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There's nothing virtual about Future Shock

EDITORIAL

Published 10-Jul-2006



We recently received some comments from a longtime reader from New Zealand, who misses *Eureka Street* in the print medium. He admitted that he is struggling to adapt to online media, which he says are strong on allusion, but weak on focus.

Online publishing puts us in touch with many conversations. But there is a danger that it will sever the necessary link between our awareness of the cultures and debates in the world, and the humanity at the core of our being. It's 36 years since Alvin Toffler co-wrote *Future Shock*. Speaking to [Phillip Adams](#) on the ABC last week, he reiterated his view that humanity and technology are in a state of collision.

Our Kiwi correspondent reflects on his own country, which was last month transfixed by a case of domestic violence in which two babies were killed. Allusion helps us make sense of such violence and tragedy. But there is a danger that it will divert us from a focus on effective solutions. Toffler speaks of the role non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have in helping to achieve what governments fail to accomplish.



One such NGO is the [Jesuit Refugee Service](#) (JRS), In this issue of *Eureka Street*, Kent Rosenthal shares his first-hand experience with JRS in Haiti, where corruption and ineptitude in government and business make for intolerable living conditions in which migration to the Dominican labour camps represents a better life. Advocacy is what NGOs are about. Advocacy is not merely solidarity, but the engineering of change that fixes living conditions and provides for human dignity.



Haiti impinges little on our world, but the problem of broken and unscrupulous governments is universal. Closer to home, there is some light on the horizon in East Timor, with the weekend's appointment of Jose Ramos Horta as Prime Minister. Paul Cleary, who worked for former PM Mari Alkatiri, implies that the appointment is one small step towards making East Timor viable. And in Australia, the St Vincent de Paul Society's John Falzon makes it clear that the the Welfare to Work legislation that took effect on 1 July represents a major setback for the dignity of this country's poor.

[Click here](#) to download an MP3 audio version of this editorial.

Vinnies' sad heart over Welfare to Work legislation

AUSTRALIA

Published 10-Jul-2006

1. Australia at the dawn of the 21st century: More like the 19th? More divided than diverse?

...¢ How many feel oppressed and blamed for their oppression?

...¢ How many ask: What does it profit the country that we be pushed and shoved like this? Will anyone profit from us, pushed off income security and into low-paid jobs?

...¢ In 1848 Ozanam, wrote of the burning need to take the side of ...œthe people who have too many needs and not enough rights....

...¢ Australia 2006: unprecedented changes to our social security and industrial relations frameworks. Combined, these changes will supply cheap labour, driven by legislative sticks into the lowest and most insecure end of the labour market.

...¢ How many of us would love the chance to connect? But this is not connection. How many of us will suffer and how many of our children will suffer? Not connection; catastrophe.

2. The prophets cry blue murder: ...œWoe betide those who enact unjust laws and draft oppressive legislation, depriving the poor of justice, robbing the weakest of my people of their rights, plundering the widow and despoiling the fatherless.... (Isaiah 10:1-3)

...¢ Paul VI wrote of the mutilating effects of 'oppressive social structures, whether due to abuses of ownership or to the abuses of power, to the exploitation of workers or to unjust transactions....

3. Remember the story that Nathan told to David? (Samuel 12:1-7) The one about the poor man's lamb that the rich man took possession of and slaughtered even though he had many flocks and herds of his own?

...¢ Bewildered, we watch the little we have, we who survive on the margins, being taken away.

...¢ We're told that this is good for us; that it's good for us to take care of ourselves even if this means being poorer and more crushed.

...¢ Some of us live in cars or on the streets.

...¢ Some of us are homeless - one in every three is a child.

...¢ Two out of three children who seek assistance from a homelessness service are turned away each day...|

...¢ This is not good for us. This is not good for our children.

4. We feel like we're pushed with sticks.

...¢ As if this is all we understand.

...¢ Our incomes have been lowered. What does this teach us? How are we to give our children breakfast, let alone birthday cakes? How should we explain this to our children, the flesh of our flesh?

...¢ *How shall we sing...]?...* (Psalm 137:42)

5. We had no choice. We had to sign the contract. When we left work to help our children who were sick, we lost not only our jobs but 8 weeks of income from the Government.

...¢ This is not good for our children.

...¢ Centrelink sent us to a charity.

...¢ It's justice we're after.

6. How's our future going?

...¢ Crushed.

...¢ We're accused of ...œwelfare dependency... . We're told that ...œwelfare dependency... is not benign. What do you call the cancer of poverty? Working poverty or the poverty that breaching brings: neither of these is benign. It is not good to jump out of the frying pan and

7. into the fire.

8. Are we the ones who must pay to make our country more competitive?

9. ...œI feel like a dreadful mother when I say this, but I used to be out of the door at 6:00 am. I'd ring home at 7:00 am to wake [the children] up. They would get ready for school and I would meet them on the way home.... (Living Low Paid Report)

Are we wrong to feel that it is easier to exploit us than to house us or to enable us to claim the power that comes from learning?

10. This is our ...œstruggle for justice and love in the world of today.... (Psalm 137:42)

"We won't be silenced. We are desperate to ...œmake all things new.... (Revelation 21:5)

On 1 July, the new [Welfare to Work legislation](#) was implemented. We at Vinnies marked this day with a sad heart. The new laws will see many people with disabilities and single mothers and their children pushed into greater poverty and indignity.



[Our members](#) feel a deep sense of compassion for the people who will suffer under these new laws. We will stand with them in their financial stress as well as their sense of despair.

We cannot understand why the people we assist should be further oppressed. The point of good government is to address our nation's problems; not to create



new ones.

We have consistently voiced our support for policies that enable people to move from welfare to work. We oppose, however, any moves that drive vulnerable people from one social security benefit to a lower benefit and then into jobs that actually keep them in poverty.

To expose sole parents and people with disabilities to the threat of eight weeks payment suspension is an example of the Government's sticks rather than carrots' approach.

To then refer some of these victims of breaching to charities is a further means of humiliating them rather than empowering them. We will not participate in this ill-conceived program.



We anticipate that our members will see a significant increase in the number of people seeking assistance due to the combination of these Welfare Laws and the Industrial Relations laws.

We will always provide whatever charitable assistance we can. In the words of Vinnies Founder Frederic Ozanam, these people deserve justice rather than charity.

Ozanam said: "Charity is the Samaritan who pours oil on the wounds of the traveller who has been attacked. It is the role of justice to prevent the attack."



Filters, fixes and flimsy in new Net policy

AUSTRALIA

Politics

Published 10-Jul-2006



The Internet has revolutionised business, brought families together across the geographic divide and networked like-minded groups for good causes. But it has also delivered an unprecedented flood of pornography and graphic violence into our homes, schools and offices. Just how to deal with it presents a problem for parents, teachers and governments.

Communications Minister Helen Coonan's latest plan is to give every family in the country a free Internet filter program for their computer. She described it as "the single biggest commitment to protecting families online in the history of the Internet in Australia". The government is also putting more money into its NetAlert advisory service for parents and will roll out a community education program - all at a cost of \$117 million. But the families lobby, Labor, Family First and many government MPs are adamant the real solution lies with filtering at the Internet service provider (ISP) level.

They argue that it would be better for children to receive a "clean feed" from the service provider than have parents, many of whom are computer illiterate, configure filters on their home computers. But while the government is watching the results of trials of ISP level filtering in Tasmania, it is reluctant to force ISPs to act. Senator Coonan argues there is much evidence against ISP-level filtering.

She says it slows Internet access down considerably, it cannot deal with unsavoury goings-on in chat rooms and other parts of the Internet, and it is costly. What's more, it would encourage parents to take a hands-off approach, under the belief that their children can navigate the net free of any disturbing images or dodgy characters wanting to chat with them. "You wouldn't send your child out to ride their bike without a helmet, or let them travel in a car without a seat belt, so why would we let them surf the Internet without the protection of an effective filter?" she says. But Labor communications spokesman Stephen Conroy says 'clean feed' technology is working in Britain, Norway and Sweden and a Beazley government would implement such a scheme.

He points to independent advice given to the government which said it causes a delay of only 10 milliseconds - an insignificant blip in the scheme of things - and there is no extra cost to the consumer.

Senator Conroy says the minister is ignoring the fact that two in three households did not use filters - either for reasons of cost or lack of computer literacy.

At least 60 Government MPs have come out in support of ISP level filtering and have lobbied the minister to keep an open mind on the issue. While there is evidence that Internet porn is becoming a serious problem, the law is slow to



Media Release
\$116.6 million to Protect Australian Families Online
The Government will create a National Filter Scheme to provide every Australian family with a free, on-line, \$116.6 million comprehensive package of measures to combat the scourge of pornography, the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Senator Helen Coonan, today announced.
The National Filter Scheme is the centerpiece of the Australian Government's Protecting Families package. Protecting Families Online will also include measures to provide Australian internet users with computer centers. All internet access Australia will become child-friendly zones.
As part of the implementation of the package the National Library of Australia will be required to install an all of its public access internet terminals, with the option of disabling the filter when the terminals are not in use.

recognise the fact. In Brisbane just this month (July) a man was jailed for six months after collecting more than 52,000 pornographic computer images of children.

