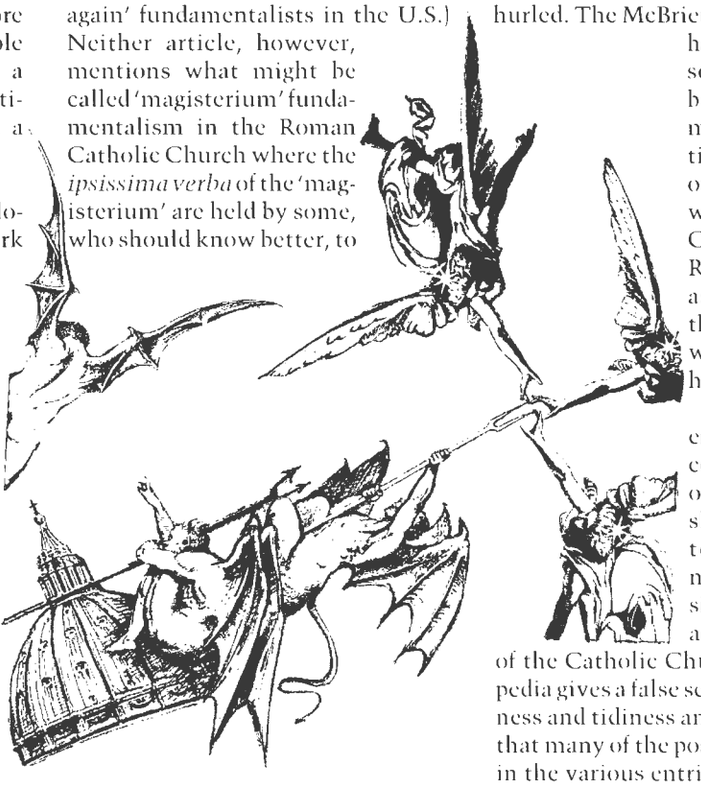
those companions of my childhood, the guardian angels. One rather gets the impression that, despite Wim Wenders, the angels are on the way out. The article also notes the 'famous quibble over the number of angels that can dance on a pin'. But, given the sophisticated medieval concept of angels—they are non-material beings and therefore not in space or time—the quibble was not even a quibble but, as our politicians are prone to say, a nonsense.

On 'conscience', both encyclopedias deserve an Honours 2A mark with, perhaps, the Glazier-Hellwig article (by Vincent McNamara) slightly ahead. Both entries give short shrift to the idea that our consciences can only be 'informed' if they are in accordance with the teaching of the Church. As McNamara says, 'the injunction to inform conscience can only be another way of saying that fidelity to the moral call entails a sincere effort, according to one's capacities,to find the truth'. St Thomas Aquinas held indeed that if one conscientiously believed that Jesus Christ was not God one was morally obliged not to be a Christian.

Having done a good deal of reading of and about the remarkable early 14th century philosopher-mystic, Meister Eckhart, I looked to see how both encyclopedias treated him since he has recently undergone a reappraisal and been reinstated (at least by scholars) as an 'orthodox' Christian thinker.

But both entries on Eckhart, while adequate on his historical background, are disappointingly obscure on his teaching and say nothing about his remarkable dialogue with the beguines and other religious women in the Rhineland in the early 14th century. The women, to put the matter crudely, supplied the religious experience and Eckhart, a former professor of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Paris and much influenced by his Dominican confreres Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, provided the theory to generate a profound account of the Christian spiritual life.

On 'fundamentalism', however, we are provided with an embarrassment of riches. Being largely American productions both encyclopedias give a good deal of interesting details about the local varieties. (A recent alarming statistic claims that there are some ten million 'born again' fundamentalists in the U.S.) Neither article, however, mentions what might be called 'magisterium' fundamentalism in the Roman Catholic Church where the *ipsissima verba* of the 'magisterium' are held by some, who should know better, to be literally true. One gets the impression that it is taken for granted that we must interpret the words of scripture, but that the words of the magisterium on sexual morality, celibacy, the ordination of women to the priesthood, miraculously bear their meaning on their face and cannot be subject to exegesis and interpretation.



Both encyclopedias are strong on great men and women in the Catholic Church, but only the Glazier-Hellwig volume, which has been adapted for a local audience, gives any space to Australians such as Mary McKillop and Daniel Mannix. (Edmund Campion is the Australian contributor). On the theologian, Karl Rahner, who, as both volumes agree, is the greatest Catholic theologian of the 20th century, both articles give illuminating appraisals of his work. These articles approach the kind of scholarly overview of the French 'Dictionnaires' and one wishes that more of the entries had been in this style, even if that required a two-volume work.

In general, then, both encyclopedias can be recommended. They are written in non-triumphalist and ecumenical language and, so far as I could detect, no anathemas are hurled. The McBrien volume is, perhaps, more handsomely designed but both have many illustrations, some in colour, including a winsome photo of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger looking as though theological butter wouldn't melt in his mouth.

Inevitably, an encyclopedia is a collection of 'still' or static snapshots of various topics and one misses the dimension of the history and development of the Catholic Church. An encylopedia gives a false sense of completeness and tidiness and very little idea that many of the positions described in the various entries have emerged after a long and often anarchic process of trial and error with a good deal of making things up as one goes along. In a perfectly obvious sense, all religions are 'inventions'—creative human responses to 'revelations'—and the Catholic Church is, after two thousand years, more of an invention than most, and none the worse for that.

The real Catholic thing, so to speak, is much more diverse and untidy and improvisatory and ramshackle than we like to pretend, and all that, of course, is impossible to catch in an encyclopedia. Still, as kinds of family albums for the coming 2000th anniversary of the Catholic Church, the two encyclopedias do have their undeniable uses and charms. ■

Max Charlesworth is former Professor of Philosophy at Deakin University. His most recent book is *Bioethics in a Liberal Society (CUP).*

JIM DAVIDSON

A timely life

Long Walk to Freedom, Nelson Mandela, Little, Brown & Company, Great Britain, 1994. ISBN 0 316 90965 3 RRP $35.00

WHEN HE WAS IMPRISONED on Robben Island, no one symbolised the plight of black South Africa more than Nelson Mandela. In its final years, the question of his release became the truest test of the intentions of the white South African government. Here was a man who, while conscious of the precedent set by Nehru (a phrase of whose provides the kernel of this book's title), had also something of the moral force of Gandhi; but being up against much tougher opponents than the British, a preference for non-violence had to be constrained by tactical effectiveness.

This autobiography—begun in jail, and then smuggled out—has a pastoral, almost patriarchal opening, as though Mandela is deliberately presenting an exemplary life. His given name, Rohlihlahla, means 'shaker of trees', or troublemaker; there is a mythic singularity about him from the beginning. But apart from being nostalgic for a lost, innocent Transkei upbringing—understandable given the circumstances of his writing—there is also the fact that the young man was slow to find himself. Brought up in the household of the regent of Thembuland, and from a family that had traditionally supplied the chief's counsellors, he was educated at Methodist institutions and then went on to the famous African tertiary college, Fort Hare. At this stage—conducting bible classes in nearby villages, as did his friend Oliver Tambo—Mandela still thought he would live out his life in a tribal context in the Transkei. But he had not reckoned on the strength of 'a proud rebelliousness, a stubborn sense of fairness' which he inherited from his father. Suspended from Fort Hare for a stand on a matter of principle, he also faced the prospect of being dragooned into an arranged marriage. He fled to Johannesburg.

