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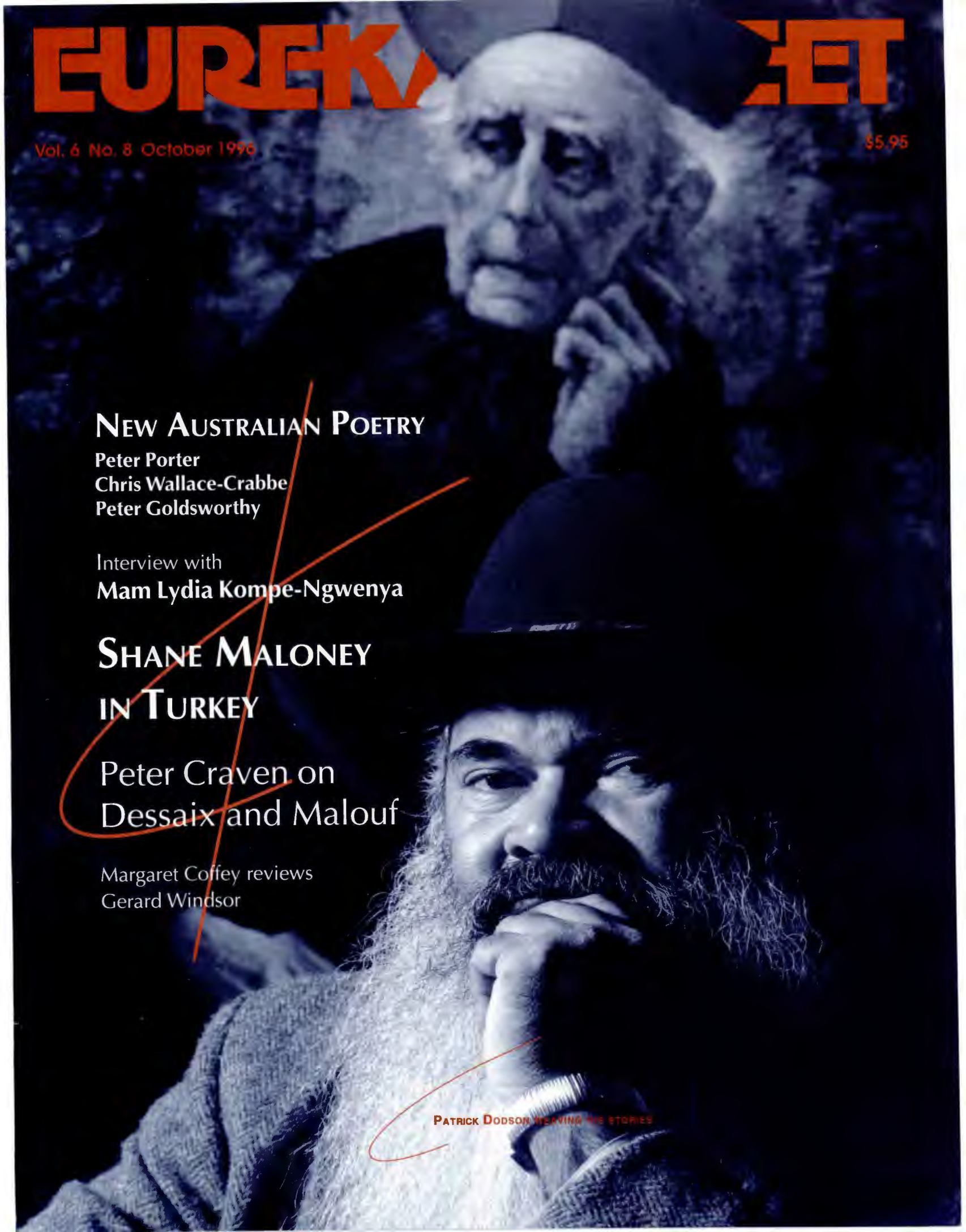

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Volume 6 Number 8
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A magazine of public affairs, the arts and theology

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COMMENT

BILL UREN

The Law and abortion

OPPONENTS OF ABORTION HAVE TRADITIONALLY found little over which to rejoice in the 1973 decision, *Roe v Wade*, in the United States.

In the first trimester of pregnancy, all government authorities were forbidden to intervene in the decision to abort. In the second trimester, the Constitution of the United States was interpreted to say that a governmental interest in abortion might be acknowledged, but only to a very limited degree. Recognising that abortion after the third month had increased hazards for the pregnant woman, the state's citizen, the Constitution permitted the government to require that late abortions be performed only within hospitals or other facilities licensed to perform abortions.

It was only in the third and final phase of pregnancy that the Constitution was interpreted to accord any recognition to the interests of the unborn. When this stage was reached, the Constitution permitted the state to protect the 'potential life' against the unrestricted liberty of the carrier of the child. But even in this trimester the woman had the liberty to abort the child if her health—defined in terms of the World Health Organisation's 'well-being'—required it.

Although there is little apparent solace for opponents of abortion in these distinctions, there may yet be some, and that not only in the developmental recognition of the interests of the unborn child. The *Roe v Wade* interpretations may at least be construed as an attempt to adjudicate a *conflict* of interests—that the state and the community also has an interest in the procedure, as well as the woman requesting abortion. It is not simply 'a woman's right to choose', even though the interests of other members of the community have very little practical effect during the first two trimesters of pregnancy. There is, nonetheless, the recognition that restrictions on abortion at least have to be considered, and, in some instances, to be enforced—in the second trimester as regards place, in the third trimester as requiring the mother to demonstrate that there were some reasons, 'physical, emotional, psychological, and the woman's age—relevant to [her] well-being', why the procedure should be carried out.

It would seem that a similar spirit, at least to some degree, and perhaps to an even greater degree, animated the original decisions of the judges, Menhennit and Levine, in their corresponding Australian precedents, *R v Davidson* (1969) and *R v Wald* (1971). Abortion was seen from a social point of view as at least very regrettable, if not abhorrent, and this at all stages of the pregnancy. The petitioner, therefore, must demonstrate some circumstance or condition why this procedure should take place. These grounds have been

interpreted very broadly to give doctors discretion to decide whether a woman may have an abortion, by allowing it only where there is a serious threat to the woman's health for economic, social or medical reasons. But some 'necessity' must be demonstrated.

In his judgment in the *Superclinics* case in the NSW Court of Appeal Mr Justice Michael Kirby, subsequently elevated to the High Court, interpreted this necessity very broadly. He recommended that the court should take into account not only the *present* conditions and circumstances of the woman seeking an abortion, but also her likely conditions and circumstances *after childbirth*. The logic of this recommendation would seem to extend these circumstances to the whole period of the prospective child's minority. Perhaps this is implicit in the *Davidson* and *Wald* rulings, but Kirby's fellow Justices, Priestley and Meagher, did not think so. They thought that the rulings should be interpreted restrictively. Kirby's construction is a long, long way, too, from the 'conflict of interests' of *Roe v Wade*, and would effectively license abortion on demand, especially since the foetus in question in the *Superclinics* case was apparently diagnosed as quite healthy, and the prospective mother was far from indigent.

If the line of reasoning proposed by Mr Justice Kirby were adopted, then not only Catholic hospitals and practitioners but all doctors and hospitals, of all religious persuasions and none, will feel under considerable threat of litigation. They will need in all cases of pregnancy, irrespective of the health of the foetus, to explore thoroughly with the patients the advisability of abortion. Otherwise, during the period of the child's subsequent minority, any adverse alteration in the circumstances of the mother, family or child that could have been foreseen at the time of the advice could give grounds for litigation. With divorces over this period running at 30 to 40 per cent, and diagnosis of possible genetic defects becoming more refined, maternity practitioners are very vulnerable.

THE AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS and the Australian Catholic Health Care Association have been demonised in the press for re-igniting the abortion debate. But, granted Kirby's provocative construction and his eminence in the legal profession, they really had little choice but to contest the widening of the grounds. Whether they were well-advised to question the whole Common Law basis of the applicability of the doctrine of necessity when human lives are at stake (as they have chosen to proceed), or whether they might have done better to address more narrowly and explicitly the relaxation of the grounds, only the High Court will tell.

Considerations of the problematic status in law of the embryo/foetus and of the implications for public policy of retrospectively calling into question the legality of 77,000 abortions a year may well deflect the High Court from the legal point. But whatever the decision, the grounds will have far-reaching consequences, and ones which the Catholic Bishops and the Australian Catholic Health Care Association could have ignored only by placing considerable faith in the High Court's ability to discern with Justices Priestley and Meagher, that their colleague Kirby's liberalising construal of *Davidson* and *Wald* was indeed maverick. ■

Bill Uren SJ is the Provincial of the Jesuit Order in Australia.

COMMENT: 2

ANDREW HAMILTON

Muzzling immigration research

AMONG THE CASUALTIES of the new government has been the Bureau of Immigration Research. It sponsored conferences and research, maintained a Melbourne library and acted as one of the few honest brokers between Government and the community.

At one level, few will notice its passing. But it may be another stone of a mosaic, composed of tiles such as the increasing politicisation of the public service, budgetary cuts and pressure for corporate involvement in the ABC, involvement of the corporate sector to compensate for reduced government funding to schools and universities, the reduction of municipal library services, and the closing of small publicly funded centres of information.

If information is power, and good argument humanises its uses, these trends are of concern. For it is in the interests of the community that there should be many sources of argument and that the gathering and analysis of information should not be centralised. Where information, analysis and argument are confined to a few, self-interested centres, the capacity for good argument to be made and to be heard will be limited. What comes from the centre, too, will be more likely to be concerned with persuasion that with truth.

There will be less opportunity, too, for the agencies that work with people at grass roots to shape the making and administering of policy. Without mediating agencies, their contribution will necessarily be anecdotal, and can easily be dismissed by those who have the 'big picture'. But the discrepancy between the conventional wisdom that guides government, and experience of life that will further fuel the distrust of government.

In the enquiry and argument which civilise the use of power, there are few economies of scale to be made. Such economies as they are, are made usually to credibility. ■

Andrew Hamilton SJ has worked with Jesuit Refugee Service on refugee and migration issues since the mid '80s.

AGNES WARREN

Tell the truth now

HOW MANY CRUISE MISSILES does it take to make a war? That's the question TV networks were asking themselves earlier this month as US shells sailed into the skies of southern Iraq.

It was battle stations at channels Nine and Seven. The missile strikes were perfectly timed for Australian prime-time television, networks made the most of the meagre pictures available, booking satellite links and rounding up experts to talk about the significance of the latest skirmish in the Gulf.

Channel 7's *Witness* threw out stories prepared for the evening and brought the real-life conflict to our loungerooms. Channel 9, not to be outdone, second-guessed *Witness* and pitted Ray Martin against Jana Wendt—commercial television superstars head-to-head in the war for ratings.

And just like five years ago, what's become known as the 'CNN Factor' was the guiding force behind the television coverage. Anthony McClellan, head of production at *Witness*, says the Gulf conflict has shown how dependent journalists and television networks are on CNN. 'We have it beamed to us live and we monitor it all the time, only because they are generally quicker than the wires, they're certainly quicker than the Australian television networks and the American non-news networks in terms of breaking news'. It was CNN that broke Port Arthur, and beamed it around the world.

But Anthony McLellan and others were 'Gulf-wary' this time round, aware of the 'cultural imperialism' problem that goes along with feeding off US-driven news coverage. 'I think we just have to be sceptical and try to rely on facts as opposed to opinion. And that's where CNN is generally pretty good.'

In the latest round of warning shots fired across Saddam Hussein's bow, cartoons appeared in newspapers with missiles labelled 'Clinton's Election Campaign'. Dr Peter Young, Professor of Defence Media Studies at Bond University, had his students on the job looking at how the conflict was being covered. They concluded that a more sophisticated, more cynical approach was evident in all media, with print taking the prize.

Dr Young, who sounds a little like a retired British army major, says *Operation Desert Storm* was a disaster for journalism. 'The Media was [sic] completely unprepared, mentally and physically, for such a war in the trackless desert and they were also completely unprepared for the sort of media manipulation which the military, who'd been studying for a long time, were able to throw at them'.

Greg Wilesmith was the ABC's Middle East correspondent during the Gulf War and the only Australian reporter in Baghdad until he was ordered out by then managing director, David Hill.

Wilesmith says Doctor Young did not set foot on the sands of Arabia, and is wrong to say reporters were conned, or that they conned readers. Greg Wilesmith says 'reporters in the Gulf were well prepared; they knew that the American military was going to run a sophisticated propaganda unit; that they had learned the lesson from Vietnam and would try to restrict sources of information'. The ABC's man on the spot says he 'reported on these restrictions throughout the war. According to Wilesmith the great myth of the Gulf War was censorship. He says this only applied to the small group of US journalists with military units going into Kuwait.

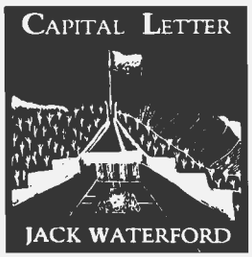
To Adele Ziadat of the journalism department at Yamouk University in Jordan, the problem with Western journalists is that they overlook the victims of conflict in the Arab world, opting instead to talk about 'attack and destroy' missions.

He argues that while people in his country have access to CNN and other US television networks, the West rarely gets to hear the views of ordinary people in his part of the world. 'I think they should start to understand the plight of the Iraqi people, not just to attack and destroy that part of the world.'

We can only hope that the rapid globalisation of media outlets now under way provokes public debate on our access to information, in Australia and overseas.

LET'S NOT FORGET THE MANIPULATION of the media in the federal election campaign. Journalists had little chance to question and analyse policy when documentation was made available only after the launch of the day. The media may have learned lessons from the Gulf War, but perhaps the battle over access to information is only just beginning. ■

Agnes Warren was an ABC correspondent in London and the Middle East during the Gulf War and her program, *The Media Report*, can be heard at 8:30 am and 8:00 pm Thursdays on Radio National.



Owning the agenda

Spiro Agnew, who died last month, will probably be remembered more for his campaign against the American East Coast liberal establishment in phrases such as 'effete corps of impudent snobs', and 'nattering nabobs of negativism' than for the inglorious end of his public life. For Nixon, he performed the valuable job of bringing redneck America on side. Pauline Hanson may help John Howard do much the same in Australia.

John Howard is not a racist. He may favour more restrictions on immigration, but he is not anti-Asian. He has good aspirations in Aboriginal affairs. He is a cultured and civilised man, more likely to be listening to the ABC than to John Laws. Why then does he, with his party, give the appearance of pandering to the sort of views that Pauline Hanson represents?

Why does he use code words: references to the 'aboriginal industry', to the 'multi-cultural industry', the 'ABC industry', disapproving references to 'political correctness' and so on, to signal continually to the culture of the Ipswich fish-and-chip shop that he is really on side, if unable or unwilling to go as far as their populist heroine?

Two reasons really, and they connect. The first, of course, is that he wants the vote of that sort of constituency, which is far bigger than many people think. That constituency consists of very many alienated and angry people, particularly in rural and regional areas but also in the cities, who feel that they have been left out of any economic progress, ignored and disdained by the policy makers, and who have a strong feeling that social stabilities of old have come apart.

The major reason why they are in that situation is because of the implementation of just the sorts of policies which John Howard believes in—indeed with more fervour than the Labor Party which had been implementing them for 13 years. But their anger is not directed so much at economic forces as on a search for villains, not least those who are seen (often unfairly) to have prospered while the dislocations were taking place, been pandered to while *their* needs were ignored. Labor's wooing of particular groups gave it marked advantages, but always left it vulnerable when others were able to create constituencies out of those not supping at the table.

Because Labor was so dominant for so long, and because it had politicians, notably Paul Keating, with fine rhetoric and a sense of history, it was involved in myth-making and setting the intellectual climate. For years, Labor did not win all the debates, but the debates were mostly on Labor agendas.

Often, Labor could use that capacity to frame the debate to split the coalition: the republic, homosexual laws in Tasmania, *Mabo* and other issues being good examples. This was possible because the political intelligentsia in Australia—the ABC would, in the minds of the Liberals, be a code word for this—was liberally-minded and adopted the agenda. Even those who did not would accept the topics set for debate.

John Howard believes that a Liberal Party which will stay in office must itself create the myths, set the agenda, and have versions of history reinforcing his view of the world. The Howard mindset is by no means a redneck one, even if it contains elements of yearning for the white picket fence, which appeals to the sentimentality of the country town and the unskilled worker who has been displaced. Howard's ideas have different philosophical bases from Labor's.

The Liberal Party constituency is not just the displaced, or those who listen to John Laws and come to adopt his view of the world. It too has intellectual currents, dinner tables and networks. Their complaint against, say, an ABC, is not so much that their people of ideas do not get an airing so much as when they do, they have been questioned and debated against the background of a different status quo. They actually want to be the status quo themselves and to have others testing their ideas against their assumptions.

Some events conspire to help it happen. The Manning Clark fiasco may have actually reinforced the historian's stature, but it also subtly underlined the fact that many people interpret events differently from him. The Hindmarsh Bridge affair has damaged Labor more than the Liberals because the Labor Party, at early stages, had shortcut a stage in the debate. Just because the newspaper editorials agree, or the debate among those allowed to play in the top leagues had produced a consensus, does not mean that public opinion is on-side. There is never any escaping the hard work of listening and persuading.

IT MAY WELL PROVE THAT the most significant aspect of the last budget has been a code word not so far used by any of its proponents, but which might still resonate out in Hanson-country. If one looks about those who have gained and lost, the attack has been primarily on the *indigent* poor, not the working poor. Groups, apart from old-age pensioners, who are primarily dependent upon the public purse, have copped it. The unemployed and Aborigines are the main sufferers. It may not be based entirely on an assumption that their poverty is all their own fault—their inefficiency, improvidence, dishonesty, drunkenness or whatever—but it is certainly based upon the idea that dependence on the public purse saps initiative, reinforces dependence, and destroys self-reliance.

The lobby groups of the providers are being consciously pushed aside. Although there are any number of howls from affected constituencies, particularly in Aboriginal affairs, it has almost passed notice that virtually every single act of Government has been focused on shifting the ground over which fights occur.

John Howard would probably figure, and probably rightly, that more people would agree about his policy than would not.

In the long run, of course, those who are susceptible to populism—who end up in fact being highly amenable to the political blandishments they purport to despise when they are directed at others—may find this is not entirely to their liking. But unless Labor repositions itself to benefit from the renewed anger, they may, as a party, have nowhere to go. ■

Jack Waterford is editor of the *Canberra Times*.

Wrong again, again

From Raimond Gaita

McKenzie Wark says that I misquoted and misrepresented him (*Eureka Street*, September 1996). I did misquote him (once, not always, as he claims) but it did not support my interpretation of what he said; if anything, it undermined it. He cannot claim that the misquotation served my purposes.

Wark says that he did not praise Helen Darville but had merely 'noted' that she 'opened a space'. 'Noting' that a young writer of critical and sceptical intelligence has 'opened a space' which enables us to 'begin again to ask the hard questions', unsupported by 'accepted senses of certainty', 'convenient grand stories' or 'neat moral fables', looks like praise to me. It also looks like the familiar self-congratulations of those who think they have seen through things—Scepticism 1B, as Peter Steele has put it. It wouldn't have been worth remarking on were it not for the fact that the belief that the victims of the Holocaust 'were absolutely innocent' is one of the 'neat moral fables'. The qualifying 'absolute' does nothing but muddy the waters. I argued that in my article. In the context of Darville's novel, the denial of absolute innocence can only be entered as a radical claim—one that undermines moral fables—if it denies that the victims of the Holocaust were innocent. That is what 'we must begin again to ask the hard questions about'.

The denial that the Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust were innocent should not be confused with the assertion or hypothesis that perception of Jewish guilt played a causal role in their genocide and Jewish behaviour played a causal role in the perception of that guilt. In the right circumstances the latter could be advanced as a claim seriously intended to advance our historical understanding. The former cannot be. It is naturally taken as adding to the first the thought that the Jews deserved at least some of what the Nazi and their accomplices did to them. I did not say that one must take it that way, but only that it is natural to do so, especially when it is taken together with the pretension to be exploding fables. Rather than elaborate on the difference I will put my point this way. The relation between Wark's words and my interpretation of them justifies my astonishment that *The Australian* published them. (The reader will remember that my interest was not in Wark's article but in the fact that *The Australian* published it.) I have no idea why Meaghan Morris finds my account to be a travesty of what Wark said.

Nor do I understand why she thinks (if she does) that her remarks about the cold war count as criticism of what I said. It may be true that the demonisation of each other by some of the disputants in the Cold War prepared the way for the publication of Peter Wilkinson's cartoon. Nothing I said commits me to denying it. However, I would emphasise that any account of how that was made possible must acknowledge the importance of the distinction between what is highly offensive and what is unthinkable. The importance of that distinction does not depend on my being right in claiming that Wilkinson's cartoon and Wark's praise of Darville are examples of the unthinkable. Even if I am wrong about that, any other account will have to place them in a space whose conceptual shape is structured by sensitivity to that distinction.

Wark says that I was more concerned to judge than to understand. The contrast is not as sharp as he would make it, but insofar as he wants to make it, then I would describe what I tried to do in his own words: I inquired 'into the nature of the bounds [Darville's transgression] highlight through its very excess of them'. Everything I have written about Demidenko was intended to advance our understanding—of the difference between the Holocaust and Bosnia or Rwanda, of the difference between European anti-Semitism and the kind of hatred that exists between many Serbs and Croats, of the distinctive place of the concept of evil amongst our moral concepts and of its importance to the literary depiction of the inner lives of those who do and suffer it.

That brings me to Morris' other point. She says that the demonisation during the Cold War degraded 'our culture's capacity for belief'. I'm sure she will agree that is an issue that needs a lot of unpacking.

It is interesting to note that many people spoke without hesitation of the evil of the events depicted in *The Hand that Signed the Paper*, while others (and sometimes the same people) showed themselves to be uneasy with the concept. Sometimes the unease was only about whether the concept of evil has a distinctive place amongst the moral concepts—an unease that is partly generated by the mistaken belief that 'evil' is an essentially religious concept and one inherently hostile to subtlety, ambiguity and uncertainty. At other times the scepticism was more general and diffuse. I argued that it is difficult to know how seriously to take such scepticism because the more radical versions are often posturing or thoughtless or both. It is one thing to profess moral scepticism against the background of controversies over abortion, euthanasia, sexual morality and matters of that kind. It is another thing to profess it in the face of a sober sense the evil of the deeds that define the Holocaust. I have never heard anyone do it. That being so, I find it hard to understand the relevance of an appeal to a general scepticism about value when the topic is the Holocaust. I don't say it has no relevance. Only that it needs careful unpacking.

Elaborating the concept of the unthinkable, distinguishing it from the offensive, seeing how it marks out one kind of taboo from other kinds, is part of that unpacking. Unserious professions of scepticism is encouraged by our lack of an adequate account of the unthinkable—a term I used to cover the various ways—be it in moral, scientific or philosophical reflection—

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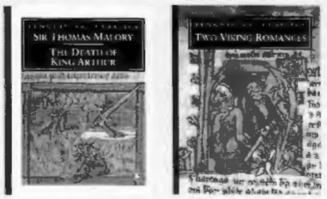

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that we rule things out of consideration. Collapsing the unthinkable into a species of the very offensive or the radically unsettling encourages the illusion that a genuinely critical and free intelligence will not be afraid to question anything. Of course one can think *about* unthinkable propositions. One can think—as I did—about the proposition that Elvis Presley is alive and working for the CIA, just as one can think about the proposition that the Jews deserved what was done to them in the Holocaust. But that is quite different from seriously wondering whether those propositions are true. The concept of the unthinkable is at the intersection of epistemology and logic on the one hand and social philosophy on the other.

A final point. Morris says that Robert Manne and I underestimate the virulence of racism. Perhaps. However, I am sure the publication of Wilkinson's cartoon and Wark's article is not to be explained by the presence of anti-Semites on the staff of *The Australian*. Anti-Semites would never have published them. That is why their publication so interesting.

Raimond Gaita
St Kilda , VIC

It's right to be wrong

From Rev Dr Kim Miller
Max Teichmann's review of Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (July/August 1996) left me rather confused. For a while I had thought I had read a different book of the same title. I'm not sure whether Teichmann objected more to the content of Goldhagen's work, or to the style, or to implications which are apparent for Teichmann but escaped me in my own reading.

Goldhagen's thesis, as I understand it, is that the Holocaust was not the secret out-working of some secret plan, but was the end result of a nationally recognised political process of dehumanising one community of people for political ends. After reading Teichmann's review I am divided between admitting a degree of naivety which is embarrassing, or claiming the right to be wrong.

Goldhagen starts with the question, 'How could the Holocaust happen?' In answering that question he, as does anybody, explores the levels in which structural anti-Semitism can be identified in pre-war and war-time German political and/or social life. Most people seem to locate that structural level in the higher echelons of Hitler's Nazi machine. Teichmann presents arguments for this view by quoting Himmler. Goldhagen claims to recognise it down to the level of the ordinary citizen. The book is his justification for that view. Even with its paucity of exploration of the difference between direct involvement and indifference to which Teichmann refers, and several other lacks, the book exists for what it is, not for what it isn't.

I agree with Teichmann's incipient questioning of the necessity of this book. But would not answer that question in the negative with the degree of vehemence which I see in Teichmann. The book disturbed me greatly because of its thesis, its content, and its style, but its right to be written must surely stand. Teichmann seems to be saying that Goldhagen has written the wrong book.

The book he should have written, it seems, would take the 'upper echelon' answer to the 'How does genocide happen?' question and apply it to one of several other places in the world where genocide is the norm for political control of a nation. To continue to apply this question to the Holocaust, it appears in Teichmann, is too painful for German communities everywhere.

Teichmann's final paragraph says 'this book is interesting for its basic agenda, and as an object lesson in how not to approach history'. I would have preferred his sharpness of style to be have been applied more to his first item than to his second.

Kim Miller
Wagga Wagga, NSW

Bar none

From I. Goor
I find Dominic V. Crain's criticism (*Eureka Street*, September 1996) of Marie Louise Uhr's 'Do Not Pass Go' article self-cancelling.

I have no academic accreditation in theology, but I can read and check assertions made by Ms Uhr, who presents her thoughts clearly and quotes from verifiable publications of reference.

Dominic V. Crain claims she distorts scriptural facts, he does not indicate which, calls her radical and wonders why she does not leave the church, rather than point out injustice within it.

When Dominic has no valid argument other than to label someone he does not agree with radical, then to use his own words this can become plausible to some sympathetic ears. I perceive no contempt for the catholic church emanating from Ms Uhr, rather a universal plea from, and on behalf of all women to be heard.

Why should there not be a Catholic Church in which there are no exclusions in qualifying to become an ordained priest?

I. Goor
Tamworth, NSW

Which church?

From Marie Louise Uhr
Dominic V. Crain (Letters, *Eureka Street*, September 1996) misinterprets me when he concludes that, because I seek to have women ordained into all ministries of the Catholic Church and therefore seek to change its present all-male, all-celibate, hierarchical structure, I have 'nothing but absolute contempt' for the Church. Had I such contempt I should certainly join the many women who can no longer remain in a church which, in its commitment to male-only language for God and us and in its refusal to consider the inclusion of women in ordained ministries, refuses to acknowledge the full humanity of women. But I distinguish between the actions of the 'official church' which makes these rulings and the 'catholic church' of which I am a part.

The Catholic Church is my spiritual home. I love its communal, sacramental, incarnational nature,

which affirms that I am not alone before God, but go to God in community. I love the marvellous, mixed, local parish community with whom I worship, some of whom agree with me, some of whom don't. I love its universality, the richness of its saints, known and unknown, the tangled, human mess and marvel at its history, theology, arts and music.

As members of the church, we are part of the body of Christ, with all our theologies, all our hopes and dreams, all our strengths and weaknesses. We are pluralist, as we have been from the beginning with our four gospels, our churches at Antioch, Corinth and Jerusalem, Jew and gentile, male and female, slave and free; all part of the people of God.

I do not equate the Catholic Church with the Vatican, as Dominic Crain seems to do. The pope, hierarchy—and the curia—are part of the church, yes—but so are we the people, and our faith is, in the end, the faith of the church. So it remains important for me, as catholic, to argue for what I believe is a more catholic, more inclusive vision of church, and I remain convinced that a church with a renewed ordained ministry open to all whom God calls, is truly catholic.

If it 'distorts scriptural facts' to claim that women's ordination is not prohibited by scripture, then the Pontifical Biblical commission, the American Catholic Biblical Association and the Catholic Biblical Association of Australia, all of whom have concluded that our scriptures do not preclude the ordination of women, must also be accused of such distortion. These Commissions and Associations base their conclusions on 20th century historical-critical biblical exegesis, while the Vatican continues to ignore such scholarship; hence its arguments are unconvincing and difficult to accept. Assent cannot be given to any proposition unless it be judged true. We await, as we have for over 20 years, the Vatican's response to the arguments of today's biblical scholars on the question of women's ordination.

Until we see much more persuasive arguments than have been presented, I think that I shall be one of the millions around the world who continue to stay committed to the Catholic Church and committed to working for change in its ministries and government. And my Anglican and Uniting Church friends support me in this.

Marie Louise Uhr
Cook, ACT

BRIAN TOOHEY

Rearing the right

HAVING 12 CHILDREN is not a prerequisite for parliamentary membership of the Lyons Forum, but it helps if you think other people should. It also helps if you can ignore the inherent tensions between the Forum's focus on 'family values' and the Government's economic policies.

Established in 1992 by the Tasmanian Liberal, Chris Miles, the Forum is named in honour of Dame Enid Lyons, mother of 12, federal parliamentarian from 1943 until 1951 and member of the Menzies Cabinet from 1949 until 1951. As convenor, Miles sought to bring together federal Coalition politicians who believe in God, the sanctity of marriage and the primacy of the family.

Membership lists are not publicly available. According to the present Chairman, Kevin Andrews, around 45 to 50 of the Coalition's 130 parliamentarians belong to the Forum. While some exhibit the moral fervour of the US Christian Right, others are more subdued. All seem aware that membership is no obstacle to career advancement while John Howard is Prime Minister. Howard himself was a member until his workload prevented him from attending meetings. The position of the Treasurer, Peter Costello, is more ambiguous. The Forum reportedly claims him as a member but his office says he has never attended a meeting.

Apart from its opposition to divorce, homosexuality and abortion, the Lyons Forum's best known goal is to make it easier for women to stay home and look after children. In this respect, Dame Enid seems honoured more for the fact that she had 12 children than for a demanding career which took her away from home when some of her offspring could be still regarded as in need of her parental guidance.

The Forum has taken the credit for the Budget's $1 billion package of tax breaks for mothers who don't go out to work. But this can only be regarded as an initial step if the Forum is really serious about tilting the financial balance in favour of staying home. Costello's budget speech, for example, highlighted the extra $17 a week which the package would provide for a single-income family with two children, one of whom is under five. Where both children are over five, the benefits amount to $7.70.

While undoubtedly welcome, these sums are hardly enough to convince a working mother to forego $400 a week or more from a full-time job. Even a part-time job on $200 a week is still highly attractive when the traditional head of the household typically brings home around $500 a week.

To make a genuine difference, Howard's family assistance package would need to cost several billion dollars a year at a time when his economic advisers are urging even tougher fiscal discipline. However, the biggest gulf between the Lyons Forum and the inherent logic of the Howard's free-market economic agenda involves wages policy.

Essentially, the Forum yearns for a return to the world of the much-derided Basic Wage in which the Arbitration Commission attempted to determine a rate sufficient for a male breadwinner to support a wife and two children. But those days are long gone.

As far as the dominant economy theory in Canberra is concerned, the family doesn't constitute the 'God-ordained fundamental unit of society' envisaged by the Lyons Forum. What matters to economic fundamentalists is the individual economic agent. If the family breadwinner can't earn enough in the market place, then his wife should go out to work. If she can't earn enough, then the children should look for jobs—an attitude reflected in the fierce opposition of Australian officials to attempts to block imports produced by children chained to looms.

The ultimate goal of the Government's reform agenda is for wages to be set by bargaining between employers and individual employees, free of the market-distorting 'friction' created by unions, industrial tribunals, or minimum wage laws. The legislation now before the parliament does not go this far but the pressure to complete the deregulation of the labour market is unrelenting.