The prosecutor told the court it was one of the worst cases of its kind in Queensland legal history because of the number and type of images involved - including infants being involved in sex acts and children involved in bestiality.

But a six-month jail term was given because of a number of mitigating factors - there was no commercial aspect to the crime, the man cooperated with police and was suffering depression at the time.



The case raises question marks over the effectiveness of the law. Recent figures published by the Australian Communications and Media Authority showed it received 293 complaints about pornography on the Internet from January to April and acted on 236 of them. Of the total, only 12 web pages which attracted take-down notices were posted in Australia, with the remainder appearing on overseas sites.

ACMA cannot make an overseas web host take down an item, but rather asks the makers of Internet filter software to block the sites. For Australian-hosted items, ACMA can issue a take-down notice and if the content host does not comply it faces a maximum penalty per day of \$5,500 for an individual and \$27,500 for a corporation. Potentially criminal content, such as child pornography, is referred to the federal police.

But even this seems to be ineffective.

The real solution would seem to be a broad-based approach to cracking down on pornography at every level:

- * Boosting global efforts to crack down on those who initially produce it and post it on the net
- * Nabbing those who download it;
- * Filtering content at the ISP level;
- * Educating parents and teachers about desktop-level filter programs and providing them free of charge to all.

But perhaps the most important step would be to give children a positive self-image and set of values, and teach them about the productive uses of one of the most revolutionary technologies in recent decades.

Roman Polanski's Oliver Twist

FILM REVIEW

Drama

Published 10-Jul-2006

Oliver Twist: Director: Roman Polanski. Starring: Barney Clarke, Jermey Swift, Ian McNeice, Timothy Bateson, Ben Kingsley. Running Time: 130 minutes, Rating: PG

Charles Dickens was a scholar of humanity. So who better to interpret his work, the oft-filmed children's classic *Oliver Twist*, than acclaimed director Roman Polanski and Academy Award winning screenwriter Ronald Harewood (*The Pianist*).

Roman Polanski is one of the few great directors still on top of his game, and this results in an immaculately designed snapshot of humanity in the industrial slums of mid-1800s London. Polanski shows a sympathetic eye for the mass of struggling humanity in this great city. Each character is brought to life inside the detailed production design, and even the extras that people the seething streets seem to have a life outside of the film.



The movie is for the most part true to the book, except for a few vital points. Firstly, the subplot concerning the mystery of Oliver's parentage is completely cut, so there is no gold locket, no Monks, no Old Sally and no Mrs Corney. Other than that, it does follow the book very closely, and even has a couple of scenes from the original book that no other film version has included (including Oliver narrowly escaping being apprenticed to a chimney-sweep, and his being briefly sheltered by a kindly old lady on his trek to London).

The film does alter aspects of the story in the second half, mainly to create a broader role for the characters of Fagan and Bill Sykes. Ben Kingsley is brilliant as Fagan, a role he seems to have waited a lifetime to play. His interpretation is full of hints about Fagan's earlier life, and under Polanski's deft direction he has perhaps summoned his greatest performance yet.

The fundamental problem with this *Oliver Twist* is *Oliver Twist*. Barney Clark seems lost in the title role; it is as if he has been mesmerised by the entire production.

Oliver's sufferings seem to mirror that of children in many places, and across the ages. When it is alleviated, it is not for those benign motivations of charity or civil duty. While a carriage full of prosperous people studiously ignores his plight, a poor old woman who has little herself cares for him. While the wealthy city is content for him to die on the street, a criminal feeds him. When Oliver finally takes his place in the middle class, a priggish religiosity reminds us of Victorian society's cure for criminality.

In the end Polanski knows, through the lense of history, what Dickens could only assert; that being, that individual decency and humanity alone can provide hope

and redemption.

Making music in Rio

FILM REVIEW

Documentary

Published 10-Jul-2006

Brasileirinho: Brazil, 90 minutes, Rating: PG

Director: Mika Kaurismäki



Brasileirinho is Finnish director Kaurismäki's brief tribute to 'choro', a musical genre that drew influences from old European waltz and Afro-Brazilian rhythms and beats and was the basis for both samba and bossa nova. This concise documentary breezes through one aspect of Brazilian musical culture and will entertain and surely bring a smile to your face.

Kaurismäki opens the film with a shot of Rio de Janeiro at night, the city lights glimmering off the Guanabara Bay. The musicians symbolically arrive by boat, much the same way the waltz and Afro rhythms did centuries before. The camera then snakes through Rio at night, a city of music clubs and bars, where the locals are warming up for a night of dancing and music while the trio combo 'Trio Madeira Brasil' prepare nervously for their show to begin. The curtains open; the musicians start playing the beautiful, soulful choro.

Initially based around the combo 'Trio Madeira Brasil', the film begins its journey into the history and culture of choro. Kaurismäki introduces us one at a time to new musicians who discuss their introductions to choro and how the music has influenced their own careers. We sit with them on patios, in cafes, and elsewhere. The musicians, who range in age from 16 to 70, are amiable and passionate. They break out into spontaneous guitar solos or songs to emphasise each point they make. From different socio-economic backgrounds, they all come together for choro. One particular scene that stands above others is an impromptu jam session held on a bus by a group of teenagers who travel four hours one way into Rio each weekend to learn more about their craft and passion. They play, each improvising, yet flowing seamlessly with the other guitarists, trombonists, trumpeters and tambourine players on the bus, completely capturing the more jazz and emotive aspects of choro.

The film is not about the musicians, but the music. Kaurismäki set out to 'capture the soul ... [the magic feeling and the unique emotional bond] of choro. As the film progresses, and the ensemble grows, we rehearse with them and join in the applause at the end of the show. Although we are given only a short time with each musician, the reality and frankness of the film allows us to connect with each of them. You are left completely satisfied and even discreetly swinging your hips as the credits roll.

Does God have a sense of humour?

THEOLOGY

Published 10-Jul-2006

At a coming seminar, Michael McGirr and Beverley Dunn will speak on the humour of God. It is a brave venture, the audacity of which has left many theologians speechless in admiration.

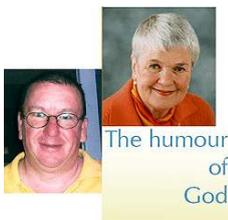
If we give God a sense of humour, what kind will it be? Humour differs across individuals and cultures. I may switch off *Funniest Home Videos* to watch the hundredth rerun of *Fawlty Towers*. But should I imagine God congratulating me on my superior sense of humour?



All theologians agree that God is different from us. If God has a sense of humour, it will differ totally from our humour. That is less sobering than it sounds, because if God is serious, his seriousness will also be totally different from ours.

But does God have sense of humour at all? Certainly, if humour is a good thing, a good God will have it. But it is not so evident that humour is really a good thing.

Much humour is designed to mock other people. It unites a group of people by excluding others. Humour can be brutal, as it is when an individual or a group are made the butt of jokes. But even benign humour works by exclusion as, for example, in jokes about Irishmen, Poles, blondes or lawyers. Try telling a joke about the Australian, the Englishman and the Irishman, but instead of the Irishman, make the Australian the comic figure. Your joke will be met with a puzzled and slightly hurt silence. You are excluding those whom jokes are meant to include. The humour is harmless, but it is alarming to contemplate God indulging in it?



Humour is also often a form of control. If conversation falls into a silence that might invite depth or intimacy, it is tempting to interject a facetious remark. We then assert control over a dangerously open-ended situation, and ensure that superficiality reigns. It is hard to imagine that God would need to use humour for self-defence.

For those of us endowed with higher gifts of humour, these forms may seem very primitive. But some of the greatest forms of humour rely on irony. It feeds on the gap between the world as we would like it to be and the reality that we know. It helps us to bear reality without yielding our ideal. The humour that flourishes under totalitarian regimes and self-deprecating humour offer examples of irony. It is subversive because it makes the present situation and regime seem impermanent and transient. But is hard to attribute irony to God, because by definition in God there would be no gap between ideal and reality.

But perhaps this human gap between human ideals and reality provides the space in which we might speak of God's humour. For when we say that a sense of humour is a gift, we usually think of its importance for handling that gap in ourselves and in others. The humourless person regards the gap as an affronting

wall against which heads are to be rammed. A sense of humour allows us to accept both ourselves and others who fail to meet our ideals.

A God who loves people and the world in their conflicted reality could then be said to have a sense of humour. It is not surprising that the Book of Jonah, which more than any other biblical text represents this kind of a God, is a richly comic work.

