EUREKA STREET

Vol. 5 No. 5 June/July 1995

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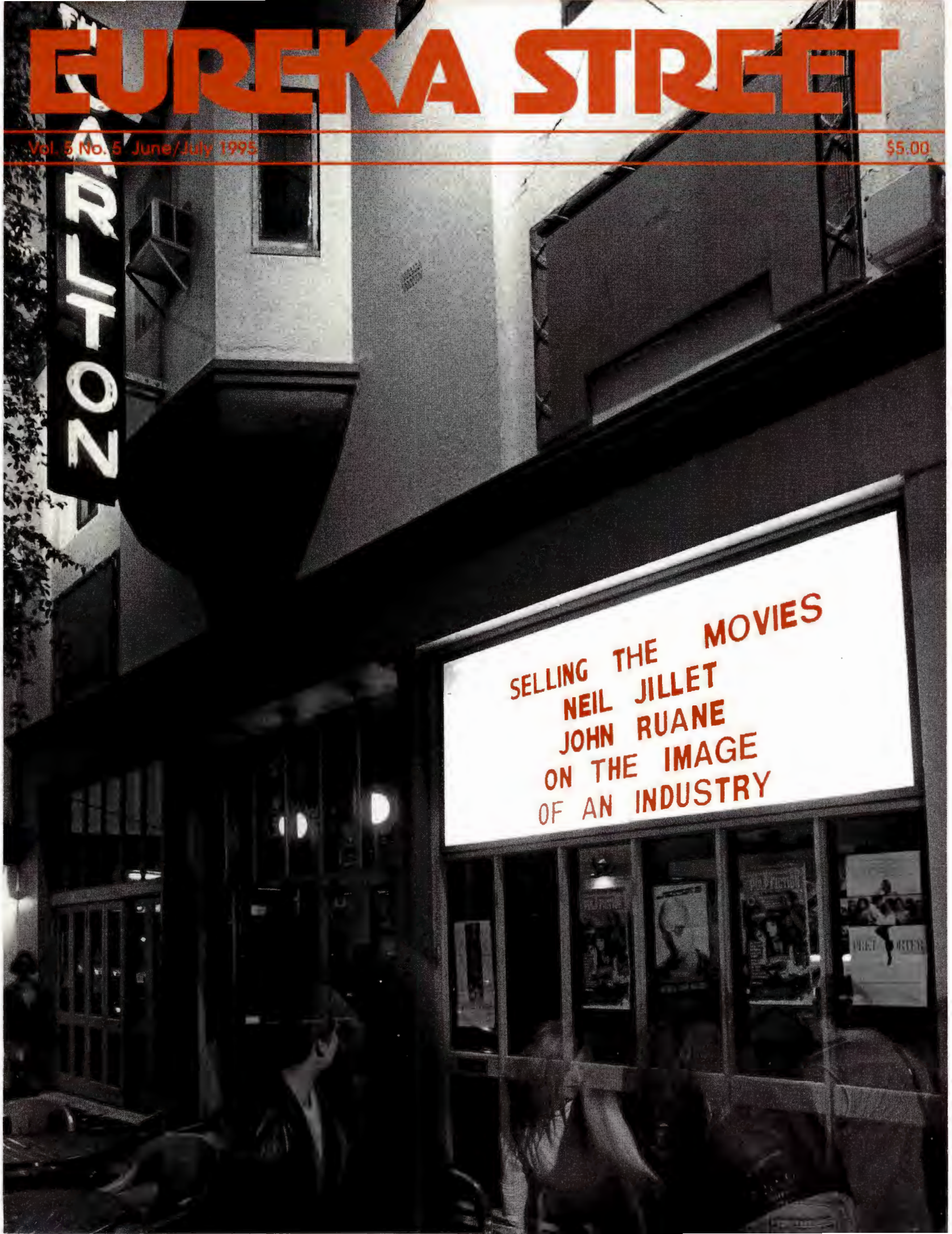

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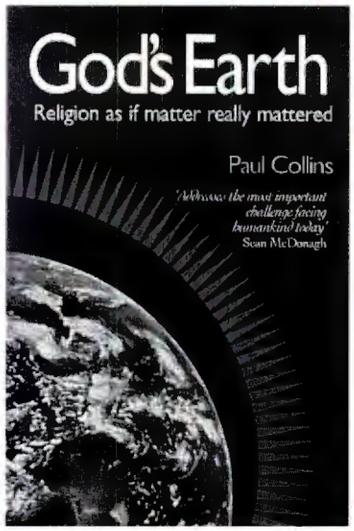

God's Earth: Religion as if matter really mattered

by Paul Collins

Paul Collins is the author of *Mixed Blessings* and *No Set Agenda*. His new book looks beyond the challenges facing religion to the deepest challenges facing the whole human race. He argues that environmental concerns are a matter of life and death in both a spiritual and material sense. 'Nature is the source of our human origins and the on-going context of our evolution and spiritual development. If we were to lose our natural context we would lose a sense of ourselves as human beings. The result: the poetic, mystical core of our spirituality and culture would dry up.'

Thanks to HarperCollins, *Eureka Street* has eight copies of *God's Earth* to give away, each worth $19.95. Just put your name and address on the back of an envelope and mark it '*Eureka Street* June Giveaway.'

EUREKA STREET

Volume 5 Number 5
June/July 1995

A magazine of public affairs, the arts and theology

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With this issue, Eureka Street *bids farewell to our production editor,* ***Ray Cassin****. Ray has been with the magazine since its inception and has played a major part in its development. He moves to a career in freelance journalism with the best wishes and thanks of everyone at* Eureka Street.

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by Paul Sinclair.
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by Dean Moore
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COMMENT

OUYANG YU

After Deng

IN 1985 DENG XIAOPING was nominated *Time* magazine's Man of the Year, the first Chinese leader who was ever extended such an honour. Ten years on, Deng once more becomes the centre of international attention. This time however, not with his economic reform but, rather ironically, with his failing health and, by extention, the failing symptoms of his country. The speculation is so rife that some have gone so far as to predict the decline and fall of the People's Republic of China.

Others, particularly those in the Chinese media in Australia, are more interested in setting a date for Deng's death. They have pinned down 1995 as an extremely sinister year with its recurrence of a leap August (the Chinese calendar is different from the western one) and the return of an El Niño. Since the fifteenth century, it is believed, a leap August in any year would bring disasters. A more recent example is 1976, when the Tangsan Earthquake took nearly 400,000 Chinese lives, followed by the death of the three greatest leaders in China, Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and Zhu De. In that year, too, Deng was stripped of all his powers in and out of the Party.

Those who make the pessimistic prophesy may have every reason to convince themselves of its inevitability, for the People's Republic seems to show all the signs of deterioration. The market economy that Deng introduced more than a decade ago has now widened the gaps between the rich and the poor, causing prices to soar and poverty to spread. Urban crime is on the rise. Corruption is rampant. Remnants of the old society are back, such as prostitution and drug taking. The education system as it is now makes mockery of Deng's respect for the intellectuals and for knowledge: salaries are so low that academics are willing to give up their cherished calling in favour of making money, either in China or overseas; the large-scale brain drain has only just begun.

There is a distinct feeling of near-decay. Despite its long history, China has died and been reborn nearly every decade since the founding of the Republic. 1957, 1966, 1976 and 1986 (of which 1989 is but an extension) are political landmarks that tell and retell the story of death and regeneration. As 1995 wears on, with the combination of a leap August and an El Niño, who can deny that another national death is not near at hand?

Despite this pessimism in the West, the short, smiling Deng would probably leave behind him a stronger China than ever. Politically, a mature and stable leadership is now upgrading the nationwide campaign against pornography and corruption. The most recent senior casualty is Chen Xitong, mayor of Beijing, who has just resigned from his important position because of his involvement in a suicide case of the

deputy mayor of Beijing, Wang Baosen, a month ago. The economic prosperity is such that, in the city of Beijing alone, the foreign currency deposits in U.S. dollars exceed three billion. Already there is hope for a Greater China, as proposed by the prominent political dissident Yan Jiaqi, who called for a United China incorporating Hong Kong and Taiwan that would hold economic supremacy in Asia.

For me, there is no easy prediction. Any hope for a similiar downfall of communism in China to that in East Europe seems too naïve, for Deng has spent his life making the system work, whether it is a communism in name only or another name for capitalism or nationalism. As his famous motto goes, 'it does not matter whether a cat is black or white so long as it catches mice', so is today's China, made in his image, bent on making more money and making itself stronger. A China without Mao has not broken up.

A China without Deng, the funny short man who enjoys eating French croissants, playing bridge, watching American thrillers and never writing a line of poetry, is certainly not finished yet. On the contrary, a disintegrated China would be of no benefit to anyone, least of all to Australia, which would certainly not want to see another 40,000 students sweeping down in the wake of another political purge and massacre.

Ouyang Yu is a poet. He has translated Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* and David Malouf's *Fly Away Peter* into Chinese. His translation of Alex Miller's *The Ancestor Game* will appear later this year.

COMMENT: 2

TONY COADY

McNamara's band

THERE WAS A NOTE OF BETRAYAL and intransigent outrage struck by many prominent Australians, especially senior military officers, in the wake of Robert McNamara's memoir of the Vietnam War: McNamara may think *he* got it badly wrong, but who is he to disturb *our* complacencies? This refusal to re-evaluate, to re-examine conscience, and to allow for the genuine benefits of reflection and hindsight, does not bode well for Australia's future military and defence commitments. Nor is it reassuring to hear once more the standard military reflex of blaming the politicians. As McNamara shows, politicians get it wrong, but this is sometimes because they listen too well to 'can do' military advisers, and, in any case, the justifications for waging war are ultimately political and moral, not military.

McNamara's book *In Retrospect: the Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (to give its American title: in Australia, it has been astonishingly retitled *McNamara's War: the Doves Rise*) is an exceptional work, because not only does the man who served as Secretary of Defence for seven years under two presidents (Kennedy and Johnston) admit considerable responsibility for important specific policy mistakes, he takes a major part of the blame for the war itself, (until early 1968) acknowledging that the American leadership, with the best of intentions, got it all 'terribly wrong'.

How did such righteousness come unstuck? McNamara gives 11 causes of the failure—several of them, as befits the former president of Ford motors, managerial in nature—but the most interesting are the false assumptions upon which the intervention and its escalation was premised. A principal culprit here is 'the domino theory' by which a Vietcong victory in South Vietnam meant the eventual loss of South-East Asia to the Soviets and/or Chinese, and hence made the defeat of the Communists in Vietnam an overriding priority of US foreign policy. McNamara concedes that it is now clear that the defeat of the Viet Cong and the Vietminh had no such overwhelming importance. Moreover, the huge importance the US administration placed upon victory in Vietnam was at odds with another basic assumption, to which continual lip service was paid, namely, that the principal task of defeating the communists rested with the South Vietnamese themselves.

Once it was realised that the war could only be won (if at all) by massive US domination of the war effort, and of the South Vietnamese polity, a major plank of the Kennedy commitment to Vietnam was undermined. As the war progressed and escalated, more and more people within the administration became convinced that withdrawal was a saner option than fighting on, but somehow this option could never be faced squarely.

McNamara is puzzled by this failure in himself and others; he puts it down to there being no single person who had sole responsibility for Vietnam, to defective information about the political and cultural realities of South-East Asia (caused, he believes, by the McCarthyist purges that had driven the relevant experts out of the State Department), and to the vast range of things that the Government had to deal with at any one time. Many of these were influential, but there are others just as instructive that McNamara omits or does not sufficiently stress. One was the personality of Lyndon Johnson, a complex man, ill at ease with foreign affairs and addicted to furtive poli-

ties. Another was the mind-set that was obsessed with bombing, defoliating, the technological fix, and the inconceivability of defeat. Another important factor was a lack of effective dissent within the leadership and, for a long time, the Congress itself. McNamara, Ball, McGeorge Bundy, elements in the CIA, all eventually had doubts about the war but submerged their judgment in the collective will to fight on.

Loyalty can be a vice, and McNamara's loyalty to the Presidency, to Kennedy and Johnson personally, to the military chiefs of staff is tinged with sentimentality and proved ultimately crippling. Not surprisingly, it is cited as his reason for not resigning long before he was pushed out. The band around Johnson, with McNamara at its head, was gifted, serious and relatively honest, but they paid little attention to outside critics and they clearly relished the role of running 'the Free World'. As McNamara himself now says, one of the lessons of Vietnam is that: 'We do not have the God-given right to shape every nation in our own image or as we choose.' But the confident wearing of this mantle was one of the major causes of the disaster: it made possibly the almost casual decision to engineer the deposal and murder of Ngo Dinh Diem and gave plausibility to the view that the South Vietnamese régime was a creature of the US.

McNamara is saddened by the deaths of more than 58,000 Americans who he believes did not die in vain because they were loyally serving 'their country and its ideals'. But, as too often happens, this loyalty was misplaced, and its abuse is the major reason for the 'cynicism and even contempt' with which many Americans now view their institutions and leadership and which McNamara somehow hoped to correct by telling his story. He expresses no sadness for the far greater death-toll of America's South Vietnamese allies, nor for the devastation inflicted on the enemy and upon the civilian population of North and South Vietnam, the results of which continue.

Those who advocated Australian involvement because of the defence credit it would gain us with the US should note that there is no mention of Australia in the book's 414 pages. (It should therefore not astonish us that it took McNamara's book to apprise Malcolm Fraser of our ally's role in the overthrow of Diem.) We lost 500 dead and the upshot is that the US is now less interested in the politics of our region than at any other time in the past 50-odd years. Given McNamara's revelations, perhaps that is something to be thankful for. ■

Tony Coady is Boyce Gibson professor of philosophy in the University of Melbourne.

COMMENT: 3

RAY CASSIN

Sailing from Byzantium

'The *fin*,' declared Dorothy Parker, 'is coming early this *siecle*.' Ms Parker was referring to the languors of jaded intellectuals, but with a little more prescience she might have conjured up the bout of anniversary mania that has overtaken the world. In the course of 1995 Australia and other Western countries—plus a few once described as the Eastern bloc but now apparently without a compass point to anchor them—have celebrated or will celebrate a swag of anniversaries to delight end-of-an-era buffs.

There has already been the 50th anniversary of VE, or Victory in Europe, Day (why was no one prepared to call it VG, or Victory over Germany, Day?) and we await the 50th anniversary of what most countries except Australia (and Japan?) still acknowledge as VJ, or Victory over Japan, Day.

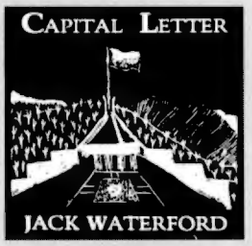
In between the two great anniversaries of 1945, Australians and Americans marked the 20th anniversary of what no one has yet been frank enough to christen DV, or Defeat in Vietnam, Day. All these milestones have been greeted with a sense of relief greater than that which normally accompanies the memory of disasters past. For the events of 1989 and 1991 made clear that World War II and its ghastly postscript, the Cold War, really are over. To both the victors and the vanquished of 1945, a divided Berlin symbolised unfinished business. That divide has now gone. The Cold War, in turn, was the engine that drove Western intervention in Vietnam, and the passing of its fears has made possible a different relationship between Hanoi and the West.

But is anniversary mania only a retrospective exercise? Do the various celebrations carry no agenda for the future (other than Paul Keating's evident hope that VP, or Victory in the Pacific, Day will set in motion another wave of electorally opportune nationalism)? One remote actor in the events of 1989 and 1991, Pope John Paul II, is fond of portraying them as stepping stones to a re-evangelised Europe. The subtext of this papal dream seems to be that the faithful, long-suffering Christians of Eastern Europe must convert their lax brethren in the West.

Perhaps, Holy Father. But let us also note another anniversary being celebrated in Europe this year. In France, the church is celebrating the 1500th anniversary of the baptism of Clovis, King of the Franks. This is not just a domestic affair for French Catholics. In its time, it signalled a distancing of the papacy from the orbit of the Byzantine emperors. Its consequence for succeeding centuries was a tension between church and state that has been fruitful and instructive for both, in Europe and beyond.

Yes, Holy Father, it is difficult living with crude barbarians like Clovis. But can we finally let Byzantium rest in peace, please? ■

Ray Cassin is a freelance writer.



Serving it up to the public

NEW PUBLIC SERVICE legislation is not normally a topic which generates much excitement, even less so in a pre-election budget. But the observer should keep a close eye on the progress of this legislation, marked for debate in Parliament during the spring session because it may well do more to change the nature of public administration than all of the changes we have seen in the past 15 years.

The role of the public service is to serve ministers and the government impartially, to provide frank, honest, comprehensive and accurate advice, to implement legislation and government policies efficiently and effectively, and to deliver services equitably to the community on behalf of government.

There is explicit direction about protection of the community from arbitrary and discriminatory treatment, about privacy, and explicit requirements about the merit principle, about public service codes of conduct, all of which are good to see down in print.

So what's the catch? Well, the fine statements of principle disguise the fact that the government is removing from the public service any of the particular protections it once had. The public servant, in a purely employee relationship, will serve the interests of the government of the day. Moreover, we are to have not one, but several public services, with each departmental secretary given wide powers to set terms and conditions of employment in such a way that will undermine uniform conditions. Concepts of 'office' (the idea that a person is appointed to a particular job) will go: the public servant who is 'difficult', or who offers unpalatable advice (or who is incompetent) can be quietly shuffled off somewhere else with very little comeback.

The Secretaries themselves—made the custodians of the values of the service in the draft legislation—are not exactly to have unfettered authority. They are, of course, now contract employees, with very little in the way of rights should they offend their ministers, and recent precedent confirms this; for example, the summary sacking of Graham Evans, former secretary of Transport, or, earlier in this Keating term, of Tony Cole from Treasury, for wondering whether the Government really wants frank and fearless advice. Once there was a Public Service Board as a guardian of bureaucratic interests and careers: now the almost impotent Public Service Commissioner, who replaced the Board, is to have these powers further enfeebled. And, in the Budget, the Government has announced a weakening of the Merit Protection and Review Agency, the body which is supposed to act as a check on arbitrary power.

A host of appeal rights and elaborate procedures for appointment, promotion, transfer and dismissal are to be thrown out as being excessively 'process-oriented'. Some are to go into awards as mere industrial conditions; with others, those with a complaint, say, about unfair dismissal, can instead go to the Industrial Relations Commission. Many public servants will lose the right to indefinite employment: they will be put onto contracts. Of course, there could not possibly be a risk that the timid might hesitate to say what they thought to a minister; or that enthusiasm for contract renewal might make some over-anxious to help.

Now there is of course a strong culture in Australia of resenting the supposed tenure, glorious superannuation, and lack of achievement by the public service. In fact Australia has a pretty competent and efficient public service, particularly at the Commonwealth level, the excellence of which was for many years built up because some of the nation's best and brightest people were inspired by idealism and notions of serving the public interest. Government today might prefer public servants as loyal clones doing what they are told, but, if that idealism is explicitly removed, the public administration could quickly become a home of the second-rate.

The public service managers whose review of the legislation has produced the drafts of the Act (astonishingly no outsiders were involved) have great enthusiasm for getting 'flexible', (i.e. unrestrained) arrangements, and hardly any for checks and balances. They also have an entirely rose-tinted vision of the freedom with which managers are supposed to be able to operate in the private sector.

When the Bill comes up, one can expect squawking from the public service unions, but more of that, I am afraid will be industrial in character, designed to protect existing interests, and all too little focused on the wider public interests involved.

In the meantime, the public service ideologues have given us a splendid insight into their own hypocrisy. After years of telling everybody that the philosophy has been about letting the managers manage, about flexibility and about results, uniform cuts are being put across the service. Some of the line agencies (bodies such as Social Security) had, over the years, developed complicated enterprise bargains involving productivity trade-offs for wage increases, right in the spirit of what they were being told to do. And they were able to use some of the money they liberated by these processes for improving the actual work that was being done.

But the guiding central agencies such as Prime Ministers, Treasury and Finance—the promoters of this stuff—neither trimmed their budgets, developed systems of measuring their outputs, nor negotiated enterprise bargains with their staff.

And now Finance, in the course of looking for ways of squeezing the lemon harder, has found a new swizz as well: the automatic indexation of running programs to take account of price movements is now to be 'adjusted' for the fact that, because of the productivity improvements of the good manager, costs have not really moved as much as the consumer price index might suggest. On this score, state health and education programs, and line agency programs, are to be snipped a net $347 million in 1995-96 ($2 billion over four years, or a quarter of the price of a Commonwealth Bank). A wonderful incentive to seek efficiencies: anything you gain from your efforts will be taken away from you, but, if you do nothing, you will not suffer. ■

Jack Waterford is editor of the *Canberra Times*.

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

True attendance

From Stephen Brown
Father McGirr (*Eureka Street*, Mar '95) makes the disparaging and inaccurate comment that the attendance of 200,000 at Randwick for the beatification of Mary McKillop was 'about a third of that drawn each year by Sydney's gay and lesbian mardi gras.'

It is a media myth that 600,000 people attended the mardi gras in 1993 and 1994 and it is preposterous to give it credence. To achieve that number, the crowd would need to be more than one hundred deep along both sides of the entire route (2.5 kilometres). Plainly, this is a physical impossibility. Judging by the television footage of the 1993 and 1994 events, there were few spectators at the start and finish of the route and even at its thickest the crowd could hardly have been more than 15 deep. This suggests the true attendance was perhaps one tenth of the mythical 600,000.

I really cannot see why a Catholic publication would wish to debase the beatification by such a spurious comparison.

Stephen Brown
Barton, ACT

Might v. right

From Gavan Breen
Our political leaders on both sides tell us that we should go easy on Asian governments that consistently violate human rights. There are a few honourable exceptions—such as Alexander Downer, according to a recent report—but he'll probably be brought into line.

In a country like Indonesia, there is an oppressor class and an oppressed class, and outsiders must choose which of these they will support. You can't be neutral, that amounts to supporting the ones who are on top. Yet this is what our government does. It trades with the oppressors and even sells them arms, piously hoping, or pretending to hope, that they won't use them against their own people. I wonder how many of these politicians would have the same attitude to oppression in a neighbour's house—wife-beating or neglect of children—as they do to oppression in a neighbouring country.

To the discomfort of our leaders, the news of atrocities in East Timor can't be kept out of the news. But a lot of people don't know this is just one of the 'trouble spots' in the Indonesian empire. Another is West Papua.

West Papua, or Irian Jaya as the Indonesians call it, became a province of Indonesia after the so-called 'Act of Free Choice' in 1969. This was supposedly supervised by the United Nations, but Indonesia blatantly broke the procedural rules and intimidated the voters, and the UN chose to ignore the report of its representative there.

There has been oppression and rebellion in West Papua ever since, but since the people are mostly illiterate and have little access to modern communications, news gets out slowly and irregularly. But one report tells of a village being bombed, and its people attacked by paratroops, after the West Papuan flag was raised there in an act of peaceful defiance. Other reports tell of torture and murder.

The focus of much of the resistance is the giant copper-gold mine run by the American Freeport corporation, which has been polluting the land and rivers of the Amungme people and others since the late '60s.

Most of the local people have been 'resettled' in camps near the coast, where their child mortality rate has increased by 20 per cent. The mine employees, few of whom are Papuan, live in a town surrounded by a 2.2 metre barbed wire fence, reportedly 'to deter natives entering in search of food scraps.'

Freeport has a base in Cairns, and BHP and other Australian companies are involved in the exploration in West Papua.

Gavan Breen
Alice Springs NT

Words unheard

from Chris Curtis

Paul Spencer (*Eureka Street*, May '95) is right to be critical of the attacks on democracy and the rule of law by the government of Victoria but wrong to say that no public servant or teacher has spoken up against that government.