That is where Mandela's life began—as surely as Peter Conrad declared himself born on reaching Westminster Bridge. The book reflects this in a sudden access of liveliness, which it sustains almost to the end. In Johannesburg Mandela studied law at Wits—the English-speaking university—and was employed by a liberal firm. This meant, amongst other things, that white secretaries would be prepared to take his dictation; unless, of course, a white stranger appeared in the doorway, in which case they might lean across and tell 'Nelson' to take a proffered sixpence and go and buy some shampoo at the chemist's. At Wits Mandela met Joe Slovo and Ruth First, radicals; in Alexandria township, settled with his wife and family, his tribalism broadened into a black South Africanism. People commented that his Xhosa now contained Zulu words. Soon he would set up a legal partnership with Oliver Tambo, the only African one in Johannesburg. Meanwhile he had met Walter Sisulu and other black activists.

Mandela makes the point that his entry into politics was not the result of some epiphany; rather, it arose from an increasing sense of injustice at white exclusiveness. Prejudice was everywhere. In his legal work, Mandela found that police in court would not answer his questions directly, but would address the magistrate instead. The biggest firms, he soon discovered, would charge Africans more for their services, not less. His own firm was harrassed under the Group Areas Act, while there were two attempts by the Transvaal Law Society to strike him off the register once he became an activist.

Initially Mandela was most active in the ANC Youth League, and was very much an Africanist. He distrusted Communists, since he felt they might be using Africans for their own ends, and he was opposed to working with whites and Indians because he feared their capacity to dominate. Active in organising boycotts, stay-aways and strikes, Mandela was first arrested in 1952. Soon after he formulated a plan whereby the ANC, if banned, could still function as an underground organisation. While involved in the formulation of the Freedom Charter of 1955, with its goal of a democratic, non-racial South Africa—complete with the mines nationalised for the benefit of all—the break-up of that assembly by the police confirmed his growing instinct that non-violence was not the answer. 'The oppressed', he writes, 'are often left no recourse but to use methods that mirror those of the oppressor.' After the adoption of the Freedom Charter, Mandela was onc of 165 people, of all races, who were rounded up by the state and put on trial for treason. In court, they were initially caged; police evidence ran to 12,000 items, which even included a Russian cookery book. The testimony of witnesses at one stage became impossible, since South Africa was now under the State of Emergency following Sharpeville. Mandela's account of the various courtroom manoeuvres make exciting reading, and have the satisfactory conclusion that, after four years, all the accused were acquitted. It

was after this that the police began to isolate, torture and beat up their prisoners.

Shortly afterwards Mandela was involved in setting up the ANC's guerrilla army, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Spear of the Nation). Unlike the ANC proper, some whites were recruited; and the aim initially was to carry out acts of sabotage, since these were least harmful to individuals, most damaging to the state. For a time Mandela lived a charmed life as the Black Pimpernel, but when the police caught him and he was put on trial, the sentence he was given was the stiffest given to a black for political offences to that time.

It was while serving this sentence that Mandela underwent another trial for treason, this time as commander of *Umkhonto we Sizwe*. The sentence now was life; and shortly after began his incarceration on Robben Island. Here, in addition to being placed in a cell where a light burned twenty-four hours a day, African prisoners (but not those of other races) had to wear shorts. In winter they were chilled by howling winds as they worked away hammering stones.

Gradually, though, conditions on the island improved. Some warders were befriended, and every opportunity taken to educate them about the ANC. Later, the ANC ran courses for their own people, and even organised a hunger strike which was matched by a simultaneous one by the warders—who had grievances of their own, since they were poorly paid. Mandela tells us that by the seventies the ANC might not run Robben Island, but the authorities could not run it without them. This did not mean, though, that Mandela and others could be cocky. A trip to the dentist in Cape Town might offer enticements to escape, but a glance out the window at an empty city street could only mean one thing: a police trap. The street had been sealed off so that pistols could be used freely.

When Mandela and others were first taken to a mainland prison, the most likely reading was that the authorities wanted to cut off the head of the ANC organisation on Robben Island. Eventually it became plain that the government was tentatively moving towards negotiations. Where this account adds to that given by Allister Sparks in *Tomorrow is Another Country* is the way it emphasises Mandela's isolation from his colleagues in prison, from 1984 on, and how he deliberately took the initiative to talk with the white leadership. There is a good description of his release, together with the inclusion of a letter received later from a white Cape Town housewife: 'I am very glad that you are free, and that you are back among your friends and family, but your speech yesterday was very boring'.

Thereafter the narrative reads rather flatly.

Its main points have already been made. One is the ignorance of the Afrikaner oppressors: people such as Jimmy Kruger, the police minister, knew far less about the recent history of his own people than did Mandela, to say nothing of how little he knew about the ANC. Others are the ecumenical nature of the ANC: by 1987 whites were on the executive, while the model Mandela kept in mind when dealing with Black Power was that the organisation should be like 'a great tent that could accommodate many different views and affiliations'. Similarly, instructed himself in South African history, Mandela was aware of the enormously poisoning influence of the Boer War, and so was convinced that it would be entirely for the good of the country if blacks and whites could negotiate a settlement. He even allows himself the observation that the ANC's failure to secure a two-thirds majority in the Assembly was a good thing, since this means that the constitution will have to be a genuinely South African one, rather than something devised by the ANC.

What manner of man emerges from this autobiography? Mandela's body language suggests a solitary figure, and while much of this was imposed by those twenty-seven years in jail, a good deal of it was not. There is his upbringing in a royal household, and the lasting love of the veld and the sky that his Transkei youth has given him. But he is the kind of man who prefers to set out on journeys at 3 am, and whose need for space extended to preferring —initially—better clothes and food rather than contact with other prisoners, until he realised his mistake. Self-control is high on his list of virtues; one of its corollaries is an almost automatic alignment of priorities. There is a vein of guilt running through the book about the great deal his career has cost those closest to him: 'The wife of a freedom fighter', he writes, 'is often like a widow, even when her husband is not in prison.' For twenty-one years he did not so much as touch his wife's hand.

So a great deal of Mandela's capacity for feeling has—prompted by Christianity—been fed into his public life. There was, for example, the recent dinner he organised, for wives and widows of former prime ministers and freedom fighters: a highly imaginative way of dramatising the need for continued interracial cooperation. Throughout the book there is an abiding generosity towards his enemies. How sad, though, that such a man should feel genuine gratitude even now to a warder who, instead of barking 'Time up!', would say to his visiting wife, 'Mrs Mandela, you have five more minutes'. ■

Nelson Mandela, above, sparring with Jerry Moloi at his gym in Orlando.

Photograph by Bob Gosani/Bailey's.

Jim Davidson teaches The Rise and Fall of Apartheid at Victoria University of Technology.

RAY CASSIN

Goody Goodies

The Eleven Saving Virtues, Ross Fitzgerald (ed.), Minerva, Melbourne 1995. ISBN 1 86330 463 0, RRP $14.95

TOM LEHRER, THAT URBANE satirist of the fabled '60s, once remarked about people who complained of difficulty in 'communicating' that the very least they could do for the rest of us was to shut up. I had a similar reaction to many of the essays in this companion volume to Fitzgerald's earlier collection, *The Eleven Deadly Sins* (1993). If this assembly of the wise has nothing more interesting to tell us than that virtue is a more difficult achievement than vice, then we could better seek guidance elsewhere.