Some theologians open another front in the conversation by saying that the only way to know what God is like is to look at Jesus Christ. This argument does not help us say whether God has a sense of humour. There are few jokes in the New Testament, and Jesus' words are invariably serious.



But the Gospels do represent Jesus as a storyteller. You have only to look at a good storyteller holding an audience of children spellbound to see that humour is an essential part of the deal. The circumstantial detail and the possibilities of a well-told story must take you along the narrow ridge that runs between laughter and tears.

Perhaps we should explore the notion of God as a storyteller. In classical theology, God's stories are actions. What God says, God does. That a God should make and love such a crazy world as ours is a richly comic and happy notion.

Beverley Dunn and Michael McGirr will speak at the Mary Ward Symposium, Tuesday August 8, at St. Mary's College, Parkville, from 6.00 to 7.30 p.m. Rod Quantock will chair the symposium. [Click here](#) to download the flyer (PDF 1.3MB)

The Anglican division: God's love lost?

THEOLOGY

Published 10-Jul-2006



The Anglican Church is dividing, according to recent media statements. This view comes in response to a refreshing and frank essay from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, '[Challenge and Hope for the Anglican Communion](#)', taking up the evident stresses within it. His 'reflection for the Bishops, Clergy and Faithful of the Anglican Communion' follows the recent General Convention of the Episcopal Church of the USA, which formulated a careful if less than fulsome response to *The Windsor Report*.

What is meant by 'The Anglican Church', however? It is often assumed that it is some well-organised, centrally run global institution. 'Division' in such a body would thus mean parallel institutions, living as rivals with overlapping episcopal jurisdictions.

Much of the media debate, however, fails to acknowledge that we are talking about (and for Anglicans such as myself, living in) an Anglican *Communion*. As Williams writes, 'institutionally speaking, the Communion is an association of local churches, not a single organisation with a controlling bureaucracy and a universal system of law'. It is a 'communion' of churches seeking to live in the 'communion' of the triune God (as every Christian tradition seeks to do).

Humanly speaking, that the Church of England spread to become this now-global communion is something of an historical accident. Alongside this truth, Anglicans view this development as an act of divine providence, offering to the world a tradition both 'catholic' and 'reformed', open to embracing, within the tradition of the Scriptures, the ambiguities of history and the particularities of context as revelatory data.



The struggle over Anglican identity has engaged theological reflection on the importance of 'communion', *koinonia*, to what it means to be 'church'. In this way of looking at things, every person baptised -plunged by the Spirit into Christ's dying and living to be the child of the one heavenly Father -is thereby drawn into the love-life of the Holy Trinity, whose being is 'in communion'. That is where the 1998 Virginia and 2004 Windsor Reports not only begin, but find their life.

In what sense is it then possible to speak of 'division' in communion? As Archbishop Rowan acknowledges in his essay, those who see the full recognition of Christian gays and lesbians as the last straw, and those who view it as the breaking down of the next barrier to 'inclusion', may both conclude that God's gift of communion is shattered by the other. And some Anglicans do seem to be taking such extreme stances, albeit (to my mind) at the risk of turning communion as divine gift into communion as reward for holding certain stances on lifestyle (non-justification by non-works?).



But what difference does all this make to the life of an Australian Anglican diocese or parish in places such as Bendigo, where I live? There are differences of opinion across every diocese and in most congregations on such issues -but such differences barely touch the need to get on with God's mission. The relationship of my diocese with ECUSA, Nigeria, England or Sydney is secondary to the prospect of division *locally*.

And that is where the real danger lies. When 'ordinary' Anglicans read about 'division' in a supposedly global 'Anglican church', they may start seeing local relationships in terms of suspicion rather than trust. This can too easily begin to corrupt these, and so communion, not only between dioceses and/or congregations, but within Christian friends and households. And that quickly becomes an ecumenical and social issue.

One ironic facet of a debate whose public face concerns same-sex relationships 'in Christ', is the imagery employed. Marriage has now become the favoured metaphor to describe the situation: 'separated' but on the way to the divorce court is the way Archbishop Jensen puts it, while 'separated' but working for reconciliation is suggested by the Australian Anglican Primate, Archbishop Phillip Aspinall.

One wonders what those seeking to support classical Christian teaching on marriage as indivisible, *and* those seeking recognition for committed, exclusive same-sex relationships, make of such language! Has divorce now entered the Christian imagination as a central way to express truth? More significantly, such 'pair' language tends to underscore the dualistic, polemical assumption that opposites are in contention, rather than the Trinitarian language of churches 'being in communion'.



Language shapes our world. How Anglicans -and all Christians- speak about our communion (or lack of it) in God's love, may do as much damage as the debates in which we are taking part.

Virtual voyeurism

MEDIA

The Net

Published 10-Jul-2006



One of the earliest internet fads involved users setting up webcams, often in the privacy of their homes. Some were connected permanently, others operated sporadically. These webcams provided windows into the interior world of an individual. Some were enlightening, others salacious. All brought an element of personalisation to the internet, and along with this, a hitherto unknown 'connectedness' to the world. An early metaphor for the internet that was made famous by Australian academic McKenzie Wark was of the internet as a 'virtual geography.'

The Internet allows us to flit from global event to global event, and allows us to feel a sense of 'synchronicity' with the events of the wider world. The vast number of virtual experiences on the Internet creates an artificial reality. A virtual geography of media vectors means we can always be there -wherever 'there' is.

Walking through Federation Square on the way to the AFL Grand Final last year, I was bemused by the many football fans who used their their mobile phones while gesticulating wildly on the big screen. 'Look at moi!' A new take on the idea of a video phone, Fedcam (www.fedsq.com/index.cfm?pageID=55) encourages visitors to wave to friends overseas or at home.

From Melbourne we can virtually travel south to Mawson Station in the Antarctic (www.aad.gov.au/asset/webcams/mawson/default.asp). Every ten minutes a picture is taken and sent by a permanent satellite link to the Australian Antarctic Division's Headquarters located in Tasmania. The web photo is updated automatically. The site provides still photos taken over the last couple of days, as well as photos of the coldest, mildest and windiest days. It becomes quickly obvious why it is so dangerous to be caught in the snow during a windstorm: on the photo of the windiest day, nothing at all can be distinguished!



From the south to the north. At virtual.finland.fi/netcomm/news/showarticle.asp?intNWSAID=27690 , you will find a range of views of the picturesque Helsinki South Harbour and its surroundings. The camera is able to pick up details of this historically fascinating and very popular precinct. As the camera settings are changed, a range of significant Helsinki locations become visible including open-air markets, the City Hall and the Presidential Palace, the green-domed Lutheran Cathedral, the traditional Uspenski Orthodox Cathedral replete with onion-like cupolas, and the modern Alvar Aalto-designed marble-clad Stora-Enso office building.



Another more remote webcam in Finland (

www.saariselka.fi/eng/webcamera.html) is pointed towards Saariselkä chapel in the heart of Lapland. During the summer you can see just how long the midnight sun continues to shine. Saariselkä is so far north that it houses the permanent training camp of the Finnish skiing team.

Another bucolic rural view can be seen at <http://www.valnerinaonline.it/webcam/> . It shows the valley containing the mediaeval Italian town of Norcia, with Monti Sibillini in the distance.

Many webcams cover places of religious devotion. The Western Wall in Jerusalem in Israel is the subject at <http://www.aish.com/wallcam/> . This has become a much wider website that invites Jews and non-Jews alike to leave virtual prayers in the cracks between the stones of the Wall. The Western Wall is a surviving remnant of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, and is the centre of the Jewish spiritual world. The website claims that when King Solomon built the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, he specifically asked God to heed the prayer of non-Jews who come to the Temple (1 Kings 8:41-43).

You can see a very different webcam of worship at www.monksfadoration.org/chapel.html , run by a public association of monks in the diocese of Venice in Florida. The Community of The Monks of Adoration maintains a webcam depicting their chapel. They actively solicit funds for the website.



They also appeal for a monastery devoted to St Joseph the worker, asking visitors for a 'buck a brick'. The monastery has now been completed. But the community of three monks has built up a large presence on the Internet through its online ministry. They enable their ministry of encouraging adoration of the Holy Eucharist to be spread virtually throughout the world through their webcam.

The Lutheran Kramer college at the Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA also makes chapel services available via the Internet. www.ctsfw.edu/chapel/audio.php

Another type of spiritual experience is available at www.camvista.com/sports/football/chelsea01.php3 It displays the current mecca of football in England — Stamford Bridge, home of the Chelsea Football Club.



As the virtual traveller moves from one geographic view of reality to another, the media vectors generate a virtual reality.

