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Quadrant

The Borrowed Testimony That Jailed George Pell
Keith Windschuttle

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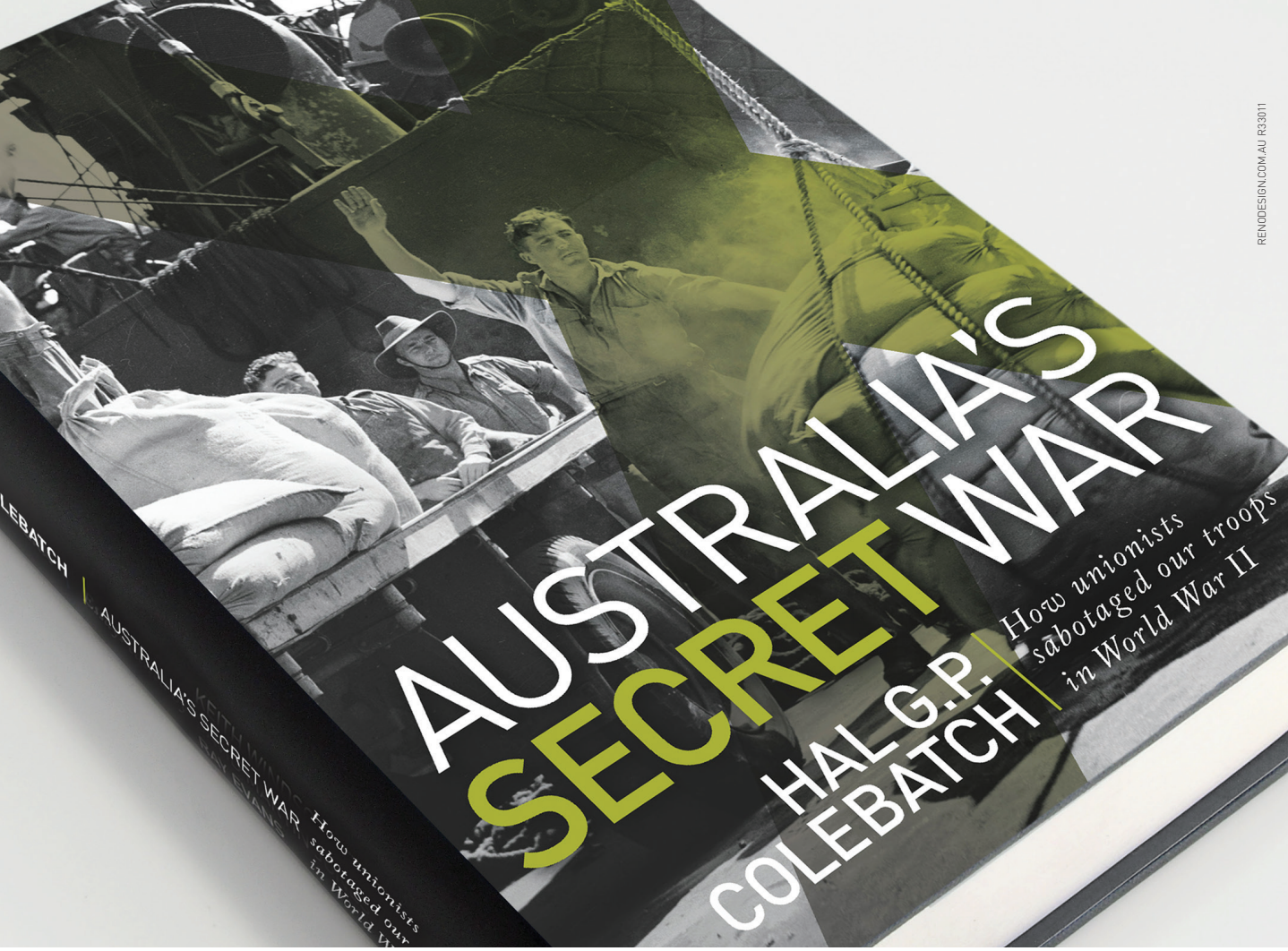

AUSTRALIA'S SECRET WAR
HOW UNIONISTS SABOTAGED OUR TROOPS IN WORLD WAR II

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HAL COLEBATCH's new book, *Australia's Secret War*, tells the shocking, true, but until now largely suppressed and hidden story of the war waged from 1939 to 1945 by a number of key Australian trade unions — against their own society *and* against the men and women of their own country's fighting forces during the perils of World War II.

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LETTERS

The Unusual Coyness of Tim Minchin

SIR: I recently read a review of Tim Minchin's sold-out performance at the Palais Theatre, as part of his "comeback" 2019 national tour of Australia. Cameron Woodhead, of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, noted that it was the first time in memory that no complimentary tickets were issued to the press (he had to buy one for $142). The review was mixed, but generally positive, but one part stood out glaringly:

> Minchin didn't sing the one about George Pell and tortured us all explaining why, slaloming for minutes between outraged invective and sympathy for the devil. He baulked at the prospect of kicking a man when he's down, and even raised the possibility Pell might not have gotten a fair trial …

Minchin's final whinge is hypocritical, as his atrocious anthem, "Come Home, Cardinal Pell" (which he now doesn't even sing, in a two-and-a-half-hour show) is an example of the worst sentiment that music is capable of. His was also one of the loudest voices in the choir of lemmings pillorying Pell before his "fair" trial. Perhaps he is covering himself in the event of acquittal at the appeal?

Joe Dolce
North Carlton, Vic

A Grossly Unsafe Verdict

SIR: As a (non-Catholic) journalist and criminal lawyer who has witnessed and taken part in innumerable trials and knows something about evidence, I would like to add my name to those who believe that the trial and conviction of Cardinal Pell was grossly unsafe. There were many aspects which should have told against a conviction and not merely one but many circumstances of reasonable doubt.

Hal G.P. Colebatch
Nedlands, WA

The Sad Future of the Gender-Dysphoric Child

SIR: I share the concerns of Professor John Whitehall ("Conversion Therapy and Gender Dysphoria", March 2019) about potential legislation limiting therapeutic approaches supporting gender-distressed children and adolescents.

During over forty years of working in child and adolescent psychiatry, my experiences are consistent with those of Professor Kosky in the quoted 1985 paper—that in almost all of these (then relatively uncommon) cases, there were identifiable dynamic pressures in the child, family, or even culture, that explained the desire of the child to change gender. And helping the child and family to deal with these led not only to resolution of the gender issues, but also improved general emotional and social functioning.

Current interventions are using hormone treatments and subsequently surgery, with very limited evidential support and almost certain sterility; any psychological or emotional interventions with the child and family are focused on supporting the conversion of the child to their chosen gender. Minimal consideration, if any, seems to be towards the family and other issues that I, Kosky, Zucker, and many others have found driving this desire for gender change. Indeed it may become illegal to offer this approach if the activist

LGBTI community influence is successful.

I am saddened to think of the future for many of these children and adolescents seduced down a medical/surgical path that unfortunately offers an apparent "easy" early resolution but with potentially catastrophic consequences.

Cary Breakey
Fernvale, Qld

We're All Afraid

SIR: Robert Solomon's all-embracing review of "The Serious Decline of the Common Language" (March 2019) omitted mention of probably the most commonly misused English word at present, namely *phobia* as in *Islamophobia*. The Oxford Dictionary defines a phobia as an extreme or irrational fear. Hence arachnophobia refers to a fear of spiders. By common usage the word *Islamophobia* has now come to embrace "fear, hatred or prejudice" against the Islamic religion and Muslims.

We all, Muslims included, are Islamophobic in that we fear the worldwide terrorism of radical Islam. Hence the body searches, the metal scanners and the armed guards at airports and public buildings, the CCTV and concrete bollards around public squares and shopping malls and the self-censorship of writers and editors. Even *Quadrant* is phobic about publishing any article that satirises or denigrates Allah or his prophet, fearing a *Charlie Hebdo* response. *Phobia* should mean "fear of" and not "hatred of" nor "prejudice against". We are all Islamophobic.

Hatred of or prejudice against Muslims should be described as anti-Islam or anti-Islamic (not Islamophobic), a concept as egregious as anti-Semitism or anti-Christian.

One other current misuse of language is the reference to Muslims as being of one "race". There are over one billion Muslims around the world, in Africa, Europe, the Middle East and Asia, of all races. So defining critics of Islam as "Islamophobic racists" is a meaningless misuse of the English language.

Ian Bernadt
Swanbourne, WA

Hardy the Architect

SIR: Thank you for Philip Drew's wonderful article, "Thomas Hardy the Architect and the Stonemason's Song" (April 2019).

I've read most good biographies of Hardy but Drew provided new information about a largely unexplored aspect of the novelist's other career, his *lifelong* architectural expertise. I enjoyed Drew's description of the lack of drawing and painting skills among modern practitioners: "They no longer know the sensual touch of a graphite extension of their fingers on white paper." (My favourite uncle was, in the old way, both architect and watercolourist.)

I'm grateful, too, for Drew's recollection of his visit, "via a bough-bent leafed alley" (perfect Hardyesque language!) to the interior of Hardy's house in Dorchester. When we went there, as so often happens to eager antipodean tourists, the house was closed to visitors on the day of our pilgrimage; thus now, looking back sadly, I'm only able to picture its exterior.

I was also pleased to be directed to "The Abbey Mason", a long poem which I'd previously overlooked.

Drew's argument about the poet's lifelong love of drawing is supported by the fact that my copy of *The Complete Poems* contains a brief preface by Hardy himself, including his footnote: "The early editions were illustrated by the writer. T.H. September 1898". A copy which included those sketches would be a wonderful thing to see.

Suzanne Edgar
Garran, ACT

Quadrant *welcomes letters to the editor. Letters are subject to editing unless writers stipulate otherwise.*

BORROWED TESTIMONY

Keith Windschuttle

"Billy" was a 10-year-old student at St. Jerome School in 1998, and an altar boy just like his older brother before him. A sweet, gentle kid with boyish good looks, Billy was outgoing and well-liked. One morning, after serving Mass, Rev. Charles Engelhardt caught Billy in the church sacristy sipping leftover wine. Rather than get mad, however, the priest poured Billy more wine. According to the grand jury, he also showed him some pornographic magazines, asking the boy how the pictures made him feel and whether he preferred the images of naked men or women. He told Billy it was time to become a man and that they would soon begin their "sessions." A week later, Billy learned what Engelhardt meant. After Mass, the priest allegedly fondled the boy, sucked his penis and ordered Billy to kneel and fellate him—calling him "son" while instructing him to move his head faster or slower—until Engelhardt ejaculated. The priest later suggested another "session," but Billy refused and Engelhardt let him be.

—Sabrina Rubin Erdely, "The Catholic Church's Secret Sex-Crime Files", *Rolling Stone*, September 15, 2011

What is the difference between this account of child sex abuse in a Catholic church in Philadelphia and the evidence given by the sole accuser in the Victorian court case that convicted Cardinal George Pell of sexual abuse of a thirteen-year-old choir boy at St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne, in 1996? Not much.

The American case allegedly occurred in 1998 and the perpetrator was a Catholic priest, not an archbishop. There were two boys in the Melbourne sacristy after mass, not one, as in Philadelphia. However, the rest of the accusation that condemned Pell bears uncanny similarities to that given by "Billy Doe" and reproduced by a journalist in the American magazine *Rolling Stone*, that saw Reverend Charles Engelhardt also prosecuted, convicted and sent to prison, where he died.

No transcript of the evidence given by Pell's anonymous accuser has been released and the evidence itself was given in camera but part of the address to the jury by the Victorian Crown Prosecutor is reproduced by ABC journalist Louise Milligan in her book *Cardinal: The Rise and Fall of George Pell* (2017, revised edition 2019). It contains the details of the sexual abuse the alleged victim—who Milligan calls "The Kid" in the excerpt from her book below—described to the court.

In December 1996, as the choir from a Sunday Solemn Mass presided over by Archbishop Pell was leaving the cathedral, two choir boys left the procession and headed for the sacristy "in search of some hijinks". They found some communion wine there and started swigging it. Milligan continues:

> But not much time passed before they were sprung in the act. The Kid would tell the police that it was the Archbishop, who asked them what they were doing and indicated that they were in trouble. He said Pell then approached them. He took out his penis … "He pulled [The Choirboy, i.e. the other boy] aside and had him crouch in front of him. Cardinal Pell was standing," Crown Prosecutor Mark Gibson would later explain … "So according to [The Kid] Cardinal Pell had his hand on the back of [The Choirboy's] head and his other hand at his own genital area. [The Kid] saw [The Choirboy's] head being lowered towards the genital area of Cardinal Pell. This all occurred over no more than a minute or two. Cardinal Pell then moved on to [The Kid] … Cardinal Pell was standing and he pushed [The Kid's] head down to a position where [The Kid] was crouching or kneeling. [The Kid] was then pushed onto Cardinal Pell's erect penis so that Cardinal Pell was in [The Kid's] mouth. This act of fellatio or oral sex lasted for a short period which [The Kid] estimates to be a couple of minutes. You will hear that Cardinal Pell then stopped and told [The Kid] to remove his pants. [The Kid] stood upright. [The Kid] pulled down or dropped his pants and his underwear in accordance with the instruction … Cardinal Pell then started touching [The Kid's] genitalia ... While touching [The Kid's] genitalia, it's alleged that the Cardinal was touching his own genitalia." After a couple of minutes, the Archbishop stood up. The boys went back to their robing room.

The Philadelphia case was written up in *Rolling Stone* in September 2011, well before the Victorian police began what they called their "trawling operation" against George Pell, hoping to find someone to testify against him. As Detective Inspector Paul Sheridan of Victoria Police told Pell's committal hearing, they began their activity in 2013 to see whether he had committed serious crimes that had gone unreported, but the complainant only came forward in June 2015. In other words, the *Rolling Stone* story had been in circulation for four years before an Australian version was provided to the police.

So, what is the probability that the evidence given in Australia was not an authentic account of what happened in Melbourne but, rather, a copy of a story that had already been aired in print and online? Here are the similarities between the American and the Australian allegations:

- Both cases of sexual abuse occurred in the sacristy after Sunday mass.
- In both cases, the victims had been drinking wine they found in the sacristy.
- Both boys assisted in the celebration of the mass.
- The priest fondled both boys' genitals.
- Both boys were made to kneel before the priest.
- Both boys were made to perform fellatio on the priest.
- Both the alleged victims were the only witnesses who testified for the prosecution in court—it was their word against the priests'.

The only difference between the American and Australian evidence was the account of a second alleged meeting, which the boys said took place "a few months later" in Philadelphia and "a month or so later" in Melbourne. In the American version, it was a different priest involved this time, who led the same boy to the sacristy, told him to undress and then fellated him. In the Australian version, Pell allegedly found the boy in the back corridor of the cathedral, forced him up against a wall and fondled his genitals.

Nonetheless, the two accounts are so close to being identical that the likelihood of the Australian version being original is most implausible. There are far too many similarities in the stories for them to be explained by coincidence. The conclusion is unavoidable: "The Kid" was repeating a story he had found in a magazine—or repeating a story someone else had found for him somewhere in the media—thereby deriving his account of what Pell did from evidence given in a trial in the United States four years earlier. In short, the testimony that convicted George Pell was a sham.

This does not mean the accuser was deliberately making it up. He might have come to persuade himself the events actually happened, or some therapist might have helped him "recover" his memory. But no matter how sincere the accuser's beliefs were, that does not make them true, especially when there is so much other evidence against them. There is little doubt that if members of the jury in Pell's case had been informed of the surprising similarities between the two versions, some of them must have had serious questions about their witness's veracity. The result would have been either a second hung jury or a not-guilty verdict.

So why has none of this been made public in Australia before? Although I am a reasonably thorough browser of the Australian media, I had not heard the details of the American story until a *Quadrant* reader, Richard Mullins, alerted me to the *Rolling Stone* article. However, that article was not buried away in some forgotten archive. *Rolling Stone* is an American magazine devoted to popular culture, targeted at teenagers and young adults. It published an Australian edition from 1970 until its closure in January 2018. In the United States the allegations made by "Billy Doe" made national headlines in 2011. Under his real name of Daniel Gallagher, he was identified as an accuser whose testimony sent two Catholic priests and a school teacher to prison, as well as Monsignor William Lynn, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's secretary for clergy. The jailing of this senior Catholic administrator for protecting clerical offenders under his charge was seen by American newspapers as proof that corruption extended to the heights of the Catholic hierarchy. The police and District Attorney's office who investigated and prosecuted the case emerged as heroes in the American mainstream news media.

However, in 2016, *Newsweek* devoted a 5000-word feature article by Ralph Cipriano to the scandal. This was partly designed to expose the activist journalism of *Rolling Stone* author Sabrina Rubin Erdely, in the wake of her equally notorious story about a University of Virginia student who claimed in 2014 she was gang-raped by seven men at a college party. That "toxic masculinity" story dominated press and television headlines for weeks, until it was exposed as a hoax. *Rolling Stone* was subsequently hit with defamation suits by several of the accused young men.

Cipriano was also keen to reveal the local politics behind the subsequent legal clashes over the proceedings of the church sexual abuse cases between Pennsylvania's higher judiciary and Philadelphia's District Attorney. The trials of the clergy had remained front-page news in Pennsylvania for three years because multiple appeals in the cases had overturned the original convictions, resulting in retrials, reversals of convictions, and ongoing disputes between courts and government.

Newsweek also said it had reliable information that the Archdiocese of Philadelphia had paid Gallagher compensation of $5 million. By this time, Gallagher's status as a reliable witness was dubious. The magazine found a wide range of inconsistencies between the evidence he gave to police and his eventual testimony in court. He was a drug dealer and petty thief who had been arrested six times. Catholic defence lawyers argued the District Attorney had given Gallagher "red-carpet treatment" because he was one of the few alleged victims of sex abuse whose allegations fell within the local statute of limitations, which meant charges against the church could be filed.

In other words, it is very unlikely that the story of "Billy Doe" was unknown to those in Australia involved in the prosecution of George Pell. The police in Victoria who were pursuing Pell, and whose minds were no doubt finely tuned to anything that would support his prosecution, must have been aware of the success their counterparts in Philadelphia had enjoyed from both the support of their District Attorney, Seth Williams (later sentenced to five years in prison on unrelated bribery charges), and their extensive media coverage. The American example told the Victorians they were on a winning track.

What about the Australian media? They gave a lot of coverage to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse but made little mention of the fact that the findings and interpretation of events in Australia were following a well-worn track of investigations already made overseas, as I showed in my column in the April edition of *Quadrant*.

The current heroine of the news media pursuing this story is Louise Milligan, who has a best-seller with her book *Cardinal*, and her own special reports on ABC television's *7.30* and *Four Corners* programs. The latest edition of her book lists the awards this work has won her: the Walkley Book Award, two Quill awards from the Melbourne Press Club, the Sir Owen Dixon Chambers Law Reporter of the Year award, the Civic Choice award in the Melbourne Prize for Literature. The new edition also carries accolades from an impressive array of left-wing journalists and authors: Annabel Crabb, David Marr, David Armstrong, Peter FitzSimons, Kate McClymont, Quentin Dempster, Michaela Bond, Derryn Hinch, Yvonne Rance, Gerard Windsor and Anton Rose, plus a foreword by novelist/historian Tom Keneally who says Pell got what he deserved because he was "a notable neo-conservative", who "had questioned climate change" and "has raised only muted opposition to the federal government's heinous asylum seeker policy".

Did Milligan know about the similarities between the evidence of "Billy" and "The Kid"? There is nothing in her book, or anything else she has written that I know of, to indicate that she did. She seems to be completely in the dark about the American connection. So, as far as I can see, she cannot be accused of suppressing information to make her own case more plausible.

However, a real investigative journalist would not have left out of reckoning the overseas dimension to this story. So the most that Milligan can be accused of in her single-minded pursuit of her quarry is incompetence in not investigating the full dimensions of the story over the many months she worked on it. This must eventually be a source of embarrassment for those who have showered her with prizes, and for all those writers who adulate her journalistic skills in the early pages of her book.

The Victorian police, however, are in a different position. They had every reason both to know about the American connection and to keep it quiet, lest it ruin their case. Catholic lawyer Frank Brennan and Pell himself in the early stages of this drama both suggested that the police were leaking information to the news media. The philosopher and theologian Chris S. Friel, in an impressive, forensic examination of the case on the UK site *Academia*, has suggested the police engaged in a long-term strategy to slowly undermine Pell's public reputation and to entwine it with the publicity attracted by the Royal Commission. Friel writes:

> It will be countered that the very idea that the Victorian police deliberately created a distraction is just a conspiracy theory. It's true that it is merely a hypothesis, one based on circumstantial evidence, and I would not argue that it is proven beyond reasonable doubt. But it does fit the facts, and so provide a reason to doubt whether the complainant is telling the truth beyond reasonable doubt … As to the issue of "conspiracy," we recall that Milligan herself hints at one: for, according to the Kid, Pell is not the only menace; some unnamed and dangerous man is searching for the informant, and that is why he pleads with the journalist that she should continue her investigation.

If Australia still has any genuine investigative journalists, there must be one somewhere willing to follow these leads into the bowels of the Victorian police operations to find out what was really going on all this time. Meanwhile, George Pell remains in prison until his appeal in June, unjustly convicted and unjustly defamed.

ASPERITIES

John O'Sullivan

If you want a metaphor for the exercise of writing about Brexit, it is tweeting from a barrel as it goes over Niagara Falls. Events are happening faster than you can describe them, let alone analyse them. They rush past you unwritten just as you're about to hit the *Send* button. Time loses its order and coherence. Every story happened tomorrow. And just as you think you see how it must inevitably end, the barrel hits the rocks and you are pitched into an impossible surrealist stream of consciousness in which Theresa May teams up with Jeremy Corbyn to force the Tories to rejoin the EU customs union sealed with a lock that prevents them ever leaving.

Tweeting may be the only way to do justice to a story like Brexit. Since any tweet is limited to a handful of characters, it forces the writer to respond promptly to the rush of events. As often as not, it involves debate, combat even, with those of an opposite point of view. It abjures long, reasoned and thoughtful arguments, preferring epigrams, short quotations, and snatches of song and verse. What follows, therefore, is the last week in Brexit refracted through my tweets in no particular order (since that would violate the twitter form).

We'll begin with the announcement by Downing Street that the Prime Minister will meet with the Opposition Leader to see if they can agree on a compromise plan to get her Withdrawal Agreement through the Commons, since her own party won't back it. That's a local version of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, since Jeremy Corbyn has until now been the Tory party's pet Dracula, whose links with the IRA and admiration for Venezuelan economics have been used to good effect in frightening Middle England. Bringing him into government is a massive exercise in unilateral rhetorical disarmament by May that elevates Corbyn and has sent a shockwave through the Tory party in and out of the Commons.

Paul Goodman, the editor of the influential website *Conservative Home*, relays and endorses the ominous judgment of Iain Dale, the talkshow host, publisher and all-round Tory cultural entrepreneur, that this week "something has changed". Message: *She's gone too far.* Tim Montgomerie, the founder of *Conservative Home*, took a medium-size step further: "I wouldn't vote Conservative in any Euro election," he writes, "I'd abstain."

Within hours that was looking like squishy tentativeness. Euro election? What about general elections? Abstain? What's wrong with voting against the bastards? Some tweeters proclaimed they were leaving the Tory party to join Nigel Farage's new Brexit party. Some ministers—anonymously as yet—have told reporters they may vote for it too.

Not all were leaving the sinking ship. One angry constituent reports that he advised his MP he would not campaign, due to him voting with Labour. "His response told me all I needed to know: 'Thank you for your past support. Yours sincerely, Nicholas Soames'." And he published the facsimile of the bold sweeping signature of Churchill's grandson. Very few Tory MPs can still carry off the grand manner with Mr Soames's confidence. I doubt, however, that voters in their current mood will take kindly to grand gestures. They feel bruised and betrayed.

It doesn't help that evidence is emerging of government planning for this amazing U-turn from way back. Christopher Hope of the *Telegraph* was mildly triumphant when May announced civil service preparations for the UK to take part in the approaching European elections: "This story was dismissed when I wrote it in May last year: 'Fear over "secret" Government plan for UK to stay in EU after deadline as cash set aside for 2019 European elections.' Not any more!"

Not only do they betray us, therefore, but they take our acquiescence for granted. I tweeted: "As an American radical once complained sadly: 'They spit on us and we call it rain.'" (I've cleaned up the quote slightly.) In London at present it's a tropical storm.

Some Tories were still unable to quite believe what was happening. Anne-Marie Trevelyan, the Tory MP for Berwick-on-Tweed and one of a formidable band of Tory women Brexiteers in the Thatcher mould, appealed sadly to her lost leader: "The PM must not allow Corbyn to determine Brexit. She still has time to salvage her reputation and deliver what the voters asked for—to leave the EU."

I took a firm line with Ms Trevelyan: "This is foolish day dreaming. May wants to stop Brexit without getting the blame. So she tries shrinking it to indefinite BRINO vassalage. She's more opposed

to UK independence than Corbyn. He wants a right to subsidise failing industries but he's pushed by moderates towards May." That's only a slight exaggeration: Corbyn wants socialism in one country, May wants Euro-regulation that would impose a sort of corporate multinational capitalism throughout the continent. Neither is what the Brits asked for in 2016.

Stewart Jackson, a strong Brexiteer who was an adviser to the Secretary of State for Exiting the EU before Chequers last year when the policy changed, was keeping watch on how May's new partnership with Corbyn was going down at Westminster. He tweeted gleefully, "I understand that [Rory Stewart MP] is trying to push a pro Theresa May letter for Tory backbenchers to sign defending the Corbyn hook up. Not I imagine an easy sell!" Mr Stewart, a popular figure among Tories, a former coalition official in Iraq fifteen years ago, who famously walked across Afghanistan, bears some resemblance to a John Buchan hero about whose shoulders hangs a faint whiff of cordite. If he is supporting May's current policy of transforming Brexit into more or less permanent subjection to the EU, however, he will end up with Balfour's verdict on Gladstone: a Tory in everything except essentials.

Indeed, the whole Tory party risks getting that dismissive moniker. May's deal is not a popular sell—at least among Tory MPs. There's a majority of Tory MPs strongly against it, but there's also a majority of *all* MPs in favour of it. That's the parliamentary arithmetic behind the May–Corbyn alliance. Unless some Tory Brexiteers are ready to take the nuclear step of voting to bring the government down on a parliamentary motion of no confidence, they cannot stop May's pretend Brexit passing into law.

As yet they're not ready to do that—the taboo on voting with Labour to bring down their own government is simply too powerful. May's embrace of Corbyn to advance an anti-Conservative policy should logically have removed that taboo. But it hasn't. And it's driving them mad.

What's driving them madder is that public opinion outside parliament is moving quite sharply in their direction. Lord (Matt) Ridley tweeted an exchange in the House of Lords debate in which he corrected the statement of a Labour peer that "nobody wants No Deal". He then cited a poll by Sky News that showed 41 per cent of people would prefer a "no-deal" Brexit, 35 per cent of people would rather a long delay and participate in European Parliament elections, while only 16 per cent of people would prefer to leave the EU with Theresa May's deal.

May rejected no-deal in her speech to the nation on the grounds that MPs had already rejected it. But MPs had already rejected all the other proposed solutions, including those she is now proposing with Corbyn, and yet she is pushing ahead on them.

Not surprisingly, as the tweeting traffic now shows, May is distrusted by everyone. She is seen as such a shameless liar, especially by Tories, that watching her lie is actually unsettling. It undermines the everyday sense we all have that reality is unavoidable. And that feeling is aggravated when ministers, MPs and Remainer media nod along as she claims absurdly that her policy is a last and only chance to get Brexit. This robot-like deceit may win, but it can't convince.

There is a fatalistic mood that without some last-minute dramatic intervention no one foresees, May's pretend Brexit will go through. What then?

One common prediction, here expressed by tweeter Mike Rees, is apathy. "When the first referendum took place many of us thought, 'That's great. But they'll never actually let us leave.' And so it has proved. Why vote?" The trouble is, those driven to apathy would be mainly easygoing, not-very-committed voters. As a result, the Tories would shrink, a populist party rise, Labour become Momentum, and Brexit remain a national obsession.

Another meme going the rounds is that hard-line Brexiteers are responsible for May's pretend Brexit because they opposed it too strongly. If they had been more willing to compromise, they could have improved it. Quite apart from the fact that the Brexiteers compromised away like Neville Chamberlain, Daniel Hannan hit that argument firmly on the head: "People are not stupid. If MPs vote to cancel Brexit, they won't blame Brexiteers. They'll blame the MPs who voted to cancel Brexit."

Remainers are certainly anxious on both scores. On the verge of getting what they have been fiercely campaigning for since the referendum vote, they are suddenly anxious about the possibility of a backlash. Might they be blamed for reversing Britain's largest ever exercise in democracy? Alastair Campbell and Michael Bushell were among tweeters who worried: "Brexiteers may well be frustrated but their rhetoric of betrayal, sabotage and treason is fuelling a dangerously febrile atmosphere." The police have, oddly, issued a similar warning.

In short, everyone seems to agree with Iain Dale: "something has changed". We all sense uneasily, even the winners it seems, that a major change has occurred in how we are governed. Fraud and deceit in the form of a Potemkin Brexit have been employed to bring the UK back under the sovereignty of an emerging European imperial power.

Maybe we shrink from the words, but we recognise the thing.

Barque

An ill-fated barque
near reefs off Rottnest,
a cargo of building needs,
nails, windows, doors,
at risk in furious seas.

When its captain saw
the lighthouse-keeper's
distant warning flare,
he mistook it for a beacon
promising a haven there.

And so, drawn forward,
the hopeful barque went on,
went in, as if at last he saw
a faint but friendly light
above a neighbour's door.

An old anchor propped
on the foreshore now
points to the lonely place
where the barque went down,
leaving scarcely a trace.

Or points to this perhaps:
that nails, doors and windows,
homes we build or yearn for,
may come to rest at last
as fragments on a coral floor.

Grandson

The faint where are you voice
comes to us from afar,
softly, playfully, the words
going this way and that way,
not knowing where we are.

Here, behind the big curtain,
the oncoming footfalls pacing,
I am hiding in the silence
with my little man, his heart
beneath my hand racing.

His tiny heart reminds me
of his father's heart, another day,
now lost in time, when my son
was here beside me, his whisper
giving the game away.

Brave, but not so brave,
swapping glances in the gloom,
it will all be frantic laughter
in a moment, as we dash
into the other room.

