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## Monster-making mutes purposeful alarm

EDITORIAL

*Michael Mullins & James Massola*



Next Monday marks the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attack and the beginning of the 'War On Terror.' In that time, many of us have made fun of the 'alert but not alarmed' catchcry.

All the while, we have progressively lost a sense of purposeful alarm, which is the necessary wake-up call we need when a situation goes beyond the pale, and action is required. Our capacity to respond to alarm is diminished by the media's manufacturing of monsters, in order to sell papers and compete for ratings and website hits. Last week, acquitted terror suspect 'Jihad' Jack Thomas was recalled from holidays in Gippsland to have a control order placed on him. At the weekend, sex offender turned model parolee John Lewthwaite was put back behind bars in response to the media-induced outcry after police spotted him exposing himself to a consenting adult in the dunes at Cronulla Beach.

The hysteria created by this style of reporting of such events diverts our hearts and minds from more legitimate sources of alarm. The Dili jailbreak has created conditions for a return to the violence we saw earlier this year in East Timor. In North Darfur, the security situation has taken a major turn for the worse, with a massive build-up of troops and military hardware. In Sri Lanka, there have been massacres every few days, almost all of them unreported in our media. The Catholic Centre for Peace and Reconciliation in Jaffna lists scores of violent events that took place in August, such as the Allaipitty massacre in which 20 people were killed in an attack on a church. 91 were injured, including seven babies, 20 children, 18 men and 28 women.



In this issue of *Eureka Street*, we sound the alarm where it is required. In the week of the release of *An Inconvenient Truth*, the legitimately alarmist film on Al Gore's climate change crusade, we look at the implications for the elderly and the most vulnerable. The bottom line, as Kate Mannix puts it, is that their bodies will cook if we don't do anything about it.

Suzanna Koster, a correspondent based in Pakistan, looks at the ongoing battle between the desire for democracy and the dangers of allowing militias

and al-Qaeda-associated groups too much freedom. This is not a battle easily won, nor one in which either side is without fault. Similarly, Kaylea Fearn writes on the Solomon Islands, and a people who daily struggle with the very real problems of corruption and decaying social cohesion. The day-to-day struggle for these people is a reminder to all of us of just how lucky we are to live in this country.

Also in this issue, we feature three 'replies' to articles from the previous issue. As editors, we begin to have a sense of being on the 'right track' when emails, phone calls and letters start coming in, declaiming and proclaiming what is so right, or so wrong, with what we have published. We welcome all of your correspondence, and encourage you to keep watching the letters page, and sending in your feedback, which we will continue to feature on the site.



Finally, a short note. As some of you will be aware, we are running a competition at the moment—the [Margaret Dooley Writers Award](#). This award honours a woman who made a significant contribution to her community. It offers budding Australian writers (under the age of 40) a chance to make a contribution to the fields of ethics and journalism. We like to think that a distinctive feature of Eureka Street is its moral component. We focus on the human implications of events and policies. We believe that this perspective is much needed and often lacking in Australian writing. This is the reason why we offer such a generous award for short essays on ethical topics—so start writing!

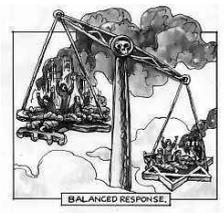
[Click here](#) to download an MP3 audio version of this editorial (2.6MB)

## The place of empathy in moral judgment of Israel's war

### COLUMNS

Andrew Hamilton

*Eureka Street* has published many articles critical of Israel's actions in Lebanon and Palestine, including my own. Mihal Greener's passionate yet eirenical exploration of the Israeli perspective provides a view that is both different and welcome. It invites a serious response.



Her article is challenging because she not only enables the reader to better understand an Israeli perspective, but insists that to do so is essential if one is to pass moral judgments on Israel's policy, and the execution of this policy. She reminds us that moral analysis without empathy for those on whose actions you are passing judgment is a repelling moralism. Her moving representation of Israeli attitudes brings home how difficult it is to enter the inner world of people whose history, predicament, ethnic and religious identity you do not share. The chastening conclusion, to paraphrase Wittgenstein, might be that "whereof one cannot feel oneself part, thereof one must be silent". Certainly, silence would be preferable to a response that cited the sufferings of the people of Lebanon and Palestine, as if these made morally insignificant the sufferings of Israelis.

I agree with Mihal's implied argument, that to enter fully the history, the predicament and the constant beleaguerment and rejection of the Israeli people is an essential part of moral reflection on this war. I think that she would agree that empathy is neither a substitute for moral reflection, nor that by itself it is a totally adequate response. If we respect people fully, we expect that, in whatever situation they find themselves, they will ask themselves as persons and as a nation what it is right for them to do. Our answer to that question will be based on acknowledgment of shared humanity and respect for the human dignity both of ourselves, and of those with whom we are in conflict.



Parentetically, I wonder if the widespread criticism of the actions of Israel, as of the United States, comes not out of disrespect for these nations, but from high expectations. We demand more of those who have a high historical and rhetorical respect for humanity and for moral seriousness.

I would set the discussion about proportionality, introduced by Ms. Greener, in this moral context. Although international criticism of Israel's military actions as disproportionate has mainly been framed in legal terms, the requirement of proportionality is morally based. International law demands that the conduct of war (*ius in bello*) is proportionate and discriminate. These requirements, as also the more stringent conditions for declaring war (*ius ad bellum*), however, reflect the moral belief that even in war we can act rightly or wrongly. They are designed to ensure that warring parties respect human dignity by limiting its diminishment in war.

The judgment about what is proportionate is not a mathematical but a human judgment. It measures the fit between the reasons for and the goals of our action, and the means we use to achieve it. It echoes our intuitive sense that, even if justified, any violent response must be measured to the injury, and capable of achieving reasonable goals. If a neighbour allows his cows to trespass on our property, for example, we may not burn down his house. Neither our goal of preventing similar incursions nor the damage the cows cause could make such an extreme response legitimate. It simply does not fit. It is beyond all reasonableness.

After we have taken into full account Israel's long experience of hostility, insecurity, suicide bombings, rocketings and cross border attacks, we should still ask whether the response in Palestine and Lebanon was right. Not to ask that moral question would compromise the moral sensitivity that makes the welfare of the Israeli people of concern to us. It raises two issues of proportionality, of fit. Does it fit with Israel's reasonable and achievable longer term goals? And is it proportionate to the injury and the immediate threat to which Israel was responding?

It is hard to see that the longer-term flourishing of the people both of Israel and of its surrounding nations can be secured in any other way than by conversation and negotiation. A small nation that relies heavily on military force and external patronage for survival and respect is inherently insecure. Military action only entrenches resistance to conversation and negotiation on both sides. It is a short term fix which subverts long term aims. Nor is it likely to provide security for the people of Israel and surrounding nations, even in the intermediate term.



I find the fit between the injury suffered by Israel—the capture of its soldiers—and the response even more problematic. Mihal Greener has described powerfully the seriousness of the violation. But the response to that action—the destruction of such infrastructure as the port, electricity

generation and bridges that provide the conditions for ordinary citizens to live with dignity in Palestine and Lebanon—seems disproportionate. It is to strike at those who might harm me by punishing others with no power to stop the assailants. I recognise in the logic of this action the same instrumental use of human suffering as characterises the Australian treatment of asylum seekers. It is equally offensive. I believe that attacks on convoys containing many civilian vehicles also lack a proper respect for humanity.

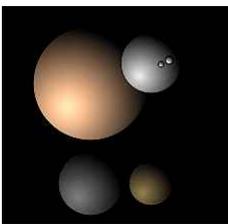
Under Mihal Greener's argument that critics of Israel's actions come too easily to their conclusions lies a deeper and more despairing question. Are questions about respect for human dignity a luxury that only the comfortably secure can afford? Is not the more basic human question about how to survive, whatever it takes? I feel the force of those questions. But if we answer that survival legitimates any action, does our position not erode the grounds, not only of criticism, but also of solidarity with others?