The owners to today's webcams are highly diverse. Institutions and individuals maintain them. Some are operated for tourism purposes -Like Fed Square, they display many beaches and other tourist destinations.

www.webcamgalore.com offers a catalogue of webcams. It encourages visitors to add webcams and to report broken links. Among many forms of listings, Webcam Galore offers the 24 most popular webcams. At the moment, a view of the King Fahd Road in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia is the most popular, followed by a controllable webcam that shows St Peter's Cathedral in the Vatican. A series of exotic beach destinations follow. What does this tell us about the virtual journeys that we wish to make?

Undeclared war on Haiti's poor

INTERNATIONAL

Published 10-Jul-2006

I decided to stop over in Miami on my trip back to Australia from Haiti—after all, Miami is the gateway to the Promised Land for many Haitians and others in the Caribbean, especially Cubans.

My taxi driver from the airport, being from the lesser Antilles island of Guadelupe, spoke a Creole dialect similar to that in Haiti, so he was delighted to have a chat in his own language as we crawled through peak-hour traffic on the way to Belen College's Jesuit residence, the home of several exiled Cuban Jesuits who re-established their school in Miami 50 years ago.



The cabbie knew about poverty and politics in the Caribbean, and he understood the lure of a better life in the United States. When I told him I was working for Jesuit Refugee Service on the Haitian border near the Dominican Republic he remarked, 'You know life is really tough here for an immigrant as well. I work constantly—long hours, long hours—my life is not my own.'

The Jesuit community where I stayed was celebrating the 50th year since they'd set up Belen College Jesuit high school in Miami. President Fidel Castro—a former student there—had closed down the college following the revolution. On my tour of the college, one of the pre-revolution Jesuits said the original school in Havana was even bigger. He was proud of the new school, but his eyes evoked a sense of nostalgia as he showed me the photo of the original school, which covered an entire foyer wall.

The well-equipped and prosperous new school boasts a 'who's who' list of wealthy exiled Cuban benefactors. It has state of the art facilities, including a meteorology lab that provides hurricane warnings to the local media and city council. Following the tradition of the old Havana college, they have re-created the student barber shop. As a reminder of the old days, sitting on a side bench was a glass display cabinet protecting a blade and scissors allegedly used to snip Castro's locks.



Soon-to-be ordained Jesuit deacon Frank, whom I'd met in the Dominican Republic, offered to show me some of the sites of Miami. Frank was born in the United States to Cuban parents. While passing through some lush, leafy and well-off streets of Miami, he commented, 'I tell people in Cuba and the Dominican Republic that these (nice streets) are the result of socialism! It's all organised and controlled by the local government. In this area you can't park commercial vehicles and trucks near your home—that's to keep things looking tidy.'

He mentioned that the problem with Cuban socialism was Freudian. Although Castro had been Jesuit-educated, he had a difficult upbringing and bad relationship with his father which he was still bitter about.

We headed into downtown Miami to visit the Jesuit parish of Gesu where Frank was to serve as Deacon at the Sunday Mass. The activity in central Miami is impressive—there is a building boom. Cranes and building sites are everywhere. On the church's front steps was a Haitian-looking man slumped against the door asleep, his tin of coins dangling from his hand ready to drop. At the back of the church as I waited for Mass to begin I noticed a railed-off section with statues of patron saints from all over Latin America. Each had their identifying name plate and national flags, with hand written petitions left by devotees, as well as cash notes, coins and candles. There were several devotees softly mouthing prayers and lighting candles. During the Mass a woman proclaimed the readings -from her accent I knew she was probably Haitian. Frank introduced me to her after Mass. She was caught by surprise when I started speaking in Creole. Her young daughter commented, 'Oh, I thought he was a white man.'

After Mass I glanced at the front page of the *Miami Herald* which had an article asserting that Castro was becoming more popular, due to the rise of leftist governments in the region. It made particular mention of newly-elected Haitian President Rene Preval's visit to Cuba. Preval is an ally and former government colleague of Jean Bertrand Aristide.

The ploy to divide the world into left and right, the so-called threat of communism, is still being used to manipulate, control and demonise any country or leader who aspires to help the have-nots and challenge the 'new world order.' The threat of 'reds under the bed' was the same ploy the United States and France used to polarise Haiti and rid it of Aristide, stigmatising him and thereby justifying his exile, even though he was popularly elected. Not only did he have a much-needed social reform agenda that threatened the oligarchy of Haiti's wealthy elite, he also happened to be a meddling priest.

In Haiti people are fond of using proverbs, and there's a particular one that aptly describes the situation of people in the dusty border town of Ouanaminthe where I worked -'Woch nan dlo pa konn doule woch nan soley' -which is a Haitian creole expression meaning 'The rock in the water doesn't know the suffering of the rock in the sun.'



Haitian proverbs have the annoying knack of forcing us to confront things we don't like to admit. In an egalitarian society like Australia we like to think life deals the same fate for us all -that we are all battlers, and that through sweat and willpower we can all overcome tough beginnings to eventually live a reasonable life. But through my work with Jesuit Refugee Service in this impoverished town on the remote northern border, I see that this is not the reality -that the new world order does not deal us all a level playing field. The rock in the sun cannot get ahead like the rock in the water.

Whether you're the rock suffering in the sun or whether you're cooling off in the water depends on where you were born, what passport you hold, what education you have, whether you speak French, whether your parents are peasants or well-off, whether your parents are married or if you have a birth certificate. Chance can deal a very cruel or kind hand in Haiti.

Living conditions in Ouanaminthe, a 'town' of around 100,000 inhabitants amount to an undeclared war on the poor. There's a lack of services, jobs, water, health, schooling, toilets, electricity, phones, garbage collection, legal system, and

an unemployment rate of around 70 per cent. This makes Ouanaminthe a gathering place for human traffickers, smugglers and corrupt authorities ready to profit from people desperate to leave for the Dominican Republic.

Spend some time in Haiti and it becomes apparent what English author Graham Greene meant in *The Comedians* when he wrote of Haiti, 'Violent deaths are natural here. He died of his environment.'

Part of my work with Jesuit Refugee Service involved giving communications workshops to members of a community organisation monitoring human rights abuses along the border. I started one seminar by talking about the concept of 'objectivity' in the context of reporting an incident or event. The idea that a journalist is ethically obliged to provide a balanced report, from as many perspectives as possible, caused laughter among workshop participants when we started to apply it to the mainstream media. It was humorous for them to think that a national newspaper would give a poor peasant's perspective on any given issue, even though this population represents the overwhelming majority of Haitians.



Many politicians and thinkers attack any attempt to reflect what we Jesuits refer to as 'the preferential option for the poor', claiming that it's not objective, it's immature, it's naïve. Many claim that former president Jean Bertrand Aristide was forcibly and illegally removed from office; he has been internationally defamed and vilified. Yet what is more important: representing the interests of a small elite, or the overwhelming poor majority, as Aristide sought to do? Aristide is a controversial figure, but many in Haiti still believe strongly in his message.

Christianity challenges us to be objective, to look at reality, to reflect on it, and to do something about it. In Haiti, hardship and suffering create desperation to migrate, even when it means suffering the deplorable living conditions of the Dominican labour camps. And these conditions are the result of politics and business, both national and international that leads to poverty, illness, violence, crime, corruption and premature death. Advocacy work in poor countries such as Haiti is really a struggle to provide dignity, and not dignity in an abstract moral sense, or mere spiritual solidarity, but a quest for tolerable living conditions.

There's a popular Haitian gospel song that's been ringing in my ears since I've arrived back in Australia. I used to hear it on the radio in Haiti almost every day. It goes, 'Why all these things? Why this division? Why these politics? Why can't we sit...eat...and pray together?'

It's a simple but powerful mantra. Surprisingly, it's not a mournful tune. You could get up and dance to it! It's a song that reflects the Haitian attitude to life -aware of the hardships faced everyday, but hopeful, cheerful and getting on with life. It's a song our world needs to listen to as we stop to ask the tough questions, even as we're bopping and grooving along in our daily lives.

David Hicks' rights under natural law

INTERNATIONAL

Politics

Published 10-Jul-2006

Anyone who argues that an individual enters into society with certain basic rights adopts a natural law perspective. Natural law exists independently of positive law, or human-made law, and asserts that all people have certain rights that no government can deny. The natural law is therefore 'unwritten'. It is not a codified system of rights or regulations imposed by a legislator, such as a Bill of Rights. Practical reason is viewed as a means of inquiry to guide human affairs and the basic standard by which human beings discern moral obligation and legal authority.



The relationship between law and morality remains a complex and thorny topic. Today, natural law is implicated in increasingly controversial issues such as nuclear deterrence, the legitimacy of customary international law and the treatment of prisoners. Many commentators also continue to talk about September 11 as the day the world changed. A rehabilitation of natural law theory can contribute to debate on managing this new age of asymmetrical war and associated contemporary moral and political problems. Natural Law theory can also help renew judgements about the foundations of a just, equitable world order. It may be argued that the rehabilitation of natural law is not only a genuine option but also an urgent requirement in these times of widespread conflict, fear and anxiety. Respect for long-held values of human dignity, democratic standards and the rule of law are central to the pursuit of security.