And so, the game runs on,
runs out, the end unplanned,
but something of myself will
linger here, a memory of his
heartbeat in my hand.

Nicholas Hasluck

Patience

The boulders on the beach
have a stroked solidity, like well-kneaded dough
sitting on the tray, soon to bake.
Curved and quiet, they are all
roundness and waiting contained,
small bumps on their hugging surface—
dappled to touch, in a setting of sandy crumbs.
My life is fast, broken minutes, all quick questions: why
do you wait? They stay and stay, saying little,
curled in stout certainty that their crusts will break,
one day, the end of everything.

Katherine Spadaro

ASTRINGENCIES

Anthony Daniels

It was an Australian—Kerry Packer, to be precise—who destroyed my interest in professional cricket once and for all. He turned the game (in my estimation) into yet another vulgar spectacle in a world hardly short of vulgar spectacles. No doubt this was in some sense inevitable and of great financial advantage to the players, who until then had been paid very badly; but my view of professional cricket until then had been as of a vocation rather than a career. I felt about post-Packer cricket as I feel about a deconsecrated church now being used as a nightclub, and also as I feel about rugby union since its professionalisation.

The latter seems to have had a strange biological effect, rather like the addition of the hormone thyroxine to the water in which cave-dwelling salamanders live permanently in larval form: they change into something else entirely. In the case of rugby players, they grew two feet taller and three feet wider; there were no such terrifyingly muscle-bound monsters, refugees from horror films, in my childhood and youth.

Even professional football has changed. When I was a boy, professional footballers went home on the bus after the game rather than in a Ferrari, and to a landlady more likely than to a mansion; and no one knew anything about their private lives, however famous as footballers they were, and however often their picture appeared on cigarette cards. They were paid a maximum wage not very much more than that of a skilled worker in a factory, and in those days the pitch turned almost immediately into a sea of mud if it rained. It cost very little to gain entrance to a match, the facilities were spartan, as if designed to expose infants to the elements to see which were fit to survive, and the behaviour of the crowd on the whole was good. It was much more a working-class spectator sport than it is now, when no politician, celebrity or chief executive of a vast company dares admit to an indifference to it or not to "support" a team (whatever that may mean), mainly composed of foreign mercenaries with no essential connection or loyalty to the locality in which the team has its stadium. "Supporting" a team is at best a form of local pride for fools. I remember hearing, when I was boy of about ten who went to matches with a friend of the same age, a man in the crowd saying to the people around him, "No swearing, there are children present." The quality of the football has improved out of all recognition, it is far faster and more skilful nowadays, but (somewhat against what one might have hoped or expected) with prosperity has come coarseness.

I wasted many a happy day at Lord's. In those days, there were no clouds, only clear blue skies; like the game itself, the weather has since changed for the worse. The crowd, except for Test matches, was exiguous, but it struck me as in no way peculiar that professionals should play a three-day match in front of only a smattering of spectators in a very large ground, only to end in a draw. On the contrary, this only reassured me as to the importance of what they were doing: there was something almost hieratic about it. Lord's was then the monastery of cricket, and I have always been attracted to monasteries.

I can still conjure up in my mind's YouTube cricketing heroes of those days. I checked recently that my memory of Brian Statham's characteristic bowling action was accurate, and it was. I remember at a Test match sitting by the white boundary rope (the seats were all taken), running to stop the ball struck by the England captain, P.B.H. May, shortly before it hit the rope, an act which did not meet with the approval of purists: but touching the ball struck by May and throwing it back to the chasing fielder, I felt something of the irrational thrill that I was later to experience on buying books inscribed by their author. Perhaps some sympathetic magic would increase my ability or talent by mere touch.

In those days, I had an elevated romantic view of cricketers. On a frieze on the wall of Lord's was inscribed the famous line of Sir Henry Newbolt's poem "Vitaï Lampada", "Play up! play up! and play the game!"

> And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
> Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
> But his captain's hand on his shoulder smote
> "Play up! play up! and play the game!"

I imagined a world in which people would rather lose than cheat and in which one applauded the feats of one opponents, even of the visiting Australians (Mackay, Simpson and Benaud, for example) who were the opponents *par excellence*. As for underdogs, one delighted in their victory.

I felt about post-Packer cricket as I feel about a deconsecrated church now being used as a nightclub.

Was this all romantic claptrap? I have only two cricketing books in my library, one of them a study of the suicide of cricketers (apparently they have a high rate of *felo de se*) by the prolific cricket writer David Frith. I am aware that I begin to sound like the old retired cricketers described by Frith whose:

> reunion gatherings have their limitations: a couple of drinks, a few hours of reminiscence, grumbling about the modern game, followed by mutterings on how old and washed-out some former team-mates look … and an intimate admission that one perhaps doesn't look so bright and youthful oneself any more.

Have things deteriorated, or have I merely grown older and endowed the past with a sunset glow? Long after my own rather undistinguished career as a player was over, one of my neighbours asked me to be scorer for a nearby village team in a local league. I accepted somewhat hesitantly, but was pleased to discover that there *was* honey still for tea, or at least cucumber sandwiches and cakes, and the village pitch was undefiled, that cricket wives still accompanied their husbands, that little boys played tip-and-run outside the boundary, and that scoring books were exactly as I remembered them from more than half a century ago, notwithstanding the development of electronic scoring systems.

My neighbour gave me to study the professionally-printed rule book of the league in which the village team played. It was very long, with (to me) astonishingly complex regulations as to how points in the league were to be allocated in the event of matches being stopped by rain and other natural calamities. But even more astonishing were the rules to detect, avoid and punish cheating.

Not having followed cricket for many years, I did not know what "sledging" was, namely the humiliation and intimidation of batsmen by the fielders. This was prohibited, as was insulting the umpires. I had no idea that such things were done on cricket fields, and I asked my neighbour whether such was the practice in village games. "Oh yes," he replied, "they imitate the professionals." Gentlemanliness no longer existed, and if you could get away with a false claim to have caught someone, that is what you did. No more namby-pamby gentlemanly play up, play up, and play the game; more all is fair in love and war.

My only other cricketing book is titled *Cricket in Conflict: The Story of Major Crises that Have Rocked the Game*, by Peter Wynne-Thomas and Peter Arnold, published in 1984. I bought it because it was very cheap. It was, as its title suggested, a history of crises (including the bodyline controversy) since the game was played in anything like a recognisable form.

Though by no means academic, it was typical of the kind of historiography according to which the history of anything is nothing but a record of the crime and folly committed in its name. Was there never a time, then, when the expression "It's not cricket!" was not a true reflection of the way the game was played? If it were not, how did the expression ever arise?

I remember the days of the Gentlemen versus Players matches at Lord's. They might as well have taken place in 600 BC, so far have things changed. The Gentlemen were amateurs, at least nominally, and the Players were professionals, who were of lower social standing but not necessarily of higher cricketing prowess; but they were all, as far as my blinkered eyes could see, gentlemen. And then, along came Kerry Packer …

Or am I making a scapegoat of him?

Anthony Daniels's most recent book, co-authored with Kenneth Francis, is ***The Terror of Existence: From Ecclesiastes to Theatre of the Absurd*** *(New English Review Press), published under his pen-name, Theodore Dalrymple.*

SWEDEN DISOWNS ITS VIKINGS

Hal G.P. Colebatch

In what looks like a new paroxysm of self-hatred and cultural suicide, Sweden has begun destroying artefacts from its ancient Viking history.

One might think that the country, over-run by hordes of Middle Eastern "asylum seekers", would wish to preserve as much of its national identity and cultural heritage as it could. Even at the most mercenary level, Viking sites, museums, artefacts and souvenirs have been huge tourism money-earners. The television series *Vikings* shows Western man's fascination with the hairy old sea-rovers. The immensely popular books and films of *The Lord of the Rings* drew in large part upon Norse mythology as well as Christianity, showing its deep resonances even for modern man.

Now an angry archaeologist has blown the whistle on the fact that the curators of Stockholm's Länsmuseum have been ordering the systematic destruction of newly-found artefacts from the Iron Age and the Viking period with the weak excuse that the material would be too burdensome to process. This is despite the fact that preservation of the past is what being a museum curator is meant to be all about.

Coins, arrow-heads, ritual amulets, weapons, jewellery and weights that were kept in the past are now dumped into metal-recycling bins upon discovery instead of being cared for and displayed. Museum excavators are instructed to recycle unearthed iron elements into scrap metal on the weak pretext that "it would take too many resources to process, identify and store them". The findings are usually quickly disposed of in order to make way for construction machines and building workers.

Ironically yet appropriately, the boom in excavation which has led to the doomed artefacts being unearthed has largely been to provide housing for the asylum seekers flooding into the country, and who are now pushing the crime-rate back towards, well, towards Viking levels.

This process was kept secret until a declaration by Johan Runer, the museum's archaeologist. He had tried to raise the alarm before but only met indifference from the liberal Swedish media. According to Runer, this has been going on since at least 2016. He claims an entire ancient settlement was secretly levelled to allow roadworks.

The artefacts could easily be stored, as they have been previously, or sold or given to other museums around the world which would be eager for them. The real motive looks like the conscious destruction of Sweden's culture, history and heritage—an act of Gramscian cultural warfare by the Left.

Nor is Sweden alone in this madness, or rather, this orchestrated strategic exercise. Apart from the Robert E. Lee statue in the US and the demonisation of Columbus, in Australia there has recently arisen an all-too-predictable campaign to destroy statues of Captain Cook and other heroic figures of the past. In Britain, believe it or not, the money-losing *Guardian* newspaper, a faithful mouthpiece of the extreme Left, recently printed a call for the destruction of Nelson's Column!

It is not that the Vikings, or at least some of them, were awfully nice people. (The name *Viking* means something like "pirate hiding up a creek".) The fact that one particularly gentle Viking was called "the children's man" tells us a lot about them—he got the name because when going a-Viking he allowed children to live. As for their own children, mothers are said to have clucked approvingly ("He'll make a good Viking!") when their more boisterous games with axes turned lethal.

They had little conscience about winning by lies and deception. An archbishop, taken hostage by them, was pelted to death with soup-bones at a merry feast which got a little out of hand. We gather something about others from their names: Eric Bloodaxe, Thorfinn Raven-feeder, Sigurd Skull-splitter.

However, it is arguable that in their other role as traders they actually helped spread civilisation and international commerce. And they were phenomenally brave. To sail across the uncharted North Atlantic to America in open boats was not a job for snowflakes.

They took their wives, too, one of whom put a

menacing group of natives to flight by running at them bare-breasted and wielding a sword. In the North European imagination, at least, Vikings came to stand for death-defying courage, challenging the gods and the unknown, and facing incredible hardship and death with stoic bravery. Even allowing for some romanticising, the historical record shows this picture contains more than a little truth.

They navigated the great rivers south across Russia to the Black Sea. At Constantinople, they formed an elite guard for the emperor. They nearly conquered England and would have done so but for the heroic Alfred the Great. Their direct descendants, the Normans, did conquer England—the Norman Conquest has been called the last and greatest Viking raid of all. They successfully settled Iceland and even settled Greenland for a time until the climate changed for the worse (the descendants of the original Norse Greenland settlers are believed to have been trapped there because there were no trees to provide wood for ships and they perished gradually and miserably). Later explorers there found the ruins of a cathedral with stained-glass windows.

The Normans did more: converted to Christianity by the heroism of missionaries, they provided the steel-clad ranks of medieval chivalry which turned back the incessant Muslim assault on the West, and even for a time held Jerusalem. They allowed European civilisation to survive.

They preserved, when Christianised, something of the legacy of Greek learning and philosophy and Roman administration and technology: they gave Europe its modern form. It is tempting to think that their culture of magnificent daring at sea played a part in giving Europe the impetus for the great voyages of discovery (Columbus is said to have seen Viking charts or accounts of the voyages to America). Is it entirely coincidence that both "Drake" and "Nelson" have a Norse sound about them?

One commentator, Jean-Batave Poqueliche, said of this destruction of Sweden's Viking heritage:

> If we do not expose them and fight this lunacy, how will it stop? This story is just one more proof of the Left's effort to shape the future of their ugly world using the technique of the scorched earth.

It also follows recent claims from Leftists that ancient marble statues made thousands of years ago are actually racist and were specifically used to "whitewash history".

Other examples where History is targeted include the Left using violence and threats in order to get Southern generals' statues removed from various locations in the United States.

There is not much difference between those Liberal iconoclasts and the Islamic State's goons smashing millennia-old statues and monuments with sledgehammers. In both cases, those who destroy claim that the targets are false idols.

Such practices are revolting to say the least. They are a prime example of how Cultural Marxism aims at erasing the past to get rid of the last roots that our children can call theirs. Just like violent communist regimes in the past which aimed first at burning libraries, bringing down churches, graveyards and museums before shooting teachers and scholars in the back of the head.

Without respecting the ancient traditions of men, a stable and healthy future cannot be built. By destroying elements attached to the idea of Viking culture, which valued success, bravery and putting one's people first, Sweden's self-loathing decision-makers try to erase the few traces that show Sweden as something other than a multiculturalism-infected petri dish.

Destroy a people's history so they cannot find a common heritage and you can start anew and create the society you seek.

For all that might be said against the Vikings—which is quite a bit, to be sure—they are part of Northern Europe's history, and in many ways an inspiring part. A society that wilfully destroys its own history in obeisance to ideology is in deep trouble—as those responsible know perfectly well.

Western Europe today is dying for want of three things the Vikings personified: optimism, enterprise and courage.

Hal Colebatch, who lives in Perth, is a frequent contributor. Among his books is ***Return of the Heroes: The Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, Harry Potter, and Social Conflict****.*

Mark Durie

The Eco-Fascist Ideology of the Christchurch Killer

In the wake of the horrific Christchurch shootings, we need to thoughtfully engage with the ideology which influenced it. Just before the massacre, the self-confessed killer, Brenton Tarrant, distributed what is being called a manifesto, in which he unashamedly describes what he was about to do as a "terrorist attack", and gives an account of his ideology. We need to understand this ideology, not to give it a platform, but to learn and to equip ourselves to stand against such hatred.

I have recently been re-reading Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago*. The Christchurch massacre of people at prayer took place while I was making my way through Solzhenitsyn's history of the Soviet annihilation of millions of their own. Countless lives were flushed down the vast sewer of the Gulag. Solzhenitsyn traced the Soviets' descent into darkness as communist ideology took over people's souls and minds, making many even half-decent people into monsters. He wrote:

> To do evil a human being must first of all believe that what he is doing is good, or else that it's a well-considered act in conformity to natural law. Fortunately it is in the nature of the human being to seek a *justification* for his actions. Macbeth's self-justifications were feeble—and his conscience devoured him. Yes, even Iago was a little lamb too. The imagination and the spiritual strength of Shakespeare's evil-doers stopped short at a dozen corpses. Because they had no *ideology*.
>
> Ideology—that is what gives evil-doing its long-sought justification and gives the evildoer the necessary steadfastness and determination. That is the social theory which helps to make his acts seem good instead of bad in his own and others' eyes, so that he won't hear reproaches and curses, but will receive praise and honours …
>
> Thanks to *ideology*, the twentieth century was fated to experience evildoing on a scale calculated in the millions.

In *The Gulag Archipelago* Solzhenitsyn delves into and documents the outworking of a political ideology, communism, which killed on an industrial scale. As unpleasant as his task was, it was a necessary and honourable one.

The Christchurch slaughter is a textbook example of what evil ideology can achieve in a person's heart. Like the Soviet Gulag, it needs to be understood. All terrorism needs to be treated this way: its controlling ideology should be carefully examined, considered and, where necessary, rejected. This is something we owe to the victims, and to ourselves.

Jacinda Ardern, the New Zealand Prime Minister, who has been widely praised for her handling of New Zealand's response to the massacre, has vowed to deny Brenton Tarrant, the accused killer, any platform for his views, not even speaking his name: "He may have sought notoriety, but we in New Zealand will give him nothing." Taking his cue from the Prime Minister, the New Zealand Censor has banned the downloading or possession of Tarrant's manifesto. Censorship of a document is permitted in New Zealand if its publication "is likely to be injurious to the public good" and Tarrant's manifesto could be injurious if someone read it and was radicalised by it, as was the author's intent. On the other hand, rejecting the ideology of the manifesto is also in the public good, but to do that comprehensively one must first understand it, and to understand it, one must read it.

In any case, Tarrant had already posted his manifesto to the web before the atrocity, ensuring its wide availability. As galling as it is that a killer could gain a platform through a hate crime, it is necessary to pay attention to the ideology of Brenton Tarrant. Why should we do this? Because there are others like him, connected to each other on the internet, and because Tarrant's ideology has the capacity to replicate itself. It is important to understand this ideology, not least so that it can be resisted and opposed with all the strength and

skill we can muster. Silence won't achieve this. This strategy would be like trying to combat Nazi ideology by refusing to ever speak the name *Adolf Hitler*: I do not begrudge Hitler his long Wikipedia article.

Tarrant's ideology is laid out in his manifesto, "The Great Replacement", the title for which he took from French, *le grand remplacement*, a phrase which has come to embody fear about the demographic future of France and a looming "white genocide". His primary concern is the demographic decline of the "white race", by which he means people of European stock. The immediate cause of decline is the lack of will to reproduce, and the resulting low birth-rates. This needs to change, he says, but a more immediate threat to "Europeans"—among whom Tarrant counts himself—is immigration from non-white countries. Tarrant calls immigrants "invaders", and sees his violence as legitimate "partisan" resistance to this "invasion". His stated purpose in massacring innocent people in New Zealand was to set off a war between whites and other races. There is more to it than just that—he lays out a model of how he expects this will play out—but this is the essence of his purpose.

Tarrant chose Muslims as a target, but his hatred is directed at all non-white immigrants. It is their "race" he objects to. He has nothing to say about Islam as a religion, making no mention of Muhammad, the Koran, or sharia law. Although Tarrant nurtures a number of grudges against Muslims, for example for the history of jihad against Europe, he makes clear that his primary reason for targeting mosques is to incite white people to rise up against immigrants in general, not just Muslims. He would drive them all out if he could.

He makes clear that his primary reason for targeting mosques is to incite white people to rise up against immigrants in general, not just Muslims. He would drive them all out if he could.

Is Tarrant a right-wing extremist, as many have claimed? He mocks those who would try to pin him somewhere on the left-wing-right-wing spectrum. He does own that he is a fascist—to be precise, an eco-fascist green nationalist—and the list of what he despises is long, including conservatives, Marxists, the "cult of individualism", urbanisation, industrialisation, drug addiction, capitalism, globalisation, democracy, exploitation of workers, free markets, multiculturalism, diversity and free trade. Several of his pet hates are characteristic of the Left. The nation whose philosophy is closest to his own is, he says, Communist China, presumably because of their unashamed will to use all available power to dominate.

Is Tarrant a Christian? Tarrant's manifesto makes no mention of Jesus or the Bible, and his text includes no discernible biblical allusions. In this respect it is very different from the propaganda of Islamic jihadists, which is chock full of Koranic references. Although Tarrant refers to Christianity a number of times, he equates it with white culture. He has little time for churches, describing them as "empty". He also considers Western religious leaders to be "corrupt".

At one point Tarrant asks himself the question, "Am I a Christian?" His laconic answer is, "That is complicated. When I know, I will tell you." However, it is crystal clear from the manifesto that, although Tarrant identifies with Christianity as an aspect of cultural whiteness, apart from this he has no interest in the Christian *faith*, and his ideology has nothing recognisably Christian in it. The manifesto's closing words are, "I will see you in Valhalla."

In Tarrant's fascist vision, the primary good, overriding all else, is the success and dominance of the race-nation. This is a law-of-the-jungle, survival-of-the-fittest view of morality, which considers it entirely legitimate for one tribe to dominate and destroy another to its own advantage. Those who think like him, in Nietzschean fashion, "worship strength". For such as Tarrant, the will to dominate, exercised by any means, is necessary and noble. Tarrant's solution to his crisis of white demographic decline is to incite conflict so that whites will be compelled to awaken, radicalise and grow strong. This is what his attack in Christchurch was all about.

The idea that one group could or should seek to replace another is not an innovation, but an ancient attitude to human life reflected in patterns of warfare attested in many societies. In *The Descent of Man*, Darwin suggested that sympathy for the species developed out of concern for the welfare of the tribe, according to which "actions … are good or bad, solely as they obviously affect the welfare of the tribe—not that of the species, nor that of an individual member of the tribe".

One hardly needs to look to ancient history to find examples. Five hundred miles east of New Zealand lie the Chatham Islands. They used to be inhabited by the Moriori, a gentle and vulnerable tribe, who

had abandoned the Maoris' fiercely warlike ways. In 1835 the Moriori were brutally slaughtered and replaced by Maoris from the North Island. The conquerors banned the speaking of Moriori among the few survivors, and prevented them from marrying each other. One of the invading chiefs stated afterwards, "We took possession ... in accordance with our custom, and we caught all the people. Not one escaped. Some ran away from us, these we killed; and others also we killed—but what of that? It was in accordance with our custom."

Doctrines justifying replacement of whole groups have also been developed in modern times. Communist and Nazi regimes forged their own versions, directing their destructive impulses against "enemies of the people", whom the organs of the state flushed away in their millions.

Despite his claim to be a warrior for Europeans, Tarrant's morality is implacably and utterly opposed to the humanitarian biblical roots of Christianity and, ironically, at odds with the spiritual and ethical foundations of the European cultures he claims to appreciate. In Tarrant's moral universe there is nothing of "love your neighbour as yourself" (Luke 10:27), nor of care for the stranger and the alien in your midst (Exodus 23:9; Leviticus 19:34, "you shall love the alien as yourself"). There is nothing of the insight that human beings are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and thus of inherent worth, irrespective of their race. Tarrant owes nothing to Paul's warning not to take revenge but to live at peace with everyone (Romans 12:17–19). He would have nothing but contempt for such thinking.

Tarrant has turned his back on Christian ethics and knows nothing of the historical influence of Christian ideas on "white" Europe. In reality, Christianity led Europe *away* from the violent, vengeful path Tarrant has chosen. For example, the Vikings had plundered and enslaved their way across Europe serving Norse gods of war, until conversion to Christianity turned them into peaceful nations, eventually becoming the Icelanders, Danes, Swedes and Norwegians of today.

The deeply anti-humanitarian features of Tarrant's ideology are particularly troubling, not least because Western societies' movement away from humanitarianism is a discernible long-term trend, and not just among violent extremists. Reverence for human life is no longer as dominant a characteristic of Western people's thinking as it used to be. Patrick Moore, co-founder of Greenpeace, recently reported in an interview that he left the organisation because it was turning its back on its humanitarian roots, by repositioning humans as "enemies of the Earth". Tarrant himself aligns with this trend in environmentalism, which regards people as a blight on the earth: one of the reasons he says he hates migrants is that they come, he says, from groups that are "overpopulating" the world. He rants, "kill the overpopulation and by doing so save the environment".

Tarrant's ideology is as chaotically self-contradictory as it is revolting. His theory of history and nations is a complete mess. He has no awareness, for example, that Christianity is an Eastern religion as much as a Western one. He imagines that China "lacks diversity". In response to his anxiety about our rapidly changing world—changing in a direction he hates—he has latched on to a worldview driven by hatred and worship of strength, which leads down a road to despair and death.

As chaotic and counter-factual as it is, Tarrant's ideology nevertheless has structure. His hatred of individualism drives the whole show, and goes hand in hand with his tribal morality, which subjugates the worth of an individual human being to the dominion of race and nation. His identity politics flowers into bloody genocide. He feels entitled, for example, to kill Muslim children praying in a New Zealand mosque as "revenge" for acts Muslims did centuries ago, thousands of miles away. He also wants families of immigrants who commit sexual assault to be hanged. This is the darkest, pointiest end of collectivism, a conviction that guilt and punishment are not individual, but cling to groups, even down the generations. It is a profoundly anti-biblical view of guilt (compare Ezekiel 18 and Jeremiah 31).

Is Tarrant a psychopath? He may be. The vast majority of ordinary people could not kill in cold blood as he has done.

After the Battle of Gettysburg a clean-up operation found that most rifles were still loaded, and some had been reloaded many times. One theory is that it is psychologically so difficult to kill another person that the inexperienced soldiers just kept reloading their rifles, only giving the impression of killing. Today professional armies help recruits to overcome their innate reluctance to kill through training, including shoot-em-up computer games, to make killing an automatic, repetitive action. We know that Tarrant had a long history of playing violent computer games—he refers to them in his manifesto and styles his video of the massacre to look like one—so this could have conditioned him to kill.

One reason secular Western people look to psychopathy to explain terrorist massacres is that

many have come under the grip of utopian thinking. This is grounded in the belief that people are not inherently bad, but can be perfected through social progress. By this view, the true location of evil is to be found in social structures, and sin, in so far as it exists at all, is collective, not individual. The abolition of evil structures ought then to usher in a better world: this is called "progress".

From within this worldview, it would generate cognitive dissonance to admit that sane individuals could commit mass murder. Yet there is overwhelming evidence that they can, and do. Solzhenitsyn's writings make it abundantly clear that ordinary, even pure people, can become agents of mass torture and murder. He writes in *The Gulag Archipelago* of one young man, a "selfless, dedicated boy, as fresh as spring water", who, at great risk to himself, even spoke up for Solzhenitsyn when he was arrested. Years later Solzhenitsyn discovered that this same man had become an interrogator (that is, a torturer) for the security services, and Solzhenitsyn reflected that he himself might well have ended up doing the same, if circumstances had directed his life differently. The "line separating good and evil", he concluded, "passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either—but right through every human heart—and through all human hearts".

As Solzhenitsyn stated, it is "ideology—that is what gives evil-doing its long-sought justification and gives the evildoer the necessary steadfastness and determination".

Tarrant's manifesto and actions are bad, not mad. Driven, cold and calculating, and fully responsible for his actions, he had been captured by an evil ideology, which made him a hero in his own eyes.

It is lamentable, but only to be expected, that some have recruited Tarrant's terror to serve their own political ends:

• Erdogan, the President of Turkey, while electioneering, incited religious hatred against "Christian" New Zealanders and Australians for the Dardanelles campaign in the First World War.

• Australia's left-wing opposition leader, Bill Shorten, declared, "Not all right wing extremist hate speech ends in right wing extremist violence. But all right wing extremist violence begins with right wing extremist hate speech." If he had made the same statement about left-wing or Islamic extremists, his political career would have been over. The Right, Shorten makes out, is uniquely evil.

• David Koch, an Australian television presenter, waxed lyrical on the dangers of right-wing extremism: "most of the [Australian] terrorist attacks are right-wing white supremacist. We had Hilton bombings. We had IRAs." In fact, the Australian Hilton bombings were the work of a left-wing extremist, and Australia has never had an IRA terror incident, and even if it had, the IRA were most influenced by Marxism, so also left-wing.

• In a bizarre series of events, Chelsea Clinton was accused of causing the massacre by students at a New York vigil for the victims. "Forty-nine people died because of the rhetoric you put out there," she was told by Muslim student Leen Dweik. This was because Clinton had criticised an anti-Semitic tweet by Ilhan Omar, a Muslim Congresswoman from Minnesota.

• At the other extreme, Australian politician Fraser Anning heaped guilt on the innocent Muslim victims: "just because the followers of this savage belief were not the killers in this instance, does not make them blameless". (Anning's hateful comments have been heartily condemned by all sides of Australian politics.)

• Other distortions are more subtle. John Azumah, professor of World Christianity and Islam at Columbia Seminary, voiced his fears that "radical Islam is now defining Christian witness and filling Christians with fear, hatred, and even violence". It is true, as Azumah points out, that Christians are persecuted in Islamic contexts, so much so that Christians are many, many times more likely to be killed by radical Muslims in Islamic nations than Muslims are to be killed by Christians in the West. The recent destruction of Christian communities in Iraq and Syria is but one example among many. Yet Tarrant was no Christian, and his views do not reflect those of any Christian group. For Muslims who live as large and growing minorities in the West today, the rise of anti-Christian racist ideologies, like Tarrant's, pose a danger far greater than resentment or fear about Islam among suffering Christians.

A shared theme of all these confused and distorting responses is that they perpetuate collectivism, by blame-shifting Tarrant's pathology onto whole political or religious identities. Such ideological exploitations of Tarrant's violence can rightly be seen as a victory for him.

It is necessary to explore Tarrant's passion over the "great replacement". He describes visiting France, and feeling grief-struck by the ebbing away

of the French: "The french [*sic*] people were often in a minority themselves, and the french that were in the streets were often alone, childless or of advanced age. While the immigrants were young, energised and with large families and many children." In disgust and despair Tarrant pulled over by a military cemetery, overwhelmed, and wept at the sight of crosses for soldiers who were killed fighting in the two world wars, stretching out to the horizon. He was weeping over their seemingly vain sacrifice.

By his own account, this was how Tarrant was radicalised. That was it. In front of those crosses he demanded of himself, "Why don't I do something?" Then and there he committed himself to violence in the belief that the radicalisation of other Western young men will be inevitable.

What is disturbing about this testimony is that there will indeed be many who lament what Douglas Murray has called "The Strange Death of Europe". The demographic transition is real enough, and well advanced. Many will find it traumatic, and as it progresses, there is potential for accelerating anxiety and distress. No group relishes the loss of its identity and sense of place in the world, and denial will not help. Attempts to forge a new multicultural identity for Europe, to replace the old national identities, have not been entirely successful. In the wake of violent terrorist attacks in France in 2016, the distinguished French social scientist Pierre Manent expressed the feelings of many when he wrote:

> The French are exhausted, but they are first of all perplexed, lost. Things were not supposed to happen this way … We had supposedly entered into the final stage of democracy where human rights would reign, ever more rights ever more rigorously observed. We had left behind the age of nations as well as that of religions, and we would henceforth be free individuals moving frictionlessly over the surface of the planet … And now we see that religious affiliations and other collective attachments not only survive but return with a particular intensity.

If radicalisation is to be prevented, the crucial thing is to short-circuit the progression from lament and trauma to violence. A sense of loss is and will be unavoidable, but a descent into violence need not be. To prevent this outcome moral leadership is required.

The core challenge Tarrant represents is not that some might be incited to copycat or revenge attacks by his example or his testimony—although that risk is not to be underestimated. The greatest threat is that the option of violence might become increasingly attractive to people who have turned their backs on love-thy-neighbour morality, despising it as weakness, and who also feel deeply challenged and uprooted, both emotionally and morally, by our rapidly changing world, not only by rapid demographic shifts, but also by cultural loss, environmental degradation and all of the other ills Tarrant rails against. The greater the sense of loss, the more attractive the worship of strength could appear. What ethical alternatives will be made available to those who are tempted by this path?