## Honk if Pluto is still a planet

COLUMNS

Archimedes

*Tim Thwaites*



The outcry with which people greeted ex-planet Pluto's [change in status](#) took Archimedes by surprise. Even the language used was astonishing. Pluto had been ...œdemoted...• , ...œbanished...• and ...œstripped of its status...• . *The Age* newspaper wrote an editorial on the topic, and the *Times of India* reported people buying bumper stickers over the Internet asking fellow drivers to ...œHonk if Pluto is still a planet...• .

Bizarre! Nothing had changed physically—only the words used to describe Pluto's position in the Solar System. The fact is that it always was different from the eight other planets with which it was formerly lumped—tiny (smaller than the moon), surrounded by debris, and with an orbit which intersects with Neptune outside the planetary plane. So now we're recognising the fact.

What has changed is a thought pattern in people's minds. All that time devoted to learning about Pluto as a planet, and the mnemonic to remember the nine (now eight) planets in order. What right have scientists to change their minds, people have demanded. What right to admit that they didn't have it quite right the first time? How dare they rob us of a childhood verity?

It's an illustration of a wider problem for science itself, and a general misunderstanding of the way it works. The misunderstanding is partly the fault of scientists themselves, and partly fostered by those who find scientific evidence at odds with their beliefs.

You see, many scientists like to portray what they find as 'reality' or 'the truth'—and their craft certainly does provide a model of reality. But that's just what it is, a model.

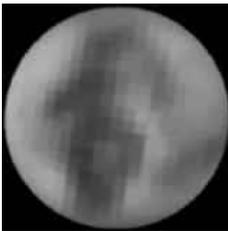
Furthermore, this introduces another great strength of science—it is self-correcting. It can provide better and closer models to reality as it accumulates more evidence. In the process some of the old ideas of reality or the truth are swept away, which jolts people's faith and upsets their



sensibilities.

In fact, the ground always has the potential to shift, and that worries many people, who like certainty. When Archimedes was a student of zoology, the revolution of molecular biology was in its infancy. The sophisticated techniques which allow researchers to study the stuff of life, DNA, were being developed, and genes began to be studied as chemical entities.

The upshot was that the process and progress of evolution and the origin of species was opened to scrutiny at a level never possible before. Suddenly, we could see evolution happening before our very eyes, and species looked a lot less rigid than in the past. There were huge and exciting debates about how to redefine evolution and species, and the certainties of the past were overturned.



That's why the language of science is rarely one of certainty. It is of probability and percentages, significant difference and estimation of error. To back its ideas or hypotheses, science demands evidence. Accumulating that data takes time. That's why, for instance, it takes so long between the first suggestions of a medical advance and its application as a treatment or therapy. The evidence that a drug is safe and useful, for instance, can take years or even decades to compile.

And that makes science such an easy target for those who deal in certainties. Because it can never be 100 per cent sure, science leaves open a loophole for those who don't agree. And, because the pace of progress is ever faster, the relative pace of science always seems slow.

Health Minister Tony Abbott, as an outside observer, suggests that stem cell research has been a failure because the progress to therapy is so slow. As an insider, Archimedes is boggled at its speed of progress and the enormous potential applications it possesses.

Perhaps the world should follow the lead of the shifting sands of science, and show a little more flexibility in its thinking. (Note that Archimedes said science, not scientists, who are just as prone to inflexible thinking as anyone else.) What led to the change in Pluto's designation was an increase in knowledge—the discovery, using better technology, of many more Pluto-like objects further out, beyond our neighbourhood of the inner eight planets.

With any increase in knowledge you run the risk of upsetting your present understanding. That demands tolerance of new and different ideas. Is that

such a bad thing in our world of climate change and the War On Terror?

## Corruption and prosperity don't go together in the Solomons

INTERNATIONAL

*Kaylea Fearn*

Australians watched in horror as the capital of the Solomon Islands, Honiara, was burning in April this year. After hundreds of millions of dollars invested by the Australian government into the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI), the Solomon Islands was still floundering.



Six months on, the reports from the Solomon Islands have died down, but the question still remains: what would cause a community to burn down its own capital city, and when will the violence be over for good?

In July 2003, Australia joined ten other Pacific nations in sending RAMSI to restore law and order, after years of ethnic and historic tension led to violence perpetrated primarily by militias. The violence resulted in over one hundred reported deaths, approximately 30,000 people being displaced, and a collapse in the already struggling economy.

Since then, many Solomon Islanders have looked to economic investment and trade with countries such as Australia and Taiwan as a potential way forward. Despite many efforts, there is currently very little sustainable industry and even less infrastructure. Businesses in Honiara often go without electricity and running water for days.

While the absence of basic services and reliable business practice is a visible concern, the heart of the issue provoking the continuing unrest in the Solomons is more of a moral one.



According to Martha Horiwapu, coordinator of the trauma-counselling program for Caritas Solomon Islands (CSI), the underlying issues stem from a culture of mistrust, corruption and unhealed wounds. High levels of trauma have been recorded amongst the population and there are arguably specific links between overcoming trauma and lasting peace.

...œWe [the Solomon Islands] won't be able to achieve complete reconciliation until there is healing. When people's minds are healed, they can move on and live their lives again,...• she says.

...œWe try to create a space for rehabilitation of the mind. People have witnessed and committed terrible acts of violence during the ethnic tension and need specific treatment."

With these needs in mind, CSI has developed a community-based trauma counselling program and the results have been encouraging. Martha reports that one example of the program's effectiveness is a drop in cases of sexual and domestic abuse in participating communities.

Despite many successful programs enacted by NGOs, continuing community distrust is demonstrated in the possession and use of firearms. Furthermore, governmental instability following the April elections has been a focus for the international media. There have been many reported feuds between Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare and Attorney-General Primo Afeau.

However, David Mills, member of Initiatives of Change and organiser of last year's Winds of Change: Solomon Islands conference, has seen a dramatic shift in community attitudes since the April elections.



...œBefore, for most people, the very idea of corruption was inconceivable. Now, there is recognition that it exists within the community and that it is a bad thing. This is a significant transition. The people are ready to consolidate,...• he said.

Judith Fangalasuu, general secretary of the Solomon Islands Christian Association (SICA), agrees with Mills and adds that not only are Solomon Islanders now aware of corruption, they are keen to change the culture.

...œPeople in Honiara are ready to move on and do something about combating corruption. They now realise that it has been the major contributing factor to our instability,...• says Fangalasuu.

In the past six months, conferences held by major community groups to discuss the principles of integrity and transparency have been extremely well attended. The same influence groups have also convinced RAMSI to start handing back responsibilities to the Solomon Islander people.

These major developments have led SICA to organise 'The National Ethical Leadership Conference', which will be held 1-2 November, and will include 52 parliamentarians, all the provincial premiers, and prominent business people.



Fangalasu'u believes that this conference will help lay the foundations for developing trust in the community, but also stresses that people adopt an anti-corruption mentality for the country to prosper.

...œIt's easy to say that politicians and business people need to change. But we all need to realise that we have to change on a personal level too, and consider our own integrity. [But] it's hard for people when the price of living keeps rising and there is no cash around."

With Solomon Islanders preparing to work more closely with RAMSI on identifying ways of institutionalising community input and outreach, there is an opportunity now for the country to take its first real steps as a fully independent nation. The hope is that in reaching for a brighter future, some are not left behind.