Some of the contributors blame the elusiveness of virtue on dismal aspects of the Western religious inheritance. Thus Gerard Henderson, writing on affection, compares his Catholic and Jansenist upbringing with the Congregationalist and Calvinist nurturing of Bob Hawke. It seems, however, that the columnist and the politician were not seeded equally with the Augustinian pessimism that inspired both Calvin and Jansen; for while little Gerard was learning at his mother's knee that he was 'yet another maggot in the sight of the Almighty', the man who would be Prime Minister was being assured by his parents of his membership in the elect.

The gist seems to be that all this perverse religiosity, Catholic or Protestant, can produce a level of self-obsession that stunts the capacity for affection (though we are never allowed to doubt that Henderson's maturation imbued him with a virtuous self-knowledge apparently denied to Hawke). All right. A plague on Calvin, Jansen and their disciples for spawning the likes of Gerard Henderson and Bob Hawke. Now what was that about affection?

Gabrielle Lord, treating of fidelity, goes one better than the virtue-plays-hard-to-get motif favoured by her fellow essayists. The virtue itself becomes suspect because, we are told, fidelity is the trait that separates people into an Us and a Them, or rather into various kinds of Us and Them. The only kind of fidelity that Lord deems acceptable is that which may be shown to an 'inner sense of our unity' with all of suffering humanity, a fidelity that transcends our dubious partial loyalties.

Have I, then, failed to be fully human if I feel a greater sense of obligation to my own daughter, growing up happy and healthy in Australia, than I do to, say, an orphaned, ailing child in Sarajevo, who can never be more present to me than her fleetingly glimpsed face on the television news? And does the fact that I feel a greater obligation to the child I hold in my arms prevent me from acknowledging that the child on the other side of the world is a victim of great injustice, and so has a claim on my compassion, too?

Most people—rightly, I think—would see no moral confusion in answering 'yes' to the first question and 'no' to the second. Moreover, they would find something profoundly *in*human in the conduct of a person who abandoned his own child in order to rush off to Sarajevo to help a child in greater need. And, after a little reflection, they might even suggest that a parent who could not recognise which child had the prior claim on his loyalty would probably only pay lip-service to wider loyalties anyway. Such as the loyalty we feel when we recognise an 'inner sense of our unity' with the rest of suffering humanity, for example.

That is one reason why we need virtues like loyalty: exercising them teaches us what it means to be part of a web of mutual obligation, and hence part of what it means to be human. And the fact that sometimes our loyalties are misdirected, with disastrous consequences, hardly proves that the virtue itself is phoney. It just emphasises how important it is that we learn to get it right.

Loyalty is a better name for the Us-and-Them virtue than Lord's 'fidelity', which is most often used in sexual contexts these days. But it is not the oddest misnomer in *The Eleven Saving Virtues*. Trevor Jordan, for example, writes about 'truth' rather than honesty. The nature of truth is indeed a vexed philosophical question, but one does not have to be a sceptic about the possiblity of moral knowledge to recognise that the question of what it means for some claim to be true must be resolved differently from the question of what it means for a person to act truthfully. Jordan's account wavers between both questions, which does not help him to shed much light on either.

The problem is partly an editorial one. Ross Fitzgerald decreed which topics the various contributors should write about, and in his introduction matches each virtue with an opposing vice from *The Eleven Deadly Sins*. 'Truth' is opposed to 'hypocrisy', which suggests that honesty was what Fitzgerald really had in mind. But there is a deeper problem in this juggling with names, for one reason why someone might blur honesty into truth is if truth itself is understood, in Nietzschean terms, as something that can only be constructed, not discovered.

To be fair to Jordan, his essay acknowledges this postmodern predilection for unmasking the makers

of truth claims. And some of the other contributors to this collection revel in it, especially Michael Sharkey, on wisdom, and Philip Nielsen, on humility. But Nielsen's topic offers greater opportunities for playing Nietzschean games than any other in the collection, because historically humility has always had detractors who maintained that it was an innovation among virtues, and a barrier to human flourishing.

Again, it has usually been supposed to be Christianity's fault. The humility encapsulated in the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount, which Hume and Bentham derided as a 'monkish' virtue, was about the emptying of the self, a shedding of egoistic concerns. It seemed quite different from the humility that Aristotle had advocated, which amounted to having a proper sense of self-worth. There have been those—Aquinas, for instance—who did not think that the two notions were so very far apart after all, but it is a long argument and not to be settled here or in *The Eleven Saving Virtues*.

Aristotle, whose understanding of virtue and of truth is antithetical to Nietzsche's, and whose writings animate most of the contemporary philosophical efforts to revive virtue ethics, gets an occasional nod from contributors to *The Eleven Saving Virtues*. But the essay that is most strongly Aristotelian in spirit, and the best by far in this collection, does not invoke the master's name at all.

Marion Halligan's reflection on hope begins with a fictional tale of hopes dashed and raised again, which flows neatly into a discussion of why we need to live in hope, whether our hopes will be dashed or not. It is a forceful feminist piece, which is perhaps why Halligan does not give that old misogynist Aristotle a guernsey. But I am sure he would have liked her deft grasp of the universal in the particular; and one of the things I now hope for is that the editor of any future collection of essays on the virtues will take Halligan on hope as a model. ■

Ray Cassin is writing a thesis on the unity of the virtues.

Bruce Williams

Cats, cabinets and Franz Kafka

Back in the 1970s, there was an enterprising season of new music-theatre works at Melbourne's Union Theatre which included an adaptation of Kafka's story, *The Metamorphosis*: The role of the much put-upon clerk, who wakes up in the morning to find himself transformed into an insect, was sung by a young baritone called Lyndon Terracini. Twenty years on, Terracini plays Kafka himself in *The Burrow*. The two seasons offer some nice period contrasts. In the '70s such an evening was rare; in the '90s Melbourne has the excellent Chamber Made Opera, which regularly stages adventurous music-theatre works. In the '70s, Terracini, as befits a beetle, clambered around a lot; in the '90s, he is cribbed and confined, bound up, strapped down, wheeled around, stripped and exhibited. As in some late Beckett novel, entropy appears to have taken hold. In the '70s, Terracini played a character, albeit insectivorous; in the biography-mad '90s he plays a writer. Back then, even at the wacky edges of the performance world, some kind of narrative could usually be pieced together. In the postmodern '90s, there are no such sops or securities.

Chamber Made Opera
The Burrow.
Music: Michael Smetanin
libretto: Alison Croggon
direction: Douglas Horton. National Theatre, St Kilda, August 1995.

Irritating word, postmodern: if the present is what is meant, why *post*-anything? Contemporary art like *The Burrow*, however, precisely justifies the term. Kafka, or something like him, is at the centre of the evening, but it is not Kafka's story—or indeed any story—that gets told. What we get instead is a complex, multi-layered series of images, a kinetic meditation on passages from the life and works.

In the opening sequence, a shadowy group of clown-figures exhibits to us, one by one, then stacked upon one another, a set of illuminated cabinets: in the cabinets, portions of Kafka: the trunk, the legs and feet, the head. These, and a typewriter, gradually make the man. None of this is to be found in the libretto—at least as printed in the program for the evening. Prompted by Douglas Horton's program note ('designer and director have chosen not to merely illustrate the work of composer or librettist') I take this to be scenography. The box-play, absorbing in itself, is a game of construction and deconstruction. We are about to see a piece about a man constructed by writing and undone by writing, for whom a lover present in the flesh was less real than the lover he addressed in letters, a man who hid in a burrow. We are about to see a theatre piece which plays freely with the vocabulary of modern spectacle: expressionism, surrealism, the animations of Terry Gilliam, 'black' theatre (of Prague?) and clown figures from the realm of *das Groteske*.