Calls to suppress Tarrant's views from being known and discussed are mistaken. As Solzhenitsyn stated, it is "ideology—that is what gives evil-doing its long-sought justification and gives the evildoer the necessary steadfastness and determination". The real struggle we face in the West is over moral worldviews which despise the value of human life. Put simply, it is the erosion of the ethic that we should treat others as we would ourselves want to be treated (Luke 6:31).

It was Tarrant's rejection of the inherent value of each and every human life that opened the door to his raging collectivist hatred. The challenge for us all is to discern and uproot the seedlings of his deadly ideological trend, and to plant something better in its place. To do this we must understand and acknowledge such thinking, understand how such a worldview might germinate and grow, and be able to trace the paths of its influence, so that we can intervene and oppose it, lest it spread. But to achieve all this, we must take our heads out of the sand, not put them in it.

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Different people

Different people, different signs
but everyone is "darling" now,
starting with her husband who

is honouring a distant vow.
He takes her to the jazz they love
as often as he can,

New Orleans through to Latest Thing.
She can be anxious on the road,
the night so wide and unforeseen.

Inside, she wears a playful cap;
smiles and taps her foot
and sometimes starts to sing along.

Six parts disinhibited,
she fills the short-lived gap
left between our clapping and

the leader's next announcement
with a stripe of child-like wonder.
"Aren't they marvellous!" she says

and starts a ripple of bemusement
and slightly wincing smiles.
Even the musicians get it;

more flattered than annoyed.
Her voice is now a part of it
and, most nights, she is right.

The Keys

Not long after it began
they found that they had swapped their keys;
happy matron, older man,
and neither one too hard to please.

No need to knock, she had her own;
more often, he was bringing his.
They rarely spent a night alone.
For years, their life retained its fizz

until one lock grew more resistant.
Even now he can remember
how he had to be persistent
more in June than in November.

Finally, he lost the knack.
The story takes a bleaker twist.
They meet for coffee; swap them back.
He keeps the memory in his wrist.

Geoff Page

Falling Asleep with a Clean Pillowcase

The pillow case is murmuring,
"I remember, I remember—
guess what I remember:

the washing line,
the backyard,
the sun stacking shadows;
the sleeping dog
sloth-sucked to the lawn,
the troupe of unchased pigeons;
the neighbour mowing a duet
with the muffled postman's bike;
the wind coaching clothes to dance,
their arms peg-held;
bees nuzzling the gum tree,
a school bell calling far away.

I remember all these things
were there and then,
and here."

Katherine Spadaro

Bettina Arndt

Legal Process and the Phony Rape Crisis on Campus

As a callow youth Sydney University Vice-Chancellor Michael Spence completed an arts degree, an unlikely start to his long, illustrious career. Sadly, he failed to absorb even the most basic lessons of history from his early studies—lessons that might have stood him in good stead, given the risky direction he is now taking his institution.

Late last year Sydney University introduced regulations to adjudicate rape cases on campus, using a "balance of probabilities" standard, which fails to offer normal legal protections to the accused. Spence and his colleagues are taking this step to kowtow to a small group of feminist activists keen to see higher rates of conviction in date-rape cases. Juries are notoriously reluctant to send young men to prison in he-said-she-said cases when they don't know whom to believe. The feminist reaction to this irritating state of affairs has been to bully universities into taking over adjudication of such cases involving students.

Sounds farcical? Well, that's exactly what happened in the United States, where the Obama administration required all publicly-funded universities to set up tribunals for determining sexual assault cases. That followed years of feminist campaigning claiming a rape crisis on American university campuses dating back to 1990s demonstrations featuring furious young women brandishing placards claiming one in four students are raped. A so-called documentary called *The Hunting Ground* was shown across the country claiming serial rapists were preying on female college students—a film denounced by nineteen Harvard law professors for misrepresenting key issues in a legal case where a student was ultimately cleared of sexual assault charges by a grand jury. False statistics used in the film have been totally discredited.

The claims being made about the rape crisis are ludicrous. Heather Mac Donald, in her excellent new book *The Diversity Delusion*, points out that if campus rape figures were anything like those suggested by activists there's no way we'd see the current stampede of girls trying to get into American colleges. "Highly educated mothers in New York City pay $200 an hour to prep their female tots for nursery school admissions tests, all in the hope of winning a spot for their little darlings in the Ivy League thirteen years later. Yet we are to believe these ambitious mothers are deliberately packing off their daughters to a hellhole of sexual predation," writes Mac Donald.

Yet the campus rape frenzy steamed along, establishing a system of kangaroo courts where the accused had no help from lawyers, was often not given full access to allegations and was denied other legal rights available under criminal law. It led to a steady stream of young men (and occasionally women) being suspended from college, their lives derailed by this "victim-centred justice".

The most notorious case is probably the Columbia mattress girl. In 2015 Emma Sulkovitz became a global celebrity by turning a false rape allegation into performance art by spending years carrying her mattress around campus. She was protesting Columbia's decision not to take action against a young German student, Paul Nungesser, whom she'd accused of choking and anally raping her.

The university had investigated the case and found him not guilty. There's a Facebook message from Sulkovitz to Nungesser two days after the alleged rape asking to join in a party in his room. A month later she sought more contact: "I want to see you." The following month she messaged: "I love you Paul. Where are you?"

Columbia decided the evidence suggested the young man wasn't guilty yet allowed Sulkovitz for three years to carry her mattress, holding campus protests where people openly called Nungesser a rapist. She was even given academic credit for the performance as part of her visual arts major and permitted to carry the mattress in her graduation ceremony. Eventually Nungesser won his case against Columbia and the university paid him a

large confidential settlement for failing to protect him from defamation and harassment.

Massive legal payouts are adding to the escalating costs of administering this quasi-judicial system. Last year, a Court of Appeals case ruled Boston College should pay over $3 million in compensatory damages after the university had failed to provide a "fair disciplinary process" for a student accused of sexual assault by another student. According to an excellent organisation called SAVE (Stop Abusive and Violent Environments) which is tracking the damage being caused by this system, this was the 100th judicial decision in favour of students who sued their colleges in such cases—with the resulting publicity being extremely damaging for the universities.

Now the Trump administration has moved to ensure due process rights in colleges, a move greeted favourably around the country. *New York Times* columnist Michael Powell described the current college tribunal system as a "broken process" that "flipped fundamental concepts of fairness". The *Chicago Tribune* ran a pithy editorial summing up why rape should be left to the criminal law system: "Campus rape? Call the police."

The evidence is now clear that the Obama administration put the universities into an impossible position, which John McCardell, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the South at Sewanee, Tennessee, described as having "imposed on entities ill-trained or equipped for the task, a quasi-judicial role, with the implication that 'justice', however defined, can be satisfactorily rendered through processes that cannot possibly replicate a genuine legal proceeding".

It's not just in the United States that proper adjudication of rape cases has broken down. Last year a series of UK rape cases collapsed following revelations of deliberate withholding of key evidence by prosecutors and police, part of the same "victim-centred justice". In the ensuing scandal, the Director of Public Prosecutions stepped down and it was decided that key rape and serious sexual assault cases should be reviewed. The Metropolitan Police announced that they were ditching their practice of "believing all victims".

But when it comes to the higher education sector in Australia, no government is requiring our universities to take on this quasi-judicial role. Rather, certain universities, including Sydney, are choosing to embrace this risky business. What is astonishing is that they are doing so in the face of solid evidence that the campus rape crisis simply doesn't exist.

In August 2017, the Australian Human Rights Commission released the results of a million-dollar survey into sexual assault and harassment on university campuses, following years of lobbying by activists. Designed to provide proof of the rape crisis, it proved to be a total fizzer. Only 0.8 per cent per year of the 30,000 surveyed reported any sexual assault, even using the broadest possible definition including "tricked into sex against your will" and sexual contact with a stranger on the bus or train trip to university. In response, the activists immediately shifted ground, issuing alarmist warnings about high levels of "sexual violence", which was mainly unwanted staring and low-grade harassment, including sexual jokes or comments.

The results were in, but I was the only journalist writing in the mainstream media that day to celebrate our safe campuses. My news story published in the *Australian* included data from the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics showing campuses are about 100 times safer than the rest of the community for young women. The ultimate irony was that the day the AHRC data was released we had demonstrations at Parliament House, with protestors carrying mattresses honouring the mattress girl, less than a week after Columbia University lost the case involving her.

Despite the solid evidence refuting the rape crisis scare-mongering, across the country Australian vice-chancellors continued to appease feminist activists with endless displays of virtue-signalling, promising to tackle the sexual violence with twenty-four-hour help lines, sexual assault and harassment units, and sexual consent courses. I wrote to all our major universities posing a series of questions about why our universities are choosing to lie about the safety of our campuses, risking scaring off Asian families from sending their daughters to study in this country. The result was endless weasel words from university media units—not one acknowledged that the whole thing is a farce.

So, this sixty-nine-year-old grandmother is mounting her own protest. For much of the past year I have been touring Australian university campuses speaking to students about the implications of this move by our universities—despite strenuous efforts from protesters trying to silence me. La Trobe University initially banned my talk, claiming it clashed with the values of the university—although they finally gave in after media pressure. In September last year the riot squad was called in by Sydney University security after they were unable to remove unruly protesters who blocked my audience from reaching the venue. It's five months since I made a formal complaint about the university's failure to enforce codes of conduct in relation to key organisers of the protest.

A cursory look through Australian university

websites has revealed four with regulations in place for adjudicating rape using a "balance of probabilities"—apart from Sydney there's Tasmania and Adelaide, while UWA's regulations don't spell out how they make decisions in these cases.

Last year I spent eight months helping a PhD student at Adelaide University ward off a university committee investigating a sexual assault allegation from another student. I found a criminal barrister to give him *pro bono* advice, and eventually the university dropped the charges, but only after a long battle. Given that this university committee had the power to withhold the young man's PhD, it was an extremely stressful ordeal for the young man, as documented in the YouTube video I made with him.

I've also just released another video interview with a male student who was thrown out of his college at UWA following a rape accusation by his former girlfriend. It's shocking how badly the male student was treated in this classic "believe-the-victim" investigation. His side of the story was never properly heard—he was given no support and no legal advice and was so frightened he took six months to even tell his parents what was going on. I'm following up a steady stream of such cases including one where a university withheld a male student's degree for over a year, despite no proper investigation of the rape allegation by a fellow student. At UTS in Sydney, the committee investigating sexual assault includes students amongst its members.

My news story, published in the "Australian", included data from the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics showing campuses are about 100 times safer than the rest of the community for young women.

Universities across the country are joining the witch-hunt, with young men being subject to biased, unfair investigations. Making matters worse are online sexual consent courses being run by most of our universities which teach young women that they cannot give sexual consent if they have been drinking—so if two drunken young people hook up together, he's guilty of rape—and that even if girls give consent they have a right to change their minds afterwards. So, if she thought their sexual liaison was the start of something wonderful but he wasn't on board her romantic illusion, she's now being encouraged to regard that "regret sex" as rape. At many Australian universities such sexual consent courses are now compulsory—UTS last year withheld exam results from students who failed to complete the courses.

It's alarming that this is all happening with so little public scrutiny, but it speaks to the grip of feminism on our key institutions, including mainstream media, that anyone challenging the new orthodoxy is silenced. Last year the National Union of Students passed a resolution to prevent me speaking on campuses and offered to fund protests against me—great use of compulsory student union fees, isn't it? This action has succeeded in intimidating some of the student groups from hosting my campus speaking events. Last month I hosted my own talk at UWA, paying the $350 security fee imposed by the university using the crowd-funder which is supporting my tour. Amusingly, the university announced they were offering counselling to students or staff upset by the fact I was questioning the rape crisis on campus.

The Chancellor of UWA is former High Court Justice Robert French, whose inquiry into free speech on university campuses has just been released—an inquiry prompted by the violent protest against me at Sydney University. It's a pity French has concluded all that is needed is a voluntary code of practice for universities. Sydney University seems to see no problem in unruly, violent students preventing my audience from accessing the venue for my talk last September. Vice-Chancellor Michael Spence has publicly dismissed as a "circus" the fuss made about the riot squad being needed to remove those students.

There's been no outcome from my formal complaint against the key protest organisers who breached the university's code of conduct by bullying and harassing other students at the event, as well as harassing members of the public, including myself. Not only has there been no action taken in response to that complaint but the university also failed to act over another complaint against one of the protest organisers, Madeline Ward, after the university's own investigation body recommended she be given a one-semester suspension for misconduct after she flashed her breasts at an anti-abortion group last year.

I'm taking further action. In February I arranged for almost 2000 flyers to be distributed on the Sydney University campus, mainly to college students, warning of the university's decision to become involved in adjudicating rape cases. (I'd be delighted to send a copy to anyone who'd like to see the flyer.) I've also sent a detailed letter to all members of the Sydney University Senate, providing them with evidence regarding the costly,

damaging likely consequences of this move.

We are pulling together a group of influential people connected to the university who can plan further action. So, this is an appeal to all alumni, or parents of young men attending the university or likely to do so in the future: please contact me and come on board. It's not good enough to just sit back tut-tutting, lamenting what's happening to our universities. The universities are making this move in response to pressure from a tiny group of activists whilst the silent majority just sit back and let it happen.

This is on our watch. Our universities are becoming increasingly unfriendly places for young men—it's hardly surprising that 60 per cent of graduates are now women. But we owe it to current and future generations of male students not to allow our higher education sector to sell out their rights. Where are the social scientists willing to expose the non-existent evidence for the rape crisis? And there must be some academic lawyers who can spell out the legal implications of this move by our universities.

As the daughter of an eminent academic, the economist H.W. Arndt, I know Heinz would be turning in his grave at our lily-livered universities. He was never one to be easily silenced.

Bettina Arndt's website is www.bettinaarndt.com.au, where contact details can be found.

Autumn in Acton

Season of fructose gladness, its sugars mixed
With sadness for declining life and year.
Now the year turns downwards to the compost tip

Rosella parrots with their sideways treadle-ing claws
Move transverse up the sprays of pyracanthus,
Munch golden berries in a slow exultant dance.

But for students in the Acton antipodes the autumn is springtime,
When migrating flocks settle in to fresh campus groves
The newcomers mating and bonding, to raucous musical grunts
And thumps that threaten the ancient roof-ridges
Give their elders the fidgets
Et gaudeamus igit–
Ur! In this Academe spring of new units with scarce an exam in sight,
Time when the teachers cut just a little slack,
As they unfold ancient wisdoms
For the briefly young in that old community
Whose anthem is *juvenes dum sumus*
And aims to chart our human humus.

Soon frosts will crispen till the last leaves crash
Tinkling on frozen earth. For me
Autumn's a white cockatoo, with pale crest of lemon,
Perched on May in a poplar of burning gold,
And the dawn mist wisping up like smoke.

Mark O'Connor

Michael Connor

An Outbreak of Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria

A book for young adult readers (fourteen-plus) includes a letter to the writer's amputated breasts:

> And I know this is probably hard for you to hear, but I believe I'll be happier without you. I also think this will be better for you. You need to be free and I'm just going to keep holding you back and pushing you down. It's time to separate.

Nevo Zisin's surgery costs were paid for, like earlier testosterone treatments, by internet appeals for cash. *Finding Nevo* is an autobiography commissioned by Walker Books, "the leading children's publisher in Australia and New Zealand". By age twenty, when it was published, the gender celebrity author had been a girl, a lesbian, a man, and non-binary. Presently, the transgender activist is a public speaker who runs "programs and workshops" for schools and workplaces, and advises children and parents in the Jewish community on gender and sexuality.

In December 2016, about the time *Finding Nevo* was being written and edited, Dr John Whitehall, Professor of Paediatrics at Western Sydney University, published the first in a series of *Quadrant* articles on childhood gender dysphoria—the conflict experienced by those children who believe they have been born in the wrong gender. The psychological condition has become a politicised media celebration, and a cause in the culture wars. YouTube, Tumblr and Instagram are guides for escaping youthful boredom, bullying and parents by selling the excitement and obsessiveness of gender swapping. For the isolated and friendless, Google will find you gender advice and medical solutions to put things right. It's a fast-track route that leaves some young twenty-somethings mutilated and drug dependent, alone, and in another body, worrying about adult things like working, passing and how to tell new acquaintances, and remind old ones, of their pronouns. And after the glamour and grooming that led them on their journey, everyone around them now seems to be talking of suicide.

Whitehall is on the side of the kids, urging caution and pleading for the saving of young bodies from surgical castration, body disfigurement and lifetimes of prescribed drugs with unknown long-term effects:

> While proponents argue for massive intervention, scientific studies prove the vast majority of transgender children will grow out of it through puberty if parents do little more than gently watch and wait.

Our world is an unquiet place. Transsexuality, multiple interpretations of gender, racial politics, self-identity fantasies, pronoun dictatorship, and the immediate cry of "transphobia" in reaction to different conversations about dysphoria are weapons in the progressives' war against everything. At the Sorbonne students prevent actors from taking part in a performance of Aeschylus's *The Suppliants* because a publicity-enjoying pressure group claims their stylised masks are racist: "Blackface: Colonial Propaganda at the Sorbonne".

The cover of *Esquire* magazine in March was an unremarkable photo of a seventeen-year-old boy, sitting in his bedroom, looking towards the viewer. Social media took offence. The white heterosexual body outraged them, and this simple cover text set off a keyboard tsunami of complaint: "An American Boy: What it's like to grow up white, middle class, and male in the era of social media, school shootings, toxic masculinity, and a divided country." The always silly *Guardian* wondered if the social media fury "was part of a marketing strategy?" It noted that although the long-established men's magazine had said the cover was promoting the first in a series about "boys of different races and sexualities and genders, leading the series off with a particularly Aryan-looking lad was a tactical mistake. The angry

response was inevitable." An ordinary boy is called Aryan-looking and this causes an inevitable angry response? It could be the opening scene for a posthumous Tom Wolfe novel: *The Bonfire of the Gender Vanities*.

Melbourne is a woke colony and the natural home of *Archer*, an "award-winning" magazine published twice yearly and feverishly but unerotically devoted to lipstick-sexuality, gender and identity studies 101. Where else would you discover that the rainbow coalition "consume ecstasy alone at a rate almost 6 times that of the general population". Drug testing the ABC should be an election policy—for all political parties. Several lines from a delicious artefact of contemporary Canberra snobbery make a packingly tight fit in its decorated pages and modish articles:

> My exchange semester in Paris was a culture shock but not the type I was expecting. I had uprooted myself from Canberra, home to a visible queer community and the largest percentage of "YES" votes for the same-sex marriage postal survey, to find myself in a sterile metropolis … When a student in my French political history class [at the elite Sciences Po] turned up in a suit with cufflinks, he didn't even raise eyebrows.

The sexual-politics seriousness of the magazine is evident in a text exploring stageworthy indignities suffered by a community worker and writer when "planning my [Adelaide] wedding as a non-binary queer":

> Amongst other things the [same-sex-marriage] survey result meant that I could get properly married now … As a bisexual, and as a non-binary femme of colour whose partner is a cis white guy [heterosexual], my queerness is often invisible … Technically, I could already marry regardless of the outcome of the survey and subsequent legislation. I had chosen not to amend my gender marker on official documents, so there was no legal barrier to my partner and I getting married as man and wife … When we turned up to appointments with vendors [wedding suppliers], there was often confusion about who I was and who my partner was. "Who are these people? Where are the gays?", their faces seemed to read.

The 1956 film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (but not the 1978 remake) was a documentary, not science fiction. Its trailer held a warning for your future, which you may have forgotten: "The unimaginable becomes real, the impossible becomes true."

It's true, drag-queen kids have entered the mainstream media. An online video promo for a *Good Morning America* interview is headlined, "The 11-year old trailblazing drag kid 'Desmond is Amazing'". The film appears on my screen after I ask YouTube the question a lot of kids probably ask: "am i trans"—no question mark needed—YouTube understands. The clip of Desmond has attracted over 14,000 comments—most are horrified. In another six months it will probably have become terribly banal and his eager parents may have signed for a drag family series with Netflix. Their drama would compete for viewers with *I Am Jazz*, a reality television series currently in its fifth season. It follows the life of young Jazz and her transgender boy-to-girl experience: born in 2000, diagnosed with gender dysphoria aged five, and a trans celebrity thereafter. In series four Mom suggested a "farewell to penis party". When good old smiling dad asks why it couldn't be a "new vagina party" Mom replied, "I wanna bake a cake. And I'm not baking a vagina cake." The cake and finger food were penis-shaped and the gay *Pink News* website reported that the show's fans "loved the penis cake". Publicists describe the emasculating operation Jazz undertakes as "gender confirmation surgery". The slick series is produced by TLC, a pay television provider of family entertainment formerly known as The Learning Channel. Its programs are seen in 95 million US homes.

In Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, John, the Savage, is taken to the feelies. He finds the experience base and ignoble. Nobody understands what he means.

Whitehall's *Quadrant* advice to "gently watch and wait" is premised on having sensible parents, living in a sensible world. Prime Minister Scott Morrison tweeted, "We do not need 'gender whisperers' in our schools. Let kids be kids." He was reacting to a report which suggested New South Wales teachers were being trained to search their schools for signs of transgenderism in the kids, who could then be directed towards helpful advisers. He was savaged, his comment was called "hateful", and he was set up by the media to appear cruel and unfeeling.

Given the chance, the Australian media would crucify a writer like Todd Whitworth. In a *Quillette* opinion article he offered similar commonsense advice to that of Whitehall and Morrison:

> I would promote the use of caution in transitioning children … The prevalence of Gender Dysphoria is not nearly as high as many activists would have you believe. Indeed it afflicts less than 1 per cent of the population.

> The determination of whether someone has this condition requires a qualified mental health professional who specializes in the field. Your kids' teachers and your own Facebook friends don't qualify.

He added: "It is the job of parents to keep children safe from harm, including harm that arises from decisions they may not yet be ready to make." Whitehall is a professor of paediatrics, Morrison a politician, Whitworth is an American-born Canadian aged in his forties, and a female-to-male transsexual man.

In the 2018 Victorian Premier's Book Awards the People's Choice Award was won by *Ida*, a young adult novel by "non-binary author" Alison Evans: lesbian fantasy with pronouns and gender. The writer's new book, *Highway Bodies*, has just been published and has already collected excellent reviews from Goodreads—helped along by the availability of free copies to some young readers in return for reviews, almost all of which favour the propaganda: "Everyone is queer. And the people who aren't are evil." "This is the most delightfully Australian zombie apocalypse story I've ever read. I love all the queer representation (big surprise, right)." "Honestly, I'm loving how, in the midst of this zombie apocalypse, these kids show us this utopian society, where you can still respect each other's genders and pronouns."

Only one reviewer offered a negative appraisal:

> Try as I might to ignore the rabid gender politics being rammed down my throat, I couldn't go more than 2 pages without being reminded that *EVERY* POV [point of view] character is bisexual, nonbinary, lesbian, homosexual, or transgender. That's right, not a single heterosexual POV or main character as at page 116 … I feel like one star is still three stars too many.

The books are favoured by educationists and Evans is invited to speak in schools and libraries, has been featured at other conservative-free sites like the recent Perth Writers' Week and the Wheeler Centre, and is appearing in May at the Sydney Writers' Festival. The Perth event was a discussion of topics selected from an unimaginative Left food-truck menu of platitudes: "multiple intelligences, multiple genders and the dangers of standardisation and stereotyping".

Breaking through the standardisation and stereotyping practised by progressives themselves is Lisa Littman, assistant professor at Brown University School of Public Health. The originator of the term and discussion about "Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria", she is a researcher who trans activists have attempted to silence. In a *Quillette* interview she outlined the problem which would not be familiar to those who only hear the arguments of transgender activists:

> The descriptions of multiple friends from the same pre-existing group becoming transgender-identified at the same time were very surprising. Parents reported that, after announcing a transgender identity, the kids became increasingly sullen, withdrawn and hostile towards their families. They also said the clinicians they saw were only interested in fast-tracking gender-affirmation and transition and were resistant to even evaluating the child's pre-existing and current mental health issues.

Her academic research points to the influence of friends and the internet in the spreading of gender dysphoria through adolescent groups—"social and peer contagion". School teachers, school librarians, invited school speakers, children's authors and publishers could be added to her list.

Before the recent New South Wales elections a clickbait headline on the News.com.au website read, "One Nation and Australian Conservative candidates slammed over 'terrifying' trans kids comments". The report was based on a Centre for Independent Studies election forum, "Do Third Parties Matter?"

The "terrifying" comments didn't seem so scary. Australian Conservative candidate, and *Quadrant* contributor, Greg Walsh had proposed that gender dysphoric children should be allowed to "develop naturally and when they go through puberty these issues will resolve". He suggested a national inquiry into the treatments they are receiving. Mark Latham, the One Nation candidate who went on to be elected, pointed to elitist gender fantasies which have resulted in children "changing their gender every other day" and becoming "mentally ill because they are confused about their gender".

Journalist Ben Graham contacted a person he described as an "expert", Eloise Brook, secretary of the board of directors of the New South Wales Gender Centre. He asked her to comment on what she hadn't heard—for his story does not mention that she was actually present. As a publicly funded organisation the Gender Centre should be open to discussion and its staff trained to speak publicly without bullying. The journalist moved things in the right direction: "Their comments have been met with scorn by Ms Brook". She said the statements were "terrifying" and that word was repeated six

times in the article and heading.

Brook made the incorrect claim that doctors and scientists are "100 per cent in agreement" about treatments for gender dysphoria, but the journalist did not find this error terrifying. She warned that an "epidemic on mental health issues and suicides" would eventuate if these bad ideas were enacted. With the numbers of children being treated for dysphoria wildly rising perhaps her good ideas are not working, for we already have an epidemic.

Brook was reading from a familiar script activists rely on for closing and thus evading debate. Whitehall had previously described the familiar tactic: "Accept the pathways of 'medicine', we are urged. Welcome transgender as but one hue in a natural rainbow. Or the children will kill themselves." Even as she was attacking political candidates to the parliament which provides her organisation's funding she was also pleading for more of their money: "We currently have one case worker helping 130 families, we're supposed to see 65 per case worker."

In the 2016 census the number of trans people in Australia is given as 1260. A Gender Centre statement, endorsed on Eloise Brook's Twitter account, states that the true figure is closer to 200,000. With these figures childhood gender dysphoria is a crisis graver even than AIDS—or are they exaggerating?

Detransitioning is the process whereby a person who has made a gender change then decides to return to their biological gender. It is a lonely and frightening process with little help available from trans-promoting groups. A search of the Gender Centre website does not reveal a single mention of detransitioning.

The Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne received their first referral for gender dysphoria in 2003. Six years later the number of referrals began rising and in 2017 (the latest figure available) it is in excess of 250 patients—these are children and adolescents up to the age of seventeen. The Hospital's Gender Service informs parents that children "begin expressing their gender identity at two or three years of age". A wait-and-see attitude does not seem part of their DNA.

Progressive culture shuns and silences dissident voices. On the dark side of the culture we are not always great at aiding and promoting each other—something the Left do very well. In the incredibly cruel drama which is being performed in front of us there are voices talking clear sense we should be noticing—John Whitehall and Greg Walsh in *Quadrant*, Todd Whitworth in *Quillette*, Madeleine Kearns in *National Review* and the beleaguered Lisa Littman.

Advice to Authors

Strive for clarity—

for purity of impulse
wedding word with intention—

simple as glass unstained, like water
held in a trembling frame:
all limpid, no turning,
honest as gravity.

Seek for transparency;
edit yourself
ruthlessly.

And do this also
in your writing.

Katherine Spadaro

Aynsley Kellow

How Labor Will Generate an Impoverished Energy Future

The Australian Labor Party intends taking to the federal election a promise to reduce Australia's emissions by 45 per cent—well above the target Australia adopted in the Paris Agreement. As one means of reaching this target, Labor has promised to ensure that 50 per cent of Australia's generation will come from renewables by 2030. This is nonsense on stilts—and very expensive nonsense at that.

A recent analysis by Brian Fisher, former head of the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics, showed just how costly this policy would be: a cumulative cost of $472 billion to 2030 compared with $69 billion for the Coalition's 26 to 28 per cent reduction target. Labor has shrugged this off, but Warwick McKibbin, probably Australia's leading academic economist in the area of climate economics, said it agreed with his own recent analysis.

However, this did not stop Paul Barry on ABC's *Media Watch* using a 2015 report McKibbin produced for DFAT to dismiss Fisher's analysis because McKibbin had shown the Labor target knocked *only* a further 0.5 per cent off Australia's GDP. Barry was seemingly ignorant of the fact that $472 billion was entirely consistent with a cumulative cost of 0.5 per cent annually by 2030! Australia's GDP in 2017 was 1.7 trillion, so 0.5 per cent per year is $85 billion and $850 billion over ten years—more as the economy grows.

Fisher's analysis also resonates with the best international research, informed by experience such as that in Germany, where its *Energiewende* program since 2000 has led to greatly increased costs for no recent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. *Energiewende* has cost billions of euros in subsidies and, having dug an enormous hole, German policymakers have chosen to dig deeper rather than admit they are not going to strike climate policy paydirt.

The reason why there has been no reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is that the system must be made reliable, and with limited hydro-electric resources (historically, about 3.6 per cent of generation) and batteries only being able to provide voltage and frequency stabilisation, rather than back-up over days, months or years, this reliability has to come by means of (inefficient but flexible) open-cycle gas turbines or by underloading combined-cycle gas turbines or coal-fired thermal generators. These generators typically require ten hours to start up from cold, so they frequently sit fired up, emitting but not generating, or at sub-optimal loads, producing more greenhouse gas emissions per kWh generated. France, which has an extensive nuclear program, has increased its greenhouse gas emissions for this reason: encouraged to install substantial wind capacity, it now needs more gas turbine generation to regulate the system because the nuclear plants that dominate it cannot cope readily with the fluctuations associated with large amounts of wind.