## Pakistani tribal areas key to the War on Terror

INTERNATIONAL

Politics

*Suzanna Koster*

The young Pakistani army man shook his head in disbelief when he read in an English newspaper that Pakistan is not doing enough against terrorism. "We have pulled out 80,000 troops from the Indian border leaving a void for the Indians to fill, and what do we get? They're saying we're not doing enough," he says, requesting that he not be named.



The recently-foiled plot to blow up trans-atlantic airplanes has put a new focus on Pakistan's efforts in the US-led war on terrorism. "Much has been done against al-Qaeda, but far less against domestic jihadi groups," says Samina Ahmed, South Asia project director of the International Crisis Group. "Al-Qaeda is definitely far less," agrees Talat Masud, former head of Pakistan's secret service ISI, "but the Taliban are more, and there is a vast number of terrorists."

Pakistani security forces have arrested more than 700 terrorism suspects, but the president, General Pervez Musharraf, who under US pressure dropped support for al-Qaeda after 9/11, has allowed Islamic hardliners to flourish. Extremist parties have never been more powerful and Taliban-like militants have taken over swaths of tribal areas. "In the last three years there has been more radicalisation of the tribal belt and adjoining areas than in the whole history of Pakistan," says Masud.

Most notably, parts of the Waziristan region in Pakistan's federal administered tribal areas (FATA) bordering Afghanistan have become increasingly 'Talibanised' since 2003. An alliance of local and foreign militants, many of them Uzbeks and Tadjiks, have taken hold in South-Waziristan, subjecting its population to Taliban-style rule. Last December they hanged more than 20 suspected criminals on a tree in Miran Shah. Two days later they bound them behind cars and dragged them through town. Barbers are forbidden to cut beards and shopkeepers are not allowed to sell music or videos.

The militants in Waziristan also plan and carry out attacks on



Afghanistan's south, where in the Uruzgan province 390 Australian troops work with the Dutch-led provincial recovery teams. "It is now becoming difficult to differentiate between the two, and yet their thinking is different. One is operating on the Afghan or Pakistan-level, and the other is operating on a pan-Islamic level," says Talat.

Misguided military actions in tribal areas against foreign militants, in which hundreds of innocent civilians have lost their lives, have infuriated the Pakistanis and driven tribal peoples into the hands of militants. "We are killing our own people. Now they hate us," says the young army man. He also says the forces are bound to their compounds in some areas of Waziristan. "To a certain extent we are hopelessly lost. We cannot seal our borders and people can easily hide here," he says.

Taliban-style rule is spilling over into the adjoining settled areas of Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province. Men who allow their women to go to the bazaar are publicly castigated during Friday prayers in the mosque. Cultural venues have been attacked, and the provincial government Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, an alliance of six Islamic parties, has banned advertisements that depict women.

Most analysts agree that fighting terrorism is not just a matter of using military force. "The Americans are all the time out on using the military instrument. Pakistan has also been using it. By using the military instrument alone you actually create a difficult situation," says Masud, referring to Waziristan. But Pakistan's army spokesperson Major-General Shaukat Sultan says the army has not had a choice as the tribes keep protecting foreign militants. Masud says that Pakistan has to combine military, political and socio-economic development to counter terrorism in the long-run, "but it is easier said than done."

The spread of democracy is essential in reining in extremist views. So far Musharraf has not allowed secular opposition parties to take part in the political process. Instead, he has sided with extremist Islamic parties, such as Jamaat-e-Islami, and given them an unprecedented presence in the government. "Pakistan should move towards democracy as soon as possible. It would take a long time before we have a mature democracy but if the elections were free and fair, and mainstream political parties came back to power, and there was pluralism, many of the extremist views will get absorbed in the political system and will mellow-down," says Major-General Sultan.

**U.S. Relief Efforts in Pakistan**

Chabkhal, Pakistan  
October 20, 2005  
U.S. Army General John Alward, U.S. Central Command commander, shakes hands with Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff General Pervez Musharraf. The two men, along with other U.S. military officials, are in Pakistan to help coordinate relief efforts for the victims of the earthquake that struck the country in October 2005.



The backing of President Musharraf by western governments, due to his willingness to engage in the 'War on Terror' has been both a blessing and a curse. Musharraf has, by remaining in power, given western democracies an ally in the region. Unfortunately, the fact that he is an unelected leader is more than a little uncomfortable—the anti-democratic nature of his regime is contrary to America's stated aim to spread democracy and, furthermore, has fomented dissent and extremism. The growth in extremism in the so-called 'wild zones' of Pakistan shows just how far there is to go before the 'War' is 'won'.

The vast majority of Pakistanis are moderate; more than 90 percent have voted for moderate, democratic parties in the past. With functioning democratic institutions, this moderate majority will be empowered. This is where international, particularly western, attention should be focused. A single-minded emphasis on al-Qaeda, and its offshoots, is shortsighted and counter-productive.

## Grief exploited for political purposes

AUSTRALIA

*Richard White*



Jehan Nassif, 18 years old, died of meningococcal disease. The refrain in the media was “her death could have been avoided”. The NSW Opposition has taken up the cry. Leader Peter Debnam has promised a no confidence vote against the government’s Minister for Health, John Hatzistergos. Meanwhile, Jehan’s family is grieving her death and looking for an explanation.

Sudden death, particularly of a young person, has its own demands. Family and friends are not prepared. Life and liveliness, promise and youth are the context. Death is the disruption, the destruction of a dream. The initial reaction is shock, then disbelief, denial and anger. The family does not want to, cannot, believe that life, this life, should end, now, here and suddenly. This is a normal and healthy reaction.

The gradual adjustment to this loss begins with the funeral preparations, where the thinking and shock can be put on hold. Practical considerations can absorb energy and create an immediate focus. There will be time for the investigations and the recriminations. Now there is only time for honouring and remembering and farewelling, the rest can wait.

Only, it cannot wait. Private grief like that experienced by Jehan Nassif’s family becomes fuel for the imagination of the general public. The outpouring of feeling is charged with indignation. How could this happen? The questioning intrudes. The inquiry cannot wait.

This politicisation of grief is not uncommon. Some years ago, a young woman died at the Big Day Out. Elements of the inquest continued for some years afterwards, including analysis of the band and its responsibility. Currently, any death associated with possible failures of the health system is fair game. Personal grief becomes public property. More than this, it can become political capital.



There is a public face to grief, and funerals are an important expression of this. The structured and ritualised expressions are the beginnings of

mourning, that time of supported and acknowledged sadness that enables people to come to grips with loss. It is both a permissive and freeing time, where there can be the beginning of acceptance and a re-ordering that enable people to recover from tragedy or death. We need this public side to our grief; many cultures have structured and detailed customs related to mourning. In our secular western society we tend to muddle through, with some traditional religious rituals and some evolving attitudes to death that serve us well enough. Until, that is, our mourning is structured in ways that are not helpful.

Accountability and blame have their place in inquests. There is little room for them in mourning. There is the world of difference between the anger of a family feeling robbed of their daughter and the genuine, and manufactured, cries of injustice linked to purported failures of 'the system'.

The family's anger has its roots in loss. It is more than rage against the coming of the night. It could well include the anger that spurs one on to discover what went wrong and why a life was lost. But, at heart, for a grieving mother, father, friend and family, this anger is the cry of why? Why her? Why us?



**PETER DEBNAM MP**  
NSW Liberal Leader  
Shadow Minister for Veterans' Services  
Shadow Minister for Business & Industry  
Shadow Minister for Citizenship

**MEDIA RELEASE**

Monday 29 August 2006

**PREMIER IEMMA MUST APOLOGISE TO  
JEHAN'S FAMILY**

NSW Liberal Leader Peter Debnam said today he found it extraordinary Miss Iemma was willing to apologise to the family of the 15-year-old teenager who died.

"My heart goes out to the family of Miss Iemma. It is not surprising she would like to show some of the same - such as respect," Mr Debnam said.