It's worth a little detail to give some impression of how dense and demanding this work can be. After the dumbshow, the first scene begins with a spoken duet between Kafka and the ghost of his childhood self, one speaking in German, the other in English. A giant stuffed cat falls from the flies. The clown-figures eviscerate it, turn it inside out, and up pops a cluster of rubbery figures, a tight little crowd. They speak: 'Smash the Germans! Kill the Jews! Their violence alternates with Kafka, who sings about Prague: 'how can I leave you/ how can I stay?' This sequence gives way to a vision of his lover, Milena. In the fourth and last section of the scene, the ghost (sung by a tenor, incidentally)

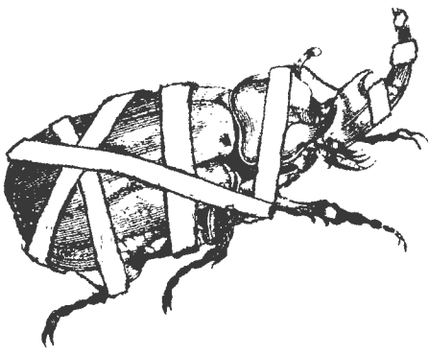
confronts Kafka with images from his childhood ('the music-box/ its ballerina/ trapped forever/ in her maze of mirrors'). Kafka finds this unbearable: 'I died there', he concludes.

Gradually a pattern might emerge. Kafka, victimised by his tyrannical father, lacerated by the brutality of the world around him, retreats into what he hopes will be quite literally an inner sanctum. But it is no use. In another of Horton's wonderful images, the wall of the burrow is pierced with many eyes. One by one the eyes drop out of the wall and bounce at Kafka's feet. And then there is Milena, who loves him and tries to reach him, who torments him as the dead are tormented in *The Waste Land* This pattern however, is not presented, as it might be in realistic drama, as a psychological case study. In that model, here is Kafka and over there is his Problem. This theatre is non-therapeutic: people are what they are, exhibited 'as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen'.

The local complexities of the work are enough to tax even the alert audience for Chamber Made. But there is plenty of encouragement to persevere, because, in contrast to the Moderns, these creators don't cast the audience as humble recipients of the Artist's Vision, nor is the tone all that solemn. Every production by Douglas Horton offers immediately accessible theatrical pleasures; here, for example, the cat and the cabinets. Acting and singing were, as usual, strong and disciplined. It is hard to single out performers when the musical textures are so closely interwoven -the three person chorus, for example, has just as tricky a job as the soloists—however, I particularly admired Tyrone Landau's negotiation of the high tenor of the Ghost.

BRECHT, THE MODERN, sometimes peered into a postmodern future. He talks about (but did not practise) a theatre in which, instead of all the elements contributing to 'an organic unity' (a *Gesamtkunstwerk* or whatever) each would keep its independence. Words could say one thing, music another, the costumes a third. *The Burrow* is this kind of work. Alison Croggon's libretto is imagistic: fragments, moments, detached phrases—they coalesce here and there, but they do not clump which leaves the audience free to connect in different ways. Michael Smetanin's music avoids illustration of the text. There is little 'word-painting', nor are there immediately recognisable feeling-codes, swelling tunes for the afflatus of love, and so on. For the most part, the words are declaimed, which gives them a chance to be heard in their own right (or would have, if the sound mix had been more precisely calculated).

The sound of the music is characteristically dark and bony,



generated by an ensemble which omits the higher strings and emphasises the more blatant sounds extractable from woodwind and brass. It is dominated by percussion (including percussive keyboards), an almost constant, often pounding momentum. This basic sound is enriched in a variety of ways. The chorus, for example, can provide a nimbus around the solo lines and some special effects, such as an invisible second voice at a point where Kafka imagines two Milenas. Declamation, in the vocal line, is relieved by lyrical passages, with longer, slower-moving lines held against the rapid chatter of the band. The effect is sometimes like the chorale tunes in Bach's cantatas, a sturdy line festooned with colour and movement.

If the music does not 'express the feelings of the characters', what does it do? Where does all the pounding energy come from? What connexion has it with the Kafka world? Musing over these questions I remembered this comment: 'Musical expression lies in the rhythm; and in the rhythm lies all the power of music.' And, from the same writer:

> Thus, while words and actions express the most detailed and concrete elements of feeling, music has a much higher, wider and more abstract goal. Music becomes, in a way, the moral atmosphere which fills the space in which the characters of the drama portray the action. It expresses the fate that pursues them, the hope which animates them, the gaiety which surrounds them, the felicity which is in store for them, the abyss in which they are to fall...

WHAT THE TEXT REVEALS is how Kafka's various efforts at control or evasion keep breaking down, exposing him to intolerable anxiety. Perhaps we could think of the music as essentially conveying this 'moral atmosphere', and that makes sense of its anxious, violent, conflict-ridden elements. That is what lies under Kafka's careful, infinitely precise prose and his obsessively ordered working life. But the music, at least to my ears, is also full of an energy that comes from desire, an essentially creative energy. (There are similarities with Messiaen.) If this is so, we can see where the director's freedom comes from. Not having to pother about with subtexts and meaningful pauses and the rest of it his contribution can play off against the music: hence the jauntiness of some of the staging, its element of wit and surprise corresponding to that aspect of Kafka's own prose.

So where is Kafka? The answer is, everywhere: onstage, as personated by Mr Terracini; in the wit and style of the staging; lamenting and rejoicing in the pit. What we have in *The Burrow* might be thought of, if the term is not too dry, as a creative essay, and a very fine one. It has been seen at the Festival of Perth and now in Melbourne, and if it comes your way, don't miss it.

The musical theorist, by the way, is Rossini, he who wrote *The Barber of Seville*. ■

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

THEATRE

GEOFFREY MILNE

On site drama

NEARLY EVERY CONVERSATION in Darwin, especially with anyone over thirty, begins with Cyclone Tracy. While it is difficult to see much evidence of the 1974 cyclone devastation in Darwin today, it certainly appears to have had a long-term effect on the town's theatre practice. Whether because of some deep-seated post-Tracy claustrophobia, or because of a lack of proper theatres, Darwin audiences get to see theatre productions in some of the most interesting out-door locations.

On a lengthy tour of the city I was shown a dozen open-air or semi open-air venues that have been used for theatre productions in recent years. These included the wide sands of Mindil Beach, a garden with a magnificent old banyan tree, the ruins of the old Palmerston Town Hall and those of a war-time oil storage facility, a disused, huge water storage tank on the site of the present Darwin High School, a World War II gun gurret on East Point, a basketball court and three amphitheatres. There is even a tiny amphitheatre, in the courtyard of a YMCA backpackers' hostel (seemingly purpose-made for Elizabethan-style drama), another in the Botanic Gardens (rather like Melbourne's Myer Bowl) and yet another in the grounds of the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.