It is understandable that he thinks as he does for much is said but little is published, one consequence of the growth of the misnamed economic rationalism in the last decade being its dominance of 'thinking' in the mainstream media. I have written to the editors of both dailies more than once to answer the factless claims against the teaching profession, but they remain unmoved, and letters for publication in *The Age* never see the light of day.

May I quote one I sent earlier this year?

'Geoff Spring, the Director of School Education, has restated (17/2) your editorial claim of a 'union-dominated' education system under Labor (13/2). I challenge him—and you—to provide some evidence for this claim.

'The teaching profession's position at the end of Labor's rule in 1992 was much worse than it had been under Victoria's last real Liberal government in the early 1980s. Under Labor, the salary of Senior Teacher fell, in real 1995 dollars, from $51,587 at the start of 1982 to $41,875 at the start of 1992.

'In 1982, the secondary pupil-teacher ratio was 10.9:1. By 1992, it was 10.8:1. This apparent improvement of less than one per cent disguises a change in definition and a growth in non-classroom positions.

'In 1980, the average teaching load in a high school was, according to the Legislative Council Hansard for October, 15.9 hours for an ordinary teacher, 14.7 hours for a teacher with a responsibility position and 12.5 hours for a Senior Teacher, giving an overall average of some 15.3 hours. The ALP government's industrial agreements increased this average to a minimum of 16.3 hours.

'The ALP government also increased teacher workload through such initiatives as the introduction of the VCE and the integration of disabled students into mainstream schools. In fact, the actual time worked by a teacher went from 44.5 hours a week in 1984 to 50 hours in 1992.

'The facts are unanswerable. They show how shameful is the vendetta being conducted against the teaching profession by the government and its media cheer squad. The damage done to education behind the factless diatribes of the economic rationalist theorists is being borne by our children. The Directorate of School Education is a newspeak term that ranks with the Ministry of Love.'

Mr Spencer is naïve to think that a common law right to freedom of speech can legally override the Victorian Constitution. Nonetheless freedom of speech is a basic human right and recognised by the High Court as implicit in the Common Constitution. Teachers are not intimidated: they do speak up for their profession and for the children they teach, but if the media barons have a line to push, no facts will be permitted to intrude.

Chris Curtis
Hurstbridge, Vic

Talking Point

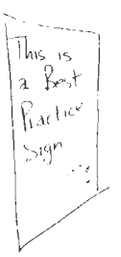
'The Triumph and Case for Life' will be the theme of Summit '95 to be held at the Regent Hotel in Sydney on 9 June at 1.00pm. Summit '95 will be addressed by former Vietnamese general and prisoner, Vo Dai Ton, and is open to young people from all walks of life. Enquiries to Tim on (02) 9327 8890.

This month, by courtesy of Penguin Books, each letter we publish will receive a copy of

Andrew Marvell
The Complete Poems
Penguin Classics,
rrp $12.95

There's no place like home

THIS IS A TALE OF TWO COUNTRIES. They sit side by side in the southern hemisphere, in a region known to some as 'the arse-end of the world'. One is a real country and the other is fictitious, but a comparison between them reveals some interesting options in economic policy.



The real country is called Australia. Its economic-policy makers have pursued a program of open-door internationalisation: tariffs have been cut, exchange controls abolished and the Foreign Investment Review Board accepts 98 per cent of foreign investment proposals.

These 'economic rationalist' policies have been pushed by all of Australia's major political leaders. Bob Hawke and Paul Keating, despite their personal differences, have been in accord on this. On the other side of politics, the same is true of John Hewson (remember him, the visiting economics professor who didn't get tenure?), that other chap who was in charge of the Libs for a while, and not-so-new leader John Howard, preacher of salvation through 'incentivation'. Their stories are basically the same. It is what has come to be known as the TINA syndrome... There Is No Alternative. TINA, she who must be obeyed. Obey Ye the market.

Already the nation (if one can still use that archaic term) has gone a long way down the track of international free-market economics. But major problems with this strategy are evident. Following a decade of policies aimed at integrating the national economy more fully into the international economy, it is now recognised that the strategy involves a heavy reliance on foreign investment. This generates many economic problems.

Particularly important are the balance-of-payments difficulties. Capital inflow generates dividend and interest outflows. These are the largest component of the nation's current account deficit. Dealing with this balance-of-payments problem has dominated economic policy during the last decade, leading to cuts in government services, reduction in real wages levels and restrictive monetary policies. The standard of living of most Australians has thereby been reduced.

There is also a problem of greater economic instability. The flow of foreign investment into Australia expanded dramatically in the late 1980s and then diminished in the 1990s. Thus it accentuated the boom and then intensified the recession. The country has become yet more vulnerable to the ups and downs of international capitalism.

Heavy reliance on foreign investment also reduces national economic sovereignty. Key decisions affecting Australia are taken in the boardrooms of multinational corporations around the globe, with little regard for any national interest. Not that local capital necessarily serves the national interest, as we know from the practice of Australian-based transnationals. Conflicting class interests are endemic to capitalism, but multinational capital intensifies the contradictions.

There are also specific difficulties associated with collecting company tax. Multinational corporations' ability to minimise their taxation liabilities throws the tax burden more on to ordinary taxpayers and local business.

There is the further problem of cultural imperialism. Reliance on foreign investment commonly involves the subordination of local culture to an increasingly standardised international formula. This tendency is a particular concern in the visual and print media.

Finally, it is evident that internationalising the economy through foreign investment does not foster a more balanced or dynamic outcome. Indeed, the Foreign Investment Review Board's own figures show that less than a quarter of foreign investment in Australia creates *new* businesses—the vast bulk of it consists in the acquisition of existing firms. In other

words, existing policy has fuelled financial manipulation rather than wealth creation. Recognising these problems, some of the citizens have formed a social movement to reclaim Australia's future, a movement called Reworking Australia. But the nation already seems to be a long way down the road en route to economic internationalisation, padlocked into the cheap seats. To use another metaphor, the nation seems to have become a junkie needing ever bigger fixes. The more foreign investment it accepts, the more interest and dividend payments flow out, the bigger becomes the balance-of-payments deficit, leading to still bigger capital inflows, and so on *ad infinitum*.

The 'logic' of the international capitalist marketplace does not seem to be serving the society's needs. Indeed, those social needs seem more and more to be subordinate to the dictates of multinational capital, including Australian-based businesses competing in the same league.

Is it too late to change direction? If so, it may be appropriate, as the centenary of federation approaches, for the moves to change the flag and the constitution to be joined by another move: to change the nation's name from Australia—to TransNatEcon.

Key decisions affecting Australia are taken in the boardrooms of multinational corporations around the globe, with little regard for any national interest.

NOW PAUSE FOR A MOMENT to redirect your gaze to a nearby country, OzEcon. It is a make-believe land with different characteristics from Australia, though its human and natural resources are similar.

The simple-minded citizens of OzEcon have been denied the benefits of an education in orthodox economics. They've never heard about the doctrines of economic rationalism, the 'J curve', comparative advantage or competitive advantage. Pathetic creatures!

OzEconians organise their economy on ridiculously naïve principles. They believe that all they have to do is to use the society's human and natural resources to produce the things they want. So they produce food, clothing, housing, bicycles, surfboards, the various useful products that can be made from the magic weed hemp, and so on. No-one in OzEcon is unemployed, because there is so much useful work that needs to be done. The work is shared equitably, and so are the products.

A simple banking system has been developed, in which money functions as a means of exchange, and through which savings are channelled into productive investment. Financial institutions are regarded simply as agencies serving the needs of the real economy. The general objective is to balance savings and investment by channelling the savings through a national investment fund to various productive purposes in both public and private sectors. Priority is given to economic and social infrastructure that enhances the quality of life. Foreign investment is not prohibited but is generally regarded as unnecessary. Domestic savings are effectively used to finance a modest rate of economic growth that is compatible with ecologically sustainable development.

Economists, to the extent that they exist at all in OzEcon, are considered rather like dentists modestly serving social needs. J. M. Keynes had a similar view about the role of economists. But I digress; OzEconians have never heard of Keynes, Milton Friedman or any of the gurus of the economics profession.

Trade between OzEcon and other countries is undertaken on a modest scale, giving preference to other countries which have acceptable environmental standards, do not exploit labour or repress civil liberties. Phrases like 'the balance of payments crisis' are unknown. The idea that wages policy, or government spending on social services or capital works, could be dominated by external trade or debt problems is considered laughable.

The country is regarded as a world leader, not in growth of GNP, but in balancing economic, social, environmental and other goals. The dominant principle is a basic notion of self-reliance. The central belief is that, as in your personal life, if you have confidence in yourself, then you can have confidence in dealing with others. On that secure foundation all economic practices are based.

OzEcon is not utopian: social differences abound, and the mix of markets and planning in the economy is subject to continual experimentation. But, as the OzEconians move towards their nation's centenary celebrations, they too are considering a name change, from OzEcon to simply Oz. They see the change as denoting that economic concerns are not allowed to dominate their society and polity. The economy is the servant, not the master.

Australia/TransNatEcon is real, whereas Oz is a figment of the imagination. Or is that so? Here's a radical thought. Could it be that Oz is founded on a sound basis of economic reality, while Australia/TransNatEcon rests on fairy-floss notions derived from abstract economic theory? Is it Oz that provides the common-sense option, while TransNatEcon clutches at unattainable goals? Could we have confused myth and reality? ■

Frank Stilwell is associate professor of economics at the University of Sydney, and a member of Reworking Australia.

NEIL JILLETT

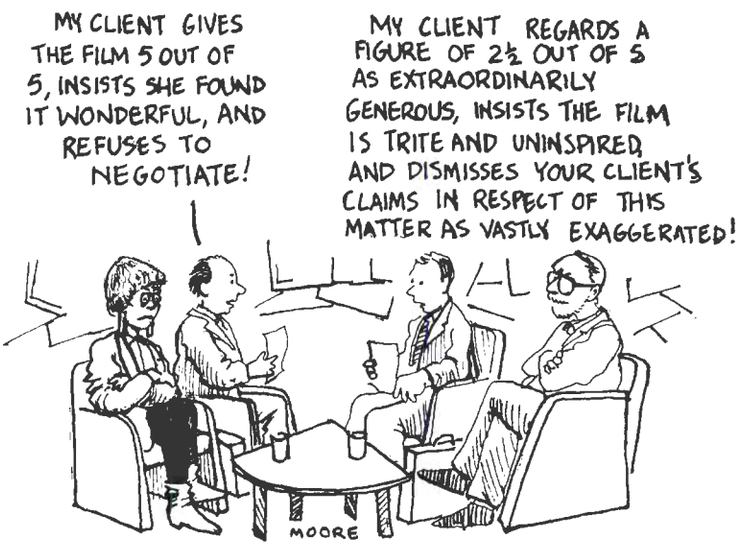
The houses that art built

Cinemas used to be defined as art houses because they showed art films but these days labelling has gone into reverse, so that a film will probably be defined by where it is shown.

BACK IN THE 1950s AND '60s—even well into the '70s—it was easy to define 'art films' and 'art houses'. Art films had subtitles, because they were always foreign, usually French or Italian, but occasionally—and especially if the actors took their clothes off—Swedish. Art houses were cinemas that showed art films.

The films were regarded by those who patronised them as aesthetically and intellectually superior to more popular fare, possibly because they tended to be morally, and sometimes politically, slightly at odds with prevailing community values. (It also helped that art houses were often in basements—literally underground.) To suggest that such films as Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* (1957) and Alain Resnais' *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961) were boringly incomprehensible, or tiresomely silly, was to risk being branded a philistine. And only someone lacking all sensitivity would accuse the celebrated Italian neorealists of mawkishness.

Treating art films, or what are touted as art films, as sacred objects is still fairly common. It is, for example, almost heresy to find Jane Campion's *The Piano* (1993) less than perfect. This is odd, because, according to the strictest contemporary definition, *The Piano* is not an art film. These days some films unequivocally definable as art are made in the antipodes, but the entry of Americans into the field is far more significant. Indeed, some distributors and exhibitors argue, though not with absolute seriousness, that the only feature that should be termed an art film in the 1990s is one made on a shoestring budget by an unknown American director.



Cinemas used to be defined as art houses because they showed art films but these days labelling has gone into reverse, so that a film will probably be defined by where it is shown. Although *The Piano* reeks of artiness, its status is at least ambiguous because, on its initial release, it went into so-called mainstream or 'commercial' cinemas (including suburban multiplexes!) as well as art houses.

The label 'art' is not necessarily determined by quality. Consider films about great composers. You might think that, as art and as entertainment, *Amadeus* (Milos Forman's 1984 film about Mozart), handicapped though it has been by eight Oscars, is much better than *Immortal Beloved* (Bernard Rose's 1994 film about Beethoven). But *Amadeus* can't be art because it was a mainstream hit, whereas *Immortal Beloved* must be art because it is doing less flamboyant business on the art-house circuit.

The similarities between two recent films, *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction*, do not end with their having the same American writer-director, Quentin Tarantino, and some of the same actors. Both films are vividly violent and morbidly funny, and in both the wit and brilliance of the writing are dimmed by patches of dreary directing. See one film and you have pretty well seen both. But *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) is—in Australia, anyway—an art film because it was shown in art houses. *Pulp Fiction* (1994) almost became art, then dipped out at the last moment. It was to have been released only in art houses, but its success in America—the previously unknown Tarantino had become 'hot'—indicated that it would do good business here. So it went into multiplexes as well as art houses.

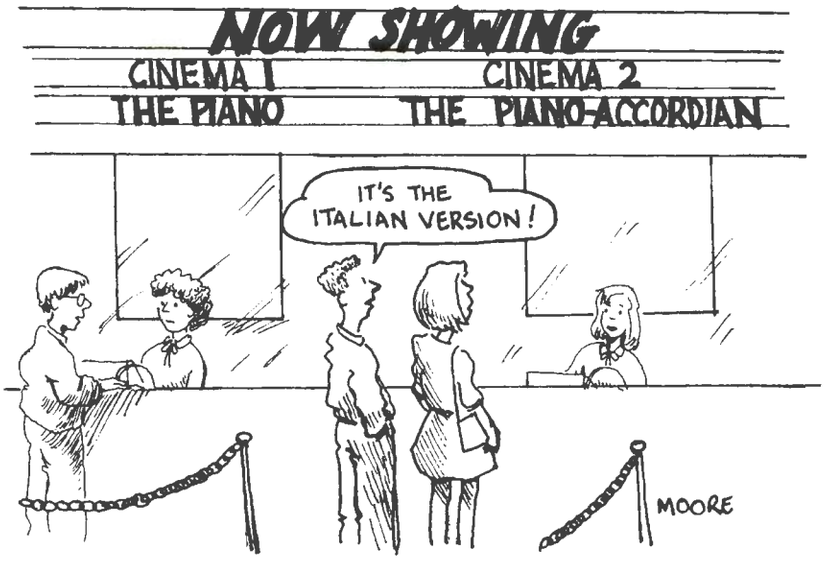
This is a case of what Alan Finney, (who, as managing director of Village Roadshow Film Distributors, has a key role in deciding what films Australians will see and where they will see them) calls 'using the release strategy to define the perception of the film'. The strategy is necessary because of the confusion about what is an art film

and which cinemas are art houses. A film can gain, or be damaged, by being wrongly judged by its marketeers. A mistake—suggesting it is 'art' rather than 'ordinary entertainment', or vice versa—can aim a film away from people who are likely to enjoy it and towards those who are not.

The art/entertainment confusion has been exacerbated by the spectacular expansion of the art-house circuit (if you will excuse some loose language) during the past year or so; but you have to go back to the late '70s to find a time when the defining line was not blurred.

Paul Cox, for example, is regarded as Australia's most consistently arty director—indeed, his style has become so idiosyncratically refined that some of his later films have trouble getting into any local cinemas, art houses or otherwise. Yet Cox's award-winning *Lonely Hearts* (1982) did reasonable business as a mainstream release.

Other example of 'art' films that went commercial include adaptations of Shakespeare's plays and, among subtitled rarities, two epics by Japan's Akira Kurosawa. John Dahl is a new American director (*Red Rock West* and *The Last Seduction*) who mixes wit and violence far more skilfully (in my estimation, anyway) than Quentin Tarantino, but he has yet to become very notorious rather than mildly famous, and his films feature little-known actors and have small budgets, so they have not graduated, or declined, from art to mainstream.



MELBOURNE HAS HAD a well-patronised art-house circuit, one of the best in the world, for the past 10 years at least. Sydney has been slightly behind, but it is catching up.

In the mid-1980s the Rivoli, a Village twin-screen in the middle-class suburb of Camberwell, a few kilometres from the centre of Melbourne, had been going for 15 years, although its adventurousness in showing foreign-language films is being replaced by an emphasis on examples of the 'quiet good taste' school of English cinema. Village also had a quasi-art-house in the city, the Australia Twin, but seemed to make only half-hearted efforts to keep it going. On the edge of the city, the State Film Centre, run by the Victorian Ministry for the Arts, showed an avant-garde spirit, with mixed success—its screening, in 1987, of Chen Gaige's 1964 masterpiece, *Yellow Earth*,started a long-running Melbourne vogue for Chinese films.

During the '80s the Carlton Moviehouse, the Universal (in Fitzroy), and the Valhalla, (then in its original home in Richmond), could be guaranteed to provide a reasonably varied diet of European films, and to let Australians know that New Zealand had a vigorous and entertaining cinematic New Wave that was largely being ignored on this side of the Tasman. In South Yarra, Natalie Miller, who had long been in business as a film distributor (importer), was about to become an exhibitor by joining a partnership to take over the Longford (after the Australian Film Institute ceased to use it as a showcase for Australian films). From 1982 her partners, Andrew Pike and Michael and Maria Walsh, had used art films to make their suburban twin, the Brighton Bay, the most consistently appealing cinema in Melbourne, at least to reviewers.

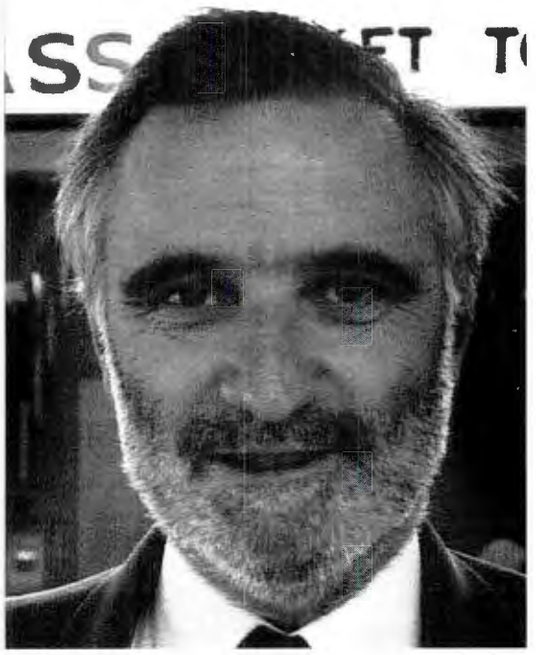
Even more interesting films began to turn up at the Kino, an underground twin opened in Collins Street in 1987. The Kino, which has recently gained a third screen, is run by Frank Cox, in partnership with Lyn McCarthy and Graeme Tubbenhauer, who have the Dendy Cinema, an art house in Martin Place, Sydney. As a film distributor, Frank Cox owns Newvision Films. The first film he imported, the Oscar-winning German-Hungarian co-production *Mephisto*, in 1982 established the reputation of both the Brighton Bay and the Dendy, Sydney. Cox paid $11,000 for the Australasian rights to *Mephisto*, outbidding everyone else by $1000. These days it would cost somewhere between $40,000 and $100,000. Lyn McCarthy and Graeme Tubbenhauer are also distributors, through Dendy Films. Their company and Frank Cox's, operating separately, import between 20 and 30 films a year, the main source of programs for their cinemas.

Two years ago Natalie Miller, who is also a film distributor, though on a much smaller scale, went into partnership with the Valhalla's Barry Peak to open the Nova twin on the site of Carlton's Pram Factory Theatre, which, as the home of the Australian Performing Group, was the wild nursery for such playwrights as David Williamson, Jack Hibberd, Barry Oakley and John Romeril. The Nova has just expanded to four screens.

The Valhalla, too, has had changes. It has moved further from the city, to Northcote, and has become a

Treating art films, or what are touted as art films, as sacred objects is still fairly common. It is, for example, almost heresy to find Jane Campion's The Piano *(1993) less than perfect.*

home for cult fodder (such as New Zealand splatter comedies, American teen flicks and animated Japanese violence) rather than European films. The Carlton Moviehouse now rarely shows films on first release, but picks them up after they have done their dash at the plusher art houses.



Partners in pictures: Tony Zeccola of Palace Entertainment (above) and Alan Finney of Village Roadshow.

In Sydney as well as Melbourne the art-house scene has been marked by quiet, steady growth, with a few cinemas opening, a few closing, a few changing hands. Antonio Zeccola, of Palace Entertainment, has introduced a touch of boom-or-bust drama to both cities. If you express surprise at his sudden emergence as a powerful player, he says: 'It's just that I don't think people knew what I was up to. I haven't changed course. I've always known exactly what I wanted, but it's taken a long time to get it—a fine chain of art or upmarket cinemas.'

Zeccola came to Australia as a 13-year-old, the son of a man who had a village cinema in Italy. A few years later, in the early 1960s, young Tony was renting cinemas and running his own movie shows, importing films (with subtitles for English speakers, without for migrants). Later he entered the video market and bought cinemas, including the Metro Malvern, where the Melbourne Film Festival—which had abandoned the Palais, St Kilda, but had yet to find its present home at the Astor, St Kilda—bivouacked in 1982 and 1983. He also imported three of the most successful art, or 'quality', films of the period—the first international hit from the Merchant-Ivory-Jhabvala team, *Heat and Dust*, the French comedy-thriller *Diva* and Peter Greenaway's first and best feature, *The Draughtsman's Contract*.

Heat and Dust, Zeccola likes to recall, set a small but significant precedent in Melbourne's exhibition pattern. It was booked in at Greater Union's Russell Steet complex in the city, but Zeccola insisted that it go into Village's suburban Rivoli as well. Previously, films shown at the Rivoli had not gone to a city cinema, whereas now it is rare for a film to play exclusively at the Rivoli.

So *Heat and Dust* and Tony Zeccola can claim part of the credit, or blame, for blurring the distinction between art houses and other cinemas. His subsequent career has continued the blurring. He has taken over the Brighton Bay and three suburban multiscreen cinemas. It would be stretching a point to call some of his suburban cinemas art houses, although they do not play the violent garbage and improbable action movies that define the bottom of the market. The blurred line does not matter to Zeccola, who prefers to talk of 'quality films' and 'quality cinemas', especially in reference to his latest enterprises—the three George cinemas in St Kilda, and the three Como cinemas, only a few hundred metres from Natalie Miller's Longford in South Yarra.

A FEW HUNDRED METRES in another direction, Village is building a multiplex, and that, at first sight, almost seems to put Zeccola in competition with himself. The Como and the George, which the public is being encouraged to think of as art houses, are half-owned by Village, the exhibition arm of Village Roadshow Corporation.

'What you see is what I planned long before any arrangement with Village,' says Zeccola. 'They saw in me, with Palace, someone who was perhaps ahead of the others; they realised what I was up to, and very intelligently, they approached me. They could see that I was a fairly good operator. I was getting a bigger slice of the art market, which sometimes for them is hard to control. This is mainly dominated by Frank Cox and Natalie Miller. Village saw coming in with me as a way of being part of that market.'

As well as expanding into Sydney on his own, Zeccola is building a joint venture there with Village (the four-screen Verona, in Paddington). He insists that Village is a silent partner and has no say in the way he programs his cinemas. There is some cynicism in the industry about his ability, or willingness, to keep things that way, but both Zeccola and executives at Village Roadshow offer instances where each side has refused to take a programming or distribution decision that would apparently have benefited the other.