"I wonder in 2007 how far the family of Jehan Khalil - everyone except I appear, I am certain," he said.

"As a former Health Minister and now Premier, Miss Iemma's response to this tragedy has been heartfelt and extraordinary.

"The community will be assured her family is deeply apologised to the family."

It is rage addressed to God and to the Universe. This cry has no answer, none that any inquest could provide. It is the instinctive and healthy assertion of individual uniqueness in the face of the eternal law. This energy is not wasted, nor futile. It is part of the sanctity of grief: every death is special and some of them are tragic. A woman said to me after the funeral of her aunt, "I wish I came from a family who could wail!" This is what the grief-anger is about.

Politicisation of grief will occur. It is inevitable. But, it is important that the anger which can be a part of mourning, not be confused with the anger that demands explanations. They can become intertwined. People may talk about the closure associated with explanations and resolutions. They have more difficulty articulating the anger at the loss of meaning a tragic death occasions. Only the safety and support of a mourning space and place allow for new meaning to emerge. This is where real healing begins.

## Giving Anangu women a say on child protection

AUSTRALIA

Joan Healy

In June [Mrs Mantatjarra Wilson](#) talked on ABC's *Lateline*, with tears streaming down her cheeks of her sadness for her grandchildren, and their children. The Josephite Sisters working with Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) mothers and grandmothers already had plans in place to meet with the women on the APY lands in the western desert of South Australia to talk about 'child protection in place'. The sadness and shame among their Aboriginal friends at the direction of the debate after the *Lateline* program made this meeting more urgent. The Sisters knew the wisdom of the women elders and wanted their voice to be heard.



So it was that at the end of July a group of four Josephites, Michele Madigan, Kenise Neil, Helen Duke and Joan Healy, together with a very experienced child protection consultant Professor Dorothy Scott, gathered on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands at Umuwa to listen and to learn from Aboriginal mothers and grandmothers who were deeply concerned about the protection of their 'young ones'.

Mrs Waniwa (...œAuntie Lucy...• ) Lester, a senior Anangu woman, acted as interpreter and cultural consultant, and Dr Irene Watson, an Aboriginal academic, gently facilitated the conversation. More than a dozen Anangu mothers and grandmothers participated in the discussions, which were wide-ranging and touched on such issues of child protection as poverty, poor housing, family violence and substance misuse. Some women spoke in their own language, others in English. Some attended on one day, others two days. They spoke of their worries and hopes.



The talking began with Waniwa referring to a traditional Anangu story, the theme of which was the importance of children carrying with them the spirit of their mother, and how life itself depended on this story being carried forward, and not being discarded and replaced by that which was new and not of the mother.

In response to the question ...œhow can Anangu grow up children strong?...• , deep pain was expressed about the loss

of particular children and how families had wept with sorrow. One grandmother spoke with intense anguish when recounting how her young grandchild had asked on the telephone, "...Grandmother, where are you?"

The women said that Anangu who are taken away ...feel like strangers in own country when they return... | children taken away call other people 'mum'—wrong way—not true—names of some people who were taken away not true now... | we all want to stay in land to learn culture, not learn other people's culture... | learn from own people....

Anangu women spoke a lot about hunger. Families cannot afford to buy food due to the very high prices in the stores. Much of the food was unhealthy. ...Takeaway food not good. Take away food killing Anangu... need enough food for children to stay on lands....

...This issue hidden... children hungry... | not getting fed properly... | then being placed in someone else's care. Mistakes (of the past) can't be repeated.... The discussion often returned to the issue of the affordability and availability of good food. ...Shops big problem in community... | take this to government.....Many skinny children on lands... | bones not growing properly....

When asked what should happen when parents cannot care for their children properly and the babies are underweight—when parents might be sniffing petrol, for example—the women said that the 'Anangu way' was for grandmothers or aunties to look after the child, yet many grandparents are raising children without financial support. They said, "...Grandmothers need help to buy food." They know that foster carers receive allowances for the expense of rearing children.

Child protection policy has a huge impact on Aboriginal communities, with Aboriginal children being six times more likely than non-Aboriginal children to be in State care, largely for child neglect. One of the most serious forms of neglect is 'failure to thrive' or malnutrition in infants and young children.

It was hoped, through the homemaker services that are being developed in some communities on the APY Lands, that a house with a warm and welcoming homely atmosphere would encourage mothers and their young children to come together to cook and share healthy food with their children.

...Have been thinking safe place, feeding place.... • ...Have house with mattress, milk, cot, fruit... | that kind of place like to see." The grandmothers said they too would come to such a place, to help the mothers and play with the children. They know of traditional ways of safeguarding children from



harm, but need a safe space.

The mothers would be cared for and fed as well. The Anangu women said that once trusting relationships had been established with mothers—many of whom are themselves very young and may have problems such as petrol-sniffing—the mothers would then feel comfortable having an Anangu homemaker or family support worker helping them in their home. They said, ...Don't do the work... support people to do the work...| need more people to help in homes...| problems start in home...| need to work in homemaking."

However, there was concern that the homemaker service would not be successful unless the centres were big enough for a kitchen and a group of women and children. There also need to be enough money to buy food, and sufficient staffing by Anangu women. Women carrying out this demanding task would need to be well-housed, supported and paid properly. ...Can't make a garden without a shovel." ...Not CEDEP wages—real wages....•

Accounts were given of previous services which had failed due to short-term funding and poor co-ordination. There was confusion about the many narrowly-focused services delivered from a great distance. ...To tell the truth, I don't know what they are doing." Such services were not seen as accountable to the community. ...Need to sit in front of Anangu and say 'this is what I have done'—do proper report, start to work with communities. Work out what they want. Work it out....



Anangu women could see how some things could work—for example, a program where 'young ones' could come together in the evenings to play music and 'have a good feed' reduced petrol sniffing and violence in the community. But there had been many broken promises. ...Government need to talk proper story....

A fragile hope for the future of their children was expressed by the women at the end of the days together. ...Today we are talking for first time...| we all know what is happening. We like to see these things in place...|to be true story...|make this a true story...|don't know if there are any true stories yet....

The women who listened are convinced of the wisdom they heard. They will, at every opportunity, tell what they heard and so influence decisions about child protection in remote communities. As well, leaders of the Sisters of St Joseph, Josephites Federation and Central, will work together to keep the issue of a justly reconciled Australia on the agenda. Josephite Sisters are

in partnership with Aboriginal people in every mainland state, both in remote and urban areas. Almost two thousand copies of their program *The Hour Has Come* are now in circulation.

“Make this a true story.”

## What makes a site sacred?

### THEOLOGY

*Andrew Hamilton*

St. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises is introduced by a marmoreal document called the Principle and Foundation: ...The human person is made to praise, reverence, and serve God Our Lord, and by so doing to save their soul. The other things on the face of the earth are created for human beings in order to help them pursue the end for which they are created. It follows from this that one must use other things in so far as they help towards one's end....



The statement has been criticised for being cold in the way it speaks of 'other things'. It encourages people to be calculating and heavy in the way they relate to the world and to other people, and to forget that the world is sacred. In my own occasional moods of self-examination, however, I wonder whether it breeds a rather indecent lightness of spirit.

I wonder how the Principle influences my response to stories about funny business in the Catholic Church. July marked the 25th anniversary of Pope John Paul's strong speech in Alice Springs, in which he endorsed the dignity and the right to land of indigenous Australians. To mark the occasion a Mass was celebrated in the largely indigenous parish of Redfern. People had asked prior to the celebrations if they could put a mural in the church, but their request was refused. Before the Mass, a group broke into the Church, with the result that when the community arrived the next day, they saw facing them a large and splendidly executed mural. It enshrined the Pope's words in Alice Springs. The visiting celebrant innocently blessed the mural and prayed that it remain there in perpetuity. The parish priest commented that this mob knew nothing about obedience. But he was left with an unpalatable dilemma: leave the mural there, or whitewash Pope John Paul II.