Add to that the costs of transmission. Average German capacity utilisation rates are only around 17 per cent for wind and 8 per cent for solar. Australia has better conditions, but the same problem remains: wind and solar both have low density. Average insolation at the top of the atmosphere, for example, is only 343 watts per square metre, with a lesser amount reaching the surface (depending on cloud cover and particulates), so the land area required is substantial. Renewables are therefore remote from sources of demand, and require transmission lines that can carry 100 per cent of output, but might only average 25 per cent of that load. There are also transmission losses to consider—around 5 per cent in Australia, and dependent on length and load. Indeed, the Australian Energy Market Operator in 2018 adjusted the "marginal loss factor" (which reflects transmission losses) for renewables by up to 22 per cent after finding that the contribution of solar and wind to the market was less than expected, and some have been reduced by 20 per cent, so far, in 2019. Renewable generation is low-density, so must be located where land is cheap, usually remote from demand. Moreover, when the wind is blowing

and the sun shining everywhere, there are problems with managing congestion.

Some people assume that 100 per cent renewables is possible, but it is not—or at least not at any sensible price (a point made by some leading climate scientists). For the sake of simplifying to give an example, let's assume a 25 per cent capacity factor for renewables (likely slightly worse than achievable in Australia). A system of 100 per cent renewables then requires capacity four times the average demand to generate average demand. But, of course, this needs storage, and storage is both expensive and inefficient, only 70 to 80 per cent efficient for pumped storage hydro (let's say 75 per cent), so in actuality even more capacity is required to supply a 100 per cent renewables system backed up by pumped storage. And similar transmission capacity is needed, but it is utilised only to deliver energy only up to 20 per cent of the time, including to and from storage. (Batteries are perhaps 85 to 87 per cent efficient, but are expensive and far from viable, except for ensuring short-term stability.)

Renewables advocates usually place their faith on interconnection and the hope that the wind will be blowing or the sun shining elsewhere.

Even a target of 50 per cent renewables has similar problems, and one wonders why Labor thinks this is a sensible policy. More to the point, how has it managed to convince its affiliated trade unions to support this policy? True, unions have begun to support the Adani coal mine, but they seem so far to have accepted the 50 per cent target, which will almost certainly result in the transfer of the aluminium industry offshore, for example. When I was many years ago a member of the Tasmanian ALP Minerals and Energy Policy Committee, trying to develop a sensible energy policy after the Gordon-below-Franklin cancellation, the representatives of the ETU and the FEDFA were strong advocates for the interests of their members. Why the union silence now?

An important factor seems to be the prevalence of poor analysis that is insisting that renewables are cheaper than coal or gas. Last year, I pointed out that such claims by Professor Andrew Blakers and his colleagues at ANU rested on conflating the *price* renewable generators were bidding into the National Electricity Market with the *cost* of renewables. The price, of course, reflected the additional income the renewable generators realised from the sale of renewable energy certificates, the value of which themselves was about the cost of electricity from a new ultra-supercritical coal-fired power station ($81/MWh)—the kind that is being built in large numbers in Asia, and which can provide a 25 per cent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions over the existing black coal fleet, and around 40 per cent over brown coal.

Numbers like $50/MWh are frequently tossed around by spruikers of renewables, but this *price* is acceptable to investors only because they stand to double this income from the sale of renewable energy certificates. Fortunately, we have available some estimates of non-subsidised costs of wind and solar systems in Australia that are regularly updated by the company Lazard. Their most recent estimate (November 2018) is US$43 to 131/MWh for solar, or A$61.92 to 188.64/MWh converted at the most recent estimate for Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) of A$1.44 to US$1. The estimate for wind is US$34 to 73/MWh, or A$48.96 to 105.12. The spruikers of renewables are always promising us that costs will continue to come down, but Lazard's Levelised Cost of Energy (LCOE) Analysis report warns that "over the past several years the rate of such LCOE declines have started to flatten".

But, as noted above, income from generation plus sale of renewable energy certificates is only half the story, because this ignores the costs of integration into a reliable electricity *system*.

Analyses such as those from Blakers and his colleagues rely upon estimates of the LCOE from renewables, but such estimates ignore *system* costs that can double the cost of renewables. A more accurate estimate of cost—the *System* Levelised Cost of Energy (SLCOE)—is ignored by Blakers *et al* in their continuing attempts to convince us that we can have 100 per cent renewables at no net cost, and that the electricity sector alone can meet our economy-wide Paris target, and do so in a few short years.

Remarkably, that is the claim that Blakers *et al* recently made. Extrapolating from a rapid growth in renewables installation over a couple of years, they noted that Australia's growth in installations was the highest globally and all that was required was for government to get out of the way. This was a remarkable piece of analysis, to suggest that we would achieve a renewables nirvana that would meet all of Australia's Paris commitments for the economy as a whole (and Labor's 50 per cent renewables target) by 2024. However, they ignored the possibility that the recent level of investment might have been stimulated by something other than cost: a kind of gold rush in renewables investment to

capitalise on the Renewable Energy Target scheme that was nearing its goal. They even acknowledged that "the target has now effectively been met, and new solar and wind farms can no longer expect significant subsidy support". Renewable energy certificates will continue to be earned until 2030, but their value will be eroded by the addition of new capacity, unless propped up by a tightening of the target.

Blakers *et al* were immediately criticised, even by those who supported policies to encourage renewables. Their ANU colleague, the economist Frank Jotzo, said it was "a very big assumption that renewables deployment would continue at present rates. And all it is is a straight-line extrapolation from one year's renewables deployment." Melbourne University's Dylan McConnell tweeted that the analysis "seems not only internally inconsistent, but seriously flawed".

Blakers *et al* and many other analysts simply ignore integration costs, which are substantial. Even at 30 to 40 per cent wind market share, the integration costs are up to 50 per cent of generation costs—€25 to 35/MWh (A$49.45 to 69.23/MWh converted at Purchasing Power Parity). This is the estimate for Germany, which requires less storage back-up thanks to interconnections to other European countries with nuclear and hydro capacity. Lazards estimate the cost of solar plus storage at about 2.7 times the cost of solar alone.

Blakers *et al* are not alone in ignoring these costs. The analysis performed for Greenpeace by Reputex published in 2018 (which examines the economics of Labor's 45 per cent target) similarly simply ignores transmission. If Labor has been encouraged by the Reputex analysis, it has been encouraged in its policy on research that simply ignores integration costs.

An important integration cost is the need to provide storage to ensure system reliability. This is less important at lower levels of renewables penetration, because the system can draw on large amounts of dispatchable generation. However, German economist Lion Hirth found that the value of wind power fell rapidly as wind penetration increased from zero to 30 per cent of total electricity consumption; for solar power, similarly low value levels were reached at 15 per cent penetration.

There are four kinds of storage necessary in a system with large amounts of renewables: *short-term* storage to maintain grid stability (frequency and voltage); *daily* storage to capture solar energy for when the sun goes down and the wind drops to zero (or is so strong turbines have to be shut down for safety); *intraseasonal* storage needed to cover intermittency of wind and solar, the output of which can fall to near zero for several days at a time; and *interseasonal* storage that could store surplus solar-generated electricity in the summer months for use in the depths of winter. (This last is less of a problem in Australia, with a summer peak.)

Batteries can cover short-term storage, but at a considerable cost. Jack Ponton, Emeritus Professor of Engineering at the University of Edinburgh, has estimated the cost of the "world's largest battery" installed by Tesla in South Australia (a 129 MWh system believed to have cost around US$38 million, which can perform this function for the South Australian system for four minutes), as in excess of $400,000 per megawatt hour. (It is worth noting that Lazard sees the price of batteries possibly increasing because of plant constraints and rising lithium prices.) The costs of stability for 30 to 40 per cent wind penetration in Germany are less than $12; this exceeds the estimate by Blakers *at al*, who state: "The cost of hourly balancing of the Australian electricity grid is modest: about $5 per megawatt hour for a renewable energy fraction of 50 per cent, rising to $25 per megawatt hour for 100 per cent renewables." (The source they give for this estimate is a self-reference to an earlier post of theirs on *The Conversation*.)

Pumped hydroelectricity can provide daily storage at around $60/MWh—bearing in mind that this is a net consumer of electricity—but there is currently no technology that can provide intraseasonal or interseasonal storage. Renewables advocates usually place their faith on interconnection and the hope that the wind will be blowing or the sun shining elsewhere, but Australia has the world's longest transmission system and this entails losses exacerbated by distance (currently 5 per cent)—not to mention the impact of events such as dust storms on the output of solar installations, both domestic rooftop and grid. Blakers *et al* place enormous faith in solar and wind output "counter-correlating", but there are many widespread calm nights, and this does not overcome low capacity factors for each that are not a problem when they are operating at the margins of a system dominated by dispatchable generation.

Blakers *et al* simply wish most of these issues away, stating: "Stabilising the electricity grid when it has 50–100 per cent renewable energy is straightforward using off-the-shelf techniques that are already widely used in Australia." For them, these off-the-shelf techniques are storage (pumped hydro and batteries), demand management, and "strong interstate interconnection using high voltage transmission lines to smooth out the effect of local weather". They don't cost these techniques and we are being asked to believe that they will come at prices where they will simply walk off the shelves.

At low levels of penetration, renewables can be a useful addition to a modern electricity system—but we must be careful how we evaluate them, because they very quickly escalate the cost of the system as they achieve substantial penetration. The problem confronting Australia is that we have subsidised and regulated our way to higher system costs. As economist Paul Simshauser pointed out five years ago, we have gone from first to last in terms of electricity prices, and we have done so by focusing solely on LCOE of particular generation sources, ignoring what we were doing to the system—a mistake common to the work of both Blakers *et al* and Reputex. The situation has worsened since then, and Labor is promising to make it even worse, and it cannot simply wave away the Fisher analysis, because these realities tend very much to support it.

We desperately need good policy analysis that focuses on the *System* LCOE of variable renewable energy, defined as the sum of their LCOE plus integration costs per unit of variable renewable energy generation. It is a measure that seeks to comprise the total economic costs of variable renewable energy. A large component of integration costs has already been felt, but rarely made explicit, in Australia: reduced utilisation of capital embodied in thermal plants, which has not been accounted for in most integration studies.

Labor would head us down a path where costs would increase still further. Our current system is cannibalising the dispatchable generators, and Labor would have us double down on this. It is also discouraging investment in new ultra-supercritical coal-fired plant that can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25 per cent over the existing black coal fleet and 40 per cent over the brown coal generators in Victoria. There is an enormous risk in all this: what happens in 2030, when many of the renewables generators will have repaid their capital but no investor will have any appetite for investment in thermal? Indeed, many of the early renewables will be ageing by then; what price will be needed to induce investment with no renewable energy target?

Our non-systems thinking is systematically driving us towards an impoverished energy future.

Aynsley Kellow is Professor Emeritus of Government at the University of Tasmania. References for this article appear at ***Quadrant Online****.*

Bob

A Distinguished Member of the Humane Society,
by Edwin Henry Landseer, 1831

At rest but on alert, the Newfoundland
fills up the canvas, large head poised, both fore-
legs dangling over a granite quay. A band
of birds (gulls? terns?) glide through skies of grey. More
green is the sea which laps to rust a ring
awaiting boats. Such colour flecks the coat
of Bob himself—thick, coarse, slick, varying
from light to dark as breeders always note.

How fitting that a dog once rescued from
a shipwreck should save men—twenty-three
in fourteen years! How odd that floods would come
to harm his image in a gallery
in London! Restoration took too long;
now done, the hero yet again looks strong.

Jane Blanchard

Note: The dog who posed (in a studio) for this painting was named Paul Pyr and was owned by the artist's cousin.

The Museum of Socialist Art, Sofia

If it were not for the sculpture garden,
who would ever come out to this dismal place,
where long-poured concrete has been left to
harden
as parking lots and unleased office space?
Yet come we do, hoping to unearth
a brilliant gleam amidst the ashen waste,
to prise out that object of uncommon worth—
the relic that will brighten understanding.
Yet should this dream-goal prove too
demanding,

experience, close and coarse-grained, may
suffice;
we buy our tickets and head towards the yard.
Set by the gate, as if to advertise
some new brand or fad, is a huge, red-starred
finial, the former stickpin of Party House.
It stands now in a state of disregard,
atoning for the passions it had once aroused.
Beyond wait the statues, each on its plinth,
surrounded by spring grass, as green as absinthe.

We follow a path down the gentle slope
towards the collection of statues and busts—
an assembly of astonishing scope.
The restless eye, drawn here and there, entrusts
itself to no one form. These shifts portend
awareness of how violently this garden thrusts
all of its sculptures together, close-penned.
Each was designed to command a single space
(a public square or a glass display case),

like a shrine image set on its pedestal.
Then every passing eye was raised
to meet its image, grave and terrible,
the stern ideal that the sculptor had phrased.
Though it cannot return to that prominence—
that hilltop from which it had been displaced—
we could still view it singly, at close distance,
spurning the yard-penned agglomeration.
We make a start, fixing concentration

on a woman fighter, carved in high relief.
Stout and thick-legged, she surges forward,
her jaw clenched in adamantine belief;
behind her back, she wields a heavy sword.
Who knows what injustices shall be slayed
on the crowless battlefield she moves toward?
Next along is a portrait of Lenin, portrayed
as a tradesman in a flat cloth cap.
Chin jutted forward, ready for a scrap,

he strikes an insurrectionary pose.
Next is another Lenin—this one capless
yet otherwise alike. Again it shows
him as protector of the hapless;
the tidy moustache and close-trimmed goatee
project a manly strength. Not for him the sapless
waiting of the bourgeoisie. A devotee
of immediate action, he discerns
how slowly justice progresses and yearns

to give it a shove. There are some other heads,
but all of them defenders of the Cause.
There's one of Marx; deep thought threads
two parallel lines in his brow. By force
of comradeship, or glamour, Che Guevara
has also earned a place. We briefly pause
to catch his famed beret. Doctor Mara
Maleeva-Zhikova's next—a surprise
in that she's a woman. At first we surmise

that hers is a tokenistic presence,
but then, further along the way, we meet
her again, learning that she was the President's
wife. Head held erect, she's ready to greet
the people—her smile of royal condescension
affixed. Yet whether in bronze or concrete,
no other figure gains half the attention
that's granted here to Lenin. That's him, seated
this time. In all else the sculpture's repeated

the now-familiar motifs: the prideful nose;
the facial hair; the steady gaze, intent
on confrontation. As we draw close,
to study the iconography, dissent
begins to rouse within. With a start,
I see what should long have been apparent:
these "realist" sculptures are religious art.
This statue before us is a Russian icon;
by choice of pose, the sculptor seems to liken

the Leader to the Virgin Mary, enthroned.
Though he wears no halo, nor is he flanked
by seraphim, the baby Jesus disowned
most of all, for dignity he isn't outranked
by the Empress-Virgin in a lapis robe.
In the centre of the park, its sacrosanct
core, there's a whole icon-gallery to probe.
The figures here are the most monumental.
Of course, it can't be coincidental

that these are the Soviet leadership,
along with their local franchisees.
A religiously-minded readership
would've turned their gaze, attentive, on these
and seen Christ Pantocrator, Ruler of All.
Not even standing as high as his knees,
we look up at Lenin. Of supernatural
height, he surveys the entire yard,
his gaze never shutting, no detail disbarred

from his notice. In the park hereabouts
all his acolytes rise, their bearing
as erect as a cross. Still, we have our doubts
about the local brass, these trenchcoat-wearing
saints. Take, for instance, Georgi Dimitrov:
he's shown here, tall and martial, commandeering
Stalin's moustache. Yet it hasn't brought off
the intended effect (or at least
not to the fullest degree). The creased,

baggy pants and his oversized coat
look like somebody's hand-me-downs.
There's something about his figure now, remote
from power and consequence, which sounds
a note of melancholy. And so we leave him,
heading towards the edge of the grounds.
On the way, we pass statues of workers—slim
in both stature and quantity. Two, peasant
women, hurry fieldwards, as if a present

awaited them there. Going barefoot
and shouldering hoes, they thrust out each stride
devotedly. A few steps on, they're put
up against the tableau of the giants behind,
the colossi of this Communist Thebes;
the apparatchiks have been deified,
the workers depicted as antlike plebes.
And then we reach the foot of the yard.
A block of flats with a pale, grey facade

juts up beyond the boundary fence.
Blank of expression, it looks out across
the sculpture garden's unpeopled expanse.
Turning around, I'm forcibly struck (at a loss
to see how it took so long) that the garden
is empty, apart from us. There is no gloss
to be put on it, no ready pardon
to be granted now; for locals, this place
is where spectres walk, the sacred space

of a vanished cult. Whatever bleak rites
were practised once in the veneration
of its concrete gods, this mirthless scene indicts
them all. Yet what then of their penetration
through every city and town in the land?
What of their ceaseless reiteration
through all the years the dream-realm spanned?
This empty scene, it answers this too—
more volubly, it seems, than any statue.

The locals have built a park-sized cage
for the idols of this toppled cult,
like pieces of bone from a saint or sage,
locked in a subterranean vault.
But the faith is dead. The grass is untrampled,
the paths untrod. No follower will now exult
in the mysteries that these forms exampled.
It's thus, we defect from the pieties
of the surging, just-sworded deities.

Sean Wayman

Keith Windschuttle, Patrick Morgan,
James Franklin, Peter Costello, Mervyn F. Bendle

Peter Coleman: A Great Australian

Peter Coleman died on March 31. He was ***Quadrant****'s Editor for most of the period from 1967 to 1990. But that was only one of his many important contributions to Australian literary, cultural and political life over the past sixty years.*

Keith Windschuttle

A Great Man of Letters

In the 2015 Queen's Birthday Honours list, Peter Coleman received an AO, making him an officer of the Order of Australia, a much deserved and long overdue accolade. The list said the award was for services "to the print media industry as a noted editor, journalist, biographer and author; to the parliaments of Australia and New South Wales; and to the community".

Peter's best-known contribution to Australian print media was his role as magazine editor, in particular as editor of *Quadrant*. Peter became co-editor with James McAuley in May 1967 and held the position of either co-editor or editor continuously from then—with some brief breaks—until January 1990. In June 1975, the co-editors took the gamble of converting the bi-monthly journal into a monthly magazine, declaring in an editorial that the move would not affect its reasons for existence:

> *Quadrant* has always been both a literary magazine and a magazine of combat. It has published the best literary work it could find and it has also believed that political controversy is a good thing. It will continue to do both.

After James McAuley's death in 1976, it was Peter who largely defined the publication as a monthly magazine of national standing.

One of his critical roles was to ensure the magazine became Australia's most prolific publisher of poetry and short fiction. Before *Quadrant*, this role been filled by the *Bulletin* magazine, of which Peter was editor from 1964 to 1967. When its owner Frank Packer converted the *Bulletin* into a weekly news magazine, Peter resigned and transferred its literary contents to *Quadrant*, where they have stayed ever since. In short, since 1967, Peter's efforts ensured there was always a widely-read, national, monthly publication deeply involved in nurturing and shaping high-quality Australian poetry and fiction.

The same is true of his role in preserving in Australia the high culture of Western civilisation. Peter's approach made *Quadrant* a major source not only of literary essays but also art criticism, film criticism, theatre criticism, autobiography, and essays on history, philosophy, politics and religion. Within each genre, he helped preserve a distinctively traditional yet creative set of values. As Prime Minister Tony Abbott observed in October 2013 at a dinner to celebrate the magazine's 500th edition:

> *Quadrant* has consistently displayed a scepticism of new paradigms and panaceas, a willingness to put forward a rational counterpoint to the breathless enthusiasm of the next big thing, an empirical philosophy that judges ideas not by their source or popularity but by the strength of the evidence and argument, and above all else a deep regard for the lessons of the past and the institutions and traditions that build and protect our society.

In June 2008, when the University of Sydney awarded him the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa), its citation acknowledged Peter's contribution "to the intellectual life of Australia and to its world of letters for more than fifty years". It said his writings "constitute a remarkable analysis of civic society in Australia … they address the philosophical and moral underpinnings of international civic life". His speech in reply, "The Whirligig of Time", was published in *Quadrant*, September 2008.

Peter was one of Australia's finest essayists.

There is a distinction between essays and feature articles in journalism that is probably impossible to define, but the University of Sydney citation above captures the difference in its notion of writing that bears "the philosophical and moral underpinnings of international civic life". Most of Peter's writings contain something of this. The best of his essays, forty-two of which were collected in *The Last Intellectuals: Essays on Writers and Politics* (Quadrant Books, 2010), are beautifully crafted works from a master of the art. They constitute an invaluable record of cultural and political life in Australia in the especially turbulent period of the Cold War and its aftermath.

Peter embellished his editorial career by publishing six collections of essays by other writers that have themselves become important in defining Australian civic life. Two of these books are now widely acknowledged as classics of their time: *Australian Civilisation: A Symposium* (Cheshire, 1962) and *Double Take: Six Incorrect Essays* (Mandarin, 1996).

As well as spending most of his working life as a full-time editor, Peter also distinguished himself as a politician. From 1968 to 1978 he was a member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, where he rose to become both a minister and Leader of the Opposition. When he lost the 1978 election to Labor's Neville Wran, he left parliament and became administrator of Norfolk Island from 1979 to 1981. He was then elected to the federal House of Representatives as member for the Sydney seat of Wentworth, where he served from 1981 to 1986.

During his political career Peter also found time to write several major books of cultural and intellectual history and biography. His book on the international cultural politics of the Cold War, *The Liberal Conspiracy: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe* (Free Press, 1989) is an intellectual *tour de force* that remains the definitive work on the topic. As he noted in *The Last Intellectuals*, the struggle from 1946 to 1989 between Western civilisation and communism was waged not only by political confrontation in Central Europe and Latin America and overt warfare in Asia. There was also a global cultural war fought by writers in magazines, newspapers and books. Peter was one of Australia's central figures in this great contest. *The Liberal Conspiracy* recorded how journalists, essayists, poets, novelists and editors defended cultural freedom and contributed to the eventual collapse of communism. More than any other movement, this culture war embodied the moral dimension of the Cold War. "It was," he says, "an historic success."

Along the way, Peter also managed to write the biographies of three important contributors to Australian cultural life: poet and essayist James McAuley, satirist Barry Humphries and film-maker Bruce Beresford. He also co-authored a biography of economist and fellow editor of *Quadrant*, Heinz Arndt. He followed this with his autobiographical *Memoirs of a Slow Learner* (Angus & Robertson, 1994, and a revised and updated edition published by Connor Court in 2015). This is a chronicle of his journey from student bohemianism to anti-censorship liberalism and anti-communism in the Cold War. At eighty years of age, he took on the daunting task of co-authoring with his son-in-law, the former Commonwealth Treasurer Peter Costello, an account of the robust politics of the eleven years of the Howard government, *The Costello Memoirs* (Melbourne University Press, 2008). These books alone rank him as an important figure in Australian cultural and political literature.

As the University of Sydney's citation for his honorary doctorate recorded, Peter's contribution to the intellectual life of Australia and its world of letters over more than fifty years was remarkable. In short, he was one of Australia's truly great men of letters.

Keith Windschuttle is the Editor of ***Quadrant****. An earlier version of this article, marking the award of the Order of Australia to Peter Coleman, appeared in the July–August 2015 issue.*

Patrick Morgan

Four Distinguished Careers

In the mid-1960s the Sydney *Quadrant* group used to hold conferences at the old Regency plush Belvedere Hotel to the east of the city. I found the discussions and the people—who included Richard Krygier, James McAuley, Professors Dick Spann and Doug McCallum, Donald Horne and Peter Coleman himself—congenial. *Quadrant* at that stage was an incongruous mix of Sydney libertarians and Melbourne Jews and Catholics; both groups had anti-communism or more generally anti-totalitarianism in common. Positive emphasis on freedoms made it a radical liberal rather than a conservative journal.

Quadrant, and its sponsor, the Congress for Cultural Freedom, were on a roll then, with its worldview, based on writers like George Orwell and Hannah Arendt, getting it right in the post-war climate, whereas many other local magazines

were still wallowing, in Patrick White's words, in the "dreary, dun-coloured offspring of journalistic realism". Coleman had just published his refreshing symposium *Australian Civilisation* (1962), which ushered in a more sophisticated, internationalist perspective, and confidently announced Australia as not just a culture, but as a civilisation. This was the first of Peter's many important achievements.

From the start I found Peter different from many who mixed in journalistic, academic and political circles. He was personally charming, assured and urbane, neatly dressed and well groomed, easy-going but with at the same time a focused demeanour. He was fundamentally serious as opposed to much of the frivolous or irresponsible counter-cultural behaviour in fashion at the time. He could imperceptibly change gears to adapt himself to any new milieu, a sign of a person interested in others. He was relaxed, detached and non-ideological, neither an urger, a pusher nor a limelight seeker. Peter covered many areas and felt at home in the world of ideas. He was a gentleman, not of a certain stiff older type which could operate only within its own status group, but with a contemporary style which could retain its bearings in any company. I realised after some time that these were qualities I admired in the Sydney scene, in contrast to the Melbourne one (from which Peter had originally come), where people hunted in packs and treated you as a potential combatant until you proved otherwise.

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Quadrant at that stage was housed in a couple of rooms in a rundown warehouse in Clarence Street. Peter was more in day-to-day evidence than Jim McAuley. Though they were joint editors, Peter operated in the penumbra cast by the scintillating star of the founding editor, who got more of the kudos and public attention. At that stage most of my dealings with the magazine were through Peter. Working with him was easy and a two-way street, as he sought your own opinions rather than being a passive receptacle for material sent to him. In the rooms as secretary and office manager was Marie Gillis, assisted by an aristocratic East European lady whose daughter married into the English royal family. They were succeeded by the long-term, long-suffering and devoted Robin Marsden. The magazine was a shoestring operation; if you happened to be in the office at publication time you were shanghaied into licking the address stickers, stamps and envelopes like everyone else.

As the 1960s moved into the 1970s McAuley became ill and Peter moved into the driver's seat. Whereas the early *Quadrant* had seemed to be on a winner, its tone changed from confident to embattled, as Vietnam, student riots, the new Left, the permissive society, and university radicals became the go-to centres of interest, and support, for the media. Peter carried on an intelligent campaign against this new spirit of the age, being well equipped for this role as a former *Bulletin* editor and a thinker with a wide-ranging perspective. He held the fort when freedoms were increasingly on the back foot, and a new form of barbarism, exemplified by student rioters and more seriously by the Black Panthers and the Red Brigades, was on the rise. From this experience he later wrote a major work, *The Liberal Conspiracy*, the history of the worldwide Congress for Cultural Freedom, and of the organisational and ideas struggle during the Cold War period. His title may refer to the Congress being seen as illegitimate by the *bien pensant* intelligentsia. I still often see his book referred to. Very few Australians have written a widely recognised book on a key international issue. Peter also wrote a succinct biography of his co-editor James McAuley, which rescued McAuley's reputation from earlier defamations masquerading as biography which made him out to be a weird, devilish, peripheral figure.

Peter had four interconnected careers, as journalist, editor, politician and author. Curiously I thought of him temperamentally as an academic, which he technically wasn't, because he was an analyst as much as a player. In conversation he would often quiz me, in the manner of a university tutor, in order to force me to clarify my ideas. Whom was he most like? I think of William Buckley of the *National Review*, like Peter an acclaimed editor and author, a dapper US East Coast gentleman, engaged with ideas and current controversies, yet above it all. Buckley, like Coleman, was ahead of the pack. When US liberal intellectuals like Norman Podhoretz were formulating a new position but hesitating to leave the Left, Buckley said: "Come on in, the water's fine."

Peter seemed assured in public but on a few occasions when I met him at his Woollahra flat or

for a meal in Melbourne he seemed dispirited. One time was during his period as Opposition Leader in the New South Wales parliament when Neville Wran was Premier. Although he never said it to me directly, it was obvious he could never use the stories floating around about major corruption, as legally defendable evidence was not at that time available, so he was easily beaten by Wran in an election, a fatal blow to his political career. With the release of the Lionel Murphy material and with the trials of subsequent Labor ministers, the truth was if anything worse than the rumours, so he was unfairly hamstrung. In the New South Wales elections just concluded, pundits said Michael Daley's gaffes in the last week lost the election, but the deeper reason was that the New South Wales electorate, including Labor voters, does not have confidence, with Labor corruption matters still before the courts, in electing the ALP to power. Peter won a federal seat after losing in New South Wales, but by that stage his New South Wales Liberal contemporary and perhaps rival, John Howard, had consolidated his position.

As sole editor of *Quadrant* in the 1980s Peter successfully took the magazine into a new period when it was once again in the ascendancy by opening up economic issues such as free trade, small government and industrial relations reform. Worries about school education and university delinquencies were increasing. The magazine backed efforts to end the Cold War by weakening Russia's stranglehold on East Europe, and by similarly supporting South-East Asian nations like Indonesia. *Quadrant* was in good shape after having painstakingly built up its credibility and influence over the years.

But, as we all know to our cost, what has taken time and effort over time can be jeopardised overnight. The succession plan to have Robert Manne made joint editor caused problems. Manne had edited a book mainly by *Quadrant* contributors called *The New Conservatism in Australia*, in which he praised his contributors for "fighting the reigning left-wing orthodoxy of the intellectual class". The book's title was inaccurate, as many *Quadrant* contributors were not conservatives, but former Left-liberals who had been mugged by reality, like McAuley, Coleman, Sam Lipski and the two most recent editors of the magazine, Paddy McGuinness and Keith Windschuttle. As sole editor Manne announced that his erstwhile colleagues were a reactionary "old guard". He moved the magazine to a trendy, progressive "adversary culture" position which supported protectionism and bagged Australian civilisation. His new contributors introduced a foreign tone of moral vanity into the magazine. This development understandably caused Peter great disquiet.

Peter's family were, like him, productive and successful. His wife Verna wrote biographies of women writers and activists, and their son William published on economics. A daughter, Tanya, married Peter Costello, who like Peter was a suave, eloquent, persuasive figure, who mastered the arts of public life. Though Peter Costello undoubtedly had great natural talents, who knows how much he was one of his father-in-law's many legacies. Both, though successful, had public careers that were at the end curiously incomplete and under-recognised. Peter Costello was young enough after his mid-life setback to fashion a second successful career for himself. Late in life Peter Coleman had the consolation of reflecting on a variety of impressive careers through which he had contributed to the nation's vitality.

Patrick Morgan first published in ***Quadrant*** *in 1967 under the editorship of James McAuley and Peter Coleman.*

James Franklin

A Rare Understanding

Peter Coleman himself was often asked to speak at funerals, and there was a good reason for that. He had a clarity of thought that could summarise what someone's life had amounted to. At the same time he had a sympathetic emotional attunement that could appreciate what it was like to have someone else's concerns.

He had a difficult family start, which left him with some permanent burden. It was compensated for in later years by Verna and his children. On the other hand, the kind of things he did in his career lacked tenure, and the reversals of fortune usual in politics and journalism affected him. He wrote successful books, but not ones to bring in big money. It was a precarious life with no chance to rest on laurels even when there were plenty of laurels.