Village Roadshow's Alan Finney, not surprisingly, welcomes the expansion by Palace. 'Sometimes I had to wait three months to get my films out,' he says. 'So far, it's been fantastic to have theatres that weren't there before. But if Tony Zeccola won't pay the terms we demand for a film, he won't get the film.'

Finney says that he is concerned with distribution, not with programming Village's cinemas or anyone else's. (Village owns the cinemas; Roadshow, which is jointly owned by Village and Greater Union, buys films.) But it is clear that Finney's love of strategy has some influence on which cinemas play what Roadshow films and when. An example is the way *My Left Foot* (1989)—a difficult film to handle because it was about a man with cerebral palsy—was given time to establish itself at the Longford before moving out into the mainstream.

A few years ago, when there were not so many art houses, it was rare for an art film to be released to more than one cinema. These days, when the opposite is more likely, Alan Finney is one of the few istributors who advocate the advantage of occasionally publicising a film as 'very special' by giving it a one-cinema release. Finney also says that he rarely sees films other than those he distributes. This eccentricity, he admits, is against approved business practice—know your competition—but 'I hate to see other people's product in case I like it ... I prefer to be totally dedicated to our own product. I don't want to know about anything that might threaten it.'

Roadshow is the biggest distributor of mainstream and art films. Its links with Miramax, the world's major distributor of art films, are useful; so is what Finney calls Roadshow's 'reputation for paying more ... the first offers usually come to us'.

Cinema has boomed in recent years in competition with television. Videos, once seen as the final nail in the coffin, has, it is generally agreed, encouraged people to explore the range of films on offer. The building of the city and suburban multiplexes in the 1980s has continued into the 1990s, though at a slower pace. A common generalisation is that the multiplexes (which are owned by Hoyts, Greater Union and Village and their associates, and often share films) provide entertainment mainly for audiences in their mid-teens to mid-20s; but in fact many of their films are aimed at an older audiences. The Showcase, one of the cinemas at Hoyts Forest Hill multiplex, in suburban Melbourne, regularly shows subtitled art films.

There has been or will be expansion on the art-house scene, in addition to that already mentioned. Frank Cox, of the Kino and Newvision Films,'has big plans to get involved more in exhibition. We need a few more months before we make a public announcement. It will probably be a combination of new cinemas and taking over existing ones.'

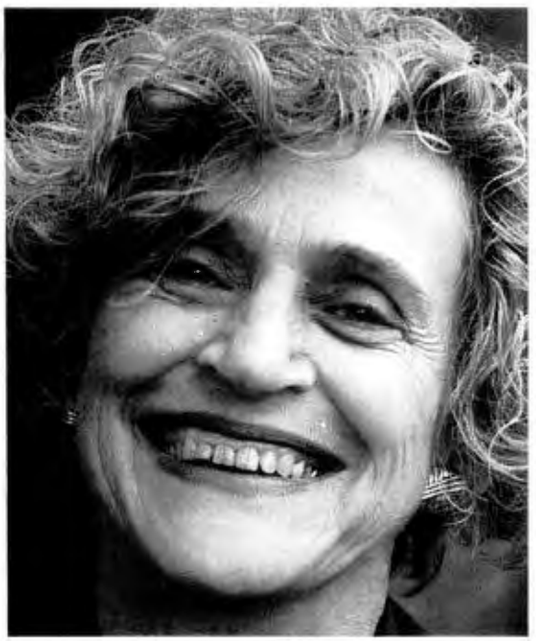
Paul Coulter is talking of adding a second screen to the Lumière, which he opened in Melbourne's central business district two years ago. Coulter is the only Melbourne art-film exhibitor who is not also a distributor or has formal links with one. He says this isolation makes it harder for him to bid for films, and the necessity of nursing those he does get would be helped by another screen. During the past two holiday seasons, Coulter has shown that good films are in danger of slipping through gaps in the expanded art-house network. Two fine Australian features, *Blackfellas* and *No Worries*, virtually overlooked by judges for the Australian Film Institute awards and apparently rejected by other Melbourne exhibitors, did good business at the Lumière.

Some people claim to know 'what sort of films' each art house specialises in, but their programs are unpredictable. For instance, I thought it was out of character this year for the ostensibly staid and middle-of-the-road Longford to show a film as violent as the Maori domestic drama *Once Were Warriors*. Yet eight years ago the Longford screened the even more uncharacteristic *Sid and Nancy*, a gross and violent look at the world of drugs and punk rock; and in 1985 it launched one of its biggest hits, *This Is Spinal Tap*, a 'mockumentary' that is far more a cult movie for the young than a work of art designed to satisfy the middle-aged.

Exhibitors and distributors agree that the increase in audiences for art, or quality, or specialist, films reflects a broadening of public taste and a return by older people to 'picture-going'. Alan Finney says the patrons of quality films are aged between 35 and 50 and are predominantly women. Frank Cox says most of his patrons are aged between 23 and 45.

'Up to 350 films get released in Australia every year,' he says. 'That's 25 to 35 films a month. The majority of Australian audiences, the 'commercial' audiences, attend the cinema three times a year; our audience, the art-house audience, goes once a fortnight. That still gives them only 24 films a year, and art houses are releasing more than 70 a year. With that pecking order, in this market, the smaller films that haven't got a hook to the audience find it very hard to exist.'

Frank Cox and other exhibitors and distributors can cite a variety of changing costs that affect their business. But the main point is that the art-film market has become much more competitive than it was 10 years ago. Among particular challenges are picking winners in one of the main growth areas of art films—low-budget, first-time features by young American and British directors—and deciding whether Australians have lost their taste for allegorical Chinese epics. 'My life in the mid '80s was far more comfortable than it is today,' Cox says. 'I don't mean in terms of dollars, but in terms of spare time and peace of mind. I was doing well in a business where there wasn't much competition. It was a business where the majors hadn't much idea, hadn't really got into it; they only dealt in big films. The whole market has changed over the last two or three years.'



Natalie Miller: 'For quite a few years there was only a small group of distributors. We were all so nice to each other.'

Photos: Tim Stoney

NATALIE MILLER, WHOSE FIRST VENTURE in the business was to import Buñuel's *Exterminating Angel* (1962), goes to the Cannes festival every year to check the art-film market. 'For quite a few years,' she says wistfully, 'there was only a small group of distributors. We were all so nice to each other! "You have that one; I'll have this one." There was none of

this competitiveness to raise the prices.' As a distributor, Miller has always been a cautious buyer—'not a gambler'—but as an exhibitor she is expanding, because she enjoys the challenge and the stimulation. 'If I have any disappointments, it's that it's become more business than movies for a lot of people, and that takes some of the fun out of it. I'd rather talk movies than deals any day ...'

Like everybody else in the business, Tony Zeccola is broadly optimistic, but will not attempt precise predictions. 'I do think, though, that cinema will survive anything that's thrown at us. There's obviously a boom, world-wide, in cinema-building ... I'm always a bit concerned there may be in three, five, seven years a bit of readjustment as to which cinemas are going to survive and which aren't.

'I think we're very fortunate in Australia that we've cultivated over the years, with blood, sweat and tears, audiences who appreciate other than normal American fare. That appreciation is more prominent here than in other parts of the world.' ■

Neil Jillett, a Melbourne freelance writer, was formerly, though not simultaneously, South-East Asia correspondent, arts editor, film critic and dance critic of *The Age*.

Director's cut

IN THE FILM INDUSTRY, any one day can feel like a long time. But twenty years can pass like a day. It's not uncommon for a project to take nine or ten years to develop and even then it can finally collapse and expire.

It's twenty years since I left Swinburne College, now the film and TV school of the Victorian College of the Arts. I ask myself occasionally what I have to show for that time. Some moments stand out. I remember meeting the late Raymond Carver, America's short-story icon, after I had worked on an adaptation of one of his stories for the screen. *Feathers* was released in 1987. Carver told me that right from the opening image he knew we'd captured the story. Even more satisfying is the occasional experience of connecting with a wide-ranging audience. *Death in Brunswick*, based on a book by Boyd Oxlade, was released in 1991. To hear people laugh because they resonated with what we were trying to achieve is, as the cliché goes, 'something that money can't buy.' It's not a trivial experience. It's a lasting affirmation that has to sustain you through months and years of drudgery. I remember the producer, Tim White, and myself, attending screenings of the film when it first opened just to relish the way that audiences laughed *with* the film.

On the other hand, I have attended the creenings of some Australian films where laughter has been unintentionally generated. My heart goes out to the producers and directors involved. I can still recall one such director silhouetted against the glow of an exit sign, head in hands, slouched over and trying hard not to vomit as the audience roared and howled with derisive glee throughout his film. It scared me to the bone. It's one thing to have critics put the boot in, and I've had plenty of that. It's another to be in a cinema with an audience and experience your film not working. You feel trapped, nailed to the seat. You cringe. You sweat. You know when that 'next bit' that

didn't quite come off is about to appear. You look away and try to think of something else, anything rather than watch that screen.

Throughout your time on a feature (and in my case it's always been years) you watch it so many times in editing, rough-cut screenings, the mix, festivals and hopefully a commercial release, that the thing becomes unwatchable and to a degree meaningless. Yet strangely you always see more. Jokes that once worked seem clumsy and stupid. Lines that read well and sounded good start to clunk and groan. The thing is to know when to walk away and let go. It is to be hoped the film has a life of its own. There comes a time when you can't help it anymore.

For the past couple of years, I have stayed alive by reading scripts professionally for various government funding bodies. As I go through a script I often ask myself if there is some kind of universal good which the script embodies. Do we all recognise a good idea or story? Basically I think we do. Good scripts stand out. They read well and at the end of the day you feel better for having read them. Bad scripts depress you like bad books. You read the same line over and over. You become trapped in them. I think it's rare for a good script to go by unnoticed. Whether that script ever gets made is a different matter.

Contacts, fashion, reputation, the availability of 'stars', and luck all play a part. But above them I rate perseverance, and belief in the script and in those who are to turn it into a film. For example, after countless phone calls, faxes, deals, script discussions and amendments, and many, many meetings, Lynda Hobson, the producer of *Muriel's Wedding*, finally found the key to her financing in London, with Wendy Palmer, a New Zealander working for a French production company, CIBY.

When I was a child my father hired, swapped and screened movies at the weekends on a 16mm projector in our loungeroom. The next door neighbours were Greek and ran the local fish and chip shop. They hired such films as *High Noon*, and swapped them for films that dad had got hold of, like *Objective Burma*, which happens to be the first film I can recall seeing. Surrounded by neighbours and family friends, I was told to 'sit there and be quiet'. These were the days before TV. Film was and still is basically a communal activity. The essential elements are the dark, other viewers and an image.

Although I didn't appreciate the fact, I was hooked on storytelling at a young age. Years later, the problem remains: what story to tell? I spent nearly a decade trying to have my own scripts made and was rejected by the production funding bodies nine times in a row. I finally broke through with the adaptation of *Feathers*. Adaptation has become my mainstay and is both a blessing and a curse. My latest attempt has been Tim Winton's novel *That Eye The Sky*. It's a story of faith, love and the blurry distinction between the natural and the supernatural.

Giuseppe Tornatore, who directed *Cinema Paradiso* and *Une Pure Formalité*, said 'between one film and the next a director experiences death.' Without seeing how an audience reacts to a film, the production is stillborn and the grieving process has no end. One waits to read what the critics write, good or bad. I still treasure Clark Forbes' review of *Death in Brunswick* in the Melbourne *Sunday Herald-Sun*: '... a feature with less appeal than a weekend in a smoke-filled room with badly dressed members of the Socialist Left.' It's the bad reviews that one remembers, yet I long to read them and hear people speak about the film. What worked and what didn't? Should the book have been made a film in the first place? Does the play adaptation work better or worse? Can one ever make one piece of work from a book that captures all its dimensions? In *That Eye the Sky*, I think we've sacrificed humour from the piece in pursuit of naturalism and to a degree I think that's been a mistake. Yet Tim Winton was moved by the film and I set great store by his opinion. It's not commercial cinema, it doesn't have an orthodox narrative. Instead it conveys a mood, tells a simple story, haunts one with certain images and tries to deal with God, visions and, to a lesser degree, faith and religion. Its religious elements have turned some distributors away from it. 'It's too religious, how do we promote something like that?' said one. Yet the film won the Special Jury Prize for Critics' Week at last year's Venice Film Festival and deserves to be seen, warts and all.

THE INVESTMENT OF RESOURCES AND ENERGY in a film is legendary. *Death in Brunswick* cost $2.1 million. *That Eye the Sky* has cost $4 million. Up to sixty per cent of this cost can be met by the Federal government through the Film Finance Corporation. When you finally organise the money, there are typically three months of paid work in the pre-production cycle, two months while you're shooting and five months in post-production. This is the only time for which you draw an income. Everyone involved with *That Eye the Sky*, from actors down to the catering company, agreed to defer 15 per cent of their pay in order to see the project through to completion. There's simply no point in taking on an involvement of these dimensions unless a story screams out at you as needing to be told. Your material has to fire your imagination enough to be worth the telling.

Judging the right story for your potential audience is equally fraught. In 1990, when *Death in Bruns-*

'Comedy now reigns among Australian films. Audiences here and overseas see our films as synonymous with those overused words, 'quirky' and 'wacky' ... In my opinion, Muriel's Wedding *is now the benchmark for other films to follow'*

ABOVE: *Toni Collette in* Muriel's Wedding, *dir. by P.J.Hogan. Photo courtesy of Village Roadshow.*

wick was in post-production, I attended a sneak preview at one of the local cinemas of *The Big Steal*, a film made by Nadia Tass and David Parker, who were responsible for the excellent *Malcolm*. The audience hadn't been told what they were to see. They sat with their popcorn in hushed anticipation of what it could be. The master of ceremonies was a DJ from a commercial FM station. He began by saying, 'Well folks, the film you're about to see tonight is...' We all waited. Arnie? Woody's latest? Michael Douglas in underwear? What? ' ... is an Australian comedy!' 'Ahh!', the audience groaned. The air of disappointment and betrayal was palpable. The DJ pressed on undeterred. 'But this one is different folks, this one's actually funny!' I don't think anyone believed him for a moment. I repeat, this was 1990. Australian films were still either historical or straight dramas. Sure there had been *Crocodile Dundee* and *Mad Max* but they were seen as exceptions to the rule. The DJ felt it necessary to apologise before the film had even begun. But within moments the audience was laughing and the sense of disappointment vanished. The film worked. In a way I think that film and *Death in Brunswick* prepared the way for the *Priscillas*, *Ballrooms* and *Muriels* to follow.

COMEDY NOW REIGNS among Australian films. Audiences here and overseas see our films as synonymous with those overused words, 'quirky' and 'wacky', and woe unto those films that depart from this expectation. Comedies are important. They are incredibly difficult to make and the ones that work are truly gems. In my opinion, *Muriel's Wedding* is now the benchmark for other films to follow. But when I cast an eye over the current 'work in progress' I appreciate the risks that my fellow practitioners are prepared to take. Geoffrey Wright is following the successful *Romper Stomper* with *Metal Skin*. Mark Joffe is moving from *Spotswood* to an adaptation of a Louis Nowra play, *Cosi*. There's no guarantee that success will follow success, and second films are generally thought to be disappointing—but *Priscilla* is a second feature, coming after Stephan Elliot's less-than-spectacular box-office with *Frauds*, starring Phil Collins. The only rule that bears remembering is 'nobody knows nothin' '. I'd prefer to think of myself as part of this complex business for another 20 years yet. Touch wood. ■

John Ruane's latest film, *That Eye The Sky*, will be screened in June at the Sydney and Melbourne film festivals.

COUNTERPOINT

PAUL CHADWICK

Somebody mentioned the war

THE END OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR has been replaying through our sophisticated, supremely visual, communications technologies. Those who lived it and those born since, are seeing that time in black-and-white images and hearing voices as they emerged scratchily from the wireless. Commemorative ceremonies are being 'attended' by millions through television.

But can our high-tech global media do as well with war in prospect, not retrospect? The 1991 Gulf War suggests that the technology is irrelevant if journalism fails. I think Australian journalism has been doing rather well in its look back at 50 years, especially the press. True, some historians have cautioned against over-reliance on newsreel sources which, when viewed with our television-trained eyes, may mislead. John Lang, in *The Age* for instance, reminded us that VE Day in Australia was actually sombre, with officialdom not permitting revelry to divert the people from the unfinished war against Japan.

But in the media coverage overall, nostalgia has not glossed the horror nor misled today's twentysomethings about war in the way that society's institutions recalled war in the past, and so deceived those guileless young men who signed up excitedly for, say, Gallipoli or Verdun. Again and again we are hearing the veterans both venerate their companions' courage and sacrifice *and* warn against anyone ever having to repeat the experience.

When former US Secretary of Defence, Robert McNamara, published his apologia for Vietnam, the instant reaction that this somehow debased the dead seemed quickly to fade. What replaced it was more subtle: a warmer embrace of Vietnam veterans, as if their dual suffering of both war and exclusion could be acknowledged now that the campaign they fought in had itself been acknowledged, almost officially, as a mistake. This spirit was encapsulated in the faces of those old diggers who delighted in being accompanied on the Anzac Day march by Vietnam vets on motorcycles, long hair streaming from bald-top heads.

The perception that Vietnam had been the Television War, and lost because of it, has limited the ability of that medium to report to us more recent conflicts. TV's very effectiveness was its downfall. Some limits have been externally imposed. In the Falklands, Grenada, Panama and the Gulf, governments and the military have combined to prevent those technologies from conveying the dreadful story of war, which is fundamentally the same story that has been told by the media this year about battles 50 years ago.

At a time when media can affect popular opinion with more speed and power than ever, so that wars might become harder to prosecute (at least by democracies) without popular support, the media told us less about the Gulf War than it had about Vietnam. In information terms, we sent an elephant to pick up a matchstick, wrote one commentator at the time. Ronald Dworkin has reminded us, in the context of the Gulf War, that, 'unless survival is at stake, war cannot trump democracy. We are no democrats if we trust the people only when the stakes are sufficiently low.'

Democracy is impossible without independent information, and journalism has a duty to seek and supply it. Media must reflect the popular mood but also, crucially, give a platform to dissenters, especially the really unpopular ones. (Recall the treatment of the critics of the Gulf War and of the ABC for giving them airtime.) All our sophisticated technologies become dangerous when they are used to drown out the contrary views by which we might test the rightness of orthodoxy. 'Yes, yes,' says the war correspondent sheltering from sniper fire in the Balkans. 'I know my duty, but does my audience want to know my story?'

Here the media's responsibility ends and the public's begins. Gerald Long, a former managing director of Reuters, has asked of First World War England: 'How could the government suppress all knowledge of the slaughter, of the frontline conditions, in spite of casualty lists and soldiers on leave? Was it that people did not want to know and, sensing their wish, returning soldiers did not feel they could tell them?' ■

How the Women's Weekly saw the war in 1942. Photograph from All In! Australia During The Second War ***by*** *Michael McKernan*

Paul Chadwick is the Victorian co-ordinator of the Communications Law Centre.

• A fine treatment of media coverage of the Gulf War can be found in *Index on Censorship*, vol 20, nos. 4 and 5, from which the Dworkin and Long comments are drawn.

MARK DEASEY

Good business, Vietnam

IN THE EVENING BY THE RIVERBANK IN HUE, a vendor has spread out a cloth covered with small mounds of bric-à-brac; some not very antique bowls and cups, odd bits of glassware and brass. What seems to be designed to catch the eye of the passer-by most, however, is a pile of US Army dog-tags, mess spoons and cigarette lighters. The dog-tags especially are of dubious authenticity though each bears the requisite name, initials, serial number, blood group and religion, and all are stained, battered and dented to suggest two decades and more of wear and concealment; the pile of smooth and shining blanks close by suggests an eye to the MIA (Missing In Action) market. The professional searchers, though, would be lucky to hit on any such firm relics; a friend in Da Nang tells me they're excited by finding so much as the eyelet of a US Army boot these days.

Both towns and villages have a haphazard look about them, as if dropped in a tumble from the back of some great truck.

The thick of the hunt is well away from the leafy charm of Hue. Head 100 km north into Quang Tri province, and the reminders of war are no longer quaint curios to be sought out, but inescapable elements of the environment, whichever way you turn. Great strips of white sand waste slash across the narrow plain; the rock and red-yellow soil of the low hills is barely concealed by sparse scrub, and both towns and villages have a haphazard look about them, as if dropped in a tumble from the back of some great truck. War cemeteries line the road at close intervals, each with its central granite tower and serried ranks of tiny graves. The Demilitarised Zone, which divided north and south from 1954, runs through the north of Quang Tri; maps and signposts point to Khe Sanh, where Vietnamese forces mounted their greatest pitched battle against the US marines, in 1968.

Now the province is trying valiantly to attract investment. The effort has meant the province has a particularly well-staffed External Relations Department, and to visit our project sites, every possible facility is placed at our disposal. The red tape which can confound the simplest undertakings in other places hardly appears. At the Agricultural Bank Guest house, we cross paths with a large Reuters' crew, gathering footage in preparation for the 20th anniversary of Liberation in 1975; there's also an American MIA search team somewhere in town—but then, there usually is.

Out in the back-blocks of Cam Tuyen district, it's not hard at times to imagine yourself in Australia, bouncing through the red dust and dry scrub in a battered Russian jeep. The track through the low hills is lined with eucalyptus, cattle forage apparently untended, and the illusion is broken only when you come across the occasional neat plot of peanuts or cassava, sitting in the middle of nowhere. This is a New Economic Zone—a term no longer meaning exile for political undesirables, but an attempt to resettle some of the population now crammed into the narrow and overburdened coastal strip. Life here is hard; this area was saturated with defoliants, and the effects can be seen in children born 15 years and more after the last bomb was dropped. Growing rice out here would be impossible; small plots of cassava and corn are painstakingly set wherever the hot, dry wind will give them a chance. Gathering scrap metal is a far more certain way of keeping the family fed for most.

Water at least we can help with. Until now, it's all had to be drawn and carted from the shallow and contaminated river a couple of kilometres away. Diarrhoea and worse have been a constant curse. There is a spring of sorts in the low rise above one hamlet which affords a trickle even at the nadir of the dry season; money from Oxfam Hong Kong/CAA is paying for bricks and mortar while the local people build water tanks to hoard the flow. It should cut a few hours off most women's working day, or at least allow them to deploy the time a bit more fruitfully than in the endless yoke-and-bucket trek.

There's a pungent reek of lantana as we push through the scrub to the source, tailed by a small boy with what looks like a huge goitre from shoulder to chin. There's no way of knowing just what can be ascribed to Agent Orange around here; when medicine for diarrhoea is beyond the means of most, sophisticated laboratory tests are in a realm of fantasy.