IF UNEMPLOYMENT RISES, the Government's advisers will blame this on the lack of 'downward flexibility' in wages. Once wages are allowed to fall far enough or so the constant refrain goes, the unemployed will no longer 'price themselves out of a job'. A commonly accepted figure in advisory circles in Canberra is that minimum wages would need to fall by around 30 per cent for the labour market to 'clear'. For a breadwinner on a bare minimum of $400 a week at the moment, this would mean a cut of $120.

So far as is known, all Lyons Forum members support 'freeing up' of the labour market.

Brian Toohey is a freelance journalist, broadcaster and regular columnist for *Eureka Street*.

FRANK BRENNAN

The politics of trust

THE *MELBOURNE AGE*, 27 AUGUST 1996, carried a headline, 'Howard branded a racist by priest'. I am the priest referred to. Might I assure the *Eureka Street* reader that I am not in the habit of gratuitously calling the Prime Minister a racist. But I am happy to state my strong concerns about this new government.

Ten days prior to the *Age* headline, the leadership of Aboriginal Australia was gathered in Canberra to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Fraser Government's land rights legislation. Prime Minister Howard was in Adelaide at a Liberal Party conference. Those at the Canberra conference were upset by the sharp budgetary cuts to the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation and ATSIC, both of which had been publicised before the release of the Budget.

In previous elections, when there was no suggestion of a Beazley blackhole, the Coalition had gone to the polls committed to cutting ATSIC's budget by $100 million. Prime Minister Howard had already made gratuitous references to 'the Aboriginal industry' and 'thought police'.

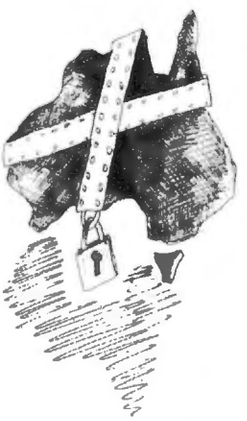
The ATSIC cuts were announced at the same time as the retention of the diesel fuel rebate which has been more corruptly administered than any Aboriginal program, and the appointment of Mr Hugh Morgan to the board of the Reserve Bank. Mr Morgan has been the mining industry's harshest critic of the *Mabo* decision, claiming that the High Court's naive adventurism was placing at risk the economic future of Australia, our territorial integrity and the legitimacy of the High Court itself.

Reasonable Aboriginal concerns about this trifecta met with John Howard's response to the South Australian Liberal Party Conference: 'We are not decimating Aboriginal funding. We are not threatening the process of reconciliation. We are not engaged in any kind of racist pursuit. All of those criticisms are baseless and exaggerated and completely unfair'.

I was not aware of anyone's having labelled the Howard government's policy approach as a 'racist pursuit'. The Prime Minister's use of that dangerous phrase was an attempt to foreclose criticism of the government's more assimilationist approach which favours dealing with Aborigines as disadvantaged citizens in need of temporary welfare assistance rather than as indigenous people with a right of self-determination within the life of the nation.

Having been locked out of government for 13 years, the Coalition parties risk destroying, rather than consolidating, the common ground which has been won through negotiation with Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

In an exclusive interview with two journalists from the *Age*, the Prime Minister offered general criticism of the Aboriginal leadership, and stated his concerns that they were not fully representative, insufficiently co-operative, and too close to the Keating government.



And this, the day after the Governor-General had made his impassioned plea to the nation for reconciliation in the Lingiari Lecture.

Sir William Deane drew lessons for reconciliation on the 30th anniversary of the Wave Hill strike concluding that problems relating to health, unemployment, education, water, housing, and self esteem 'will only be resolved by a partnership between the nation as a whole and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples under which the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders play a major active role, particularly in the actual supply of health and other services.' The prospect of partnership was looking grim.

No other group of leaders has been so slighted by the new Prime Minister with none of them ever earning his praise by name. Despite the Cabinet's hasty special audit measures for ATSIC announced after its first meeting in April, Lois O'Donoghue and her staff had conducted themselves loyally. There were no leaks. Staff in remote offices worked weekends—and with no thanks.

When John Herron was rightly censured by the Senate for the conduct of the special audit which had to be suspended so as not to delay CDEP (work for the dole) payments for the new financial year, Howard had told the media Herron was censured for a mere slip of the tongue. The censure had nothing whatever to do with his lamentable wife-beating remark to Senator Collins. The gravity of the financial situation in remote communities was being parodied by the Prime Minister as a mere slip of the tongue.

I have no problem with the Howard government's insistence that there are four groupings of Aborigines: the radicals, the moderates, those opposed to ATSIC and the other moderate leadership and those who just want to be treated as ordinary Australian citizens. Given that this country has been spared the political violence of a Bastion Point, Wounded Knee or Oka, the Australian government, whatever its electoral mandate, needs to be attentive to the voice of the moderate Aboriginal leadership. It cannot simply prefer the view of those wanting assimilation for themselves, even if they be a silent majority as this government suggests.

IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, John Howard will be the first Prime Minister since the 1967 referendum not to introduce significant new Commonwealth legislation or policy expanding Aboriginal rights. All Prime Ministers since Malcom Fraser have negotiated closely and personally with moderate Aboriginal leaders in formulating new policy. Though Paul Keating, unlike his immediate predecessors, did not have significant relationships with Aborigines prior to his assuming the prime ministership, he did build those relationships through stormy times. He ultimately earned the trust of Aborigines, and they his, despite earlier allegations that his policy proposals on native title were 'slimy', 'putrid', and 'moral scurvy'. None of Howard's predecessors necessarily enhanced their electoral appeal by legislative reform in favour of Aboriginal rights.

Though welcoming the government's announcement on Budget day that it will spend more on indigenous specific programs than Labor did in its last four years, its

budgetary assault on ATSIC and the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation and the Prime Minister's antipathy to the moderate Aboriginal leadership make its four-year future commitment less credible to Aboriginal Australia. Who will this government deal with when it come to designing new programs and policies? In the Lingiari Lecture, Sir William Deane claimed:

'It is now accepted by persons of goodwill that those Aborigines who desire separately to pursue and develop their traditional culture and lifestyle within our multi-cultural nation should be encouraged, assisted and protected in that pursuit and development, and that those who wish to be assimilated within the ordinary community should be assisted in that wish.'

For this choice to be guaranteed, the Coalition will have to revise its restrictive approach to self-determination and build relationships with Aboriginal leaders.

If the Native Title Act is to be rendered more workable, there will have to be more trust between the Howard government and the Aboriginal representative bodies. Howard's earlier opposition in 1988 to treaties or compacts on the basis that they 'must inevitably lead to claims for national land rights' has been overtaken by the High Court's decision on native title and the need for all governments to strike the balance between land holders and developers. When it comes to workable amendments to the Native Title Act, all parties will recall that it was Howard's personal challenge to John Hewson which precluded Coalition participation in the original amendment process in 1993. Some of Senator Minchin's proposed amendments for the benefit of miners and pastoralists violate the Racial Discrimination Act and undercut Aboriginal rights in the name of workability.

The government is proposing an expansion of pastoralists' rights. If native title exists on pastoral leases (and that is a matter for determination by the High Court in the *Wik* case), it does not affect mortgageability or renewal of leases. A lease can automatically be renewed without need to negotiate with native title holders, provided the lease contains identical terms, conditions and reservations for the protection of Aboriginal access.

A proposed amendment would allow a pastoralist to renew a lease for longer terms than the original lease and to vary terms of the lease permitting the pastoralist to engage in non-pastoral activities. If native title were affected by the extension of lease terms or conditions or by 'permissible pastoral lease related acts', the native title holder would be entitled to compensation.

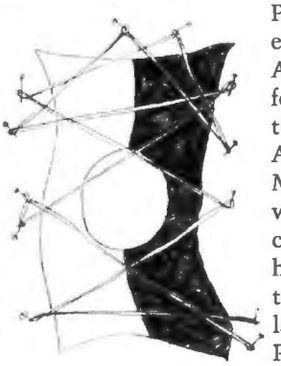
To legislate in this way before the decision in the *Wik* case, the government will have to admit that the legislation, in so far as it is necessary, is inconsistent with the Racial Discrimination Act and to the extent of the inconsistency, this later specific Commonwealth Act will prevail. Expanding pastoralists' rights, therebyinterfering with native title rights even with compensation, while not countenancing any such expansion of one group's rights to the detriment of another in any other case, is an act of racial discrimination.

AUSTRALIA WILL BE the better country in the preparation for the Sydney Olympics and the centenary of Federation if its legislation is proven to be non-discriminatory, if its Prime Minister can praise its Aboriginal leaders and not just slam them, and if its Prime Minister can talk with the Aboriginal leaders in trust and not just refer to them as an 'industry'. Our laws and policies will be the better if government builds a constructive relationship with Aborigines. Any concerted attempt by government to turn back the clock on land rights or self-determination will be unacceptable whatever its electoral appeal.

Sharing the country by sharing the burdens means equal treatment for the defence forces, the athletes, the miners, the big-time farmers, and the dispossessed, unemployed Aborigines. The government needs to spare Aborigines special treatment except when they request it, and not when poll-driven ideology dictates it.

The Howard government might take a leaf from the senior management of the RTZ-CRA group of companies. Australia's most senior mining executive, Mr Leon Davis, Chief Operating Officer of RTZ-CRA, addressing the Australian Business in Europe Group in Australia, said, 'Our experience of negotiating with Aboriginal communities has taught us that Aboriginal leaders face a Herculean task. I understand this difficulty. It is the greatest challenge facing the current generation of Aboriginal leaders. So I urge more acknowledgment of the efforts of those Aboriginal leaders representing the spirit of reconciliation and an understanding of the pressures upon them.'

In its formal presentation to the national conference marking the 20th anniversary of the Commonwealth Parliament's land rights legislation, CRA, through its Vice President Paul Wand, expressed regret to Aboriginal Australians for the failure to prevent the destruction of Aboriginal housing at Mapoon, Cape York, when bauxite mining commenced there; for having ignored traditional owners whose lands were mined in the Pilbara, and for the scars on the land and the scars on the spirit of the people at the Argyle diamond mine in the Kimberley.

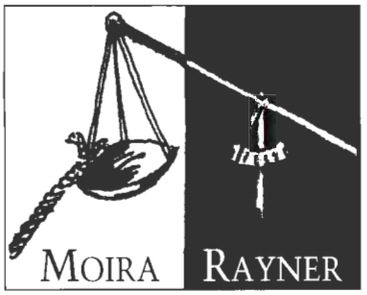


At the same celebration, Gough Whitlam told Aboriginal Australia that he had been commissioned to put the case for the Sydney Olympics to the African nations. He told the world of our strong record on indigenous rights, and our claim to be second to none in the international protection of human rights. If this government drops the bar on either, we will have won the Games on false pretences.

Shrinking the ATSIC budget, retreating from self-determination, legislating in a discriminatory way about native title under the cloak of workability, deciding the fate of Aborigines behind locked doors, constitutes a threat to the well-being of all Australians. It also undermines our claim to host the friendly games for the youth of the world, whatever their race.

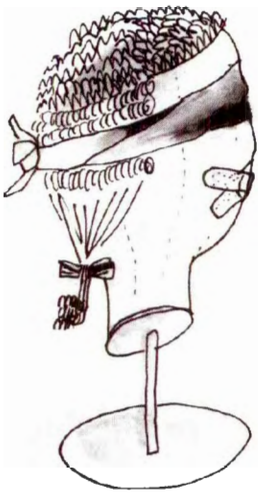
Any contemporary Australian Prime Minister must lead the nation in reconciliation, justice and recognition. As Wenten Rubuntja, the chairman of the Central Land Council said in 1988, 'We have to work out a way of sharing this country.' We cannot do it without Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, Mr Howard. We have to do this together. It is time for both sides of politics to settle the deficit of history rather than risk a blow-out of trust and reconciliation.■

Frank Brennan SJ is director of Uniya, the Jesuit Social Justice Centre, and Fellow in Law at the Australian National University.



Justice doesn't pay

A FEW WEEKS AGO a friend approached me for help. She had major workplace problems: victimisation by work colleagues which wasn't being dealt with by managers; she had been assaulted as she walked to the bus-stop after a night shift, anonymous obscene phone calls and police who didn't care and, inevitably, stress-induced psychiatric illness. I couldn't find a single lawyer who would—or said they could—act for her. Every one had a 'conflict of interest': they either acted for Telstra or the government department she works for, or the Union (she's not a member), or the WorkCover insurer. One unusually frank lawyer said that because they were competing for tenders for government work they did not want to be seen to be opposed to government at all. It was then I realised we've got a problem.



Access to good legal advice is essential if we are to retain our faith in 'justice'. Last month the High Court said, in the *Kable* case, that the Australia Constitution requires public confidence in an integrated federal judicial system to be maintained. But what nonsense it would be to preserve the integrity of State Supreme Courts to that end (the Court struck down the NSW government's 'preventive detention' legislation which would make its Supreme Court act 'non-judicially') and not deal with access to legal advice, too.

The High Court has said twice in the last four years that sometimes justice absolutely requires legal representation: if you are charged with a serious crime (*Dietrich*) or if you are a vulnerable child (*Re K.*). At the same time our Hilmer-inspired push towards a 'national legal services market' and restructuring of the profession, coupled with cuts to legal aid, have cut most people off from it.

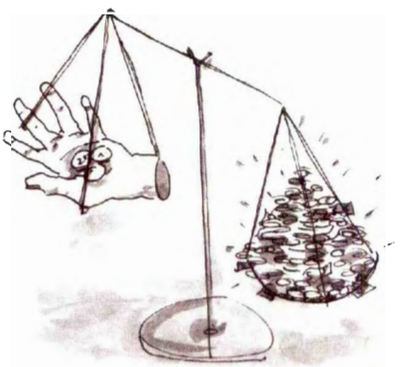
Lawyers have a special function in a democratic society: people need them to chart its navigable channels, and to assert individual rights against institutional and market abuses of power. Yet lawyers are also in it for the money, they make their living out of law, and they value some kinds of legal work more than others. A well-organised legal business gets much more value from servicing the many needs of a large corporate or institutional client than an individual, or the thousands of small firms and businesses, with minor or one-off needs. Law being business, and businesses being the major market for legal services, also means that the larger firms, who can offer a diversity and range of legal services, are much more likely than small ones to attract corporate work. Herein lies the conundrum

Since 1993, under national competition policy principles, the Australian government has given more and more of its legal work to the private legal profession. Since July 1995, more than 70 per cent of its legal business has gone to large private law firms. The Federal Attorney General's Department, which once held a monopoly on government lawyering, has had to compete for its work—and it has done so successfully, turning a tidy profit in 1996. It has become just another legal practice.

The same thing has been happening in the States as well: now, the nation's largest law firms—most of them national firms, too—carry out a very significant chunk of all government legal work. The consequence for individuals, and small business, and other bodies whose interests are not the same or even directly antagonistic to government policy, is the loss of choice. It is very hard to find a law firm which is not doing government, as well as corporate, legal work.

The legal profession has long been divided into plaintiffs' and respondents' lawyers—those who act for aggrieved individuals and those who specialise in representing insurance companies, employees or employers, with either a corporate or individual client base. The privatisation of government legal work has taken this further.

The Sackville committee, which wrote the *Access to Justice* report, which is driving the changes to the legal profession, wants lawyers to be more competitive. My experience—supported by other anecdotes I have heard from individuals who want, for example, to sue a premier for defamation, or the National Crime Authority for excess of power and can't find a firm—is that in practice some individuals have no access to justice because of the business preferences and priorities of law firms. Justice requires the disinterested advice of independent counsel, as both the former Chief Justice of the High Court, Sir Anthony Mason, and the great Australian jurist, Sir Owen Dixon, said at their retiring and inaugural speeches. If barristers are to 'compete' with solicitors, and form partnerships and corporate business structures too, even they will find 'conflicts', because their associates and their profit margins will fence them off.



This duty to justice before the pursuit of prestigious and profitable legal work seems to be both disappearing, and unlamented in the current 'market' environment. In 1994 the Trade Practices Commission suggested (and in 1995 the Sackville committee agreed) that the same competition and business principles should be applied to lawyers as to any other industry. The laudable objective—cutting cost—will remove

only one barrier to justice, and advantage only corporate and government business needs. The effect, unintended though it may be, appears to be a restraint of trade which indirectly discriminates against individuals and small operators. The Trade Practices Act prohibits, in Section 45(2) and 45D, contracts, arrangements or understandings that contain arrangements between competitors to restrict the supply or acquisition of goods or services to or from particular people or classes of people.

So who will my friend turn to? A suburban sole practitioner, who may or may not have the skills and experience to handle her case, and certainly won't have the resources or capacity of a large firm to 'carry' her case against delay and costly obstruction from the well-resourced corporate opponents in the hope of winning her costs from the other side (of course, she has no money)? Corporations can claim their legal costs and litigation disbursements as a tax deduction or a taxpayer expense, but she can't. Legal aid? That stile across the barbed-wire barrier to justice has been chopped, along with the funds for community law centres.

THE SACKVILLE COMMITTEE suggested that it is in the public interest to provide 'legal aid,' which, by allowing the disadvantaged to run their cases, performs a crucial democratic function: 'it is not just the interests of the wealthy that direct the development of the common law.' Those funds have dried up, along with the profession's interest in *pro bono* legal work. If the private profession carries out the government's doled-out legal work as well then, without some balancing mechanism in place, we may expect the systematic exclusion of people and interests with smaller voices, less powerful friends, and lighter purses from challenging government and institutional decisions and policies, and access to justice. This is, not to put too great a point on it, dangerous to the principle of equality before the law; it denies access to justice, and ultimately the citizens' foundation of faith in their government. Law is not a business: it is the legitimation of our being ruled. ■

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Burning down the house

AFTER YEARS PERCHED CAUTIOUSLY ON THE FENCE while it carefully examined the scene, the world's official arbiter on climate change has now climbed down on one side of the debate.

In its most recent scientific assessment, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—a joint initiative of the United Nations and the World Meteorological Organisation—concludes for the first time that 'the balance of evidence suggests a discernible human influence on global climate'. The assessment was put together by more than 200 contributing scientists from 40 countries.

'The IPCC was not able to make such a statement on human influence in the assessments it released in 1990 and 1992,' says Professor David Karoly, the director of the Co-operative Research Centre for Southern Hemisphere Meteorology based at Monash University. 'Its recent conclusion means that human involvement in climate change is not just talk any more.'

In response the energy industry, like the tobacco industry before it, has gone into a state of denial, looking for any chink in the scientific armour through which it can attack.

Already—in editorials run in *The Wall Street Journal*, and in the science journal *Physics Today*—scientific friends of the energy industry have accused the chief authors of the IPCC assessment of subverting the procedure by which the panel reached its conclusion. Some of the American contributors to the assessment have been called before US government committees and grilled by conservative politicians.

And along the way, the energy industry has picked up a fellow traveller—the Australian Government. Following the most recent conference in Geneva of the parties to the convention on global warming, Australia was left as one of the few countries holding out against setting legally-binding targets for reduction in the use of fossil fuels. Even the US dropped its traditional opposition. The other countries joining Australia's stand were the OPEC nations (for obvious reasons), Russia (for quirky personal reasons) and New Zealand, which argued that it would bear an inequitably high load of the cost of reducing fossil fuel use.

Part of the reason for Australia's recalcitrance matches New Zealand's—that is, it would cost Australia more to reduce its dependence on fossil fuel than it would countries in Europe. But a more pig-headed argument emerged in a letter that the Minister for Resources and Energy, Senator Warwick Parer, wrote to the science news weekly, *New Scientist*: 'Australia is particularly vulnerable to the economic impacts of co-ordinated OECD-wide measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We are the world's largest coal exporter, and we specialise in greenhouse gas-intensive exports such as petroleum products, basic metals, chemicals, cereals and livestock.'

It's like saying—to push the tobacco analogy—we're against banning smoking because we make a lot of money out of selling cigarettes. Unfortunately Prime Minister John Howard took this same line at the latest South Pacific forum, where most of the island nations live in fear of inundation as a consequence of climate change. He came across as having all the moral scruples and sympathy of a rich drug baron.

And it seems all so silly, really. Even to the Australian Government, it must be clear that for good reasons or bad, most of the rest of the world is moving towards decreasing the use of fossil fuels. So, instead of trying to hinder this trend, with all the impact of a mouse grabbing onto an elephant's tail, why shouldn't Australia attempt to guide, by taking up the lead?

Just as the South Australian Government has made a virtue out of that state's perennial water problems, by trying to sell technological solutions to Asia, perhaps the nation as a whole could do the same in the area of efficient use of fossil fuels. We are well placed to develop innovative ways of decreasing dependence on fossil fuels, as well as mechanisms for recovering and redirecting the resources invested in 'greenhouse gas-intensive exports'.

Otherwise Australia is going to end up with the OPEC nations, clustered around an evil-smelling side door of the world economy's head offices, in a small gasping knot of those who can't kick their fossil fuel dependence. ■

Tim Thwaites is a freelance science writer.

This man is no donkey

*A chance encounter with a cartoon character in Brunswick thrust the resolutely monolingual **Shane Maloney** onto the stage at a Turkish academic conference.*

MY ROOM-MATE WOULD BE a college professor, I'd been told. From America. I was looking forward to his arrival. Being an American, he was bound to know something about air-conditioning. For two days I'd been fiddling with the control knob, failing to convince the room temperature to drop below thirty-five degrees. Either that or sitting on my balcony, fanning myself with a tourist map and trying to orient myself. This was my first time in Turkey and things were not exactly as I had expected them to be. Not that I had much idea of what to expect.

My room was on the fifth floor of the Başkent Öğretmenevi Oteli, the Teachers' House Hotel. Spread before me was the city of Ankara, baking in the midsummer sun. Downstairs in the lobby, my fellow conference delegates were checking in. Bulgarian folklorists. Azerbaijani ethnographers. Anthropologists from Dagestan. A poet of Ashkhabad. Experts in the mythology of the Kumuks and the classification of Kyzgyr proverbs. Romanian professors. Sociologists from Tartaristan. Macedonian art historians. Uzbek musicologists with instrument cases that looked like tapestry golf bags.

I'm not a big conference goer. To tell the truth, it's not often I get asked. Perhaps that's why the invitation to the 5th International Turkish Folklore Congress seemed too good an opportunity to pass up. The theme of the conference was Nasreddin Hodja. My contribution would be to explain his influence on Australian literature. Frankly, I was drawing a very long kebab indeed.

My first encounter with Nasreddin Hodja had been in the children's section of Brunswick library, in the pages of a book called *Watermelons, Walnuts and the Wisdom of Allah*. Nasreddin Hodja was the most famous sage of Anatolia, it said. The nifty imam, the sufi wiseacre. A wit and a prankster, the man with a thousand funny stories. A household name to generations of Turks. A national icon. The very embodiment of Turkishness.

He had exactly what I'd been looking for—a name that was well-known within the Turkish community but unlikely to be recognised outside it. I immediately co-opted him. He became the pivotal clue in the multicultural murder mystery I was writing. I even pinched one of his parables. No copyright problem, I thought. He'd been dead for 500 years.

But nothing about the Hodja is a simple as it seems. Two years after he appeared in my book, he came back to haunt me.

The representation of Nasreddin Hodja, above, was bought after much haggling in a Turkish bazaar. Shane Maloney lost on the deal. The cartoon representations of Hodja, overleaf, are from the comic book which started it all.

UNESCO, in recognition of Turkey's contribution to world culture, declared 1996 to be the International Year of Nasreddin Hodja. To mark the occasion, the Turkish Ministry of Culture organised a conference on the theme of the man and his tales. To which I, as the only Australian writer ever to have mentioned either, was invited.

Great, I said. Happy to oblige. Nothing like travel to broaden the mind. So there I was, late June, sweating profusely, staring out at the capital of the Turkish Republic and wondering what I'd got myself into.

Ankara was once a Hittite town. The Phrygians had lived here. The Galatians, the Romans, the Byzantines. But not any more. Not unless they'd taken to building freeways and driving like horn-honking demons. Signs of construction were everywhere. Arterial roads had been gouged open by a giant trench for the new subway. Natural gas was being installed, piped in from the Turkic republics that used to be called Soviet Central Asia. Government buildings and housing estates reached out towards the dusty hills that fringed the city. The only landmarks I could identify with any certainty were the Atatürk mausoleum and the Sheraton Hotel. Each, in its own way, a symbol of modernity and secularism. Founding principles of the Republic. Principles now arguably at risk.

I had arrived in Turkey, just my luck, at an historic moment.

The fragile centre-right coalition that had governed the country since the beginning of the year had collapsed. Tansu Çiller, the nation's first woman prime minister, was facing imminent corruption charges. Unless a new coalition could be formed within days, the nation would be forced to a divisive and probably inconclusive election. The key to the solution lay with the Islamic Welfare Party, known for short as Refah. With 24 per cent of the popular vote, Refah was the biggest party in parliament. Locked out of government, it was a destablising influence. Let in, it might turn Turkey into a religious state. Which the military, as the self-declared guardian of Atatürk's vision, was unlikely to tolerate. Lobbying among the political parties was intense, the predictions shrill.

This much I had gleaned from the *Turkish Daily News*, read on the flight from Istanbul. My conference colleagues had been less forthcoming. Not, however, from any sense of political circumspection. Most of them didn't speak English. And I don't speak Turkish. Not a word. Not even enough to persuade the hotel switchboard to give me an outside line so I could call home and tell them I'd arrived. To get a handle on the current affairs situation, I would need to get out and about.

My volunteer guide to Ankara was Esan, the sister of the former Turkish cultural consul in Melbourne. She'd just quit her job as a high-school language teacher and was thinking of setting up as a yoga instructor. 'See how the trees are dying', she said as we joined the Sunday afternoon crowd heading up the Path of Honour towards Atatürk's tomb. 'The Refah Party controls the city council, so the trees don't get watered properly'. The pines looked green enough to me, but I was beginning to appreciate the oblique nature of Turkish political discourse.

Mustafa Kemal's final resting place is austere and modernistic, a colonnaded box of porous brown stone. Despite the monolithic architecture and the soldiers standing to rigid attention in the forecourt, my fellow visitors were conspicuously unawed. Family groups picnicked on the lawn. A man posing for a photograph in front of the 40-tonne black marble sarcophagus held a can of Coke.

Atatürk would probably have preferred something a little more sophisticated. A Campari soda, perhaps. Or a glass of raki, for the Father of the Turks was a man who knew how to party. The museum adjoining his tomb is a testament to the fact, its glass cabinets crammed with gold cigarette cases and monogrammed pyjamas. Here was a man who lived his vision to the full. Not only did he fight a war of independence, abolish the Sultanate and give women the vote, he also looked great in a tuxedo.

THIS WAS NOT MERE AFFECTATION. If Turkey was to be a modern nation, he instructed, it must look the part. You can't expect the world to take you seriously in a fez. To get women out of the veil, he decreed it compulsory for prostitutes. He made his personal style a political tool, a challenge to Turkish manhood. At his death —of cirrhosis of the liver—his revolution was victorious and his prestige was unassailable.

But now, 58 years later, other sartorial preferences were back on the agenda. The turban, the chador.

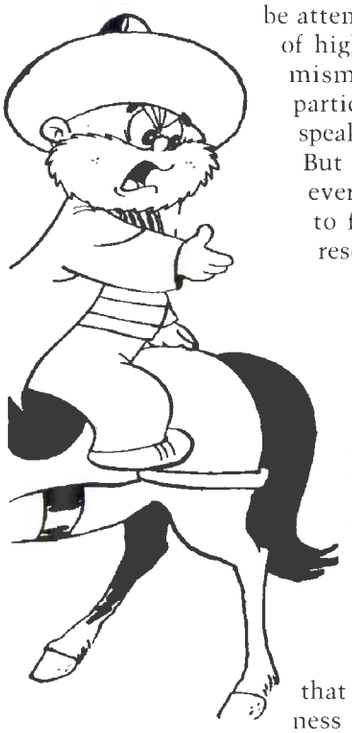
That evening we dined in the Citadel, a Roman fortress overlooking the city. Esan's husband, a successful construction engineer, threaded his car up narrow cobbled lanes between crumbling plaster walls to a restaurant that had once been an Ottoman house. We were joined by Sirma, a journalist at the *Turkish Daily News*, and Aylin, formerly with the World Bank and now in charge of cultural liaison at the Australian Embassy.

I asked Aylin what she thought about the prospects of a Refah government. The very idea was an anathema. 'My grandmother didn't wear the scarf. My mother didn't wear the scarf. Nor will I'.

Sirma, a supporter of one of the social democrat parties, was less vigorously apprehensive. For the religious conservatives to form a government, they would need the support of the free-market Right. 'An alliance', as a commentator in her newspaper put it, 'between those who refuse to believe in economics and those who know nothing about them'. The army, Sirma thought, was unlikely to intervene. If previous military coups had proven anything, it was that the generals could not solve the country's problems. Religion, here as elsewhere, is merely the current

manifestation of a deeper issue. Globalisation is forcing a re-appraisal of Atatürk's entire project. 'For the moment', she concluded, 'the best we can hope for is more uncertainty'.

I edged the conversation tentatively in the direction of 'the situation in the south-east'. Frank speech on the subject of the Kurds, I had read, should only be attempted by those well trained in the use of highly explosive linguistics. My euphemism proved unnessary, at least in this particular company. It is now possible to speak more freely of the situation, I was told. But the violence continues, intractable as ever. Successive governments had pledged to find a political solution but quickly resorted to military escalation, declaring



My room-mate was to give the keynote address, 'Nasreddin Hodja Through the Ages' ... *I was just beginning to doze off when the heckling began. Either the academic conference scene was a lot more lively than I had been led to believe, or Weary's dissertation was pushing some pretty sensitive buttons in the hairy-hat section of the crowd.*

that terrorism must be defeated first. Business types were constantly proposing economic development projects and some of these have begun to bear fruit, notably those spinning off from a number of large-scale dam projects. But the Kurds remain desparately poor, caught in a vice between the Turkish military and the PKK.

Three musicians approached our table. Men in their sixties, with wide ties, two-tone shoes and potbellies. The violinist wore plate-glass spectacles and a bad rug. The others carried strange instruments, a deep-dish banjo and a zitherish thing. They pulled up chairs, lit cigarettes, ordered tea and proposed a possible repertoire. The call was for sentimental songs. My companions closed their eyes and sang along. Sad ballads of unrequited love, of seeing but not touching, of destiny embraced. In mid-set, not wanting to exclude the foreigner, the band played an upbeat instrumental. Something international. *Hava Nagila.*

Back at the Başkent Öğretmenevi Oteli, I found that my American room mate had arrived. He was stooped and dignified, and I didn't think it was appropriate to ask him what he knew about air conditioning. For a start, Dr Ilhan Başgöz, Professor of Turkish Studies at the Bloomington campus of the University of Indiana, would not have been able to hear me. His hearing aids lay on the bedside table, big as mangoes.

The Congress began the next morning, after breakfast. By then I was getting used to starting the day with black olives, white cheese and rose-petal jam. I shared a table with Rauf, Embergin and Tura, academics from Tashkent. Rauf spoke a little English. 'You are pedagogue of Turkology?' he asked.

Promptly at ten, four hundred of us Turkological pedagogues filed into the hotel auditorium to await the Minister for Culture. The prestige of his office, we implicitly understood, required that he arrive a little later than officially scheduled. The occasion was a formal one and most of us were in suits. One man wore a shaggy astrakhan hat and a silk robe. This, apart from the solid gold teeth of the Azerbaianis and the chunky fountain pens of the Germans was the only manifestation of national dress in the 25 countries represented. I wondered if I should have run a line of zinc cream down my nose.

In due course, the Minister appeared and did the honours. After a minute's silence for those who had died in the service of world culture, a youth choir sang a folk song. Something about the phrase 'tra-la-la' seemed to encapsulate the universality of official culture.

My room-mate was to give the keynote address, *'Nasreddin Hodja Through the Ages'*. Lugubriously long-faced, he shuffled to the podium and laboriously arranged his notes. By then, I had begun to think of him as Weary Başgöz. Even allowing for the fact that I couldn't understand a word of it, his speech seemed inordinately long.