It was in this last location that I saw the Darwin Theatre Company's recent production of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, and a thoroughly delightful experience it was. To call it an amphitheatre as such is a bit of an overstatement, but it is a lovely garden, with a natural slope (on which was built bleacher-seating for about 160) and good tree plantings providing a suitable 'tiring-house' area for the actors as well a diversity of entrance and exit points. The site was beautifully exploited by director Tom Pauling (who doubles as NT Solicitor General by day) and designer Joanna Barrkman. Add a starlit sky and a naturally pure acoustic and you have a venue to die for. Having seen this pastoral comedy in such an idyllic setting, it's easy to imagine the effectiveness of Shakespeare's war plays in the brooding atmosphere of the old gun gurret or of indoor/outdoor plays like *A Winter's Tale* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the Town Hall Ruins.

Pauling's production was a relatively orthodox one, unencumbered by modernist interpretational frills, and his cast (a mix of older and younger actors) gave the play a good, clear rendition. The costumes, which in open-air venues carry the main burden of the designer's statement, were a mix of children's storybook Robin Hood for the Forest of Arden and King Arthur mediaeval for the court characters. It worked well enough, although the much-mentioned 'Winter and rough weather' cold of the exiles' bitter experience was a bit hard to cop.

The DTC's annual dry season Shakespeare productions are always 'pro-am' affairs and they are almost invariably given out of doors. They are also almost always packed out: Pauling estimated that *As You Like It* would have played to 101 per cent capacity! Next up, the company embarks on fully-professional productions of David Williamson's *Sanctuary* and Michael Gow's *Sweet Phoebe*. These will have their Darwin seasons indoors in a rebuilt historic miners' exchange) and will tour widely through the Territory.

Elsewhere in town, the Bougainvillea Festival and Fringe Festival were in full swing. Some of the Festival events were presented in the Darwin Performing Arts Centre (a purpose-built, indoors theatre complex with a 1001-seat proscenium-arch Playhouse and a new 298-seat flexible Studio theatre) which is mainly used for touring productions from down south as part of the extensive Northern Australian Regional Performing Arts Centres Association.

THE TEN-YEAR-OLD Corrugated Iron Youth Theatre's August production, *Branded*, also did a sold-out season to an extraordinarily mixed audience—one far too large to have been composed of just parents and friends—in a community youth centre in suburban Nightcliff. The show was about the effects on a débutant rock band of the twin scourges of

teen life: substance abuse (specifically, alcohol) and sexual activity and it was written and directed by Corrugated Iron's Artistic Director, Maggie Miles. I found the primary emphasis on the dangers of alcohol consumption a shade didactically heavy-handed at first, but in a town whose alcohol intake is the highest in the nation (road-trains of frightening proportions distribute their loads of grog daily throughout the Territory from the very wharf where such innocent people's merrymakings as those described above are enjoyed nightly) I could see the point of Miles' community concern. Her decision to stage the company's annual big show in this suburban location was also clearly an intelligent one and it was vindicated by the substantial general community audience as well as the many teenagers.

A SENSE OF COMMUNITY (albeit of a slightly different kind) also permeated my impressions of a brief trip to Adelaide, exemplified in various ways. One of them was the enterprising 'Threesome' season of productions at Theatre 62, undertaken by three of Adelaide's up-and-coming project-funded and fringe companies and auspiced by that city's senior Community Theatre Company, Junction Theatre Company. Junction began life back in 1983 as a Trade Union-based 'art-and-working-life' theatre group, touring workplaces and factory canteens in workers' lunch-hours with purpose-made short pieces about various issues relating to working people.

More recently it has been forced by workplace changes (and shrinking lunch-breaks and work-forces in a distinctly 'rust-belt' city) to ply a new trade more attuned to attracting audiences into theatre venues (not necessarily plush orthodox ones, however) for more popular entertainments.

The three companies, and their productions, are Ambush, with a comedy about mateship called *Blokes* by local young writer David Ross; Living Voice, with a love/hate, mother/daughter play about relationships entitled *When I Was A Girl I Used To Scream And Shout*, by the Scottish playwright Sharman MacDonald; and Not So Straight Theatre, a gay group whose play by Stephen House, *One Plus One*, is about love and infidelity in an imperfect world. Their joint-venture subscription season over five weeks in August and September was facilitated by a special Australia Council grant and was set up to enable the fledgling companies to gain greater profile, publicity access and audience exposure through the joint marketing scheme.

A similar scheme operated throughout 1995 in Brisbane under the title of 'Open Doors', a joint marketing and subscription arrangement—with a similarly informative season brochure—among five major and minor companies, auspiced by La Boîte.

FURTHER EVIDENCE of company co-operation in Adelaide can be seen in the collaboration between South Australia's premier Young People's Theatre company, Magpie, and the young people's modern dance ensemble, Outlet Dance, on a joint performance project which promises to be very exciting when the product is seen. Even in the doughtily mainstream Adelaide Festival Centre, a spirit of co-operation is in the air. This was seen on one level through the resident State Theatre company, whose Executive Producer, Chris Westwood, is reported as being at least partly instrumental in bringing new talents like Living Voice to broader notice and to have encouraged them to achieve government funding for their projects. Not to be outdone, Adelaide Festival Centre program manager, Andrew Bleby, has used some of the profits from high-profile entrepreneurial activity to subsidise projects like the Brave New Works, which showcase new work by smaller companies such as Doppio Teatro, Restless Dance Company, Not So Straight and others in the Centre's Space Theatre.

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT this is the kind of leadership which mainstream companies and infrastructure organisations should be showing.

Another recent initiative in Adelaide is an annual subscription season of national and international theatre productions, put together by the Festival Centre Trust. Designed at least in part to increase the usage of the Centre's theatres, the World Theatre '95 season certainly also increases the amount of theatre available to Adelaide audiences.

Among the productions listed in this year's brochure are Playbox's production of *Sanctuary*, Circus Oz, the Royal National Theatre of Great Britain's much-lauded *An Inspector Calls*, Circa Theatre Wellington's *Joyful and Triumphant* from New Zealand and both *Hamlet* and *The Tempest* from Sydney's Belvoir St Theatre.

Whether this kind of season will ultimately prove to be complementary to other mainstream theatre activity in Adelaide (notably the State Theatre's) or merely a source of competition to it remains to be seen, but it is certainly an impressive listing. ■

Geoffrey Milne teaches theatre and drama in the School of Arts and media at La Trobe University.

Splash for cash

Waterworld, dir. Kevin Reynolds (Hoyts). Sometime in the future the earth is covered by water and the remaining humans struggle to survive on small floating atolls contending against the hostile elements and constant attacks by sea pirates known as Smokers. A drifter called Mariner (Kevin Costner) stops at one such atoll for supplies. The inhabitants discover he is a mutant and imprison him. When the atoll is attacked by Smokers he escapes with the help of Helen (Jeanne Tripplehorn) and her adopted daughter Enola (Tina Majorino). However, Enola has a secret that Deacon (Dennis Hopper)— the quasi-religious leader of the Smokers—wants. On her back is tattooed a map showing the way to Dryland. Got the picture?

Waterworld is reported to have cost nearly US$200 million. Given the elaborate sets, non-stop action and wonderful photography by Dean Semmler, it's obvious where most of the money went. Unfortunately this is just one more post-apocalypse movie, and, frankly, there are much better, and cheaper, examples of the genre—*Mad Max* for one.