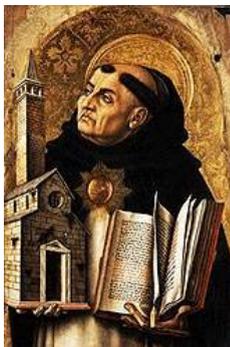
In the wake of the atrocities of September 11, a number of individuals suspected of involvement with terrorist organisations or associated activities were apprehended. After he was captured by Northern Alliance forces in Afghanistan in December 2001, terror suspect David Hicks was handed over to the US military and transferred to a prison camp in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Hicks has been charged with various offences, including conspiracy to commit war crimes and aiding the enemy. For much of his detention, Hicks has been held in a concrete solitary confinement cell waiting for trial by a military commission. The Bush administration decreed that al-Qaeda and Taliban members would not be accorded prisoner-of-war status. Indeed, none of the usual protections of the rules of evidence would apply, nor would suspects have the right to examine the evidence against them. Australian Prime Minister John Howard has steadfastly defended the US position by claiming that the Australian Government intends to 'do whatever is necessary' to ensure justice.

Yet Guantanamo Bay has become associated with the abuse of executive power. It is a symbol of an utter disrespect for basic human values. The Australian Government has lost perspective by agreeing to conduct which violates

fundamental human rights principles and breaches international legal standards. The United Nations Committee on Torture has called for the closure of the facility. Hicks' legal representatives have argued that their client has been treated in a manner that will diminish Australia's moral authority as nation, and allege that Hicks has been tortured. British Attorney General, Lord Goldsmith, has called for the closure of the US detention camp at Guantanamo while stating that the military tribunal process is neither fair nor independent. Despite international condemnation, Howard dismissed Lord Goldsmith's criticisms, declaring that Australia would make up its 'own mind about these things' and maintained that the US had a 'right' to put Hicks before a military commission.



Howard's legal positivist stance limits individual rights to the confines of a particular legal system. In the 'war against terrorism', it leaves no safeguard against executive excesses or the seizure by the state of absolute power, and no basis to defend the dignity of human persons. Legal positivism is built on the understanding that the only binding law is a rule of law backed up by the means of enforcement and imposed by the state. Advocates of legal positivism assume that the defining feature of law, and notions of right and wrong, are not in their conformity to higher moral principles, but in the fact that laws are established and enforced by the people with the power to rule. This notion that morality and ethics would always be relative to the prerogatives and opinions of those who are dominant and powerful remains a highly resilient feature of international politics.



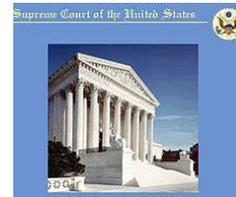
Alternately, natural law is a rejection of legal positivism. Natural law insists that some laws are intrinsic and fundamental to human nature. Law is, and should be, rooted in a moral system. Theologians, such as St. Thomas Aquinas, asserted that some values exceed any single state and that natural law was common to all people—Christian and non-Christian alike. Later thinkers such as Jacques Maritain have seen natural law as providing a rational underpinning for universal human rights ideas. Natural law theory was viewed as granting an essential intellectual resistance to the barbarity of warfare. Suggestions that there is a higher law than human law are worth considering; natural law can act as a critical guide to the proper context for positive law, and the adoption of ideas of freedom and justice in a culturally and religiously diverse world.

In June 2006, America's Supreme Court ruled that the controversial military tribunal system established to try accused terrorist suspects was illegal. The majority of the court concluded that the military tribunals that had been set up after September 11 breached both US military law and the Geneva conventions. The decision raises both important legal issues and profound moral questions. At the very least, it is widely recognised that justice delayed is justice denied.

The White House has reacted by refusing to discard the military tribunals, though it has indicated its intention to redesign a formula that would continue to offer detainees less than standard court-martial or civilian court proceedings. Problematically, the decision will also not affect Bush's sweeping authority to keep inmates indefinitely at Guantanamo prison. The Australian Government mirrored the Bush administration's unswerving conviction by claiming that it does not want

Hicks to return to Australia. Howard's policy reinforced the message that Canberra has no sympathy for the prisoner, or apparently, any qualms about the legal abyss that David Hicks has been dropped into.

Whilst not a panacea for providing detailed solutions and prescriptive actions to the numerous challenges of international life, including the search for balance between core human rights and national security, the recognition of natural law is a legitimate enterprise that can contribute to fostering the dialogue between rationality and faith, legality and morality. Despite its limitations, natural law can offer a powerful bridge between universalistic principles and legal realities. Natural Law would have it the shared humanity of all peoples is pre-eminent, and that this grounds moral obligations. The individual should treat other human beings as ends worthy in themselves. Each person's dignity is protected by absolute moral requirements, and it is never right to treat anyone, including detainees such as David Hicks, as a mere means.



Long road back for Ramos Horta

ESSAYS

International

Published 10-Jul-2006



When Bishop Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo and Foreign Minister JosĂ© Ramos Horta jointly won the Nobel Peace prize in 1996 they made the long suffering Timorese people immensely proud and brought great hope after two decades of brutal Indonesian occupation. They also set a world record for East Timor—it had one prize for every 500,000 people.

Ordinary Timorese had largely followed their example by practicing reconciliation following the events of 1999, and the previous 24 years of occupation. Until recently, East Timor was a remarkably safe and peaceful place in which to live, despite a traumatic past and overwhelming poverty.

But for a country with such a proud record, the new government installed in May 2002 pursued some very uncompromising policies. It refused to pursue justice for the atrocities of 1999, and in so doing left many wounds festering. More seriously, it created rival security forces and fostered a mini arms race as various factions armed themselves with the latest weaponry.

In 2006, the government's inept handling of a dispute in the army involving soldiers from the western region of East Timor put the young nation on the brink of civil war, and has now created a new tension between east and west within East Timor.

This has been part of a broader pattern of questionable governance pursued by a government led by a clique of Timorese who lived in exile in Communist Mozambique during the Indonesian years. Alkatiri's government has come to be seen by the population as arrogant, authoritarian, highly centralised and to some degree anti-democratic. They had controlled the portfolios of prime minister, natural resources and minerals, finance and planning, state administration, interior, defence and agriculture.

The new government managed to completely alienate the country's oldest and most powerful institution —the Catholic Church. It had also shown contempt for some basic democratic principles; it proposed making defamation a criminal offence and it had intended to conduct next year's parliamentary election without international supervision.

At the core of this crisis was a dispute involving 600 soldiers, representing almost half of the army, who claimed that senior officers from the eastern region discriminated against them. The government's decision to sack the soldiers created an angry mob, and this spiraled into widespread east-west violence.

This violence continued as this latest edition of *Eureka Street* went to print. In the last week of June more houses and



businesses were torched, despite the presence of more than 3,000 international troops. One of the targets was the business of Pedro Lebere, a leading easterner whose Vila Harmonia guest house was a clandestine base for many journalists and independence activists during the Indonesian years. Mr. Lebere and his family planned to leave East Timor last week out of fear for their own safety.

The east-west divide is a recent problem in East Timor. It is an artificial division created by the government's failure to resolve the military dispute. Now in Dili there are more than 70,000 people in refugee camps, and just as many in camps around the country. Hundreds of homes and markets burnt to the ground as a result of this new division, and the country must now rebuild the police force and military forces from scratch.

A mark of this deep division is the major east-west 'transit camps' now located immediately to the west of Dili. The camps exist because bus drivers from the west will not drive any further into the eastern region, so those easterners fleeing back to their homes in the east are dropped there, Dr Jay Maheswaran, country director of Caritas Australia, told me.

Upon becoming independent, East Timor had the opportunity to avoid creating an army. But the decision to establish the FDTL, as the army is known, came about largely because President Xanana Gusmao had wanted an institution to carry on the military tradition created by the FALINTIL resistance army. Many of the veterans found positions in the 1,500-strong army and remained loyal to Gusmao.

A much bigger, 3,000-strong national police force, known as the PNTL, was created during the UN transitional administration, with a mandate for internal security. A small number, believed to be around 100, had formerly served in the Indonesian police force. But the power-hungry former Interior Minister, Rogerio Lobato, wanted to turn the PNTL into his personal fiefdom and fomented rivalry with FDTL.



Worse still, Lobato established a special response unit known as the UIR which was armed not with batons and riot shields, but with about 200 Steyr assault rifles. These are the same highly-effective rifles used by the Australian Army. This was just one weapon in the huge arsenal brought into East Timor. The police also imported more than 3,500 Glock pistols, 64 FNC assault rifles and seven F-2000 automatic rifles. More than 200,000 rounds of ammunition were imported under a contract awarded to a company controlled by the brother of Alkatiri.