Bright neon signs outside the Dong Ha Hotel advertise 'DMZ Tours', and minibuses full of large pink people can be seen shuttling up towards the Bon Hai River daily. The district which comes up to the south bank wants the headwaters reafforested to protect the watershed and provide a livelihood for the new settlers there. To sort out the whys and wherefores, we

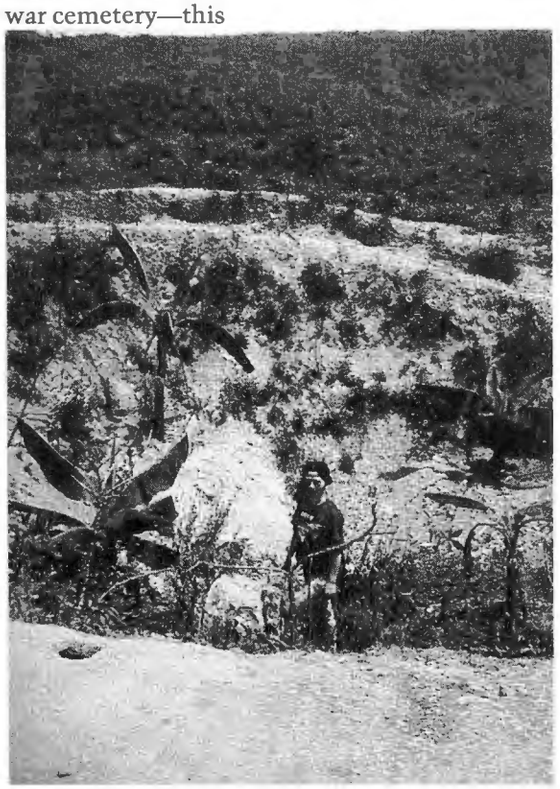
gather in a meeting room ceilinged in the blue marbled laminex beloved of Vietnamese officialdom, the vinyl sofas still covered in what feels like Glad-wrap. In the end, we opt for a smaller-scale venture; 30-odd families have recently been resettled further down the river. They need trees to protect their plantings and to sell to the paper mills—will we help? Anything you could call agricultural land disappears after Gio Linh district town. There are still bombs not far beneath the surface. Further up the river is as stark a sight as you'll see anywhere in the country: hill after hill of dusty green scrub rolls away to the horizon, and there's hardly a human being or even an animal of any size in sight. There was a large US base just beyond one of the these rises; the surrounding countryside was bombed to smithereens and defoliated bare to deprive the Viet Cong of cover and human shelter. They still won it in 1972, but it wasn't until a year and a half ago that anyone was prepared to move back.

Hidden between two folds in the hills we find the home of five young sisters and brothers, who moved here last year from Gio Linh town. The house is of the most basic: a single room, thatch walls and roof, and bare earth floor. One bed, and a few pegs for clothes. A pile of taro roots in the corner indicate what will be food today, tomorrow and the next day. One of the brothers comes in for lunch; he's been out digging for scrap metal. He can normally expect to find about 10 kg a day, which will sell for about 80c, their one source of cash. If you find a whole bomb, you throw a party. Has anyone he knows ever been killed or injured by anything they've turned up? No, that only happens to the amateurs from outside the district. Official reports would suggest otherwise.

We probably won't help each family plant 10 hectares of *acacia auricofolia*; they're lower-maintenance and friendlier to the environment than the eucalypts they have invested in, but even the keenest can't get up much earlier than the pre-dawn hours most of them now keep. Small plots of citrus for market and protective belts of acacia look more like the go, it appears after Tricia and Binh have parleyed with some settlers and with the village head, while I decoy the district official up the hill to talk about History and survey the landscape. Across the river is no longer 'North Vietnam', but extensive stands of eucalyptus show that it's another district with a different idea of sustainable forestry. Gio Linh in the end seems happy with our more modest proposal.

GOING DOWN TOWARDS CUA VIET on the coast is something else altogether. The small port was fought for almost hand-to-hand on several occasions, and one village is built—or rebuilt—largely of scrap metal and other chance offerings. There's an abrupt line where the rice land ends and the white sand begins; in Australia, you'd declare a national park beyond this point and keep out anything with hooves. Small chance in central Vietnam; the land's been squared off with casuarina windbreaks and meticulously hillocked for sweet potatoes, irrigated for the short growing season from the fresh part of the river, a good few kilometres upstream. Just how people do it, with no machinery to speak of, less cash, and families to feed and shelter, is hard to work out even after you've interviewed householders at length. You can count on a major typhoon every few years as well.

This is our guide's home village, and he points out his grandfather's grave in the war cemetery—this one for those fallen in the war against the French. Salt is encroaching from the sea, as the onshore winds blow and more and more of the river's flow is used for irrigation upstream. So a lot of the village's income now comes from harvesting the stuff, as crop and fish yields diminish. In the meantime, they still need water to drink, and have had to cart it 3 kilometres over the causeway from the next village. The project we've run seems oddly Australian in flavour, albeit designed by Vietnamese engineers and supported basically from a Hong Kong-based agency—household rainwater tanks, with corrugated iron sheets to catch the rain. It's been a resounding success, given the enthusiasm expressed even when no officials are present. It seems a small number of families (or the men thereof) chose to use part of their supply to distil rice spirit to sell over the Tet festival. It's not quite within orthodox development models of income-generation, but it is their prerogative after all.



Seeds of hope: Ms Tran Tanh Binh from Oxfam Hong Kong stands in the middle of a bomb crater planted with banana trees and cassava in the Gio Linh district, formerly a demilitarized zone.

photograph courtesy Mark Deasey

It's a grey and soggy day as we head back to Hue, and stop to look at one of the scrapyards that line the highway. Large mounds of anonymous shrapnel, torn sheets of roofing iron, neat piles of shell casings, and in one corner, a little group of rusted-out GI helmets. You'll find these used as buckets by the pavement puncture repair men everywhere from here to Phnom Penh—swords into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks. But it's hard not to shiver as one perforated example is picked up for examination. Whatever the rights of wrongs of the war, and all that's happened since, each one of these once sheltered a human head and can seem redolent of questions and memories it's often easier not think about. ■

Mark Deasey is Community Aid Abroad's program co-ordinator for Indo-China and China.

ROSEY GOLDS

The last call

I FIRST DISCOVERED PAUL'S EPICUREAN through a friend who worked at the ABC Ultimo Building in Sydney. We must have had at least half a dozen conversations where he would lovingly describe every quirky detail of the place—almost as if by recounting it he could prove to himself that such an unlikely establishment really did exist.

My friend had a particular reason to be sentimental about Paul's. It was a few minutes' walk from what used to be the giant fruit and vegetable markets in Chinatown. His family had a fruit shop in the mid-sixties and as a child his father would take him to buy fresh produce from the markets at the crack of dawn. He can remember walking into Paul's and witnessing for the first time that unique combination of flamingo-like bottles of liqueur, plastic grapes and exotic foods.

He also remembers Paul, an animated, svelte, Northern Italian man in his mid-twenties who smelled of rich, exquisite coffee and crusty Italian bread. In those days, Paul employed thirteen young men, each with his own wheelbarrow, to pace the markets selling paninos to hungry retailers. A panino is a large slab of Italian bread filled with cheeses, mortadella, salami and preserved capsicums.

Almost twenty-five years later the ABC moved from its modest broadcasting headquarters in Darlinghurst to its glistening, pompaidourial complex in Ultimo. As a radio producer for the ABC, it was this relocation that led to my friend's rediscovery of Paul's Epicurean.

The word epicurean is derived from the Greek philosopher Epicurus. Epicurus maintained that humanity was tormented by two main worries: fear of the gods and fear of death. According to Epicurus, all this anxiety was a complete waste of time. He contended that the gods were detached from man and his world. To be concerned with human affairs would compromise their own joy. He argued that death should not be feared because good and evil reside in sensation, and death negates sensation. Liberated from these worries, a man can live a pleasurable life. Contentment, he argued, can best be achieved by being prudent, moderate and just. Where possible, one must also cultivate friendship.

I don't know to what extent Paul Biasci's business philosophy (or his Catholicism for that matter) was influenced by the teachings of Epicurus, but there's no doubt that Paul's was no ordinary delicatessen. Like other delis, Paul's sold a variety of meats, cheeses, coffees, cakes and liqueurs. But this was only the outer layer of a truly postmodern establishment.

Paul's displayed a curious variety of what could only be described as majestically tacky souvenirs—things like the 15-year-old postcards of the Manly hydrofoil with a giant koala superimposed on the upper deck. He sold a variety of soft toys, in particular stuffed kangaroos, koalas, rabbits and emus. He also dealt in boomerangs. A selection of babywear for sale was stored in a rather sad cardboard box. As an astute gesture to international diplomacy, perhaps, Paul employed a young Chinese woman as his assistant. As a return courtesy, she wore a miniature Italian flag on her lapel.

Paul was keen on radio and TV. There was a small black-and-white television set which remained switched on in the corner of the store. No matter what time you stopped by, there always seemed to be a classic midday movie screening with a fifties siren like Elizabeth Taylor or Gina Lollobrigida. There was also a transistor radio perched on one of the shelves which played tragic post-war love songs. These songs were punctuated at 12 o'clock by a sobering rendition of 'Amazing Grace', sung by a Country and Western diva. The station Paul faithfully tuned into had a rotational play list which enabled you to predict each day which songs could be heard at which hours. It was a small shop. No bigger than a bus stop really. A little urban alcove jam-packed with incongruous but tender objects.

Paul's was also a cafe. It had two round tables at which people would stand and drink their coffees and eat their panini (in the traditional Italian, espresso

Photo of Paul's Epicurean by Andrew Stark

style). You could always tell a new customer. The uninitiated would bite into the roll, and without fail the juice from a preserved chilli would squirt out unexpectedly onto whatever they were wearing. First time at Paul's was always the most expensive: it included the cost of a drycleaning bill.

David Hill was a faithful customer. His status as Managing Director of the ABC was observed by serving his panino on a plastic plate with a plastic knife and fork—a privilege extended to no other. The horde of hungry firemen who regularly double-parked their great big red fire engine outside the shop and ordered fifteen large paninos to go, ate with their hands, like the rest of us.

Paul was featured in a documentary about the author Patrick White (another steadfast panino man). On a little noticeboard at the side of the shop was a page of the *Sydney Morning Herald's* TV Guide which featured a review of the documentary. If you looked closely you could see that Paul had carefully underlined his own name in the piece. He would never draw attention to this, but he was quietly proud when people noticed.

Paul would sit on an old banana box and read *Time* magazine and the *Asian Weekly*. He revealed one day, quite casually, that he'd spent some time in Russia. Once the SBS television program, 'Eat Carpet' came to film him doing a promo for the show. 'Eat Carpet?' he said. 'What is Eat Carpet?' My Italian friend translated for him: *mangia tappeti*. 'Mangia tappeti?' Paul only laughed and shook his head.

THE DAY BEFORE AUSTRALIA DAY this year, my Italian friend went along with a colleague for his usual panino and coffee. He noticed the box of babies' clothes and boomerangs had been shifted to the middle of the store. When he had finished his panino Paul gave him and his friend a gift. Each received one of the famous flamingo-like liqueur bottles. He thanked them for being such good customers. A few days later, my friend once again dropped by Paul's. Paul stood with his assistant at one of his tables drinking what was probably their last espresso in the Epicurean. He was neatly dressed in a shirt and tie. As my friend approached him Paul's assistant said quietly in her broken Chinese/English, 'When you see him just say hello, but don't ask him.' A few weeks later the sign was painted over. Paul's Epicurean was no more.

When I began this story I searched through phone books from the last decade trying to find 'Biasci' or any version of it. I contacted loyal customers, real estate agents, libraries and local Italian societies. I even telephoned a radio reunion program hoping that someone in the audience might know Paul's story. But alas, nothing. Like my friend, I find myself lovingly recounting details to prove that he existed. ■

Rosey Golds is a Sydney freelance writer.

THE ECONOMY

JON GREENAWAY

Super highway

WHEN ANNOUNCING CHANGES to superannuation in the budget, Ralph Willis declared them to be: 'extremely good for Australian workers and families, and just as good for the nation'. The government's initiative to match the contributions of low to middle income earners with money out of its own coffers has the potential to make good on the Treasurer's promise. But it also has the potential to turn super into an industrial and administrative quagmire.

The superannuation tax regime is weighted in favour of higher income earners: the 15 per cent tax on contributions provides a much larger tax break for those paying 47 per cent income tax than those on 29 per cent. Up until now the only redress for low income earners has been a nominal rebate on voluntary contributions which very few qualify for. But after the rent and bills are paid, there's not much money left for the retirement fund.

The Government's contributions will be capped at $1,000 per annum for those on $46,000 or less, after which they will be gradually reduced. This will mean that instead of having the equivalent of 12 per cent of their wage contributed to super by 2002, as was originally intended, the amount will be 15 per cent.

This offer comes in place of the tax cuts promised in the One Nation statement. Although Canberra will be getting 15 per cent back in tax, the majority of the recipients should be happy as the tax cuts were intended for the benefit of those earning more than $35,000 a year. If implemented successfully, this initiative should help address some of the inequities of super.

The question is 'if'. The Government has always intended to bring in compulsory employee contributions, and it was thought this would come as part of the existing Superannuation Guarantee Scheme. Instead, only legislation for the matching payments will be drafted, with the employee contributions to be negotiated in workplace agreements.

Clearly this will create problems for fund administrators. The employee and government contributions will have to be treated as different components, adding more chambers to the superannuation beehive. But the switch to employee contributions could prove to be an even greater problem.

The upcoming Accord Mark VIII will announce the agreement between the Commonwealth and the ACTU over the phasing-in of employee contributions starting in 1997/98. The involvement of unions was central to the introduction of compulsory super in 1992 and again they will lead the way with employee contributions. Unions will have to ensure that award conditions are being met by employers so that workers get full benefit. Otherwise some workers will be on 15 per cent super while others, particularly the ununionised, will be on 9 per cent. Unions will have to increase their involvement in the workplace to achieve this. On the other hand if unions try to use employee contributions as a lever for extravagant pay-rise claims, then we could see many an industrial stand-off.

With the involvement of unions, superannuation could develop into a capital reserve which will provide decent retirement incomes—as long as funds give some sort of return—and, more importantly, productive and job-creating investment. ■

Jon Greenaway's book on superannuation for young people is soon to be published by *Allen & Unwin*.

JULIETTE HUGHES

Throwaway lines

Landfills are filling up faster each year, leaving municipalities with the headache of finding ever more sites. And evidence is mounting that the increasingly popular 'bigbins' are encouraging people to throw away re-usable, recyclable or compostable materials.

'ALMOST EVERYWHERE the mother worked long hours. .. She made jam and chutney, biscuits and cakes and glass jars of preserved fruits that were arranged on shelves in the pantry: every self-respecting house had a pantry.' In 1920, says Geoffrey Blainey in *A Shorter History of Australia,* a 'kitchen was still a small factory'.

Older houses that have not fallen to the developer's bulldozer can still be found with what seems to '90s urbanites to be an extraordinary number of fruit trees in their quarter acre. These, with the vegie garden, were once essential factors in the economics of the Australian home. Chooks were kept, and sometimes a sheep was brought in to eat the front lawn and be slaughtered when it grew fat. You would need to buy only things like flour, sugar, salt, spices, tea, soap. Cleaning was done with mops, brooms, rags, beeswax, yellow soap and a bit of bicarb or vinegar to help the elbow grease. Shop-bought meals were as rare as labour-saving appliances. The butcher, the baker, the grocer and the draper were the primary suppliers, their wares mostly bought as raw materials for assembly at home.

Waste was not only frowned on: its consequences usually had a quick and quantifiable effect on the household itself, showing up immediately in the food and clothing of the members. Clothes were made and then repaired until they became dusters, rag rugs, patchwork, cushion stuffing. Food scraps went to the chooks, the cat, the dog and the compost. There were middens and rubbish dumps, but they were lilliputian compared with today's municipal landfill mountains—in 1920 there were over 10 million fewer Australians and they were not throwing away a tenth as much per head as we do now.

These days the effects of our unthriftiness are felt more widely, more diffusely; people rarely have to take immediate and full responsibility for what they waste. Each Melburnian, according to the Litter and Recycling Research Association of Victoria's (LRRAV) Recycling Audit and Garbage Bin Analysis, is responsible for approximately 680 kilograms of solid domestic rubbish per year; Sydney, according to CRC for Waste Management and Pollution Control, generates about 800 kilograms per head, but that figure also includes factories and offices. Where does all the rubbish come from? One of the answers lies in the rise of supermarkets. Since their coming, the packaging industry has benefited vastly, since current practice demands a high level of packaging for efficiency. Supermarkets have tended to encourage products that are 'recyclable' rather than re-usable, because they see themselves as strictly one-way operations. The main effect has been to make people take the problem home with them, and this has made the responsibility devolve largely on to councils, who must dispose of household garbage. Our rates and taxes pay for this.

A house in the 1990s is no longer a small factory; it is more a sort of way-station that supports a huge range of industries which are dependent on conspicuous consumption, and the recovery of some of the materials used. Recycling has become very profitable, with many businesses incorporating a recycling arm into their structure because of cost and public relations benefits. But although it makes many people feel good to think that the detritus from their conspicuous consumption is to be turned to another use, there is reason to think that many recycling programs are simply covering up the underlying problem of a prodigal overuse of resources.

THERE ARE KERBSIDE COLLECTIONS for some of the waste generated by this process. Over 90 per cent of Australian municipalities offer some kind of recycling collection. Councils, industries and charities run drop-off points in various places all over the country for discarded glass, aluminium, car batteries, steel, tyres, paper and cardboard, plastics (including everything

from cling wrap to drink bottles, old toys and fast food containers), garden waste, motor and cooking oil, pharmaceuticals, old clothes, halon fire extinguishers, paints, solvents, pesticides, CFCs (in old fridges and car airconditioners), old concrete and bricks—even the 90 million wine and 30 million champagne corks we import annually are highly valued and collected by Girl Guides.

Landfills are filling up faster each year, leaving municipalities with the headache of finding ever more sites. And evidence is mounting that the increasingly popular 'bigbins' are encouraging people to throw away re-usable, recyclable or compostable materials. So the landfills mount, except where more visionary local authorities have instituted volume-based systems, with people encouraged to separate all their rubbish for disposal or recycling.

One answer is to encourage re-use. Standard beer bottles are re-used but the trend is moving towards stubbies and cans for re-cycling. With small batteries it makes sound economic sense to buy rechargeables, yet rechargeable batteries have not caught on very well in Australia. They have not been promoted much, and the reason is not hard to find—what benefits the customer economically does not do the same for the company.

And if companies are starting to put significant corporate energies into, say, the large and centralised recovery of aluminium cans or PET bottles, they are not going to welcome proposals that would reduce consumer buying of those containers. In the EC this has already caused conflict. In 1988 Denmark's law requiring all beers and soft drinks to be sold in refillable bottles was challenged in the International Court of Justice by the international beverage industry. The law, it was claimed, created a trade barrier. This view was supported by the court but the Danish law was upheld on environmental grounds. British journalist Simon Fairlie, writing in *The Ecologist* in 1992 said 'Large companies... prefer recycling because it allows a continuing expansion of industrial throughput and provides a convenient environmental excuse for planned obsolescence.'

So landfills mount in the dwindling areas available, and the solutions proposed are ever more ingenious: many rubbish dumps are being tinkered with to use the methane generated by the decay of organic waste. But the problem of increasing amounts of garbage is not going to go away, largely because of the way we live nowadays. As one example, 'disposable' nappies, around 720 million of them used annually in Australia, are at present unrecyclable. They cannot be flushed down into the sewers without causing blockages, thus they have added a significant amount of faecal material to our landfills since their advent, as many parents are too squeamish to scrape poo off them into the toilet: some conservationists fear this will cause water table contamination, although some studies dispute this. And if we use cloth nappies we devote large amounts of chemicals and electricity to their cleansing. It is estimated that each child needs about 6,000 nappy changes. At a conservative cost of 40 cents per paper nappy-change (some brands can cost up to 85 cents each) that works out at $2,400 per child. However we keep a baby's bottom clean, it is going to have a cost.

What happens when it leaves you

SPARE A THOUGHT for that ultimate item of waste, the humble turd. When it leaves a human or animal body in urban Australia it is disposed of through water. Even dog droppings (90 tonnes per day in Melbourne) leave us in this way through highly efficient systems of storm water drains that service our cities, and, in rainy weather, lead to high E. coli counts near beach outfalls. At Cronulla, however, treated human effluent is still discharged at a shore-line outfall, although Bondi, once a malodorous hazard to its devotees, has begun to get its act together. Treated effluent is now pumped two and a half kilometres through a tunnel on the ocean floor, and 'diffused' at over twenty different points. The digested sludge left behind after the treatment is sold to landscape gardeners and even formed the basis of Sydney's third runway. Some may find an irony lurking there.

But at Melbourne Water's Werribee installation it is a very different story. There, more than half of Melbourne's outpourings, 520 megalitres daily, are sent through a network of channels to different treatment areas. Some of it goes into lagoons of up to 289 hectares, some of it is sent through sedimentation tanks and pumped onto land or grass, where cattle are brought in to graze after a fortnight. A flourishing farm operates there: the cows don't seem to mind the smell, which sometimes offends motorists passing between Melbourne and Geelong. Sludge digesters deal with the heavy solid waste. We are reassured about pollutants by a pamphlet which says 'Bacterial slimes on the soil, grass stems and in the water, trap and digest pollutants'. After four or five days the wastewater flows out through drains into Port Phillip Bay. They are also experimenting with planting eucalypt trees, which have grown ten metres in four years on the abundant wastewater. Most of the sewage treatment in Australia falls between the extremes of Cronulla and Werribee.

The eventual cost to the whole community of the over-consumption of resources and the waste that it generates is something that can only be guessed at. In Australia there is still a sense of space, and time to act. But to keep the advantages that we have, we will soon need to become very intelligent, not only in how we deal with what we discard, but in what we choose to use in the first place. ■

Juliette Hughes is a freelance writer.

PAUL SINCLAIR

Trickle-down ecology

Irrigated farming has devastated the Murray-Darling river basin.

AT THE SWAN HILL PIONEER SETTLEMENT, the local community has built a monument to their pioneers. A plaque explains that the pool surrounding the monument 'illustrates our total dependence upon water—then—now—and in the future'. A century of irrigated farming has caused massive environmental degradation and made the region's future uncertain.

Tim Fisher, the Australian Conservation Foundation's natural resources campaign co-ordinator, argues that the area is doomed: 'All the people in the CSIRO and Murray-Darling Basin Commission, they all say Kerang is finished. The salt's too high and more and more salt gets put in (the river system) because of salty irrigation water. They're even talking about a line that you basically draw through Kerang and eventually all irrigated land to the west of there goes.'

It's a bleak picture. Ghost towns. Rusting Delbridge irrigation wheels. Salt-scorched earth. Surreal scenes of water lapping the windowpanes of abandoned houses.

At present, northern Victoria is reproducing conditions similar to those of the last ice age. Between 18-20,000 years ago the area had high water tables from a previous wet period and subsequent high levels of evaporation and low rainfall. These conditions concentrate saline water tables. High levels of saline discharge poison the land and river system.

Now the cause is irrigation. Its use partly reflects and ignorance of local ecology, but the demands of urban populations for cheap food have also played their part in snaring farmers into destructive land and water management practices. One per cent of agricultural land is used for irrigated farming, and this land produces 30 per cent of the value of Australia's agricultural output. Irrigation accounts for 74 per cent of all water extracted for human use from rivers and ground water.

Large scale irrigation works were developed in northern Victoria during the 1880s and serious salinity problems first emerged in the 1920s. The decimation of local Aboriginal peoples destroyed knowledge of local ecological processes. By the time Europeans started taking an interest in the botany of the area in the 1850s, the ecology of the northern grasslands was completely altered. It wasn't until the floods of the 1970s, when local residents were taken up in aeroplanes to survey flood damage, that they had a chance to look down on the landscape and see how much of it was salt-affected.

Roger Jones, who grew up in the area, now works for the Victorian Museum researching Victoria's contemporary and historical ecosystems. Jones believes that those flights marked an important change in local environmental consciousness.

'It really got to people. That experience often provided a galvanising moment for someone to start doing something.

'Describing what a landscape was like around the time of (European) occupation is a very similar thing. If you can bring up in someone's imagination what a place might have looked like, which of course has natural heritage built up over thousands, or millions of years, that juxtaposition is often enough to get people thinking.'

Jones agrees that unless the process of sustained degradation is slowed, and ultimately reversed, the region will have a limited future.

Improved knowledge of the region's heritage will be crucial in bringing about environmental change.