Now any sober-minded person would judge that these doings were disgraceful, and that they clearly echoed Adam's raid on the apple tree. But my response was not to mourn at such great sinfulness, but to laugh loud and long. The story made my day. After due reflection, however, I recognised that the reason why I had failed to respond with proper gravity was that this

story is really less about obedience than about property. It is about how we use things, including churches, to praise, love and reverence God. It is full of ironies—of invading a sacred site, of consecration through desecration, of respecting land rights through disrespecting land rights. Ultimately the story lightened my spirit because it made sport of property rights and put property into play.

Before you praise the moral acuity of my response, you should know that I also laugh when I hear stories of the United States' Jesuit Dan Berrigan and his friends. They were jailed for cavalier disregard for government property after charges that they had poured blood on draft cards and assaulted a nuclear warhead. They failed to persuade the judges that the government was perverting the proper use of such things by dedicating them to a war that brought human beings to a totally improper end. I also confess to smiling secretly two months ago when an Irish jury found Ciaran O'Reilly and his companions not guilty. They had been tried for taking to a United States military plane at Shannon Airport with a hatchet. They argued that in receiving such planes, used for military operations in Iraq, Ireland was allowing its property to be used improperly.

To add to this catalogue of moral perversity, my sins also include laughing at raids on property undertaken purely out of greed. After a false priest was detected ministering for a considerable period of time in a rural town, for example, the parishioners took up a petition to have him remain. Best pastor they had ever had, they said. Not to mention a range of priests who were suspected of rigging raffles, and convicted for running ringers at country race meetings. Trouble was, everybody knew, and had got on the nags.

I confess that I laughed at such impropriety, even though it sullied our Catholic Church. But is it really reprehensible to laugh at such violations of property rights? Jesus seemed to display a similarly cavalier attitude to property. He told his disciples to go fish for the temple tax he owed. He attacked the economic base of Jerusalem when he whipped the stall holders out of the temple. He also told a story about a crook manager whom his master praised for cooking the books in order to ensure his future employability.



The praise puzzled generations of scriptural scholars who held property to be almost sacred. Mind you, they also had to work hard at the saying about the rich man and the eye of the needle. Perhaps the real affront in this story is not that the master praised his manager, but that Jesus enjoyed the story. He wasn't in favour of rigging the books. But he laughed at the manager's fraud because in his world, as in ours, people took money too seriously.

They built their law around property rights, and made property sacred. For Jesus, as for Ignatius' Principle, property is to enable all human beings to live well. It has a social bond. So stories, even of scoundrels, that enable us to laugh at the pretentiousness of giving our lives to keep and guard property, are precious.

On hearing the parable of the Good Samaritan, a young girl asked why the robbers could not have been nice robbers, and just stolen the traveller's money, instead of beating him. That is the world of the First Principle. In it robbery is wrong, property is not king but servant of human beings, and laughter is free.

## Spain's hard line makes illegal immigration more dangerous

### ESSAYS

International

*Anthony Ham*



Europe and Africa lie just 14km apart across the Straits of Gibraltar which separate Spain from Morocco, but when it comes to living standards, there is no wider gulf between neighbours anywhere in the world. Spain is the world's eighth-largest economy and the average Spaniard earns \$A29,380 a year. Just across the water, Moroccans get by on \$A5,253, while people from Morocco's neighbour, Mali, earn just four percent of annual Spanish salaries.

It is scarcely surprising, therefore, that this juxtaposition of geographical proximity and economic disparity should provoke mass attempts by Africans—predominantly from countries south of the Sahara—to reach Europe by illegal means. What is more surprising is that Europe in general and Spain in particular seem no closer to finding a way to deal with those who clamour at Europe's gates.

During the last three years, Spain has received a staggering 600,000 immigrants a year. The majority of these arrive legally, encouraged by a Spanish economy on the upswing and by a government struggling to fill the newly created jobs that are driving its economic growth.

But a large number of immigrants to Spain also arrive in leaky boats or by scaling barbed-wire fences.

It used to be that small wooden boats crossing from Morocco to Spain were almost as common as the large ships that pass through the straits, one of the world's busiest commercial shipping lanes. But after an agreement between the Spanish and Moroccan governments led to unprecedented co-operation—joint patrols, repatriation agreements and aid heading south—between the two countries, the shortest route into Europe was effectively closed to illegal immigration.

In October last year, the world watched appalled as up to 11,000 sub-Saharan Africans, who had been stranded in Morocco by the new display of Spanish-Moroccan bipartisanship, stormed the border fences surrounding the Spanish enclave of Melilla which



is one of two outposts of Europe on the African coast. A few made it across, three were shot dead by Moroccan police and those who were returned across the fence by Spain were dumped in the Sahara Desert by Moroccan police.

With each new crackdown, would-be immigrants were forced further south, further away from Europe, but there were increasing signs that the new policies were merely making the journey to Europe more dangerous, rather than acting as a deterrent. By March, diplomats and NGOs in Mauritania and Senegal were warning that up to half a million illegal immigrants were gathering in the two countries in preparation for the journey to Europe. Most were setting out from Nouadhibou, in northern Mauritania, for the perilous 1,000km journey across the open sea to Spain's Canary Islands.

In April, the dangers of the new route became apparent when a boat with 11 bodies washed up on the shore of the Caribbean island of Barbados. Investigations revealed that the boat had sailed from Praia in the Cape Verde Islands on Christmas Day. On board were 50 would-be immigrants from Senegal, Guinea-Bissau and Gambia. Each had paid 1,300 euros to a Spanish man to secure illegal passage to Spain's Canary Islands. Soon after departing Praia, the boat began to encounter difficulties off the Mauritanian coast and the Spanish organiser of the journey was contacted. It appears that the boat was towed for a short distance and then cast adrift with neither food nor water. The towline was reportedly severed by a machete.



By the time the boat arrived off Barbados 135 days later, the boat had drifted 4600km off course and 39 of the immigrants were missing, presumed dead.

The only clues to the identities of the men were an Air Senegal airline ticket and a farewell note written by one of them, Diaw Sounkar Diemi, from Senegal: ...Things are bad. I don't think I will come out of this alive. I need whoever finds me to send this money to my family...

...Please excuse me and goodbye. This is the end of my life in this big Moroccan sea....

Since the start of this year alone, more than 18,000 undocumented immigrants have nonetheless arrived in the Canary Islands. The Spanish coast guard estimates that at least 1,200 people have drowned while trying to make the crossing in 2006, among the more than 5,000 who have drowned in the past eight years.

Spain's government has responded as it always has, with a mixture of pragmatic self-interest and compassion.

Elements of both were apparent in a mass legalisation of illegal immigrants in 2005, followed by a further amnesty earlier this year. Combined, the two

moratoriums saw almost 900,000 immigrants receive temporary residence after proving that they had at least a six-month work contract.

The policy saw barely a blip in the popularity levels of the Spanish government. This was due in part to a recent study which showed that Spain—suffering from record low birth-rates and an ageing population—would require 350,000 immigrants every year for the next decade in order to save its social security and pensions system from bankruptcy. Although the government made the legalisation a centrepiece of its policy to combat illegal immigration—the amnesty was time-specific—most analysts agreed that the move would prove more effective in tackling Spain’s enormous underground, non-tax-paying economy.

But there have also been suggestions that the Spanish government has no interest in espousing the politics of Fortress Europe or Fortress Australia that its European partners were calling for and which Australians know so well.