The really disappointing thing about *Waterworld* is that the underlying story of competing views of how the world came to be covered by water (was it created thus or is it the result of some past ecological disaster?), and the idea of a people, ill-suited to their environment, searching for the 'promised land', form the basis for what could have been a great story. But *Waterworld* fails in its attempt to combine mythology and action—so successfully done in the *Stars Wars* trilogy—and we are left with nothing more than a futuristic chase movie. ■

—Tim Stoney

Split Ends

The Separation dir. Christian Vincent (independent cinemas). So many films pose simple questions to which they give simple answers yet sometimes you can walk out of a film less certain of things than when you walked in, and be happy to do so. *The Separation* is such a film.

It is the anatomy of a very modern break-up. Pierre (Daniel Auteuil) and Anne's (Isabelle Huppert) relationship doesn't fail because of trauma, violence or circumstance, but because of ebbing passion. Isabelle is the first to realise and accept that the fire has gone, however Pierre seeks to retrieve what has been lost, and in doing so becomes resentful and confused. He seeks the counsel of his friends Victor (Jerome Deschamps) and Claire (Karin Viard) when he discovers Anne is seeing another man. As they drift apart Anne is more impervious and Pierre more desperate. Their 18-month-old-son becomes a relic of their love and the only thing which they are mutually desirous of. Anne gets to keep the boy, and Pierre is left to ponder what went wrong.

The Separation is about the pain of breaking up and there is a sense of inevitability about the way Pierre and Anne hurt each other in spite of themselves that questions if there is something essentially masochistic in human nature. At times the story is arduous but it is always self-assured, and it doesn't take the soft option of providing easy answers at its conclusion. ■

—Jon Greenaway

An eye full

That Eye, The Sky dir. John Ruane (independent cinemas). Anyone who goes looking for comedy in a graveyard in the way that John Ruane did in *Death in Brunswick* isn't shy of a challenge, but Tim Winton's *That Eye, The Sky* was never going to be an easy project for even as resourceful a director as Ruane. I was reminded of something Paul Theroux said about the filming of his novel *The Mosquito Coast*: it took him five minutes on his own to think up the idea of an ice factory in an equatorial jungle and it required an entire Hollywood department to build it. Winton wrote *That Eye, The Sky* in a matter of weeks. Its freshness and intensity survive any number of rereadings. The film cost some millions and is a tame experience by comparison. It is eluded by the delicate shifting of religious experiences and the hunger for a spiritual vocabulary which are burnt like rubber onto the pages of the book.

But let's be fair. John Ruane relishes a story and tells it to effect. Ort Flack (Jamie Croft) is a 12-year-old whose father, Sam (Mark Fairall) is incapacitated in a road accident near their homestead. A stranger, Henry Warburton (Peter Coyote) appears from nowhere to help Ort's mother, Alice (Lisa Harrow) with the burden of a sick husband. He shows the family more open ways of living but at the same time makes impositions. Ort learns how to live in a world which seems to expand and contract at the same time. The film has a narrative drive which lets it ride over some of its own awkwardness. And it has a wonderful scene in a church. ■

—Michael McGirr

Eureka Street
Film Competition

Tell us what might have been going through Marlon Brando's mind during this bongo solo and we'll send you $30.00—enough for two movie tickets and an industrial-sized box of jaffas. Send entries to: *Eureka Street* Film competition, PO Box 553, Richmond 3121. The winner of the August competition was Annette Lyons of Glen Iris, Victoria, who was spot on with Lana Turner's real name—Julia Turner. Not much difference really.

One's old man

D'Artagnan's Daughter, dir Bertrand Tavernier (independent cinemas) You'd think that just about every twist imaginable has been wrought on Alexandre Dumas' famous tale of chivalry and deceit, but Tavernier and scriptwriter Michael Leviant have come up with a new chapter, and plenty of swashbuckling action and tongue-in-cheek humour, to pad out the adventures of the famous Musketeers.

Eloise D'Artagnan (Sophie Marceau) has been cloistered in a convent since, as a young girl, she was left there by her father. Inadvertently, she uncovers a plot to assassinate the soon-to-be-crowned King Louis XIV, and so sets out to find her estranged father and seek his help in exposing the conspirators.

D'Artagnan (Philippe Noiret) has been dismissed from the King's service in disgrace and, understandably, doesn't have much interest in assassination plots. But the spirited coaxing of Eloise brings him out of retirement to gather the Musketeers for one final adventure before arthritis and haemorrhoids disqualify them.

D'Artagnan's Daughter is a riotous, slapstick period piece, with Marceau strong, confident and predictably feisty as the heroine. But it is the Musketeers, D'Artagnan, Porthos (Rauol Billerey), Athos (Jean-Luc Bideau) and Aramis (Sami Frey), who stir their ageing bones, romantic memories and by now not-so-deft swordsmanship to ensure that justice is done. ■

—Tim Stoney

Tall tale

All Men Are Liars dir. Gerard Lee (Hoyts, Greater Union). After seeing the film my friend said 'It's Shakespeare'—and she was right! 'Liars' is a cross-dressing, feel good comedy in the vein of *As You Like It*, with a North Queensland country-town setting, local simpletons and true love found, lost and found again.

As in that other famous film, a piano is a vital plot-mover and the sound track, boasting rockabilly and some good new songs, is well worth a listen. The cast is packed with new talent and a funny, complex script is strong enough to make risky sentimental moments utterly believable. Issues of homosexuality, transsexuality and domestic violence could have made for a far darker film, but every tense moment dissolves on impact. God is given an unusually up-front role in the film, represented by the Sacred Heart icon and invoked in 12 year old Tom's prayers to bring his mother home, whispered before his totemic snakes. God is a warm presence, making sure goodwill, truth and love triumph against the odds. ■

—Jane Buckingham

Look here

Exotica, dir. Atom Egoyan (independent cinemas) extends the concern with human desires and their deformations that characterised earlier Egoyan films such as *Family Viewing* (1988). 'Exotica' is a club where lap dancers act out the erotic fantasies of men who pay to see them, and each night Francis (Bruce Greenwood) arrives in time to watch Christina (Mia Kirshner) shed her gymslip with as much affected schoolgirl innocence as she can muster.

Exotica will probably be a magnet for the dirty raincoat brigade but Egoyan's voyeuristic preoccupations deserve better. Sexuality of the look-but-don't-touch variety marks an alienated personality: someone who is focused on, but not engaged with, the object of arousal. And Egoyan is exploring the sources of this alienation. What traps someone in a fantasy?

In *Family Viewing*, the emphasis was on how manufactured images, especially television and video, warp human relationships by becoming substitutes for them. In *Exotica* the fantasy is enshrined in a real person, the lap dancer, but in the process her reality virtually diminishes to that of an image on a screen. And the irony, of course, is that this is all being registered in a series of images on a screen, the film itself.

The 'family' side of the equation continues in *Exotica*, too. Francis and Christina share a dark secret with Eric (Elias Koteas), the master of ceremonies at Exotica, and with Francis' brother Harold (Victor Garber) and Harold's daughter, Tracey (Sarah Polley). The mystery is revealed layer by layer, like a striptease, and if the conclusion becomes obvious sometime before it is actually reached, well, that's in the nature of striptease, isn't it? ■

—Ray Cassin

Laboured

Nine Months dir. Chris Columbus (Hoyts) Based on the French film of the same name, *Nine Months* has been eagerly awaited for all the wrong reasons, thanks to the off-screen antics of its star Hugh Grant. After seeing the film one could cynically suggest that the incident in the BMW was staged to entice the punters to see what should otherwise be a complete flop.