With both institutions armed to the teeth, clashes between them had occurred in 2004 and 2005, but no-one could see that a full-blown conflict was on the horizon. In the 2006 crisis, the government refused to hear the grievances of the 600 striking soldiers, known as the 'petitioners'. Former Prime Minister Alkatiri, would not meet with the soldiers. The head of the army, Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak, and former defence minister, Roque Rodriguez also refused to meet them, and were overseas at key moments in the dispute. Instead of reconciling differences, the government turned the army and police onto a soldiers' demonstration on April 28, prompting more soldiers from the western region of East Timor to join the petitioners.

One month later, the country was on the brink of full scale civil war as the

remaining soldiers in FDTL, mainly from the east, fought gun battles in Dili with the petitioners and with elements of the PNTL and UIR. A group of 10 unarmed PNTL officers were mowed down in cold blood as they surrendered under a UN flag. On May 25 Australian troops landed in Dili and gradually managed to quell the violence.

For the next four weeks, however, East Timor remained a volatile place. Truckloads of anti-Alkatiri protesters rolled into the capital and encircled the Government Palace, while motorcycle gangs thundered around the capital. Most of the demonstrators were youths, many of whom had not worked in some years as the new government failed to generate jobs and economic activity.

José Ramos Horta called for the resignation of the prime minister, saying that he must take ultimate responsibility. Alkatiri responded by sacking defence minister Roque Rodrigues and interior minister Rogerio Lobato, but refused to fall on his own sword.

Alkatiri remained defiant, even after sensational allegations were broadcast by the ABC's *4 Corners* program. The program reported claims that Lobato had armed civilian hit squads to wipe out the petitioners, political opponents and senior members of the church, and that Alkatiri knew of the plan. The allegations came from a commander of one of the squads and from the Police Commissioner, Paulo Martins. A warrant for the arrest of Lobato has been issued.

Alkatiri's position became untenable after Lobato implicated him in the plot, and it was only at this point that he agreed to stand down. The Prosecutor-General, Longuinhos Monteiro, now wants to question the former prime minister. But fears remain that the wily Alkatiri could return to the helm, either in the near future or after the next election. The FRETILIN ruling party must now decide on a replacement.

A good starting point for renewal will be following through on UN supervision for the 2007 parliamentary elections. Another essential change is to decriminalise defamation in the penal code and rebuild the national media. Further down the track, East Timor, with assistance from the UN, will need to rebuild the PNTL and also think hard about what to do with the remnants of the FDTL. Perhaps this tiny country does not need an army after all.

Filling the sovereignty vacuum will depend on installing a new leadership that can gain the trust of the people, many of whom now live in fear in refugee camps. Making this transition will require more forthright and sensible leadership than that shown so far by President Xanana Gusmao, and Foreign Minister José Ramos Horta.

There remains a danger that the new leadership will maintain close links with Alkatiri, and that he may even retain his influence. Ana Pessoa had a chance to assume the leadership. Pessoa, who has been hailed by Ramos Horta as a candidate, is best known for refusing to speak the national language, Tetum. Instead, she only speaks in Portuguese, even when her audience does not understand her. She has also recently made a series of inflammatory statements about Australia, including the claim that the Australian military orchestrated the destruction. She is also believed to be hostile to East Timor's other big neighbour, Indonesia. Perhaps it is fortunate that in the last days



Ramos Horta has been named the new prime minister after all, even if some of his recent decisions have been somewhat questionable.

Rebuilding the country will be aided greatly by the revenue now pouring into the government's coffers from oil and gas. This is one of Alkatiri's positive legacies, as his leadership led to a much more favourable share of revenue from the Timor Sea than had been previously allowed by Indonesia. Alkatiri spent a lot of time building up the institutions to manage this revenue, but too little of it made its way into the economy, and to the outlying districts especially, in a highly centralised government. Now is the time for the government to spend and rebuild.

The process of putting this broken country back together will be long. While East Timor was physically destroyed in 1999, the people were unified; they had voted 78.5 per cent in favour of independence.

The focus will now turn to more reconciliation and reintegration for those who now live in fear in refugee camps and have lost family members or their homes. The new Government of José Ramos Horta, the Catholic Church and aid organisations will soon begin the long process of reconciling and reintegrating people in a nation that has suffered setback after setback in the last 30 years.

Torch lights up conflict over injecting room

COMMUNITY

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In 2000, it was revealed that Wesley Mission has spent up to half a million dollars on a plan to trial a safe injecting room on its site without consent from either local residents nor the Uniting Church congregation with which it shared its property. The congregation and local residents were irate. The safe injecting room was later shelved and the Wesley Mission and Wesley Uniting Church split.

Alistair Macrae is head of the Uniting Church's theological college and a Wesley Mission board member. He was installed as Uniting Church moderator after the controversy began and was part of what he called the 'mop up' process.

'The Synod intervened and separated the congregation from the Mission in a way that it hadn't been historically allowed for,' said Macrae. 'There was a lot of ill feeling around the place and it hadn't been properly addressed.'

It was clear healing was needed, but no one knew how to deal with what had become known as 'the troubles'. That prompted the theatrical production *Faith*, in which Macrae also acted. The Torch Project was born.

In 2004, the Mission received a substantial bequest from a member of the congregation. Of course, given the split, the congregation was disappointed that one of its own had pledged big money to the Mission. As a way of deflecting further heat, the Mission decided it would put the money into a project that benefited both the Mission and the congregation.



The Torch Project was employed. The Torch Project is a Melbourne-based theatre company that uses both professional actors and community members to create plays aiming to reconcile groups in conflict. Mari Lourey, co-writer of *Faith*, said she, like Anne Phelan who once played Myra Desmond in *Prisoner*, was surprised at the level of acrimony.

'When such a traumatic event has occurred a lot of people don't feel heard and don't feel listened to. We felt caught in the crossfire of incredibly dangerous emotions.'

During the research process, Lourey was told not to talk about the troubles as no-one would want to revisit them. However, she found they were all anybody wanted to talk about. The production that emerged in early 2006 looked at Wesley's long history, encompassing the interests of residents, car park attendants, the Mission, Big Issue vendors, Lifeline, the congregation and its linked Chinese members, and the many people Wesley mission serves.

The play's central character, Faith, was an amalgam of two teenage girls whose lives had deeply moved those at Wesley. One was found burning her clothes in the

car park after being raped. Another, who came regularly to the Mission for assistance, was found dead of an overdose in the toilets.



The play closes with Faith's father placing flowers where his daughter died. This enacted the father's annual ritual for his daughter who had overdosed. Community members and professional actors gathered around him and sang a blessing, the audience was reminded that the safe injecting controversy was caused by a well-meaning attempt to save young lives.

'It's a high-risk strategy, but sometimes where there has been profound dysfunction in a relationship you need to intensify conflict in order to get through to a new place. The Torch methodology does that,' Macrae said, adding, however, that the play had merely stoked the anger of some stakeholders.

But Anne Phelan was confident the play and its processes would foster long-term healing at Wesley.

'So many people who saw it came up to me and said, 'I can move on now, thank you', she said, adding, 'The biggest trouble in the whole issue was secrecy. You can't play one group off another, you can't do that with human beings.'

Old Europe reigns supreme in World Cup

SPORT

The World Game

Published 10-Jul-2006

While refereeing standards have been the subject of much debate at this World Cup, and some have decried the paucity of goals, the re-assertion of 'Old Europe's' footballing pre-eminence has escaped serious analysis.

These have been very disappointing finals for non-European nations. Not one team from outside Europe got past the quarter final stage of this tournament, and only six of sixteen teams managed to qualify from the groups stages. When one considers that exactly half of the 32 teams that qualified for the World Cup were not from Europe, the results look even worse for the non-European nations.

At present, CONCACAF (North and Central America and the Caribbean) is awarded three and half places, CONMEBOL (South America) receives four and half, CAF (Africa) receives four and half, AFC (Asia) four and a half, UEFA (Europe) receives 16 and OFC (Oceania) receives half a spot. Much criticism has been leveled at FIFA over the present arrangements, with some arguing that the present division of places is designed to ensure that lucrative TV markets in North America and South East Asia are well served. The result is better TV ratings, but a drop in the quality of the football played early in the tournament.



While some would say that the pre-eminence of European teams at this tournament proves that the places allotted to the various federations should be re-distributed, there are strong arguments to the contrary. The counter-argument made is that FIFA's job is to ensure the continued expansion of the game throughout the world. While the occasional team may qualify and then perform less than brilliantly, on the whole there is much to recommend the present arrangements. Saudi Arabia, to take just one example, performed quite poorly at the World Cup in 2002, highlighted by a rampant German side scoring eight goals against them. At this World Cup, however, the Saudis have given a much better account of themselves; in the time between the two tournaments, the Saudi federation invested much money in both the domestic league, and in coaches for the national teams.