There is a growing awareness of the significance of natural history in the area. Despite confidence in glamorous technological solutions to environmental degeneration, our knowledge of natural ecosystems is extremely limited. Knowledge of natural processes is often held in local memory, rather than urban databases, as Jones explains:

'I ran into this old fisherman in Echuca and he could remember the rivers from about 1920 when he was 10 years old. I talked to him for a couple of hours. He could remember when you could see the bottom of the river from Echuca wharf, about how populations of cod had changed over the years, how the shape of the river had changed, how sedimentation rates had changed. These stories can become defining moments that stimulate individual action. Environmental change is tied up with the community's sense of history and its vision of where it's going.

Measurable outcomes: irrigation channel, ploughed land and salt in north-western Victoria. Photos: Paul Sinclair

In the past, environmental degradation was regarded as an inevitable cost of progress. While exhibiting indigenous flora to regional community groups, Jones says people 'would always justify the loss of the environment by saying "that's progress". Take chocolate lilies for example. They flower for up to six weeks in the spring time. When you smell them they smell like really fine Toblerone chocolate. So you'd have these chocolate lilies out at a community day and all these old ladies would say, "Oh I remember when we used to walk through fields of these on the way to school. They're not there any more, but that's progress". 'People would always say, "that's progress". Their loss has just been accepted.'

Stories about ecological history help broaden knowledge of the processes of environmental change. In light of the community's changing relationship with land and water, the re-discovery of the region's cultural heritage will also be important to developing a sense of having a shared future. The township of Kerang has one such story, about the death of a young woman in the waters of the Loddon River.

Karlie McDonald drowned in 1927, a drought year. She was a 24-year-old teacher at Kerang High School. The town called itself 'the Irrigated Capital of the North' and were strong believers in the gospel of progress. She drowned while teaching swimming to a class of girls on a bend of the Loddon River, and the whole town grieved. They built a tall white clock in the centre of town as a monument to her, and it stands taller than Kerang's monuments to those who fell in the Great War.

The clock should have reminded the people of Kerang that deaths like Karlie's bind them to the land. Instead of becoming an expression of their allegiance with the land, the monument became a celebration of their alienation; a symbol of their illusionary conquest 'of a silent and empty land'.

The non-Aboriginal relationship with the landscape is full of crime and paradox; nonetheless, we belong here. One of the most powerful symbols of the truth of our belonging are the tombstones that mark the graves of those we have buried here. Burial of the dead domesticates the place of dwelling, and maybe it creates a lineage of memory that builds an empathy with the landscape. Judith Wright says:

...And now the newly dead
is lowered there. Now we
weep for eyes whose look
is closed on landscapes
loved, and at last known.

Northern Victorian communities are tied to the land in ways that are not dominated by the logic of free market economics. Farms are not just another small business. As one agricultural consultant argued, a large number of farmers in northern Victoria have an allegiance to the land as an ethos:

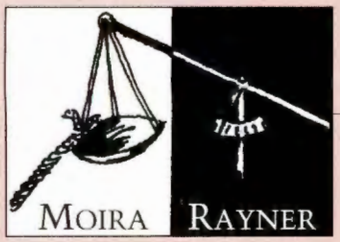
'It's not quite Aboriginal, but they're in it because they're dyed-in-the-wool farmers. They may not be doing the job 100 per cent, but who is? They have an ethos with the lands, but not as much towards the resources as there could be and that's part of community education. Those people are bound to the land. So much so, that when they go crook it's hard to prise them off.'

This ethos also finds expression in Roger Jones' work:

'A lot of the research I do is out of a sense of belonging. I've never bought any of this white alienation stuff because I've never felt it. But what I couldn't understand early on was why things weren't there. I couldn't understand why I'd go to other parts of the state and see complete floras, and I could never see it up at Kerang ... I always thought that farmers saying they were the great conservationists was pretty facile because I know they hadn't reached beyond the histories of their own families to see what lay before that. So those links hadn't been made. Quite possibly they're in the process of making them now.'

If the water tables keep rising, the land will literally become a sea. Who will remember Karlie McDonald if the land becomes barren? ■

Paul Sinclair is an environmental historian. He grew up in Kerang, and now lives in Melbourne.



A shot in the dark

Police called to the SCENE of a fatal shooting earlier today have announced that no charges will be laid against Mr Fred Baer (39), the homeowner who shot and killed midget first-time burglar, Amber (known as 'Goldy') Lochs. A police spokesman said that Mr Baer clearly acted in self-defence: 'It was dark; the family had just come home from their morning jog to a terrifying scene —broken plates and spilt porridge, smashed and soiled furniture —and when an intruder loomed out of the Baer baby's bed he just acted instinctively,' he said.

WE ARE ALL A LITTLE AFRAID of the dark, home of the terrors and shadowy nightmares. To wake, with a start, and know you are not alone in your own home is terrifying.

So it must have been for Gregory Bateman, Brisbane householder, when he shot Matthew Easdale, in the early hours of Tuesday, 27 April. The 16-year-old intruder was not a thief, but an impulsive teenager who had mistaken Bateman's house for that of a teenage acquaintance with whom he and two of his mates had an adolescent grudge. He died almost instantly.

The right to kill 'home invaders' (a term popularised by murdered Cabramatta politician John Newman) had been a hot topic for months in Queensland. That night, a Queensland pensioner, Gaetano Castorina, who shot a burglar, had been acquitted. It was a popular outcome. The next afternoon Queensland police announced that Bateman would not be charged at all.

Less than a week later, on 4 May, in Adelaide, the tragedy was re-enacted. Eighty-four-year-old Albert Geisler (arthritic, deaf and almost blind) shot and killed a 32-year-old intruder, using an old hand-made double-barrelled shotgun he kept in his home, a tiny converted warehouse, in Adelaide. Geisler, once an expert marksman, was said by neighbours to have been terrified of intruders after a recent bashing. In his case police announced that they would refer any decision to prosecute to their Director of Public Prosecutions who announced, nine days later, there would be no prosecution. In Victoria, as this article goes to print, a shopkeeper is due to face criminal charges for shooting and wounding an alleged burglar in 1994.

There is no absolute right to kill an intruder except in popular opinion. The night after the Queensland boy died, 96 per cent of callers in a TV poll by *Today Tonight* were firmly in favour of a legal immunity. The criminal law does not, in fact, indemnify a home-defending homicide.

The basic legal principle is much the same across Australia. The force which may be used must be 'reasonable' if you are to be excused from criminal responsibility for causing a human death. You must establish that you feared that you, or those you are responsible to protect, would be grievously hurt or killed, if you did not use the force that killed. In South Australia, since 1991, you may also use fatal force to protect property or prevent criminal trespass if it was not 'intended to cause death' and you were not 'reckless'. Could one seriously argue that, at least logically, it is not 'reckless' to fire at a shadowy figure in the dark? A Leahy cartoon in the *Courier-Mail*, the day after Easdale died, depicted a terrified woman in bed who was 'Awakened by a noise in the front room.. She knew the intruder was inside her house ... Alone except for a rifle... Trembling she pulled the trigger ... the government AND the opposition praised her quick reflexes ... Her husband would never come home late again.'

The success of the legal defence depends on the community assessment of 'reasonableness'. A jury convinced that crime is out of hand and that any intruder is likely to kill you, would not convict a householder holding the same beliefs. But what if that fear is irrational or, worse, deliberately incited by irresponsible media reports, party-political propaganda, or police PR in support of budget bids, or increased powers. Are they responsible too?

Police do not usually decide (and announce) prosecution decisions as quickly as in Bateman's case, but this is an election year for Queensland. Suspicions were immediately voiced about possible political pressure or, as the President of the Queensland Council for Civil Liberty, Terry O'Gorman, and lawyer David Solomon claimed in the *Courier Mail* that week, that the police had become a tool in the 'law and order' debate which was already, and promises to remain, a polling issue, as it was in the NSW election.

THERE IS POLITICAL MILEAGE to be made out of people's fear. In uncertain times the people crave security and strong leadership. Though the fear about the real risk of violence to the elderly, or in our homes from strangers, is manifestly non-factual, it is beguiling to believe it. Violent crime is not out of control in Queensland, or anywhere in Australia. The Queensland Criminal Justice Commission's research in 1993 and 1994 found community fear of burglary and robbery with violence had increased, but in fact, though burglaries had increased (according to the Brisbane *Courier Mail*, in the 17 months prior to the Brisbane death there had been a marked increase of 14 per cent) there was no increase in crimes against people. According to criminologist Paul Wilson, the rate of increase of even those property crimes had begun to diminish markedly. But people do not want to or

just cannot hear this in the face of fear-mongering.

Australians have no equivalent of the US 'right to bear arms' but the rhetoric of the US right is heard on our redneck radio too. After the Oklahoma bombing early in April, President Clinton accused the 'loud and angry voices' of paranoia, particularly hate radio, as the sources of suspicion, of our neighbours, of government gun control measures; of establishing a climate where violence is acceptable, in the belief that firearms may be used as a right to defend one's home and family. The prime suspect for the bombing (which took place on the anniversary of the Waco firestorm, that ultimate insane defence of the right to bear arms) is the paramilitary militia devoted to that view.

Guns in the home kill or injure husbands, wives, children, relatives and friends at three times the rate of intruders. Guns have their place: in the regular defence forces, in hunting (if you must) and even for responsible recreational use. (I speak as a one-time pistol shooter, founding member of a pistol club in the 1960s and solicitor for the local chapter of the Sporting Shooters Association in the '70s.) But there is no place for a shotgun behind the bedroom door, or any firearm in the hands of a frightened man, woman or child. There is tremendous potential for mayhem and murder if common or garden thieves believe they must prepare for armed defence.

Two gormless trespassers died violent deaths this year, at the hands of those whose homes they intruded upon. They paid the ultimate penalty. The proper authorities should decide by an open procedure, whether their killers should be put on trial, and for what. Juries would then decide on the meaning of 'fear' and the rightness of their actions. But as the National Committee on Violence recommended, back in 1990, police should undertake fear reduction strategies, not turn up the volume.

Men fear death, as children fear to go in the dark; and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other. —**Francis Bacon** ■

Moira Rayner is a lawyer and freelance journalist.

Programming nature

DEDICATED COMPUTERPHOBES BE WARNED. The computer graphics technology that makes possible those infernal, garish games that mesmerise teenagers is here to stay. Worse, it is now being turned to uses much more difficult to demonise. The combination of computer features which has made virtual reality possible is beginning to step out of the games arcade and into socially useful applications at home and work.

Researchers in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and France, for instance, are using virtual reality software to simulate on computer the growth of plants in three dimensions. At present these virtual plants can only be grown on high-powered workstations. But Dr Peter Room, a CSIRO scientist working in the Co-operative Research Centre for Tropical Pest Management in Brisbane, believes that within three or four years, computers with the capacity to run such simulations will become widely available. Then farmers will be able to try out new management techniques on virtual plants to assess their impact on real crops, and breeders will be able to design new plant strains on screen before engineering them genetically.

Graphics-based computing is particularly helpful in coming to terms with the environment. The environment has always been a problem—a challenge?—for the scientific purist. That's because of its frightening complexity.

Until recently the capacity of computers to handle the complexity of the environment tended to be bottled up in laboratories. The programs that simulated reality were so involved that they had to run on large mainframe computers, and when they finally came up with an answer, more often than not what they produced was pages of numbers which had to be interpreted.

So, although computers were employed in managing the environment, they did so in the background. Australian meteorologists, for instance, have dramatically improved their forecasting by plugging satellite data into some of the world's most sophisticated climate models. And tucked away behind the scenes in traffic authorities in Sydney and Melbourne are some of the world's most advanced programs for managing traffic. Now the results of sophisticated simulations can be presented in an accessible way, as a graphic.

Take the example of the house energy rating scheme. Since the 1950s, at its Division of Building, Construction and Engineering in bayside Melbourne, the CSIRO has been generating and collecting information on the energy efficiency of houses—the performance of insulation, the effect of orientation, the impact of where windows are placed. This information has been used to build large and highly complex computer programs to simulate and compare how much energy it takes to live comfortably in houses of different design.

Energy Victoria, a state government energy conservation authority, has created a simpler version of the CSIRO program which runs even faster. The Victorian program is so friendly that, once it has simulated energy use in your house, it gives helpful hints as to how to make it more energy efficient. Just like an electrical appliance, the program gives an energy efficiency rating from zero to five stars. It is one of the first operational parts of what will be a nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme. When the scheme is introduced into the ACT in July, it will become mandatory for all new houses to be built to a rating of four stars or better.

The House Energy Rating Scheme is the advance guard for many such conservation programs. So while we now have the capacity to damage the environment in ways that were previously inconceivable, at least we are also developing new capacity to cope. ■

Tim Thwaites is a freelance science writer.

PETER COLLINS

Out of sight, out of mind

TO TURN AROUND AN OLD SAYING, bad law makes hard cases. In October, 1994, Sue, 35, from Melbourne, was paranoid and distressed. She rang the local mobile assessment team and was told she could only get help when she was actively suicidal or violent. By February 1995, she was frantic. She reached for a knife. At last she got help.

Sue's story is not an isolated one. Throughout Australia, mental health consumers and advocates complain that those seeking psychiatric care find it virtually impossible to get help until it is too late.

There is an underlying cause of this bedlam. Various laws set out strict criteria to determine admission to mental health care. Some of these were originally framed to protect the mentally ill from simply being locked away in 'asylums'. Now those laws have been subject to a thorough review.

A consultancy team, headed by Professor Neil Rees from the University of Newcastle's centre for Health Law, Ethics and Policy, has recently presented a report to the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council National Mental Health Working Group.

The consultancy evaluated the way mental health legislation matched the human rights principles set out in the relevant UN charter and the 1991 National Mental Health Statement of Rights and Responsibilities.

These charters establish principles such as the right to appeal against being refused treatment, the right to confidentiality and the right to appear before review hearings. They also include the regulation of surgical and other procedures such as ECT and practices such as seclusion and restraint.

When matched against these minimal principles, Australia's states and territories generally performed abysmally. Only NSW and Victoria passed the human rights test, rating 75 per cent and 64 per cent respectively. Others failed. Queensland, Northern Territory, South Australia and Tasmania barely made it to 30 per cent. Western Australia rated just 15 per cent.

The criticisms made of laws revised after the 1993 Burdekin report were even more disturbing.

The WA Bill, currently awaiting the approval of parliament, rates just 43 per cent. The consultancy noted significant deficiencies in the 1993 South Australian Mental Health Act, including the failure of the Act to regulate informed consent for voluntary patients and the lack of proper criteria for involuntary detention.

In Victoria, proposed amendments, due for enactment in the spring session of parliament, take away an applauded feature of the 1986 Victorian Mental Health Act, namely the right of patients to appeal to the Chief Psychiatrist when 'knocked back' for admission.

At best, a charter of patients' rights, now in draft stage, will be put in place. In the interim, those Victorians desperately seeking help for their mental illness will find themselves trapped in a legal vacuum.

As part of its report, the consultancy has proposed a model Mental Health Act, setting out provisions designed to be the basis upon which Australia's states and territories could reform their mental health laws.

ALTHOUGH THIS MODEL law contains provisions upholding rights of voluntary patients and sets out rights of appeal, redress and confidentiality that are in accord with human rights principles, nonetheless, it is still deficient. Disturbing evidence indicates that an unspecified number of people have been cruelly afflicted with a tongue twisting and head shaking condition, 'tardive dyskinesia'

This permanently debilitating disease is a direct side effect from anti-Parkinsonian drugs such as Cogentin which is regularly given to mentally ill people who are on anti-psychotic drugs. Tragically, those who have this condition while on compulsory treatment orders have no legal recourse anywhere in Australia.

Yet there is an alternative. Provisions exist which regulate electro-convulsive therapy (ECT) and psycho-surgical procedures, yet there are none in place to deal with pharmaceuticals. It is time similar provisions were in place to regulate drugs. Some have a 20 per cent failure rate.

All too often, mentally ill people are discharged from hospitals armed only with the address of hostels for homeless people. Staff at Matthew Talbot, hostel in Sydney's Woolloomoolloo, report that hospitals discharging patients from acute psychiatric wards, arrange transport by ambulance or police vehicle to simply deposit them in a laneway near the hostel.

The St Vincent de Paul Society reports that this method of discharge continues not only in Sydney but all around the country. A recent report from the Salvation Army's Crossroads centre found that 70 per cent of mentally ill people on community orders living in boarding houses in Melbourne's St Kilda area didn't even know their case-manager.

The only existing provision related to housing for the mentally ill is a controversial 1993 amendment in Victoria, in which people on community orders can be forcibly moved to other accommodation.

Despite good intentions this provision has resulted in people being shifted to sub-standard accommodation—at times, paying higher rents.

Responsible authorities need the legal capacity to ensure compliance with minimum standards of housing. These provisions need to include compensation and financial assistance for those who pay higher rents or are forced to pay for the mortgage on their houses while they also pay rent in a boarding house. ■

Peter Collins SJ is a mental health researcher for the Australian Catholic Religious Leaders Institute.

PAMELA FOULKES

Legends of the fallen

Mary Magdalen: Myth and Metaphor, by Susan Haskins, Collins Dove Melbourne. ISBN 0006546773 RRP $24.95

THIS BOOK DOES FOR MARY MAGDALEN what Marina Warner's groundbreaking study, *The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary*, did for the mother of Jesus. Beginning with the New Testament portrayal of this important disciple of Jesus, Susan Haskins goes on to explore the development of her cult and the myths which have been attached to her over the centuries.

The Gospel writers tell us that Mary of Magdala had followed Jesus from Galilee, was present at his death and was the first and most important of the Resurrection witnesses. Commissioned by the Risen Christ to preach the Good News to the other disciples, she was honoured by the early Church as the Apostle to the Apostles. However, by the sixth century she had become confused with two other New Testament women: Mary of Bethany, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, and the unnamed woman in Luke's Gospel who anoints Jesus.

This latter identification became the focal point of the cult of Mary Magdalen. As the redeemed whore, the sinful woman who repents her sexuality in life-long grief and penance, she embodied the Church's ideas about the links between women, sexuality and sin. She became one of the most popular saints of the Middle Ages, the patron of all sinners and, in particular, of reformed prostitutes. It did not seem to matter that the Gospels contain no evidence either for the identification of Mary of Magdala with the penitent woman in Luke, or for believing her to be a prostitute.

Susan Haskins explores the cult of Mary of Magdala through her depiction in both literature and art. She is at her best as an art historian, bringing to our attention a wealth of images representative of the Magdalen's use in every age as support for ecclesiastical ideology. Her exploration of the exploitation of the myth of the beautiful and sensuous whore as legitimised voyeurism even into the 19th century is fascinating. Clerics and other good Christian men who preached asceticism, celibacy and the denial of the body apparently saw no irony in their use of images of voluptuous female nudes as aids to prayer. She also presents evidence of the projection of the myth of the penitent whore onto real women, as a means of defining and shaping their roles within both Church and society. Over the centuries it became a powerful weapon for controlling female sexuality and women's role in Christian life. It is time that we, as Christian women rediscovered the reality of the disciple Mary of Magdala, beloved friend of Jesus and woman of faith.

To recognise and understand the myths, as this book does, is the first step. ■

Pamela Foulkes is a biblical scholar.

Painting: Mary Magdalen in the House of the Pharisee (1891) Jean Beraud

JULIETTE HUGHES

Magic Man

IN OXFORD THIS MAY, Blackwell's window was full of Terry Pratchett's books. In Northcote Municipal library in Victoria the librarian told me that Pratchett's books are stolen more frequently than any others. This, for a British author who is not afraid of footnotes and whose books are set in an imaginary world which is a disc carried on four elephants who stand on the back of a 10,000-mile-long turtle. His allusions range from Shakespeare and the Bible, through the *Mabinogion*, *The Prince*, to theoretical physics, voodoo, the Brothers Grimm and the New Age. His biggest audience is among young science fiction/fantasy fans, usually male, who will have discovered him in the SF sections of bookshops and libraries. However, if the signing queues are any indication, men and women of all ages are buying his books: he seems to have bridged the usual gulf between the wider population and the genre fan.

It wasn't possible to go to England to join a signing queue to have a few words with Pratchett. Besides, I wanted more than a few words. So I decided to get to him on the internet, that strange arrangement which is rapidly linking every computer in the world. I asked him what he thought of Paul Davies winning the Templeton Prize for Religion, not the kind of question you can raise in a department store.

'I thought that in religion all the prizes came later,' he returned.

A conversation on the infobahn has unusual protocols. I discovered along the way, for example, that if you like something your interlocutor has flashed across the screen, you send it back to your correspondent with a 'smiley' symbol, :-). However, at this stage I wanted to debate:

'I'm not sure about the prizes coming later for religious people. It's like those T-shirts with the message: "Kill 'em all—let God sort 'em all out after". '

I got a long and considered response. Pratchett thought that a competition like the Templeton Prize 'for persons who have found new ways to increase our love, or have enhanced our understanding, of God' sounded like it took place on another planet.

'I cannot see how you can have an 'interface' between science and religion—it would be like having an interface between butter and the colour purple. The best you could hope for is a room somewhere [where] scientists and priests could meet for a drink on the understanding that no one is allowed to set fire to anyone. Incidentally, it's sad to think that an educated person 80-90 years ago would automatically have been their own interface!'

You can't interrupt someone on the internet. Sometimes, it's more like a presidential debate (with both sides delivering speeches at each other) than a normal conversation. Unable to rattle on with the spoken word, I showered him with questions, hoping to get another long reply. I asked Pratchett about the continent he has invented for his Discworld series. It's called XXXX. Where could it be? What kind of gravity operates there? Does it go in one direction?

'Well, up until *Interesting Times* we know that there are wizards who surf and wear corks around their pointy hats, and ... we learn that it has a red desert and hopping animals that look a bit like giant rabbits... nope, I just can't think of anywhere I could have had in mind.

'It seems logical that on Discworld the gravity is all, er, down—after all, the turtle must be massive and it is under the disc. But the mechanics of the place concern me less than the people who live there.'

It has always intrigued me that the most effective 'escapist' literature deals with recognisable things. Tolkien, in his famous published lecture 'On Fairy Tales', drew an important distinction between escaping *from* and escaping *to*, and defended escape from a reality that has become like a prison. Pratchett's reply was like a manifesto for all fantasy:

'Discworld sometimes satirises, or parodies, or highlights, or merely resonates with this world...:-). I know the kind of people who attack fantasy as 'escapist'. They are unfit to walk under the living sky.

'I always ask: does the book in question open a window or slam a door? This is only Tolkien's comment put another way, of course. But too many dull-brained people feel that books for children should be desperately PC and full of inner-city gritty reality—when the kids who actually experience said reality, and are still fortunate enough to acquire a love of reading, broaden their minds via fantasy.

'I have no patience with these people. Fantasy and science fiction gave me what schoolteachers never did, which was a thirst for reading. And then I went from fantasy to mythology to ancient history, and from science fiction to astronomy and geology and an interest in science. It happened seamlessly as I found truths that echoed the fictions. What planet offers better monsters than the Earth, circa 65,000,000 years BC? What better SF than the history of the universe?

'I also suspect that people dislike this 'literature' because it often cherishes the good and condemns the evil, and extolls the virtues of courage and intelligence and kindness. It doesn't accept the assumptions of their sterile worldview. From such people, we need to escape.'

ONE OF THE ADVANTAGES of being interviewed on the internet is that you can answer the questions you want and ignore the rest. I asked about the Unseen University and whether it resonated with modern universities. I asked whether Corporal Carrot (a character in the Discworld novel *Guards! Guards!*) was likely to be enlisted in the Australian republican debate. And his witches couldn't be ignored: the trilogy beginning with *Wyrd Sisters* is among the most popular of his works, so I asked if Nanny Ogg's talent for languages had anything to do with the Celtic Og. He stopped one of three.

'You can certainly assume that Nanny Ogg represents the old roots of paganism, yes. In her heart she longs for the old wild days of paganism, and in her head knows why they mustn't return!