Hugh Grant appears as Dr Samuel Faulkner, child psychologist and

Correction:
In Jon Greenaway's review of *Apollo 13* (*ES* September) Tom Hanks appeared as Tom Cruise and Bill Paxton as Fred Haise. Sorry, but there was no time for re-entry.

reluctant father, bumbling his way through an ideal existence in San Francisco, complete with red Porsche and weekends in the country. Cute smiles and English public schoolboy charm are in abundance as he tries to come to terms with the pregnancy of his partner Rebecca who is desperate to start a family. Sam's efforts are not helped by chance encounters with the chaotic Marty and Gail Dwyer whose uncontrollable offspring represent all he loathes about family life.

On the other side of the coin, his friend Sean Fletcher (Jeff Goldblum), the ultimate bachelor, is fed up with shallow and meaningless relationships, and urges him not to lose what he has with Rebecca. As he grapples with the choices presented to him he is embroiled in a series of comic scenarios that aim to give the funny bone a good ol' whack.

Unfortunately they miss the mark. The film consists of one joke stretched over an hour and a half and a pile of clichés topped off by the entirely predictable rush to hospital at the ending. There is some comic relief provided by Robin Williams as the Russian veterinarian-cum-obstetrician in charge of the birth but even he only manages to elicit the odd titter.

In essence *Nine Months* is an attempt to handle child-birth in the way *Four Weddings and a Funeral* dealt with marriage but fails in the attempt. ■

—Jon Greenaway

Let's dance

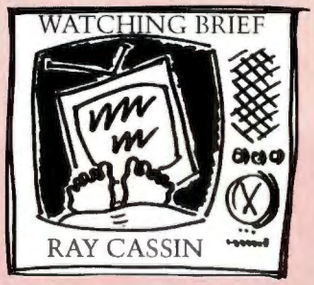
The Conformist, dir. Bernardo Bertolucci (independent cinemas). This 1970 adaptation of an Alberto Moravia novel was not only its director's finest film, but also provided a self-referencing title for his most notorious one. For it is here that we get to see the *first* tango in Paris—and fortunately, it has nothing to do with the tedious erotic groanings of an ageing Marlon Brando.

The dancers are played by Dominique Sanda, who exudes a bisexual slinkiness that rolls Dietrich, Bacall and Garbo into one (I don't just mean that she looks good in trousers and knows how to wield a cigarette), and Stefania Sandrelli. The former is the wife of an Italian philosopher who has fled Mussolini's Rome for Paris, and the latter is newly married to the Conformist of the title, an aristocrat craving middle-class normality (Jean-Louis Trintignant). Once he studied under the philosopher, but now he has been sent to Paris to kill him.

Other filmmakers of the '60s and early '70s tackled the relationship between political and sexual repression (Visconti with his lurid *The Damned*, Pasolini with the coprophiliac mire of *Salo*) but in *The Conformist* Bertolucci displayed a finesse that his contemporaries lacked, and that he himself was to lose when he returned to similar themes in the bloated, unwieldy *1900*.

The film's success is partly due to superb performances by Sanda and Trintignant, but above all it is a triumph for the visual imaginations of Bertolucci and his director of photography, Vittorio Storaro (who worked with Coppola on *The Godfather* and *Apocalypse Now*, and restored *The Conformist* for its new release). This is essentially an architectural film: its stylised sets, designed by Vittorio Scarfiotti, convey more forcefully than words ever could the shrinkage of individuals in the grim public spaces and rituals of totalitarian states, and its centrepiece dance, the tango, reminds us that there are also rituals that liberate rather than repress. ■

—Ray Cassin



Show 'n' hell time

JUST AS OTHER RELIGIONS HAVE THEIR TRUE BELIEVERS, their heretics and their infidels, so the great *ersatz* religion of television has its true and false viewers. And, just as the same individual can waver between faith, heresy and unbelief, so are most of us both true and false viewers, moving from time to time between one state and the other. The switch between truth and falsehood, moreover, is like the channel selector on a remote control: as often as not it is tapped idly, without much previous reflection on the part of the viewer.

It is easier to describe the false viewer first, for it is always easier to define an heretical deviation than to formulate orthodox doctrine. Television is watched falsely when we treat it as a kind of miniature cinema in the corner of the living room, something that we switch on deliberately because we want to watch a specific program. And yes, that's how we would all like to be all of the time, for it would be evidence that we did not really need the religion's cathode-ray consolations but could enjoy them or not, as we pleased.

Television's true believers, however, confess that its essential nature is not to be switched on, but to be left on. We watch it truely when we think of it not as a series of discrete programs, connected by advertisements, but as a series of electronic stimuli that grab our attention from time to time, and among which the advertisements are as likely to absorb us as many of the programs. The people who pay large sums of money to buy advertising time on television understand this, of course, but they do not always understand that television audiences are not mere receptacles for whatever message it is that the advertiser has to push.

True viewers, as defined above, may be more passive than false ones. But, just as the evangelist haranguing a congregation is likely to lose street cred by proclaiming that there's not much difference between Jesus and Satan anyhow, so too can the true worshippers of television sniff out the heretics amid the great throng of advertisers clamouring for their attention. The worshippers know that all those electronic stimuli are there to provoke as well as to entertain, but how willing they are to be provoked, and what they are prepared to find entertaining, depends on much more than what the advertiser thinks they ought to see. Simply, there are some things that people don't want to see.

You know what I mean. If only the Transport Accident Commission of Victoria and its counterparts in other states did, too. It's always the moralisers who transgress most when it comes to belabouring us with the reality that humankind cannot bear very much of. And the road-safety evangelists have sinned most grievously. They were not the first to fall, of course, for the Grim Reaper AIDS commercials of some years past probably prepared the way for the notion that the best way to change people's behaviour is to scare them witless. Since there is no hard evidence that the Reaper and his ludicrous bowling ball did much at all to change sexual practices (I do not suggest that other AIDS awareness campaigns have been ineffectual), one might have thought that evangelists for other causes would have avoided adopting similar tactics. Alas, it has not been so.

THE TRANSPORT ACCIDENT COMMISSION began its Brueghelian portraits of the damned with an inebriated driver who maimed his girlfriend and so got beaten up by her mother in the hospital casualty department. Oh, and who can forget Tracey's friend? Tracey was her best friend, you know, and she killed her. Then there was the young couple who foolishly drove all night to reach an outback holiday destination, only to run into the side of a truck in the early morning, and several carloads of young people who overtook when it was not safe to do so, thus ending up splattered all over the freeway. All these sequences were considered shocking, but all got cautious approval because the message is so important, after all.

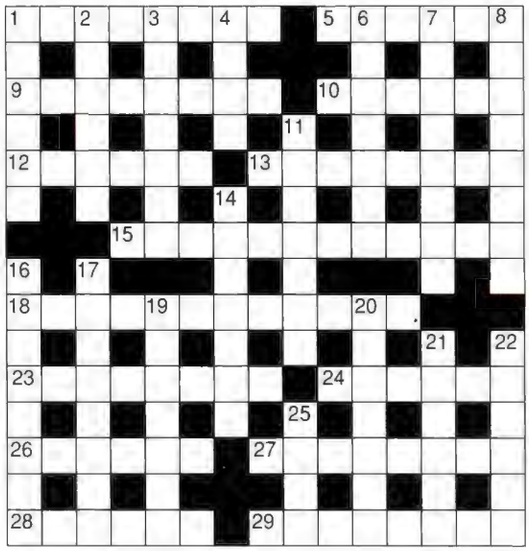
So far the sights were gruesome enough, but we were being shown results. The horror meter switched up a notch when we actually got to watch people die. Remember the car carrying two teenage girls, being pursued by a car carrying two teenage boys? The girls ran a red light at an intersection and struck another car. We watched as the woman who had been driving this car convulsed in her death agony, while a baby cried in the back seat. Finally, we have been privileged to see a small boy run on to the road in front of a speeding car, and then get crumpled under its wheels. The front *and* the back wheels, one bump after the other.