I was just beginning to doze off when the heckling began. Either the academic conference scene was a lot more lively than I had been led to believe, or Weary's dissertation was pushing some pretty sensitive buttons in the hairy-hat section of the crowd.

A rather severe-looking man in a rather severe looking suit jumped up and began to shout. Other voices joined in. Weary stopped speaking and took a sip of water, the glass trembling in his hand. The conference director, the splendidly named Alaaddin Korkmaz, leapt to his feet. Instead of silencing the interjectors, he began to take Professor Başgöz to task. At which Weary summoned his dignity, folded his papers and stalked off stage. The Minister took the podium and brought the formalities to an abrupt end.

As we spilled out into the foyer, I cornered a fellow English speaker, a post-doctoral student from UCLA. 'What was that all about?'

'Politics'.

And the guy in the dark suit?

'A fascist.'

Başgöz, it was explained, had done his historical homework. Gone to the sources. The Nasreddin Hodja

that I knew, the Nasreddin Hodja of *Watermelons, Walnuts and the Wisdom of Allah* was only the most recent version of the man. A bowdlerised version, cleaned up the moral edification of small children. A travesty of the original. A pale imitation of the genuine, down-and-dirty, demotic Hodja. The clergy-baiting, donkey-diddling, democratic Hodja.

To illustrate his point, Başgöz had related a tale from one of the earliest manuscripts. Nasreddin Hodja was riding through a strange town. 'What is that?' he enquired, pointing to a minaret. 'Why, that is our town's penis', said some clever-dick. 'Really?' said the Hodja. 'And is there a town arsehole to go with it?'

BLASPHEMY, CRUDITY, HOMOSEXUALITY. For some, the very idea that the national icon's name could be attached to such a joke was tantamount to treason. 'I'm a Turk', the man in the sinister suit had shouted. 'And I refuse to tolerate this filth.' Such a reaction could not have come entirely as a surprise to Professor Başgöz. No longer was he Weary. Now he was Foxy Başgöz, academic *agent provocateur*.

And there I'd been, thinking there was no more to Nasreddin Hodja than a jolly old fellow with a donkey and a tendency to rather tame one-liners. Little had I suspected that major ideological forces were locked in combat for ownership of his reputation. The Holy Fool was hot property.

Before I could discover more, a young woman in a head-scarf and 'women's dress' begged my pardon. She wondered if she might interview me on my views about the Nasreddin Hodja controversy. For television. Islamic cable. 'Delighted' I said and fled upstairs to my room.

The air-conditioning still didn't work, but the television did. I channel-surfed, looking to see what I had got myself into. *Police Rescue*, dubbed. A game show. Chat. Current affairs. Shedding my suit, I sat transfixed.

We are in the mountains. The sky is summery blue. Snow still streaks the high passes but the pastures are lush and flecked with wildflowers. Carbines and rocket launchers stand in stacks. Laid out beside them are half a dozen bodies, dead men in olive drab trousers. A helicopter hovers, disgorging troops.

Cut to a parade ground. Soldiers stand to attention. Medals are presented. A politician makes a speech. Nervous-looking locals are herded before the camera to receive certificates. More bodies, the chopping of helicopters. Generals at a press conference.

Without the language, I could make no sense of the commentary. Just like that business downstairs. Never mind the nuances, the very facts were escaping me. If I was going make anything of this place, I'd need to learn Turkish. Fluent Turkish, very quickly.

The phone rang. The guy on the other end spoke fluent Turkish, very quickly. He wanted Professor Başgöz, that much I could tell. But he'd got the village idiot instead. He hung up. A stack of message slips were shoved under the door, and none of them were for me. The phone started ringing again. Word was obviously getting around that Foxy Başgöz had recruited Nasreddin Hodja to the anti-fundamentalist cause.

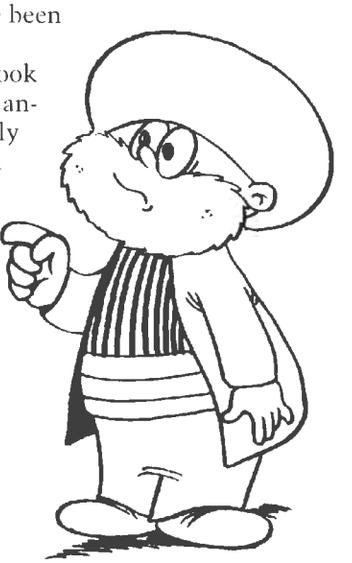
Lunch at the Öğretmenevi Oteli was set-menu. Pilaf and meat, fresh apricots. I sat with the Uzbeks. Emboldened by our conversational breakthrough earlier in the day, Rauf told me all about Tashkent. 'Is grandioso'. It even has a subway. Either that, or he'd dropped his apricot under the table.

My linguistic deficiences were compounding by the minute.

The two women across the table were speaking what sounded vaguely like Italian. A language with which I am familiar, owing to the amount of coffee I drink. But this didn't quite sound like the Italian they speak at the Covo Sportivo in Lygon Street.

It was Ladino, the language of the Jews who settled in the Ottoman empire after their expulsion from Spain back in 1492. Or so said Matilda Coen Sarano, an Italian-Israeli of Turkish-Sephardic parentage. For all I knew, it might as well have been Albigensian.

We spoke English, sort of. Matilda took the opportunity to explain her particular angle on Nasreddin Hodja. He wasn't really Turkish, she confided. He was actually a Sicilian folk character of Arabic origin named Joofa. She planned to reveal this fact the next day, in the same session as I was scheduled to speak. Her paper would be delivered in French. Would anyone understand her, she wondered?



One of the conference organisers stepped into my path. She had unexpected news. I had been selected to chair the afternoon discussion. Unfortunately, simultaneous translation would not be available. 'But I don't speak Turkish'. Don't worry, I was told.

I couldn't imagine this Sicilian-Arab line going down too well with the ultra-nationalists. But I hastened to reasure her about her choice of language. I'd done French at school and could still comprehend a word or two. But not three, I was about to add, when she hit me with the full Larousse. 'Oui, oui', I murmured, and bolted for the door.

One of the conference organisers stepped into my path. She had unexpected news. I had been selected to chair the afternoon discussion. Unfortunately,

simultaneous translation would not be available. 'But I don't speak Turkish'. Don't worry, I was told.

How could I not? The room was restive and very crowded. The first speaker on the agenda was Foxy Başgöz. I scanned the room for severe suits and shaggy hats. The professor, to my relief, was a no-show. His replacement was Dr Ulrich Marzolph of the University of Göttingen. His paper, Humour and Ideology, would be delivered in English.

Ulrich was very German. He was sinewy and intense, with brush-cut hair and a neck like a wrist. He started by defining humour. The audience began to chat among themselves. I wondered if I should call for a bit of shoosh. It seemed like a big ask, even if I'd known how. My co-chair said nothing. I lowered my eyes and doodled on my conference notepad. 'The Nasreddin phenomenon', declared Dr Ulrich, 'requires wholistic comprehension'.

Twenty minutes in, my co-chair gave the wind-up signal. This was a red rag to Ulrich's bull. 'The unrestricted hero', he seethed, 'clever and nasty at the same time'. The wind-up got more insistent. Ulrich got more antsy. The veins in his neck throbbed. He'd barely covered humour, he complained, let alone ideology. But nobody was listening. They had begun to yell at each other. Doors flew open. People spilled into the corridor, gesticulating vehemently. Half the room got up and walked out. My co-chairman looked anxious. Then he, too, walked out.

That was good enough for me. I was out of there like a shot. Only to discover that the session had reconvened on the balcony outside. Everybody was jovial and relaxed, the air thick with tobacco smoke. Twenty minutes of German humour without a cigarette. It was more than a Turk could be expected to bear. My co-chair offered me a fag. I shook my head. His look said I didn't know what I was missing.

If Ankara has a nightlife, I wasn't getting any of it. The Öğretmenevi Oteli was on the outskirts of town, far from the nearest boulevard. Foxy Başgöz was off talking to the press. The air-conditioning knob still didn't respond. I stripped to my boxers and watched the seven o'clock news on ITN. Events in Ankara led the European bulletin.

The picture showed riot police beating demonstrators. Severely. This was in response to the desecration of a Turkish flag during a conference of HADEP, a pro-Kurdish political party. We saw the flag, cut loose from the ceiling, flutter to the floor of what looked like a basketball stadium. We saw bloodied heads being shoved into police vans. Then we crossed to Brussels for a meeting of the European Union. I flipped stations. The flag was falling everywhere. It fell all evening, on every channel. It fell before *Sale of the Century* and after the Monday movie.

It was still falling the next day, in full colour on the front page of every paper on the news-stand. Storm Rages over HADEP Conference, reported the Turkish Daily News. Not only had the emblem of the nation been desecrated, PKK slogans had been hoisted in its place. A wave of indignation was reported to be sweeping the country. 41 people had been detained. Questions were being asked. Among them, how it was possible that the 700 police present in the hall during the incident, 200 of them plain-clothesmen, had failed to apprehend the culprit.

By comparison with this firestorm of controversy, Foxy Başgöz's provocation was small beer, an eight paragraph item on page three. 'Nasreddin Hodja called people to be tolerant,' he was quoted as saying. *Cumhurriet* and *Milliyet*, the up-market broadsheets, reported at similar length. The other big news was that Islamic Welfare was edging closer to a deal with Tansu Çiller's True Path party. If Refah leader Necmettin Erbekan got the prime ministership, a way might be found around Çiller's corruption indictment. But more a pressing issue than the future of the Turkish state confronted me that morning. It was, at last, showtime.

MY PAPER WAS FOURTH on the agenda. First we listened to a 20-minute dissertation in Macedonian—don't ask what kind. Then one of similar length in Hungarian. As we pondered the Hodja's influence on Magyar folk practices, my eye was drawn to the title of the next paper. *Power, the Body and Sexual Concepts in Nasreddin Hodja's Tales* by Ms Jennifer Petzen of the University of Indiana. How, I wondered, would Foxy Başgöz's enemies cope with all that.

Fortunately, they were nowhere to be seen. Nor was Foxy. The main game had moved elsewhere. This session was a side-show, shunted into a hall housing the conference photographic exhibition, portraits of Yakmet shepherds and Uighur brides.

As Ms Petzen took the podium, her compatriot from UCLA sidled into the seat beside me. 'Pure post-structuralist boilerplate,' she murmured. 'Betcha.'

Jennifer Petzen was young and fair and terribly innocent-looking. 'The problematisation of gender', she began, her keening mid-western accent utterly without mirth. She moved onto Nasreddin Hodja's testicles. 'The juxtaposition of Rabelaisian bawdiness with the paradigm of the carnivalesque...'

'See', hissed UCLA. 'Toldja'.

After all that, my comparison between Nasreddin Hodja and Dad'n'Dave must have sounded terribly tame. The only one who laughed at my jokes was the Australian ambassador, David Evans, come to lend moral support to my little cultural exchange exercise. I got a polite round of applause and a laminated certificate which I still can't decipher. Then it was Matilda Coen's turn. '*Il y avait un Chrétien, un Mussulman, et un Juif...*' There was a Christian, a Moslem and a Jew...

By the middle of the week, Necmettin Erbakan was modern Turkey's first-ever Islamicist prime minister, Tansu Çiller's charges had been dropped, and I was wagging it. Hadiye Nugay, the Turkish cultural

consul in Melbourne, had twice read my fortune in the dregs of an upturned coffee cup. Back home, she predicted that my book would be published. Here in Ankara, she prophesied that I would discover some unexpected connection with the distant past.

I FOUND IT IN A GLASS CASE in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations. It was a clay tablet, 5000 years old, the handwriting still as fresh and legible as the day it was baked. It spoke to me, I swear it did, through all the intervening ages. In the beginning was the word, it whispered. Keep the faith, baby. Always take notes. On the other hand, maybe it just said that the annual income figures for the Gilgamesh Grain and Grape Company were better than projected. Hard to say. My cuneiform isn't what it used to be.

As we drove back to the Öğretmenevi Oteli, I noticed that many of the larger buildings had sprouted enormous Turkish flags, some nearly ten stories high. Innumerable smaller flags also flew from the balconies of private homes or flapped on the aerials of cars. The red field with its white crescent and star was everywhere. The message could not be clearer. If these Kurdish terrorists thought they could insult with impunity the symbol of the unitary state, they need only look around them.

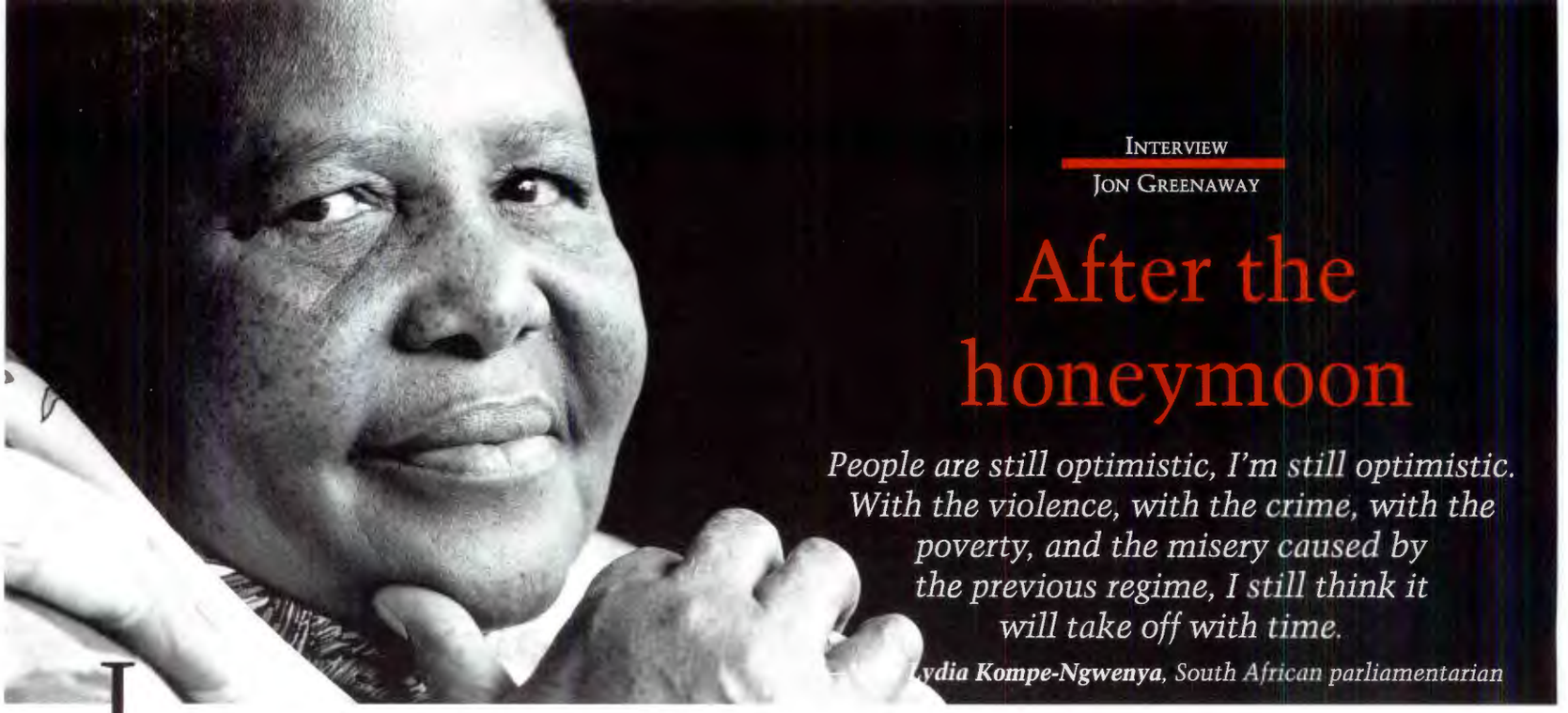
The conference was winding down. All that remained was the official dinner. We sat outdoors, at tables arranged around the swimming pool of an exclusive sports club. My Uzbek mates had been shopping and were in fine form. Embergin presented me with a copy of his paper on the holiday rituals of the Karakalpaks of the Amu River. I assured him, by means of gestures, that it would have no trouble finding an Australian publisher. Rauf talked ethno-musicology. 'I Heard It Thru' the Grapevine,' he confided.

Then the Hodja himself appeared, larger than life. Not the anti-authoritarian, scatological Nasreddin, of course. This was the orthodox, safe-for-the-kiddies version, all cotton-wool beard, foam rubber turban and rosy red cheeks. As he processed around the pool, posing for group photographs, a Janissary band played martial airs of the Ottoman empire.

Foxy Başgöz was nowhere in sight, decamped for Indiana. A gigantic flag hung down the side of the Öğretmenevi Oteli, almost covering our balcony. The room was too hot for sleep. I got down on my knees and began to search. The result was beyond dispute. There was a temperature knob but no inlet grille. The building merely *appeared* to have an air-conditioning system. I'd been tricked by an illusion.

But that what you get when you go pinching a man's parables. ■

Shane Maloney attended the Turkish Folklore Congress with the assistance of Arts Victoria. His novels *Stiff* and *The Brush-Off* are published by Text.



INTERVIEW

JON GREENAWAY

After the honeymoon

People are still optimistic, I'm still optimistic. With the violence, with the crime, with the poverty, and the misery caused by the previous regime, I still think it will take off with time.

***Lydia Kompe-Ngwenya**, South African parliamentarian*

*IN SEPTEMBER, **MAM LYDIA KOMPE-NGWENYA** toured Australia as a guest of Community Aid Abroad. A trade unionist for many years, she is an ANC member of the Government of National Unity and is active on behalf of rural women. **Jon Greenaway** talked with her in Melbourne about the troubles South Africa faces and the hopes she has for its future.*

JG *There has been great political and legal change in South Africa, but I imagine economic change takes a lot longer to occur. Are there any signs of the redistribution of wealth in South Africa, or will it take a few generations?*

ML I think really it will take a few generations to occur. Even though it has raised a lot of hopes of people after they voted [in 1994] that they would benefit from having the new government.

Through hunger and poverty the expectations were too high. Putting things right for everyone will not be addressed in this five years, because we have inherited a system where everything is divided into ethnic groups. We have the department of education which was established into four groups: white people, coloured people, Indian people and Bantu education for blacks. To bring all those things together is really an effort, and a lot of money, a lot of time, and a lot of wisdom on how to do it without confrontation is needed...

I'm sure the government must be concerned about a crisis of expectation and the people who voted for the ANC turning on you and saying 'where are the fruits?'...

It's a real concern, it is a real concern. And it is the duty of parliamentarians now, in their constituencies, to start preaching the reality of what is happening, and what to expect and what not to expect. We've got to develop people from the ground-level first, they should understand the problems we have inherited, the legacies of apartheid that have made us so impoverished. But things will come right one day as long as we manage to deliver the basics. You know in the rural areas we are starting from zero, the government of before never knew there were people existing in the rural areas...

I understand your constituency is a rural electorate and in particular you actively campaign on behalf of rural women. How difficult is it to get them on a path to betterment economically and socially?

I think during the time of resistance to apartheid, we had already started with women in the rural areas—trying to challenge patriarchal systems, trying to challenge the tribal systems where it deprived us of the right to land, the right to inherit, the right to own our own homes. Also the right to decide about our own bodies as women, because as rural women we accepted that once you are paid for, then the man has got control over you.

We are starting to teach these women by means of holding workshops; and with the assistance of Community Aid Abroad, since the Rural Women's Movement was established in 1990, we have managed to bring enough confidence to our women for them to stand up and say no... and also to call on the new government of our own choice to recognise our existence...

Is there a problem in that the main game was to break down apartheid, and other issues such as the plight of rural women are being passed over on the national stage?

I think they got bogged down in those kind of issues, of levelling the ground legally and to put things right administratively, and not focusing more on the development side.

In government you have to have good legislation, that's for sure. To repeal all these petty laws that were all over the country because of lots of little states that were established by the previous regime, and bringing them together to make one state has a hell of a lot of time, money and wisdom involved. So I think the priority must lie with that, but at the same time we must not forget that the people who put them in power are waiting to get the fruits.

There is this slight balance and in some areas you find that the government manages to give some money to basic needs like water and electricity, but it's not enough... that's why we still need support.

Can I ask what your personal experience was under apartheid, what it was like for you and for your family?

Yeah I think apartheid has caused a lot of damage to my life, in fact it's through apartheid that I have no required education.

I learnt English in the middle of the streets as a migrant worker because I didn't have the chance to study, as my parents couldn't manage to take me to school any more after the Betterment Law was brought in. It was a very critical law which deprived our parents of land that they were utilising, and the livestock that they had, so they were forced to go back and work in the mines. I was one of the lucky ones in being able to grow together with my parents, a privilege which my children didn't have. They grew alone because I had to go back to Johannesburg to work after I lost my marriage.

But I did not have the proper documents to go and work... Coloured and Indians were not affected by Influx Control. Influx Control [under the Group Areas Act] was the law which controlled us from coming in and out of the cities to go and work. So black people were given one year to go and work, if you happened to get some work. But if you were not able to get work you were not even allowed to step your foot inside those cities. So I was one of those people and here I had three children to support and educate... the forging of the documents has given my children an education, but it was very much against my will. I lived from the identification of not what I am, it was too bitter for me.

Could I ask you about the personality cult of Nelson Mandela. In the west he's seen as one of the great figures of the 20th century. Is there a lot of good will invested in Nelson Mandela because of the extraordinariness of his story and South Africa's situation and will it be difficult for a successor to keep the ball rolling?

That's a good question but it is very difficult to answer because I am one of the people who are so dependent on him. Sometimes I don't even think that he is old enough to retire, because I always feel that if it were possible to reverse his age to 40 I would do it. He still has a long way to go and a lot of things to do with his wisdom which he is not going to transfer to anybody. I can take over, somebody else can take over, but nobody will be himself.

That dependency on him is causing some undermining for me, for anyone who would be his successor...

Is there good will amongst Afrikaners towards Nelson Mandela that somebody else would have difficulty engendering?

I think the Afrikaners have been taken by surprise by Mandela. When he got out of detention, one day after his release he preached peace and forgiveness and I think it was strange for them...

They were expecting bitterness from him...

Yes. It was a very strange thing for the oppressors; how can they do these things to this man for so many years and he comes out on day one...and he stood on the pavement and preached peace and forgiveness and wanted people to live together and forget about the past. Those were the things that they were juggling around in their mind.

But they had to prove that under no doubt this man is preaching peace, he wants the Rainbow Nation to prosper. And now they are fast to say that [he is sincere] and some of them are doing it with all their hearts. They respect him very well. Even the National Party, which has pulled out of the Government of National Unity, they still respect Mandela there is no doubt about it. He has proved himself to be what he is, even to the enemies.

I don't think I would ever have done that after so many years of misery—he never enjoyed the life with his children, with his family. But when he came out it was like he was put in jail yesterday: I think he is just an extraordinary person.

What then is the effect of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, is that not creating bitterness amongst certain circles, particularly the military?

I think there has been a lot that has been revealed that some of the SADF have been involved in, particularly in regard to secret armies which were earmarked to assassinate the freedom fighters—the top ANC people. It's a very tense situation...

It must have a few people scared, are you worried about any extreme action that might be taken by those people who are scared?

I'm not really worried any more because they have been exposed, everybody knows who they are...

I think it is just a shame for the government of then because they thought these things would stay secret forever. But now natural justice is taking its course ... and it's good to know who did these things and why they did them to get it all out. That is, I think, another process of reconciliation, because you can't reconcile with someone you do not know, you cannot reconcile with somebody if he doesn't say sorry.

Is there still optimism across the ethnic divides; across rich, white, poor, black? We hear the evidence of crime and corruption—is there still optimism amongst the people that there is the opportunity for South Africa to carve out a better future for itself?

People are still optimistic, I'm still optimistic. With the violence, with the crime, with the poverty, and the misery caused by the previous regime, I still think it will take off with time.

You know people have been locked into a *kraal* maybe. If you keep something in a *kraal* ...and then you forget to lock that door do you think that once you go out, they're going to stay? Now the laws are repealed so everybody is a South African. So everybody is moving to see what is happening in those greener pastures, in those nice buildings in the city, and when they get there they don't find anything. No jobs, no houses. So then they turn to crime because they are hungry, they are desperate, they do anything to survive, they get into drugs, they get into terrible things...

And there is not only security which is needed. We all need to stand up to help eliminate that crime by means of giving proper development. Not only physical development but mental development—people have to know that it is through the previous regime that we are what we are; what can we do to change and have tolerance and have patience? If we don't preach that, we are not going to really eliminate the crime as immediately as we would expect to. ■

Mam Lydia Kompe-Ngwenya is chair of the ANC Women's Caucus and has been a founding member of the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the Rural Women's Movement.

Jon Greenaway is Eureka Street's assistant editor.

Bishop Gregory Singkai 1935-1996

NOTHING BETTER ILLUSTRATES the ambivalence of Bougainvilleans towards Papua New Guinea than that one of their Catholic clergy could, in 1982, accept appointment to the capital see of Port Moresby while another, as Bishop of Bougainville, would throw in his lot with the secessionist rebels to the point of accepting, at one stage, the portfolio of Education in their treasonable Interim Government. Both men have died in the last three months.

Archbishop Sir Peter Korongku's appointment in 1982 was deftly diplomatic: a prelate in the capital from the nation's secessionist province testified to the putative fraternity of its peoples. And the late Sir Peter lived up to his part. His knighthood capped his loyalty. Gregory Singkai, however, owed his mitre not just to his integrity and pastoral virtues.

In 1974 when he was consecrated, secessionism was on the rise in Bougainville and, owing to government intractability, culminated in the first unilateral declaration of independence on 1 September 1975, a fortnight before national Independence Day. It had been deemed politic to have a Bougainville-born bishop in the province so that, if it did occur, secession would not mean alienation, or even schism (under a 'foreign' pastor), from episcopal authority—and some 75 per cent of the people were nominally Catholic. Gregory Singkai declared for secession in 1975 because he said it was 'the will of the people'.

More than that, though, Singkai was personally committed. He was incredulous that a God who had created a distinctively jet-black skin colour and a glorious homeland in an archipelago (Solomons) remote from the rest of Papua New Guinea intended the people to be absorbed into a 'foreign nation'. The more so when this had come about only because of the greedy imperialisms of Germany and Great Britain splitting the Solomons 100 years ago. Moreover, God had provided munificent mineral wealth which was being exploited for others.

So, in spite of the Accord of 1976 which created a semi-autonomous provincial government under which Bougainville generally prospered, Singkai remained unreconciled to Papua New Guinea's integration and the presence of the gigantic Panguna copper mine. He did nothing to discourage several disaffected American priests in the diocese who were unrelenting in their criticism of Bougainville's status and the mining operation. He also tacitly approved of (then Fr) John Momis's impracticable and inflammatory 'Bougainville Initiative ' document of 1987 which encouraged rebel leader, Francis Ona, to make his intransigent demands on Bougainville Copper Ltd. Even when, in 1989, the new Prime Minister, Rabbie Namaliu, produced a generous package of compensation plus equity in the mine for Bougainvilleans, Gregory failed to condemn what had become insensate violence. As this escalated, he did not suggest to the rebels that God was not behind their cause. And he failed to foresee the grip that fanatical cultism would take on many of Ona's supporters. A grasp of the time-honoured principles of a just war would have alerted him that this civil war, which did not even have the consent of most Bougainvilleans, was morally indefensible.

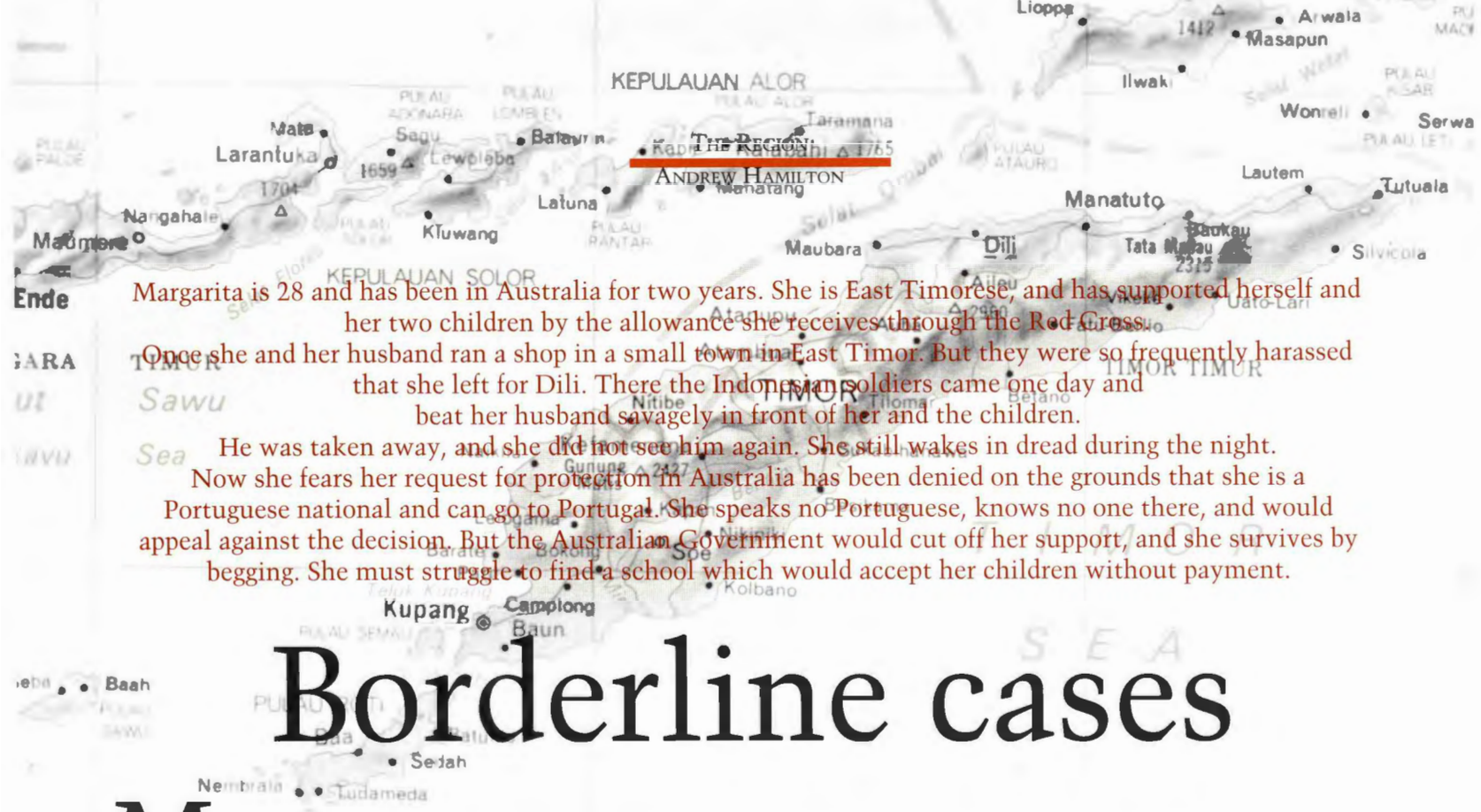
So Gregory joined the rebel government, only to find that it was both inchoate and terrorist. Former seminarians were to accuse him of being a complicit 'murderer'. When he withdrew active support, his cathedral and church buildings were razed; cultists despoiled his regalia and at one stage tried to install a bogus bishop of their own. Gregory retreated to the safety of his own clan and village in Koromina where he had been born in 1935.

EVENTUALLY IN LATE 1994 he was allowed to leave for the Solomon Islands because of ill-health. He was obviously not in favour in Rome, which counselled him to look to the welfare of his whole flock, not just secessionists. In late May this year, after a sojourn in Australia, he was accompanied by the Apostolic Nuncio to Buka Island, the anti-secessionist district of northern Bougainville. On the way through (in his case) a non-vindictive Port Moresby, he signed a brief and pathetic undertaking to conform.

After two-and-a-half months' contact with his people, he resumed the full pastoral duties that had been temporarily referred to his Rabaul metropolitan—on 16 August to be precise. However, as the Apostolic Nuncio at Gregory's obsequies put it, 'Evidently God had other plans for Bishop Singkai'. He died at Vunapope hospital near Rabaul on 12 September.