I mention that because he made the most of his experience, to understand others. His unselfish appreciation of people and interest in their stories and ideas is what made him such a success as editor, biographer and oral historian. I recall him saying about another editor, who he thought was a good editor, that he didn't entirely approve of his just accepting articles whole. Peter thought the editor's job was to help the writer explain himself or herself

as well as possible. Generosity and gratitude were typical of him.

He was chronically restless. He used that to advantage too, in moving across such a range of intellectual and literary areas. Hence the true description, "man of letters". (Here's his own comment on that phrase: obsessive scribblers, he says, "try to disguise their affliction under some other label—man of letters, philosopher, academic, humanist, freethinker, writer. None really fits the case …") As that comment shows, he had a strong sense of the farcical aspects of intellectual and political life. He says:

> When I was elected Leader of the Opposition late in 1977, there was no shortage of advice. Clyde Packer rang from California to urge me to buy a greyhound. Rupert Henderson, the legendary director of John Fairfax & Sons, warned me to expect nothing from Fairfax ("They are weak!") and to take no notice of journalists.

Thus his *Memoirs*—I think along with *The Liberal Conspiracy* his most impressive book—is memorable for the recurring phrase, "now a Japanese restaurant"; used as in "I slept at a Kent Street dosshouse and soup kitchen (now a Japanese restaurant), filling many notebooks with 'observations and reflections', to be grist to the mill of my novels when the time came …"

Also distinctive of his work was his sound judgment—his ability to grasp the right end of the stick in so many different areas, and have something unique to say. That was true early, when he learned faster than most of his generation which way was up in the Cold War. It was true very late in life too, when he became involved in indigenous affairs, an area he agreed was mostly a wasteland of rubbishy ideas, when he supported the campaigns of Bess and Jacinta Price.

That was true about the big questions of life too. Most general-purpose intellectuals take an "above my pay grade" attitude to questions of religion and the meaning of life. He agonised over them, like his friend James McAuley. As he says, "Once you have contracted the habit of looking behind the screen of life, once you are touched by the compulsion to examine conflicting values and ideas of the world, there is no turning back."

His final word on the question (I think) was in a 2009 speech. He says:

> My Mum was a Christian. She believed in the church—for marriage, baptism, confirmation, Sunday school and so on. Dad was an atheist, hedonist and a bit of a bohemian. In my youth I thought Dad had the better of the argument. But in time I came to believe that my mother was right after all.

But he didn't feel able to sign up to any sect or creed. Finally, he says, "It is not true that we never learn: *Something is gathered in*—something worth preserving and passing on."

Yes indeed. In fifty years' time, when the young people of today write their memoirs, tearily evoking old Sydney with its long-gone Japanese restaurants, their minds and culture will have been formed, whether they remember or not, by someone who really understood, made his own and passed on the best that was worth preserving.

James Franklin is Professor, School of Mathematics and Statistics, at the University of New South Wales. This is an address he gave at Peter Coleman's funeral in Sydney on April 8.

Peter Costello

Peter Coleman's Journey

When I launched the first edition of Peter Coleman's memoir *Memoirs of a Slow Learner* in 1994, I mostly dwelt on the journey of the author. He describes his early life as "growing up radical". His father, who worked in advertising, was "an apostle of modernity". It was not just any old kind of modernism either. Peter Coleman's father Stanley once worked for a newspaper—the *Age*! After divorce, he settled in Sydney, where Peter joined him. The household was peppered with radical booklets and pamphlets. Peter went on to set a record in selling badges in the "Sheepskins for Russia" campaign.

At Sydney University—in the immediate post-war period—Peter Coleman was taken up with the prevailing leftist zeitgeist. He came under the influence of the ex- and anti-communist Professor John Anderson—which probably saved him from the excesses of student Marxism. By all accounts Anderson was a huge figure of influence on the university and the city at the time. At the launch of the first edition I described this memoir as a:

> journey through bohemianism and radicalism in post-war Sydney, through universities in Sydney, London and Canberra, and in and out of the lives of Australians of literary and

artistic achievement like Robert Hughes, Bruce Beresford and Barry Humphries. In the background great intellectual wars were raging. There was the war against Stalinism and the struggle for the mind of post-war Europe—a story told by Peter in his book The Liberal Conspiracy—internationally led by Arthur Koestler, Irving Kristol and Raymond Aron. There was the war against the Australian disciples of Stalinism waged stout-heartedly by European émigrés such as Richard Krygier, Frank Knopfelmacher, Heinz Arndt and others. There was the literary war over the Ern Malley hoax and the academic war over Sydney Sparkes Orr.

It is worth reading this book just to get a feel for who was doing what back in those days of the Cold War. It is a description of a world that younger Australians will find hard to believe, how a ruthless dictatorial ideology held sway over many people who regarded themselves as the "intelligentsia". It would take forty years for the ideology to collapse in failure. As we walk through the world of arts and letters and bohemianism in Australia in the 1940s and 1950s we get an intriguing snapshot of emerging Australian writers and artists.

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Today I want to focus more on the aftermath of that journey which the author leaves off at the start of the 1960s. He has an air of pessimism. The icons of his youth are beginning to topple. His academic hero, John Anderson, is playing to undergraduate populism; the church is losing to modernism and unable to explain its concerns in any coherent way. The principal defender of conservatism in Sydney is Warwick Fairfax in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. No wonder there was defeatism in the air if our best hope of defending traditional values was the *Sydney Morning Herald*!

This new edition of *Memoirs of a Slow Learner* includes an appendix written in 2006 titled "Leaves from the Diary of a Madman", which takes up the story. Coleman finds a new purpose, embarking on a parliamentary career in both state and Commonwealth parliaments. He declares: "I am a Liberal Party liberal because I think the Liberal Party is the best expression of Australian liberalism …"

He is defeated at the state level and loses his seat. But that is followed by resurrection and eventual retirement at the Commonwealth level. It is not a bad record. Enoch Powell observed that "All political careers end in failure." To get out before the voters finally lay you to rest is as good as one can hope for. Coleman comes to believe that politics is a virus that infects a person and renders them delirious. It cannot be cured, only managed. In times of remission, temporary sanity prevails and opens an opportunity to get out of the full-time parliamentary life on one's own terms.

Although he leaves politics as a full-time paid career, the author is still infected by the political virus. Now at the age of eighty-six he writes much-read columns for *Spectator Australia* and *Quadrant*. He is a judge on the Prime Minister's Literary Awards. Recently he entered the lion's den of the ABC's *Q&A* program.

He regards himself as a secular liberal. Of course there are great schisms within this group. On one hand there are the progressives, interventionists and liberationists. On the other there are sceptics, individualists and traditionalists. Coleman is in the latter camp.

But let me return to Peter Coleman's 1960s. The church wanted to make a stand against moral relativism which it knew, instinctively, was hostile to the notion of revelation and moral absolutes. Academics were courting popularity and the *Sydney Morning Herald* was the bastion of conservatism.

Things are much worse today. The church no longer wants to engage against moral relativism, instead it largely echoes it. It does not think its relevance comes from opposing popular fads; it thinks it comes from being in the vanguard of them.

At the recent synod of the Melbourne Anglican Church, the delegates adjourned to be photographed under the banner that hangs from their cathedral that says, "Let's Fully Welcome Refugees". It does not have a banner declaring "Support for the Christians being crucified in Syria" or "Solidarity with the Churches being exterminated in Baghdad". It would consider that divisive or offensive to the multicultural multi-faith view it takes of the world. In contrast, it would see taking on the government over refugees as a unifying cause. It means standing together with all those who read the *Age* and

listen to the ABC, just like them.

After being photographed under the refugee banner the synod reconvened to decide how it could reduce its shareholding in fossil fuel companies. There was no discernible difference in the media coverage given to the Anglican synod compared to that of the Greens' state convention.

These days, far from being the defenders of traditional or conservative values, the *Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* lead the fight against them. The church knows it will be attacked by the papers if it takes a traditional position, and widely praised if gets "progressive". To use modern parlance, this as a no-brainer. If you think positive media coverage is a mark of relevance and success you should get with the program.

Back in the 1960s academics were courting celebrity from undergraduate audiences. But the universities didn't have press offices and marketing managers as they do today. We now have universities taking huge billboard display advertising to publicise their marketing slogans. Universities take out radio advertising and hire super-boxes at sport stadiums to promote themselves and promote enrolment. They go to enormous effort to recruit overseas students because they can charge them higher fees and generate more revenue for their huge enterprises. They (correctly) describe this as earning export income. Celebrity academics are a wonderful way of promoting a university and its profile. This is a media-obsessed world, this world of Twitter and Facebook. Hits and traffic can be used to measure success more quantitatively than things like rigour and independence.

I hope there is still a place for conscientious academics who think their most important role is to open up inquiring minds, just as there are still faithful clergy who think it is their purpose to minister to souls without being distracted by the obvious failures of organised religion. There are people who still like to think a university should be a place of learning rather than an export industry. This goes to values. Values are deeper than politics.

Secular liberalism may well be an organising principle for public life, but can it speak to and explain our deepest values about learning and art, or our deepest questions about life and death? Peter Coleman knows that the credo of secular liberalism is not as robust as he once thought it was. He is, he says, still in conversation about it.

Peter Coleman's fellow *Quadrant* editor and great mentor, the poet James McAuley, thought that the whole edifice of secular liberalism was unsustainable. He put his faith in God. Back in the 1960s Peter Coleman told us he was only one step ahead of the Hound of Heaven. It would be interesting to know if he is still on the run. One last chapter is still to be written about this!

The Hon. Peter Costello, Peter Coleman's son-in-law, was Commonwealth Treasurer from 1996 to 2007. This edited version of the speech he delivered to launch the revised edition of ***Memoirs of a Slow Learner*** *in Melbourne in February 2015 appeared in* ***Quadrant*** *in March 2015.*

Mervyn F. Bendle

The True Liberal Intellectual

Peter Coleman was at the centre of the most important intellectual shift of the twentieth century. It was an ideological perfect storm—a convergence of forces that brought catastrophe to the liberal intellectual tradition of the West, and elevated neo-Marxist ideology and postmodern obscurantism to the positions of intellectual dominance that they have held ever since. It was the late 1960s, the height of the Cold War, with universities throughout the Western world multiplying like microbes and bursting at the seams as the best and the brightest of the Baby Boomer generation battled through their identity crises and prepared for glittering careers in an emerging post-industrial society. There was a tremendous hunger for one of the new "paradigms" within which the cultural and political chaos of the times could be made to cohere into acceptable personal narratives, providing a comfortable political orientation for this vast cohort.

For several years the result may have been in question, but in 1967-68 it was resolved. First, devastating revelations emerged about the Congress for Cultural Freedom which, along with associated organisations and various high-profile journals, had been established to defend cultural and intellectual freedom from the totalitarian threat. Suddenly it was revealed that it was receiving funding from the CIA—an ideological kiss of death. Second, a series of student rebellions and demonstrations around the world announced the arrival of a new radical form of politics, marked by contrived spontaneity, irresponsibility and irrationalism, and informed above all by a sense of generational change that was simultaneously Oedipal and Promethean in its lust to be *sui generis*, politically and intellectually new and beholden to nobody.

The older liberalism was abruptly in disgrace and the New Left in the ascendant. Previously great names like Arthur Koestler, George Orwell, Lionel

and Diana Trilling, Daniel Bell, Raymond Aron, Albert Camus, Robert Conquest, Isaiah Berlin, Edward Shils, James Burnham, Melvin Lasky, Leopold Labedz and Sidney Hook were consigned to intellectual limbo and virtually expunged from intellectual history.

New names appeared, as a cadre of imperious master thinkers was ushered onto stage by such ideological entrepreneurs as Perry Anderson and the other Francophile Trotskyites of the *New Left Review*. Suddenly, a magical pantheon manifested itself: Foucault, Althusser, Lévi-Strauss, Barthes, Lacan, Derrida, Deleuze, Lyotard and Baudrillard; with Gramsci, the Frankfurt School and Chomsky thrown in. (Incidentally, the predominance of French theorists in this pantheon reflects the extent to which they achieved prominence by promulgating a radically simplified and "hyperbolic repetition of German philosophy", as Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut point out in *French Philosophy of the Sixties*. By shedding the complexity of the German originals and distorting their core ideas the new master thinkers made them accessible to junior academics and graduate students while also servicing the anti-American, anti-liberal and anti-humanist agendas that increasingly dominated academia and culture.)

This was an ideological coup of the first order and we have lived with the outcome ever since. We are therefore fortunate that important aspects of the event are illuminated by Peter Coleman's eminently readable book, *The Last Intellectuals: Essays on Writers and Politics*, which complements his earlier study, *The Liberal Conspiracy: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe*, and indeed describes the research and writing of the earlier book. Coleman ranges far and wide in the many essays and articles that make up the book—from a tense meeting in Sydney in 1961 that determined the future of the Australian Association for Cultural Freedom, to another notable event in 2007 when God apparently chose Coleman as an amanuensis to deliver a missive concerning the atheist views of P.P. McGuinness. In addition to its reflections on "the last intellectuals" and their struggles, it offers many other interesting articles on various cultural and political events and personalities of the past decades, from Xavier Herbert, John Passmore and Pierre Ryckmans, to Bazza McKenzie, Bruce Beresford and John Gorton.

As Coleman recalls, the work of the Congress was "an epic drama in dangerous times", when cultural issues were literally matters of life and death, especially for those courageous writers, artists and intellectuals behind the Iron Curtain for whom the Congress and its associated journals offered some hope that their voices might be heard and their names might not be forgotten. It offered a forum and a "common voice [for] that mixed company of intellectuals from New York to New Delhi, from Madrid to Melbourne [who were] determined to save civilisation or go down fighting". The discrediting and collapse of the Congress in 1967 following the revelations about CIA funding decimated the anti-communist forces in the ideological and cultural Cold War, at the worst possible time.

Coleman writes of James McAuley that "he was more than a poet. He had a prophetic gift, a sense of the crisis of civilisation that sustained his readers and brothers-in-arms."

While "the last intellectuals" remained quite capable intellectually of continuing their work and of defending themselves, their work was nevertheless marginalised on university campuses awash with the literature of a vastly empowered and insufferably self-righteous New Left, supplemented by thousands of dirt-cheap Marxist-Leninist publications from Moscow and Peking. The arguments and views of the earlier liberal generation were brushed aside on the basis that they now shared some deeply distasteful collective guilt. Even their acknowledged masterpieces and intellectual breakthroughs could not escape the stigma that had so easily been imposed. Orwell, for example, only escaped absolute condemnation because *Homage to Catalonia* was read as a favourable account of the Spanish anarchists, who were currently fashionable.

Similarly, at a time when the "Young Marx" and the theory of alienation were central to the New Left critique of contemporary society, Sidney Hook's brilliant study *From Hegel to Marx* (1936) could not be admitted to the debate and had to be replaced (or indeed replicated) by *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx* (1969) by David McLellan, who was a young and untainted Marxist writer. It also became ideologically *de rigueur* to avoid all authors, such as Hannah Arendt (*The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 1958) and Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski (*Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, 1967), who dared to refer to "totalitarianism", because the latter term was deemed by the New Left to be a reactionary attempt by "Cold War warriors" to discredit communism by associating it with Nazism (as if it

wasn't capable of discrediting itself). Pre-eminent liberal Sovietologists like George F. Kennan and Adam B. Ulam were denounced and suddenly only arch-leftists like the Trotskyite Isaac Deutscher and the historical relativist E.H. Carr were accredited for the study of Russia and the Soviet Union.

Liberal sociologists like Edward Shils and Talcott Parsons were similarly condemned as conservative apologists for capitalism because their theories allegedly promoted a false "consensus" view of society, when the New Left insisted that the dastardly truth was only exposed by "conflict" theories like Marxism (and this view still dominates sociology, especially in Australia, which partly explains its demise into breathtaking tedium and irrelevance). Daniel Bell's seminal insights in *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1974) were dismissed because his analysis wasn't economic determinist and he'd stripped the industrial proletariat of its revolutionary role. James Burnham was absolutely beyond the pale, even though (or because) *The Managerial Revolution* (1941) identified the rise of the bureaucratic "New Class" that the Left would later largely constitute.

Knowing who was in and who was out in this intellectual game became increasingly important for undergraduates in the early 1970s as they struggled to submit work and express opinions that judiciously reflected the current ideological situation. In time, this ideological coup and associated cynicism reconstituted the arts and social sciences in the image of the New Left, with all its obsessions, rage, moralising, self-loathing and blindness.

Ultimately, the very term "liberal" itself became pejorative, a label to be fixed to any author who observed the tenets of the liberal intellectual tradition and the principles of objective scholarship, while refusing to become an advocate of the favoured causes of the New Left. This approach was exemplified by Chomsky's extended defence of ideological tendentiousness in "Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship" (1969), which concluded that liberal and scholarly ideals and those who hold them exhibited a natural affinity for repression and dictatorship, as was illustrated, according to Chomsky, in the Vietnam War, which he blamed on American aggression and the liberal intellectuals who allegedly defended it.

Much of this history is tragic, and Coleman offers various revealing anecdotes as he recounts his exploits in researching and writing *The Liberal Conspiracy*. Diana Trilling, for example, declared that the story he had to tell "is littered with broken friendships! What a cesspit!"; while Coleman describes how the 1961 meeting had as its "real agenda … the humiliation of one or other of two leaders of Sydney public life", in an election for the presidency of the Australian Association for Cultural Freedom fought between those who wanted to continue the Association's campaign against communist totalitarianism, and those who wanted to engage with "the exciting new ideas of the 1960s", which included the view that anti-communism was becoming old hat and that the two world-systems were "converging". On that occasion the former group prevailed and the line was held.

A decade later, in 1970, after the demise of the Congress, Coleman attended another meeting, of the Board of the International Association for Cultural Freedom, the successor of the Congress. There he witnessed an "epiphanic moment" and realised the tables had been turned. In discussion, Leo Labedz, the Polish editor of *Survey*, begged desperately for people to stop deluding themselves: "there had been no 'end of ideology', he said, no 'convergence' in the Cold War, no liberalisation in the USSR, no new 'worldwide community of intellectuals'". Their mission still lay before them, but unfortunately too many liberal intellectuals had become accommodationist and had lost their "former clarity of purpose" and combative élan at precisely the moment when the New Left was undertaking its "long march through the institutions", in a strategy "which threatened to destroy the universities, politicise cultural life and appease the Soviets". The following day, in response to Labedz's lament, the French poet Pierre Emmanuel spoke on behalf of the board. He welcomed the New Left, which he felt was "trying to fill a spiritual emptiness in life", and he described how his own son-in-law had become "a Maoist apostle of *tabula rasa*, of a new beginning from zero". These views provoked little discussion. It had come to this.

What is to be made of such nihilism and of the resigned acceptance of it by an accomplished poet and literary figure like Emmanuel and the members of the Association for whom he spoke? It betrays a crisis at the very roots of Western civilisation that was overwhelming even the best intentions of the "last intellectuals". Elsewhere in his book Coleman writes of James McAuley that "he was more than a poet. He had a prophetic gift, a sense of the crisis of civilisation that sustained his readers and brothers-in-arms." Lacking enough people like McAuley, or the completely focused Richard Krygier, or the prescient and intransigent Burnham, or the redoubtable B.A. Santamaria (all of whom Coleman discusses in his book), it is perhaps comprehensible that the resolve of the Association crumbled as the New Left began its

"Long March", and came ultimately to succumb to a despairing accommodationist outlook.

Not that this gesture of intellectual détente was ever reciprocated. As Coleman recounts, the entire generation had to be disparaged by the victors: Koestler was condemned by the Left as a rapist, Orwell as a spy, Silone as an informer, McAuley as a sex maniac, and so on. They were all dismissed as "shits" and consigned to an "ideological gulag for anti-communists whose thought-crime was that they had been right about communism all along". In Frances Stonor Saunders's tendentious history *The Cultural Cold War* (1999), the long and courageous struggle of the Congress was dismissed as a disgraceful deception, and as "all a fiction, a fabricated reality", in which the ideals of democracy and free enterprise were really just one side of a "Manichean dualism", matched on the other by the equally credible ideals of bureaucracy and socialism, with both sides just acting out in a silly, "convulsive *pas de deux*", unable to admit their foolishness and find the common ground that allegedly had been there all along. Saunders's contempt is often breathtaking. For example, Diana Trilling is portrayed as being "in a carnal mood" as she declared in the middle of a discussion about intellectuals who were either "hard" or "soft" on communism: "None of you men are *hard* enough for me!" "They were ridiculous people, really, who lived in a teacup," the anecdote concludes.

In a few pages of concise prose, Coleman shows how Pybus's condescending and dismissive approach produces only another instance of the "ultimate banality" that typifies the obsessive iconoclasm of the contemporary Left.

Coleman justifiably gives Saunders short shrift, pointing out her many deficiencies of research, and her juvenile eagerness to assign discreditable characteristics to the leaders and membership of the Congress ("lupine", "oily", "fake", "silly", "pathetic"). Above all, he points out how she lacked the necessary imagination for the task, the capacity to empathise with the people she was writing about, and was unable to comprehend, much less enter into, their mental world as the global crisis crystallised in the immediate post-war years. As Coleman recalls: "communists and their fellow travellers expected soon to be able to welcome Stalin's tanks in the streets of Paris and Rome", while "the old refugees from fascist and communist concentration camps who rallied to the Congress for Cultural Freedom in 1950, were prepared to resist and, if necessary, go down fighting". To someone like Saunders, born in 1966, such concerns might seem exaggerated, but that was hardly the view of many as they moved from one nightmare to another in post-war Europe.

Unfortunately, there have been many other books seeking to debunk the "last intellectuals" and Coleman has done well in refuting their various outrageous claims. For example, his chapter on Koestler reveals the extent to which Koestler was systematically traduced by David Cesarani in *Arthur Koestler: The Homeless Mind* (1999). He also quotes an interesting passage by Frank Knopfelmacher that emphasises how the tragedy of Central European Jewry ("a congenital catastrophe without parallel in European history") must inevitably have found expression in the work of a Jewish intellectual like Koestler.

Similarly with Orwell, who faced "perhaps the most persistent campaign of all" to destroy his reputation (which is really saying something!). The centrepiece of this was the allegation that Orwell had provided to the government a list of writers who he thought might be collaborators if the Soviets invaded Britain in the immediate post-war period. The Left reacted with outrage: E.P. Thompson, Salman Rushdie, Edward Said, Raymond Williams, Isaac Deutscher and others all joined in their denunciations. Some of them should have known better, while the revelations about how Said artfully constructed his own biography make him a poor authority on integrity.

It is a similar story with Stefan Collini's *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (2006), where Orwell is treated in a very superficial fashion that manages to gloss over *Homage to Catalonia*, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, while judging Orwell "obsessive", "exaggerated", and of "bad faith", as Coleman points out. Collini tends to the view that genuine intellectuals are located on the "moderate, non-ideological Left", where any concern with the totalitarian threat is seen as a personality defect. Other intellectuals are treated in a fashion that reflects their location on the political continuum. For example, the views of Roger Scruton are dismissed as "doctrinaire" and those of R.G. Collingwood as "exaggerated"; while A.J.P. Taylor is allowed to downplay the destructive role he played in many important historical debates, promoting, for example, the still dominant nihilist view of the Great War. Also, as Coleman points out, Taylor used his considerable influence "to promote

anti-Americanism and a benign view of the Soviet *grand guignol*", in a career that made him one of the most influential intellectuals of the mid-twentieth century.

Ultimately, Coleman concludes, *Absent Minds* is merely "payback for George Orwell". (Collini distinguished himself several years ago by celebrating "the aura of omni-competent grandeur" of the prose of the Trotskyite *éminence grise* Perry Anderson, typified, as Collini approvingly emphasised, by a liberal use of such words as *taxative*, *lustration*, *censitary*, *caducity*, *galumphery* and *moetic*, as well as *neuralgic*—which may have referred to the effect of such pretension on his spell-checker.

The acuity of Coleman's rebuttal to all these attacks is best demonstrated in his essay, which rightly appeared as one of *The Best Australian Essays 1999*, on Cassandra Pybus's *The Devil and James McAuley*. As he laments, according to Pybus's execrable book with its multitude of mistakes, "McAuley was a committed opponent of communism. Therefore he must have been sick in the head. This is because he repressed his sexuality, especially his homosexuality, or displaced it onto the Devil" … as you do, according to the pseudo-Freudian psychobabble of the Left. Coleman then lists "eight simple rules" for misrepresentation that one can exploit to produce this type of tendentious reading. Working his way through these rules, Coleman recounts many of the key facets of McAuley's life and identifies the central forces that drove his friend, including McAuley's poetic genius, religious quest and commitment, philosophical grounding, political activity, academic achievements, unexcelled awareness of the evils of totalitarianism, and his unparalleled ability to express all this in poetic and literary form.

In a few pages of concise prose informed by a controlled anger, Coleman shows how Pybus's condescending and dismissive approach produces only another instance of the "ultimate banality" that typifies the obsessive iconoclasm of the contemporary Left.

This is an outstanding book that illuminates many of the most interesting cultural and political events of the past half-century, when the "last intellectuals" stepped forward to hold the line before one of the most sinister threats in the history of the world. It remains a battle that is far from over. It was a battle that Peter Coleman never shirked.

This is an updated version of a review of Peter Coleman's ***The Last Intellectuals: Essays on Writers & Politics*** *(Quadrant Books, 2010) that appeared in the September 2010 issue.*

A Sort of Tree House

I wake each morning
to windows full of trees,
to their weather news
and seasonal information—
freckled light on leafage,
the gloss of rain, or the stripped
boughs of winter and a bigger sky.
I still marvel that a second-floor flat
can be a sort of tree house,
with all its views and variations
mirrored inside, so that even the rooms
seem forested.

Yet it's a modest plantation outside.
Against a solid background of brush box,
beloved street tree of many a Sydney suburb,
a few gleditsias offer
their deciduous delights.
Gled what? I hear you say.
It's a North American tree,
best known perhaps as honey locust,
with pinnate leaves like jacarandas,
but only tiny white flowers.
In spring their graceful limbs
sprout shoots of palest green,
while cicada-singing summer days
bring ferny curtains of a darker shade.
Come autumn and the trees
are canopies of yellow
and when the wind is up they sway
in a frantic arboreal dance.

Birds, of course, are busy in the trees,
weaving in and out, preparing for,
or tending their young.
Once, on a grey winter's day,
I was presented with a Fauvish little pleasure—
two richly coloured lorikeets
beak to beak on a bare branch.

Barbara Fisher

Prime Minister in waiting, 1967

Tie straight. Suit sharp. Jet-black hair.
Tall, angular, Jesuitical.
With his mother's cut lunch in one hand
and in the other a hard, white knuckle
that raps respectfully on the door
of his mentor, now editor,
the grey, menacing hulk of the "Big Fella",
still fighting old battles, still spitting venom.
Now the young firebrand is
to be moulded by the old: honed.
He is schooled in history here,
of British betrayals, capitalist bankers.
Tutored in Labor lore and legend,
weaponised with an armoury
of insults, rhetorical grenades to
lob in the laps of his enemies:
the "perfumed gigolos", "loopy crims",
"scumbags", "souffles" and "swill".
And culture is bestowed here
as Demosthenes, Aristotle and St John
drip languidly from his master's tongue.
But it's the midnight eyes
the apprentice remembers most:
boring into his political soul.
Time though is up, "run boy run …",
for there are pavements to pound,
support to be sought, numbers to count,
and always, always bodies to bury.

Defending Australia

Building sandcastles,
we fair gloried in their
ephemeral lives.
Moat brimming with
cool ocean swell, clear
water circling a
keep dumped from
upturned bucket.
Loopholes for archers,
paddlepop sticks for a
palisade, shells as shields,
slimy seaweed strips
lacing speckled ramparts.

But we always knew
collapse loomed,
that our fortress
faced a reckoning:
from sudden rush
of surging breaker,
its blanketing cascade
razing our battlement;
from louts with big-toed
battering rams; from
slice of surfboards
planing on shoreline;
from lunar ebb and flow.

Behind us hulked
real forts; total war's
bunkers with slit cut
lookouts like hoplite
helmets, looking north
to invader, known
alien: "yellow peril".
Their big bertha guns
long gone but the dread
placing them there
pervasive. Worried nation,
anxious people, your coasts
cement-studded with fear.

James Curran

Barry Spurr

The Inane Expansion of Creative Writing Courses

The epigram "Poeta nascitur, non fit" ("The poet is born, not made") is customarily attributed to one of the several Roman writers known as Florus. In Sir Philip Sidney's *Apologie for Poetry*, written around 1580—the first extended work of literary criticism in English—the Renaissance poet varied the saying, but not its teaching: "A poet no industry can make if his own genius be not carried into it, and, therefore, it is an old proverb, 'Orator fit; poeta nascitur'." More recently, Albert Camus noted that the best novelists worked from instinct; and the contemporary Australian novelist and literary scholar Michael Wilding has recently remarked, in an essay on the topic of creative writing, "I don't believe you can actually teach creative writing"—a conclusion arising from his own extensive experience of trying to do so, here and in the United States.

These salutary observations, from across the centuries, should give significant pause to every classroom devoted to instruction in creative writing. And such classrooms are proliferating, in schools and universities. Unheard of, unimaginable, fifty years ago as a component of undergraduate English literature studies, creative writing, initially finding its way into postgraduate university courses, has now taken root and is expanding—apparently unstoppably—in undergraduate degrees and in the secondary school English curriculum. It is possible today, at some universities, to complete a degree in English entirely in creative writing and critical theory. The new New South Wales Higher School Certificate syllabus for English is full of it; and so, inevitably, earlier years of English studies in secondary school are now preparing students for this component too.

"Creative Writing"—if not creative writing worthy of the name—is everywhere. Indicative not only of its prevalence, but of its increasing influence and the seriousness with which it is taken in the academy, is the University of Melbourne's current search for a Level E Professor "to enrich and advance our program in Creative Writing", which includes a major in the undergraduate Bachelor of Arts degree, a coursework Master of Creative Writing degree and even a "large cohort" of PhD projects in the so-called subject.

Everything about this ramifying phenomenon is utterly wrongheaded, and there are disturbing influences, beyond mere nonsense, driving it, too. Let us start with the various dimensions of its delusional wrongheadedness.