In an interview in July, Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero was asked whether he was worried by ongoing attacks on the government by the opposition and by the Catholic Church. Not at all, said the prime minister. ...What worries me are the poor sub-Saharan Africans. The problem of immigration occupies most of my thoughts because I live with an absolute contradiction. I know that we can’t let them all enter, but I would love to provide work for all of them....

Spain has not relied alone on amnesties or fine sentiments in its bid to reduce the numbers of those risking their lives to reach Spanish shores.

In July, the government shifted its battle against illegal immigration from the high seas to a three-year diplomatic offensive in sub-Saharan Africa. The 600-million-euro Plan Africa includes aid packages for selected African countries in order to boost social and economic development and to thereby ensure that immigrants have fewer reasons to seek a new life in Europe. Other measures included providing assistance to African governments with patrol boats and training programs to improve border surveillance, as well as increasing the number of Spanish embassies in Africa so as to facilitate legal immigration.

Again, the government was keen to avoid the language of anti-immigration paranoia, with Deputy Prime Minister Maria Teresa Fernandez de la Vega acknowledging that ...the future of Africa is the future of Spain and of Europe, and the stability and development of our own states is intimately linked to the development and progress of states that are less developed”.

But cold-hearted pragmatism also played its part. Under Spanish law, illegal immigrants cannot be deported unless the Spanish government has a repatriation agreement with the countries in question. Although such an agreement exists with Morocco, few African governments have been willing to sign, understanding as they do that remittances from migrants to Europe play an important role in



keeping many African economies afloat. An essential pillar of Spain's Plan Africa involves, therefore, the cajoling of these governments into signing such treaties.



But still the immigrants come. Almost every week new records are set for the number of single-day, single-week or single-boat arrivals. In July, the issue again became front page news when two very different types of travellers came face-to-face as tourists on a Tenerife beach provided water and blankets to illegal immigrants whose boat had washed ashore until Red Cross emergency workers and police could arrive.

More recently, in late August, Spain's government came under fire for airlifting more than 8500 illegal immigrants to cities on the Spanish mainland in order to ease the pressure on the Canary Islands, where social services have been stretched to the limit by new arrivals.

Thus it is that many who undertake the dangerous journey to reach Europe find themselves finally standing on the soil of mainland Europe. And thus it is that the Spanish government—like so many governments in Europe—find themselves bereft of a plan as to what to do with illegal immigrants who survive the crossing. After being airlifted to cities like Madrid and Barcelona in more than 300 flights this year, many of the immigrants are given a bottle of water and sandwiches and then left to fend for themselves.

There they subsist as best they can in a twilight zone of legitimacy—illegal, unable to work, unable to be deported and living proof that the gulf dividing Africa and Europe is about so much more than the 14km of open water that separate the two continents.

## Changed climate will cook the elderly

### ENVIRONMENT

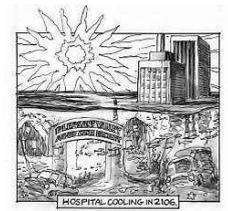
*Kate Mannix*

When the great heatwave of 2003 struck Paris, it left 14,802 people dead. 30,000 people died throughout the rest of Europe. It was, according to Britain's chief scientific adviser Sir David King, the worst natural disaster on record.

Sixty percent of those deaths occurred in nursing homes, retirement homes and hospitals.

In 2003, the French hospital authorities were caught out by climate change, and their failure to plan, let alone adapt to the long predicted changed weather conditions. The majority of deaths in Europe in 2003 were of people over 65—those who are most at risk of heat extremes.

But even if the French had planned for an increased level of air conditioning in their aged care facilities—which they did not—would it have been enough? High demand for air conditioning during extreme heat causes power outages. A frail, elderly person will die in about three days without air conditioning. But it takes at least a week for them to adapt when the air conditioning fails, according to the NSW Department of Health.



#### USA TODAY

##### France heat wave death toll set at 14,802

PARIS (AP) — The death toll in France from August's blistering heat wave has reached nearly 15,000, according to a government-commissioned report released Thursday, surpassing a prior tally by more than 3,000.



A funeral home worker in Saint-Denis-des-Fossés, northwest of Paris, prepares coffins for heat victims last month.

Scientists at INSERM, the National Institute of Health

Here in Australia, with our much hotter climate—how many will die in hospitals and nursing homes as the temperature rises? How many more people in aged care facilities will die because the air con failed, or because the facility failed to plan a backup?

And, since heatwaves are now as predictable as the first magpies in spring—how long will it be before someone—or their estate—sues?

There has been almost no public discussion of the ramifications of climate change on the health care sector in Australia. While the CSIRO has projections on the likely effects of climate change in Australia, there has been little work on what that will actually mean for human health outcomes in specific regions. But NSW Health has recently won funding from the NSW Greenhouse Office to do just that.

"There is a lack of specifically Australian information," says Glenis Lloyd, leader of the NSW project. "Much of the existing information is about global issues—and while death from extremes of cold might be an issue in the northern hemisphere, it really isn't of much interest to hospital facilities in Mildura," she says.

Climate naysayers take comfort in the difficulty of absolute predictions by

scientists. But the effects of climate change are complex; the 'heat', to coin a phrase, will not be distributed evenly. However, the Australian Greenhouse Office asserts that on average, there will be an increase in annual national average temperatures of between 0.4 and 2.0 degrees celsius by 2030, and of between 1.0 and 6.0 degrees celsius by 2070; more heatwaves and fewer frosts. There will be an increase in 'high bushfire propensity days'.

Climate change isn't just an environmental problem. It is very much a problem for business, for non-profits, for governments, and for faith communities. And for faith communities such as the Catholic Church, which owns and operates some 13% of facilities in Australia's health care sector, the challenges of our excessive consumption are considerable.



Hospitals, aged care facilities and other health-related industries need to consider their reliance on petroleum products. US public health expert Dr Dan Bednarz is a consultant working on how peak oil will affect healthcare. "Petroleum renders lubricants, gels, plastic gloves, gowns, packaging, various pharmaceuticals and medicines, toothbrushes, dining utensils, a wide variety of tools and equipment to a vast list of the artifacts of modern healthcare," he writes in the e-zine *Culture Change*. "Heating, cooling and other energy costs in medical facilities have increased about four-fold since the year 2000, while the food served in hospitals becomes more and more expensive as oil and natural gas prices continue to climb," says Dr Bednarz.

Catholic facilities should adapt their services to mitigate the worst of climate change because it is the right thing to do, not because it is good business. But if we do not, we just may well go out of business: a major insurance industry report released in Boston last week warned that climate change ultimately threatens to bankrupt even the largest insurers, noting catastrophic losses in 2004-5 of \$US75 billion.



Worldwide, heatwaves claim thousands of lives, killing more people each year than floods, tornadoes and hurricanes combined. If the Australian Greenhouse Office is right, an increase of 2°C by 2030 means that a city like Canberra could have an average temperature in the summer of almost 30°C. Canberra's summer high now—42.2°C—may reach 44.2°C.

When the human body gets to 42°C, it starts to cook. The heat causes the proteins in each cell to change irreversibly, like an egg white as it boils. Even before that, the brain shuts down because of a lack of blood coming from the overworked, overheated heart. Muscles stop working, the stomach cramps and the mind becomes delirious. Death is inevitable.

And it is the most vulnerable—the old, the young, the sick and the poor—who

will go first. Climate change will indeed test the resolve of Catholic and other aged care systems, to pursue a 'preferential option for the poor'.

## Letter: No white conspiracy in TV report on Wadeye youth gangs

FEATURE LETTERS

*Sarah Ferguson*

To borrow the opening lines from your correspondent, ...there are times when we draw a line in the sand and say enough is enough.... I write in response to Brian McCoy's article, ['Why change Aborigines into images of ourselves?'](#)

As a journalist, to be accused of not understanding Aboriginal culture is one thing, but to be accused of joining in some ill-defined conspiracy to control and dominate Aboriginal people is quite another.