'Yes,' I replied, 'if only we could keep the good bits.'

There is a type of slushy 'fantasy' stuff (coming out from America and aimed at the usual young male market) that worries me...sometimes I read one and think 'Ugh, that doesn't feel right.' And it will be because the hero has...taken an appallingly bloody revenge that the reader is supposed to applaud. I've got no problem with decent soldiery but sneaking and murdering are not high adventure, to my mind. I like books which treat of good and evil in a highly complex and nuanced way... Pratchett can do this. But there are fantasy writers whose heroes are nothing more than sociopaths who happen to win.

I thought I had been musing. In fact, I had been tapping all these thoughts into my keyboard and, with the flick of a switch, Pratchett was reading my mind.

'Well,' he said, 'Corporal Carrot killed a man—but it was right and proper that he did so, at least by his lights. Carrot, being good, doesn't fully understand the concept of mercy... And Granny Weatherwax [doyenne of the Discworld witches] is not a nice person at all. She's good...but not nice.

'I would say that Americans by and large can't write good fantasy (there are exceptions...) It is either all noble elves or fantasy versions of spaghetti Westerns.'

At that point I brought up *Star Wars*, partly because when one thinks of Americans and fantasy, the movies are never far away.

'*Star Wars* was, as everyone knows, almost classic "high fantasy", with every cliché slotting into place. Americans are good at using the mythological constructs in modern/future dress, but can act a bit constipated when dealing with them directly,' he replied.

Pratchett is often compared with Tolkien. These comparisons do nothing to convey his humour nor his canny insight. His work is his own. It does not need a background in any fantasy reading for its referents—they exist here in the world that we recognise and inhabit. Pratchett's achievement is to have created a substantial world in a way that both celebrates and subverts traditional fantasy and SF. ■

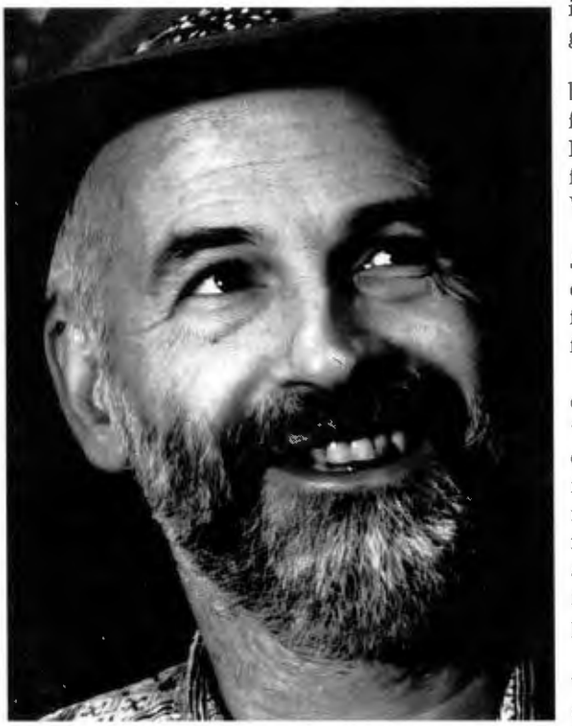


Photo of Terry Pratchett courtesy of Transworld

Juliette Hughes is a freelance writer.

MAX TEICHMANN

The world according to Gareth

THIS BOOK BY Gareth Evans and Bruce Grant, with additional inputs from some 60 Foreign Service officers, is described in the blurb as a 'rigorous, lively and comprehensive insider account of our foreign policy.' It is rigorous, in the bureaucratic sense, but not in the sense of being tightly argued, or going very far beneath the surface.

Lively is not a term which I would have thought of applying, but comprehensive it is. We are conducted through many places and told many tales. Some of these may be unfamiliar to readers. But through all the surface noise and flashing lights (terms like 'trust building,' 'constructive commitment,' 'comprehensive engagement' abound), one can discern a foreign policy whose foundations and aspirations have scarcely changed since World War Two.

One might think that announcements that we are part of Asia betoken a great change. But here too we normally preface our request for membership by saying that the US must be allowed to join as well. Not every Asian country is impressed by this approach.

The Great and Powerful Ally still holds court to our peripatetic representatives; we still follow the US vote in the UN almost willy-nilly. Occasionally Pooh Bear ventures, 'that's what I thought myself Christopher, that's what I thought myself'.

Of course things have changed a deal: there was the Vietnam War and there has been the end of the Cold War, and these are carefully noted— along with the process of partial disarmament. But such developments have not changed our official ways of talking about the world system, or viewing the big picture, as much as they perhaps should have. The rise of nations like China, Japan and the 'Tigers', the potentialities of the EC are registered, though a whit begrudgingly. It is reminiscent of Ptolemaic astronomy whereby each newly discovered star in a firmament is hastily subsumed under a new epicycle, so as to show that everything still revolves around the earth.

Australia's Foreign Relations in the World of the 1990s, Gareth Evans and Bruce Grant, MUP, 2nd edn, 1995. ISBN 0522846572 RRP $34.95

One might think that announcements that we are part of Asia betoken a great change. But here too we normally preface our request for membership by saying that the United States must be allowed to join as well. Not every Asian country is impressed by this approach—some of the Asian networks were established so as to be able to do their own things.

Throughout the book there are in fact suggestions that Hayden and Evans tried to deal independently with Vietnam and Cambodia, but were forced to back off by China, ASEAN and America. The US could not and cannot accept that little Vietnam thrashed her, nor that as McNamara now says, 'we were wrong, terribly wrong', any more than she can accept Cuba's independence. So, encouraging China and Pol Pot to harass and then attack Vietnam was the payback, along with a blockade of Vietnam that still lingers on. Thailand supported all this, for her own reasons, and has hosted Pol Pot ever since.

Bill Hayden called for a war crimes tribunal to try Pol Pot and his allies. Nothing has come of it, but Evans writes that there are many in Phnom Penh who remember this proposal with gratitude.

But Evans is moved to put in an extraordinary defence of the West's decision to ostracise Vietnam after she liberated—and I use that word deliberately—Cambodia from the genocidal Khmer Rouge. He writes, 'when that invasion occurred—*ostensibly* (my italics) to save the Cambodian people from the genocidal regime of Pol Pot, but in manifest breach of the most fundamental of all International principles—that of non intervention—it became politically impossible for any Australian government to pursue a normal, let alone, an expanding, relationship with Vietnam.'

So Fraser, in January 1979 'with the support of the then Labor opposition cancelled Australia's modest aid program to Vietnam and bilateral relations were put on ice'. (Eventually Peacock resigned over Cambodia). Australia's position on the political and strategic issues 'raised by Vietnam's aggression was essentially supportive of ASEAN policy.' Bravo. There is no mention here or elsewhere of the role of Thailand or of the Golden Triangle. The fact is, China and Thailand are determined to negate Vietnam's influence in Indo-China and are prepared to use any means to do so. Only, our leaders aren't eager to say this, let alone to oppose them.

There is an extremely modest discussion at the beginning of the book on the respective claims of *realpolitik* and morality, but later it is mainly human rights and the infallibility of the UN 'a kind of East River Holy See' which hold the scales. There is precious little analysis of the term 'rights', no attempt to grade the multitudinous number of different rights. So they all appear to have equal force or validity.

YET EVANS USES, and probably has to use, *realpolitik* to justify many of his government's positions. The Timor Gap Treaty (which he lauds), Tibet, Turkey's treatment of the Kurds, the US backed blood sports in Latin America, Palestine—really,

the list is endless. These all bear directly on our notions of human rights and their violations; 'the most fundamental of all international principles—that of non intervention' *and* democracy. Yet too often our leaders remain silent, or else dish up word-salad, as do the United Nations.

The minister's tireless, not to say compulsive, efforts to link us with various emerging regional groups, and usually with US encouragement, to suggest ever new ones, have taken up much of his time, along with that of the Prime Minister. The focus keeps changing, thus APEC seems far less important to most of its members and putative members than to our government and its publicists. The Pacific Community is on hold, while we try to become an active member of a North East Asia group, which is the latest area designated as containing our economic salvation.

This endless verbal search for belonging, for identity—even if it's someone else's—conjures up Buridan's ass, starving to death on pre-loved cargo cult, meanwhile hee-hawing 'are you my mother?' Any idea that we could take a leaf out of Malaysia's book, or any of the smaller or psychologically intact countries such as Switzerland or Norway, is apparently out of the question. And if we should cram this poor tired continent with 150 million people, as Phil Ruthven says we should, from God knows where, all mowing one another's lawns or waiting on one another's tables, or breaking into one another's houses, would we then have a mind of our own, a will of our own, an identity?

The authors have striven to keep this story almost literally up to date, and succeeded admirably. However this approach too has pitfalls. Thus the glowing account of Mexico and its great leader Salinas, the thrilling economic future awaiting NAFTA, Mexico's feelers to join APEC and Australia's to link with NAFTA, reflected the marketing hype of the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Financial Review* far more than it did the economic and social realities of Mexico. Mexico, they all said, had a beautiful set of numbers. But now Mexico is in semi-collapse, Salinas has taken refuge in America, the US is obliged to bail out Mexico *ad infinitum*, with the crash of the peso setting off the present fall and fall of the US dollar; and the rulers are shooting one another. Mexico has grown from 20 million in 1940 to 87 million now, with 'dispossessed rural families searching for a future in the cities and flooding, mostly illegally, into the United States—an estimated 15 million Mexican immigrants now provide a floating labour supply in the southern and western United States'.

In reality, Mexico is a narco-democracy, as Murray Kempton puts it, and 89 per cent of America's cocaine imports come from there. Mexico's 'economy' depends on this traffic. The overall Evans/Grant blunder here is based upon the new wisdom: a country only has to adopt economic rationalism, privatise, abolish trade barriers, and it will go like a tram. And its leaders will be called statesmen, and its treasurers the best in the world. The best men that money can buy. We *can't* take our foreign and trading policies from this cracked beaker.

The enormous potential importance for us of Europe—economically and culturally, and the still major relationship with Britain—is described then dropped. In the end, the whole story dies on us. Being part of Asia, the centrality of ANZUS, human rights as the engine which will drive the global jalopy, standing up for the good old UN, and the necessity of being highly respected abroad, is what we finish with.

Come to think of it, the last might be a good idea and some of our pollies should try it. There is no discussion here of the international arms trade, the drug trade, the money laundering industry, the lake of hot money battering our monetary systems, the burgeoning industry in illegal migrants—nor the banking, legal and political professions who are profiting mightily therefrom. Nor world pollution or the largest industry now on earth, the oil industry. Presumably there wasn't space. ■

Max Teichmann is a Melbourne writer and reviewer.

Walsh as scourge of the middle class: 'He is particularly savage about the child care lobby with its successful pursuit of high cash benefits to the affluent while doing nothing for the $300 per week chicken plucker at Ingham'.

Photo: Tim Stoney.

I confess

Confessions of a Failed Finance Minister, by Peter Walsh, Random House 1995, ISBN 0091829992, RRP $29.95.

THIS BOOK IS UNLIKELY to be read by those who would most benefit from it, clergy of all denominations with a vocation rooted in the social ministry. Peter Walsh is unlikely to be a favourite with them; he can be vitriolic and seem unkind to those who would 'do good'. Few would enjoy his analysis of ex-Senator Jo Vallentine's political contribution and her subsequent successful attempt to hugely enhance her retirement benefit. But few could challenge his facts or his logic on this or many other elements of his sometimes unkind work. What they may rail against is a determination to look at issues on a factual rather than a fashionable basis.

This is distinctly unfashionable and in some respects a clumsy book. There are irritating repetitions and bits of self-indulgence which will help those who don't like his messages to ignore them. Does his duplicated scornful reference to penalties for pinching a waitress's bum mean that pinching a hard-working waitress should not attract legal sanction, or just that worrying about such matters is fiddling while Australia burns? I don't know. In this, as in the odd and seemingly erratic changes of subject throughout the book, I just kept wishing that Random House had imposed a sterner editor and made the book a little less like what you might get over a few beers with Walshie after a good lunch.

Why wish that? Because this is a book by a man who sees politics as a matter of morality and it is a pity to give people a cheap reason to ignore it. My view of Walsh, born of long adversarial contact in the Senate, went from seeing him as a hit man with a dirt file that he was happy to use, to the realisation that he tried, within the constraints of party government in the Westminster style, to deal with issues on their merits and to devastate cant and humbug. This book reflects the author as I came to see him, passionate about the welfare of Australia and always on the side of the battler. He seemed to me to represent what I see as the good Labor values.

My opening reference to clergymen is a matching piece of self-indulgence, a crack at the often sloppy analysis of policy issues by social-justice-seeking clergy. Walsh shows no appreciation, in this book or anywhere else that I can recall, that pressure groups have a legitimate place in a democracy. But to do so would blunt the corrective he is trying to apply to the political system which enables the affluent to manipulate the system to the disadvantage of the battler. He is particularly savage about the child care lobby with its successful pursuit of high cash benefits to the affluent while doing nothing for the $300 per week chicken plucker at Ingham (another repeated image). His account of this has credibility to me: there was no more ruthless lobby in my time as a minister, and his account of the resistance to fee relief for those getting services in the private sector is undoubtedly accurate. Ideology consistently took precedence in the lobby over support for proper care for the children of working mothers.

WALSH'S BOOK IS IMPORTANT for its description of this and like matters. It is also a valuable book if those who need read it can bear to do so. The book raised endless questions for me. I disagree (for example) with the author's views on the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and with his failure to acknowledge that raw economic data are an inadequate measure of national well-being. But much of what he writes is almost axiomatic and yet is often ignored by those who seek to influence the public debate.

As I read I found myself asking, will the operatives in the social agencies of the churches be prepared to read that the industry protection they favour to protect jobs is as regressive as a sales tax on the necessities of life which they oppose? Will the accounts of the manipulation of Aboriginal interests in the thoroughly dishonest anti-uranium debate within the ALP be seen as a cause for soul-searching about principle and consistency? Will the custodians of the moral community start to object to the middle-class benefit grab and the steady favouring of the affluent retiree at the expense of the young married battler?

I don't know the answer to my questions but I do know that this is a book worth reading by anyone with an interest in a fair society. It deals with some of the policies governments can follow to either promote or reduce the increasing inequality in Australia. Peter Walsh is at his weakest when he attacks the efforts of governments and others to address non-economic changes in a rapidly changing society. He is powerful and compelling when he examines the policies which add to or subtract from the decent and egalitarian economic framework which we have proudly seen as part of our national character. ■

"Fred Chaney is a former Leader of the Liberal Party in the Senate and current member of the National Native Title Tribunal."

INTERVIEW

The road from Canberra

Upon the release of Confessions of a Failed Finance Minister, *Catriona Jackson and Michael McGirr talked to Peter Walsh about the connections between the ALP and rural Australia.*

I ENTERED POLITICS because I was angry about a lot of things, about capital punishment and about conscription, and I don't mean just in the Vietnam war. I was angry about the Country Party's agricultural policies. My beliefs were really very conventional Labor Party beliefs, but I was especially concerned about agricultural policy; people in the Labor parties didn't think very much about that, and if they did they usually got the answers wrong.

Did you see constructive developments in rural policy in the time you were in Canberra?

Oh yes, the subsidies that resulted in our charging above free market prices for food (euphemistically called orderly marketing) was all rationalised because there were some low-income farmers, especially dairy farmers. And there were—tens of thousands of them through most of the sixties—but subsidising the price of butter didn't fix up their income problems because their production of butter was too small to make much difference. The larger and already affluent farmers picked up most of the money.

I thought right back in the sixties that if there was a low income problem, the way to deal with it was by looking at income, not looking at the price of butter.

Of all the parties, do you think the ALP has provided the best representation for rural Australia?

Yes I do. I think I can justifiably claim to have had some considerable personal input into this, into weaning the Labor Party away from copying the Country Party. One of the problems was that most of the people in the ALP who had any brains or energy were not focusing on agriculture very much.

But despite your feelings about what the ALP has done in a representative sense, there is no way the ALP is seen as a country-sympathetic party?

I think a lot of people in the Labor party misguidedly think that the farmers' vote could be swung our way. It's only in the most unusual circumstances that this has happened in the past. There is an absolute decline in the number of farmers and they are firmly locked into the other side of politics.

And yet the collapse of the rural economy has major social implications for Australia as a whole?

It gives me no pleasure to note that Kellerberrin, the small West Australian wheatbelt town I grew up in has almost disappeared, as has the social life I knew as a boy, but you couldn't stop it. The farmers who've remained solvent have done so because they have become more productive. My father used to grow three hundred acres of wheat with a team of horses, and on average he'd get ten bushels an acre. To be viable nowadays farms have to be much larger, and produce at least twice as much an acre.

What have Australians lost through the collapse of the rural economy?

We've lost a way of life that I know I was fond of, and a sector of society that was, in the '50s and '60s very affluent. ■

Photo: Mathias Heng. Courtesy of the Victorian AIDS Council.

BOOKS:4

DEBORAH ZION

Strength in numbers

Power and Community: Organisational and Cultural Responses to AIDS, Dennis Altman, Taylor and Francis, London 1994. ISBN 0 7484 0194 6 RRP $32.95

Challenge and Innovation: Methodological Advances in Social Research on HIV/AIDS, Mary Boulton (ed.),Taylor and Francis, London 199., ISBN 0 7484 0198 9 RRP $44.95

Moral Threats and Dangerous Desires: AIDS in the News Media, Deborah Lupton, Taylor and Francis, London 1994 ISBN 0 7484 01806 RRP $41.95

ANTIBIOTICS AND THE DEVELOPMENT of seemingly miraculous surgical techniques in the period after World War II created a new religion—medicine. Doctors, patients began to think, offered the promise of bringing back the dead. This elevation of medical practitioners into a quasi-priestly caste had the effect of removing their discipline from the social world of their patients, so that medicine became the scientific treatment of sickness rather than, as had traditionally been the case, the treatment of the sufferer. But the invincibility of medicine has proved to be an illusion: diseases once thought curable have reappeared in other, more pernicious forms; 'progress' has itself created medical monsters; and new contagious diseases have appeared as if from nowhere.

Containing the AIDS epidemic has highlighted an emerging crisis in medicine. It has become increasingly clear that the accepted medical model, in which doctors behave paternalistically in aspects of care, research, prevention and treatment, is often ineffective and inappropriate. But if the doctor's pre-eminent role has come under threat, so too has the view that the patient can be treated simply as an individual, without reference to the community to which he or she belongs.

Prevention and treatment of a disease like AIDS involves research into areas that have been ignored by medicine. As the only effective means of controlling the spread of HIV is the regulation of private life, the epidemic has moved the focus of health research from science to sexuality. Not since Freud has sexual practice excited so much investigation. But this blossoming of public discourse of sexuality is a mixed blessing. In its cruder forms it has stigmatised the original victims of the epidemic—gay men—resulting in an added burden of discrimination to be endured along with illness and bereavement.

Many new studies of AIDS have tried to incorporate an analysis of the problem of stigmatisation into detailed studies of the epidemic and its effects. In so doing they have departed from conventional disciplinary methodology. In *Power and Community*, Dennis Altman describes the role of community groups in combating the AIDS epidemic in Australia and abroad. While many books on AIDS—particularly those about gay men—have referred constantly to community, few have actually come clean about the politics of sexual identity. Altman's detailed study therefore fills an important gap in HIV/AIDS research. He resolves the question of 'community' by referring to local organisations, rather than setting up strict boundaries that separate one group from another.

Thus Altman works with a view of community that is innately political, and refreshingly unromantic. Although he emphasises the necessity of community organisations, he also acknowledges the difficulties inherent in community representation and authority in determining AIDS policy. These become more vexed as the epidemic enters its second decade, its demography alters and new groups of people who do not share a sense of identity, and have no experience in social movement politics, become infected with HIV.

The importance of community organisation for Altman is that it is a means by which those most affected by HIV/AIDS can have some control over prevention, treatment and care. Groups like ACT UP challenged

the conventional regulation of new drugs, while the Community Research Initiative formulated a community-based process for drug trials and research.

Although communities can empower their members to change conventional medical strategies and to combat discrimination, the effect on groups that have lost a majority of their members, be they in Paris or Mombasa, is reminiscent of the complexity of feelings experienced by survivors of other holocausts. Altman turns to Freud's essay on grief, 'Mourning and Melancholia', to describe the emotional effects of this catastrophe. According to Freud, the need to remember the dead becomes a unifying force among the bereaved. Bereaved communities often construct elaborate rituals that draw their members together in an effort to remember the dead. Thus grief fortifies the group's boundaries and becomes an important component in forming group identity. But ceremonies like the candlelight vigil also make a political statement about the epidemic to those who have remained complacent .

The construction of culture through a discourse about sexuality and identity is also central to Deborah Lupton's work, *Moral Threats and Dangerous Desires*. Lupton undertakes to identify the effect of the media in creating beliefs about sexuality, illness and AIDS. She identifies a clear opposition in which AIDS, homosexuality, shame, carelessness and punishment all add up to death, whereas vigilance, safety, monogamy and heterosexuality are rewarded with health. Lupton suggests that this opposition plays upon deep-seated Judaeo-Christian anxieties about sexuality, particularly homosexuality. Such fears are implicit in her account of the media coverage of AIDS in Australia. Apart from the Grim Reaper campaign in 1987, AIDS has largely been portrayed in Australian society as a 'gay' disease, thus simplifying the apportionment of both blame and opprobrium.

The fear and loathing of the victims of disease has a long history. Lupton incorporates some of this history into her analysis of the epidemic, comparing the impact of AIDS in the last decades of the 20th century with community attitudes towards syphilis at the end of the 19th century. In both cases, the disease was used as a justification to discriminate against its victims. In Australia as in Britain, the late 19th century saw draconian laws introduced relating to enforced quarantine of prostitutes, and a general reassertion of sexual conservatism at a time when the growth of first wave feminism, publicity about contraception and the Oscar Wilde trial all undermined the idea of Victorian sexual decorum.

However, there are important differences between 19th century syphilis and 20th century AIDS, some of which Lupton glosses over. As Weeks wrote recently, 'the possibilities of living an openly gay life have been transformed, whatever the hazards that still exist.' Lupton has omitted the principal reason for this transformation—namely, the political struggle that oppressed groups engage in. Nineteenth century feminists campaigned against the Contagious Diseases Act, and used their campaign as a platform for the broader issue of female suffrage. Similarly, AIDS activists have strengthened anti-discrimination law in many countries. Lupton's analysis leaves out the positive consequences of these battles.

Lupton's work would have been enriched by a study of sources outside the mainstream media. Her analysis of the gay press' important influence on the AIDS debate is scant. She also overlooks the crisis in medicine that is being played out in many parts of the media and entertainment industries. In her analysis, AIDS is described as the invader, and medicine as the saviour. But a comparison with the reporting of medical scandals, episodes of *GP* in which doctors turn to other forms of treatment, and the prominence of doctors as anti-heroes in popular soaps operas like *Melrose Place* all indicate that a loss of faith in medicine has become commonplace.

Challenge and Innovation, a collection edited by Mary Boulton, is a creative attempt to bring together different methodologies in AIDS social research, encompassing techniques as diverse as statistics and ecology. Apart from describing new methods for collecting sexual minutiae from research subjects, this collection makes two important points about the direction of interdisciplinary health research in general.

The first of these is to question the assumption that health is the social good that people always value over all others. Recent research into euthanasia and other controversial medical practices, such as organ donation, reveal that for many the struggle to remain alive can come at too high a price. In the case of HIV, important and difficult questions about autonomy and paternalism arise when those in high-risk groups deliberately choose not to maintain safe practices.