The problem with all this escalating horror, of course, is that it becomes counter-productive. People turn off—literally, if they are false viewers, emotionally if they are true ones. The road-safety evangelists will defend themselves by pointing out how many they have 'saved'. But we'll never really be sure the credit is theirs, will we? ■

Ray Cassin is a freelance writer.

Eureka Street Cryptic Crossword no. 37, October 1995

Devised by Joan Nowotny IBVM



ACROSS

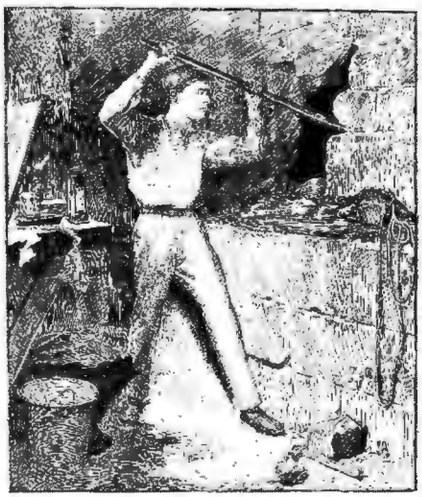
1 Curious crimes affect me in a hypnotic way. (8)
5 Having libelled the politicians, except the leading lady leftists, I produced something suitable for the table. (6)
9 His ducal horse-drawn carriage had a rough journey to reach this river in Queensland. (8)
10 The experts at Vatican II, for instance, would to some extent whisper it, I think. (6)
12 Brown boy riding a bay? Could be on the east coast. (6)
13 If seal be broken, is scheme possible? (8)
15 Wonderland girl leaps up to go to a town like this. (5,7)
18 Go east three times and make a call to take part in this sport requiring map and compass. (12)
23 Film has been revised Adult Only—OK? Rang to find out if it was about this animal. (8)
24 Recently dead? (6)
26 Some flower cultivator chided the intruders for touching this bloom. (6)
27 Could be aunt's account. (8)
28 Difficult to make omelettes in such a deprived state. (2,4)
29 Turn a weapon on a conservative politician; he's of little value. (8)

DOWN

1 The Marylebone Cricket Club awarded a Bachelor of Engineering to Stan, the cricketer. (6)
2 Could be nasty about a hundred if it is considered too few. (6)
3 And French learn about consequences that are everlasting. (7)
4 Edge along gradually to the small island. (4)
6 Actors' assistant uses the shelves. (7)
7 If cooked brains be a delicacy, the Queensland city takes the cake! (8)
8 When I'm unusually sleepy, Greek letter reminds me of this disease. (8)
11 Lock back from French course. (7)
14 Dull pain for boy in river in Hades. (7)
16 & 26-across. Concoct metropolis flower for symbol of Queensland. (8,6)
17 Yearn for salt (the chemical) within bounds, and aspire to reach the very top. (8)
19 National Education Association circle is closing. (7)
20 A Royal Academician returns for profit, but fails and falls. (7)
21 Your sheep or mine, perhaps! Australia rides on its back. (6)
22 One could possibly deny South Yarra is in a major city. (6)
25 Beautiful boy friend loses more than half his handsome quality. (4)

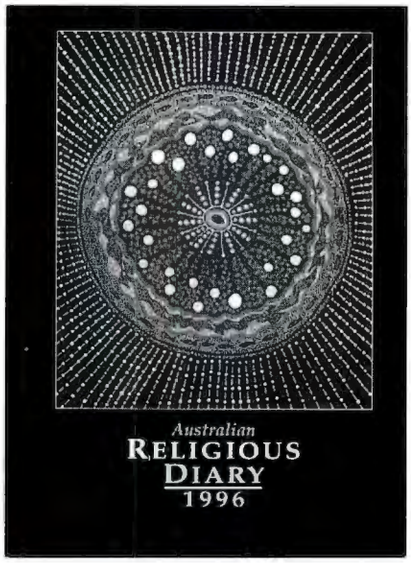
Solution to Crossword no. 36, September 1995

F	O	O	T	B	A	L	L	■	F	I	N	A	L	S
■	■	B	■	A	■	I	■	P	■	R	■	L	■	Y
A	U	S	T	R	A	L	I	A	N	R	U	L	E	S
N	■	E	■	R	■	A	■	R	■	U	■	O	■	T
C	A	R	D	I	A	C	■	A	M	P	U	T	E	E
E	■	V	■	E	■	■	■	L	■	T	■	■	■	M
■	F	A	I	R	P	L	A	Y	■	S	I	N	A	I
S	■	N	■	■	■	U	■	S	■	■	■	E	■	C
T	O	T	A	L	■	C	R	E	A	T	I	V	E	■
R	■	■	■	I	■	I	■	■	■	S	■	E	■	O
A	L	L	E	G	E	D	■	S	Q	U	A	R	E	D
P	■	A	■	N	■	I	■	C	■	N	■	T	■	E
P	H	Y	S	I	O	T	H	E	R	A	P	I	S	T
E	■	E	■	T	■	Y	■	N	■	M	■	R	■	T
D	A	R	K	E	N	■	P	E	K	I	N	E	S	E



My Eureka Street has got to be around here somewhere!

EUREKA STREET & Aurora Books



Special Book Offer

Australian Religious Diary 1996

The Australian Religious Diary includes Anglican, Eastern Rite, Jewish, Lutheran, Muslim, Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Uniting Church days, as well as the complete Sunday and daily Christian lectionary. It is hardcover, illustrated by Australian religious artists and covers 13 months from the first Sunday in December.

Eureka Street has eight copies of this superb diary to give away, each worth $24.95. Mark your envelope '*Eureka Street* October Giveaway', put your name and address on the back and send it to PO Box 553, Richmond, 3121.

Share your good Will...

The Jesuits are committed to a Christian faith that seeks to build a more just world.

To continue their work both here and overseas with:

- Youth
- Refugees
- Aborigines
- Prisoners
- The Homeless

the Jesuits rely on the generous support of donors.

You can help sustain these efforts by making a bequest in yourWill.

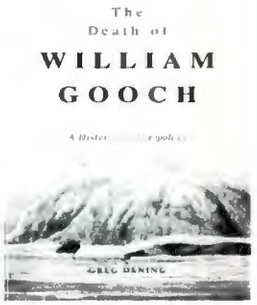
For further information contact:
Fr Daven Day S.J.
130 Power Street
Hawthorn, VIC 3122
Telephone (03)8181336

THE DEATH OF WILLIAM GOOCH

A History's Anthropology

GREG DENING

Greg Dening, the prize-winning author of *Mr Bligh's Bad Language* explores the ways historians weave interpretation and meaning into the fabric of history itself. A masterly look at the subtle shades of historical enquiry.



RRP $29.95 Paperback

Melbourne University Press

ISSN 1036-1758