It could be argued that the approach FIFA has taken is in some ways similar to the approach the AFL has taken to developing this code of football in Australia. For years, the AFL gave a 'helping hand' to the two teams in the 'heathen' northern states; the result has been that the AFL has emerged as the pre-eminent code in Australia, no team from Victoria has won a premiership since the year 2000, and, particularly in Queensland, this form of football is now starting to take root. As far as FIFA is concerned, nothing could be better for the round-ball game than for a team from Asia, Africa or North and Central America to win the World Cup. To this end, Japan and Korea hosted the 2002 World Cup, and South Africa is hosting the



2010 World Cup.

While FIFA does have one eye on its pocketbook when it allocates places to the various federations, is this actually such a bad thing? FIFA is the international custodian of the game, and does have a responsibility to its' members to grow interest in the game world wide. To do this, it does need full coffers, and it does need to look beyond the narrow self-interest of the European nations. FIFA was widely derided for awarding the finals to the USA in 1994, but the tournament was a success, and the world game has (finally) started to grow in the USA, after a couple of false starts.



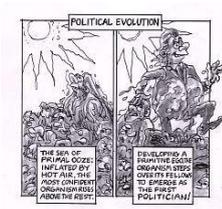
In the coming months, as European nations, and the European federation UEFA, point to the results in Germany 2006, they would do well to remember two things. The long-term pre-eminence of the sport rests on the world game continuing to be adopted by non-football nations, and on younger federations seeing that it is possible for them to actually participate on the games greatest stage. Secondly, the Europeans would do well to remember that no European nation has ever won the trophy outside of Europe (Argentina and Brazil have both won outside of South America, by way of comparison.) While the Europeans have performed well at this World Cup, it remains to be seen if these results can be reproduced in South Africa in 2010.

Keeping an eye on our behaviour

OBITUARY

Archimedes

Published 10-Jul-2006



On holiday weekends along the Hume Highway, large mobile billboards appear showing a policeman looking down the barrel of a speed camera. The police believe these signs deter speeding drivers, and that they are effective, far beyond the simple reminder they provide that the traffic squad is on patrol.

A recent study by psychologists at the University of Newcastle in Britain might explain why. The researchers used a departmental tea room where an 'honesty box' system had been in operation for years. They posted a price list by the honesty box, and changed it each week. While the prices were always the same, the photograph at the top of the list was changed. Some weeks, the picture was of flowers; other weeks, pairs of eyes stared straight out at the viewer, Big Brother-style.

When the list was topped by eyes, the researchers found that people put nearly three times as much money in the honesty box for the amount of tea and coffee they consumed. The eyes dramatically affected behaviour, despite the fact that it was quite clearly a photo. The research team speculated this might be a hangover of our evolution as a highly social species dependent on vision—that humans have evolved to respond in a reflex manner to the feeling of being observed.

Another recently published study, this time from the US, shows that over confidence makes people more likely to wage war, but less likely to win. In this case, the researchers suggested that such optimism may have been an advantage bluffing opponents in our evolutionary past, but that it doesn't play well in modern international relations. The link with the Bush administration's predicament in Iraq was not lost on local commentators.

These stories illustrate why a sophisticated understanding of our evolutionary history is important—it can actually say something about present behaviour. But if it is to do this, public understanding of evolution is itself in need of a bit of evolution. At present it seems to have been caught in a time warp, and is sadly out of date.

Two misconceptions come immediately to mind. Those who have little understanding of the modern view of the way natural selection operates still talk in terms of something being 'for the good of the species', as if species had a collective will. But though it is true that species evolve, natural selection almost invariably works at the level of the individual.

Those individuals who fit in best with their environments leave more offspring (who leave more offspring). As a result, they contribute more to the pool of characteristics that the species carries with it to the future. It's an inherently selfish process,



geared to the survival of children and grandchildren. That's why evolutionary biologists are hung up on, and have so much trouble explaining, any act that smacks of altruism.

And despite the unfortunate way biologists sometimes talk about evolution, it is not an active process but a consequence. Once you have different individuals living in different environments, evolution happens, whether you like it or not. And, while the process of evolution has direction, it is neither necessarily for the perpetuation of species, nor towards an expected outcome.

That is one area where the new idea of 'intelligent design' often comes unstuck. Eyes are so complex, and have so many interrelated parts necessary for their effective operation, intelligent design proponents typically argue, they could not possibly have evolved bit by bit by natural selection. They must have been designed by a Higher Being or Level of Intelligence.

That is a strong argument only if you start from the premise that in the first instance somehow evolution set about evolving eyes. It doesn't necessarily work that way. Biological structures build upon what has gone before, and this may have nothing to do with their present function. Take insect wings, for example. According to some entomologists, what insects now use as wings started off as flaps that captured sunlight to warm the insect's body, and thus to facilitate movement earlier in the day. As these flaps increased in surface area and gained the ability to orient to the sun, they began to act like sails, catching the breeze and leading to inadvertent gliding. It is but a short step from there to controlled gliding and active flapping wings.



This progression is made all the more fascinating by the evolution of the Solar Sailor, an Australian-designed, electrically-powered charter vessel now operating on Sydney Harbour. The boat has computer-controlled, foldable, solid sails covered in solar panels. The energy generated by the panels is stored in a bank of batteries, which can also be charged using a gas-powered generator. The batteries power the electric engines which drive the propellers.

The result is a boat with three power sources—sun, gas and wind. It uses between 10 and 50 per cent of the fuel of conventional craft. The inventor, Robert Dane, was inspired by the story of the evolution of insect wings.

A planet of slums

BOOK REVIEW

Politics

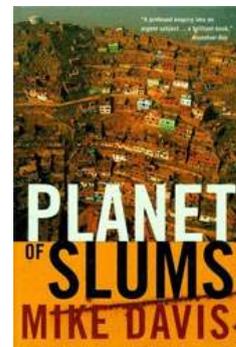
Published 10-Jul-2006

Planet of Slums, Mike Davis

Verso, 2006, ISBN 1844670228, RRP \$38.00

Consider this: World urban populations will soon exceed rural populations for the first time in human civilisation; most of this growth is occurring in Third World cities that are overcrowded, insecure, impoverished and without sanitation or safe water. There are currently one billion people living in a Third World slum; there will be two billion sometime between 2030 and 2040.

In his new book, *Planet of Slums*, Mike Davis attends to the vast inequalities and social dislocations this entails. There is a long tradition of studies of the urban poor — Friedrich Engels's examination of Victorian Manchester in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* is a well-known example. Davis updates this genre for a period of globalisation, investigating the causes and constructions of the emerging 'urban climeractic.'



As with his famous predecessor, Davis intends not just to document but also to shift understanding. We see how the Third World confirms and confounds our understanding of urban development. While industrialisation is meant to be the driver of urban growth, debt crisis and structural adjustment have meant that cities like Johannesburg and São Paulo have undergone exponential population increases while experiencing a kind of de-industrialisation.

It is sobering to read that the cities of the future will be mostly made of crude brick and scrap wood rather than glass and steel. 'Instead of cities of light, soaring toward heaven,' writes Davis, 'much of the twenty-first-century urban world squats in squalor, surrounded by pollution, excrement and decay.'

The challenges facing a study like this are that the scale of the problem is so large and the dimensions of the problem are so various. Davis ranges from shantytowns in Lusaka to squatter communities in Buenos Aires to a vast ...œmegaslum... in Mexico City. Importantly, he recognises that the particular form a slum takes arises from the common misery involved in negotiating factors such as cost, security, shelter quality, location and safety.

If geographical range is important to Davis so is historical perspective. The post-independence programs of Castro, Nasser, Nehru and Sukarno failed to consider pre-existing social and community structures. The lost opportunity Davis identifies here allowed neoliberalism to engineer the withdrawal of the state and a drastic diminution of horizons. Self-help and incremental change might now pass for progressive reform but they have amounted to little more than slum upgrading.

For Davis, the tragedy of this situation is underlined by the way Third World

elites utilise inherited colonial divisions. In countries with the greatest inequalities, the wealthy withdraw to gated communities and rely on zoning to deal with urban problems. Their governments direct a kind of social war against the poor: development authorities have targeted half a million squatters in Delhi for relocation; Robert Mugabe recently razed dwellings in Bulawayo to stifle political opposition.

Meanwhile, the 'bad geology' of many slums means the poor are subject to landslides in Caracas, floods in Manila and earthquakes in Guatemala. Their location near toxic industries led to devastating consequences with the poison cloud release in Bhopal. Lack of sanitation means 10 million people in Kinshasa without a waterborne sewage system.