There are obvious morals to be drawn from the tragedy of this man. One might be to scrap the 'bafflegab' that made its way into at least Catholic seminaries in Papua New Guinea and persuaded goodwilled people that traditional European approaches to Church-State relations had become obsolete. ■

James Griffin is Profesor Emeritus of History, University of Papua New Guinea.



Margarita is 28 and has been in Australia for two years. She is East Timorese, and has supported herself and her two children by the allowance she receives through the Red Cross.

Once she and her husband ran a shop in a small town in East Timor. But they were so frequently harassed that she left for Dili. There the Indonesian soldiers came one day and beat her husband savagely in front of her and the children.

He was taken away, and she did not see him again. She still wakes in dread during the night.

Now she fears her request for protection in Australia has been denied on the grounds that she is a Portuguese national and can go to Portugal. She speaks no Portuguese, knows no one there, and would appeal against the decision. But the Australian Government would cut off her support, and she survives by begging. She must struggle to find a school which would accept her children without payment.

Borderline cases

THE REGION

ANDREW HAMILTON

MARGARITA'S IS A COMPOSITE PORTRAIT, based on the lives of some eighteen hundred Portuguese asylum seekers. To understand their story, one must recall the history of East Timor and the complex factors that have led to this deplorable outcome.

The salient points are well known. East Timor was a Portuguese colony from the 16th century until 1975. In that year Fretilin took power in a counter-coup, and declared the territory an independent republic. In December, Indonesia invaded East Timor, and in July 1976 declared it annexed to Indonesia. The Indonesian invasion has been criticised repeatedly by the United Nations. After a prolonged resistance, the territory was opened to visitors in 1989, and the suffering of its people again became patent in the funeral massacre at Dili in 1991.

Australian relations with East Timor have remained the subject of controversy. The people of East Timor supported the Australian soldiers heroically during the Pacific War, and some 40,000 died. Before the Indonesian invasion, Gough Whitlam declared an independent East Timor unviable and a threat to security. During Indonesian incursions, Australian journalists were killed, and their fate has long remained a cause of tension. This has been renewed by regular reports of the mistreatment of the Portuguese population by the Indonesian forces.

But the Australian Government quickly recognised *de facto* Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor, and when negotiating with Indonesia the exploitation of the seabed between Australia and East Timor, gave *de iure* recognition as well. The resulting treaty was the object of an Portuguese action in the International Court of Justice. One of the last actions of the Keating Government was to sign a defence treaty with Indonesia.

East Timorese have regularly come to Australia and sought protection on the grounds that they were persecuted and could not secure protection from the Government of Indonesia, whose nationals they were. Most were given refugee status.

1995 was a critical year because for a few months the arrival of East Timorese asylum seekers and Australia's relations with East Timor became linked in acrimonious controversy. The confluence hurt the asylum seekers.

In March 1995, a visit made by General Panjaitan in the interests of closer military co-operation was publicly criticised in Australia. Panjaitan had held high rank in Dili during the massacre of 1991. In April, members of the ALP caucus complained that many East Timorese who had received tourist visas from the Bali consulate in 1994 later applied for refugee status.

In June, 18 asylum seekers who arrived by boat were detained and, after a court injunction, were given access to legal advice. Later that month, General Mantiri was nominated as Indonesian ambassador to Australia. The appointment was followed by intense public protest, especially by members of the Labor Party and of the East Timorese community in Australia. General Mantiri was claimed to have approved the Dili massacre. Early in July, as the judgment on the Timor Gap treaty was handed down by the International Court of Justice, General Mantiri's nomination as ambassador was withdrawn amid Indonesian anger and Australian embarrassment. The detained asylum seekers were released into the community on bridging visas following expert evidence that they had been tortured. The Indonesian foreign minister, however, declared that they were not refugees, and that Australia should reject their claims.

Senator Evans initially replied that determination of refugee status was independent of government, but in October attention was drawn to an opinion of the Attorney General's Department that the East Timorese were Portuguese nationals, and so entitled to seek protection in Portugal. After some hesitation, the Portuguese Government responded that Portugal would accept only those who sought Portuguese protection. This would make it difficult for the Australian government to deport the East Timorese. At the same time, the processing of East Timorese cases at the primary level was temporarily frozen.

Some members of the Refugee Review Tribunal seem to have accepted the Government's argument that the East Timorese are Portuguese nationals, and on those grounds have refused their application for protection. The cases have been appealed and will be heard by the Federal Court late in September, 1996.

Two measures introduced by the Coalition Government elected earlier this year have been fateful for the asylum seekers. It has instructed the Department of Immigration to process all cases at the primary level, and a letter sent to all asylum seekers has asked for details of their nationality. As judgments will be made without interview, it can confidently be expected that the majority will be rejected on the sole grounds of their imputed Portuguese nationality. The issue of their fear of persecution will be deemed irrelevant and so not even considered.

Boats seem to evoke a deep seated and atavistic anxiety about the integrity of our borders, and encourage otherwise reasonable ministers and officials to don their cockaded hats and stride the quarterdeck.

At the same time, those rejected at the primary stage will be deprived of the welfare assistance which they had previously received. Their children's education will be precarious, and as their work permits expire, the whole family stripped of access to medical care. Their position will be desperate, because the East Timorese community resident in Australia is poor, and voluntary agencies are already stretched beyond their capacity.

The majority of the East Timorese seeking asylum in Australia are of Chinese descent. Like the Jews in early modern Europe, Chinese have been disproportionately involved in trade and shopkeeping. They are an identifiable group, especially vulnerable in times of national crisis.

The experience of East Timor has been that of other places—El Salvador, for example, Burma, Chechnya or Cambodia where an occupying army has imposed its rule on an unwilling population. The people regularly tell of rape, torture, being forced to witness the beating or killing of family members, humiliation at the hands of baffled and angry soldiers, banishment from living places, arbitrary reprisals, and sometimes insult to their religious sensibilities.

The East Timorese have therefore experienced East Timor as a refugee camp, and suffered trauma routinely. The Indonesian soldiers, too, have suffered from being forced to operate in a country where their presence is without the consent of the people and where they meet sullen hostility. Like the people, they are the victims of a rule imposed on an unwilling population by the Government which they represent.

Those who have sought Portuguese nationality have had to do so in Portugal. They cannot work until they have an identity card, a process which can take over a year. Many live in very difficult circumstances. But very few of the asylum seekers in Australia speak Portuguese or have physical or emotional contact with Portugal. They find the idea of seeking asylum in Portugal as alien as it would be for an Australian to seek protection in Senegal.

When their traumatic experience in East Timor, their fear of being despatched to an alien destination like Portugal, and their prospect of losing financial and medical support necessary for survival in Australia are taken together, the result is great psychological stress. This is particularly so for those who have been deeply depressed and traumatised by their past experience.

Thus, independently of the other issues involved, there is an overwhelming case that those who are most vulnerable should be given continued financial support through the Red Cross, and awarded permanent residence in Australia on humanitarian grounds. Their well-being is too precarious to support further disruption.

The events of mid-1995 reveal how the treatment of the East Timorese has been affected by political considerations. The Australian government clearly identified Australia's political and economic interests with the treaty with Indonesia. The visits of Indonesian military leaders were part of this process.

As a result, the the protests directed at Generals Mantiri and Panjaitan, and the humiliating withdrawal of the former's nomination as ambassador, were particularly disconcerting. The contemporaneous hearing of the Timor Gap case made it clear that profitable and cooperative commercial relationships with Indonesia depended on recognition of Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor and the mending of fences.

It was coincidental that attention became simultaneously focused on the East Timorese asylum seekers. The complaint that East Timorese had too easily been granted tourist visas in Bali, and particularly the arrival of the single boat in Darwin both touched an underlying Australian antipathy to refugees. It recalled the response to the Cambodian boat people of six years earlier. Boats seem to evoke a deep seated and atavistic anxiety about the integrity of our borders, and encourage otherwise reasonable ministers and officials to don their cockaded hats and stride the quarterdeck.

The publicity given to the asylum seekers and their claim to have fled persecution led the Indonesians to demand that they not be considered refugees. The asylum seekers, unpopular at the best of times in Australia, provided the raw material for a placatory Australian signal to Indonesia.

It has been argued that it is necessary to make the East Timorese asylum seekers a Portuguese problem, in order to protect the Australian relationship with Indonesia. In this view, the attribution of Portuguese nationality is a necessary compromise which saves the East Timorese from repatriation, placates Indonesian wrath, and defends long-term Australian interests. Those interests, too, can be more generously construed than as being confined to profit-taking and defence. The stability of Indonesia is of vital concern to Australia. Furthermore, the capacity of Australia to encourage our neighbours to adopt fuller commitment to democratic processes and human rights will rely on her having strong allies and patrons within the region. It is therefore in everybody's long-term-interests for the relationship between Indonesia and Australia to be as strong as possible.

I RESPECT THIS THEORETICAL ARGUMENT and the realistic view of moral dilemmas which it supposes. In such conflicts between a greater and a lesser good it is not always clear what should be done, as controversy about policies as diverse as Clement XIV's suppression of the Jesuits, Pius XII's silence about the Jews, Chamberlain's appeasement of Hitler, or ASEAN's opening to the Burmese junta testifies. The moral challenge to a foreign policy that advocates silence about abused human dignity, however, is to name what level of abuse will demand a change of policy: the murder of ten,

say, a hundred, a thousand or a million? The policy must also show the fruits of constructive engagement. The imprisonment of Aung San Suu Kyi's supporters immediately after the placatory approach by ASEAN, for example, does not highly commend such a policy.

Whatever of the theoretical position taken here, however, Australia's interests do not demand the sacrifice of the East Timorese. They became an issue only after the Australian response to their representatives justifiably inflamed Indonesian sensitivities. They had the right to expect better advice from Australia. Since Australia had earlier quietly granted refugee status to East Timorese in more tranquil times, the hearing of their cases could be resumed quietly. Nor would the grant of residence on humanitarian grounds create political difficulty.

THE DECISION TO DENY THE EAST TIMORESE protection in Australia introduces complex legal issues. The Convention on the Status of Refugees defines refugees as those who suffer persecution, are outside the country of their nationality, and cannot avail themselves of its protection. Those judging the East Timorese applications for refugee status must therefore decide what is their nationality, and whether they can avail themselves of its protection.

The judges of early cases assumed, as did the Attorney General's Department, that the East Timorese were of Indonesian nationality. For after the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia East Timorese travelled on Indonesian passports, and Australia recognised Indonesian sovereignty.

This judgment reflected the common-sense judgment that nationality is attached to one's place of living, and is therefore linked to sovereignty. Where a colonial power's sovereignty ceases over a territory, so in practical terms do the inhabitants of the territory lose its nationality, regardless of the domestic law of the previous sovereign power. In East Timor, Portuguese sovereignty clearly ceased with the declaration of a democratic republic, and even more dramatically with the Indonesian occupation and incorporation of the territory. For the purposes of asylum, they must be treated as Indonesian citizens.

Others have argued that, while Portuguese sovereignty and therefore nationality have effectively lapsed in East Timor, the East Timorese do not have Indonesian nationality. They should rather be regarded as stateless. This judgment is based on the United Nations resolutions on East Timor which refuse to countenance its absorption into Indonesia, and which call on Portugal, as the previous colonial power, to carry out its best efforts to secure a free act of self-determination for the people of East Timor. These resolutions arguably equate East Timor to a trust or mandated territory whose inhabitants cannot receive their nationality from the administering power. As stateless persons, who cannot avail themselves of the protection of any nation, they may claim protection in Australia on a case by case basis.

The third opinion, which has determined the recent treatment of the East Timorese, is that they have Portuguese nationality, and so must claim protection from Portugal. This argument separates sovereignty from nationality. The former is regulated by international law, while nationality is regulated by national law.

The relevant Portuguese law of 1867 entitled anyone born in Portuguese territory, including its colonial possessions, to Portuguese nationality . In a 1981 revision of the law, it became necessary also for the mother or father to wish to declare themselves Portuguese.

Thus, Portuguese law sees nationality as an endowment given by place of birth or by blood. Because it allows multiple nationality, Portuguese nationality does not lapse when the East Timorese take up Indonesian citizenship. If East Timorese asylum seekers have Portuguese nationality, it can be argued that they can avail themselves of the protection of Portugal and may not be entitled to protection in Australia, regardless of the experiences which led them to seek asylum here.

When Portuguese municipal law is made the decisive grounds for the awarding of refugee status, it can lead to humanly bizarre decisions. A decision made in the Refugee Review Tribunal, for example, divided a family. The father was denied refugee status, because he was born in Portuguese territory. The mother was awarded it, because she was born outside Portuguese territory. The elder child was denied refugee status because born in 1973; the younger child was awarded it because born after the law was amended in 1981. Mercifully, the then Immigration minister intervened to prevent the family being dismembered by this relentlessly sharpened knife of legal logic.

The Federal Court, and most probably the High Court, will now have to adjudicate whether the asylum seekers are of Portuguese nationality, and whether this should exclude them from receiving protection in Australia.

But the deeper question here is not legal. It is whether it is fair and reasonable to impute to people a nationality which they have not sought and which does not correspond to their experience or to the exigencies of life in the territory in which they have lived, on the sole grounds that a nation with which they have no natural connection declares them to be its nationals.

I would argue that it is neither fair nor reasonable. It is unreasonable because it postulates a useful but unreal divorce between nationality and sovereignty. Undoubtedly useful, since it allowed the Australian government simultaneously to argue that the Timor Gap treaty was valid because Indonesia had sovereignty over the territory, and to assert that East Timorese enjoyed Portuguese nationality because of the provisions of Portuguese law.

The moral challenge to a foreign policy that advocates silence about abused human dignity, however, is to name what level of abuse will demand a change of policy—the murder of ten, say, a hundred, a thousand or a million?

In reality, however, sovereignty cannot be divorced so easily from nationality. Nationality presupposes a natural relationship between the citizen and an organized community. Unless a government is linked to a community by natural links of race and proximity, or by having effective government in an area, its attribution of nationality is a fiction. Thus, while sovereignty is not a sufficient condition of nationality, it is a necessary condition of effective nationality. Therefore, to attribute nationality to others against their will without such links is absurd.

To use such imputed nationality in order to evade the ordinary responsibilities of protecting refugees is both absurd and unfair. It is unfair to Portugal because it uses the generous inclusiveness of the Portuguese law to saddle it with Australia's burdens. While it is reasonable and generous for the Portuguese to make use of a

fiction in order to grant protection to the defenceless, it is unfair and churlish for Australia, a wealthier nation, to use Portuguese law to make Portugal bear the financial responsibility for asylum seekers who have no Portuguese connection.

It is also unfair to the asylum seekers because it makes their fate depend on an abstract fiction. Is the case morally different from what it would be to investigate asylum seekers' blood lines, and to exclude those with traces of Jewish or African blood from protection in Australia?

The coalition government has so far been preoccupied with the Budget. The desire to cut expenditure and encourage economic efficiency have led to significant cuts in immigration and a hardening of policy towards family re-integration.

Refugee policy has also been affected by this desire for fiscal restraint. The refugee intake has been considerably reduced. The on-shore refugee programme, however, has suffered more acutely, in the belief that those who apply for asylum within Australia are queue-jumpers who keep out those in overseas camps. The support previously paid through the Red Cross to asylum seekers until their appeals had been heard will now be payable only after a delay of six months, and will be restricted to those whose primary decisions are in the process of being decided. Those who appeal to the Refugee Review Tribunal will be without financial support or access to medical care. Presumably, it is hoped that this restriction will encourage them to leave Australia without troubling the legal system.

The budget cuts have been accompanied by a distinctive political rhetoric, couched in more intense terms of family values, but more restricted in the groups to whom it is extended. The narrow mainstream is to be rewarded with tax cuts and other benefits. Those outside the mainstream—Aboriginal Australians, the unemployed, refugees and others—are penalised. The penalties are justified by criticising unlikeable members of the group, and so stigmatising the group as a whole. Thus, the unemployed are stigmatised as welfare-cheats, aboriginal administrators as self-serving, and on-shore asylum seekers as rich queue-jumpers.

The budget cuts to asylum-seeker assistance appear particularly unfortunate, because officials will come under pressure to make hurried decisions about refugee status. The increased funding for refugee determination only increases this pressure. The fear of loss of jobs, the conventional wisdom of government that the claims of on-shore asylum seekers are unfounded, taken together with the expectation of rapid turnover, and the hearing of applications without interview, will surely reduce the quality of decisions made. Because neither asylum seekers nor their lawyers will expect a fair hearing at this level, they will inevitably look for justice to the Refugee Review Tribunal. To deprive them of support before they can make this appeal will be perceived as vindictive and intimidatory.

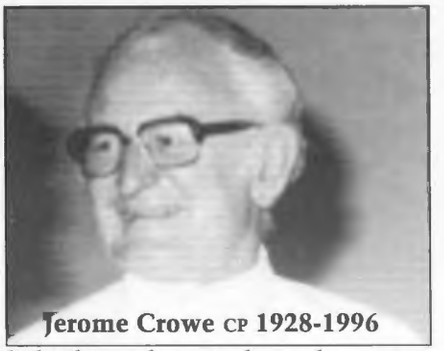
The deprivation of benefits to the East Timorese is especially repugnant because they are being rejected on morally indefensible grounds. The deprivation of benefits before the issue has been thoroughly resolved in the courts can be seen only as an attempt to starve them into submission to unjust policy.

The East Timorese asylum seekers should be given entry to Australia on humanitarian grounds. This would recognise the fact that their exclusion on the basis of an imputed Portuguese nationality is dictated by Australia's political interests. It also recognises their continuing need for support. Even if this argument is not accepted, the many who have suffered serious trauma in East Timor must surely be given residence. Their survival is at stake.

Finally, even while these decisions are made, the asylum seekers should receive support until the court cases about their rejection are concluded. The denial of benefits to them amounts to intimidation of the asylum seekers and unfair pressure on Portugal. ■

Andrew Hamilton SJ has worked with the Jesuit Refugee Service on refugee and migration issues since the mid '80s.

Robert Crotty



Jerome Crowe CP 1928-1996

On the evening of Monday 12 August 1996 Jerome Crowe died suddenly at Holy Cross Retreat, the Passionist student house in Melbourne. A few weeks earlier he had left Adelaide to fill in for a semester at Yarra Theological Union. He returned from an evening lecture, ate with some of his confrères, then, at 11pm, without any prior warning, suffered a heart attack.

Jerome joined the Passionists after leaving school in 1945 and was ordained a priest in 1951. Almost immediately he went to Rome where he did a Licentiate in Theology at the Angelicum University and began his Licentiate in Scripture at the Biblical Institute. He then went to Jerusalem and majored in biblical studies and archaeology at the Ecole Biblique et Archéologique Française.

They were heady days. The Dead Sea Scrolls had come to light in the 1950s and his professor of archaeology, Roland de Vaux, was the first editor-in-chief of the scrolls and excavator of the presumed Essene monastery at Qumran. What became known as the International Team, entrusted with the editing of those scrolls that were not in Israeli hands, was mainly based on the Ecole Biblique and what was then known as the Palestine Archaeological Museum of which De Vaux was the director. The Ecole Biblique was also on the wave of new development after the 1943 encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* had emancipated biblical scholars. Jerome met up with teachers like Pierre Benoit and Marie-Emile Boismard. Their influence was to last all his life.

I first met Jerome in Adelaide in January 1957. He was beginning his teaching career. I was a teenager beginning my theological studies. I was witness to the transformation that took place as he became part of the Passionist theological faculty which had formerly been more interested in practical preaching that the subtleties of biblical exegesis.

For the first time we young pre-Vatican II students heard not only of the Dead Sea Scrolls but of literary forms, apocalyptic, *Formgeschichte*, demythologisation and new theories of biblical inspiration. We learned that Genesis 1-11 was not to be taken literally, that the infancy gospels were not history but theology, that when the gospels called Jesus 'Son of God' they did not necessarily imply he was God.

With it all Jerome demanded real scholarship and required us to keep up our Greek, to study Hebrew (despite antiquated Latin textbooks!), to read articles in French and German.

On a broader front, Jerome turned a quiescent Catholic Adelaide on its head. The Catholic paper *The Southern Cross* had long published dreary front-page articles on the opening of school science laboratories and toilet blocks. Jerome submitted articles on the finding and interpretation of the Dead Sea Scrolls, on modern trends in biblical interpretation. For the local readership this was a revelation.

The *Australian Catholic Record*, required reading in those days for most Australian Catholic clergy, had specialised in casuistic discussion on the minutiae of recent Papal Bulls and heated debate over obscure liturgical gestures. Jerome, during his first year in Adelaide, wrote a series of articles that examined the theory of Annie Jaubert suggesting that perhaps the events of Maundy Thursday including the Last Supper had taken place on the previous Tuesday. Archbishop Matthew Beovich, never known for his scholarship, was reported to have gone into apoplectic shock.

Jerome never was denounced, as far as I know. In fact, he was not really a controversialist unless he deeply felt for a cause. He *did* take to the streets to protest over the South African Rugby tour when apartheid was at its height.

He never accepted *Humanae Vitae*. When my brother wrote two articles for *The Australian* which rejected the outmoded theology underlying that encyclical, Jerome stood by him as Knox first deprived him of priestly faculties and then forced him out of Australia. In many ways, for good or bad in hindsight, Jerome was a restraining influence on many younger clergy who wanted to take more drastic action and storm Raheen in those depressing, post-encyclical days. But overall he was not one for controversy. He was instead the meticulous scholar who preferred to debate calmly with opponents. His real achievement was in tertiary biblical education. Never in a hurry to put pen to paper, he wrote a few books, many of them school texts and books for the lay reader, which were exemplars of clarity. He became President of the Yarra Theological Union in 1977-1979 and resigned to take over as the Australian Provincial of the Passionists.

At the completion of this term of office he accepted the new challenge offered by the South Australian CAE, which would eventually become part of the University of South Australia. Religion Studies had been set up as a disciplinary area in the CAEs in Adelaide during the 1970s and the Catholic Education Office had made overtures about establishing a parallel strand of study that would prepare teachers who wanted employment in the Catholic school system. It was Jerome who gave Catholic Studies academic vision and direction while still keeping the content within the ambit of Catholicism.

Jerome was a very human person. If news spread of sickness or misfortune, he would appear at the hospital bed or family home. His dry wit was legendary.

He never pretended to be modish: he knew that he did not speak the language of the toddler or even the teenager.

He was never a morning person. In the days before Mass became interactive he had been known to fall asleep saying Mass and have to call the server up to find out where he had reached. He was impractical in many ways. One of his plans after retirement from the University of South Australia was to go to the Ukraine and teach in an impoverished Ukrainian theological seminary, despite the fact that it was still in a war zone and he knew no Ukrainian.

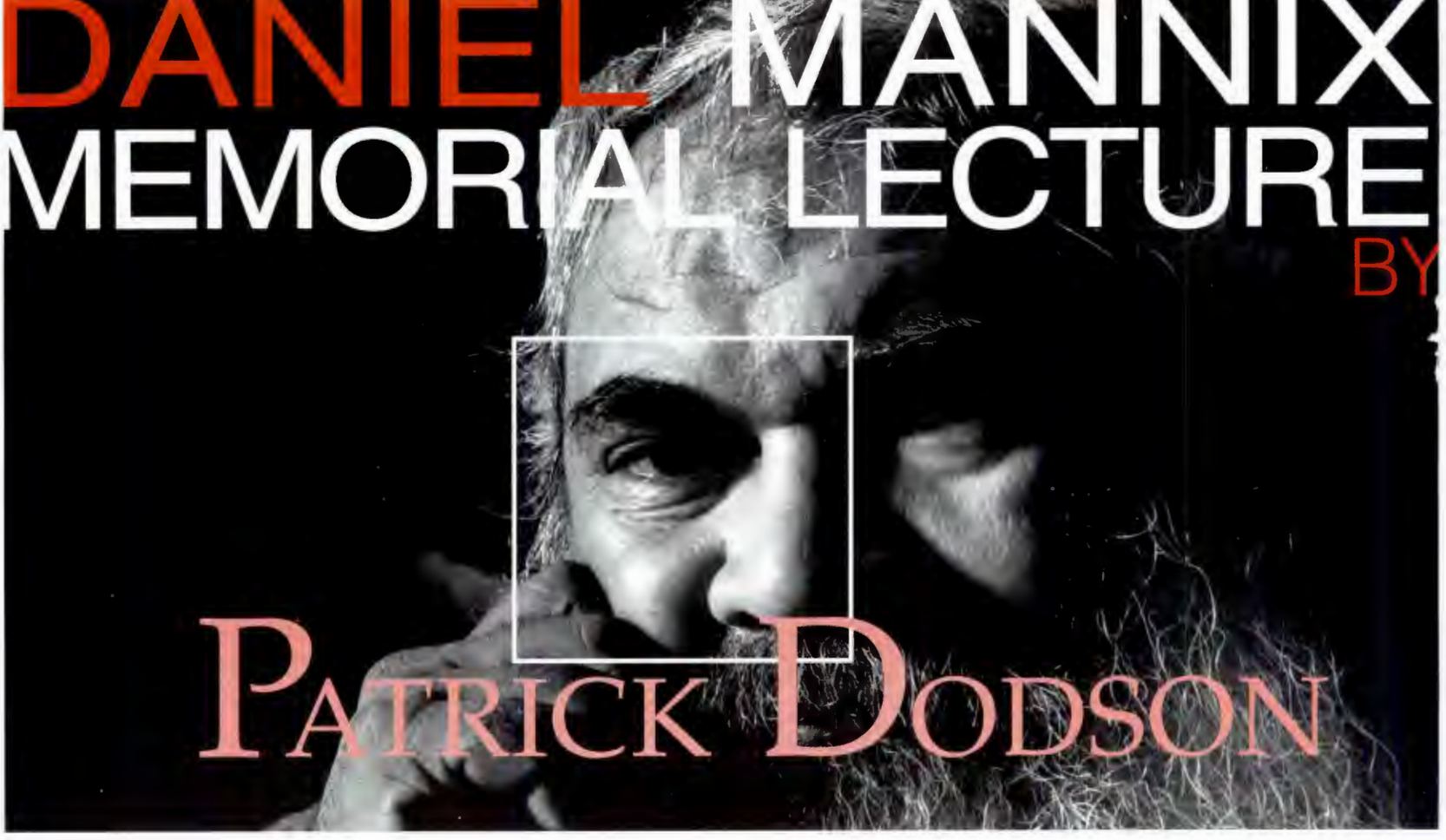
My brother and I shared a meal with Jerome a few weeks ago prior to his departure for Melbourne. Over beer and fish, almost a liturgical menu, we laughed about ongoing episcopal foibles and the idiosyncrasies of clergy we had known. We told those old Latin jokes for which there is an ever-diminishing audience. Jerome enjoyed the fare and shared with us the projects he still had in hand, his plans for the future.

Vale, Jerome. ■

Robert Crotty is Associate Professor in Education, University of South Australia.

DANIEL MANNIX MEMORIAL LECTURE

BY



PATRICK DODSON

My story is about two men, who shared a place, a time and from my perspective, a set of ideas that I have come to call truths.

The place they shared was Australia.

One came from the other side of the world to become an Australian. The other never left the north-west of Western Australia.

One became the keeper of faith for a generation or more of Irish Australians, especially here in Melbourne. The other was the holder of the law for a generation or more of Yawuru people at Broome, Western Australia.

One drew thousands of people to showgrounds to hear his words. The other drew people to sit under the shade of a jigal tree and share his knowledge.

One was Daniel Mannix. The other was Paddy Djiagween, my grandfather.

About Daniel Mannix, many facts are known. Books have been written, such as F. Murphy's *Daniel Mannix, Archbishop of Melbourne,* which appeared in 1948. Debate has raged, history has spoken with many voices. He was a famous—for some infamous—man.

Daniel Mannix was born on 4 March, 1864, in Charleville, County Cork, Ireland and died on November 6, 1963 in Melbourne. A Roman Catholic prelate, he became one of Australia's most controversial political figures during the first half of the 20th century. Mannix studied at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, in County Kildare, where he was ordained a priest in 1890 and where he taught philosophy (1891) and theology (1894). From 1903 to 1912 he served as president of the college, coming to Australia and becoming Archbishop of Melbourne in 1917.

Mannix's forthright demands for state aid for the education of Roman Catholics in return for their taxes, and his opposition to drafting soldiers for World War I made him the subject of controversy. A zealous supporter of Irish independence, he made an official journey to Rome in 1920 via the United States, where his lengthy speechmaking attracted enthusiastic crowds. His campaign on behalf of the Irish, however, caused the British Government to prevent him from landing in Ireland, where he finally visited in 1925.

After World War II, Mannix sought to stop Communist infiltration of the Australian trade unions; he played a controversial part in the dissensions within the Australian Labor Party and

backed the largely right-wing Catholic Democratic Labor Party, which broke away.

A promoter of Catholic Action, lay apostolic activity in the temporal society, and of the Catholic social movement, he was responsible for having established 181 schools, including Newman College and St. Mary's College at the University of Melbourne, and 108 parishes. These are the facts of the contribution of Daniel Mannix during his lengthy time as Archbishop.

I first heard of Archbishop Mannix in 1962, when as a young lad, recently orphaned from both my parents in the one year, I was sent from Katherine in the Northern Territory to Monivae College as a boarder. It was thought to be an option preferable to my being sent to the Garden Point Home for Half-Caste children near Darwin, and was a decision negotiated between my sister and the MSC priests of Darwin and given the seal of approval by the Protector of Native Affairs. Whether it was a wise decision or not, it was a major decision, and shaped my life and especially my ongoing engagement and tussles with Catholicism.

The college on the cold Western Plains at Hamilton became my home of sorts for six years. I arrived in Monivae the year before the death of Mannix. The Archbishop was omnipresent and omnipotent. Much closer and more tangible than the Pope, his steely-eyed visage was in every corridor, watching my every move. He might not have known this dark boy from the north, but from his picture, he seemingly knew everything I did. Maybe he would have approved of my attitude to study, and my ability with a football, but perhaps little else.

It is difficult from today's fast-driven electronic age, in which personalities flit across our consciousness through their 15 minutes of fame, to capture that presence in the close, very Irish Catholic community in Victoria at the time. It was a bit like someone coming to Geelong and hearing about Ablett. For a boy from the bush, he was the boss, the biggest boss, the stuff of legend and myth, the flag-bearer of the complex identity of a complex people. As I learned about the Irish Catholic Australians, and their history of struggles for emancipation, self-determination, and economic growth through social acceptance and education, I learned about Mannix.

I remember the sense of loss at the end of that year when this man that inspired such awe and admiration, as well as fear and hatred in another sector of society, was laid out for public viewing at St Patrick's Cathedral. Many thousands of school children, including the senior boys from Monivae in their blazers, filed past his body to pay their respects and acknowledge their gratitude for his defence of the rights that they and their families were able to freely enjoy as a result of his lifelong efforts.

Truly the death of a hero—to the poor, to the unemployed, to the Irish Catholics, to anyone who wasn't born with a silver spoon in their mouth and an estate in their future. I, like many, was somewhat confused about the criticism of him for being Irish Catholic while I understood him to be a very patriotic Australian. His strong and concerted efforts for education so that those not born into wealth might take their place amongst the public servants and the professions was something that made a lot of sense to me. Because at that time education was seen as a bridge for Aboriginal people to cross the chasm between our culture and way of life and that of the non-Aboriginal.

WHEN MANNIX WAS LYING IN STATE AT AGE 99, Paddy Djiagween was probably resting in the shade of his jigal tree. Unlike Mannix, facts about his birth, life and death are not certain, and not yet picked over by scholars. His birth date is debated in Broome, as being either 1880, the year in which Broome was established, or perhaps as late as 1888. When Mannix died my grandfather was a very old man, around 80 years old. Very old, especially given the early mortality of too many Aboriginal men. He was always, it seemed, older than the oldest man in my home community.