It's a pity the author couldn't master a more coherent argument because he does make a valid point that in Australia—we often seem more interested in the plight of Australians outside the country than in that of our own indigenous population. Not so at the *Sunday* program, which has a rich history of covering indigenous affairs—most recently in our cover story, ['The Gangs of Wadeye, A Lost Generation'](#). Wadeye is an Aboriginal community in the Northern Territory that attracted national attention earlier this year when gang warfare paralysed the town.

My principal argument with your correspondent is that of laziness. He tries to include our program in a broad amalgam of white bigotry with no evidence to support his theory. My suspicion is that he did not actually watch the program. The only lines he quotes come from the publicity blurb from our web site, and not from the program itself. If he did see it, he must have been particularly sleepy that Sunday morning as he missed one of the essential questions of the program, posed by the locals themselves: what should be done to give the next generation in Wadeye the opportunity to take part more fully in Australian society? He accuses us of superficial and negative representations but ignores one of the most commonly expressed concerns in Wadeye.



For those actually watching the story, the opening lines were these: ...The young people of Wadeye are caught between two worlds...| the bush lives of their ancestors and modern youth culture...|... The notion of being caught between two worlds was expressed by every person we interviewed in Wadeye; elders, young people, men and women. Where is the lack of respect in making this one of the central themes of the story?



And then there is the accusation of our 'fear of difference'; that is, racism by any other name. Your correspondent suggests that along with the Federal Government we are guilty of dredging up ancient stereotypes. He even suggests it is not unreasonable for people to conclude that we are in a conspiracy with the government and its ministers to denigrate Aboriginal culture. He offers nothing from the program to support this, quoting only a line taken from the website introduction, not the program, that we ...documented the social and cultural issues at play in the community.... I concede that line may be over simplistic but where is the fear, where are the ...persistent and dangerous values... expressed here?

On one salient cultural question—the surprising popularity in Wadeye of 1980s heavy metal music—I quizzed the federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister, Mal Brough, during his visit. The minister said the popularity of heavy metal music in Wadeye and the clothes that went with it made him uncomfortable. Isn't it obvious that whatever you make of that comment, it reflects the minister's attitudes, not ours? Or perhaps it suits your correspondent to imagine a world where the minister and I worked it all out together before we went?



My first thought was that such a woolly critique didn't merit a response, except that it does the greatest disservice not to us but to the Aboriginal people it claims to defend, by encouraging them to believe that such a conspiracy could exist.

Our experience in Wadeye was a very rewarding one. I defy anyone who has actually seen the story to come away with such a negative impression of our intentions, or what we achieved.

Letter: 1965 genocide of Indonesian Chinese did not occur

FEATURE LETTERS

Charles Coppel



“Like the Japanese, Indonesians too have uncomfortable lacunae in their narrative, not least over the anti-communist purges of the 1960s and the systematic massacres of perhaps a million Chinese, but Australians, perhaps, are as ignorant of this as most Indonesians are.” (Jack Waterford, ‘[Teaching history of our region is also important](#)’, *Eureka Street*, 22 August 2006)

When Jemma Purdey and I responded to Jack Waterford’s article in the last issue of *Eureka Street* through the [letters](#) section, we said there was no empirical evidence to support the view that there was a kind of ‘Chinese Holocaust’ in Indonesia in 1965. The victims of the 1965 anti-communist massacre were overwhelmingly Javanese and Balinese, not Chinese; the slaughter was politicide rather than genocide.

In Mr Waterford’s reply, he produced no evidence in support of his claim that there were “systematic massacres of perhaps a million Chinese” in the 1960s. Instead, he said that “reputable historians cannot agree” whether 100,000, 500,000, 1 million or 1.5 million died, let alone on regional sequences of events, and that while he acknowledged that “many ethnic Indonesians were killed”, “most of the observers and commentators [he had] read think that Indonesia’s Chinese were peculiarly and particularly singled out”.

For the last forty years I have specialised in the modern history and politics of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. My book *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis* (Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1983) was a political history of their experience of the violent transition from Sukarno’s Guided Democracy to Suharto’s New Order. After carefully considering the available evidence of anti-Chinese violence in that period, I wrote (pp58-59): “...| it seems safe to conclude that the total number of Chinese killed can scarcely have exceeded about two thousand. The highly exaggerated estimates [of Chinese killed] can perhaps be explained as being the result of faulty logic. It is true that many Indonesians believed that the Chinese had communist sympathies and that anti-Chinese sentiment was prevalent amongst the Indonesian population. It is also true that some hundreds of thousands of suspected communists were killed after the coup attempt. It is possible that some observers have simply proceeded from these premises to conclude that a large proportion of the victims of the killings must have been Chinese.”



No reputable historian has challenged my conclusion. Mary Somers Heidhues, another reputable historian who has specialised in the history of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, contributed the entry on Indonesia in the authoritative *Encyclopedia of the Chinese Overseas* (ed. Lynn Pan, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1999). She wrote (p166): "While it is true that some thousands of Chinese lost their lives, the number killed was proportionately less than the number of ethnic Indonesians. The violence of 1965-67 was directed against communists or suspected communists, not against ethnic Chinese."

In a special issue of the scholarly journal *Asian Survey* (July-August 2002) on the legacy of violence in Indonesia, Robert Cribb—the most respected historian of the Indonesian massacres—contributed an article ('Unresolved Problems in the Indonesian Killings of 1965-1966') in which he wrote (p557): "There is a fifth paradigm that seeks to explain the events of 1965-66. It is worth mentioning largely for its pernicious tenacity, but it also raises the important question of numbers. This paradigm, which recurs regularly in the press, claims that the main victims of the killings were Chinese Indonesians. However, it largely ignores the empirical evidence, which suggests that the vast majority of the victims were selected for their involvement with the PKI [Indonesian Communist Party] regardless of ethnicity."

Reputable historians do not agree with Mr Waterford that "Indonesia's Chinese were peculiarly and particularly singled out" in the systematic massacres of 1965-1966.

One final, more general point. Mr Waterford cites the various and widely divergent estimates of the numbers killed as evidence of 'uncomfortable lacunae' in the history of the Indonesian massacres. In Cribb's introduction to his edited volume *The Indonesian Killings 1965-1966: Studies from Java and Bali* (Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, Clayton, 1990) he lists the sources of these different estimates and provides a detailed and illuminating discussion of why it is so difficult to arrive at reliable figures.

Among other reasons, he writes, there was nothing in Indonesia that was comparable to "the relatively efficient record-keeping of the Nazis in Europe and the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia" (p7). However uncomfortable it may be for Mr Waterford, historians must live with the knowledge that there are some facts that, for lack of empirical evidence, they will never know with certainty. Nevertheless, the range is narrower than Mr Waterford suggests; I know of no reputable historian who now believes that the number of deaths was as low as 100,000 or as high as 1.5 million.

## Is there room for 'idealists' on the ABC Board?

### BOOK REVIEW

*Veronica Brady*

*Whose ABC?*, by K.S. Inglis. Black Inc, 2006. ISBN 186395189, RRP \$39.95 [website](#)



When I was appointed to the Board of the new ABC, I turned to the first volume of Ken Inglis' history, *This is the ABC*.

It was 1983, the year the Australian Broadcasting Commission became the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Inglis' book had just been published, and I read every word of it. It was an illuminating guide to the complicated and challenging institution with which I was briefly—and unsuccessfully—involved. Reading the second volume, which brings the story up to the present, is equally illuminating, though in a different way. Inglis is a magnificent historian, in full and sympathetic command of his subject. He is able to set the story of this particular institution in the context of our national history. He has done so lucidly and, on occasion, wittily.