Creative writing proceeds from the unscrutinised basic assumption that because you are reading and studying literary works—as all schoolchildren must, English being the only compulsory subject through to Year 12—you should be able to write them. This makes as much sense—none at all, in fact—as supposing that because you are engaged in in-depth study of art works or of music (let us say) you will have a talent worth pursuing for painting and composing. I studied the piano for ten years from the age of eight and never had the slightest interest in (and, no doubt, zero talent for) composing original keyboard music.

In the domain of school curricula for creative writing today, it is demanded that all must do it; it is not an optional extra for that tiny minority (always and everywhere) who think they may have (and just possibly do have) a genuine creative literary flair: who have Camus's native instinct for such composition. Further, it is now mandatory that the study of literature in English must have, as an increasingly significant component of its assessment regime, the testing of pupils' abilities as creative writers.

It is by no means sufficient, any more, that, as intelligent and perceptive readers, students should be able to give a lucid, distinguished and distinctive account of themselves as developing interpreters and assessors of works of imaginative genius by others—the essential justification for the academic study of literature in English. They must become such creators themselves. Everybody has this potential, it is gratuitously assumed, and what is more, they have it even from early teenage years, when they have read

next to nothing, in depth, of any prose or poetry and have had a very limited experience of human life from which to draw subjects and scenarios for imaginative composition.

Michael Wilding has asserted that "the student who intends to write needs to encounter at least some of the major works of world literature". That is to put it modestly and mildly. I would say "many" not "some", and of the widest variety and in as many different forms as possible—a process that takes us, as the biographies of numerous great writers have demonstrated—well into our twenties and is, in fact, a lifetime's labour of love. "You learn to write by reading other writers," as Wilding says. He further reflects that "literary geniuses produce themselves. Those who want to write will write, and know what they want to write, and will go about it in their own way." This wisdom, based on a lifetime's experience of his own creative writing, is the antithesis of the "thinking" behind the creative writing component of today's English courses.

There is no question that there are schoolchildren and undergraduates (and probably more of them, as they have had more experience of life and reading) who relish opportunities for creative writing, and they should be encouraged. But they are exceptional: they are born to write and if it so happens that there are meetings and groups they can attend in which their writing can be nurtured and given the opportunity to flourish, obviously they will benefit from some informed instruction and criticism, and the discipline of having regularly to produce some original work for others to read and critique. And some of them may come to realise, in time, that they did not possess the talent they thought they had. But even in consideration of this small cohort there is a formidable obstacle, particularly in the schools. What capacity and training do schoolteachers of English possess to teach and evaluate the creative writing that they now find is yet another imposition on them by the syllabus-designers? Unless you are a creative writer yourself, what business, not to mention aptitude will you have for teaching it (assuming, as Wilding doubts, that it can be taught)?

In universities, such teachers have always been creative writers themselves (novelists, poets and so on), but their reports, after some years in the trade, have been routinely discouraging. A well-known Australian poet told me of her increasing disenchantment with the entire enterprise of university creative writing courses. Every effort she had made to broaden students' subject matter and develop their technique beyond formless ramblings had been thwarted by their relentless desire—hardly surprising, from late adolescents—to write only about themselves and the various highs and lows of their personal lives. And these, of course, were students who had elected to take creative writing (so, one assumes, they at least imagined that they possessed some talent for it), not the masses of schoolchildren who now must do it whether they like it or not, and whether or not they have the slightest gift for it. "Be creative, or else!"

It is assumed (in the new "Craft of Writing" module in the New South Wales HSC Advanced English course) that students will "strengthen and extend their knowledge, skills and confidence as accomplished writers".

"Accomplished writers"! This is beyond delusional. They are scarcely apprentice writers. The syllabus statement concludes that students will produce "highly crafted imaginative, discursive, persuasive and informative texts". Such a requirement would be challenging for even the genuinely gifted writer.

Most students are simply befuddled and bamboozled by such prescriptions, and (naturally) come to resent creative writing and its increasing dominance of their English courses. They remind me of youngsters in earlier generations who were forced to take piano lessons while not possessing a grain of musical interest or talent, and could grow up hating music as a result. So far from this process being encouraging for creative writers, enforced creativity is regularly having the opposite, counterproductive effect.

The practical application of the course details to assessment tasks has a rococo complexity that would baffle even the most committed creative writer. For a Year 11 class (for example), the "outcomes to be assessed" in such an exercise require the students to

> compose texts in different modes, media and technologies; analyse and use language forms, features and structures of texts considering appropriateness for specific purposes, audiences and contexts; strategically use knowledge, skills and understanding of language concepts and literary devices in new and different contexts; think imaginatively, creatively, interpretatively and critically.

Not only would verbiage of this kind dry up anybody's creative juices, such still-born prose—the writing of English as if it were a dead language—is calculated to quell the inspiration of any literary creator, let alone the unaccomplished novice.

Currently working with a large group of high-achieving HSC English students, of both sexes and

from a variety of schools, I can report that not one of them enjoys the creative writing component of their study. As we turn, as we must regularly, to this requirement, their apprehension is very evident and vocal. Their usual complaint is that they have no idea what to write about, which is utterly unsurprising, as most of them have few if any ideas of a creative kind, or any native impulse to be a creative writer in the first place. And the requirements of the kinds of contexts and technical demands (see above) in which they must set their non-existent creativity pose a further affront to their intelligence and capacity. These attributes are amply affirmed in other aspects of their English studies, but can be significantly shaken by this new and ever-enlarging requirement. They come to doubt their ability as students of literature in English in general because they are not creative writers.

At one school this term, the Advanced Year class in English is required to concoct a story about "the experiences of an individual in a significant social and political landscape, set in the Cold War era, 1945–89". Having lived through most of that period, having read countless poems and novels deriving from it and having a fair grasp of the historical and cultural issues peculiar to it, I would find it challenging to come up with a short story that did justice to the demands of this task and resonated with a degree of authenticity with aspects of that complex (and often superficially misrepresented) period. For students with none of that personal background, little of that range of reading, virtually no cultural discernment to tread carefully in the representation of such complex epochs from (to them) the distant past, and, as often as not these days, zero acquaintance with the history of that or any period, this task is not only perplexingly daunting for them to embark upon, and intellectually suspect, but bound to repress, rather than stimulate, any creative flair they may indeed have. It engenders frustration, rather than the inspiration it is supposed to stir. Yet the syllabus polemic prattles on about how profoundly enriching the experience will be for students.

Currently working with a large group of high-achieving HSC English students, I can report that not one of them enjoys the creative writing component of their study. As we turn, as we must regularly, to this requirement, their apprehension is evident and vocal.

The most bizarre variety of the now regularly-encountered creative writing assignments for senior secondary school reveals aspects of the disturbing elements of this enterprise, beyond its merely delusional components, that need to be clearly called out, decisively challenged and, you can only hope, eradicated. It is the exercise that requires students to make up stories based on this or that plot-line or character, usually in a novel, less so from a play, but rarely, it seems, from poetry—which, mercifully, escapes this particular phenomenon, as it is all but unsusceptible to it. The student has to imagine, beyond what the author has imagined, a development or an intensification of what the original writer has provided.

So, for example, we have *Pride and Prejudice*—a sufficient and complete work of genius, you might have thought. But, no, there is more to be said, and our students are going to assist Jane Austen in that saying, even improve upon her. They are required to take a character or a scene from the novel and give us more information and nuanced detail—imagine Mrs Bennet, for example, worriedly writing to a relative about her matrimonial aspirations for her daughters.

Or they are to think of a different ending to James Joyce's perfect story "Eveline", in *Dubliners*, where the young woman, instead of renouncing her lover, the aptly-named Frank, at the conclusion, and returning to her miserable existence, takes off with him to Buenos Aires. What will their future life be like? How many children will they have? Or perhaps Eveline escapes alone to some other far-flung corner of the globe. What will become of her there? Finish the story that Joyce has left (apparently) incomplete. Or of which he has merely provided one version.

At first glance, these exercises may seem harmless enough; possibly even educative, in that they focus concentrated attention on aspects of narrative and plot, characterisation and tone, in the process of developing and varying them further. But, in fact, the tasks derive from the familiar and sinister postmodern theorising about the insufficiency even of the greatest works of literature; the presumed (and preposterous) ownership that a "responder" has of any text; and the relentless desire (especially in the face of canonical authors, such as Austen and Joyce) to bring the mighty down from their seats and demonstrate how they might have made a better fist of the job.

What is most disturbing about this aspect of the phenomenon of creative writing (and which is

pervasive in literary study, more generally, today) is—for all the posturing to the contrary—that it derives from a denial of the value of literature, a lack of respect for the autonomy of literary works and for their creators. As Gerald Wilkes has argued, in *Studying Literature*, the appropriate response to bring to the reading and appreciation of any work of literary art is that of humility. The reader:

> is not likely to extend his grasp of writers who lie beyond him by smothering their work with his own preoccupations, and overpowering their mind with his … The collective mind (so to speak) of Chaucer and Shakespeare, Donne and Milton, George Eliot and Patrick White reduces us into near insignificance by comparison.

"The only wisdom we can hope to acquire," T.S. Eliot reflected in *Four Quartets*, "is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless." But in our era of overweening narcissism and the "selfie", it is the most disreputable of the traditional human virtues. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread. No one is suggesting that a self-denying Uriah-Heep-like humbleness should be brought to the study of literature, but the nurturing of the love of it (and any study of it that does not proceed from that objective will be fruitless) includes a deepening recognition of how little we know, how much we have to learn and—with regard to creative writing—how wide and profound are the gifts and skills that any accomplished writer must possess and acquire to contribute anything of value in that domain.

What is to be done about all this? Reclaiming education, at large, from the damage that has been inflicted on it over the last fifty years is a formidable, well-nigh impossible project. The universities, in their Humanities faculties at least, are, of course, a lost cause; nothing short of a revolution will redeem their corruption. In the schools, there is the possibility that teachers, who have the unenviable task, day in, day out, of making this creative writing folly work as a compulsory component of English study, will come to realise its absurdity and futility.

Creative writing must leave the syllabus-bound classroom, and, on the questionable assumption that it should be pursued in schools at all, have a presence there akin to that of public speaking, debating, choir or orchestra. That is, it would be an optional extra-curricula activity available for students with a definite interest in and aptitude for imaginative writing and led by teachers who themselves have a particular flair for it and, one might hope, be creative writers themselves.

Barry Spurr was Australia's first Professor of Poetry and is the Literary Editor of ***Quadrant****.*

Clean or Unclean

during radiation after chemotherapy

The maid spends hours in the suite next door.
Some sickly one must have moved out and on.
Who knows what he or she was treated for.
You hope attendant germs will soon be gone.

You think of all the things you chose to touch.
The elevator buttons—down or up?
The common breakfast—always much too much.
The sip you took on Sunday from the Cup.

You trust that God can sort all of it out:
Who has to die or has to live instead.
Meanwhile you opt to go and get about.
Brown hair begins again to crown your head.

Jane Blanchard

Kevin Myers

The English and Brexit: A Comic Book Calumny

The author—a weekly columnist with the *Irish Times*—of this extraordinarily awful book about the English and their role in Brexit tells us that as a child he devoured the British comics *Beano* and *Dandy*. In his current enthusiasm to denounce the English generally, Fintan O'Toole seems unaware that these publications were produced in Dundee, which, he might have heard, is in Scotland. Nonetheless, these comics provide him with Lord Snooty and the Bash Street Kids as a template for modern England, with arrogant toffs lording it over incoherent, bigoted plebs. This view is clearly enhanced by his immersion in the comics' modern adult equivalent, the *Guardian*, written by North London toffs who despise their own country. Thus, as Quislingtons, they enjoy a postcode exemption from the witless class-generalisations upon which this book depends.

These generalisations do not feature the affable and benign creatures who populated O'Toole's childhood, but semi-racist caricatures which if employed about the Irish would be roundly denounced by his chums in the *Guardian*. A staple upon which O'Toole depends is that the English, as a defining characteristic, usually hate not merely foreigners and black people, but also, when occasion suits, Jews.

Writing about the appalling state of the 1960s British economy, he declares: "There was a ready and visible target for those looking for someone to blame for the country's economic and social ills—black people, who had themselves replaced Jews in the role. (It is not coincidental that the last anti-Semitic riots took place in 1947, just ten months before the arrival of post-war immigrants from the Caribbean.)"

That grotesque series of non-sequiturs typifies O'Toole's way of arguing: presenting one factoid before unblinkingly linking it with another, unrelated in any way, other than by his own *Beano*-informed imagination. Thus, the parenthetic conclusion to the paragraph might lead the unsuspecting to believe it is informed by some deep historical knowledge. It is not.

There were anti-Jewish riots in several English towns that summer of 1947, and inexcusable though they were, they were not in any way representative of how the English usually thought or behaved. Britain had just endured the longest, coldest winter of the entire twentieth century, with power cuts for five hours a day, almost no coal, soap, petrol or fuel, and grave food shortages. British morale was rock-bottom. Then two captured British Army sergeants were hanged by Zionist terrorists in Palestine, leading to anti-Jewish disturbances in which much property was damaged, but no one was killed or seriously hurt. These deplorable events soon passed from public memory, and why should they not? The larger truth was that by 1947, Jews had become an indispensable part of British life; there were twenty-two Jewish MPs, including the Minister for Fuel and Supply, Emmanuel Shinwell, with two Jewish-founded companies, Tesco and Marks & Spencer, opening Britain's first self-service shops.

The arrival of the *Windrush* into an impoverished society did cause some concern, but mostly among Labour MPs. Only an idiot would deny that mass-immigration was followed by widespread racism. Yet the fact remains that few racists have ever won, and none has ever retained, a seat in the House of Commons, proving how relatively little explicit xenophobia has poisoned national British national politics. Leaping from 1947 to 1968 and Enoch Powell's much-misunderstood but undeniably idiotic "Rivers of Blood" speech, O'Toole opines that "no senior figure with credible designs on power would again so explicitly blame blacks and Asians for England's failings … This left a vacancy, which was filled by the European Union."

Putting aside this allegedly chronic English need

Heroic Failure: Brexit and the Politics of Pain
by Fintan O'Toole
Head of Zeus, 2019, 240 pages, $29.99

to hate, one has to ask: *failings*? What failings? Not merely have thousands of immigrants poured lawfully into Britain from the EU since the Brexit vote, in 2018 alone 534 illegal immigrants in small boats were intercepted leaving France—a very anchor of the EU—bound for England. Nonetheless, O'Toole next declares that there was a "large overlap between pro-Brexit and anti-immigrant sentiment … The black and brown Other fused with the European Other."

Oh please, spare us these wearisome, pretentious clichés about The Other. The Home Secretary and Mayor of London are brown, and nearly seventy black or brown MPs have been elected this century. Yet O'Toole's many falsehoods are a weird admixture of self-hating *Guardian* columnar effusions and the alcoholic ramblings of a sociology student at a third-rate, third-level college: a Polly Toynbee meeting a Polytech. And perhaps suitably, for it was another Toynbee—Arnold, her often foolish great-uncle—to whom O'Toole turns in another grandiloquent assessment of the English character: "They [the English] stopped grieving over their defeat in the Hundred Years War in the exhilaration of discovering and colonising a new world."

Really? The length of time between the end of that war and the voyage of the *Mayflower*, that is, 170 years, is about the same as that between the erection of Nelson's statue in Trafalgar Square and the Brexit vote. What sane person, in the absence of a tab of LSD, two joints and a half-bottle of whisky, could connect the two, other than someone deranged by an astounding ignorance of history or the demented dogmas of Eurology?

No one who was faintly literate in the meaning of the referendum believed for a second that a Leave vote would result in the immediate departure of all immigrants.

These two qualities are most evident in O'Toole's endless contemplations upon the Hundred Years War, as if that calamity—begun and continued by "English" kings, apparently—embodies a typically violent form of Englishness. Neither observation is remotely true. The war was a ferocious, almost genocidal, dynastic struggle between two French-speaking noble families, the Angevins and Plantagenets, to whom both Englishness and the English language would have been as mystifying as moonrock and McDonald's. Not even Henry V, the first king of England since 1066 able to speak the tongue of the English people, was English: in Shakespeare's play, from which O'Toole quotes but clearly does not know particularly well, the king twice-over, and quite pointedly, declares that he is Welsh.

Observing the futility of the war's endless "English" victories, O'Toole continues: "Its solution was one that would appeal to most of the free-market ultras behind Brexit: the war was privatised and out-sourced to gangsters … The contemporary English knight Sir Thomas Gray called them 'a horde of yobs' ... raping and murdering … all in the name of the English 'king of France'."

So, by extension—and not a long one—both Brexiteers and privatisation are comparable to gangsters, rapists and murderers, while the nineteenth-century term *yob* (a back formation from *boy*) rather miraculously makes a guest-appearance in the mouth of a medieval knight.

"Even the worst Brexit will be nothing like the catastrophe of the Hundred Years War," he muses with the bathos of Adrian Mole, aged thirteen and a half, before concluding with an even more vertiginous fatuity: "But there are perhaps meaningful parallels …" No, no, there aren't.

O'Toole does not confine his comparisons of Brexiteers to medieval rapists and twentieth-century racists. Hence the following: "When Thomas Mair, the far-right fanatic who murdered Joe Cox during the referendum campaign, told his trial that his name was 'Death to Traitors, Freedom to Britain', he was at the extreme end of a spectrum that stretched into respectable mainstream opinion."

Given that logic, and based on comparable evidence, would O'Toole argue—and would his publishers even allow him to say—that the murderers who beheaded Lee Rigby and the 7/7 bombers who slaughtered fifty-two people in London were merely at the extreme end of a spectrum that reaches into respectable mainstream Islamic opinion, and would include the mayor of London, Sadiq Khan? Such an observation would not merely be utterly foul and wrong, it could only be uttered by a certifiable lunatic: so how were such outrageous and inflammatory calumnies about constitutional Brexiteers such as Gove and Farage accepted by O'Toole's publishers?

Even the hapless Theresa May is comparably apostrophised alongside Nazism, communism and anti-Semitism. O'Toole accuses her of employing "volkish rhetoric" when she said, "If you believe you're a citizen of the world, you're a citizen of nowhere," thereby, he declares, "openly evoking the far-right (and Stalinist) trope of rootless cosmopolitans who did not deserve citizenship".

This is quite a feat, a sort of rhetorical revival of the Ribbentrop–Molotov pact, but now in the service of the EU; hence, "volkish" "far-right" and even "rootless-cosmopolitans" (which was how Stalin described Jews in the 1950s). Thus a single sentence manages to declare genocidal imputations, not merely for the millions of UK voters who voted to leave the EU, but also for the sorry woman who later became Prime Minister and who, after all, had voted to remain. So, who will be spared O'Toole's sanctimonious calumnies?

Obviously, not the Iron Lady. With all the well-informed acuity of Adrian Mole at his most indignant, he observes that "Thatcher's governments did more damage to Britain's industrial cities than the Luftwaffe's bombing campaign." Nice try, but not really. The German air force killed 67,000 British civilians and destroyed half a million houses. He also speaks of "the gradual erosion of the welfare state after the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979" then continues, "when the welfare state starts to slip away … it is regarded nostalgically as an aspect of a golden age … England began to be viewed in the rear-view mirror."

In 1979, when Thatcher came to power, there were 55,000 doctors in the UK National Health Service. In 2017, there were 113,508 doctors in the *English* National Health Service alone. The UK National Health Service today employs 1.7 million people and is the fifth-biggest employer in the world. This figure does not include the UK's 50,000 self-employed NHS-funded GPs; that is, one for every 1200 people, as compared to, say, Sweden, which has one GP per 1588 people.

Of course, O'Toole tars today's Brexiteers with the same false brush with which he paints so much, particularly his bugbear. "[Enoch] Powell didn't believe in the welfare state, and most of the leading Brexiteers don't either …" Every assertion here is wrong. First, no Brexiteer seeks to privatise the NHS; even the most extreme seek merely to introduce elements of competition. Second, after being appointed the Minister for Health in 1960, and after a ferocious fight with the Treasury, Powell put £100 million into rehabilitating run-down hospitals, before next embarking upon a £500 million hospital-building program, the first in the history of the NHS. Though he believed in free markets, pragmatically he recognised—rather like today's Brexiteers—that the NHS had become a key ingredient of British identity across party boundaries. Moreover, he himself had long before argued, in his paper *Needs and Means*, that "health and education should be comprehensive and universally available services".

Do historical facts have any relevance to O'Toole? Do his leftist spleen and ideological frenzies blind him to simple, easily ascertainable truths? Or are some other forces at work? Certainly petty-bourgeois nationalism bubbles through his text like lava breaking through mosaic. "Opposition to Irish independence," he writes, "even in the anodyne form of Home Rule, is utterly constitutive of modern conservatism."

What? The Tory Prime Minister Ted Heath signed the Sunningdale Agreement that created a power-sharing executive in Belfast and gave the Irish Republic a say over the governance of Northern Ireland. This influence over a constituent part of the UK was later extended by Margaret Thatcher to include a secretariat of civil servants from the republic, with offices in Belfast to monitor events and advise on policy. Next came the Belfast Agreement, an early architect of which was the Tory Prime Minister John Major, which ultimately installed in the Northern Ireland government the very party whose terrorist wing had twice-over tried to exterminate Tory cabinets, including Major's. And having overlooked those truths of Tory policy towards Ireland, O'Toole's swivel-eyed purview of Anglo-Irish relations manages to include the Black and Tans—the infamous police recruited to combat IRA terrorism in 1920-21—and, of course, Oliver Cromwell.

On immigration, he writes: "31% of Leave voters want a sharp reduction in EU migration and a big part of the anti-immigration mood flowed from *an entirely false belief* [my italics] that hundreds of thousands of EU nationals, especially from eastern Europe, regarded the UK as a soft touch and arrived as welfare tourists."

This was *largely* lifted from a report in the *Guardian* by the highly respected pollster Peter Kellner—but that word *largely* is decisive. Because what Kellner actually wrote was this: "many voters … believe that far more immigrants are receiving out-of-work welfare benefits *than those reported in government statistics*" (again, my italics). Kellner did not say "entirely false belief", a term which O'Toole invented, though his footnoted confection confers a wholly unwarranted authority upon it.

O'Toole continues: "Precisely because this belief was unfounded, the expectations of those who voted Leave in the belief that all the immigrants would immediately go home were not and cannot be fulfilled. There is here the downside of the mendacity that fuelled Brexit."

Mendacity is a useful word here, for no one who was faintly literate in the meaning of the referendum believed for a second that a Leave vote would result in the immediate departure of all immigrants.

The only legal consequence of the referendum would be that Parliament would either continue to legislate as before or would begin proceedings to leave. It was that simple.

Equally simple is what the EU and the European Bank have done to O'Toole's native country: namely saddled it with multigenerational debts to cover German banking losses in the Irish property market in the mid-2000s. Incredibly, this gets no mention here. Indeed, wherever ascertainable facts are either ignored or twisted but still do not sustain O'Toole's arguments, he introduces an even greater level of fiction: novels. O'Toole's literary recruits include Len Deighton's absurd *SS GB*, in which a navy-less Germany (with no battleships or landing craft, about ten destroyers and just two cruisers, one with a wonky engine) is in 1940 able to invade and defeat a Britain whose army had in fact just been extensively re-equipped by the USA and whose navy still ruled the waves, Robert Harris's rather more believable *Fatherland*, the fantastical Melrose novels by Edward St Aubyn, and most troublingly and even tremblingly, the sado-masochistic fantasies of *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

The manly relish with which O'Toole deploys the imagery of this last book, and the feverishness with which he so often returns to its themes, including nipple-clamps, suggest a more avid study of such erotica than the issue of Brexit would normally command. Nonetheless, his devotion does him credit, even if sometimes he seems to have been typing one-handed. Perhaps that is why he sometimes gets confused as to the difference between the two geographical concepts of England and Britain, as in his words, Brexit wanting "to be a restoration—of Britain as a great power, of England as it used to be", when in fact it is a third entity, the United Kingdom, which is leaving the EU.

But categorical and verbal confusions abound here, as conjoined "Englishness" and "privilege" are portrayed as being intrinsically vile: thus the Brexiteer Michael Gove "evokes the idea that English nationalism can be seen as an oppressed sub-culture analogous to that of homosexuality … Here again we see the urge of those within a privileged Tory elite to take on the mantle of oppression."

Putting aside yet *more* sexual references, be it remembered that Michael Gove is a Scot and the son of a single mother. He was adopted by working-class parents in Aberdeen, heroic people who later fostered a completely deaf stepdaughter. Truly, the very personification of the "privileged Tory elite".

O'Toole is on rather surer ground when dealing with Boris Johnson. A three-way cross between Toad of Toad Hall, Burlington Bertie and Harry Flashman, Johnson will surely soon be able to star in his own film-bio, *Carrion Stinker*. But, despite O'Toole's argument that Britons are so gullible as to be cheated of their patrimony by a manifestly unprincipled and priapic buffoon like Johnson, the latter was not the reason why the people of England voted to leave, as did 2,222,336 people in other parts of the United Kingdom. For most traditional Britons, Johnson is the very embodiment of metropolitan immorality and connubial betrayal: they voted Brexit despite, not because of, him.

How can the frugal, the prudent and the industrious plan for hospitals, schools, roads and prisons, if any and all from the hundreds of millions within the EU, as a matter of legal right, may then enjoy the rewards of their virtues?

The referendum was about the future—and I admit, this judgment is as much based on guesswork as it is about those other forms of prediction, now about as efficacious as steaming chicken-entrails, namely opinion polls. Just as they underestimated the Trump turnout, they got one vital aspect of the Brexit vote wrong, namely immigration. Quite simply, the taboo on acknowledging that immigration was a factor in their decision to vote Leave caused many people to disavow it when questioned by pollsters.

Nonetheless, I rather suspect that the Leave voters contemplated the future rather as a conveyancing solicitor might do after he spots in the small-print a public right of way into the house, through the dining-room and into the master-bedroom, bathroom and toilet. And not just for a week or so, but *sine die*, in perpetuity, for ever thereafter, until judgment day. Might that solicitor not crack his fingers in perturbation at such a clause, before urgently counselling in the negative?

Membership of the EU constitutes a permanent contract that can punish the diligent by allowing any of the hundreds of millions of people, from the Hebrides to the Aegean, and from Roaring Water Bay to the Black Sea, to avail of the fruits of their efficiency. How can the frugal, the prudent and the industrious plan for hospitals, schools, roads and prisons, if any and all from the hundreds of millions within the EU, as a matter of legal right, may then enjoy the rewards of their virtues? Let the town of Wisbech (naturally, unmentioned here) speak for

England. Between 2003 and 2016 its proportion of Poles and Lithuanians went from virtually zero to 40 per cent.

Such demographic transformations—repeated to a lesser degree across the UK—were one powerful reason why the plain people of Britain voted to Leave, and also why the EU has chosen to torture them for doing so, both to punish their heresy and to deter others from behaving similarly. Nonetheless, island peoples usually have a geographically definable identity that is hard to repress, as the British have shown, and I hope (though not optimistically) that their example will be followed by other countries that have reasonably clear boundaries—such as Ireland, Sweden, Denmark, Portugal, Greece and Italy.

In the meantime, those on the bridge of the RMS EUtanic have spotted the iceberg yet continue to sail full-steam towards it. So will the crew mutiny before impact, and steer the vessel away from disaster? Or will the ruthless, unelected despots in the Council of Europe remain with their malevolent fake-benignity at the helm calling "Steady as she goes" while ordering the master-at-arms to unlock the gun-cabinet and shoot any opposition?

That is in the future: as to what was in the past and how the British vetoed the rights of way of strangers into their bedroom, this wretched encomium to a failing union is absolutely not an explanation. But it is, nonetheless, a useful (if unintended) guide to the cosmic scale of the intellectual deceit and moral misprisions which underlie that Great European Fraud, the EU.

Kevin Myers lives in Ireland. Among his books is the memoir ***Watching the Door: Cheating Death in 1970s Belfast****. He wrote "A Casualty of an Age of Character Assassination" in the December 2018 issue.*

Message with no address

For Louise Gluck

Like a letter opened
Years later, the poem read
Like a forgotten confidence, words blurred and faded
From a friend you knew for a while

From a friend across the border of another life—
Her voice is audible
Through softening light
Tinkling amongst the whispering of leaves

It must be winter there, you surmise
Were these messages that waited for an answer
Or echoes murmuring after an ending
The real endings like leaves suspended around her head.

The stars shine down gilding the midnight grass
Can I hear silence and a season moving off in a different arc?
Do I hear the drone of an echo from the neck of a beached bottle?
Did the waves roll, sway and wash your voice all the way to here?

Thoughts idle—did the sea drift timelessly
With your time, your words, your place
In time, to tell me something, something to carry away
Your yearning, your whispers of greeting now kept with me
Transported as far as this shore, a voice echoing
Staying afloat, in the roars of waves, in the crescendos of time.

Luke Whitington

Colleague

Dividing, conquering, you won
The Roman History Chair from where
You now survive destroying staff,
Intrigues to be vice-chancellor,

Wife's nervous breakdown, suicide,
And generally fulfil yourself
In dirty works that haven't found
A publisher. Dubbed "Iron Man",

"King Rat", "Unflappable", your dark
Suits still don't show wet hands wiped on
Them furtively, though sweat begins
To bead your upper lip from words

You use with less skill than before
Against colleagues' innuendoes.
Out walking Sunday with a new
Nit-picking departmental row

Instead of family picnicking,
These symptoms give me pause as I'm
About to kick a fissured stone
The shape and colour of a heart.

Graeme Hetherington

Night Fishing

(Back Creek, South West Rocks)

There's a phalanx of weary trawlers
tethered to stout, bright white columns
that look thieved from a Greek temple.
Their hulls nestling, snug at the pier
on a watery carpet of black felt.
There's a bridge all lit up with as
many lamps as a Cold War checkpoint,
yet only moths patrol, frenzied by glare.

That sliver of Pacific ribbons through
and fills the creek so that its rush
licks and slaps at the cubed rocks
that hedge the water, unforgiving.
Whilst we, fishers of the night,
roll dough between finger and thumb,
globing the hooks in cloudy stickiness,
hopes cast quietly into the gloom.

Time never seemed measurable there,
not allotted, not subtracted either, even kept.
Only the fine line from rod tip to surface
was monitored, an angler's telegraph
slack in stillness, tugged by nibble
or that dull, heavy pull as the bream
takes and races, jig-jagging, twisting,
argentine perfection in agonising finale.