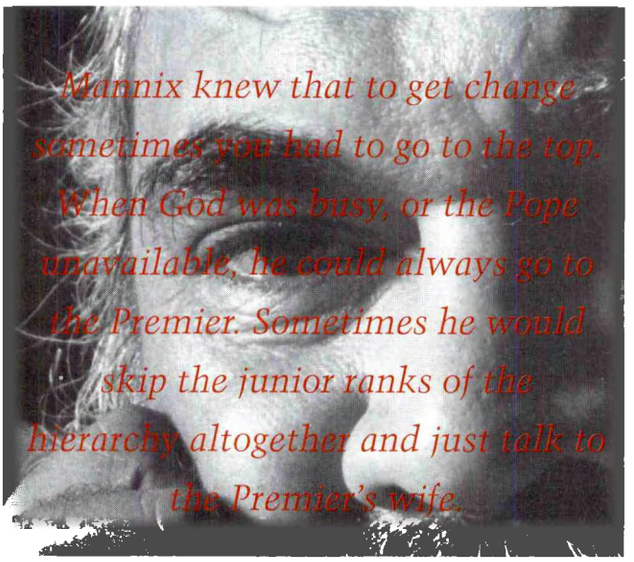
The death in 1991 of Paddy Djiagween at the age of 111 or 103 passed without much notice in the wider non-Aboriginal community, as seems to be the way when very senior Aboriginal people die. His passing left for me a very deep sense of loss but also a firm conviction that his contribution to Australia and to the promotion of similar values to those of Archbishop Mannix should be told if at all possible. It is what he lived through, what he lived for and how he lived it, that is to our gain and is the story I'm hoping to weave tonight.

Patrick Djiagween was born of Aboriginal parents, Jilwa and Wanan, both belonging to the Yawuru people who have traditionally occupied the coastal and hinterlands from Broome south to Wybeena. His proper name was Djagun. The kinship grouping into which he was born was Brungu. His law, the ceremonies and traditions and custom for which he was owner and custodian was that known as Una, Dulurru and Gatrinya. He was baptised a Catholic at Broome around 1900 by Father Nicholas and confirmed by Bishop Gibney in Beagle Bay Mission. He described to Fr. Francis Huegal, a German missionary, some of his early encounters with the emerging Catholic Church

in Broome and Beagle Bay in the following way:

'They were Christians of Beagle Bay. My father would do any job. He lived in the bush near Broome, camping anywhere around there. There were any amount of Aboriginal people here, a lot more than now. Plenty big corroboree …

'I was about thirteen when Fr. Nicholas went to Beagle Bay in a boat. He said, "You boys like sugar cane?" He take us to old jetty. We going to Beagle Bay [140 kilometres away] We were in the dormitory plenty boys, only seven half-castes. School was with Mr. Randle from England. He was our school teacher, boys and girls. After school we went to work in the Garden.'



It was not long after this experience in Beagle Bay Mission that he and several others became homesick for their country in Broome. Despite his attempts to return to his country, he and his mates were found in the mangroves and returned to the mission.

He also told of how in 1907 when the St John of God sisters arrived, led by Mother Antonia O'Brien: 'They came in a small boat. Two men carried her, she bent and kissed the ground. Then I came with a hermit crab. She got frightened.' Asked later by Mary Durack, what he thought when he first saw Mother Antonia in her full white habit, he replied that he thought she was a seagull. No wonder he gave her a hermit crab.

The life style at the Mission with the priest and brothers in the earlier period he described this way: 'We went to Mass, all in Latin. We learn to sing. Only the Lord's prayer was in English. On Sunday we go picnic, every one in khaki shirt, big and small. First hymn we learnt, English, Latin, *Salve Regina*. Easter, we have ceremonies. Plenty people.'

What we need to realise from these reports and observations of Paddy Djiagween about his first encounters with not only the Catholic Church but with the non-Aboriginal world of Australia is that it was all happening in the period just before the Australian Constitution was passed in Westminster, prior to the First World War and just before Archbishop Mannix began to condemn the second referendum push in 1917.

Worlds were in collision, and events and interests on the far side of the world were powerful enough to have dramatic effect in Broome and in Melbourne. In 1917, Mannix said, 'I warn you to keep conscription out of Australia and not to give a blank cheque on your liberties to any government'.

Paddy Djiagween's liberties had already been taken by government. There was no contemplation by the Federal government that Aborigines should be allowed to vote in the referendum even though Paddy Djiagween had lost a brother overseas as a soldier in 1914.

While my grandfather came to know the priests, brothers and nuns of Beagle Bay, the region of his birth was in turmoil, with the forces of pastoralism, pearling, the gold rush and law and order changing the face of his land forever. A few years before his baptism at the turn of the century, a pitched battle was fought at Windjana Gorge between Jandamarra and a posse of police and pastoralists from Derby. The death, or capture, of Jandamarra was not only the justification used for sweeping raids along the Fitzroy, Margaret, Mary and other major rivers in the Kimberley, indiscriminately killing and terrorising the Aboriginal communities who were living there upon their tribal lands.

It was also seen as necessary for the young colony of Western Australia to show it was capable of ruling its natives. There was nothing to be gained for that young colony by making it known to the Home Office of its mistreatment of the Kimberley Aboriginal people.

My grandfather was working for his Irish father-in-law, Joseph Fagan, droving cattle for the Duracks to the Port of Wyndham in the early 1920s when a dispute between an Aboriginal man named Lumbia and a white man named Hay led to a punitive expedition out from Oombulgurri or Forrest River, which resulted in the capture of Lumbia, and 20 or 30 others, who were brought to the mission in neckchains. Others came to the mission too, with gunshot wounds and stories of mass killings and cremated bodies, later found by a rare Royal Commission to be true.

Two constables found responsible for the death of four of the prisoners while in their custody were tried, acquitted, promoted and transferred. Lumbia was convicted of killing Hay, sent to Fremantle Gaol for ten years. Rough justice, blind justice, or injustice? The Crown's justice being brought brutally home to the natives of the north. *Lumbia had killed Hay because Hay had violated his wife.*

My grandfather saw rights to land being trampled by the hooves of cattle, rights to fair treatment being strangled by iron neckchains, and rights to life being dispensed with by the muzzle of a gun. He lived that period of history which people now say is so far in the past it should be forgotten.

I say it should not be the subject of guilt—a wasted emotion—but should be the subject of honesty, a reminder of what has happened, in order that the thinking behind those events does not have a legitimate place in the present.

THE BRUTALITY OF THE FRONTIER was replaced by a kinder form of brutality, in the guise of high ideals of assimilation, forced social change and relocation of Aboriginals for their benefit, if not by their choice.

Many of the settlements and reserves that were set up during the assimilation period just before World War II were established on behalf of the Government to raise beef. The many thousands of head of cattle that were sold to feed the soldiers at the front came from the cheap labour of Aborigines that settlements provided. They were the labour force that fed the front line, as well as making airstrips and being the Coastwatch. Many who worked in those camps at Moola Boola, Violet Valley and on private lease-holdings often had no house to sleep in, no swag and certainly never became wealthy from the years they laboured.

The current Human Rights Commission Inquiry into the Removal of Aboriginal Children will, I hope, touch upon this aspect of the slavery of those who were put into these settlements through the policies and intentions of governments. I hope it will deal not only with the lives of the individuals that suffered under those policies, but also deal with the consequent effect on those who were left behind as well as those who were removed from their land, and put under pressure to distance themselves from their cultural and social ways of life by being forced to adopt new beliefs and new behaviours.

In 1914 Paddy Djiagween married Grace Elizabeth Fagan—my grandmother—a Djaru woman from Halls Creek, and went to work for his Irish father-in-law in the East Kimberley, not only doing stock work but keeping his books and records in order. He had an ability to travel through the traditional lands of the many groups that still had possession of their country and were bound by their traditional laws, customs and practices.

Whites ignored and violated Aboriginal Law and custom without penalty. This was not the case for Aboriginal people, especially one from the salt water, Goolarabulu side of the country. His approach, understanding and respect for protocols was maintained. Paddy Djiagween was bound by these laws and participated in ceremonies honouring his obligations and kinship responsibilities.

As well as his responsibilities to Aboriginal law, Paddy Djiagween also carried out responsibilities in the white world, holding a job for many years with the Western Australian Roads Board, prior to the declaration of Broome as a town. He would go up and down the town on foot, or on bicycle, reading water and electricity meters. I know his relatives at Halls Creek were very impressed to know that a blackfella could not only ride a horse, but also ride a bicycle.

As one of the very few Aboriginal people working in Government circles, he not only could look after his family with a sense of security, but use his influence to ensure that the broader community was also cared for, particularly ensuring that the Yawuru had a cultural reserve near Broome. He was the link between the bureaucracy and the people, creating a place where people could keep their ceremonial objects, free of interference from others.

Mannix knew that to get change sometimes you had to go to the top. When God was busy, or the Pope unavailable, he could always go to the Premier. Sometimes he would skip the junior ranks of the hierarchy altogether and just talk to the Premier's wife.

My grandfather had to wait for his moment to get to the top brass. He waited until the Queen visited Broome in 1963. He shook the white-gloved hand and said to her 'Why can't we have the same rights as the white man?' The Queen promptly agreed and indicated her wish that he be given full rights. My Grandfather went across to the Continental Hotel and demanded a beer. The barmaid was startled and refused, as the consumption of alcohol was forbidden to those without a dog tag of citizenship rights. An aide of the Queen was summoned and confirmed the citizenship rights of the old man. He sipped his beer with a sense of gratitude—due more to the achievement than thirst I feel. He was not a big drinker, but the right to drink was a liberty denied by government and statute, and like Mannix, he knew rights had to be struggled for and won.

Paddy was a product of his time and his place, and so was Mannix. The crucible of the thinking of Mannix can be found in the struggle for Catholic emancipation in British history, in particular the freedom from discrimination and civil disabilities granted to the Roman Catholics of

Britain and Ireland in a series of laws during the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

After the Reformation, Roman Catholics in Britain had been harassed by numerous restrictions. In Britain, Roman Catholics could not purchase land, hold civil or military offices or seats in Parliament, inherit property, or practise their religion freely without incurring civil penalties. A Roman Catholic in Ireland could not vote in Parliamentary elections and could readily be dispossessed of his land by his nearest Protestant relative. Paddy, had he known this history, would not have been surprised.

The Emancipation Act of 1829 admitted Irish and English Roman Catholics to Parliament and to all but a handful of public offices. With the Universities Tests Act of 1871, which opened the universities to Roman Catholics, Catholic Emancipation in the United Kingdom was virtually complete. This was the context that Mannix and many other Irish Australians carried with them.

Mannix saw the value of political mobilisation, public oratory and legislative change being necessary for the achievement of justice and an end to discrimination and the restriction of liberty based on sect or race. In all of it, education was a key element, and the right to a quality education that protected culture and religion was central. Like Aboriginal people, the Irish were treated as a race. Only for Aboriginal people, the treatment did not become legislated away in 1871.

Instead my grandfather was born into a legislative system that looked at race, at skin colour, as a marker of freedom. Like the Irish centuries before, my grandfather's people, all over Australia but especially in Western Australia, were denied the Common Law human rights of land ownership, of education, of religious practice, of language, of being able to front a bar and buy a beer with the money from a day's labour. More than 120 years after the Catholic emancipation, we are still awaiting full and ungrudging recognition of common law rights, such as the right to maintain land ownership and our native title.

Mannix recognised this, and saw the truth of it. On Social Justice Sunday in 1940, he is quoted as saying, 'We have come here tonight to talk about social justice, or to listen to others talking about it. I wonder if anyone else in the hall who talked and thought of social justice thought that we owed something in the matter of social justice to the Aborigines of Australia. I believe in social justice, but I believe in it all round. I do know that the Aborigines of Australia would be able to furnish a very strong indictment against the present rulers and inhabitants of Australia and those who have gone before us.'

Fifty years later, his words live on in black and white, losing nothing in accuracy, relevance or timing. But my grandfather thought not in terms of indictment or condemnation or of social justice or of emancipation. Those concepts fade into abstraction and disappear like smoke, out of reach. He lived his life and judged a person as a person, treating all as equals, and as good people until proven otherwise. There was no bitterness or hatred there, no spark of angry revolution, surly or real. He worked in his community with his people, through his law on his land, to show a way of survival, of adaptation to events he could not control or change. Bending but not breaking. He was always strong in his own position, certain of his authenticity, a lawman who followed his bush law and Catholicism, finding a source of spirituality and a rationale for life in both.

Adaptation to change did not mean acquiescence. He did not bow his head before force but looked it in the face, working to find ways in which his stories, songs and law could survive, using his authority in law to negotiate constructive resolutions for the problems of massive social change, dispossession and dislocation.

Much of this was internal, between different social groups moving into places like Broome and Beagle Bay. As a keeper of songs and ritual practice, as an Archbishop in traditional religion, he ensured that people in Broome could share in the ceremonies that travelled through that country, even when their own country was locked away from them by barbed wire and old gates. There are many stories to be told of those efforts that will have to wait till another time.

I remember many things about my grandfather, and he taught me much that I am still learning to understand. Much that he said or did, however, was a puzzle to me, as I was too young, headstrong and brazen to understand.There were two key periods in my life when I sought his counsel, and managed to spend enough time with him to absorb some of his wisdom. The first was in the year before I was ordained. I was wrestling spiritually and personally on the threshold of a commitment to Holy Orders. I sought a year's leave, particularly to be with my grandfather and sit and learn from him to think in the country.

Later, after a time as a priest in Port Keats, when the community was torn apart by grog-fuelled riots, I came across to Broome to see him again, depressed and disillusioned, looking for answers to the sense of futility and frustration that was eating at me. I found him sitting in the

deep shade under the mango trees, a few old dogs at his feet and a billy can of cold sweet tea on a smoking fire near him.

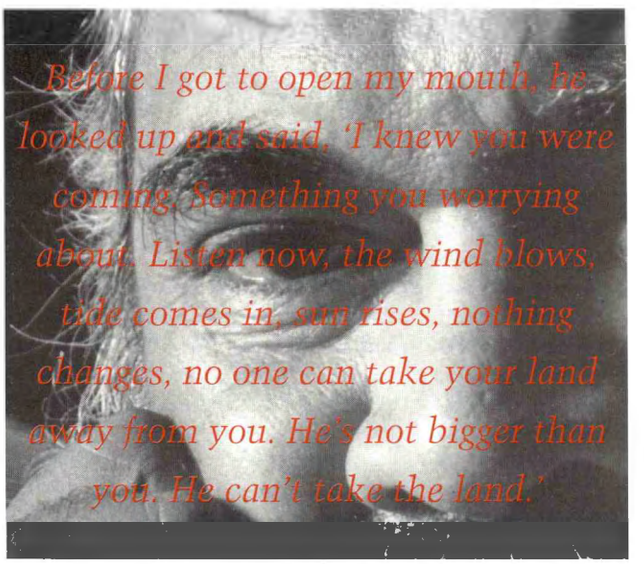
Before I got to open my mouth, he looked up and said, 'I knew you were coming. Something you worrying about. Listen now, the wind blows, tide comes in, sun rises, nothing changes, no one can take your land away from you. He's not bigger than you. He can't take the land.'

I had nothing to say, and what I thought was important became irrelevant. Those words will always travel with me. They are part of me, of who I am, of how I live my life, and one day, I might fully understand them to the depths of their meaning. They are carved on his tombstone.

In researching Mannix, I found this quote from Vincent Buckley:

'Mannix seems to have believed passionately in two principles which most people cannot follow in their own minds because in practice they contradict each other: the unitary principle that the "right" should be followed with all the resources and all the virtues you have; and the pluralist principle, that people are entitled to follow out the logic of their own initiatives without interference.'

That to me was a crystallisation of my grandfather's philosophy in action. He followed the right cause, for his people, for his country, for his law, with all the resources and virtues that he had. He ensured through negotiations for areas of land both with the white system of land tenure and the traditional system of land tenure and native title, that people in that area had the room to follow out the logic of their own initiatives in law without interference. He made sure there was a place where people could keep their sacred objects, and practise their business, their law. Yet he also respected and allowed for the white man's logic, seeking not to interfere but to influence by example and honour, in the hope that one day sense would prevail.



For those of us working to spark a spirit of reconciliation and social justice in this country, the lessons of Daniel Mannix and Paddy Djiagween still echo from the grave. We need to pursue with all our resources and virtues the unitary principles of justice, equality, liberty of the 'right'. We also need to commit ourselves to the pluralist principle, that all Australians are entitled to follow out the logic of their own initiatives without interference, leading to an acceptance and respect for difference, for self-determination, for our right to be bosses for ourselves.

Finding the sweet point of balance between these principles is the challenge of reconciliation for Australia, and for each of us, in our own lives and in our own actions, just as it was for Daniel Mannix and Paddy Djiagween.

For Mannix, thought and belief required action. In the present climate those committed to reconciliation and those committed to social justice face some challenges to the unitary and pluralist principles outlined above. In the present specific debate on native title and general debate on Aboriginal Affairs these principles are in tension on a number of fronts. There is a reluctance to recognise the communal, collective basis of Aboriginal society and culture.

Instead, there is an insistence, for example, that native title should be reduced to an individual title, able to be sold, pawned or mortgaged in negotiations with other parties. On the same grounds, we are seeing a sustained attack on Aboriginal organisations and their leaders, with the view being expressed that funding should be channelled to the 'lowest common denominator', namely the individual or the nuclear family unit.

Our challenge and our opportunity is the redefinition of the Australian identity as we go to the anniversary of Federation. We need to understand that the Australian identity is fundamentally tied to the relationship with the indigenous people. We need to stand for the vision of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 'A united Australia, which respects this land of ours, values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and provides justice and equity for all'.

I know where Mannix would have stood if he were alive now. I know where my grandfather, Paddy Djiagween stands.

The question is who will be standing with them. ■

Patrick Dodson is Chairperson of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. He delivered the Newman College Students' Club 1996 Daniel Mannix Memorial Lecture at Melbourne University on 4 September, 1996.

BRUCE WILLIAMS

Machines of desire

THE UNENTICING ADVANCE PRESS about the Australian Opera's *Flying Dutchman* centred on Barrie Kosky. Would he or wouldn't he? Was this to be another boo-and-hiss-attracting, Sydney-hated-it, Melbourne-loved-it, great-for-the-box-office production, like *Nabucco*? In the event, audiences have remained polite, and other critics, in relief or disappointment, seem to have welcomed a soberer Kosky. This is certainly not an 'irresponsible' or merely silly *Dutchman*, and what it offers is an interpretation, as distinct from a stunt. Even so.

The single most consequential element in the production is the set. In Wagner's three-act version, the one usually played, Act I takes place on 'part of the Norwegian coast with steep and rocky cliffs in the foreground' and the set must somehow accommodate two sailing ships. Act II is in a room in Daland's house large enough to house a spinning chorus, and Act III throws the two worlds together, with both ships, the exterior of the house, and a cliff from which the heroine can plummet into the sea. All this, of course, nowadays, is usually only suggested.

In Sydney, it is largely absent. Midway between stage floor and proscenium, designer Michael A.R. Anderson hangs a traditional box set, of the kind used in Ibsen and company—that drawing room, with piano and potted palm. This one's proportions taper towards the back, which pushes the effect closer to the expressionists. Beneath the drawing room is an industrial workshop, represented by old sewing machines which must have been a property assistant's joy to disinter. When the Dutchman makes his fateful entrance into Daland's house, a section of the drawing room floor and wall rends apart, and from then on to the end of the evening, dry ice and lurid light stand in for the world of the Other. The room, the factory and what is not the room.

The central character is this interpretation is not the Dutchman, who is deprived of a milieu, and consequently of much dramatic substance. It is Senta, the well-

Richard Wagner, *The Flying Dutchman*, Australian Opera, Sydney Opera House, August-September 1996.
David Chesworth, *The Two Executioners*, Chamber Made Opera. Malthouse, Melbourne, August 1996.

brought up young lady who is obsessed with the legend of the storm-tossed wanderer. This Senta has a terrible time. Not only is her father ready to sell her to a total stranger, which is Wagner's idea, but she is put to work like a proletarian drudge and not once, but twice, hurled to the ground by Erik, her lover. These are (presumably) Kosky's ideas. The contemporary iconology of the female victim is freely drawn upon. The chorus gangs up as if to rape her, but doesn't (twice). Senta does a lot of staring out at the audience, wide-eyed, as if on the brink of something immeasurable and rather appalling.

At the same time, there seems to be another insistence on Senta as—ah, the dear old phrase—a socially progressive character. At the end, she refuses to take a dive. Wagner's stage direction reads:

> In the glow of the rising sun, the transfigured forms of the Dutchman and Senta, clasped in each other's arms, are seen rising over the wreck and soaring up into the sky.

Kosky's Senta leaps down from the drawing room to the stage floor and, going further than Nora when she leaves her doll's house, out of the fictive frame altogether. It is a fine *coup de theâtre*, and a fine example of our current belief that the best thing a character from the past can do is to behave as if she had all the advantages of the present.

This way of resolving the conflict, combined with the lurid light and the dry ice and the absence of ships, is to turn the Dutchman into an option for Senta, an item in her consciousness, a way out of the Spinning Chorus. This is an impoverishment. Certainly few would want to see a production today which simply underlined the resemblance between the character and his creator, who also required a steady supply of maidens to plunge into the infinite sea of his ego. Yet the text and the music offer something more ambiguous and dramatically promising than that.

Senta is attracted to the Dutchman, not only because she sees herself in the role of redeemer, but because she has heroic aspirations; she wants to join him in a world of profounder being. If he is a demon, she will be a saint: either is preferable to Daland's world of getting and spending. As in later Wagner, there is the ordinary world and the world of vision, and the heroic characters are visionaries. (Well, OK, maybe not Siegfried.) But does this world exist, this finer plane? To romantic sensibilities, the question, however resolved, is not trivial; the symbolic realm of the sea had a powerful imaginative hold over many besides Wagner. (W.H. Auden's *The Enchafed Flood* is a book about it.)

ANOTHER WAY TO APPROACH the matter is to listen: the finest passages of the score, such as the Dutchman's monologue ('*Die Frist ist um*') and his scene with Senta later in the same act speak, most have thought with extraordinary eloquence, of these possibilities. To treat them as a sickly phantasy, born of oppression, is to eliminate myth and substitute the standard sociological banalities of our time. I don't say it can't be questioned or re-interpreted: I object to its being scorned.

There are several other ideas running around in this production, sometimes colliding. Piet Mondrian and his theosophically-influenced designs are drawn upon for a visual motif and there is some guff in the programme about a 'dynamic conflict' between this and Wagner's world. The flat planes of Mondrian are difficult to reconcile with the singers' movement, which alternated between something akin to expressionist distortion and good old operatic all-purpose knockabout, particularly noticeable in Senta's scenes with Erik. There was much heavy-handed over-insistence. Senta, for example, stared and stared and stared at a lightbox with the inscrutable Mondrian motifs.

The Australian Opera and Ballet

Orchestra under conductor, Gabor Ötvös, gave a straight account of the score with plenty of forward momentum. Perhaps it was Ötvös, as well, who steered the singers towards the score's lyrical possibilities, and away from Wagnerian barking and pointing. In this, they were assisted by a recessive box set, like a wind-up gramophone horn, which produced a clear, warm acoustic for voices. The orchestra was less fortunate; the Sydney pit reduced the basses' surging scales in the overture to a buzz and the timpani thudded dully. Woe, thrice woe, unto the NSW Department of Public Works.

Julian Gavin, as the Steersman, and Elizabeth Whitehouse, as Senta were both making their Australian Opera debuts. Gavin produced an appropriately young, fresh sound, and obviously enjoyed treating his big aria ('*Mit Gewitter und Sturm*') as a parlour ballad. Beats clinging to the rigging. Elizabeth Whitehouse sang Senta with not the least trace of squall. There is a German radiance in her voice, but its top notes are clear and forward, like the Italians'. The combination made for exemplary Wagner singing. Senta's 'Ballad', cleanly attacked, actually sounded like a ballad, and her line in the great duet unfolded with rhapsodic freedom. She was born to sing the *Valkyrie* Sieglinde—in Adelaide, perhaps?

'*The Flying Dutchman* without a riveting portrayal of the protagonist is like *Hamlet* without the Prince' says the AO program. An overstatement, fortunately. Richard Paul Fink used his strong dark voice intelligently, but his production was uneven, especially in the lower mid-range, and under pressure too many notes went sharp: the end of '*Die Frist ist um*' brought a wincing example. In fairness, another interpretation might have better served his singing. Relentlessly, he was directed into slow-motion 'expressionist' movement, which at times gave the impression of a man, two of whose thoracic vertebrae have just collapsed, trying to reach a telephone.

In Melbourne the following week I caught the revival of Chamber Made Opera's *The Two Executioners*, a prize-winning and much-vaunted production. David Chesworth's opera sets an adaptation of a play by Fernando Arrabal, who had his vogue in the 60s and 70s with plays like *Picnic on the Battlefield* and *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria*. (It was the period of Genet and the elevation of the Marquis de Sade.) I recall a production of *The Architect*, at the Pram Factory, in which Jon Hawkes and Max Gillies, both naked, ran round a large space spouting Arrabal's peculiar blend of the scatological and the gaseous-metaphysical—shit with syntax.

The action of *The Two Executioners* consists of two sadistic rituals, one off- and the other on-stage. A woman denounces her husband to two executioners, who promptly get down to work. In the anteroom to the torture-chamber the woman waits, with her two daughters. One daughter sides with mother, the other

rebels, but by the end of the play, the mother and her ally have succeeded in bullying, humiliating and manipulating the rebellious daughter into closing ranks with them against her father. This action is punctuated with howls of pain from the torture chamber, and on a couple of occasions mother goes in there, first to taunt her husband, then to rub literal salt and vinegar into his wounds. Man dies, daughter succumbs, blackout.

Chamber Made lavish their usual meticulous and inventive theatrical skills on this scenario, and Chesworth's music (so far as I could judge on one hearing) effectively articulated both the savagery of the action and the phony lyricism of the three women. 'You must see it' said most of my theatrically-cultivated friends.

All right, I give up. What for? The piece is psychologically rudimentary, and as one-eyed as *The Brady Bunch*. When it was written, it had some herbs: Franco ruled Spain, and elements of Catholic culture, such as the sanctification of the martyred mother, were ripe for Arrabal's raw, frontal satire. It is not a question of the world's having radically improved, and such triangles and quadrilaterals are still played out. It is a question—if you want to get into that territory—of finding a live connection with the audience's current experience, including the experiences they want to suppress. As it is, the 'shocking' subject-matter shocks no-one; we are there to enjoy, if we can, the overt 'theatrical brilliance'. And covertly?

Musing over these two productions, I began to wonder. How is it that, with one or two exceptions, such as Kosky's own *Nabucco*, these 'challenging' and 'radical' productions are so easily absorbed nowadays by those who, on the face of it, ought to be, if not shocked, at least peeved? Several explanations come to mind, one of them summed up in the celebrated *mot* of Mr Vincent Crummles: 'the public craves a novelty'.

Flicking through my AO program, however, with its ads for Scotch and luxury cars and high-end audio gear, it struck me that perhaps we might seek an explanation in an unnoticed congruity between the audience and those who currently tweak the texts.

These two productions banish the transcendent, neutralise, so far as possible, the softer and more sociable emotions and present human beings (in Deleuze and Guattari's phrase) as 'desiring machines'. Arrabal just sees people in that way, and the production is faithful to the text. Kosky's interpretation, in omitting the sea and ridiculing the ordinary, has the same effect. Staging is elaborate and inventive: the range of concern narrowly fashionable.

Just so in the theatre of capitalism, in the advertising, the 'presentations', the product launches and multimedia displays, all the resources of money and power and technology are brought to bear on the desiring consumer whether what s/he desires is a Rolls, a slimmer, younger body or some custard powder. TV audiences have learnt to make an everyday disjunction between form and content, to enjoy the ads, without reference to what they are supposed to sell.

Is something like that happening in what are alleged to be sites of critical culture? ■

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PETER CRAVEN

Tall tales, but true?

The Conversations at Curlow Creek, David Malouf, Chatto & Windus, 1996.
ISBN 0 7011 65715 RRP $35.00
Night Letters, Robert Dessaix, Pan Macmillan Australia, 1996.
ISBN 0 7329 0851 5 RRP $29.95

IT SEEMS FASHIONABLE at the moment to pretend that there is some kind of new viability in the non-fiction novel and to suggest that the novel, that tired old nag, has run its race.

George Steiner has been holding forth about this lately, in the wake of V.S. Naipaul's factional (as we say in this country) *A Way in the World*, and Sir Vidiadhar has declared that making it up is a thing of the past as far as he is concerned. The debate is so tired it can sound like a postmodern pastiche of an argument, though it is true that in recent years we have seen books like *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* which yield almost precisely the same narrative satisfaction as the novel, and seen such exact analogies in terms of artistic realisation as Tobias Wolff's *In Pharaoh's Army*.

Although it is an argument which has to be rejected in the light of Proust and Boswell and all the rest of them, it has a certain seductive plausibility just at the moment, and that must have something to do with whatever is in the air. It's only a couple of months since Naipaul's ambiguous version of novelistic form was pipped at the post for the Dublin IMPAC award by David Malouf's *Remembering Babylon*, which must have surprised Malouf as much as it did everyone else. Now we have David Malouf's new book *The Conversations at Curlow Creek*, which appears at almost the same moment as Robert Dessaix's unclassifiable *Night Letters*. Reading them together is enough to make you credit George Steiner and imagine that some new tradition really has come among us.

David Malouf's international reputation began to consolidate at almost the time that his Australian readers started to wonder about where he was headed. In *The Great World*, David Malouf, our lyricist and miniaturist, decided to treat the Changi POW camp and the long shadow it cast over the lives of two men. It was an epical subject, a Patrick White of a subject, and in an extended treatment David Malouf made it the focus for the drabbest performance of his career, a novel so lacking in the fundamentals of narrative tension and dramatic projection that it did not even compel 'fantasy' to the extent where the reader could tell the central characters apart in the mind's eye. *The Great World* seems to me the most singular turkey of Australian literature in the last couple of decades but that didn't stop it gaining a new, and one suspects rather more middlebrow, audience for Malouf.

Remembering Babylon was a more endurable book, with sharply realised moments of poignancy, but it too was from the novelistic theme park; a book about a 'white' Aborigine, full of lame dialogue, historical tushery and extended, imprecise, lyrical interlude. The Russians and Central Europeans have a smorgasbord of words for this kind of thing. Suffice to say that David Malouf in recent years has shown a fatal weakness for what might be dubbed either the Myth of the Statuesque Settler or the Australian Magpie Myth. Call it what you will, the result is High Fake Colonial. He has been writing as though he imagines he is Patrick White reborn to animate the merely chronicled iconography of Manning Clark and give it a third, novelistic, dimension. Such an ambition should not be seen as always already ridiculous just because its fruits are so consistently meagre or pompous; but it is an ambition wildly out of kilter with Malouf's gifts.

The Conversations at Curlow Creek is a book about the Irish and a book about the bush. The protagonist, Adair, is a gentleman trooper, charged with the duty of hanging one Carney, a bushranger, at dawn the next morning. Much of the concentration of the book and part of its not inconsiderable, if fitful, power comes from the fact that the two men exchange the roles of penitent and confessor as they commune almost mutely through the dark night that is to precede the death of one of them, but is poignant with enigma for his executioner as well. Adair has it in his head that the leader Carney served, the turbulent Irishman who has led him and other renegades into the bush and is himself now dead, is his adoptive brother Fergus, the wild and golden boy he had loved as a child and who, through his magnetism and the mystery of his fate had occluded any possibility of Adair giving himself to his true love (or is she?), Virgilia.

The Conversations at Curlow Creek is a deeply deliberated attempt to articulate the inchoate longing which someone may experience for the twin of his own sex, and in this sense it is in the tradition of all Malouf's work, stretching back beyond *An Imaginary Life* to *Johnno*. Much of the

Nijinsky's leap

This is just one of the ways
of imitating music.

How can we do anything valuable
who are tied to meaning?
I leap, I jump, I stay still
on top of the air. Can a musician do that?
I am working on vibrating at the top.
And not coming down.

The men who interview me
at this hospital don't believe
I am still at the top. They talk to me
only when I come down.
I am definitely here
but I have not come down.
Because I am on top
I will not leap further. They want me
to admit I am a dancer.

Please, I am not a dancer,
I am the man who drives the poleaxe
and kills the animals.

I could exaggerate
and say that everything smells of blood.
But if everything did *smell of blood*
we would eat only vegetables.
We are not hardened,
we are not habituated,
we can love animals.