There is no real escape from the consequences of global poverty. The European middle classes in the 1830s and 1840s came to realise that they couldn't separate themselves from the ravages of cholera and typhoid. Davis published a book last year, *Monster at Our Door*, that makes the same point about our ability to avoid diseases such as Avian influenza.

Planet of Slums reveals how the Third World is denied the kind of developmental measures and vision that helped Europe and America to modernise. Despite the promises of globalisation, the UN reports that 46 countries were poorer in 2004 than they were in 1990. Even successes such as China and India have come at a great cost: Bangalore now boasts golf courses and shopping malls along with a slum of two million people.

There is a justified anger in this book at the coldness and hardness of a world where slums are the 'implacable future' of the poor. Davis notes that at least during the Cold War the West maintained some vision of development for the Third World, if only as an immunisation against revolution. Slums have now become the dumping ground for more than one billion informal workers.

Davis aligns himself with the wretched of the earth and a refusal of their extreme marginalisation. The responses to this marginalisation can range from wanting to share in modernity's promises to the atavistic rejection of modern life altogether. The danger is that West's patrolling of borders between securitised areas and demonised spaces beyond might become part of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Davis provides a timely survey of all this, as well as an urgently needed pull of the emergency cord.

A murder in the family

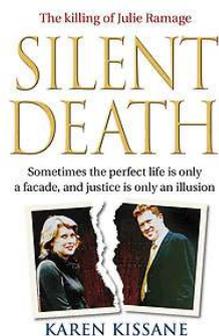
BOOK REVIEW

True Crime

Published 10-Jul-2006

Silent Death

Karen Kissane, Hodder Australia, 2006, ISBN 0733620094, \$35.00



As I was reading Karen Kissane's *Silent Death* a long-buried memory came back to me. I was about 13 years old, when my mother spoke of family dysfunction as normal. All through my childhood and adolescence I had longed to be part of a normal family and here was my mother telling me, to my horror, that tension, power struggles, abuse and violence were, in fact, normal after all.

On the surface Julie and Jamie Ramage's marriage was the embodiment of normalcy. They had an enviable lifestyle and two high-achieving teenage children. But one day in June 2003 Julie decided to leave her husband, moving to a townhouse in Toorak with her daughter, and, soon after, starting up a new romance. When she told her husband six weeks later that their marriage was over and she wasn't coming back, he punched her in the face, strangled her to death and buried her in a shallow grave. The public was interested in the case: they saw a high-status family, who seemingly had it all, fall apart so dramatically. When Jamie Ramage pleaded not guilty to manslaughter rather than murder, citing provocation as a mitigating circumstance, or partial excuse, and the jury eventually agreed, the case provoked heated public debate.

Karen Kissane has written a thoughtful, involving account of the case and the difficult questions it raises. Kissane, who initially wrote a feature article in *The Age*, begins by describing the murder, tells of the Ramage's relationship, and then takes us compellingly through the trial and its aftermath. She elicits the opinions and insights of those involved - friends and family members, counsellors and lawyers - to discover what led to the killing of Julie Ramage and whether justice was served.

In the core of her book she discusses the defence of provocation, long used in Australian courts as a partial excuse for murder. In the Ramage case defence attorney Philip Dunn argued that Jamie Ramage's actions in killing his wife were understandable, and in effect partially excusable, as his wife had provoked him during their final meeting by saying that their sex life repulsed her, she was much happier with the new man in her life and the marriage was over. This claim was enough for the jury to convict Ramage of manslaughter instead of murder, which

would have attracted a much harsher sentence.

Kissane's careful day-by-day account of the trial is riveting. She guides us through the weeks leading up to the crime. Although Jamie Ramage was on trial, the two weeks were largely spent in questioning and often vilifying Julie Ramage's actions and character. The details of the case, particularly Dunn's discussion with Kissane of his tactics, are at times shocking and even offensive. (Dunn fought to include a particular autopsy photo. Its purpose was to give the jury a glimpse of the victim's pubic region. It suggested that she was a 'fast woman', part of the 'evidence' that proved that Julie provoked her husband to kill her). The interviews with professionals involved in such cases substantiate Kissane's damning critique of the provocation defence. The Ramage case (amongst many others), ultimately led to an overhaul of Victoria's homicide laws.

Recent legislation has removed provocation as a defence and introduced a new crime of defensive homicide to assist women who kill their abusers. This group has legitimately used provocation as a defence in the past.

After discussing the trial and its aftermath, Kissane interviews the various players (with the notable exception of Jamie Ramage himself) in an attempt to answer the broader question of how such a crime could have happened and how it might have been prevented. The courts might have failed Julie Ramage, Kissane argues. She goes on to ask whether the community could have saved her? She interviews four of the five counsellors Jamie Ramage dragged his wife along to see in the weeks following their separation. It's hard to imagine how a counsellor in one 50 minute session could have accurately predicted the danger Julie Ramage was in, but it's even harder to imagine how the Ramages could have consistently maintained the façade of a happily married couple for over 23 years. The chapter entitled 'What the Jurors Didn't Know' is illuminating.

Those who knew the Ramages recount various incidents of violence over the years, including a broken nose, and more subtle yet unmistakable bullying and controlling behaviour on the part of Jamie Ramage. None of these incidents were heard in court, because friends' and family members' accounts were deemed hearsay, not admissible as evidence. This chapter offers a particularly unsettling, but in no way voyeuristic, glimpse into someone else's marriage. When a business partner of Jamie Ramage expressed surprise at a separation, Julie is quoted as saying, 'no-one knows what went on behind closed doors'. And yet this was obviously not true. The Ramages' acquaintances regularly observed incidents at dinner parties, separations, black eyes, public put-downs, and more.

The reason close friends failed to speak of his abusive behaviour may have been that it is extremely difficult to comment on other peoples' relationships, even those you're close to. One fears to offend, to overstep personal boundaries. But is the need to observe privacy really an adequate reason not to challenge, or at least to discuss, attitudes and behaviours, when these can lead, as they did in the Ramage case, to tragedy?

In 2003, when arguing for the need to review the provocation defence, Victorian attorney-general Rob Hulls argued that it was developed in the 16th and 17th centuries, 'an era in which assumptions about male and female behaviour were

steeped in misogyny', when women were treated within marriage as goods and chattels. He argued that the law had failed women in many ways and it was time to bring it into the twenty-first century. Thankfully the law has been changed, although the changes came too late for Julie Ramage.

Karen Kissane's book makes us ask ourselves whether the private attitudes that allowed men to claim provocation as a defence for killing their partners have really changed. Do they also need to be overhauled? Maybe we owe it to Julie Ramage and countless women like her to break the taboo of privacy, and to talk openly about these issues not only in our own relationships but also in those of the people we care about. Maybe then in the future fewer and fewer mothers may have to tell their children that the kinds of emotional and physical violence so many of grow up with is 'normal.'

I open a door in my head

POETRY

Published *10-Jul-2006*

I Open a Door in my Head

Here is a boy in a listless room, breathing
with the world, a terrier or anything
the shape of a terrier below the table.
There is food -apple teacake, pears
sleeping like birds. The dog lying on a layer of gristle
fed steadily into its basket and veiled with cloth.
All is quarantine. Laughter on ration;
hunger preceeding the eating and following it.
The chrome toaster leers, prey in teeth.
Nothing moves except the boy's hand,
reaching under the table, restless, mysterious.

Flatlands Stanzas

I

We might speak into this blackening stretch and expect the sound
of nothing to return to us, borderless and narrow, diffuse and echoing,
but not even a black-whisper breaks the monotony uncovered in flatlands.
Biting dirt in spools and threads lifts off the surface; rare detail among strips
of sclerophyll interspersed with mnemonic red, strata upon strata upon strata
slowing not for weather or salvation. Luminous floes of air have battened
the surface into an ancestral boredom with space. Night rolls out like a
thunderhead.

II

This is what we have for the sublime, and it is no wonder Gnosticism never
took off. We are on the horizon, and the horizon interminable, bands and levels
erasing sibilants and giving us flat lines, serious and trackless. We cannot shake
it, the country, its focused planes and plateaux, the madness rocking under
its eaves. Unfurling vagaries of land hide the slender guises of life: wires of

scrub, tundra -both meaningless and mathematical -go on oblivion. The tongue
floured with sienna and sweeping, as though through description comes
understanding.

[Click Here](#) to listen to audio recording of this file.

Some were cold, some were near, some were clear

- On a line of John Ashbery's
I was there. The dead
were an injunction.
All around, waves eating
waves, the hush of sky hung.
I saw them, hoisted
into the water; I made myself
watch. The bodies finally
what they were, visible
and outlined in azure, flotsam
incapable of allegory,
urging me near. I suspected
the trance was in the telling.
This was my inheritance:
infinite motion. For a time
the sea and I stood, quiet,
as illustrations.