James Curran

Tony Macken

The Dreyfus Affair: Investigative Journalism versus State Power

The Dreyfus Affair began with an inept investigation by French military intelligence of a leakage of military secrets by an unidentified French officer to the German embassy in Paris in 1894. Suspicion readily fell on a thirty-five-year-old artillery officer, Captain Alfred Dreyfus, who after a rushed and partisan interrogation was tried by court-martial, convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for life on Devil's Island in French Guiana.

The complexities which developed from this beginning became known as *L'Affaire Dreyfus*: it involved two hearings, at both of which Dreyfus was convicted, a parliamentary inquiry, and most famously a searing denunciation by polemicist and writer Émile Zola (published as *J'Accuse!*) which attracted worldwide attention, causing the Dreyfus Case to be called then and later "the trial of the century".

Born in 1859, the youngest of seven children of a prosperous French textile manufacturer, Alfred Dreyfus was an ardent French patriot. His family accepted exile to France after the Prussian/German takeover of their native province Alsace in consequence of the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian war of 1871. Although Jewish by birth, Dreyfus did not profess Judaism. It seems he was wholly devoted to furthering a career in the French army. He was intelligent, hard-working and ambitious. After education as a boarder in a private school he qualified for admission to the Ecole Polytechnique at the Ecole Sainte-Barbe in 1878, graduating two years later.

On graduation Dreyfus was commissioned as a sub-lieutenant and enrolled in the army's School of Artillery at Fontainebleau.

Taking advantage of the reforms introduced by Charles de Freycinet as Minister of War in 1888 which opened progression in the army to candidates of proven merit (rather than as hitherto by birth and family connection), Dreyfus qualified by competitive examination for admission to the Ecole Superieure de Guerre, graduating in the top twelve of his year. This carried with it the offer of an internship in the army general staff. Dreyfus served as an intern in a number of bureaux but was not ultimately judged suitable for permanent recruitment to the general staff, in part because of his difficult personality. He was not a team player, he did not set out to ingratiate himself with his brother officers, he made little secret of his dislike of their company and unlike most of them he was independently wealthy.

On September 12, 1889, Dreyfus was promoted to captain and appointed adjutant to the army's School of Pyrotechnics in Bourges. He married Lucie Hadamard, a Jewish diamond merchant's daughter, on April 21, 1890. Her loyal support and that of his brother Mathieu carried him through the crisis which later engulfed him.

French security in 1894 came into possession of a discarded document (the "*bordereau*"), handwritten by an unknown spy and delivered to the German embassy offering French military secrets for sale. Officers of French security studied the document and decided, too readily, that its contents pointed to the artilleryman Captain Dreyfus as its author.

Arrested on October 15, 1894, Dreyfus was interrogated by the excitable Commandant du Paty de Clam, who was sufficiently convinced of Dreyfus's guilt to offer him a pistol with which to shoot himself. Dreyfus refused, emphatically denying his guilt and pledging to clear his name.

An examining magistrate, Commandant Besson d'Ormescheville, held twelve investigative sessions between November 7 and 23. The partisan magistrate brought to his inquiry an absolute conviction of the prisoner's guilt. Evidence in Dreyfus's favour was disregarded, exculpatory reports were lost or mislaid, his military virtues were taken as suspicious, absence of incriminating evidence was taken as evidence of guilt. The magistrate's inquiry was biased against Dreyfus and a judicial scandal in itself.

A trial of Dreyfus by court-martial was authorised on December 4, 1894, and opened on December 19 before seven officers sitting as judges in a small courtroom in the Cherche-Midi military prison. The court-martial was held in closed court.

Dreyfus was prosecuted by Commandant Andre Brissat and defended capably by Edgar Demange, who after studying the prosecution case had advised the family that Dreyfus had no case to answer.

If there was little doubt about the probable mindset of the seven officers who constituted the court-martial, the prosecution left nothing to chance. Even before the court-martial convened, the Minister for War, General August Mercier, provided a briefing to Charles Lesser, a journalist of *Le Figaro*, referring by name to Dreyfus and saying of him: "All that I can say is that his guilt is absolute, it is certain."

Commandant du Paty de Clam and Lieutenant-Colonel Hubert Joseph Henry of French Security provided members of the court for their private consideration a sealed envelope of documents and a commentary whose existence was not disclosed to Dreyfus or the defence. This course was said to the President of the court-martial to have been authorised by the Minister for War.

A prosecution handwriting expert, Bertillon, caused derision by testifying that the unknown spy's handwriting bore so little resemblance to that of Dreyfus that this conclusively pointed to Dreyfus as the author. Henry gave dramatic but, as it later transpired, perjured evidence that an unnamed but "honourable" informant had identified Dreyfus as the treasonous officer. The alleged informant was never identified to Dreyfus or his counsel.

But Dreyfus's demeanour, then and later, did not assist his cause. He was not an actor, he had a wooden manner and was temperamentally unable or unwilling to perform as might be expected of an innocent man. A police observer present at the court-martial wrote of Dreyfus giving evidence: "His voice was atonal, lazy, his face white … Nothing in his attitude was of a kind to evoke sympathy … there was no expression of indignation, no *cri de coeur*, no expression of feeling."

The court-martial deliberated for less than an hour before returning to pronounce Dreyfus guilty, sentencing him to be degraded as an officer and then to be deported to serve imprisonment for life on Devil's Island, a French penal colony and former leprosarium in the Atlantic off French Guiana.

Ritual degradation was possibly the greater punishment. On January 5, 1895, Dreyfus was paraded in uniform in front of French soldiers, his uniform insignia and epaulettes were torn off and his sabre, pre-scored to facilitate its destruction, was broken over the knee of a non-commissioned officer. He was marched off before jeering and spitting onlookers.

The decision was immediately popular with all sides of politics. The accused was Jewish and had been found by his peers to be a traitor to France. As a convicted spy he had served the interests of Germany, whose conquest of France in the Franco-Prussia War of 1870-71 was still a raw memory. Dreyfus was universally despised by all except for the small handful who believed him to be innocent.

Evidence in Dreyfus's favour was disregarded, exculpatory reports were lost or mislaid, his military virtues were taken as suspicious, absence of incriminating evidence was taken as evidence of guilt.

Between February 22 and April 13, 1895, Dreyfus was deported to Devil's Island. Two of his jailers during his period of custody in France advised Dreyfus's brother Mathieu that the prisoner in their observation had the reactions of a man who was unjustly accused and one of them provided Mathieu with a copy of the investigating magistrate's partisan report annotated by Dreyfus. Mathieu told Colonel Sandherr, the head of Military Intelligence, that he would devote his life and family fortune to uncovering the truth. And in painfully slow stages the truth began to emerge.

On July 1, 1895, in a move of immense significance for Dreyfus, Lieutenant-Colonel Georges Picquart replaced the ailing Sandherr as head of Military Intelligence. In March 1896 Picquart was advised that a new communication had been intercepted from the German embassy to a French military officer, Major Esterhazy. By July 30, 1896, Picquart became convinced that Esterhazy was the spy in whose place Dreyfus had been unjustly condemned. On September 14, 1896, it was disclosed in the newspaper *L'Éclair* that a secret dossier had been provided to the members of the court-martial without disclosure to Dreyfus or the defence. Lucie Dreyfus, wife of Alfred and advised by Mathieu, immediately petitioned the Chamber of Deputies for a new trial. Alarmed, military intelligence led by Lieutenant-Colonel Henry produced a falsified document to convince sceptics of Dreyfus's guilt and added this to the documents assembled against Dreyfus.

In a bid to create a better climate of opinion, Mathieu commissioned a polemicist, Bernard

Lazare, to publish a pamphlet, *Une Erreur Judiciare*. The newspaper *Le Matin* independently published a facsimile of the *bordereau*. It was not intended to help Dreyfus but inadvertently did so, putting the handwriting of the real spy in the public domain but not his identity, which remained unknown. Picquart, suspected of being responsible for the *Le Matin* story, was sent abroad by his superiors.

On June 26, 1897, Picquart, feeling that his life was at risk, told his lawyer Leblois that Esterhazy was the spy for whom Dreyfus had been condemned but swore him to silence. Leblois met Senator August Scheurer-Kestner, Vice-President of the Senate, and on a basis of confidence told him Esterhazy was the spy but forbade this disclosure to anyone else.

Sensing the net was closing in on Esterhazy, the army "retired" Esterhazy for infirmity on August 17, 1897, and on October 16 General Billot, the new Minister for War, met with intelligence officers Gonse, Henry and du Paty de Clam and the trio resolved to warn Esterhazy. This du Paty de Clam did on October 23.

Meanwhile, at Mathieu's urging, Senator Scheurer-Kestner met President Felix Faure on October 29, then General Billot on October 30, and then Prime Minister Meline on November 3, and strongly asserted to each the innocence of Dreyfus. But the senator, bound by his promise to Picquart, was not free to disclose the identity of the real spy.

Mathieu Dreyfus, a wealthy man, flooded Paris with leaflets depicting the handwritten *bordereau* and asking if readers recognised the handwriting. On November 11 one reader did: an out-of-town stockbroker who recognised the handwriting as that of his client, Major Walsin Esterhazy, a memorably unlucky investor, and informed Mathieu. Senator Scheurer-Kestner, released by this, informed Mathieu that Esterhazy was the spy and repeated this at a meeting with Mathieu, Leblois and Émile Zola. Senator Scheurer-Kestner on the same day wrote an open letter to *Le Temps* asserting confidently that Dreyfus was innocent.

On November 16 Mathieu Dreyfus denounced Esterhazy to the Minister for Justice and sued Esterhazy. An inquiry was ordered on November 17, to be conducted by General de Pellieux. Émile Zola, one of France's most successful novelists, started a public campaign for Dreyfus in *Le Figaro* on November 25, and on November 28 *Le Figaro* published letters discreditable to Esterhazy, supplied by a discarded mistress.

On December 3 General de Pellieux's report purportedly exonerated Esterhazy and on December 4 Prime Minister Meline adamantly declared: "There is no *L'Affaire Dreyfus*." Senator Scheurer-Kestner could find no support in the Senate to reopen the Dreyfus Case.

On December 26 three handwriting experts declared the *bordereau*'s handwriting was not that of Esterhazy. On January 1, 1898, a Major Ravary, acting as an investigating magistrate, ruled that there was insufficient evidence against Esterhazy for him to stand trial. On January 4 Zola published a "Letter to France", a low-key argument for open minds, but Esterhazy shrewdly demanded his own trial by court-martial, which met on January 10-11 and cleared him.

Supporters of Dreyfus reacted with anger and exasperation. Then on January 13, on the front page of the newspaper *L'Aurore*, Zola published the now historic *J'Accuse!* It was a strongly worded and scornful denunciation of the multiple abuses of process that had convicted Dreyfus and had then sought to cover up a miscarriage of justice.

Zola's account was not restrained. It named the principal characters responsible for a miscarriage of justice (Commandant du Paty de Clam, the former Minister of War, General Mercier, the Chief of the General Staff, General de Boisdeffre, the Deputy Chief of the General Staff, General Gonse, and the new Minister of War, General Billot), mocked the absurdities and denial of due process in intemperate but undeniably effective terms, and identified those involved in the pro-Esterhazy cover-up.

Zola's piece boldly concluded by pointing out to his readership (300,000 copies of *J'Accuse!* were printed and distributed on the day of publication) that he was making himself liable to proceedings for criminal libel but would willingly accept that risk. The challenge to sue was accepted but on a narrow issue which avoided a review of the hearing of the original Dreyfus court-martial which Zola had hoped for.

On February 7, 1898, Zola was put on trial for criminal libel for defaming the members of the court-martial who had acquitted Esterhazy at the latter's sham court-martial in January. The Zola piece implied they had acted under orders. This was not likely to be true: orders were not necessary. The civil trial of Zola for criminal libel was well attended by the public but given the limited side issue before the court and the refusal of Esterhazy and others to answer questions, it did not carry matters forward on the issue of the guilt or innocence of Dreyfus.

Zola was found guilty and sentenced to a year in prison and a fine of 3000 francs, with the sentence suspended pending an appeal. The outcome on appeal was adverse to Zola but was itself later set aside on jurisdictional grounds and replaced by other proceedings by the individual members of the court-martial against Zola, in which Zola declined

to participate, taking refuge abroad. His property in France was sequestrated to pay the fine and damages.

But the trial of Zola was productive for Dreyfus in an unintended way. A witness against Zola, General de Pellieux, incautiously referred to a document which he had seen which he said conclusively established the guilt of Dreyfus. He described the document and quoted its terms. This document, said to have been intercepted by French security, had been forged by Lieutenant-Colonel Henry. Its bogus nature was relatively easily established on critical examination and was eventually admitted, with Henry confessing to his role and committing suicide in custody on August 30, 1898.

At this point senior officers complicit in the trial of Dreyfus or the subsequent cover-up resigned their offices, beginning with General Boisdeffre. A request for a review of the main proceeding was lodged by Lucie Dreyfus and referred to the Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation which ultimately resulted in a formal decision for Dreyfus's vindication.

A second court-martial of Dreyfus, who had been repatriated from Devil's Island for the hearing, was nonetheless held at Rennes before a military court constituted by seven officers. On September 8, 1898, by a majority of five to two, these officers again declared Dreyfus guilty of treason but with "extenuating circumstances", reducing his sentence to ten years imprisonment in France.

An appeal was immediately lodged on behalf of Dreyfus, and now commercial considerations began to intervene. The French Exhibition ("Exposition Universelle") was due to be held in Paris in 1900. Overseas interests, outraged by the injustice levied against Dreyfus, urged a boycott of the exhibition, circulating a picture of Dreyfus with the caption "French Exhibit '99". The American Ambassador to France, James B. Eustis, wrote in 1899:

> No case has ever excited such universal and profound interest throughout the civilized world. Every government, every military officer, every judge … in every country has followed with intense interest … every stage of this trial.

A face-saving pardon for Dreyfus was therefore proposed by Presidential Decree on September 11, 1899, conditional on his abandonment of the appeal. On Dreyfus's reluctant acceptance of this condition, the Decree was signed on September 19. There was an associated amnesty, including for Émile Zola, for the officers of the general staff, and for the officers of French military intelligence. The law passed by 271 votes to thirty-two.

The timidly expressed adverse finding of the second court-martial of Dreyfus at Rennes on September 1898 ("mitigating circumstances") was struck down after review by the Court of Cassation, and after painfully slow processes, Dreyfus was finally and formally declared innocent on July 12, 1906, and the finding ordered to be published throughout France. He was retrospectively promoted to the rank of major and made a Knights Cross of the Legion of Honour with his honour restored and his innocence established.

The indispensable role of Zola in attaining that outcome is not in serious question although many others contributed, notably Dreyfus's counsel, Edgar Demange, Dreyfus's brother Mathieu, Dreyfus's loyal wife Lucie, Senator Scheurer-Kestner and Commandant, later Lieutenant-Colonel Georges Picquart who independently did his duty in the interests of justice at the risk of his employment, career and liberty.

Zola's handiwork made history in its own right and was the first modern example of exposé-style journalism deployed successfully as a weapon of redress against an abuse of state power on behalf of an innocent and greatly wronged victim.

On January 13, 1998, one hundred years after its publication, *J'Accuse!* was saluted by Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic:

> In spite of the unyielding efforts by Captain Dreyfus's family, his case could have been filed away forever. A dark stain, unworthy of our country and our history, a colossal judicial error and a shameful state compromise. But a man stood up against lies, malice and cowardice. Outraged by the injustice against Captain Dreyfus, whose only crime was to be a Jew, Émile Zola cried out his famous: "I Accuse!" Published on January 13, 1898, by *L'Aurore*, this text struck minds like lightning and changed the fate of the Affair within a few hours. Truth was on the march …
>
> Let us never forget the courage of that great writer who, taking every risk, jeopardising his peace and quiet, his fame and even his own life, dared to take up his pen and put his talent to the service of truth. Émile Zola, high literary and moral character, had understood that his responsibility was to enlighten and his duty was to speak up when others kept silent. Like Voltaire before him, he has become since then the incarnation of the best of the intellectual tradition.

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Amanda Stoker

Restoring Universalism in the Liberal Party

Trust in politicians and in democracy is at an all-time low, as is trust in the judiciary. A 2018 national survey conducted by the Museum of Australian Democracy and the University of Canberra found satisfaction with Australia's democracy has more than halved between 2007 and 2018. In some communities, the level of political distrust and disillusionment was higher than 80 per cent. If trends continue, by 2025 less than 10 per cent of Australians will trust their politicians and political institutions. People are turning their backs on the very democratic system of governance that conferred upon them more freedom and economic prosperity than any other political system known to man.

Part of that loss of trust has been earned. When banks charge customers for services they didn't provide, when politicians abuse the privilege of publicly paid expenses, when figures in the church fail to protect children from harm, such misconduct erodes trust, and rebuilding it is a slow process.

The fundamentals that have built this nation—the values that made Western civilisation the freest and most prosperous known to man—have been under attack for some time. This has a great deal to do with our inability to trust.

There has been a concerted effort among the academic class, and the media and intellectual class that flows from it, to paint the legacy of Western civilisation as little more than conquering and oppressing others, stripping them of their resources and dignity, and then abandoning them. If that were all Western civilisation stood for, then one could be forgiven for antipathy towards it. But this is a supremely negative rewriting of history. Such negativity underpins the sense of collective guilt that permeates the teaching of history and politics today.

The effectiveness of this intellectual effort to destroy trust in our institutions—coupled with the wrongdoing of some within them—has led to calls for greater regulation and control. Many call for more regulation of the banks—ignoring the fact that the last 1000 pages of legislation regulating their activities has achieved little—and many also call for more statutory interference with the churches. Politicians already face detailed reporting and transparency requirements.

In Queensland, a human rights act has recently been passed that essentially empowers judges to become arbiters of controversial questions about whose rights prevail in circumstances where there are competing rights. Those who cheered the passage of this Act played upon the notion that these matters should be above politics—as if politicians could not be trusted with them. And yet by conferring political decision-making upon the judiciary (a body without the check of regular elections) we can expect the public's trust in it to be undermined further.

The implications are profound: when we don't trust our institutions, there are calls for more regulation and control of them. The problem is that such moves inevitably limit our freedom, and don't deal with the causes of the distrust.

This is compounded when freedom itself isn't well understood in the general population. If we don't know what freedom is, and why it matters, we may give it away too cheaply.

If we think of freedom as a system of obedience to the unenforceable, and as an expression of our choice to participate in a social contract to which we are not compelled, there is a deep link between freedom and self-restraint. Understanding freedom in this way highlights its roots in the Judeo-Christian tradition, where God gave individuals free will so that they had the capacity to choose to honour God. No other tradition conceives of freedom in this way. This tradition of freedom is deeply individualistic, and honours the capacity and value of every man and woman.

Popular consciousness doesn't really make a distinction at present between the notions of freedom *from* (or negative freedom, the idea that we should be free of the bad things, like slavery and oppression) and freedom *for*—that is, positive freedom. Making the case for the importance of those positive freedoms—freedom of thought, of conscience,

of belief, of association and of speech—has never been harder.

The threats to freedom are both internal and external. External dangers to our freedom include the idea that others are coming for our freedoms, seeking to limit them either through the use of law or by ignoring the rule of law. The internal threats are real too, though they are perhaps harder to articulate. They are the internal corruption of freedom, so it is no longer coupled with self-restraint or self-discipline, but is instead a permissiveness or licence that descends into that which personally harms.

When we think of many of the social ills of our time that seem so hard to fix—addiction, poor mental health and the problem areas of child safety and inter-generational disadvantage—the internal corruption of freedom has a good deal to do with it.

We are still a land of great opportunity; but our lack of self-restraint is undermining social outcomes and true freedom. Our social tragedies highlight the crucial—yet too often ignored—relationship between rights and responsibilities.

People like rights for themselves. They feel virtuous when they talk about human rights—though those who do so most tend to care more about some rights (and particular people's rights) than others. They are less keen on responsibilities—unless it is the kind of big-picture problem that, in their bleating, they are really asking someone else to deal with.

Think about hysterical calls for action on climate change from people who enjoy in abundance the fruits of our high-electricity, high-fuel-consumption age. Think about calls for other people to be taxed to pay for any number of "worthy" initiatives. But there is no mutual responsibility: the notion that, with the many rights we have, come personal responsibilities that go beyond ourselves.

Identity politics plays an important role in the confusion about rights, responsibilities and freedom, and it is at the core of postmodernist thinking, whether called anti-colonialism, critical theory or something else. In its search for a power agenda in everything, identity politics badges every human relationship as one between victim and oppressor. Its solution is to identify victims of injustice (often in past generations rather than in the present) and elevate them over others, who because of their oppressor status are supposed to accept present punishment for past misdeeds.

This is toxic on many levels. The victim develops a sense of entitlement to elevated status, and if it is not given, whether by government or others, it confirms victimhood. It is deeply disempowering to the victims, who come to believe they are not capable of transcending their minority status. It also breeds resentment in those who are unjustly branded oppressors, based on historical misdeeds or history rewritten ungenerously. And it makes our society tribal: adhering to allegiances to groups based on skin colour, sexuality or gender.

The Jewish people have understood the disempowerment of victimhood. Though the Holocaust would have given the greatest possible justification for such an attitude, their cultural leaders understood that victimhood is self-defeating. This has played a large role in the great success of the Jewish community, despite its small size. Imagine the benefits if such resilience was developed in, for example, our indigenous community.

It shows how far the political parties have moved—that universality and respect for family have a home in the Liberal and National parties that they no longer have in Labor.

The elevation of particular tribes over others, as well as their story of victimhood over the history or ideas of others, is used to justify restraints upon free speech that today are greater than we have ever seen before in this nation. That confinement operates socially as well as legally. Not only can you be dragged before a tribunal for expressing a perspective that confronts the worldview of a protected minority class; you can also expect to be hauled before your human resources manager for being insufficiently politically correct at work, or attacked on social media and elsewhere for failing to conform.

The effect is to silence people whose views don't align with the new elite. However, this creates the impression that the identity politics agenda is the accepted norm—and deepens the well of silence.

What has always been the strength of Australian society has been that, as Robert Menzies put it in his first "Forgotten People" speech: "The things that unite Australians are infinitely more important and enduring than the things that divide us." That was true in his time, and even as recently as during John Howard's time as Prime Minister. But the way identity politics seeks to separate and dehumanise tribes within our society threatens our social cohesion. Taken to its extreme, it has the potential to descend into violence, of the kind that has become civil war in more tribally oriented nations. Indeed, we have seen shades of that on university campuses

already, where groups of students find a particular idea so offensive to their identity group that they feel entitled to demand the firing of those who expose them to that challenging idea; or worse, to riot violently on campus to prevent those ideas from being expressed.

These extreme reactions to mere ideas—whether it is the kind of emotional crushing we see of those who need a safe space in which to recover with the help of Play-Doh and puppy cuddles, or the violent reactions we see at the other extreme—demonstrate the dangers before us.

The right to freedom of conscience, to believe and to express that belief, is the core of what it means to be a free human being. That should be enough to make most people willing to fight for it. And yet, in a nation where we did not in the first place get these freedoms through battle or the spilling of blood (though many have since fought in wars in their defence), it is easy to take them for granted.

We have to ask why such a toxic ideology has flourished. Part of the answer is that we for too long assumed that Menzies's grand statement was a truth so self-evident as to be incapable of change. Another is that the neo-Marxist Left have been very effective in their march through the institutions. Identity politics boomed in the fertile climate of the 1960s and 1970s, when the women's rights movement, the growing understanding of the poor way in which many minorities had been treated and the aftermath of the Second World War combined to give that "collective guilt" approach some appeal. Though we were given plenty of warning in an academic sense, we didn't heed it until the results became apparent.

The dominance of our universities has controlled the thinking of at least two generations of young people, as well as the teacher class that now educates at the pre-school, primary and secondary level, and the media that frames the way we understand the political debates of our time. Efforts to remedy "structural disadvantage" are now corrupted into a mechanism to promote a radical minority elite into more powerful positions, and to tear down those who represent old power structures.

Indicative of the times is the way in which this march has captured the modern Labor Party. The Labor Party of old is gone. It was the party that appealed to working-class people like my grandparents, promising to help the poor with its belief in universalism—the idea that we are all deeply equal—and the primacy of the traditional family.

The rise and dominance of Labor's Left faction mean that the neo-Marxist agenda is now firmly Labor's, and identity politics is its cheap road to power. The new elite—exclusive and "woke"—in fact has disdain for the traditional family, seeking to break it down with new genders, new family forms and greater dependence on the state for the roles that family used to play in education, in sharing values, and in care for those in need. Hence, there is some irony in the fact that Labor's historical rise was in reaction to a conservative elite, harking back to a feudal order.

In the modern world, only the conservative side of politics now seems willing to fight for universalism. This represents a fascinating shift; it also represents our best road out of this horrible mess.

It will take courage from all in the Liberal Party to confront wrong-headedness whenever it is seen, and to reconnect with the fundamental values of being a classical liberal or conservative. That leadership is important because those silenced, shamed Australians who know the new order is wrong will take heart and become braver when we create the space for them to do so.

The role of women in politics and in the Liberal Party offers an opportunity to lead. There's often talk about women's role in the Party, and canvassing of the need for gender quotas. I see very little attempt made by those who support quotas on my side to reconcile that belief with the reality that it reflects an acceptance and incorporation of identity politics into our very structure. When we do that, we hollow out the very core of who we are. That doesn't work electorally, nor in reality.

But universality—the deep respect for the dignity of every individual, on an equal basis before the law—that is a good fit for who we are. It shows how far the political parties have moved—that universality and respect for family have a home in the Liberal and National parties that they no longer have in Labor.

It is also a road forward for us politically. We have an opportunity to build a new covenant with the people who would once have been Labor's people, but whose values just don't fit any more. Our belief in universality and the value of a strong family as a bulwark against the big state will appeal if we make the effort to share it in a way that transcends superficial partisan notions of "red good, blue bad", and vice versa. That depth of communication, that willingness to speak frankly for the tradies, nurses, labourers, hairdressers, small business men and women in our community, will pay dividends.

To use the language coined by Matthew Lesh in his book *Democracy in a Divided Australia*, we have a chance to build our trust with the "outsiders", as Labor chases the smaller but currently more powerful group of "inners" of this new elite.

This task should lie with politicians; but we must not forget that politics is always downstream

of culture. That means political efforts must aim to reshape culture in a way that respects fundamental freedoms. It also means that *everyone* who contributes to culture must play their role.

It's heartening to see some literary backlash against the imposition of rules forbidding "cultural appropriation"—the idea that you are only qualified to write about characters with whom you share experience. We shape our culture by connecting better to the cultural institutions in our community and helping them develop a culture of valuing our freedoms, and of universality.

Everyone in corporate Australia has a role to play—and it's time for those with influence in this sphere to show some courage about pushing back against the flow of identity politics into corporate life. There can be no more jumping on identity-politics bandwagons, as we saw in the same-sex-marriage debate, or more recently in major mining companies' push for a constitutionally entrenched indigenous voice to parliament. No more enforcement of the double-speak of politically correct language in the workplace. No more threats from the ASX to demand listed companies justify their "social licence to operate" by virtue-signalling on the pet issues of the Left—shareholder interests be damned. No more businesses caving in to demands to endorse politically correct views, pressured by social media trolling to remove advertising from news outlets that dare to publish perspectives that deviate from leftist orthodoxy—in other words, financial penalties for operating a free press. No more skewed gender-sensitivity training imposed by university administrations. No more acceptance by doctors of censorship that defies biology.

It won't be easy. The difficulty of the task is proportionate to our past complacency. But take heart—the fact that such massive cultural change was achieved in a matter of around fifty years means it can be undone over the next fifty years. But the task requires dogged commitment.

Basic human freedoms are under attack. They include freedom of conscience—the right to think and believe for yourself—and its corollaries, the right to freedom of association and the right to freedom of speech. What you believe isn't worth much if you have no right to gather and share it with others.

We must fight for these freedoms because without them we are not truly free human beings, with the dignity of the individual that is the foundation of Western civilisation. Without them, history tells us, tyranny follows.

By doing so, we can take back the reins of public debate, and share the benefits of our fundamental freedoms with a new generation, and a broader range, of Australians.

Amanda Stoker is a Liberal National Party Senator for Queensland. This article is based on a speech she gave at the Centre for Independent Studies in February.

Jacarandas

Every November they challenge us
with that disturbing blue,
a blue cloud for a tree
standing in a blue pool
of fallen flowers.
Avenues become blue tunnels
packed with rapt spectators,
tourists and Japanese wedding groups
posing for photographs
as traffic comes to a halt.
What is it about that blue,
its mauvish loveliness
somehow unsettling?
Seeming to foreshadow
the sun's sudden withdrawal,
banking clouds in a bruised sky
and a catastrophic storm?

Barbara Fisher

Don't talk

Don't talk of gender
or of sex.
Don't talk of science
at all events.

Don't talk of him.
Don't talk of me.
Don't stand for
masculinity.

Don't talk ideas.
Don't ask for proof.
Don't be so brash
to ask for truth.

Don't talk of drugs
or family.
Just bark the word
"Equality!"

Don't talk free speech
or liberty.
Just bark the word
"Diversity!"

Don't talk about
South Africa.
You shut your mouth!
Don't act bizarre.

Don't talk about
the media
or Marxist
academia.

Don't think it through.
Don't be that chump.
Just sing along
to "I hate Trump!"

Just do what you're
supposed to do.
You know the drill.
There is no you.

There is no God.
There was no Fall.
In fact, you'd best
not talk at all.

Peach Klimkiewicz

Dog Years

I flick between channels and find a doco
on retreating ice caps; the rain here drowns
out the combined whir of fridge and dryer.
Lying on my brother's leather lounge, Rex
the Boxer twitches his greying jowls
and stares at me like I'm responsible
for the storm outside; I turn the TV off.
Rex is smart: he opens the wire door
by standing on his hind legs and working
the handle, he knows it's time for a w-a-l-k
once the sun goes down and explains
in barks if he's low on water. But flashes
of lightning reveal a septuagenarian afraid
of lightning; I can't comfort him with toys
or slow his heart rate with pats. His tail
is a hairy window wiper when my brother
gets home. Rex pretends he's forgotten
how to shake paws so that he's greeted
with a hug instead; I remember how

Dad started shaking hands with us
before beddy-byes and leaving for work
without whispering goodbye, his half-finished
coffee on the kitchen bench
caught the first few scraps of light
each morning. My nose wrinkled
the day I discovered he was drinking
shandies without lemonade. I'll fall asleep
on the lounge tonight in a break between
the thunder or these thoughts
about my father.