But it is what we have done to animals
(ourselves included)
which has made me mad—
i.e. insane, i.e. in shadow
when I'm out in the sun.

And I see it, see him,
that mask with its shoebrush moustache,
that penis in astrakhan—

Ever since that day
I have been dancing away from him
though I've always known
he owned all the music.
I've had to learn to dance without music.

Now I dance all the time,
without sets, without ballet-master,
without Chopin and Weber,
in my old man's costume,
my fat body and shrunken legs.

To be with God
you must hear no music.

Your beautiful imitations,
believe in them. In the uterus
it is dark, it is a place of pure sound,
of eternal adjacence. Let no light in
and then you can leap.

Peter Porter

poetry-stained mist of Adair's brooding is impressionistic in its representation and affecting in its poignancy.

What most obviously flaws the book is what gives it its residual dramatic shape, its realism. Two men are shut up together the night before one is to be hanged. The dominant time of the novel is real time. Adair has questions he desperately wants an answer to, yet—as if in fealty to nothing but his creator's lack of confidence with dialogue—he fumbles them.

Much of the inner action of the book is in fact taken up with the flashbacks which constitute his sense of his past, though these are as much a matter of epiphanic 'phrasing' as the overriding *noche oscura* of the present. As with so much even of Malouf's finest writing, we dangle somewhere between a highly adept writing which refers rather than presents—a kind of metawriting which resembles creative criticism not in the manner of Proust but like a miniaturisation of that effect—and moments of realisation, poignant in their pathos, that cannot bear the weight of emotion that is put on them.

David Malouf's fiction seems to me to be peculiarly burdened because he is intent on doing things he is not good at. It is like listening to a light tenor trying to sing baritone. One consequence of this is that *The Conversations at Curlow Creek* is full of the kind of summarising link pieces which might grace a 19th century novel but what they lead up to are not—generally speaking—scenes of decisive action or realisation.

This is one of those novels equipped with a vulgarly workable plot which exists affectively in the *tesserae* of its haunting moments. The whole of it is dream-like

because it is vague though the parts have a half-comprehended plangency, like the lumpish translation of a symbolist poem. This sense of irresoluteness infects the atmospherics of the whole book, its half instantiation of a world where the wail of the banshee and the black tracker's sense of impending doom are cognate. It works too in the strangely evoked intimacy of two men who do not touch but who seem fortuitously to hold each others' hearts in the palm of their hands.

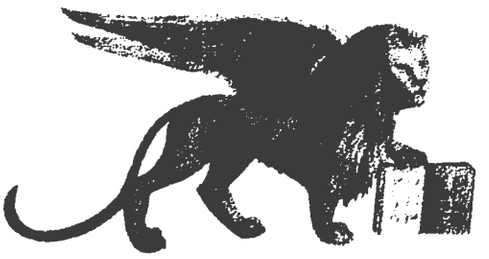
This is not, for what it's worth, the long awaited homo-erotic novel people—rather vulgarly—imagine David Malouf may one day write. It is a novel about love, perhaps a love deeper than eroticism, that has some affinity with that epiphany of the children in the apple garden at the end of *Four Quartets*; but somehow that archetypal Malouf apparition—most articulate, if most fragile, in *An Imaginary Life*—is made to consort with a world of bread and mud and hangman's rope.

So *Conversations at Curlow Creek* is not quite David Malouf's *Kiss of the Spider Woman* in the vicinity of the mystery of the bush and the ghost of Patrick White, even if it does partake of the *faiblesse* that such strange couplings might suggest.

ROBERT DESSAIX'S *NIGHT LETTERS* might as well come from nowhere. Dessaix's first book, *A Mother's Disgrace*, was the unusual autobiography of the man best known as the presenter of the ABC's *Books and Writing*, with the soft purling voice. It managed to be a brave, unconventional book, detailing both Dessaix's quest for his biological mother as well as dealing with the madness of his adoptive mother, while remaining continuous with the persona of the rare bird we know and deal with.

Robert Dessaix painted himself as sometimes whimsical to the point of solipsism, dandyish in a delicate-flower way but with a good deal of toughness behind the lisp, not least on the subject of homosexuality. Dessaix edited an Oxford *Anthology of Gay and Lesbian Literature* a while before, in which he refused to exclude material presenting the different faces of homosexual experience which happened to be by writers who did not label themselves in that way. It brought to mind the Robert Dessaix of a few years earlier still who had written for the old *Age Monthly Review* about multiculturalism with the kind of penetration that appalled the professionals.

Night Letters comes with the grimmest kind of extra-literary context. Everyone in the literary world has known for some time that Robert Dessaix is HIV-positive, and this is indeed the *donnée* of this fictionalised memoir, in which a figure with a point-to-point correspondence to the writer learns that he will contract AIDS, tells his partner, and then sets off journeying around Northern Italy. He travels as the young and obsessed travel, for the sake of it.



The letters he writes home are presumably addressed to his partner, though a slightly arch Nabokovian preface says they have been edited by one Igor Miazmov, a name in which one smells lower depths, if not Russian puns further out of reach, from this former student of that literature.

Night Letters takes the form of a journey which may be an analogue to, or a postmodern shortcut for Dante's *cammin*—and Dante is a constantly argued-with presence the narrator is reading on his way—but he is coupled with the Sterne of the *Sentimental Journey* who is one of the inventors of the modern idea of travel as experience, the 'trip' in the existential if not the ontological sense.

So *Night Letters* is a kind of brocaded, meditative travel book, skipping and brooding its way round Venice and Padua *et al* but it is also, with a tremendous gaiety and gravity in tension, a meditation about last things, not a *memento mori* (after all, who could forget it?) not any kind of simple *carpe diem*, but a complexly enacted paradigm of what life might mean, told as a set of stories, in the shadow of death.

The book contains explicit, formalised stories as well as the more sprawling story of its own movement which serves as an umbrella for them. If Dante is the great Presence, wrestled with and, in the light of the vision of God at the end of the *Paradiso*, accepted, Boccacio is the unspoken deity whose name is not invoked because his influence is structural and fundamental: Boccacio whose characters in *The Decameron* tell stories in time of plague.

As the narrator travels he listens to stories from various interlocutors who might as well be guides across the waters, psychopomps, call them what you will. Their stories distract him from the mere fact of mortality though they are everywhere preoccupied with the blood and pain and sparkle of the quest for love, generally imaged through a female romancer, sometimes a courtesan and always presented both 'fabulously' and fabulistically. Some of these stories come from the mouth of one Professor Eschenbaum, a darkly intellectual German who may be the narrator's Doppel-gänger and may be some avatar of Aschenbach in *Death and Venice*.

Somewhere way at the back of *Night Letters* there is an intellectual scaffolding that is dimly Jungian and certainly agnostically religious though all of this is very tricksily and remotely insinuated through a narrative that is both candid about its spiritual seeking and extremely skilled in its own co-ordination.

Night Letters was edited by Drusilla Modjeska, and is in the tradition of *The Orchard* (and to a lesser degree *Poppy* before it) in that it explores the interstices between fictional and discursive writing with a marvellous spaciousness and freedom, yet never makes the experiment (the experience) seem forced or mechanical.

This returns us, by necessity, to Steiner's original suggestion that it is in the fictional treatment of non-fictional material that things are being realised.

This seems to me at once incorrigible and nearly useless as a dictum, but it appears to be true of David Malouf's *The Conversations at Curlow Creek* put alongside Dessaix's *Night Letters*. The novel is by one of the nation's (and, more controversially, the world's) more accomplished writers, yet it does nothing but imitate forms of writing it cannot inhabit, nothing except reiterate old themes of the author's with a new urgency of futility.

Of course it claims the attention of anyone with a sharp interest in Australian writing or a developed interest in the success and failure of David Malouf. There is also enough of the ghost of a great book inside it to repay anyone the effort of enduring its studied lyricism and half-strangled dramaturgy and, therefore, sustain the interest of the general reader. But that is a minimal claim.

IN CONTRAST, *NIGHT LETTERS* is several kinds of books at once—an erudite travelogue in the manner of Patrick Leigh-Fermor, a dramatised journey in the manner of Bruce Chatwin. It is also, with a quite

jewel-like precision, a miniature of that most beguiling of all forms, the 'anatomy'—the book which fits no box but exfoliates its own in series. But let's not be too arty about this. *Night Letters* should be a classic. It dramatises the plangency of the tragedy of AIDS by spending most of its time talking about other things, but then returning, in snatches, and with great simplicity, to the central apprehension of loss. It deserves the readership of everyone who cares about that terrible subject. It is also an errant, wispy, very sophisticated book, never afraid to parade its own naivety. ■

Peter Craven wrote the Australian chapter of the *Oxford Guide to Contemporary Writing*, to be published in October.

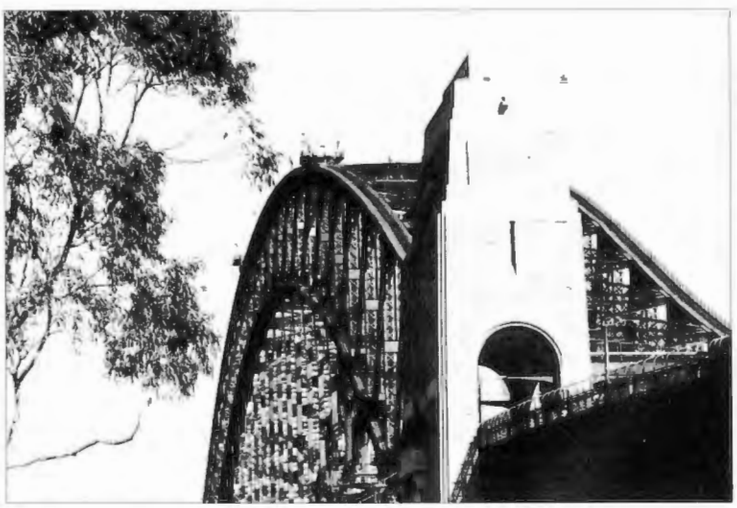
Books: 2

David McCooey

What I Have Chosen I Have Chosen

The Oxford Book of Modern Australian Verse, Peter Porter, (ed.), Oxford University Press, Australia, 1996. ISBN 0 19 553376 3 RRP $39.95

THE FIRST ANTHOLOGY of modern poetry I can remember having an impression on me was A. Alvarez's *The New Poetry*, which happened to include work by Peter Porter. As an anthology, the force of *The New Poetry* was, by the early 1980s, well and truly spent. Nevertheless, it had an effect on me, a teenager in Subiaco beginning to learn how to write poetry. Anthologies have a way of hanging around in unexpected ways. They may, like angels, be messengers of the divine dressed in tattered clothes—a faded cover, a broken spine. On the other hand, anthologies are yet one more example—like the tower of Babel or our inability to conceive infinity—of our fallen nature. In the realm of ideal forms, somewhere between anthem and anthropology lies anthology.



Increasingly, poets have been chosen as anthologists, and Australia is no exception. Tom Shapcott, Rodney Hall, David Campbell, Les Murray and Vincent Buckley have all been anthologists. Here, one of Australia's best and best-known poets, the expatriate Peter Porter, has been given this delicate and thankless job. For in an age suspicious of the hegemonic or the canonical, the anthology has become yet one more site of competing ideologies. Examples of the political nature can be seen in Issue 36 of *PN Review*, a response to *The Penguin Book of Contemporary British Poetry*, or Seamus Heaney's broadside poem written in protest at being included (a rare thing) in an anthology of British verse. Closer to home are two recent opposing volumes: Robert Gray and Geoffrey Lehmann's *Australian Poetry in the Twentieth Century*, and John Tranter and Philip Mead's *The Penguin Book of Modern Australian Poetry* (both 1992). The latter volume's most controversial element was the inclusion of the complete works of that never-born, long-dead fetch, 'Ern Malley' (who got more pages than his co-Frankensteins, James McAuley and Harold Stewart).

But as his blunt introduction shows, Porter holds no truck with camps, ideologies, or parties. This is an anthology representative of nothing less or more than the anthologist. For Porter, 'Ern Malley's' poems are excluded only by virtue of their original publication date, since he has taken 'modern' to mean anything after 1945. In this he is more inclusive than, say, Harry Heseltine's 1981 *Penguin Book of Modern Australian Verse*, which excluded poets who had established reputations by the mid-1950s. This meant excluding Rosemary Dobson but not Gwen Harwood (both of whom were born in 1920). Heseltine's exclusion of Dobson on such a basis is patently absurd, especially as she continues to write, what some may say is her best work, today.

Porter avoids that kind of ageism (I can't think of another word for it), but nevertheless sways towards the younger poets; those not only writing after the war, but who were born after it (eight born in 1949 alone). This may partially account for the significant omissions of Douglas Stewart, William Hart-Smith, Harold Stewart and Nan McDonald. Porter includes 118 poets, about two-thirds of whom are men. With 265 pages of text, there is an average 2.25 pages of text for each poet. This seems pretty much to be the norm, rather than the exception, these days. (Anthologies with titles like *12 Poets* are rare today, and Les Murray's recent *Fivefathers* is surely predicated on his reputation and the fact that the work is intended for non-Australian readers).

Inclusiveness has many positives, but one drawback (possibly the only drawback) is that the individuality, both what is singular and what is representative, of a poet's voice is unlikely to be expressed in such confines.

This becomes all the more pressing an issue when the anthologist declares himself to be uninterested in 'historical principles'; that is, in choosing poems considered representative of an individual or group, or

poems recognized by critics or poets or their authors as 'significant' for various reasons. For Porter, this is the anthologist's fatal flaw. Faced with the need to choose, 'the anthologist might be tempted to fall back on fame, notoriety, fashion and other indicators not synonymous with merit', he writes grimly.

PORTER BELIEVES THAT his refusal to make his selection on 'historical grounds' is the chief principle which differentiates him from the numerous other anthologists of modern Australian poetry. But what does this mean? 'I have endeavoured to produce an on-the-spot survey of Australian poetry over the past fifty years almost as a Martian dropped suddenly in the midst of Australian society might do' (from 'The Group' to Martian poetry in one move?). The conscientious Martian, Porter explains, would go to the library and read all the relevant books making his or her (I like that bit, what about 'its'?) selection on what 'seemed outstanding'. This metaphor is interesting, for it highlights Porter's expatriation, his dual insider-outsider status. Another paradoxical move is Porter's claim that he chooses what is outstanding 'whether it fitted in with my tastes or not' (p. 7). To me, this is akin to saying 'I chose what was good—irrespective of any extrinsic characteristics—but did not rely on my taste to make that choice'.

In fact, I think Porter's program (not to have a program) is a sound one, it simply cannot be argued as a pure one. Porter's desire to avoid polemics is laudable, though he is not the first Australian anthologist to avoid being *parti pris* (as he terms Gray and Lehmann's anthology). Vivian Smith is an example of a passionately non-partisan anthologist, willing to include poems by poets who (as anthologists) did not include his. Porter is certainly not lacking in self-confidence with regard to his mission, willing to include poems that the poets themselves would like to disregard, such as one by Kevin Hart which was excluded from Hart's *New and Selected Poems* of last year. Inevitably, I am reminded of Porter's poem, often taken as his apologia, 'What I Have Written I Have Written'.

Of course, numerous anthologists make the 'quality' claim. Gray and Lehmann in fact make the very same one in their introduction. However, the proof of the putting is in the reading. And there is much to admire in Porter's collection. Indeed, the most pedestrian thing about this anthology (quite properly) is its introduction. Although a number of anthology pieces are chosen (such as McAuley's 'Because' and John Manifold's 'The Tomb of Lt John Learmonth, AIF') Porter is true to his stated aim of not choosing poems simply for historical reasons. With Judith Wright, for instance, it is almost a relief not to have 'Woman to Man' or 'South of My Days' served up again. But then, one must ask, why 'Because' and not those poems? The significance of poems which have been important to earlier anthologists, critics and readers is that they trace out a figure of Australian poetry in the past, helping us to define it today. Porter *is not* a Martian; no matter what he intends he cannot pretend to not know what has been chosen in the past. This may seem facile, but in any case Porter disagrees, and so his anthology must succeed or fail through the force of his editorial personality, the strength of his aesthetic judgement. In many cases this pays off. There are a number of lesser-known poems which startle and impress this first-time reader, such as Laurence Collinson's 'Night and Day', Alex Skovron's 'Sentences', or Lisa Jacobson's 'Flight Path'.

Porter claims that 'the anthology has good millennial credentials', which is to say he chose poems published in collections as recently as last year. However, there are some significant late-bloomings that seem to have gone unnoticed. Rosemary Dobson and Vivian Smith are both represented, but their late work (which is often strikingly spare and plangent) is not included.

THE AVOWEDLY MARTIAN anthology invests heavily in whether or not the alien's personality will illuminate or dominate the choice of poems. To me, numerous poems seem notably Porteresque. For instance (and I am certainly not complaining about this) there is an emphasis on wit. This is seen (to choose just a handful) in poems by Jennifer Strauss, Barry Humphries, Clive James, William Grono, Laurie Duggan, Stephen Edgar, and not one but *two* excellent sestinas by Evan Jones, as well as R. A. Simpson's satirical bash at the form, 'All Friends Together'. This is very fine indeed (though it is a shame that no space was found for any of John Clarke's excellent parodies). The readiness to include expatriates is also welcome, though Humphries' 'A Threnody for Patrick White' must surely be an instance of extrinsic forces coming into play. In addition, the Porteresque is seen in the mixing of registers, in the interest in music and in the satirical. Added to all of this is the tart, unavoidable agency of death ('Death, you're more successful than America', as John Forbes puts it), and finally there are perhaps a couple too many poems featuring cats. All these aspects come together in Porter's own 'The Sadness of the Creatures'. But surely Porter was chosen for this very reason. The anthology is *meant* to break up previous notions of what modern Australian verse is through a choice which is, if not eccentric, then at least highly personal.

One purpose of an anthology—however eccentric—is to make connections; and to make connections previously unseen is probably the primary strength of the eccentric anthology. Given Australia's 'New World' status (and all the attendant dialectical imagery of Australia as both Edenic and hellish) there is an emphasis on place and on the Fall, which produces just such new connections. The first poem of the anthology, R. D. FitzGerald's 'Eleven Compositions: Roadside', seems a strikingly apposite expression of the settler-Australian's condition. The poem works through a contrast between the pastoral landscape without and the interior landscape within:

> having said this much I know and regret
> my loss
> whose eye falls short of my love for just
> this land,
> too turned within for the small flower in
> the moss
> and birds my father all but brought to his
> hand.

More overt is Lehmann's 'The Spring Forest' which begins 'Each year we get further away | from the Spring Forest, | the original text'. The dualism in both poems relates to the sense of the inescapable pressure of Australia as a *place* as well as an idea, no matter how far poets should range in form, content and style. We see this in the false innocence of William Grono's evocative 'The Way We Live Now', which distils in under thirty lines something of Perth which remains current: 'Yes, we like it here. | Sometimes the shrewdest of us find the time, | after gardening, before television, | sipping beer on enclosed verandahs, | to speculate on the future'. We see it too in the traditional figures of place which inform Peter Skrzynecki's 'Wallamumbi', which is one of a number of poems concerned with the vast changes engendered by settlement; from 'Seasons of inheritance and shadows of voices | Haunt its hills like a recurring dream' to 'Acres he ploughed became chapters in a book | He

never wrote'. Imagining Australia as 'the ungazetted paradise', Peter Rose asks us to 'Name me a republic | rousing and ringing | as a coital cry, | whose vivid flora | no colonizing nose has penetrated' ('Imagining the Inappropriate'). In the main, as John Kinsella, Philip Hodgins and Anthony Lawrence demonstrate, the pastoral theme in modern Australia is more often than not anti-pastoral. And here things begin to connect. The convict wind beneath the door which FitzGerald traces in 'The Wind at Your Door' (the second poem in the anthology) is walled-up in the convict-made bricks of a colonial house in Andrew Sant's 'Cover-Up'; it is a necessary condition of being Australian:

> ...I'll keep them sealed off, not only for practical purposes
> but also from better society. I think of the brogue of the Irish
> and the witty cockney tale-spinners exiled in Tasmania
> behind the hugely substantial indifference of distance;
> and I am walled in, a keen listener amongst the dumb bricks, with windows
> wide-open to admit the fresh breeze, the sail-raising westerlies.

What the poems in this anthology show is not simply the worldliness of Australian poetry (as if that were ever in real doubt), but how open windows onto other times and places 'admit the fresh breeze' as well as their own cover-ups. Amid all this, Australian poets are still keen listeners to their own sealed-off histories 'blasted | by a hell-fire that could bake a million bricks'.

One point about editorial principles to be addressed is the weighting given to each poet. Whilst most get two or three pages, some (as is right) are given more prominence. Despite being reckoned as first among equals in the introduction, Les Murray does not get the lion's share in terms of pages. David Malouf is given the most space mostly because of the length of 'The Crab Feast' (not a poem for those who don't like seafood). Second to that is Peter Rose. In addition to the generation noted above, there are no poems by Vera Newsom, R. F. Brissenden, Diane Fahey, Vicki Viidikas, Margaret Scott, Geoffrey Dutton, πO, John Foulcher, and Peter Kocan. Still, 118 poets is a considerable number, and one wonders what a reader wholly unfamiliar with Australian poetry (a Martian reader perhaps) would make of all these bight-sized chunks of *oeuvre*. It is certainly a shame that no biographical notes (such as those in Susan Lever's *The Oxford Book of Australian Women's Verse)* were included.

Inevitably, one can quibble with Porter's choice about individual poems; why Chris Wallace-Crabbe's 'The Fall of the West' rather than 'Puck Disembarks'? Why A. D. Hope's 'Hay Fever' rather than 'Ascent into Hell'? But if variety is what Porter strives for, then that is what he achieves. In any case, quibbling over individual poems is to miss the point about anthologies. We should not ask too much of anthologies; no single collection can define for us our national poetry. Neither are anthologies like governments, to be elected or thrown out of office every few years. We need good anthologies, just as we need good poets, as part of a sometimes-harmonious sometimes-discordant commonwealth of letters. One does not read anthologies for a definitive statement about a national literature, or even for a CAT-scan of the anthologist's literary personality, but for one more sentence with which to make a little more sense of all the other sentences in the description of what literature is, or what poetry is, or what Australian poetry is. It is a fallen genre, but then its readers are fallen subjects. And so good anthologies are judged (*pace* Larkin) not so much on being true and kind, but rather on being not untrue or unkind. We should be thankful that Peter Porter has undertaken so generously this thankless task. And despite the anthology's insistence on how-we-write-now, perhaps there is a young person in the future just waiting to read its slightly-foxed pages ■

David McCooey's *Artful Histories: Modern Australian Autobiography* (CUP, 1996) was recently awarded the NSW Premier's Literary Award in literary criticism.

A Threshold For My Son

You touch the door now, trembling on its hinge
between vague adolescence and the dark
exciting world an adult stumbles in.
(Those are not monsters: they are only gumtrees,
so take it easy.) You are seventeen

and nothing is mysterious about that,
except that all maturing somehow is
a journey through an unmapped, shadowy park:
black trees, bird-cries, lugubrious pond
but nothing you can firmly recognize.

You do not know what teams you're going to play,
nor even what the local rules may be,
but play you must, at times heroically
and yet on other days just getting by:
having enough of the ball to earn your place.

Today I spied an eagle floating slowly
along the ridge, taking a bird's-eye-view
of luck below; it hung at ease
on the blue air, and yet was governed by
a fine-tuned observation of the world;

that's the balance to be striven for,
a cool, difficult strategy, defining life
at the high, blue behest of happiness.
Walk tall, dear son.

Go straight ahead in joy
making the grassy landscape all your own.

Chris Wallace-Crabbe

PETER GOLDSWORTHY

Chemistry

1. Glass

Inside my father's shed
I notched and snapped
a hollow cane of glass.
Softened in a yellow flame
transparency became opaque:
a glowing, drooping stalk,
syrup at its golden tip.

I bent and stretched and blew
without inhaling once,
wasting many pipes
until the molten toffee cooled
and hardened into crystal
shapes, and I had breathed
an apparatus, a still of glass.

2. The Still

Ingredients were placed by measure
inside the blown globe at left-hand end,
like subjects in a sentence yet to come,
a glass machine whose moving parts
were heat and vapour, flowing left to right,
the way we think words on a page.

The cooling column
was a waist,
a hollow
narrows,
an equals hinge
between two halves
of an equation.

Beyond this bottleneck
the sum or minus distillate squeezed out
in pure and simple form, the right-hand
side of declaration, arrived at
less by magic than by see-through logic:
a wand of glass, a method that worked.
Or didn't work for reasons that worked.

3. Water

It turned saltwater into fresh,
removing taste so utterly
that there was nothing,
not even tastelessness,
an absence only, like
the taste of water in the night
inside a mouth that's warm
and dry and still confused by
sleep,
or like the taste of glass itself,
the zero flavour of the vessels
that we keep our water in,
that give our water shape.

Stand and cool, then add
a pinch of salt for flavour.
I still prefer the drinking water
that we pipe into our homes,
that splashes, stereo,
from faucets when we twist
the volume knobs, that faintly
tastes of river mud and metal,
like the heavy water
that we mostly are ourselves
inside these baggy, greasy
waterproof wineskins,
impure and unclear.

4. **Alcohol**

Once I thought booze
proof of God:
two carbon atoms
and two common gases,
fermentable from anything at hand.

Why should such simple stuff
work magic in the mind?
It seemed an obvious gift,
a rain that fell from heaven.
(The rain that falls in heaven.)

Clearer and colder than water,
its icy heat, all distillate, filled
my veins with pickling spirit,
drowned me from the inside out.

Surf's up, I said at school.
My drinking friends came round.

5. **Bromine**

Bromine is my favourite
element, period.
Its crimson fumes corrode the corks
and eat the rubber bungs
until the first red-purple drops
gather in the cooling column
like ruby grapes, unpressing
backwards out of wine,
in time-lapse, fast-reversed,

then falling into water
from the glassy neck
as heavy and uncrushable
as mercury, quickcrimson
and semi-solid, sealed safely,
unexplosively, beneath the surface
of the clearer lighter fluid.

6. **Ether**

The recipe for cooking ether
I've forgotten. One level tablespoon
of concentrated nitric acid
plus heaped teaspoonfuls
of poisonous powders.
The names are gone;
from that short night
I remember only this:
drops of ether gathering
at the distal ice-cooled tip
like tears, like even clearer
moonshine, swelling till
detachment weight,
then falling, falling, gone;
vanished into dreamy vapour
before they hit the bench
under which I slept.

7. **Acid**

There is a big name acid,
hydrofluoric, which eats glass.
For my last trick I distilled
that high and mighty octane,
standing just outside the shed,
in safety goggles made of plastic,
holding nothing but my breath,
as fumes swirled in the belly
of the flask, like juices
digesting their own stomach,

Can a sentence, having moved
from left to right, move
right to left again, taking back
its meaning without trace?
If so, the constant tug of form
and content comes to this:
style turning on substance,
my cut glass snake swallowing its tail,
self absorbed, erasing all it ever was.

PETER STEELE

Found in the labyrinth

A History of Reading, Alberto Manguel, HarperCollins, London 1996. ISBN 0 00 255006 7 RRP $45

TWO IMAGES. In the first, Christ encounters a woman caught in adultery by people who do not wish her well, or him. Challenged as to whether they should go by the book and stone her to death, he first says nothing and writes on the dusty earth, then checkmates them with a challenge, then writes in the dust again. In the second, moments before the end of the *Divine Comedy*, Dante says that he has seen 'all things bound in a single book by love/ of which creation is the scattered leaves.'

These images might be the terminals between which all reading runs. The first represents an absolutely private negotiation. Preachers and other pious conjecturers have guessed at what Christ wrote, but nobody knows. Writer and reader are identical, there; the matter is arcane, perhaps runic, but still, somehow, formidable. By contrast, Dante's vision, though singular, is of the cosmos, and the cosmos in its coherence. He is mediating something not only public but universal—and better still, benign.

Our own reading may eschew the religious, but it will certainly move up and down a scale between the two conditions. To open a private letter, especially one of any consequence, is to draw near to the one: to imagine oneself a newsreader on television is to approximate the other. We adapt to the gradations between these extremes with varying degrees of skill, some of which is all but instinctive, some cued-in by social instruction, some learned, if at all, only through a lifetime's patience, discipline, and mustered passion.

I tell my students that if they cannot read slowly they cannot read, and only time will show whether they believe this. About some tasks, they should of course ignore it, as in the reading of street directories or the consulting of Hansard, where speed is not only tolerable but laudable. And as Alberto Manguel reminds us in his spry, elegant and learned volume, the whole writing affair may have begun in equally pragmatic circumstances. Incised, then baked, clay could carry the good word about a dozen goats or a rack of wine-jars, and none of this pointed towards meditation or lyric eloquence.

But Manguel would never have begun his book if clay had the last word. He writes as someone for whom reading has obviously been, in more than one sense, an engagement—both challenge and reward. Wittgenstein thought that a form of language is a form of life, and one 'form' of language is the life-form of reading—hence the point of being prepared to do it slowly. *A History of Reading* has on its jacket a reproduction of Gustav Adolph Hennig's 'Reading Girl' (c. 1828), and a hundred and sixty-eight years later she is still intent on the book in her hands, her whole figure both serene and braced, a donor and recipient of meaning. Dante would have understood her immediately.

There are plenty of studies of books, their readers and their readings; indeed, the gigantesque and frequently pathological discipline of literary studies is, and always has been, just that. Manguel is not much interested, here at least, in either literary criticism or literary theory. He is part-archaeologist, part-anthropologist, a 'reader' of reading, whether it is bedded down firmly in an historical moment—Augustine in a garden in Milan, in August AD 386; Anthony Comstock founding the Society for the Suppression of Vice in New York in 1872—or is rippling as though timelessly through the ages. No single page of his book would have been possible without wide and intelligent scanning of earlier writings, but very rarely did I feel that things were being laboured. An Irish proverb claims, 'A rambling bee brings home the honey', and Manguel has done his home-made hive proud.

A History of Reading is divided into twenty-two chapters, the first of which is autobiographical, and the last a playful adumbration of what an in-principle interminable Complete History of reading would be like. Some of the chapters have unsurprising topics: 'Learning to Read', 'Being Read To', 'The Shape of the Book'. Some bid for a different attention: 'Reading Shadows', 'Ordainers of the Universe', 'Stealing Books', 'Forbidden Reading'. Dryden, cocky as ever, remarked of Chaucer that he was 'a rough diamond; and must be polished ere he shines': Manguel is adept at taking the rough diamonds of the reading experience and bringing out their shining planes.

The book shows throughout the working of a strong and interested mind which can close with its materials in a variety of ways. Here, for instance, are two passages, the first from 'The Shape of the Book,' the second from 'The Book of Memory'.

> In the mid-1980s, an international group of North American archeologists excavating the huge Dakhleh Oasis in the Sahara found, in the corner of a single-storey addition to a fourth-century house, two complete books. One was an early manuscript of three political essays by the Athenian philosopher Isocrates; the other was a four-year record of the financial transactions of a local estate steward. This accounts book is the earliest complete example we have of a codex, or bound volume, and it is much like our paperbacks except for the fact that it is made not of paper but of wood. Each wooden leaf, five by thirteen inches and one-sixteenth inch thick, is bored with four holes on the left side, to be bound with a cord in eight-leaved signatures. Since the accounts book was used over a span of four years, it had to be 'robust, portable, easy to use, and durable.' That anonymous reader's requirements persist, with slight

The Shrine of the Book, in the Israel Museum complex, built in the shape of the covers of the earthenware jars in which the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. The photograph is part of the current exhibition, curated by Lee Liberman, at the Jewish Museum of Australia, St Kilda, Victoria. The accompanying book, Jerusalem, In The Shadow of Heaven, *is edited by Lee Liberman and David Cohen and published by Collins.*

circumstantial variations, and agree with mine, sixteen vertiginous centuries later.

A text read and remembered becomes, in that redemptive rereading [scil., by heart in Sachsenhausen concentration camp], like the frozen lake in the poem I memorized so long ago—as solid as land and capable of supporting the reader's crossing, and yet, at the same time, its only existence is in the mind, as precarious and fleeting as if its letters were written on water.