The second issue raised in Boulton's collection concerns the ethical relationship between the subjects and the researchers, and is pertinent to medicine and social research. Do researchers have an obligation to distribute condoms, needles and advice, if this will impede their own investigations, even if the investigation will probably benefit many others in the future? Such questions are reminiscent of the debates in Australia about attempts to develop an AIDS vaccine, in which volunteers would have to expose themselves to HIV to test the efficacy of trial vaccines.

There is a fine line between research, prevention and treatment when dealing with this particular epidemic. Finding an appropriate way to carry out research in any relevant discipline is dependent on some knowledge of many of the others involved. But more importantly, researchers must enter into the social world of their subjects. AIDS research, the theorist Robert Ariss wrote before his death, presents an opportunity to examine the meaning of 'community'—how it is conceived, constructed and changed, and how it succeeds or fails in providing safe environments in this time of epidemic. ■

Deborah Zion is completing a PhD in human bioethics at Monash University.

JAMES GRIFFIN

Past and future dreamings

Oodgeroo, Kathie Cochrane, University of Queensland Press, 1994. ISBN 0702226211 RRP $16.95. **Aboriginal Autonomy: Issues and Strategies**, H. C. Coombs, Cambridge University Press, 1994. ISBN 0521446376 RRP $25.00. **White Man's Dreaming: Killalpannina Mission 1866—1915**, Christine Stevens, Oxford University Press ISBN 019553574X RRP $39.95. **The Pearl Shellers of Torres Strait: Resource Use, Development and Decline, 1866-1915**, Regina Ganter, Melbourne University Press ISBN 0522845479 RRP $29.95.

KATHIE COCHRANE WAS A FRIEND of Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker 1920-93) for some 35 years. This is not an analytical biography but it contains interesting details, a selection of poems, four speeches by Oodgeroo and vivid photographs. Oodgeroo had primary education at Stradbroke Is.; went into domestic service at 13; joined the AWAS in 1941 where she experienced no discrimination it appears; played cricket for Queensland; married an Aboriginal boxer whose drinking and abusiveness caused separation; went into domestic service post-war with Sir Raphael and Lady Phyllis Cilento whose somewhat dubious ideas on race do not seem to have tempered their kindness to Oodgeroo; bore to the Cilentos' son a son not acknowledged by them; that son was a dancer and homosexual and died of AIDS. Oodgeroo herself had a Spanish great-grandfather and a German grandfather. The earlier photographs suggest successful assimilation until she was radicalised in the late fifties, and began to take her writing more seriously and committed herself to Aboriginal liberation.

Judith Wright discusses whether Oodgeroo's verse is doggerel or poetry. Criticising many of her white contemporaries as having nothing to say, Wright says Oodgeroo's lines 'were memorable, ... were memorised and .. will be remembered' for example: No more boomerang/No more spear/Now all civilised/Colour bar and beer. Oodgeroo came to see Australia as 'a dumping ground for other cultures ... the Aboriginal nation has no enthusiasm for multicultural society'. It seems that in post-coup Fiji she saw 'a very real beginning of the Southern Hemisphere of the future'.

Oodgeroo had an audience with Menzies when he was PM. Offered a sherry, she reminded him it was against the law to give grog to Aborigines. 'I'm boss here', he said.

Photo of Oodgeroo taken from the book by Kathie Cochrane

'Nugget' Coombs (b 1906) can still be seen seasonally socialising in Canberra. In a somewhat guarded foreword, Aboriginal Social Justice Commissioner, Michael Dodson, refers to 'Nugget' as 'the white fella's most Senior Elder' who 'demands our respect'. There are 11 essays, six of which are specifically written for this book; the others show the progression of Nugget's ideas since his *Kulimna: Listening to Aboriginal Australians* (1978). When that was being compiled, Nugget believed that 'an optimistic political consensus was emerging' enabling Aborigines 'to choose freely a way of life ... in which land and access to resources necessary for its achievement would be progressively returned to them'. Today he is more than ever mistrustful that 'those who desire to control the world's resources' will allow the protection of the 'diversity in nature and in humankind'.

Nugget has become 'increasingly convinced that the non-materialist focus of Aboriginal decision-making is capable of providing a superior quality of life to Australians generally. In fact Aboriginal mechanisms for accountability and autonomy have been impaired by incorporating European processes. He sees evidence of initiatives to restore the quality of Aboriginal social life. In the post-Mabo climate he sees a need for 'a pause for reflection', 'a moratorium on legislative action' though not a halt to legal reforms which can stem 'from negotiations in the context of wide and informed community debate'. Ultimately there must be, he argues, an Act of Self-Determination based on a process of participatory democracy validated by Aborigines themselves.

WHAT IS THE MATTER with OUP's proofing? On the dust jacket 'sense' is actually spelt 'sence'. It is far from the only infelicity here, not just author clichés but gaucheries: (the mission was 'a microcosm of the metamorphosis of Aboriginal Australia'). The author worries about the use of the collectives, 'Aborigine' and 'Aboriginal' because it 'seems to be a perversion of their specific tribal identities'. But what are collectives for! On p.5 Luther rejects the Eucharist as converting bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ; on p.7 this is said to be 'unerring Lutheran doctrine', instead of distinguishing trans—and con—substantiation.

With more narrative skill, the story could have been almost epic; with deeper analysis it could have been made into a rich study of culture contact. Splendid photographs

illustrate the heroic but typically misconceived Lutheran mission to the Diyari of the Lake Eyre basin in South Australia. The impact was all too common (destruction of traditional life, creation of fringe dwellers etc). Linguistic and ethnological works were compiled. The book is zealously researched: presumably the title is meant to be sardonic.

Ganter's is a tightly argued scholarly work about an important frontier industry that should have been sustainably developed but collapsed in the 1960s after 100 years' operation. There are only glimmers of pearling lore here and of the romance, free-booting, scandals, dangers and cruelties of the industry with its multi-racial labour force uniquely operating outside the restraints of the White Australia Policy.

The author concentrates on the 'processes of development and change' and the consequences of policy choices made, rather than anachronistically sitting in judgment on the 'resource raiders' of the past. The study is therefore organised thematically so as to explain how the industry failed to innovate for survival and face the challenges of implementing conservation measures on the one hand and of volatile markets and competition from plastics on the other. It also explores the weaknesses caused by 'its segmented and carefree labour force.'

The victims in this colonial exploitation were the Torres Strait Islanders whose resource the pearl-shell was. Had the resource been worked by small-scale indigenous harvesters, the industry could have enhanced their identity and integrity as a people and would have endured, Ganter argues. A revival will depend on rejecting mass extraction in favour of 'flexible specialisation' involving 'co-operative ownership, mixed subsistence and cash production and a conserver ethic drawing on husbandry experiments.' Ganter's book is an important contribution to the 'general re-thinking of human involvement in the Great Barrier Reef....expressed as the search for sound scientific basis for reef management.' ■

James Griffin is a Canberra-based historian and reviewer.

BOOKS:6

DAVID GREASON

Unseen family

Unseen, Unheard, Unknown, Sarah Hamilton-Byrne, Penguin, Melbourne 1995. ISBN 0 14 017434 6 RRP $14.95

THIRTY OR SO PAGES into *Unseen, Unheard, Unknown*, and you get a pretty good idea of life in the Hamilton-Byrne family. 'I would usually be sent out for a break with Megan or, in later years, with Andrea, who became my best friend.' (Here the author, Sarah Hamilton-Byrne, is referring to her sisters.) 'However, friendships were frowned upon by Anne (Sarah's mother) and children could be punished for getting too chummy. At one time, during a punishment period that lasted 12 months, Andrea and I were forbidden to speak to one another.'

It hardly needs mentioning that this was no ordinary family. This was The Family, the quasi-secret cult based at Lake Eildon. Its leader, Anne Hamilton-Byrne, believed that she was a reincarnation of Jesus Christ. This is a common enough delusion, except that she had a few supporters, notably Dr Raynor Johnson, a former master of Queens College, Melbourne University. Hamilton-Byrne formed a religious movement centred on herself as its living deity, with bits of Christianity and Eastern mysticism thrown in for good measure, all to create that elusive spiritual master race.

But Anne wasn't one to waste time enlisting, and then losing, the usual types who drift in and out of fringe religious movements. With the help of a cabal of friends in the medical profession, she gained introductions to the lonely, the isolated, the alienated and the ailing, then inducted them into her nightmare world with the aid of drugs and intimidation. The cult even operated a private hospital, whose patients could be recruited or fleeced of their savings.

Anne Hamilton-Byrne also heard the call to create a 'family' or, as she more bizarrely put it, a 'scientific experiment'. She 'adopted' countless children, helped by sympathetic doctors and lawyers who provided her with false documents. Sarah was one of these children. Once she had them, she set about destroying their identities in every possible way—their names, birthdates, places of birth and familial relationships were changed continually. As a final touch, most of the children had their hair bleached to make them little clones of 'mum'.

Sarah's name changed at least twice. In the mid '70s she was a twin with Stephen, then she became a triplet with Luke and Timothy. 'By the time I was about 12 or so, I had been associated with almost every astrological sign in the Zodiac!' The 'about 12 or so' isn't an example of sloppy calculation on Sarah's part. Different birth certificates gave different ages—on tracking down her actual birth certificate, she discovered that she was two years older than she had thought.

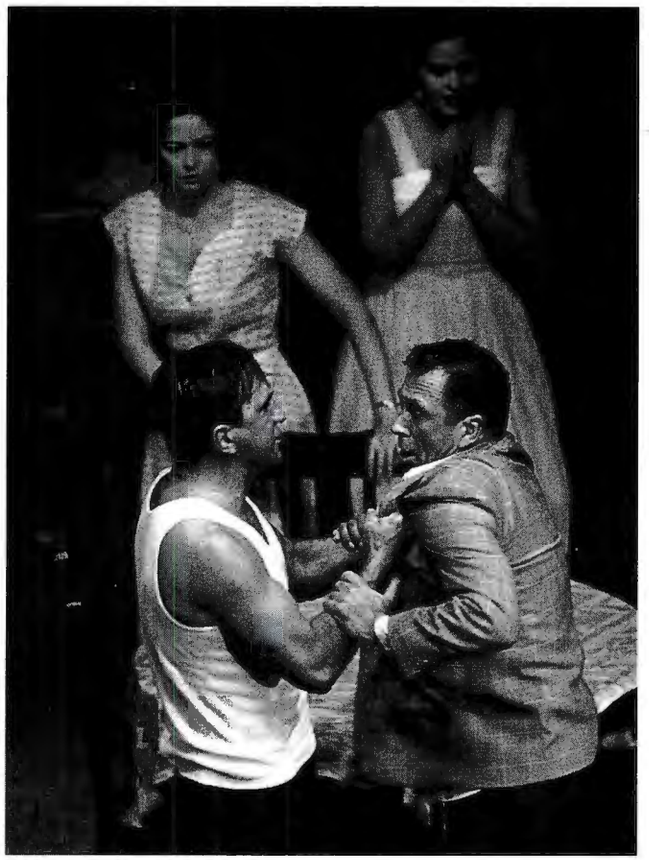
Unseen, Unheard, Unknown is a sad portrayal of the family dynamics of the mentally unhinged, and an almost criminal neglect on the part of government authorities, which failed to protect the children from abuse.

There are plenty of examples given of acts of mindbending cruelty by Anne's enforcers, 'the Aunties'. In one case a two-year-old child was held up by the ankles and repeatedly beaten for wetting the bed; another baby dirtied her nappy, so was belted and then bathed in icy-cold water as a punishment.

Some might be put off by Sarah Hamilton-Byrne's writing style, which can be rather pedestrian. But, to paraphrase Dr Johnson, even if it is not done well, one is nevertheless surprised to find it done at all. It is a brave book by a brave young woman. She stood up to this lunatic and her hellish instruments, helped to end the nightmare for her brothers and sisters, and managed to get her life together sufficiently to become a doctor. Yet it wasn't without a price—Sarah had a nervous breakdown, and Anne Hamilton-Byrne pretty much got away with it all. Despite being extradited to Australia from her comfy redoubt in upstate New York, the charges against her seemed to evaporate and in the end she got off with a $5000 fine for false birth declarations.

For her sake, she'd better be wrong about karma. ■

David Greason is the *Herald Sun's* book editor, and author of *I Was A Teenage Fascist.*



It's on again: Frankie J Holden and Steve Bisley dust it up in the MTC production of Ray Lawler's Summer of the Seventeenth Doll. Photo by Jeff Busby, courtesy of MTC.

THEATRE

GEOFFREY MILNE

Seasonal change

FEW PLAYS PRESENT the Australian theatre director with a higher degree of difficulty than *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll.* It's not that the play itself is all that hard; its old-fashioned structure and simple sentiments don't require many of the elaborate pikes and somersaults needed for more recent plays by the likes of Janis Balodis or Alma De Groen, to name but two of our more difficult contemporary writers. Finding a way to make Bubba Ryan and Johnny Dowd plausible is one of the play's obvious problems; allowing the much-ridiculed old Emma's wisdom to transcend her mainly comic function is another. There is also a problem to solve with the genuinely ambiguous ending, especially for Olive.

But the real difficulty with 'The Doll' lies in its history and its lofty reputation. Certainly no Australian play and author have had more written about them than *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* . In 1986 Joy Hooton cited no fewer than 23 articles, reviews or books in one article alone, and many other commentators have acknowledged the play's landmark status in titles like 'Australian Drama since *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*' (H G Kippax, Meanjin, 1964) or *After 'The Doll': Australian Drama since 1955* (Peter Fitzpatrick's 1979 book for Edward Arnold).

It's also been frequently enough revived over the years for practically everyone to be able to nominate a favourite production, a favourite Olive and Roo and so on. It's a bit like Australia's *Hamlet* in this sense.

In the lead-up to a recent fortieth anniversary production, one prominent arts commentator even ventured the opinion that 'The Doll' is the only worthwhile Australian play ever written. His reason was that it's the only one to have really made it in the West End in London. While it is no doubt gratifying that Laurence Olivier and his compatriots liked the play, I thought the days were long gone when we needed the approval of London before we could admire our own drama! This sort of thinking does, nonetheless, indicate the extent to which this play has been elevated to the status of a national cultural icon, like Phar Lap, Bradman, Cazaly and Melba.

In many ways its status is based on emotional and popular appeal rather on its actual dramaturgical achievement. It certainly has nothing much going for it in terms of formal innovation: its creaking three-act naturalism was old-fashioned even in its day, bearing in mind that its London season would have coincided with *Waiting for Godot* and *Mother Courage*. It doesn't compete, in terms of technical achievement, with Patrick White's earlier *The Ham Funeral*. As Fitzpatrick has said, 'The Doll' was more the culmination of a long process in the development of Australian drama than the beginning of something new.

What Lawler did achieve formally was a remarkable transformation of the ubiquitous drawing-room form of his day: what begins as lighthearted comedy (like Terence Rattigan in a goodish mood) ends in the same room in stark tragedy—and this three years before John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger.*

Faced with the burden of all this history, what is a director to do?

In 1983 (and again in a revival in 1988) Jean-Pierre Mignon decided to deconstruct the mythology surrounding the play in a remarkable production for Australian Nouveau Theatre. Taking its visual cue from the French surrealist painter, Paul Delvaux, Mignon's was a totally anti-naturalistic approach; alongside an impression only of a living-room (in primary colours) was an anteroom in which were suspended the sixteen gigantic dolls of the past (like a vast doll graveyard). An insistent clock relentlessly tick-tocked the inexorable passage of time—time that has seen Bubba grow out of lolly walking-sticks but through which Olive has steadfastly remained a barefoot girl. In place of the realistic paraphernalia of more orthodox productions, Mignon erected a new mythology: the first entry into the play of Roo and Barney, for example, was accompanied by heroic music from Mahler.

NOT TO BE OUTDONE, Ray Omodei also adopted an anti-realist approach for a 1988 production at the Hole in the Wall, on the other side of the continent. In place of the conventional terrace house living-room were six white panels surrounding and bare space with only monochrome boxes for furniture; some of the panels framed objects (such as a distorted staircase and a piano, growing out of the panels like macabre

encrustations), while others bore happy snapshots of the characters taken at different times over the past sixteen years.

Facing the daunting task for her present MTC production in the Playhouse Theatre of the Victorian Arts Centre, Robyn Nevin has opted for the meticulous period-piece approach. Tony Tripp's set is an impeccably detailed cross-section of the famous Carlton terrace, complete with tiled veranda, wrought-iron face and front gate on the outside and faded rose-papered perspective walls receding to the upstage piano corner on the inside. On the other side, there's a picket fence, a couple of vintage dustbins and a wooden gate leading offstage to the Ryan house. Every stick of furniture, every item of set-dressing including light-fittings, is an authentic reproduction or 1953 original. The same goes for the makeup and costumes, Pearl's 'respectable black' outfit being an especial triumph. To complete the thoroughness of the museum-piece impression, the house curtain is also used.

One interesting addition is a huge sky cloth soaring above the house, which lighting designer Jamieson Lewis artfully uses as a canvas on which to paint the moods of the various scenes. The overall 'look' of the production is easily its finest aspect.

This 'Doll' is subtly tinged almost throughout by the feelings of fadedness and joylessness that Tripp and Lewis express in elements of the design. It is very difficult to gain even a hint of the good times they've all supposedly had over the past sixteen summers. It's as if Nancy had died and come back to haunt the place, instead of just having had the good sense to leave it all behind, grow up and get married.

Lawler has made a number of textual changes for this production, some of them to remove the more arcane slang of the original, some of them to change the emphasis here and there. The scene between Bubba and Dowd in Act 2, in particular, has presumably been altered to give more emphasis to these two younger people and to give Bubba especially a bit more plausibility as a character. Her age is now specified as 22, which enables us to believe her continuous attachment to the Leech household and which is also designed to emphasise her growing maturity at the expense of Olive's almost wilful immaturity.

Despite the changes, the best of Lawler's language still crackles and sparkles, although not all the actors master it as well as others I have seen.

The Roo in this production is played in subdued manner by Frankie J Holden; he seems a marginalised character for longer periods of time than I remember from previous productions. Even in the big fight late in Act 2, he finds it hard to summon the energy to put his little ex-mate Barney in his place rather than responding with the spontaneous macho vigour of most Roos. Consistent with Nevin's overall interpretation, this Roo is palpably way past his best.

The two central women are generally very impressive. Genevieve Picot might not show much of Olive's legendary immaturity, but she creates the impression of a hard-edged barmaid better than most and she captures the tension, irritability and final rage very firmly indeed. Valerie Bader is an outstanding Pearl, the most polished I have seen, with a splendid amalgam of scepticism and prim maternity, but with a briefly awakened sense of adventure lurking somewhere below.

Uneven though the performances are, there is nothing uneven about the interpretation of the play as a whole. In Nevin's vision, whatever it was that made the lay-offs of the past memorable and worth hanging onto has gone long before the curtain goes up; the events of this brooding summer are very much the last rites. Joyless though it is, it's a vision of a by-gone era and this latest revisiting of the Leech household serves as a potent reminder of the passing not only of the lay-offs but of much of what we once thought of as identifying Australia and its drama. ■

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MICHAEL MCGIRR

Still lives

The Sitters, Alex Miller, Viking Melbourne,1995 ISBN 0 670 86231 2 RRP $16.95
Billy Sunday, Rod Jones, Picador Sydney, 1995 ISBN 0 330 35680 1 RRP $14.95

ALEX MILLER'S SHORT NOVEL, *The Sitters*, concerns a painter who has made his name doing portraits whose subjects never quite seem to make it into the picture. His controversial 'portrait' of Dr Henry Guston, is actually of a man who has just died; he did a picture of his agent with the agent's back to the viewer, looking at another portrait, which happens to be of the artist himself. The *Tan Family*, a work which was bought by MOMA, is not of the Tans but of the artist's brother-in-law and two nephews whom, in his emotionally destitute living circumstances, he has 'never had the grace or generosity to meet in real life.'

The artist plays with ideas to explain what he does. 'Portraiture is the art of misrepresentation', 'In portraiture it's the shy beast you're after, not the mask'; he is 'working with absence', 'waiting for that first little sign of presence'; he believes 'it's not in what we say but in what we leave unsaid that we reveal our deepest motives'. Miller handles these ideas skilfully. They are never obvious and often seductive. But they are also bandaged over gaping holes in the artist's own experience. His father taught him to paint like a hunter, stealing on a quarry, prizing 'the covert and the hidden'. His father's is the first of many intimacies the artist has either denied or been denied.

This is why the portrait of an academic, Jessica Teal, becomes so significant. He enters her world tentatively. Teal is absent from his first studies of her. He teases himself about this. 'Portrait without figure. Jessica Teal withheld.' But this time such studies turn out to be a preparation. It is not until you get to the first two paragraphs, that is, return to the first two paragraphs, that you appreciate what it has meant for the artist to commit himself to a canvas. *The Sitters* is a restrained romance. It is as subtle as colour.

Rod Jones' *Billy Sunday* develops a conceit which is in some ways similiar to that of *The Sitters*. In a frontier town of the United States, a commercial photographer, Mr Van Schaick, an opera singer, Pauline L'Allemand and their crippled son, Edgar, take a pilgrim-fugitive called Billy Sunday into their companionship. Van Schaick teaches Billy Sunday his trade. 'A photographer seeks his sustenance in the visible. In his profession, meaning resides in the world, not in the hereafter'. However, Van Schaick is experimenting in 'spirit photography' in which 'spectral presences leak like dark stains across the glass plates.' He photographs subjects that can't be fixed. In this novel also, characters wear their ideas like scars. The earnest academic, Fred Turner, is evaded by his 'idea of the frontier'. But such loss is made poignant by the intimacies which escape him. *Billy Sunday* is a small wonder. It weaves a complex story with the kind of sureness of language and deftness of plot that stirs the old human hunger to be told strange things. ■

Michael McGirr is the consulting editor of *Eureka Street*.

TIM STONEY

Selling the stars

WHEN KIERAN PERKINS leapt from the water at the end of his world record breaking 1500m swim at the Barcelona Olympics in 1992, he was perhaps celebrating not only his victory, but jumping for joy at the earning opportunities it promised. Since then Perkins has lent his face to a number of products and in the process become one of the best recognised sporting personalities in Australia.

With the intense marketing of professional sport today, one could be forgiven for thinking sporting success was a guarantee of lucrative promotional contracts and eventually a job as a commentator. But of the enormous number of successful athletes Australia produces each year, across a range of sports, very few make a living from their chosen sport and fewer still attract the sponsors' dollar enough to gain any sort of financial security. Despite years of hard training, many athletes end up with only their memories and medals.

The road to full professional status of sport in Australia has been long and hard. Even though it is nearly 100 years since splits in both Rugby and Australian Rules Football, essentially over the issues of player payments and professionalism, it is less than 20 years since the cricket world was rocked by the defection of most of the top players to Kerry Packer's World Series Cricket over the same issues. Only in recent times have we seen the emergence of the full time 'sporting professional' and even today most so-called 'professionals' hold down a full-time job as well.

Recent moves in Sydney, with the formation of the Murdoch backed Rugby Super League, and in Melbourne, with the move by player manager, Ricky Nixon, to create an élite marketing group of high-profile AFL footballers, called the Club 10, demonstrate just how important it is for top players to maximise their earnings in what are often short careers.

Martin Jolly, from International Management Group (IMG), which manages some of the biggest names in world sport, says that only very few sports people have the potential to make a living from their sport.

'While I agree the AFL should compensate the players and clubs for the promotional work they do, I have doubts about whether something like the Club 10 idea will succeed. You have to be a real superstar to stand out in a football team and there isn't a lot of money to go around.'

'It takes a lot more than just one-off success to attract sponsorship. The most marketable athletes are the ones who perform consistently over a long period of time. We look at things like the profile of the sport, whether it's international, the number of people who play it and, most importantly, the amount of media coverage it gets. Sporting success isn't a guarantee though: look at someone like Glen Houseman, he's the second-best swimmer in the world (at 1500m) but he can't make a living out of it.'