I suppose the main difference in my reading of this volume is that for a brief time, as a member of the first Board, I was part of the story Inglis has to tell. Indeed, as he describes it, it was a turbulent time. I was part of a 'faction' unhappy with the policies and style of the Managing Director. The faction was also 'idealistic', and therefore ineffectual. All of this reflects the long perspective of the kind of history Inglis writes, and writes so admirably. He uses "observation with extensive view" to survey the whole, remarking on "each anxious toil, each eager strife", watching "the busy scenes of its crowded life".

Characters parade across the stage. There are Managing Directors—Whitehead, "bull-in-the-china-shop" Hill, Shier, a one-man assault on tradition and traditionalists, Long, who "pressed all the right philosophical buttons", and Balding, a "brown cardigan man" and pacifier. They are all Chairmen—no Chairwomen—though tribute is paid to Wendy McCarthy's long and effective contribution as Deputy, like the dazzling and visionary Ken Myer at one end of the scale and the patient, effective and supportive Donald McDonald at the other. There's the passing parade of Ministers in Canberra, some supportive, some not, some intrusive, some not. Inglis also covers the ins and outs of Board politics, its impact and lack of impact of its members and



the position of staff-elected member—abolished recently.

Members of staff figure also—policy makers, personalities like Phillip Adams, Geraldine Doogue and 'Macca' of *Australia All Over*. There are outstanding journalists like Kerry O'Brien, Chris Masters and Peter Manning. Their successes and failures, especially in the vexed area of news and current affairs are part of the story, as are international incidents such as the coverage of the first Gulf War and events in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. There are the ups-and-downs of Radio Australia, and the first ill-fated attempt to set up a television equivalent. There is also the constant pressure for ratings, bound up with the dependence on the Government of the day for funding and the perennial shortage of money which has led to calls for advertising in the belief that it may be "a lesser evil than penury". Bound up with this are the financial and technical demands of new technology, the need to be 'all things to all people' and at the same time preserve standards, train broadcasters and provide leadership.



This is no tame history, then. The ABC has always been a lively and sometimes ill-behaved beast—and Inglis captures it all. There is the tug-of-war between various interests and pressure groups and Government accusations of bias, at election times especially, or of 'left-wing bias' (which, Inglis remarks may come a failure to "distinguish between partisan political preference and watchdog vigilance"). Also included is the extraordinary, if often exasperated dedication of staff, and the respect and trust that, polls suggest, most Australians have for the ABC. That is why I would wish that, in the future, Inglis might turn sociologist or philosopher, and perhaps even theologian, and reflect more deeply on this strange institution, "like and unlike a church, a theatrical company, a newspaper business, and, on a drastic view, an asylum run by the inmates", which is nevertheless the "glue of the nation" and explore what its continuing existence against all the odds has to tell us about us and our values and purposes as a people?

## No ordinary coming-of-age drama

### FILM REVIEW

*Tim Kroenert*

*C.R.A.Z.Y.*, Running time: 127 minutes, Rating: MA. Director: Jean-Marc Vallée, Starring: Michel Côté, Marc-André Grondin, Danielle Proulx, Pierre-Luc Brillant

It's hard to convey why this French-Canadian drama is so good. That's because the film is energised largely by the superb retro music that features in its soundtrack, which not only helps evoke the backdrop of 1960s Montreal, but provides much of the film's atmospheric and thematic lifeblood.



Take, for example, one scene in which misfit teen protagonist Zac (played at ages six—eight by Émile Vallée and 15—21 by Grondin) gives an impassioned performance of David Bowie's 'Space Oddity' to his bedroom mirror. Not only does this stirring showcase Zac's charisma, it signposts his place as a social 'oddy'; indeed, Bowie's androgynous persona resonates strongly with Zac's budding sexual ambiguity.

Then there's the scene where a newly atheist Zac accompanies his family to Midnight Mass at Christmas. Blissed-out on the music playing on his Walkman, Zac daydreams that he's floating up to the rafters, taking flight as the congregation below 'ooh-oohs' to the refrain of the Stones' 'Sympathy For the Devil.' More than escapism, the scene reflects Zac's unconscious desire to transcend the natural order of his world.



And why not wish for transcendence? *C.R.A.Z.Y.* is Zac's journey towards self-acceptance, namely accepting the fact he is gay—a journey rendered painfully difficult by his well-meaning but disapproving father (Côté). The weight of his father's expectations causes Zac—the black sheep among four blokey brothers—to both repress and loathe his sexuality for many years. (Incidentally, the five brothers' initials—Christian, Raymond, Antoine, Zac and Yvan—give the film its acronymic title, flagging the centrality of family to Zac's life and character.)

Zac's spiritual journey is equally conflicted. As a child, his doting mother (Proulx) encourages him to embrace his apparent spiritual giftedness as a faith healer. Zac initially does so with some zeal; later, however, his inability to 'heal' either his own asthma or the perceived infirmity of his sexuality, renders his faith troubled at best.

If *C.R.A.Z.Y.*'s soundtrack is its lifeblood, than Grondin is its heart. The then 21-year-old's otherworldly looks and brooding magnetism are as much James Dean as Bowie, and he injects the ideal amount of sardonic wit, devil-may-care attitude and subtle pathos into his character's grudging but compelling passage towards self-discovery.

True, much of act two discards the style and pace that so elevates the film's earlier sequences, instead getting bogged down in some fairly angsty, soul-searching territory. But still, the rousing levity and poignant insightfulness that permeate the bulk of the film are more than enough to give wings to what could otherwise have been a fairly run-of-the-mill coming-of-age drama.



## Satellites (for David)

POETRY

*Maria Takolander*

Close your eyes and  
let me photograph you.

Touch your eyes and  
coating yourself in silver

like brine

let me steal your soul.

Let me look in your mirror  
when it doesn't know.

Let me see you softly  
where the planets are circling  
some unknown immensity.

We're all blind in this space,  
strangers together.

Here I can be your bride.

Faceless, skinful—  
look. It's you and me lost.

And that's okay.

Yes. It's beautiful.

Everything you do has long been done before  
**POETRY**

*Debbie Lustig*

Everything you do has long been done before  
But you and this obsession are joined at the hip  
You do it anyway and you still want more  
Factory-worker, seamstress, smackhead, whore  
A life moving along at a nice unpleasant clip  
Everything you do has long been done before  
Excess of desperation oozing from each pore  
Hungry gulping now that started as a sip  
You do it anyway and you still want more  
Pretending that you can't hear death's chaotic roar  
As you delicately insert that tip  
Everything you do has long been done before  
Surrounded by thieves and sisters in gore  
Waiting for the ambulance nothing but a blip  
You do it anyway and you still want more  
Laudanum, datura, weeds from afore  
Imagine you're de Quincey taking a sip  
Everything you do has long been done before  
You do it anyway and you still want more

drencflod

POETRY

*Kevin Gillam*

loitering in 'wanna' land,  
like the spider with  
too much caffeine,  
web crazed, one leg for walking,  
seven for addiction  
tomorrow, 6 am, airport.  
will 4000k be enough?  
leaving me to walls, web,  
sticky sweetness of anticipation

in water now  
but wet never,  
shallows of linger,  
skulling sky,  
flirting with a daytime moon  
then the first sip  
(which, curiously, sits nearly twice  
inside disappointment)  
and the cube comes good.  
birds feed, flutter,  
a skink, urgent over limestone,  
vertical, holding  
as I am not  
because there will be no finishing,  
pickets pinking in this

bushfire of dreams  
and then I start thinking  
of absence,  
satin backs of ravens,  
rendered brickwork,  
  
an easterly, always an easterly  
shirring leaves and desires