The first of these might find a place in a materialist history of writing—except for the words 'and agree with mine, sixteen vertiginous centuries later,' which both gather the enterprise into an individual consciousness and give an estimation of time which would make no sense in a materialist account. The second passage has the air of lyric threnody, but the mention of Sachsenhausen holds it all down in time and place, as a nail holds a palm on wood. Years ago, Manguel wrote *The Dictionary of Imaginary Places*, and the present book also knows how to lodge the flighty mind in palpable circumstances, whose own identities may be appraised in more ways than one.

In the third of Gulliver's voyages, he comes across an academy in which there is a group of professors who believe that since all that exists is made up of things, language should exist entirely of nouns; a more radical group, who might be called the post-nounalists, proclaim that more apt behaviour still would be to drop language entirely and have people simply wave things at one another. Swift was fascinated by linguistic behaviour all his life, whether 'in the flesh' or in those lingual substitutes, books; and Manguel, a much more serene writer than Swift, shares his sense that speaking, writing, book-making and reading always bear the trace of our curious nature. The chapter entitled 'The Book Fool', an expression from Sebastian Brant's splendid *The Ship of Fools*, has much to say about the uses of spectacles—for instance, 'By the end of the fifteenth century, eyeglasses were sufficiently familiar to symbolize not only the prestige of reading but also its abuses'—but as usual Manguel's angle of regard is that of somebody eager to know not just what helps us to read, but what makes us run. If, in some display of various creatures, each had its insignia, and the human being had a book, what would this say of us?

As it happens, the first three pages in *A History of Reading* which bear illustrations show eighteen portrayals, ancient and modern, of readers about their business, and Manguel launches his own work with brief reflections on each of these. This sets a precedent for what happens many times in his History, where visible representation is met by skilled interpretation. In a deservedly celebrated expression, Seamus Heaney speaks of one's 'gleaning the unsaid off the palpable', and Manguel knows how to do that kind of gleaning.

Perhaps there are as many different ways of reading as there are readers: certainly, there are few limits to the ways we can regard others as readers. Shakespeare's Julius Caesar has reason to say of the Cassius who is conspiring against him, 'He reads much;/ He is a great observer, and he looks/ Quite through the deeds of men.' Johnson, challenged as to his handling of a particular book, retorts, 'No, Sir, do you read books through?' Browning's cynical bishop squares himself towards an interlocutor with, 'You, for example, clever to a fault,/ The rough and ready man that write apace,/ Read somewhat seldomer, think perhaps even less.' Manguel has many examples of people much given to the reading game, whether in solitude, in the company of a few, or in public. An example of the last is Dickens, who toured as a reader:

> The first extensive tour, beginning in Clifton and ending in Brighton, comprised some eighty readings in more than forty towns. He 'read in warehouses, assembly rooms, booksellers, offices, halls, hotels and pump rooms.'... Dickens had spent at

Sore At Heart

Knowing that the name of the god reversed
(none of your glib palindromes)
is also the state of heart and loins
when jokes and hope go out the window,

we nevertheless honour this of all
equivocating deities because
he/she shows how and why
we once were tempted to break cover

from nescience to toxic knowledge,
our need to suffer implicit
and each way forward a dark avenue,
blood in a basin for fiends to lap.

The homage, of course, is obvious
if tenebrous: how else and under
which other auspices could agape
become seriously a working love?

Peter Porter

least two months working on his delivery and gestures ... But, as one of his biographers notes, 'he did not act out the scenes, but suggest them, evoke them, intimate them. He remained a reader, in other words, and not an actor. No mannerisms. No artifice. No affectations. Somehow he created his startling effects by an economy of means which was unique to himself, so it is truly as if the novels themselves spoke through him.' After the reading, he never acknowledged the applause. He would bow, leave the stage and change his clothes, which would be drenched with sweat.

The always-formidable Hobbes says in *Leviathan*, 'As men abound in copiousness of language, so they become more wise, or more mad than ordinary.' I fear that he is right, and something of the same might be said of the copiousness of books themselves: it is a thoroughly superstitious notion that the more one has read the more insightful one will be. Manguel too is aware that anything so all-too-human as reading is likely to have its funny side. He quotes Samuel Butler's reference to one William Sefton Moorhouse who 'imagined he was being converted to Christianity by reading Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, which he had got by mistake for Butler's *Analogy [of Religion]* on the recommendation of a friend. But it puzzled him a good deal.' *The Anatomy of Melancholy* must have puzzled almost everybody who ever read it, whether or not they grasped what it is about; God knows what Moorhouse could cling to, tossed on its wild seas.

Of reading in general, I like three of Auden's sayings. 'As readers, most of us, to some degree, are like those urchins who pencil moustaches on the faces of girls in advertisements'; 'Pleasure is by no means an infallible critical guide, but it is the least fallible'; 'There are people who are too intelligent to become authors, but they do not become critics'. Manguel would, I think, agree with each of these, even the third, for all its contemporary smack of *lèse-majesté*. He is not out of touch with the tragic, as is illustrated by a photograph of the burning of the books in Berlin on the 10th of May, 1933, that piece of fire-worship which was also spiritual self-immolation. But the tone of much of the *History* is caught in another photo, in which the eighty-year-old Colette is displayed on the 'bed-raft' where she read and wrote, this time with a birthday cake which seems to be entirely aflame. Handling time, handling food, and handling light—not bad, in a history of reading. ■

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MARGARET COFFEY

Inside outside

Heaven Where The Bachelors Sit, Gerard Windsor,
University of Queensland Press 1996. ISBN 0 7022 29105 RRP $16.95

THE WEEK I BEGAN reading *Heaven Where the Bachelors Sit* the bulldozers tore into my old school. I had not believed it would happen and I saw it from the tram: at one end of the block the remnant silhouette of the pretty chapel, and at the other the rubble of the 1960s grant-aided science block, our gateway to the future. I had Gerard Windsor's book in my hand: the blurb at the back claimed 'landmark' status. A whole culture was defined, it said, and we would read there the story of Australia's strongest tribal identity and its disappearance. The kind of book through which to read the evidence of my own eyes.

In the late seventies I heard a writer, who had had a go at it, say that Irish Australian Catholicism was finished as a theme, worked out. I remember thinking it was not true, there were too many puzzles left untried, not the least of which was the way Ireland displaced Catholicism in influential imagination. So much of what constituted the 'genre' was worked out in terms of exigent families and even more exigent sexuality, 'racial' failings and folkloric pieties. I cannot remember coming across anything drawn to the challenge and seduction of faith and its working out in the framework of Irish-Australian Catholicism as the primary leitmotif. Well, while it might add in some ways to the above-mentioned puzzle, this book sets out to see the lure.

Earlier generations may have harked to the Hound of Heaven's prolix and following Feet, 'Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fear'. But for the age of consumers Gerard Windsor's image has an artful plain-spokenness: it emerges out of his experience—at the age of five—of loss (not despair) and a saving encounter with jam and rough-crusted bread. *Heaven Where the Bachelors Sit* is about sweetness proffered impossibly, but sweetness that goes on making a claim despite all the difficulty of getting your teeth into it. The title and the front cover point to the oddity, the comedy and the clarity of that jam sandwich.

It should be said that *Heaven Where the Bachelors Sit* is a series of set pieces, some previously published, brought together as a history. You can read some of them in their own right but placed between the same covers and in sequence they have a dynamic, a sense of a life moving forward, and a necessary intersection of the sub-culture with the mainstream. They trace the author's schoolboy perception of Jesuit vocation, his years in formation, the transition to university and secular life and the fall-out thereafter.

The reticence of the telling is softened in the stretch and especially in the displacement to the story of Michael Scott (co-founder of the Blake Prize for religious art) of something of the puzzle and ambiguity and satisfaction of (human) love. The time-frame is crucial: Gerard Windsor was at school in the fifties, in the Jesuit novitiate in the sixties and 'in the world' in the seventies. That makes for entertaining glosses on times much talked about: was it a glimpse of the heaven where the bachelors sit that separated Terence Queen of the Desert Stamp from Jean Melbourne Cup Shrimpton in 1965? (See page 129!)

There must be a sizeable readership for renderings of religious life, made up of either those who shared it or those for whom it has a fascination. They will find joy in the Jesuits. Of course it was a religious life a cut above the ordinary and by the sixties plosively arcane: with the facts of event, character and context before him Gerard Windsor has the kind of control that makes for wonderfully accurate placement, (I am thinking here of how he tells about the insouciance of angels) and the sensibility to register shade (here I have in mind the images of fellow novices and teachers). I read the early stories, the accounts of years spent among the Jesuits, from the perspective of someone utterly outside but unknowingly at the fringes of all this. A few days after Gerard Windsor was shifting Archbishop Mannix, I was brought to Raheen to pay respects.

I had stricken my children with the story of the book doled out serial-like each Friday (while we sewed): the year ended before the nun finished it and I understood well enough it would never be on a library shelf. Now I know it was *Claude Lightfoot* by Father Francis Finn SJ, and I know what happened.

NEVERTHELESS, IT WAS SOMEWHERE in here that I took issue with the blurb writer. It ocurred to me that there were problems with apprehending Irish Australian identity in terms of the tribe. The trouble with talking about tribes—and Gerard Windsor never does—is that it narrows everything down. You miss out on families (Jesuit and otherwise), you miss out on social class and the inventiveness of the upwardly mobile, the way the shopkeeper and professional Catholic classes connected themselves to

the Jesuit tradition, to norms of behaviour (proper and emotionally curtailed), and to an idea of Ireland reworked to put distance between them and 'old peasant Ireland'.

There was of course a demotic perspective—sensibilities that would never have been embarrassed by Archbishop Mannix's recollection of snubbing the Duke of Norfolk, that would not have registered a 'sophisticated Irishman' (for lack merely of defining fact—was it politics, medicine, Maynooth or the Society?), and that reworked Ireland quite differently. There were sensibilities not cultivated to the point of Latin and Virgil and for which language did not divide the world up in quite the neat and referential way it did for Jesuits. And if the truth be told, probably they were hazy about who Jesuits were, in real life that is.

That is why for me the point of *Heaven Where the Bachelors Sit* that gives it expanse is not about identity and disappearance. That became clear to me when I tried to see the book without the last stories, which take us beyond the confines of Jesuit life. (There is a last story which made me think about what an eldest daughter would be symbolically driven to bid for at a convent auction. Lamps, I'm afraid.) But those final stories bring home a point about fit—fit between image and real life, which is really what failed in the sixties. They offer the idea that you can look for that fit, imagine the jam, down the road in the parish church in 1996 in the company of a nine-year-old hopeful sceptic, and that you can do it Sunday after Sunday, hoping in a God who does not destroy things that are worth keeping. It's a good point, when you see your old school pulled down and it turns out that the bulldozers were a stratagem, a kind of shadow-boxing around building permit regulations. It is what developers do when they have nothing in mind, neither money nor plans. It makes for a wasteland. ■

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MATTHEW RICKETSON

Newsbeating

Granta 53: News, Ian Jack (ed), 1996. ISBN 014 014 1324 RRP $16.95,
The Media and Me, by Stuart Littlemore, ABC Books, Sydney, 1996.
0 7333 0331 5 RRP $14.95.

GRANTA IS AN ODDITY among literary magazines. It is popular, it does not actually discuss literature, it looks more like a book than a magazine, and it contains as much reportage as it does fiction. Bill Buford resurrected the small Cambridge University campus publication in 1979 and his first issue sold about 800 copies. Today, worldwide sales are close to 100,000.

Under Buford's editorship, *Granta* became known for showcasing works-in-progress of emerging or high-profile novelists like Martin Amis and Salman Rushdie and for long pieces of reportage such as James Fenton's account of the 1986 people's power revolution in the Philippines. Last year Buford left and was replaced by Ian Jack, a journalist of 30 years who had been editor of the *Independent on Sunday*.

Under Jack, the quarterly magazine's emphasis has, if anything, tilted towards reportage. In a recent interview he said: 'I actually think the main strength of *Granta* over the years has become non-fiction. People remember stories like those by James Fenton.' He is sufficiently modest not to mention another of these, namely his own surgically precise investigation of the 1988 shooting of three IRA members by SAS soldiers at Gibraltar, for which he was named journalist of the year in England.

So the prospect of *Granta* turning its gaze on the news media commands respect and a keen sense of anticipation. Readers, whether media people or simply consumers, will not be disappointed by this excellent issue. Zoë Heller deftly goes inside an American current affairs program whose name, *Full Disclosure*, announced its early high hopes. But with each fresh pilot, the program slid further toward the terrain of tabloid talk shows. Patrick Wright looks at the introduction of the armoured tank in World War I, and the distorting effects, sometimes chilling, sometimes ludicrous, of military censorship on early newspaper reports of their impact. And Fintan O'Toole contributes a finely structured profile of Irish businessman and media tycoon, Tony O'Reilly, whose credo is the marketing concept of brands. Not only is the public service element of the news media subsumed to the brand, but the industry itself is used primarily to serve global corporate goals.

The opening piece is the one that stands out, though. It is an extract from a coming autobiography by the expatriate Australian, Phillip Knightley, who in 1945 began working as a copy boy at Consolidated Press, then owned by Sir Frank Packer, father of Kerry. Knightley conveys an extraordinary, vivid picture of his experience in Australian and overseas newsrooms.

He shows us how journalism operated at the time, from the serf-like existence of the copy boys (who not only collected the reporters' laundry but lied to their wives about their whereabouts) to the way in which newsrooms are organised and stories parcelled out to reporters. He gives vignettes of famous figures like Packer, Sir Keith Murdoch, proprietor of the Melbourne *Herald*, and Ezra Norton, proprietor of *Truth*.

When Knightley joined the *Herald*, Murdoch invited him to Canberra to be his personal secretary for a few days because that was how he got to know all new journalists. Knightley expected Murdoch would pick him up in a Rolls but the magnate arrived in a dirty old ute driven by his son, Rupert, who kindly offered to show Knightley around Canberra. Norton used to demand his reporters compile secret files on anyone he hated (principally Freemasons, Catholics and communists), peppered each clause of each sentence with the all purpose adjective 'fucking' and had a violent dislike of Frank Packer. The pair once tried to strangle each other at the Randwick racetrack.

KNIGHTLEY SHOWS WHAT A NASTY, small-minded place Australia could be. Packer's *Sunday Telegraph* ran an annual beach girl competition and whenever the women came in to the office studio the photographers would take the requisite shots and then coerce the girls into pulling down their swimsuit tops so they could get 'one for the boys in the backroom.'

As a cadet, Knightley accompanied police on a night patrol and watched as they jumped out of the car to give an old drunk a good kicking. He became increasingly

worried about the gap between what he saw and what ended up in the newspapers. At *Truth* he literally invented a story about a train-dwelling pervert to fill a last minute hole on page one, but then in England when he covered a visiting Australian rugby league tour, he saw players pick fights in pubs and pay prostitutes to perform oral sex in front of teammates, but he filed not a word about this.

AFTER *GRANTA'S* NEWS ISSUE, Stuart Littlemore's memoir, *The Media and Me*, is a disappointment. The Sydney QC has made a significant, often stylish, contribution to improving news media standards since his program began in 1989, exposing plagiarism, unethical behaviour, conflicts of interest (for both journalist and proprietor) and impoverished journalistic imagination.

There is little doubt that the news media needs a watchdog just as much as the news media itself should be a watchdog on government and other powerful institutions. It is fair to say that many journalists have shown themselves to be thin-skinned in their reactions to Littlemore. Whatever flaws there may be in his approach and the program's method, the news media and its audience would be worse off without him. I thought that Littlemore, freed from the 15-minute *Media Watch* format, would have used a book to work out a comprehensive consideration of the news media, with detailed proposals for overcoming its flaws.

But the first 12 chapters comprise recollections of his earlier career as a journalist. Only the final two chapters describe his program's operation and an overview of the problems besetting the Australian media. This is the strongest section of the book. The weighting between memoir and analysis should have been reversed. For example, Littlemore raises important issues facing the news media:

- What are the ethics of journalism? Will we ever have enforceable rights to truthful information, or balance, or fairness?
- What confidence can we have in the honesty or objectivity of mass media reporting when it concerns the commercial activities of its tycoon owners?
- Has the time not come for legislative regulation of the mass media?
- If not by legislation, how can we make those media accountable?

He is clearly well-placed to chew these important questions over, but his answers, while interesting, are too sketchy to be really valuable.

Recently Littlemore has been on the media circuit promoting his book. Interviewed by H.G. Nelson and 'Rampaging' Roy Slaven on their ABC TV program *Club Buggery*, he admitted he had written the book in just over three days, and grinned—the only word for it—superciliously.

What are readers supposed to make of that? That he is a latter-day Renaissance man, dashing off not a sonnet before lunch but an entire book in three days? That the whole grubby enterprise is somehow beneath him?

Littlemore told Roy and H.G. that at one publication a sub-editor had been assigned to comb through *The Media and Me* looking for literals and had found nine. (On page 49, for example, Littlemore presumably meant to describe a factory as unprepossessing when he wrote 'unpreprocessing'.) Littlemore loftily assured them that there had not been a book printed that was 100 per cent free of errors. True, but what is *Media Watch*'s meat and drink? Combing through the *Illawarra Mercury* and holding their typos up for ridicule on Monday nights.

He complained that reviewers had focused on him rather than his book. Okay, let's look at the book, even if it appears to have held the author's attention for only three days. The blurb touts Littlemore's memoir as engaging and amusing, but, whereas Knightley's extract in *Granta* fairly crackles with sharp, illuminating stories about journalism, Littlemore musters only a handful of moments that truly engage or amuse—and in five times the space.

Could this be because Knightley has more to write about? After all, he is a respected investigative reporter, dual winner of the British Press Awards' journalist of the year; he is an author, known for his work on Kim Philby, and his landmark study of war correspondents, *The First Casualty*. Littlemore enjoyed some success at the BBC and ABC, particularly on the pioneering current affairs program, *This Day Tonight*, but is best known for *Media Watch*.

Knightley's career has been more distinguished, yet this is not the core reason for the qualitative difference beween their memoirs. Knightley's account in *Granta* ends well before his big scoops in the '60s and '70s. No, the disparity lies in the way they write about their lives. Knightley never forgets he is a story teller; Littlemore never lets the reader forget he is an opinion giver. It goes back to that deceptively simple writer's dictum: show the readers, don't tell them. Where Knightley's piece exemplifies George Orwell's notion that 'good prose is like a window pane', Littlemore needs a burst of Windex and elbow grease.

One reviewer has labelled Littlemore egocentric, but he told Roy and H.G. he rather thought this was unavoidable in an autobiography.

The word that keeps surfacing in *The Media and Me* is 'smartarse'. On at least four occasions Littlemore recounts stunts he pulled or one-liners he got off at somebody's expense, and comments he has always been a smartarse. He keeps bowling it up. Still, I suppose a real smartarse would believe it was smart to be a smartarse. I mean, he'd know better than the rest of us, wouldn't he? ■

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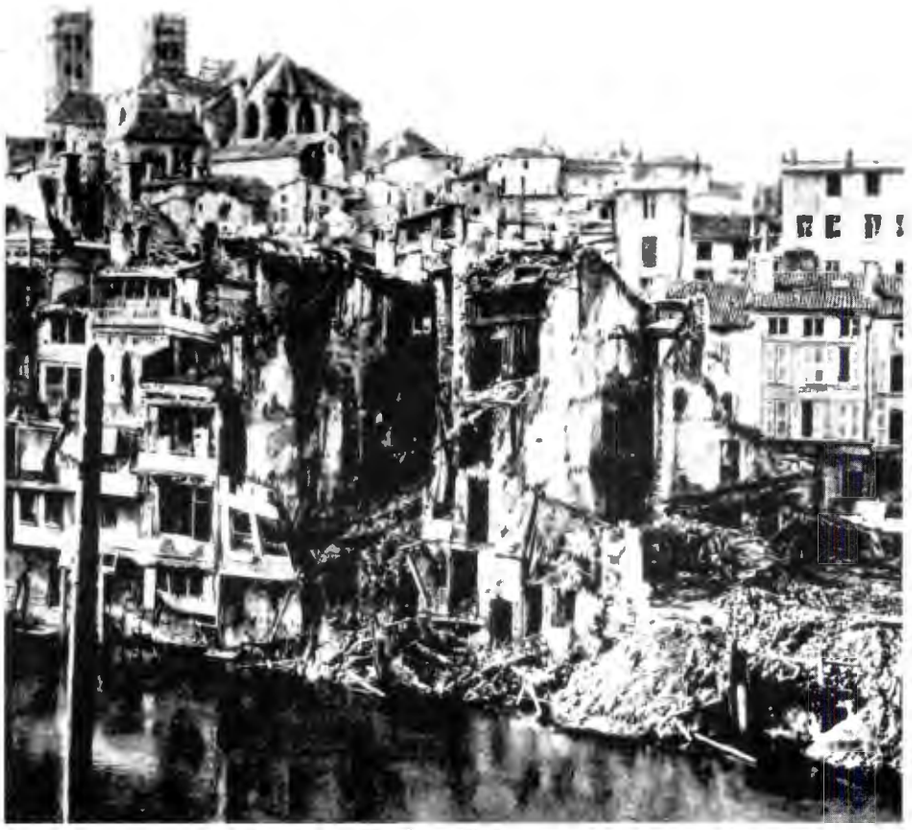
MAX TEICHMANN

Shock-absorbing

The Regeneration Trilogy, Pat Barker: Penguin
Vol. 1 Regeneration: 1991: $14.95
Vol. 2 The Eye in the Door: 1993: $14.95
Vol. 3 The Ghost Road: 1995: $14.95



Verdun, 1916

WORLD WAR I MUST APPEAR to most people as a slowly disintegrating Gestalt of browning family photographs, deserted cenotaphs, lantern slides and early newsreels. Old graves, strange popular songs, soldier's ditties. And yearly marches and ceremonies which become more painful as they seem more archaic.

Almost everyone in the Britain and Europe of Barker's trilogy would now be dead. There have been newer, larger mass killings since 1918, and the blood is fresher—much fresher. And Britain, Europe and their peoples are transformed, totally transformed during these past 80 years, so we are told; triumphantly, or sadly.

Yet when Pat Barker invites us into the Britain of 1917, and the trenches of France and Belgium, introduces us to her soldiers, and the people back home, it all seems strangely familiar. And just as shocking now as when it occurred. Perhaps people don't change as much as we thought, or feared, or hoped. Maybe this is why our social engineers have called in the geneticists to help.

Not that the soldiers didn't entertain illusions and own great tracts of false consciousness, different from those *we* clutch to our bosoms. But that's Progress. And we can observe the denials, the repressions, the group hallucinations of these poor devils with compassion. Whereas the poignancy of *our* self deceptions escape us, of necessity: Hopefully the next generations will understand, and feel sorry—not judge us too quickly.

In passing—it becomes clear that Barker's soldiers kidded themselves far less than the civilians, and as war dragged on, the gulf between soldier perceptions and the way civvies saw things widened. The soldiers looked forward—so much—to coming home on leave. Escaping the trenches, for just a little while, and meeting the loved ones, feeling like a human being again. But the soldier couldn't say what was in his mind—even if he were articulate. *They* wouldn't understand; couldn't. You couldn't tell your wife, your girlfriend, your mother what you had seen, quite often what you had done, and might be doing again. They might see you differently all of a sudden, move away, almost in fear, from this foreign being, who did horrendous things, and lived amid scenes of utter horror. Heads without bodies, the living without eyes or limbs, bones sticking out of trench parapets, walls propped up with corpses, new and old, because there was no timber or sandbags. And the never-ending stench of decaying flesh, and vomit, and blood and urine. The rats, gorged with over-eating—and *so on.* The papers and the churches never mentioned a word of that. And the civvies and loved ones were similarly tongue-tied; they stuck to trivia, or recycled the propaganda and patriotic exhortations in which the whole country was awash. The soldiers envied the civvies for their security, and longevity, and immunity from fear, and from horror and nightmares. And resented the incomprehension, and the public and private taboos against saying how it was, and how you *felt* and how meaningless and putrid the whole thing was.

As Edward Thomas wrote:

> Now all roads lead to France
> And heavy is the tread
> Of the living; but the dead
> Returning lightly dance.

Pat Barker's quest—or one of them—is to discover how men can endure this, and remain sane. (Or, did they, perhaps, quietly, go a little mad; and did this peculiar, situational form of madness lift, as the years of peace started to roll in? Or not?)

These soldiers defended themselves by repression, by close bonding, by taking each day, even each hour as it came—and by a laconic, matter-of-fact-manner; so everything hangs out, without prompting, or hyperbole.

The main character of the trilogy, the fictional Billy Prior—the other leading actors were real—writes in his diary: 'We don't remember, we don't feel, we don't think—at least not beyond the confines of what's needed to do the job. By any proper civilised standard (but what does *that* mean *now!*), we are objects of horror. But our nerves are completely steady. And we are still alive.'

But even the tough, intelligent super-realist Prior—even *his* nerves weren't always completely steady. He does a spell in the Army Psychiatric Hospital for officers, in Craiglockhart, Scotland. The poets Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen were patients there; Robert Graves appears briefly in the first novel. Their Army psychiatrist, W.H. Rivers, was an anthropologist, and Barker weaves in *his* dreams, and recollections of his Melanesian trips, and his utter absorption in a very different system of values and beliefs and behaviour—not at all like the South Sea Islanders of Margaret Mead. Of one tribe Rivers gets to know, he ponders: was it right for

the British to stop them head hunting? It was the core of their life—their religion. As the ban continued, life ran down, the population dropped to half, fertility rates to half. They started moving in groups from island to island, turning up as refugees. So: is eating people wrong? Always wrong?

Barker moves Rivers in and out of these two worlds—theirs and ours—both death cultures, devoted to the more or less ritualised murder of the 'other', or the enemy. (Incidentally, you can see Rivers' ethnographic collections in the Pitt Rivers museum in Oxford; with its rows of shrunken, blackened heads, weapons etc. Primitive, I suppose, like World War I.

Rivers' shell-shocked patients all feel shame; feel like failures. They sense they are running away, from the enemy; but, and more important, letting their friends, their bonded comrades down. *Not* the Allied victory, or the people at home—sod them—but their comrades, their tribe. And many didn't hate the Boche—Lord Northcliffe and Lloyd George could look after *that*. But Rivers wasn't pushing at an open door—they were afraid to go back and face death, or worse. The past horrors were too great to be borne consciously. So,they couldn't speak (Prior), or walk, or see or eat.

For example, Burns. He'd been thrown into the air by the explosion of a shell and had landed, head first, on a German corpse, whose gas-filled belly had ruptured on impact. Before Burns lost consciousness, he'd had time to realise that what filled his nose and mouth was decomposing flesh. Now, whenever he tried to eat, that taste and smell recurred. Nightly, he relived the experience, and from every nightmare he awoke vomiting. He hardly looked like a human being at all. His suffering was without purpose or dignity, and Rivers knew *exactly* what Burns meant when he said it was a joke.

Sassoon and Owen were homosexuals, Prior a bi-sexual, and as Rivers' psychiatric duels, with Sassoon and especially with Prior, continue, during their treatments, *he* starts to question his own deeply-buried sexuality, question its orientation. Bruce Ruxton might find all this a bit bewildering, especially as Sassoon won the MC, and Owen the posthumous award of the same decoration—'gallantry in capturing an enemy machine gun and inflicting considerable losses on the enemy at the battle of Joncourt'. *That* gentle, beautiful poet. Yet they both hated and repudiated the whole thing. So did Prior. So why did they go on?

Prior, the unsentimental loner, who loves only a munitions girl and, eventually, Rivers, writes in his diary, near the end of the novel: 'I was offered a job at the Ministry of Munitions and I turned it down, and said if I was sent back to France ... I shall sit in a dug-out and look back to this afternoon, and I shall think, 'You *bloody fool.*'

'Well, here I am in what passes for a dug-out. And I look around me at all these faces and all I can think is: What an utter bloody fool I would have been not to come back.'

It was that which Hitler and Mussolini referred to as the Comradeship of the Trenches; to *Brudershaft* and *Kameradshaft*. It goes way beyond a mutual congratulation society, should not be denied or derided, for *then* it can rise to haunt its society. The war need not have been just, nor did you need to think so at the time. It is like those who bond to a Party or Church or nation, to which they stick, no matter how wrong they know it is, or futile its endeavours.

Barker uses Prior to introduce us to the women—mainly working class. The prurient, man-hating mothers, and confused semi-oppressed daughters. The promiscuity, the woeful state of so many marriages, wives secretly hoping the old man wouldn't come back. The drunks, the wife beaters, the bores. Not Merrie England here. The febrile homosexual world in which Prior moves and takes payment, in between his munitions girl and one-night stands, is alive and well on the home front.

The younger soldiers felt betrayed, I think, by the women. Their mothers, sisters, girl friends should have stopped it—talked them out of it—not encouraged them to join up. What is a mother for? And the older men over military age, fathers etc, positively exalted in it. As did the old bastards of generals, and politicians. In Europe, the Nazis and Fascists offered the young revenge, against all of these, and those who'd kept out and profited, and the left who mocked their sacrifices. Not entirely surprising.

British novelists and some psychiatrists raised these suspicions of the double whammy—the gender betrayal, and the tribal elders' revenge against the young males.

But meantime, as Prior said, those who still lived to keep fighting were in cowed subjection to the ghosts of friends who died. There were ghosts everywhere. Even the living were only ghosts in the making. Oscar Wilde did say that man kills the thing he loves: no doubt, many do, but many more kill those they hate. And hate so as to kill with a clear conscience. But most men from 1914 on kill those whom they neither love, nor hate, nor even know. World War I was perhaps the first European-wide exercise by killing machines on automatic pilot, which consumed a whole generation. While the band played on.

This trilogy is about the Western Front, but recently I fished out a book on the Eastern Front. The Brusilov offensive of 1916. Remember that? A brilliant Russian success—but eventually failing through losses, and exhaustion of the troops. Each side lost more than a million men. Chicken feed? Take the German's Gorlice Tarnow breakthrough in 1915, which cost the Russians two million casualties. That's better. The Austrians lost 350,000 in one early battle, while Russian losses at Tannenberg and the Masurian Lakes were, and still are everyone's guess. And their bands played on.

And what ever happened to the Russian, Austrian, even German equivalents of Burns, and Rivers' other patients? Did they somehow make it back home, to resume 'normal life' in society? 'Society?', I hear Prior ask.

Perhaps they were just put away somewhere, as they were in Rivers' hospital. Beyond recall. Wilfred Owen, in the second stanza of *Mental Cases*, wrote:

> —These are men whose minds the Dead have ravished.
> Memory fingers in their hair of murders,
> Multitudinous murders they once witnessed.
> Wading sloughs of flesh these helpless wander,
> Treading blood from lungs that had loved laughter.
> Always they must see these things and hear them,
> Batter of guns and shatter of flying muscles,
> Carnage incomparable, and human squander,
> Rucked too thick for these men's extrication.

Finally:

> —Thus their hands are plucking at each other;
> Picking at the rope-knouts of their scourging;
> Snatching after us who smote them, brother,
> Pawing us who dealt them war and madness.