PERHAPS NO SPORT in Australian history has generated such national pride as track and field athletics. The Olympic Games has created Australian icons like Betty Cuthbert, Shirley Strickland, Raelene Boyle and modern stars like Debbie Flintoff, Rob de Castella, Cathy Freeman, Steve Moneghetti and Melinda Gainsford. Until recently, few of these have made anything from their chosen sport but, David Culbert, Media Promotions Manager at Athletics Australia, believes this is rapidly changing and the interest in athletes will increase as the 2000 Olympics draw closer.

'In the past, many athletes dedicated their whole lives to athletics and ended up no better off financially despite their success. We have probably only ten to fifteen athletes who make enough to live on today

and of those we probably have two or three athletes who are in the instantly-recognisable category, who can attract good sponsorship.

'My aim is to move as many up into that category as possible. In the Grand Prix Series this season just gone, athletes shared in a prize pool of $112,000 according to their performances. Last year Melinda Gainsford earned $16,000 in prizemoney.

'We get many phone calls, particularly in season from companies wanting to sponsor athletes and I expect the demand will get even higher as we get closer to the 2000 Olympics and the athletes are in the media that much more.'

The issue of professionalism is a touchy subject when it comes to women's sport, which has been traditionally lower paid and less attractive to sponsors. According to Leeane Grantham, Chief Executive Officer of the WNBL, although more and more money is going into women's sport, the lack of financial reward is a disincentive for many women to pursue sport beyond their school years.

'The top players in the WNBL would only be getting around $15,000 a year, and there is not one player who isn't working outside basketball in some capacity, although some do have jobs within the clubs. You find there is often a real conflict with full-time work and family for many young women.

'Most women aren't in it for the money, partly they can't afford to be, because there isn't as much money in the game as the men's—we can't even afford to pay the players for the promotional work they do for the league and our sponsors—they are playing more for the love of the game.

'Some people argue that women's sport isn't as exciting or as fast as men's, so they shouldn't be paid as much. I recently sat next to a man on a plane who said he thought men's basketball had become too concerned with entertainment to the detriment of the skills of the game. In women's basketball you see the whole range of skills, not just those of a few players, it's more of a team game.'

Above all else the image the public has of a sport—particularly the lesser-known ones—seems to depend on the promotion of a select few, usually male competitors. When you think of cricket, it's Shane Warne; soccer—Ned Zelic; golf—Robert Allenby; swimming—Kieran Perkins, and I couldn't even name any Australian netballers despite the fact that it is one of the most-played sports in the country.

'Ultimately the market decides which sportspeople make anything from promotions and sponsorship, 'says David Emerson, Marketing Manager at the Victorian Cricket Association. 'We'd love to see as many players as possible receiving sponsorship, but really Deano (Victorian Cricket Captian—Dean Jones) has been our only selling point this year.'

In the new age of high-tech communications it's easy to think that an ability to attract and perform in the media is everything. Martin Jolly from IMG says, 'Australians love heroes, we crave them, we love beating other countries. When we decide to manage a sportsperson we also look for what I call champion qualities. How does the person carry themselves, do they speak well, are they good-looking, how long will they be around? The most important thing though, is that one outstanding perfomance isn't a guarantee of success.' ■

Tim Stoney is a *Eureka Street* staff writer.

Bloody Margot

Queen Margot, dir. Patrice Chereau (independent cinemas). This overlong (165 mins) costume drama wavers between being a study of religious hatred and a ripping yarn, but never quite succeeds in being either. This may be a legacy of Patrice Chereau's earlier career as an opera director, but probably owes more to the fact that Chereau and Daniele Thompson adapted their script for *Queen Margot* from Alexandre Dumas' novel of the same name; the Romantic sensibilities of the author of *The Three Musketeers* are never far from the surface here.

'Margot' was Marguerite de Valois (1553-1615), daughter of Henri II of France and Catherine de Medici, sister to Francis II, Charles IX and Henri III of France, and wife to Henri of Navarre, who became Henri IV. The Valois were Catholic, and Margot's marriage in 1572 to Henri, a Huguenot leader, was supposed to forge a peace between France's warring Catholics and Protestants. In fact the wedding celebrations were overshadowed by the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre, when the Catholics of Paris slaughtered their Protestant neighbours at the behest of Margot's family.

Chereau does try to place the atmosphere of fanaticism and sensuality that embroils Margot (Isabelle Adjani), her husband (Daniel Auteuil), her lover La Mole (Jean-Hugues Anglade), and her fiendish mother (Virna Lisi, whose performance won her the Best Actress award at Cannes last year), in wider historical perspective. The scene in which the murdered Protestants are dumped into a mass grave, for example, summons up stock images of Auschwitz, the Gulag and the Killing Fields.

But mostly cinematographer Philippe Rousselot is allowed to fritter away his considerable talent with an obsessive depiction of the ways in which Ms Adjani's exquisite alabaster flesh can be splattered, streaked, daubed and, finally, drenched in blood. (Perhaps Rousselot had not recovered from his work on *Interview with the Vampire*). The sticky red fluid is almost always someone else's, except in the scene in which Margot's brothers flog her before raping her, when, instead of the usual torrents, the blood trickles demurely from neat cuts on her (always bare) shoulders and heaving bosom.

A few frames later these lacerations have mysteriously disappeared, a continuity break that is the sole hint of the supernatural in a film ostensibly about religion. In the operatic world of Alexandre Dumas and Patrice Chereau, God is apparently neither Catholic nor Protestant, but merely a potent admirer of Margot/Isabelle.

—Ray Cassin

Dead Loss

Killing Zoe, dir. Roger Avary (independent cinemas). While some films are tedious and others just plain offensive, *Killing Zoe* is versatile enough to fit in both categories.

One would expect more from the co-writer of *Pulp Fiction* in his directorial debut. However, Avary has offered us a work that amplifies violence to a disturbing level and tells a story about as substantial as a packet of Sao biscuits well past its use-by date.

It's a tale of a bunch of Dionisian gangsters who plan to knock off the only bank open in Paris on Bastille Day. They are so assured of their success that on the evening prior to the raid, they celebrate with a drug binge which makes Hunter S. Thompson's shenanigans look like primary school pranks. Naturally enough, the robbery doesn't go as planned and the result is an orgy of violence which stretches the boundary of tolerance until it finally breaks.

The question is where. For this reviewer it snapped when Zed (Eric Stoltz), the ace safe-cracker from America, redeems himself by saving Zoe (Julie Delpy) from the ferocity of the mob. The coincidence of having the two meet as prostitute and client, criminal and victim could have been used cleverly: instead, after all the killing and shooting up, there is only room for a couple of banal exchanges. The twist in the story is telegraphed long before it happens and when it comes it falls as flat as a tack.

—Jon Greenaway

Brief pleasure

Memories and Dreams, dir. Lynn-Maree Milburn (Independent cinemas). The story of a Czech woman who survives the Second World War and ends up in rural Australia is the kind of story which has become the bread and butter of our culture. A fibro house in the Hunter Valley tells nothing of the kind of Prague streetscape which has been left behind. It's a perfect disguise, one which this superb short film seems to respect.

Memories and Dreams doesn't try to re-enact the events that led Jo

Eureka Street
Film Competition

If you can tell us the names of the two actors above, and what you think happened to baby Jane, we'll send you two tickets to the film of your choice. Send entries to: *Eureka Street* Film Competition, PO Box 553, Richmond 3121. The winner of the April competition was the Rev. Tony Baker of North Adelaide SA, who'd '...like to "send the Brady Bunch up" with Andrew Denton as Dad, Jean Kitson as Mom and the kids from *Round the Twist*.'

to emigrate. Instead, it allows an old woman to tell her story as an old woman. Her face is heavily lined, her laughter sharp and wise. She chooses her words. Images of another life are set at right angles to the story: the camera pans across the keyboard of a pre-war typewriter, over a sewing machine, into the face of a younger Jo as she leans on the window of a train. Jo was a motorcycle racer in the twenties, a journalist in the thirties and a film worker in the forties. She escaped from a death camp. One slight detail which links this beautiful young woman with the careworn Jo who speaks about her is the way that, fifty years later, she still holds a cigarette with the same tenaciousness.

There has been a spate of remarkable short films doing the rounds lately, *Eternity* (dir. Lawrence Johnston) and *Road to Alice* (dir. Stavros Efthymiou) among them. *Memories and Dreams* lasts a bare 58 minutes but lingers in the imagination longer than most features.

—Michael McGirr SJ

Joanna Weir as the young Jo in Memories and Dreams

Relatively silly

I.Q., dir. Fred Schepisi (Hoyts). The title of this film is a serious misnomer: it conspicuously lacks intelligence. But it lacks more. Its humour is predictable, its satire juvenile, its plot idiotic.

The movie is about the love of a young motor mechanic for a beautiful scientist, the niece of Albert Einstein. Ed (Tim Robbins) is smitten by Catherine (Meg Ryan) while examining the faults in her fiancé's car. The fiancé is an odious English egghead psychologist (Stephen Fry) whom Catherine thinks she loves for his intellect. True to stereotype, he is arrogant, pompous and bloodless.

Cuddly, cute old Albert, a true American democrat (played by Walter Matthau with extravagant wink-winkery), decides to promote Ed's cause by passing him off as a great, hitherto undiscovered, physicist. This involves loads of dull, slapstick farce while Albert is aided by his old mates and fellow geniuses, Kurt Gobel, Nathan Liebnecht and Boris Podolsky. True love triumphs, the nasty Pom loses, and it's good to know the smart guys can make and take a joke, indeed, that they are the only joke.

The only interesting thing about *I.Q.* is how many good actors could be persuaded to make such an awful film. Possibly it was the chance to regress to the 1950s and fool about in the beautiful surroundings of Princeton.

—Tony Coady

On the beach

Hotel Sorrento, dir. Richard Franklin (Village). There are any number of feisty conversations in *Hotel Sorrento*. One of them is particularly tense. Pippa (Tara Morice) and Meg Moynihan (Caroline Goodall) have returned from overseas. Pippa is building up her business interests. Meg is a novelist who has been shortlisted for the Booker Prize but is browned off with the London literary establishment. They come together in the house in the Victorian bayside town of Sorrento where they grew up. The third sister, Hilary (Caroline Gillmer), has battled on in the house to look after their father, Wal (Ray Barrett) and her sixteen-year-old son Troy (Ben Thomas).

One day, Hilary invites a local artist, Marge Morrissey (Joan Plowright) and her journalist friend, Dick Bennett (John Hargreaves) to lunch. Predictably, Bennett picks an argument with the renowned novelist. Predictably, the argument is about Australia, Australian identity and all that familiar rigmarole. But the script, adapted from a play by Hannie Rayson, shows the way such clichés get tossed around by people who'd much prefer to communicate something about their own uncertainties, but have been schooled otherwise.

This is the first time the sisters have discussed Meg's novel. For Bennett, it belongs to some literary category or other. For the sisters, it is uncomfortably close to their family life. Ironically, the novel is under suspicion for plagiarism. In fact, it has only plagiarised from real life.

Hotel Sorrento is sharp. It cuts mercilessly through the delusions of its characters. But it trusts them to come up with something vital for themselves. Like the play, the film is a rich experience.

—Michael McGirr SJ

Problem kids

Metal Skin, dir. Geoffrey Walsh (Village and selected cinemas). When a movie seems twice as long as it really is, has about fourteen false endings where you think 'Oh good, now I can go', and has a character saying , without irony, 'Get out of my life', you *suspect* there's a problem.

When there is a lot of Meaningful Looks in a movie, and it isn't directed by Bergman, Fellini or Hitchcock, you *worry* there's a problem.

When all the female characters seem to suffer from permanent PMT and the males all need to check into the late-lamented Peter Cook's Hospital for Over-Acting, you *fear* there's a problem.

When all the domestic animals in a movie end up squashed or Sacrificed to Satan, and you feel that all the characters need is a smacked bottom and a good hobby, you ***know*** there's a problem.

What's it about? Well, some old-looking teenagers, played by Tara Morice, Ben Mendelsohn, Aden Young and Nadine Garner, live in the ugly bits of Melbourne's western suburbs and get themselves into trouble by driving too fast, hurting themselves, each other and various dumb animals, and it generally all ends in tears.

—Juliette Hughes

Mad maths

Jean de Florette, dir. Claude Berri (23 June, 9.30pm) and *Teorema*, dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini (21 July, 9.30pm). The second of these mid-winter offerings in the 'Movie Legends' series can lay more claim to that description than the first. *Jean de Florette*, like its sequel *Manon des Sources* (both 1986), is pretty to look at but retains too much of the cloying sweetness of Marcel Pagnol's chronicles of rural Provence, on which both films were based, to be dramatically satisfying. Sitting through them is like attending a banquet at which every course consists of flourless chocolate cake washed down by botrytis-affected Riesling.

Teorema (1968) has more appeal, even though—or perhaps because—this outpouring of Pasolini's maverick Marxism now appears inescapably dated. 'Teorema' is Italian for 'theorem', and Pasolini's *Teorema* is a dialectical exercise. The problem to be solved is sketched in a mock-documentary interview with some factory workers that serves as a prologue to the film proper: the workers have been offered a say in the running of their factory, but power-sharing of this kind will make everyone into a little bourgeois; how, then, can people be liberated from bourgeois attitudes?

Pasolini proves his theorem by transferring revolutionary struggle from the workplace to the bedroom. A handsome young stranger (Terence Stamp) inveigles his way into the house of a rich industrialist and gradually seduces the whole household, beginning with the maid and ending with papa. After he leaves the family members go their separate ways, and go mad in their own characteristic ways. The QED to the theorem is that sex is the one thing the bourgeoisie can't control, so the key to revolution lies in unleashing sexual power.

Well, here we are in 1995. The Wall came down and, heirs of the sexual revolution or not, we *are* all little bourgeois after all. Poor Pasolini. And poor Terence Stamp. It's a long decline from *Teorema* to *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, with nothing but an air of ambiguous sexuality to connect them.

—Ray Cassin

Quixote lives

Caro Diario, dir. Nanni Moretti (independent cinemas) is a reminder that being funny is one of the few really worthwhile ways of being serious about life. Humour distorts our expectation of order and proportion in human affairs, and in doing so draws our attention to that order and proportion. The intent may be satiric and subversive, or conservative and conciliatory. Either way, it is suffused with that most earthly of the theological virtues, hope.

I don't know whether Moretti, who was hardly known outside Italy until *Caro Diario* ('Dear Diary') won him the award for best director at Cannes last year, is interested in theology. But he is a hopeful comic indeed. The diary entries that form the three segments of his film contain his reflections on a swathe of modern life: slasher movies and critics who make more of them than they deserve; soap operas and critics who make less of them than they deserve; hideous architecture and the human capacity to rise above it; dance crazes and the human capacity for sheer enjoyment; the disservice done to children by the oversentimentalising of childhood; and the disservice done to human well-being by doctors who simply do not listen to their patients.

None of these is a novel topic, of course, but Moretti finds fresh life in all of them. 'Quixotic', that overworked adjective, certainly applies to him. See *Caro Diario*, and take a tilt at some windmills with Nanni. They might be giants after all.

—Ray Cassin

Hell hath no fury ...

WHY DO WE PERSIST IN THINKING THAT *Gladiators* (Seven, Saturdays at 7.30pm) is something new? Clearly, combat staged with vaudevillean levels of theatricality has been around for a long time (Remember *World Championship Wrestling*?), and offbeat arena games are not without precedent, either (*Anything Goes* springs to mind, though *The Roller Game* was closer in spirit). But, however often *Gladiators'* pedigree has been drawn, a niggling doubt remains that the show's hype merchants are right: it is more than an amalgam of *The Roller Game's* belligerence, *Anything Goes'* quirkiness and *World Championship Wrestling's* personal competitiveness.

What are the elements? Each week four challengers, two male and two female, pit themselves against the eponymous gladiators in various trials of strength and skill, urged on by a cheering, jeering studio audience and subjected to intermittent inquisitions by the show's hosts, Aaron Pedersen and Kimberley Joseph. Challengers do not often score points against gladiators, but their incentive to keep trying is the chance of being selected to do it all over again in an international series of *Gladiators* in England. Challengers use their own names and wear colour-coded bodystockings, but gladiators wear plastic armour of the kind that is sold in toy stores and have names to emphasise their separation from the common run of humanity. Thus they may be called after animal totems (Condor, Cheetah, Taipan), natural phenomena (Storm) or emotional states (Fury). If they are really lucky, their names suggest that they have acquired a metonymous relationship with their genitalia (Delta, Tower).

The gladiators and challengers are all obviously people who work out regularly, and here arises a principal difference between this show and its forerunners. Participants in *Gladiators* have been formed, literally and metaphorically, by a bodybuilding culture ('personal trainer' is a frequently stated occupation) and bring the sweaty narcississm of the health club along to the set with them. The world-championship wrestlers were tough guys and girls too, of course, but above all they were showpeople—TV equivalents of the sideshow artists who until recently could be seen heaving and groaning their way around the carnivals and agricultural shows of Australia. Players in *The Roller Game* affected a kind of street-kid delinquency, and those in *Anything Goes* looked like adolescents trying to devise ways of maximising body contact between the sexes at a Methodist Sunday-school picnic. All three groups of TV combatants managed to inject a note of glee into their sport that is suppressed in, though not entirely absent from, *Gladiators*.

Pedersen and Joseph aid and abet the suppression, by dealing with the gladiators and their challengers in the same way that football commentators speak to coaches and players after the game. Tediously, they ask serious questions about individual achievement, when all that the audience, in the studio or in the home, really wants is a continuation of the combat. How different from the commentators on *World Championship Wrestling*, who accepted that they, too, were just part of the act, and that the real purpose of the interviews after each bout was to allow performers to strut and rave. For example, when Killer Kowalski appeared with some not very convincing plastic scars pasted to his forehead (which he always pronounced '*four*-head') the following dialogue ensued:

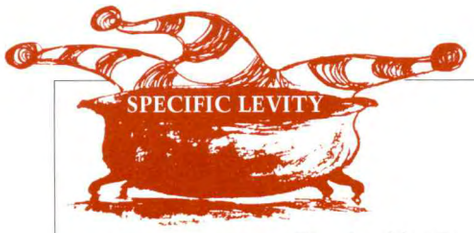
> *Killer* (tapping his forehead): Do you know who did this to me?
> *Announcer*: Er, no
> *Killer:* Lewin was the one, he did this to me. And now, when my friends and my many wives look at me they no longer see my face, they see my forehead. [Mark] Lewin has scarred my beautiful forehead, and he will pay.

Can one imagine the anodyne announcers of *Gladiators* enduring this tirade? Or allowing themselves to be picked up and hurled into the ring, as invariably happened when Kowalski or Skull Murphy or the Junkyard Dog or anyone of wrestling's other bad guys had worked himself into a rage? Sadly, no, one can't. Pedersen and Joseph are in control, and *Gladiators* will offer no blood—fake or otherwise—not much sweat and very few tears. About the only thing the gladiators appear to have in common with the bad-guy wrestlers is their musclebound brains, but even this is illusory. Compare Kowalski's words above with any utterance by a gladiator, and the gladiator will make Killer sound like a candidate for Mensa.

BUT FEAR NOT, all you who switch on each Saturday in the fervent hope that this week *Gladiators* will degenerate into a spectacle worthy of its name. Episode two contained a little eruption of envy that, if repeated, will indeed summon up the shades of the Roman arena. Tracey, a challenger, preceded her bout with Fury by indulging in a little fury of her own. She had wanted to be a gladiator herself, we heard, but hadn't been chosen so now she was back to show 'em as a challenger. Real bitterness! How did *that* get past the script editors? Tracey lost, of course, but not before she had wrestled Fury to the ground with a degree of zeal that, to judge by Fury's pained reaction, wasn't in the script either. Was La Fury the person who had denied gutsy little Tracey (Ah, how the crowd loved her!) her rightful place in wherever it is that gladiators go when they're not on television?

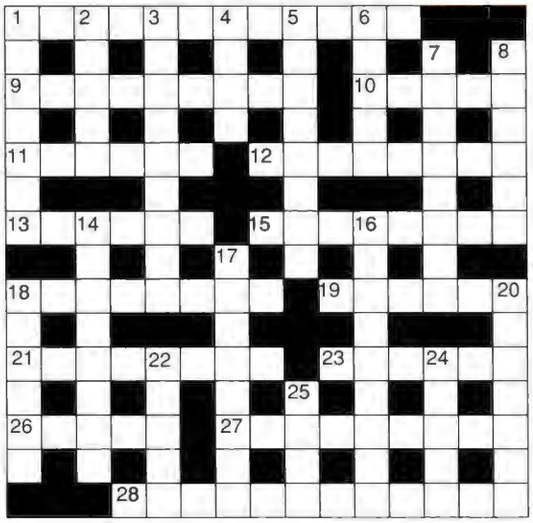
Someday, Fury will fail. David and Goliath, that's what it's about, not feats of strength. The audience knows it, but will the producers of *Gladiators* catch on? ■

Ray Cassin is a freelance writer.



Eureka Street Cryptic Crossword no. 34, June/July 1995

Devised by Joan Nowotny IBVM



ACROSS

1, 18-dn. Open R. Orwell Prize, slightly modified, awarded to Australian cricketers. (5,7,6)
9 Being prepared to study one Scottish lake. (9)
10 A capital perfume! (5)
11 See, Sir, the set arranged in order. (6)
12 Large tin contains whole assortment—go back for it. (8)
13 Socially acceptable codes form part of this currency. (6)
15 A wily bowler, like snake inside, an asset to the team! (1,7)
18 Try out a singlet for comfort. Turns out to be an absurd imitation! (8)
19, 22-dn, 11. Better than 'man of the match', 24-dn was performer of the set. (6,2,3,6)
21 It's lovely weather, so do tour—could be the country-side at its best! (8)
23 Somehow sits as if there were no action. (6)
26 Courage—the vital centre of one's being. (5)
27 Ask some journalist to pen a renamed article about the outdoor stadium. (4,5)
28 Remorseful and confused, I felt Ernest's outrage at my disregard of the team spirit in favour of my own concerns. (4,8)

DOWN

1 Sounds like one who is forced to look into the future. (7)
2 Batsman's dreaded companions. (1,4)
3 Before the fourth test, the series was poised on this, so to speak, eking feed out to sharpen the hunger? (5,4)
4 Bowler's end can be his beginning! (4)
5 Shares poles, possibly, in lacking prudence. (8)
6 The French use a Latin greeting and go. (5)
7 Windies bowler who, it seems, caught knee in the field. (8)
8 Captain sounds suitable, or possibly suits many. (6)
14 Applaud the wily stratagem? Bunkum! (8)
16 Tell a lie, steal, destroy? No wonder you feel a twinge of remorse, maybe! (3,2,4)
17 A toss of the coin, perchance, for fast test to begin. (5,3)
18 See 1-across.
20 After rain, do 17-down, again? (7)
22 See 19-across.
24 He brings war of a kind to the Windies and becomes 19-across etc. (5)
25 The sharp wail of the losers, perhaps? (4)

Solution to Crossword no. 33, May 1995

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

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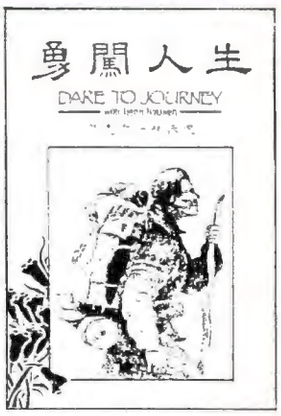

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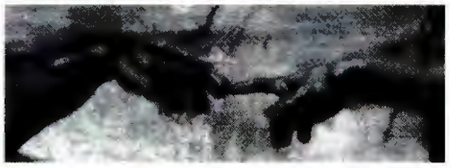

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