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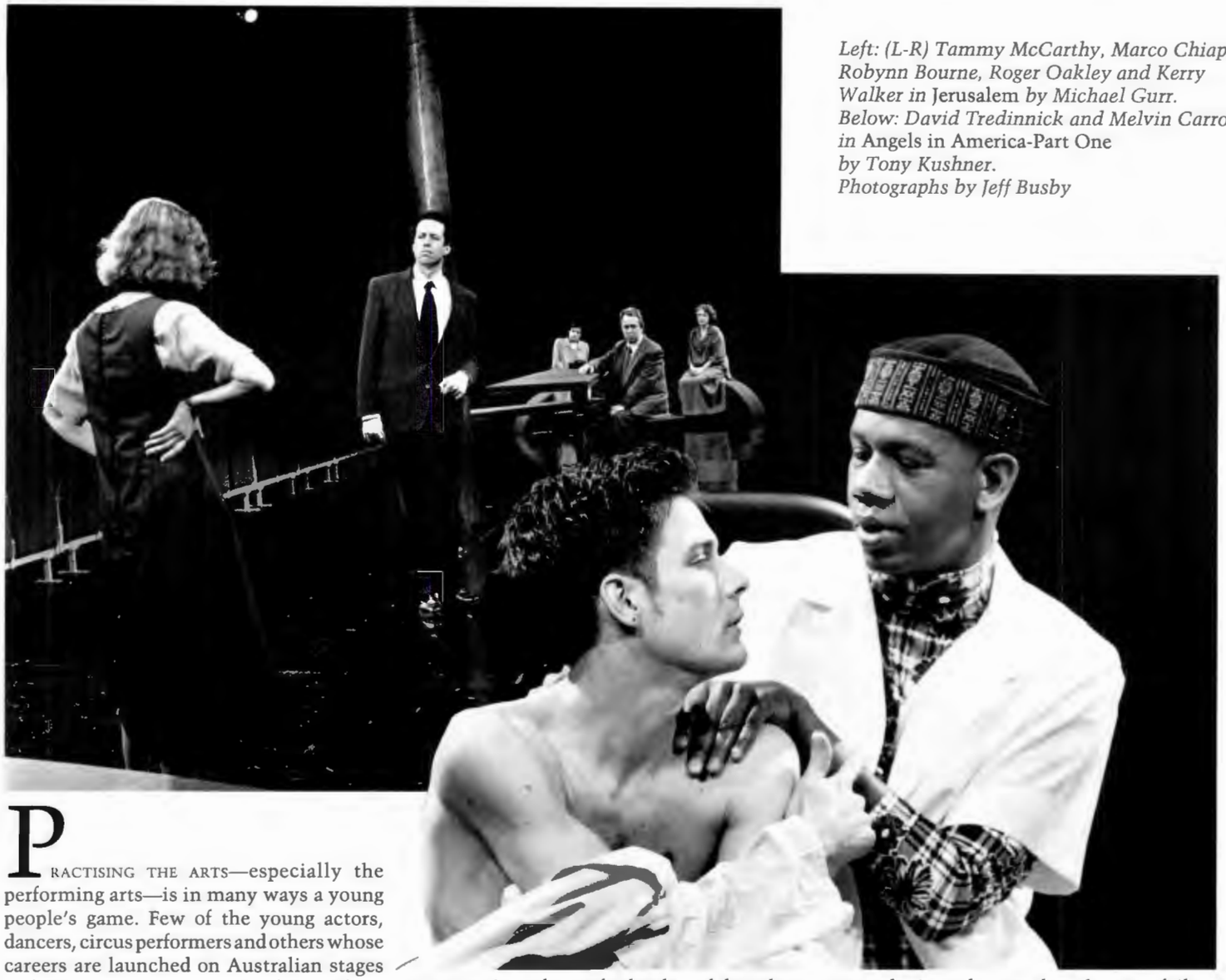

Left: (L-R) Tammy McCarthy, Marco Chiappi, Robynn Bourne, Roger Oakley and Kerry Walker in Jerusalem *by Michael Gurr. Below: David Tredinnick and Melvin Carroll in* Angels in America-Part One *by Tony Kushner. Photographs by Jeff Busby*

PRACTISING THE ARTS—especially the performing arts—is in many ways a young people's game. Few of the young actors, dancers, circus performers and others whose careers are launched on Australian stages and screens every year survive for very long in a demanding, cut-throat business in which only four or five per cent are employed at any given time.

One of the many reasons for this has to do with the repertoire. A majority of the characters created by the world's playwrights are young people, and work opportunities for actors decline as they grow older; there is a dearth of good parts for middle-aged and older women.

Another reason is economic: the average artist in Australia (actors included) earns somewhere between $12,000 and $20,000 a year at best. While optimistic, stage-struck young actors are happy to subsidise their art by casual work (as waiters, taxi-drivers and even as nannies) while waiting for the next chance to see their name in lights, this is not a prospect that appeals to older artists with mortgages and families.

Similarly, many emerging actors are happy to work in young people's and community theatre, but the appeal of incessant, energy-sapping touring and humping scenery in and out of schools and draughty halls week in and week out does not last forever. Still others form co-operative groups (mostly with friends they trained with at drama school) and eke out a precarious existence in fringe theatre. Energetic young companies of this kind abound in every city; one thinks of Splinters in Canberra, Ambush and Human Voice in Adelaide and of Chameleon or Ranters in Melbourne. But again, with very rare exceptions, senior professional actors aren't inclined to devote a couple of months to a project that's going to net them nothing but a warm inner glow and a cut of the minuscule box office at venues like La Mama, the Blue Room, Van Gogh's Earlobe or the Performance Space.

There's no doubt about it: the theatre is a mug's game.

But the daughters (and sons, for that matter) of Noël Coward's celebrated Mrs Worthington are still flocking to it in never-diminishing hordes. There isn't a drama school or course in the country that doesn't turn away vastly more applicants than it can take in and, even though many fail to complete their courses, there are scores of graduates entering the profession every year.

Some strike it lucky quite quickly. Cate Blanchett, for example, graduated from NIDA in 1992 and was an almost instant success. She was snapped up in 1993 by the Sydney Theatre Company (for Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls* and David Mamet's *Oleanna*) and by the Griffin Theatre Company (for Timothy Daly's *Kafka Dances*, which was later remounted in co-production with the STC). Blanchett's meteoric first year was crowned with the Sydney Theatre Critics' Circle awards for Best Newcomer (in *Kafka Dances*) *and* Best Actress (in *Oleanna*). Beginner's luck? Not really; she is a performer of great talent and she has had a singularly impressive string of stage and screen credits since then.

Blanchett's sometime colleague Colin Moody is another who seems to have spent very little time waiting in the wings. After graduating from NIDA in 1990, Moody was in the Q's production of Pinter's *The*

Caretaker in 1991 before beginning a substantial relationship with the Sydney Theatre Company the following year in another Pinter play, *The Homecoming*. His STC association continued over the next couple of years, with *Angels in America* and *Titus Andronicus* in 1993 and *The Crucible* as well as *Sweet Phoebe* in 1994 and 1995 (opposite Blanchett). In his time off from the STC, Moody has appeared in most of the television soap operas and several films, and in plays for other Sydney theare companies.

Melbourne-based Tammy McCarthy was also lucky enough (and good enough) to go straight into mainstream theatre from drama school. The year after graduating from the Victorian College of the Arts in 1990 (prior to which she studied academic drama with distinction at the University of New England) McCarthy appeared in the Melbourne Theatre Company's production of Katherine Thomson's *Diving for Pearls* (in the hauntingly memorable role of the retarded daughter Verge) and Bill Garner's *Sunday Lunch*. She has since had several further engagements with the MTC (including Coward's *Private Lives* earlier this year) and a year with the Bell Shakespeare Company (1993, during which she played Ophelia and some bit parts on a quasi-national tour). She has also been in all three of the remarkably successful series of plays by Michael Gurr for Playbox, most recently *Jerusalem*; and she is about to take over Helen Buday's role for the MTC regional tour of David Hare's *Skylight*.

Like most of our smartest and brightest young actors, McCarthy has also had her share of TV guest roles, as well as a horrific appearance in one of the Transport Accident Commission's advertisements. However, she has also been canny enough to mix her salaried work for the major subsidised companies with some interesting co-operative fringe theatre productions. These have included plays by cult playwright Sam Sejavka at the Universal (the seamy drug-culture piece *In Angel Gear* being one), a couple of La Mama gigs and Margaret Kirby's play about the ordainment of Anglican women priests, *My Body, My Blood*, at St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne in 1994. Her CV is thus long on variety and on roles upon which to hone the skills of her craft.

However, it hardly needs saying that for every Blanchett, McCarthy or Moody—those who break into mainstream salaried work at an early stage of their careers—there are dozens each year whose names never get into the papers and who rarely get to bank a salary cheque drawn on a theatre company's account.

As David Tredinnick, one of the up-and-coming young actors to whom I spoke recently, told me: a share of the box-office in most fringe shows will get you a beer and a pizza and not much more. Tredinnick's is one of the classic stories of the self-made actor who worked his way up from the fringe to the mainstream.

He began 'a slow arts degree' at Melbourne University in 1984, but soon became involved with Instant Theatre, a group of teacher trainees who were more interested in performing than teaching. In 1987, he joined Robert Chuter's Performing Arts Projects, a definitive Melbourne fringe theatre company then working at La Mama, to act in productions of new work like *The Music of Orpheus* and *Restoring the Portrait of Dorian Gray*.

A series of Sam Sejavka plays for P.A.P. followed (like *The Hive*, *In Angel Gear* and *Mammothrept*, for which he was nominated for a Green Room best actor award in 1991). His actual vocational training was thus a mixture of theatre in education and on-site work-experience by night, while keeping a day-job in the RMIT bookshop. Tredinnick's big breakthrough came in 1993 when he was cast in Neil Armfield's MTC production of *Angels in America—Part One*. 'I felt really spoilt', he said of the experience, 'to work on such a great play with a great cast and director in my first professional production.'

His success in *Angels* might have been a surprise to Tredinnick, but it wasn't to his peers and critics: he won the Green Room Award for Best Actor for his performance as Prior Walter that year. Early the following year, he got a part in a Playbox play (*Disturbing the Dust*); this prompted him to quit his day-job and become a full-time actor. He has scarcely been idle since, although he has also cleverly kept his career rolling along by blending co-op fringe work with properly-paid work for the major subsidised companies. His most recent part was in Playbox's *Strangers in the Night*, while forthcoming gigs include a return to La Mama and then another MTC show, *Dealer's Choice*, in November.

One of Tredinnick's colleagues in *Dealer's Choice* will be Marco Chiappi, whose career has taken a different path again. Australian born, Chiappi migrated to Scotland with his family when he was a young boy and after taking his A levels in the U.K., he trained as an actor at the Central School of Speech and Drama in London, from which he graduated in 1985. He decided to return to Australia in 1988 for a holiday in a warmer climate—only to land his first acting job with Zootango in Hobart in the winter of 1989! He won his first mainland roles in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Hamlet* for the Bell Shakespeare Company's inaugural tour in 1991.

Chiappi backed up for another Bell tour in 1992 and has been busy in mainstream theatre ever since, although he too has done the odd fringe show to keep body, soul and craft together. His performance in one of Chameleon Theatre's short plays at La Mama in 1994 was especially memorable and he has just moved from a superbly differentiated pair of contrasting roles in Michael Gurr's *Jerusalem* for Playbox to play the hapless Don Antonio in the MTC's production of *The Rover*.

Like many of the young breed of actors, Chiappi is not entirely comfortable doing screen work; 'it's the apparatus behind the camera that's so intimidating' he told me. Tredinnick agreed; his five weeks recently spent filming *Life*, the feature film version of a play by Melbourne writer John Brumpton, 'was an absolute joy but a rare experience in that branch of the industry. Usually, when you've done your final scene after a week [as an actor], they want you out of there ASAP. They're on such tight schedules.' He once did a film in which he had to stand for ages with a lizard on his shoulder; 'I had no idea why; I was never given a context.'

Both of these actors vehemently affirmed a preference for stage work, especially new work in which the actor is an important co-originator (along with the writer and director) in getting the material up on the rehearsal-room floor (as Chiappi said). Both also acknowledged the invaluable leadership roles provided by their senior colleagues; 'I stand in awe of [actors like] Monica Maughan and Bob Hornery', said Tredinnick. 'You learn so much from those dudes.'

Both also said that—unlike their counterparts of my generation, most of whom wanted to play Hamlet before they were too old and Lear when they were old enough, preferably abroad—they were happy enough just to 'stay around' and 'keep getting work' on the Australian stage, 'as long as it lasts'.■

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FLASH IN THE PAN

Let 'em come

Independence Day, dir. Roland Emmerich (cinemas everywhere). There's something highly ironic about a carefully composed shot of gargantuan alien spaceships poised over Earth's major cities. Some old spoilsports might think it's a fairly accurate evocation of the invasion of diverse cultures by the US juggernaut. And we ain't fighting 'em, no sirree. Why the world wants to pay to see American patriotism in masturbatory overdrive should be a mystery but isn't: these days Australian children are probably more familiar with the Statue of Liberty than the Harbour Bridge.

Independence Day's plot is pretty much your basic ohmygod-the-Russians-are-coming, except that now the Russians are in mafia-ridden economic rationalist hell, they don't threaten timorous Yanks any more. So bring on the aliens, looking very much like the demon-king in *Fantasia*, so that no compassion might be stimulated by scenes of them being kicked, shot, or nuked. Yes, of course they're extremely naughty: they want to exterminate us so they can just move in and take all the resources. (I think I just heard Chief Seattle turning in his grave.)

There are gung-ho special effects; no expense has been spared on the cyber-morphing of reality. The acting is considerably cheaper, although the reputations of Bill Pullman as the WASP boy-king President (I fully expected him to pull an Armalite out of a stone) and Will Smith (a sort of African-American Luke Skywalker) have been made by this. Smith was required to say sassy street-wise things and be very cool. Yo. He had a gallant single-mother girlfriend called Jasmine who was a sensible, brave-hearted stripper. Woo woo. Jeff Goldblum was a Jewish computer genius and Judd Hirsch played his father. Oy veh. Randy Quaid was a white trash alcoholic alien-abductee Vietnam vet living in a mobile home on the fringes of society. Yee ha.

In short, all America needs, to solve the problems of racial division, family breakdown, low morale of Vietnam veterans etcetera etcetera and make it feel very good and important again, is a scapegoat. It's not a new notion, but lacking original ideas, the scriptwriters have plundered and cheapened many better works—*V*, *Star Wars*, *Aliens*, *War of the Worlds* and *X-Files*. And they said Helen Demiwhatever's stuff was derivative and morally suss. Strewth.

—Juliette Hughes

Straight shooting

Courage Under Fire, dir. Edward Zwick (Hoyts). A sign that this combat movie is more than just an hour or two of patriotic drum-beating came with the American military's withdrawal of logistical support for its filming. Apparently they were disgruntled that *Courage Under Fire* was to portray defence administration and personnel in a less favourable light than the glamorised *Top Gun* or the cartoon-like *ID4*.

The core values of the film, however, are the stuff of GI-Joe legend: valour, honour and—as the film title suggests—moral and physical courage. But along with these we also have betrayal, self-hatred and denial. The appeal of the film is that the good and the upstanding prevail in the end but their success is not through formulaic victories. They struggle with themselves as much as they do their comrades.

Denzel Washington plays Lt Colonel Nathan Serling, a tank-commander who is being investigated for destroying one of his own during the Gulf War. Shuffled to the Department of Awards and Decorations, he is given a routine investigation as a distraction. He is expected to rubber-stamp a posthumous medal of honour for helicopter pilot Karen Walden (played by Meg Ryan in a strong if distant performance). Maybe it's because this is the first time a woman has received the award, but Serling takes a keen interest in the case when the testimonies of those who were involved start to conflict. The brass are desperate for the PR value such an award would bring and so pressure him for his approval, but the search for truth, which mirrors his search for redemption, consumes him, putting his career, marriage and well-being into jeopardy. The truth, in this most American of movies, is revealed in a scene by a lake draped in autumnal colours. Balm for a troubled soul.

The Gulf War backdrop of the film makes *Courage Under Fire* a tad self-righteous for the observer who believes the war, and recent skirmishes, were not fought for God and liberty alone. Nevertheless it hits the right targets.

—Jon Greenaway

Galloping gargoyles

The Hunchback of Notre Dame, Disney; (Hoyts and Village). Before going to this movie I hired the 1939 Charles Laughton version and watched it with family and friends. All the kids, from eight to sixteen, loved it. 'Why did he say he wished he was made of stone at the end?' asked eight-year-old Archie. Discussing that with him was one of the bonuses of sharing something as good as the Laughton *Hunchback:* the depth of the cinematography, the political optimism, the *incredible* beauty of Maureen

Eureka Street Film Competition

It's a while since gangster movies were the new thing. This shot comes from a 1930s classic that was one of the first. Name it, and if yours is the first correct entry drawn, we'll send you off to the movies.

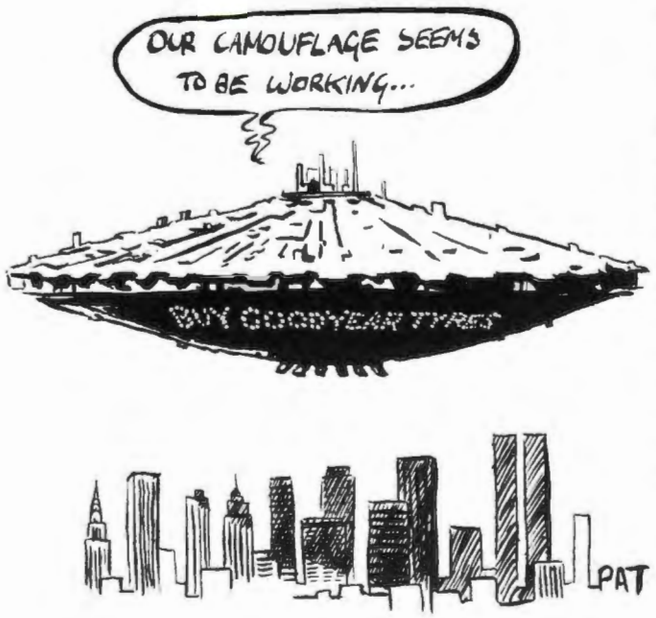
The winner of the July/August competition was Ros Bailey of Chelmer, QLD who named Cyd Charisse as Fred Astaire's co-star in *The Band Wagon* and *Silk Stockings* as the other film they starred in together.

A special commendation also goes to Kim Miller of Wagga Wagga, NSW, who just had to come up with a caption:

'I don't care what Lawrence Hargreaves says, these tri-plane box-kite hang-glider things ain't never going to fly.'

O'Hara, the pathos and complexity...

Then we saw the Disney one, and my main problem was keeping the 14-year-old in his seat. 'Mum,' he hissed, 10 minutes into the film, when rows of stone saints



began to finger-click to a very bad Broadway shuffle, 'let me go home, this is *shit*.' He'd thought he would like to compare the two versions, but wasn't prepared for confrontation with an entertainment company still presumably run by a frozen brain.

Only a dead-head would give Quasimodo three cute gargoyle buddies and give one of them the last line: 'Say, don't you ever migrate?'—to some pigeons on its shoulder. To a young sensibility that had been stirred by the restrained tragedy of the final words of Laughton's Quasimodo: 'Why was I not made of stone like thee?' this was blasphemy. My boy, inured to such macho rough-house as *Terminator, Predator, Aliens* et al, was shocked right down to his socks when he experienced the full psychic violence of gross kitsch.

If what you want is twopence-coloured bathos and Lloyd-Webberisch muzak, go and see Disney's *Hunchback*. If your stomach works, however, just stay away.

—Juliette Hughes

Purple perisher

The Phantom, dir. Simon Wincer (Greater Union). The idea, the very idea of a bloke dressed in purple running around the jungle ... I love it, and there should be more of it. Instead of Pauline Hanson's national service, we should have days when all and sundry are poured into skin-tight purple jump suits and sent up to the Daintree to hunt down feral pigs. We'd get rid of a pest and the country would feel much better about itself.

Of course Billy Zane fills out the phantom's suit a lot better than most. Unfortunately his acting reminded me of the ceramic Phantom bust a friend of mine likes to consult for advice. But hey, this is the Ghost Who Walks. And the feel of the movie was an odd mixture of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Pirates of Penzance*. Though it doesn't matter because the Phantom can communicate telepathically with his dog Devil and Hero, his trusty white steed. Kristy Swanson as Diana Palmer and Catherine Zeta Jones bring some 1990's feminine mystique to this 1930's tale of evil-doers and valiant souls. Strange, but then, as the old jungle saying goes, no one argues with the Phantom.

No matter what you do to the legend of the Phantom, he keeps shining through—especially when kitsch merchants make night-lights in his likeness. If you believe in the fight of good against evil and all that the Phantom represents, then see *The Phantom*. Rumour has it they'll let you in for free if you wear your yoga-togs to the cinema.

—Jon Greenaway

Gauling

The Visitors, dir. Jean-Marie Poiré (independent), is a kind of Don Quixote story, though Poiré and screenwriter Christian Clavier have embellished plenty of other sources, too. There are some gag routines in *The Visitors* that have a Pythonesque feel, and Hollywood time-travel spoofs of the *Back to the Future* type are another obvious inspiration. But time's arrow (and an arrow, or rather crossbow bolt, is crucial to the plot) here runs in a different direction to that commonly favoured by Hollywood: instead of nerdy American teenagers being transported back a generation to meet their parents as nerdy teenagers, we have a mediæval French knight and his cloddish servant propelled forward eight centuries to meet their descendants.

And, because the time travellers are confronting the future, not the past, *The Visitors* makes no facile assumption of universal progress; the point is not that our ancestors might have been as good as we are if only they had had modern technology.

Instead, what happens, as in *Don Quixote*, is the only thing that can happen when honour, hierarchy and dogmatic faith collide with hypocrisy, levelling and dogmatic scepticism: a great deal of confusion.

Although Poiré and Clavier are clearly not Cervantes, they find plenty of poignant humour in that confusion. The scene in which the knight (Jean Reno) and his servant (Clavier himself) try to cope with the vagaries of modern plumbing is slapstick good enough to tickle even those who pretend not to like slapstick, and the scene in which the knight, sword and shield in hand, is surrounded by helmeted French riot police, all bearing shields and batons, encapsulates the film.

But best of all is the performance of

Valerie Lemercier as the knight's 12th century betrothed and 20th century descendant: she conveys just enough understated dignity to make one think that what was best in the knight's world can breathe in our own.

—Ray Cassin

X-tra good

'WHENEVER THE SITUATION requires any real thought, any serious mental effort, people turn to UFOs, sea-serpents, Sasquatch. Afternoon talkshows and tabloid TV—they've reduced our attention span to the size of a soundbite ... soon our ability to think will be ... extinct.' (Exasperated scientist to FBI agents Mulder and Scully.)

Statements like this are part of the attraction of *The X-Files*. It shares with *The Simpsons* a capacity to look at America with a wide, analytical eye while entertaining its audience. Both programs frequently criticise the cultural and social effects of television, as though the medium's massage has been interrupted for a moment by a sudden cold face-splash.

The X-Files, created by scriptwriter and producer Chris Carter four years ago, has spawned imitators: notably the ludicrous *American Gothic*, which tries to out-grue Steven King. The territory covered by the latter program is limited to Halloween shenanigans that have a touch of *Peyton*, rather than *Melrose, Place*. *The X-Files* has a far broader canvas liberally chiaroscuroed with a paranoia that allows a suspension of disbelief, because it uses real issues, real fears, to create its world. It has resonances with *Edge Of Darkness*, *Cold Lazarus* and *Callan*. There is a deep seam of exploration that harks back to Melville and Poe, and takes in CIA human experimentation, post-Kennedy, Vietnam and Watergate mistrust along with apocalyptic terror.

The protagonist, Fox Mulder, (played by David Duchovny) is the son of a deep player in the game of Cold War politics, but realises at the age of 12 that the war extends beyond this world when his younger sister is abducted, possibly by aliens, before his eyes, presumably to ensure his father's silence and compliance in future colonisation plans.

This is a sore point in a country where *at least* five million people believe themselves to have been abducted by extra-terrestrial beings. The young Mulder goes on a quest to find the truth, and in the process is helped and/or hindered by various characters who evoke memories of the Woodward and Bernstein quest to find 'the truth' behind Watergate.

He joins the FBI and is put on 'the X-files', a term reserved for cases that have inexplicable or paranormal elements, and is given a partner, Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson), who is supposed to be the Devil's Advocate for his potential credulity. She is a pathologist, a hard-line rationalist sceptic, but becomes drawn into Mulder's intricate quest, supporting the idea that something wicked is going on without abandoning her belief in a rational explanation.

X-Files creates a world darkly recognisable as the one that lurks behind the news; the labyrinth of black ops; a world where nature is under threat and threatens us back; where the good do not always win and endings are not always conclusive, where science is frequently in the service of power without responsibility. There are those 'who know what's going on' and the rest of us who don't. The collage of images in the opening credits always includes the headline: 'Government denies knowledge', and the subtitle reads 'The Truth is Out There'. One of the main villains is a chain-smoker, cynical to the point of psychopathy, who tells Mulder 'I've seen presidents die'. If everyone knew what he knew, 'it would all fall apart'. The price of the new order is eternal nonchalance.

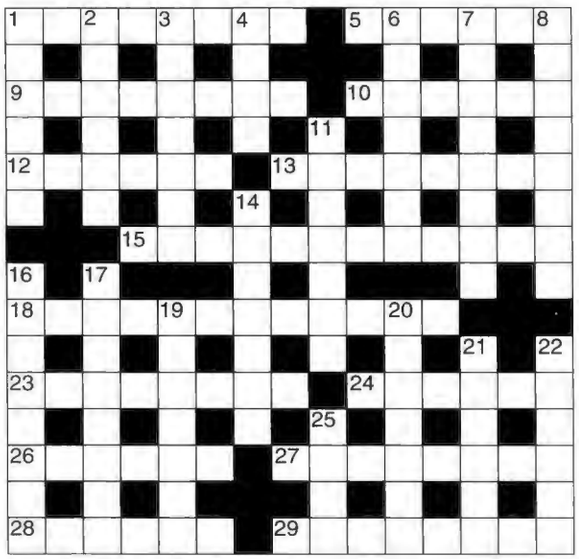
Mulder is driven, both by grief and by inclination, to find out what happened to his sister. He is Ahab, explicitly so: Scully accuses him of it during one episode 'Quagmire' when they are marooned at night on a rock in a lake possibly inhabited by a man-eating plesiosaur. She should know: daughter of a literary-minded naval captain, she was 'Starbuck' to her father's 'Ahab' when she was a child. And her pet dog, Queequeg, has just been eaten by something big and mysterious that got away. Scully-Starbuck, (the 'right-thinking first mate') is correct: he is wounded and vengeful. But his white whale is akin to Hobbes' Leviathan, evolved into what he calls 'the military-industrial-entertainment complex.' His view is seen by Scully as paranoid but it is more often than not borne os the plot. Yet importantly, his angst is magnanimous and humane—nothing of the wacko-Waco survivalist about it.

THE BEAUTY OF THIS SERIES is that its intelligence is more than seductive—it is stimulating. In the episode, 'Jose Chung's *From Outer Space*', there is some delightful self-mockery. From the first starry shot of a familiar grey spaceship underbelly, as full of piping as the Pompidou Centre, suddenly revealing itself as the underside of a cherry-picker as it rises to a faulty electricity pole at night, we know that there are going to be twists in the plot. 'Jose Chung' himself bears many resemblances to Truman Capote, and all the urban myths surrounding alien abduction are examined through techniques that remind one of everything from *Rashomon* to *In Cold Blood* and beyond. The new series starts on October 5 in the US and we will see it here some time later. ■

Juliette Hughes is a freelance writer and reviewer.

Eureka Street Cryptic Crossword no. 47, October 1996

Devised by Joan Nowotny IBVM



ACROSS

1. Iron you're putting under stress, it seems. (8)
5. Take taxi back in a United States counter device. (6)
9. In the end, placement for church was compulsory. (8)
10. Stratagem in Irish dancing includes star sign. (6)
12. Beware the convoluted spiel drunkards begin with. Get rid of them. (6)
13. With heart exchange, possible sporting trophy becomes aquarium resident. (8)
15. A picnic lunch would hardly be complete food for the road. (12)
18. Made a resounding comeback. (12)
23. Damaged copy isn't providing a general survey of some of the gospels, for instance. (8)
24. For each application read the instructions. (6)
26. This type found in capital iconic sculptures. (6)
27. Installation of bishop with mitre now, possibly reflects traditional nature of the ceremony—some would call it hackneyed! (8)
28. English foreigner threatened by immigration authorities can only grimace and depart. (6)
29. Sense an expression of agreement in the rowing crew. (8)

DOWN

1. Imitation zip fastener somehow does up! (6)
2. Headless egotistic imp thinks he's being charmingly mischievous! (6)
3. Sliding stones in front of church seem to interest this owl. Listen to its call. (7)
4. Did you hear about the three-toed ostrich? (4)
6. Inspiration about the original drawing produces a design of some dimension. (7)
7. You condemn the diet? At least credit it with one calorie reduction and don't be carping. (8)
8. Felt snubbed even though a Pole illuminated the way. (8)
11. Resembling a standardised unit, computer memory goes up about board-game on the rise. (7)
14. Goddess found in art! Emissary of the Greek Diana? (7)
16. Getting into gear. (8)
17. My life is devoted to saving El, foolish girl, from the mind-controller. (8)
19. Tearing round to hear the story! Exciting! (7)
20. Lacking 29-across in Gaza? (7)
21. At the sound of the French bell, the sea-creature will appear. (6)
22. In the chosen network the Games were introduced with a fanfare. (6)
25. The Cockney, while he may sound breathless, is a fellow of cunning. (4)

Solution to Crossword no. 46, September 1996

■	S	■	S	■	T	■	C	U	L	D	E	S	A	C
S	T	E	N	C	H	■	U	■	I	■	X	■	C	■
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L	E	C	T	U	R	E	R	■	R	■	R	■	D	■
■	A	■	C	■	S	■	I	■	E	L	A	T	E	D
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H	A	U	S	F	R	A	U	■	■	■	P	■	A	■
■	M	■	■	■	A	■	M	I	S	T	R	E	S	S
S	P	R	I	N	G	■	V	■	A	■	I	■	H	■
■	H	■	T	■	R	■	I	N	T	I	M	A	T	E
F	O	R	E	C	A	S	T	■	I	■	A	■	R	■
■	R	■	M	■	N	■	A	■	R	E	N	T	A	L
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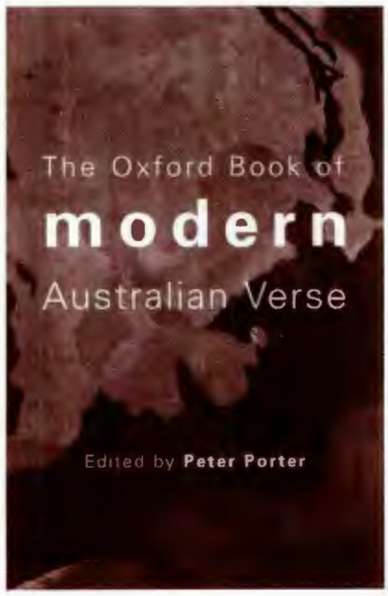

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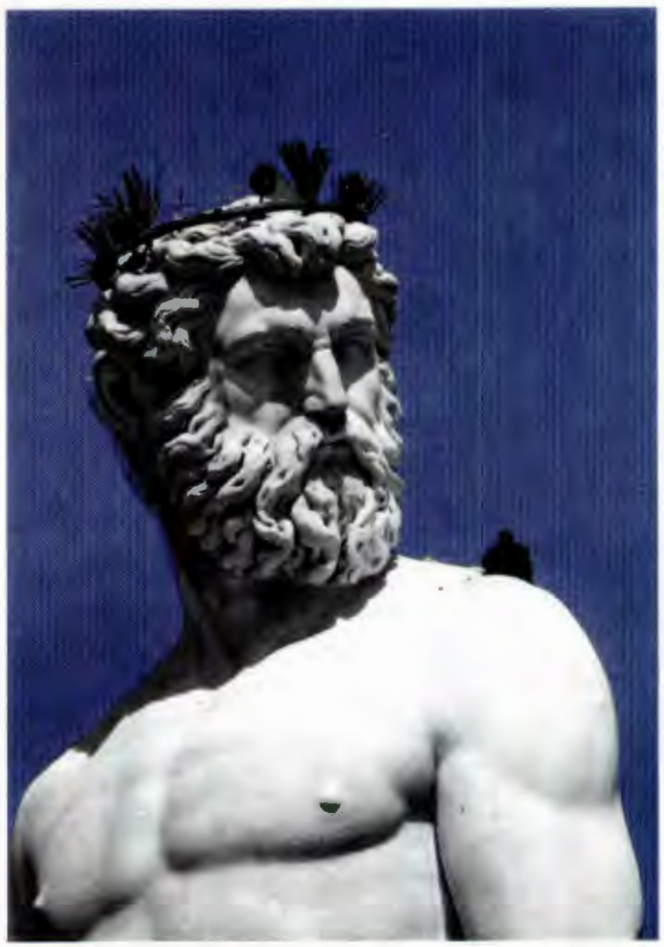

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