Andrew James Menken

Daryl McCann

The True Lies of Zionophobia

It was my mistake to post a piece on Facebook by the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies about Amnesty International having "lost its moral way with regard to Israel". A social media friend fired back with alacrity: "Have you seen how evil Israel has been to Palestinians trying to survive—cut off all their water and cut down their olive trees. Not an ounce of humanity in their evil hearts." *Evil hearts*, I reflected, is very strong language. It so commonly occurs that liberal-minded thinkers—of the armchair variety—believe themselves to be non-discriminatory and well-informed without reading critically or with the *open mind* they purportedly prize. There's no incentive to read more broadly if you believe you already have "the truth" and, fortified with that truth, you can scorn any sympathy for Israel as heartless or stupid.

The expression "Zionophobia" was first coined by Judea Pearl, father of Daniel Pearl, the *Wall Street Journal* journalist kidnapped and beheaded by Salafi jihadists in 2002. Judea Pearl agrees that classical anti-Semitism played a role in the slaying of his son. After all, the self-identified executioner Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, while an inmate at Guantánamo Bay, made the following confession during a military tribunal hearing: "I decapitated with my blessed right hand the head of the American Jew Daniel Pearl in the city of Karachi, Pakistan." However, the enmity directed specifically at the Jewish state, rather than at Jewish people *per se*, requires a separate term:

> Denying Jewish people the right for nationhood is straight racism, not anti-Semitism. Jews fight Zionophobia by labelling it anti-Semitism, which is a mistake. It is so easily deflected by saying "My best friends are Jewish" or "I'll go to prison to defend a Jew's right to wear a yarmulke or eat kosher food" but still want Israel abolished.

There is some merit in Judea Pearl's observation, with the qualification that classical anti-Semitic tropes actually *do* play a key role in anti-Israel polemic. That said, his neologism does, at least, allow us to begin responding to the anti-Zionism of "sensible and logical" folk without them playing the *inverted* anti-Semitic card from the outset—that is, their insistence that any attempt to connect anti-Semitism to anti-Zionist discourse is *ipso facto* a slur and, accordingly, ends all possibility of dialogue. Judea Pearl, not inaccurately, points out that the Israel-hater has become adept at identifying the anti-Semite charge as "paranoid" or, as asserted by Norman Finkelstein in *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (2000), nothing more than a ruse which has allowed successive Israeli governments to demand special exemption for the outrages committed by the Jewish state.

In our response to mainstream Western anti-Zionist discourse, then, let us start with the accusation that water-restricting and tree-cutting Israelis treated Palestinian farmers "without an ounce of humanity". Were these particular Jews sociopaths? Where is the broader perspective? In contrast, during the time of the so-called Knife Intifada (which began in 2015), in which Palestinian youths stabbed Jewish people to death on the street, cases of terrorism were routinely framed as the despairing acts of young freedom fighters. In October 2015, for instance, the *Guardian*'s Peter Beaumont, winner of the George Orwell Prize, wrote sympathetically about Mohammed Ali, aged nineteen, who attempted to stab an Israeli policeman in the head before being shot dead. No mention here of the would-be murderer's "evil heart"; that, presumably, is the domain of the tree-killer rather than the people-killer. Young Ali was, we are reliably informed, a "popular and happy youth" who had "no problems—except he was angry at the Israeli occupation, and in particular at Israeli actions around the flashpoint religious site of the al-Aqsa mosque". Beaumont elsewhere made the latter claim explicit in these words: "Palestinian anger is largely derived

from events at al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem's Old City and fears that Israel is trying to change the status quo at the holy site."

We could just as easily—and more accurately—depict the Knife Intifada as a modern-day pogrom involving Arab youths murdering Jewish people in the Old City. After all, the claim that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wanted to overturn the status quo regarding the Temple Mount/Al-Haram al-Sharif, on which the Al-Aqsa Mosque is located, was spurious. The State of Israel has always been—and remains—respectful of Muslim sensitivities concerning the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the adjoining Dome of the Rock. Even after Israel gained sovereignty of the Old City—as a consequence of Jordan's invasion during the 1967 Six-Day War—the Jewish state has been keen to respect Muslim sensibilities, allowing the Jordanian-led Islamic Waqf to administer the Al-Aqsa compound. As long ago as 1929, Haj Amin al-Husseini, the British-designated Mufti of Jerusalem and ally of Adolf Hitler, triggered a pogrom in Mandatory Palestine that resulted in the murder of 133 Jews, many of whose families had lived in Jerusalem and Hebron for hundreds of years. The Mufti of Jerusalem began the murderous custom of falsely accusing the local Jewish community of attempting to subvert the status quo on Temple Mount.

Therefore, we need to consider Peter Beaumont's claim about "Palestinian anger" being the result of "fears that Israel is trying to change the status quo at the holy site" in the light of history. Eighty-six years after unleashing the 1929 pogrom, Arab leaders (in this case Hamas and the Palestine Authority) ignited the same dangerous Muslim paranoia that Jews intended to occupy Temple Mount after the installation of security cameras. For some reason, the *Guardian*'s George Orwell Prize winner failed to inform his readers about the history of Haj Amin al-Husseini, Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas instigating the slaughter of Jews with bogus claims about the looming appropriation of the Al-Aqsa compound.

The records show that, in September 2000, Yasser Arafat used the visit of Israeli Opposition Leader Ariel Sharon to Temple Mount/Al-Haram al-Sharif, during normal tourist hours and with the approval of a Palestine Authority (PA) security officer so long as he did not enter the Al-Aqsa compound itself (an instruction with which he complied) to ignite local Arab outrage. There was never any intention on the part of Israeli leaders (including Sharon) to change the status quo, and yet Yasser Arafat, like Haj Amin al-Husseini before him and Mahmoud Abbas afterwards, recycled a falsehood based on religious bigotry to instigate a pogrom (in this case, the Second Intifada, 2000 to 2005).

And so we return to the Knife Intifada. Here, courtesy of Palestine Media Watch, is an account of PA President Abbas provoking religious fury at the key moment of September 16, 2015, on the official PA TV: "The Al-Aqsa [Mosque] is ours … and they have no right to defile it with their filthy feet. We will not allow them to, and we will do everything in our power to protect Jerusalem." Teenager Mohammed Ali, like all the other brainwashed Arab youngsters caught up in the Knife Intifada, could look forward to nothing more than an early death and President Abbas's hollow tribute: "We bless every drop of blood that has been spilled for Jerusalem, which is clean and pure blood, blood spilled for Allah, Allah willing."

If anybody is pushing to overturn the status quo it is Islamic provocateurs who boast of opening a third, fourth and fifth "historic" mosque on Temple Mount, while themselves denying the legitimacy of Jews worshipping at the Western Wall, a remnant of the Second Temple destroyed by Romans in 70 AD. For instance, during the doomed 2000 Camp David Summit, PA Chairman Arafat coolly informed President Clinton that "Solomon's Temple was not in Jerusalem, but Nablus". If that were so, it follows that the Second Temple Mount, built on the site of Solomon's Temple, also has no connection to Jerusalem's Temple Mount. Palestinian nationalism—as we have so far known it—is so perverse, so predicated on obliterating "The Other", that it cannot acknowledge the unvarnished truth being unearthed by archaeologists virtually every day. Then again, what does reality matter if you are fuelled by an anti-Zionist ideology that transcends the literal truth? The creation story of Palestinian nationalism is a *narrative*, and narratives, in our postmodernist dispensation, are beyond the scope of scientific inquiry, be it archaeology or historiography. Thus UNESCO, in October 2016, officially rejected any Jewish historic association with Temple Mount because Islamic supremacists/PA/Hamas did not *feel* it fitted with their relative or tribal truth about Al-Haram al-Sharif.

If Palestinian-style Zionophobia is a strain of Islamic revivalism, that is not the lens through which Western Israel-haters view the tragic violence that affects ordinary civilians in Israel and the territories, Jew and Arab alike. It is the ideology of "the settler-colonial narrative", rather than the theology of Islamic supremacism, that shapes the thinking of progressives in the West. The settler-colonial narrative has grown so potent that even Peter Beaumont's reporting for the *Guardian* on the Knife Intifada was criticised for being too hard

on the homicidal Palestinian youths. As Cynthia Wang explains, in a monograph published by the Edinburgh University Press, *Victimhood in the Face of Media Ideological Battle: A Critical Discourse Analysis on the British Media's Coverage of Stabbing Incidents in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (2017), Beaumont (and another British journalist) had the temerity to use the term "terrorism/terror/terrorist" in his reporting of the Knife Intifada. Wang, citing the belief-systems of Michel Foucault, Edward Said and Noam Chomsky, condemned Beaumont for referring to the deaths of Israelis on the street as "stabbings" while describing the deaths of the young murderers as "killings". To write that the Israeli security forces engaging in a "manhunt" for the young men (with blood on their knives and meat cleavers) was, apparently, to "animalise" them. It is hard to know what would satisfy the likes of Cynthia Wang short of Peter Beaumont adopting a slightly modified version of Mahmoud Abbas's mantra: "We bless every drop of blood that has been spilled for Jerusalem, which is clean and pure blood, blood spilled for the State of Palestine."

The settler-colonial narrative means Palestinian Arabs can never do wrong because they have been accorded the role of indigenous victims of white supremacism.

The settler-colonial narrative means Palestinian Arabs can never do wrong because they have been accorded the role of indigenous victims of white supremacism. Their plight is akin to the Powhatan natives ravaged by the English colonialists in Walt Disney's animated bohemian-socialist fantasy *Pocahontas* (1995). Faultless Powhatan Native Americans/Palestinian Arabs existed in a state of sacred harmony until Westerners/Zionists descended on paradise like "ravenous wolves" to "devour everything in their path". The indigenous/non-indigenous dichotomy, as Roger Sandall pointed out in *The Culture Cult* (2000), is mostly a zero-sum game from the standpoint of our modern-day leftist. Stabbing Zionists in the street or firing off missiles from Gaza in the general direction of Israeli citizens has less to do with common criminality—let alone crimes against humanity—than with heroic militant resistance.

Germaine Greer's *On Rage* (2008), though set in an Australian context, sums up the moral landscape we now inhabit, thanks to the encouragement of Foucault, Said, Chomsky *et al*. Greer manages to rationalise the violence perpetrated by indigenous Australian men against indigenous Australian women and children in outback Australia, documented in the *Little Children are Sacred* report (2007), as a function of "hunter-gatherer" men's rage at being disposed centuries ago of their land by "Whitey". Greer counselled indigenous Australian men to form a movement in the name of "hunter-gatherer" resistance. What ungodly acts perpetrated by such a movement would Germaine Greer be prepared to sanction?

The documentary *To Die in Jerusalem* (2007), is a study of the seventeen-year-old suicide bomber Ayat al-Akhras, who blew herself up along with seventeen-year-old Israeli Rachel Levy during the Second Intifada. Norma Musih's review of the documentary, "The Shahida's Claim: Ayat Muhammed Lufti Al Akhras", could be described as a hallowed feminist deconstruction of Ayat al-Akhras's unhallowed female destruction of Rachel Levy: "Like a drag queen who is convinced that true femininity exists, al-Akhras, too, is convinced that her act …" And so forth. Is there any Palestinian terrorist undertaking that our Western leftist intellectual cannot render as somehow emancipatory? Zionists are *ravenous wolves* and Arab Palestinians are *immaculate Powhatans*, and that is all we need to know in order to understand the Israel-Palestine conflict, according to the settler-colonial narrative. No wonder there is not "an ounce of humanity" in the rapacious Israelis who are responsible for provoking the War of Independence (1947 to 1949), the Six-Day War (1967), the Yom Kippur War (1973), the First Intifada (1987 to 1991), the Second Intifada (2000 to 2005), the Knife Intifada (2015 to the present), the First Gaza War (2008 to 2009), the Second Gaza War (2012), the Third Gaza War (2014), the 2018 Gaza-Israel border clashes, and so on *ad infinitum*. All you need to know, if you are Zionophobic, is that Israel metaphorically poisons the well.

The settler-colonial narrative, simply put, serves the purpose disguising religious bigotry (in both its Hamas *and* Fatah guises) for the benefit of a mostly secular Western audience. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), dominated by Yasser Arafat's Fatah and in turn the ruling authority of the Palestinian Authority, has continued to present itself to the world as a conventional national liberation movement. It has done so ever since 1964 when the Kremlin and various Eastern Bloc security forces reconfigured a motley collection of Fedayeen guerrillas as the PLO. Some factions had been compliant with Egyptian interests and others with the scheme for a Greater Syria,

while some wanted West Palestine (the territory of Mandatory Palestine) merged with East Palestine (Jordan). The two issues the Fedayeen militias *could* agree on were (a) the utility of terrorism and (b) the necessity of a Jewish state being expunged from the sliver of land located between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean, territory that had been a part of Ottoman Syria or, more fatefully, *Dar al-Islam* (the Abode of Islam).

Zionophobia, therefore, is a Janus-like spirit simultaneously facing in two opposite directions: one harking back to a caliphal domain, the other looking towards Western-inspired notions of Third World anti-colonialism. Nakba Day, the Palestinian commemoration of the founding of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948, is based on a twofold lie. The true catastrophe of *Nakba* (literally "disaster" or "cataclysm") is not that the nascent Jewish state engaged in a systematic ethnic cleansing, involving the exodus of some 750,000 Palestinian Arabs. Rather, it was that Haj Amin al-Husseini's Arab Higher Committee and five Arab nations refused to accept United Nations Resolution 181 and the consequent partition of Mandatory Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state. Arab leaders, refusing to countenance the establishment of Jewish autonomy on the sacrosanct territory of Dar al-Islam, launched a guerrilla campaign and then a conventional war against the Zionists/Israelis, which culminated in their ignominious defeat. The miracle of Israel's victory in the War of Independence is now challenged by the fabricated narrative of Nakba.

Western Zionophobes, and even some left-wing Israeli "New Historians" such as Ilan Pappé, have done their best to adapt the so-called Nakba as an exemplar of the settler-colonial narrative. This might be the ultimate fusing of Islamic revivalism and Western post-colonialism. Pappé's *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2006) is a case in point. Unfortunately for Pappé, however, there is Bennie Morris, also a New Historian. Morris, like Pappé, availed himself of the opportunity to study official Israeli documents linked to the War of Independence. Both Pappé and Morris quickly realised that the authorised Israeli account of the Arab exodus—there are, by the way, no official Egyptian, Syrian, Jordanian, Iraqi or Lebanese archives for historians to investigate—left a lot to be desired. The fact that not *all* Palestinian Arabs opportunistically abandoned their homes and villages, with the intention of returning once the combined armies of Egypt, Syria *et al* had crushed the lightly-armed Jewish forces and slaughtered the Zionists (many of them Holocaust survivors) in their midst, led Pappé to surmise that David Ben-Gurion's government pursued a systematic strategy of ethnic cleansing. Nothing could be further from the actual truth, and yet to admit that would spoil the "higher truth" of the settler-colonial narrative.

Bennie Morris, in *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem 1947–49* (1988) and *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (2004), provides a complex, non-ideological explanation for the departure of some 750,000 Palestinian Arabs. Some did flee at the appearance of Jewish fighters; others fled *despite* the appeal of Jewish leaders to remain in their homes. There was no conspiracy on the part of David Ben-Gurion, according to Morris's research, to generate what Pappé calls an "ethno-state". Morris strikes me as the genuine article, contrarian, sceptical, fair-minded and the servant of no dogma. Pappé, in contrast, gives every indication of being an academic-activist, dedicated to his settler-colonial creed above all else. His writings prop up the Israel-haters' worldview that Zionism is *ipso facto* a form of racism that needs to be delegitimised, demonised and defeated. In the opinion of Bennie Morris, on the other hand, "you cannot rely on any one sentence" Ilan Pappé has written. Today Pappé travels the world, including Australia, speaking to the "converted" in religious-like gatherings.

The dogma of Zionophobia necessitates not only promulgating the Nakba myth but any number of other "true lies". Take, as one example, Ghada Karmi's anti-Israel treatise *Married to Another Man* (2007). The title refers to a frequently told story about the 1897 Zionist Congress in Basel. Theodor Herzl, author of *Der Judenstaat* (1896), allegedly received a cable from a Zionist emissary in Ottoman Jerusalem with this disobliging message: "The bride is beautiful, but she is married to another man." In other words, a Jewish state might be a worthwhile idea, but the territory under investigation was already the homeland of another people. The reality, however, is somewhat different. First, by the middle of the nineteenth century there was a plurality of Jews in Jerusalem, and second, the fabled cable is truly a fable. So, Ghada Karmi, an anti-Israeli polemicist for the *Guardian*, has written a book that lies to us before we even open to the first page. For the supporters of Karmi, born in Mandatory Palestine, none of this is of any consequence. The 1897 Jerusalem cable might be a lie and yet it is a *true* lie. Even if literally false, or so the logic goes, it nevertheless conveys a metaphorical truth: the Arabs of Mandatory Palestine are as immaculate as Disney's Powhatans.

Israel-haters, in fact, subscribe to an interminable litany of libels. Yasser Arafat, as just one instance,

admonished Zionist pioneers in his 1974 address to the United Nations for believing that local Arabs were extraneous to their national project and not deserving of any rights: "It pains our people greatly to witness the propagation of the myth that its homeland was a desert until it was made to bloom by the toil of foreign settlers, that it was a land without a people." Chairman Arafat, in that last clause, was alluding to the line attributed to Israel Zangwill from 1901: "Palestine is a country without a people; the Jews are a people without a country." Historian Diana Muir has argued persuasively that, apart from Zangwill, the aphorism had very little—if any—currency among early Zionists. For the Israel-haters, on the other hand, the expression can be deployed to infer that a program of ethnic cleansing always lay at the heart of the Zionist project, satisfyingly corroborating the settle-colonial narrative. Just in case anybody should get the wrong idea, and interpret the line to mean that the 600,000 Arab inhabitants of Ottoman-run southern Syria did not see themselves as a nation distinct from the Arabs living elsewhere in Turkish Syria, Edward Said, in *The Question of Palestine* (1992), omits the second indefinite article in his citation of Zangwill: "Palestine is a country without *a* people" becomes "Palestine is a country without people". Ghada Karmi, in *Married to Another Man*, naturally follows suit.

Perhaps the biggest deception of all is when Western progressives convince themselves that their Zionophobia, in the form of the BDS movement, actually helps Israeli Arabs.

We have, in Australia, witnessed a sleight-of-hand with the introduction of the term *terra nullius* by leftist academics into the history of British-Aboriginal relations. Michael Connor disclosed, first in the essay "Error Nullius" and then in *The Invention of Terra Nullius* (2005), that the term *terra nullius* had been incorrectly used by Australian historians:

> Until comparatively recently, academic historians believed that *terra nullius* was a phrase used by government officers and settlers in the eighteenth century. It wasn't. In any other field of intellectual work the realisation that the basic building block of a particular area of study was flawed would have sent the practitioners immediately back to see what happened. In Australia, thus far, historians have protected their shambolic old work, for their careers are based on it, and are pretending nothing has changed. It has.

The problem, I suggest, is not so much that the academic historians have careers to protect but an ideology to protect. As Connor remarks about an academic who was "taken aback" by Connor's findings: *terra nullius* still explains the way Aboriginal people were treated even if the use of that expression is not historically true.

The settler-colonial narrative, as it applies to Israel, is especially inapt because the Palestinian Arabs, properly speaking, have an ambiguous role as the indigenous victim in a zero-sum relationship with the "The Other". To put it bluntly, it is the Jews—according to the customary rules of the settler-colonial ideology—who should have the role of "Immaculate Powhatans" because King David established Jerusalem as the capital of the People of Israel some three thousand years ago after defeating the Canaanites. The Arabs, only appearing on the scene in the seventh century AD, obviously have a problem with their aboriginality and provenance. Never mind! Saeb Erekat, the PA's chief negotiator in the 2013-14 Israel-Palestine peace talks, made this jaw-dropping claim on PA TV at the commencement of negotiations:

> We are members of this land and members of this people. The Natufians were in Jericho 10,000 years ago. And so were Canaanites, thousands of years. When Israel says to us: You must recognise us as a Jewish state; they are asking us to erase my history. Erase my culture. Erase my narrative.

Erekat's "narrative" makes him a descendant of the semi-nomadic Natufians, a claim that would make a well-taught twelve-year-old laugh with disbelief. Nur Masalha has written a book titled *Palestine: A Four Thousand Year History* (2018). It is one big lie, of course, but for a lot of people it no doubt *feels* like the truth.

Perhaps the biggest deception of all is when Western progressives convince themselves that their Zionophobia, in the form of the Boycotts, Divestments and Sanctions (BDS) movement actually helps Israeli Arabs (who make up 20 per cent of the population of the State of Israel) or Palestinian Arabs (the inhabitants of the territories: West Bank and Gaza). The truth is that Palestinian nationalism—as an invention of the Islamic supremacists—

needs to be scuppered, so it might be generated all over again *without* anti-Semitism at its core. This is the original sin (if I may use that term) of Hassan al-Banna, Haj Amin al-Husseini, Sayyid Qutb, Yasser Arafat, Mahmoud Abbas and Omar Barghouti, the co-founder of BDS. Barghouti, for instance, believes Arabs/Powhatans should have greater rights than Jews in the territory formerly known as southern Ottoman Syria, *and* the State of Israel must be dissolved in favour of a one-state solution for the entirety of the former British mandate. Is it so hard to work out that Barghouti is just another Haj Amin al-Husseini dressed up in the borrowed robes of Nelson Mandela?

Can the Israel-haters in the West not comprehend that there would be no slaying of olive trees if there was a whole lot less slaying of Israeli civilians? Or that an Arab Republic of Palestine would have jurisdiction over those who would uproot olive trees if Arab leaders ever endorsed UN Resolution 181? Haj Amin al-Husseini never sanctioned it. Neither did Yasser Arafat nor Mahmoud Abbas. Now Omar Barghouti joins the list of Arab rejectionists who will not ratify an Arab Republic of Palestine so long as a Jewish state exists in Dar el-Islam. They are all bigots, which is perhaps preferable to Western Zionophobes, who are not only bigots but dupes.

Zionism is a national liberation movement that has brought incredible success to the Jewish people *and* the Arabs fortunate enough to be citizens of the State of Israel. Palestinian nationalism—to date—has brought nothing but suffering to the Arabs of Gaza and the West Bank, not to mention those who fled the Arab-initiated War of Independence. The acrimonious and sanctimonious bigotry of Zionophobes in the West is contingent on the zero-sum fallacy of the settler-colonial narrative.

The Islamic Republic of Gaza, to finish with this incontrovertible counterpoint, has prime Mediterranean Sea real estate: it might compete with Monaco, on some level at least, if it were not ruled by Islamic supremacists who sacrifice the potential wealth and happiness, not to mention lives, of their imprisoned subjects (imprisoned by *them*, not by the Israelis) in order to demonise the State of Israel.

Hamas, like the Palestinian Authority, is very good at convincing Westerners of the *true lie* that there is not "an ounce of humanity" in the Israelis, and yet how does that spurious achievement on the part of propagandists make it a better world? How do theories about Nazi-Zionist equivalency move us forward? How, finally, does dragging us back to the bad old days of Jewish blood libel promote the advancement of humanity?

Daryl McCann has a blog at http://darylmccann.blogspot.com.au, and he tweets at @dosakamccann. He wrote "Progressive Ideology and the Ghosts of Nazism" in the March issue.

Mother and Child

The burping done, he let his body sag
and settle onto her, a heavy weight.

She eased him from her shoulder to her breast,
holding him close but hearing all the while
accounts of murder in the capital
and acts of violence in a far-off land.

Eyes closed and bowels relaxed, he drifted off,
talking in scribbles to her heavy heart.

Knute Skinner

St Paul's Cathedral

"No photography please"

She watches
he attaches a selfie-stick to the front pew
they pose
        backs to the Sanctuary
                heads together
three red flashes glow with cataract magnification.

They disengage
turn to each other and smile
                step forward
        press display
                        lean in
pay homage to the merit of the photo.

The light shines yellow through the stained-glass window
above the crucified body of Christ:
the pillars   up
        rising   and
                up
to shape the solid arch below the rounded timber panels of the ceiling.

The large window
the stern eagle's dark energy
wings open
        ready to soar
                glassed motionless
shielding a pledge beneath the outspread wings.

Compelling, the illicit selfie
a simple manoeuvre
inferring curiosity,
        searching for truth
                sanctioning a world
where religion grows restless.

Speaking of Language

Throbs of fading silence
searching for the words

listen for the language
see how it sings

Barramundi Dingo
song-drenched Spirits

Jabiru and Billabong
and dragon-fly wings.

Dhuwa Yirridtja
lyrics of *your* song

painted songs of passion
Charcoal Yellow Clay

mystery in the meaning
motivating senses

communal waters streaming
  a Live-Show:
    "*the way*".

Helene Castles

Alistair Crooks

"De-Prioritising Truth" in Remote Aboriginal Communities

The setting is a bush pub in outback Australia. It doesn't matter where. I'm sitting in the front bar, and across the table from me is a young woman playing idly with her drink. We exchange pleasantries. I'm a geologist just passing through on my way to a drilling project. She is a remote-area nurse working in an indigenous community, also just passing through. She adds, unnecessarily, what appears to be a well-rehearsed formula:

"I love my job. Indigenous people are so wonderful. It's such a privilege to be able to help them." It's a formula I have heard many times.

I express a little scepticism. She tightens up, on the defensive. I relate a few innocuous anecdotes from remote communities that I have stayed at or visited. She begins to relax; she is not alone, but in the company of someone who also knows about remote communities. She adds a few light anecdotes of her own. Is it the isolation of the remote communities? The lack of non-indigenous companionship? She gets more chatty and starts to talk. The trickle becomes a river; the river becomes a flood. As I sit opposite her nodding my head quietly, the anecdotes become more personal, more brutal. Is it my lack of surprise? The lack of shock at the nature of the stories she tells? The stabbings? The beatings? The botched circumcisions? All passing through her clinic. Suddenly the floodgates burst. She is unburdening herself of all her deepest worries.

Maybe she mistakes my silence for sympathy, but she would be wrong. I have heard all these types of anecdotes too many times in too many pubs across the remote areas of Australia to be surprised or shocked. Too many remote-area nurses, teachers, maintenance workers, policemen and even anthropologists.

No, what fascinates me is not the stories, but the staggering *volte-face* that I have just witnessed as, in a matter of just a few minutes she, just like the others, has moved from "It's such a privilege …" to describing the nightly terror of drunken figures lurking in the dark just outside her bedroom window. I wonder how she can reconcile the reality of daily life in her remote community as she describes it, with the lie—no, perhaps *lie* is not the right word here; we will come back to that later, but for now we will say the *fiction* of her outward public show that all was wonderful. Is there an element of Stockholm Syndrome at play here?

Half a continent away, some years back, I was involved in a drilling project on Aboriginal lands on part of a remote gated community. There was an outstation nearby from which we drew drilling water. The outstation comprised two houses, a water bore with large tanks, a solar panel field and back-up diesel generator, and a huge microwave tower for communications with other parts of the lands. The only "occupant" of the outstation while we were there was the crusty, dehydrated remnant of a dingo which had crawled into one of the kitchens and died at some point in the not so distant past. I was told, informally, by one of the administrators for the lands that a number of these outstations (fifty odd) had been built at a cost of around $2 million each so that the Aborigines from those tribal areas could "reconnect with their lands", but already more than thirty of them were abandoned. The nature of the installed technology and the generally good repair of the houses before abandonment suggested that these were recent constructions, but that occupancy had been for a very short time.

One day, while filling the water truck for drilling, we "sprang" a suspicious-looking group of non-

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The Dystopia in the Desert: The Silent Culture of Australia's Remotest Aboriginal Communities
by Tadhgh Purtill
Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2017, 267 pages, $44

indigenous men in one of the houses. At first we thought they were there to steal the solar panels and any of the other abandoned infrastructure they could move. But no, they were actually contractors who had been brought up from a city more than a thousand kilometres to the south to do some general maintenance and cleaning work on a number of these outstations to get them ready for habitation again. There was going to be an inspection of the lands by some top bureaucrats and pollies from Canberra, they informed us, and they all had to be ready for them. And no doubt re-occupied for the purposes of the visit. Two days later the men were gone and the house was abandoned again. The tour of inspection of lands had been cancelled.

Were the "tippin' elbow" (an outback term for those who frequently check their watches) politicians and the bureaucrats, or the media gaggle that follow them, in on the theatre that was to be presented to them, I wondered? How could they not be?

It seems that with respect to Aborigines in remote communities, Australians at large are divided into two groups; an "in group" of those who, from close association, are aware of the realities of life of remote communities, and an "out group", those who are not. Perhaps the continued employment of those in the "in group", like my remote-area nurse, depends on the suppression of this reality and the ability to present an appropriate public face to the "out group". The "in group", in essence, takes it upon itself to protect the "out group" from the reality.

Of course, every now and then some story does leak out from a remote community and into the public sphere, in some garbled version of fact, but it would appear that it is like water off a duck's back. The "out group" people quickly unlearn that which they have just learned, and life continues as before. What the "out group" appear to want is "plausible deniability", and they rely on the "in group" to keep as many of the facts suppressed within the walls of the gated communities for as long as possible.

This terrible burden placed on the "in group" by the knowledge of the hopelessness of their situation in attempting to reconcile the contradictory government objectives of "Closing the Gap" while ostensibly preserving traditional indigenous culture, and at the same time bearing the responsibility of providing plausible deniability to the government about the obvious failings of their policies, has been described in a recently published book, *Trapped in the Gap*, by Professor Emma Kowal. I haven't read the book myself, for reasons that will become obvious, but the book was reviewed by Kim Mahood in the *Monthly* in August 2015. Says Mahood:

> Kowal's protagonists are confronted with the irreconcilable contradiction that, in order for the "gap" to be closed, Aboriginal people must surrender or dilute their aboriginality, thus relinquishing their power and identity. This is the crippling moral dilemma: in their attempt to do good, they may in fact be doing harm. In a situation desperate for resources and support, the most highly skilled and scrupulous people are hollowed out by the effects of this contradiction.

Interestingly, Mahood also points out that Kowal's book is in essence a book for the "in group". Mahood implies that it is as if the book was written in "rigorous" academese more or less in order to prevent the "out group" from ever understanding its content. As she says:

> The rigorous academic language Kowal applies to her research may be necessary to counter the attacks that her ideas will elicit, but it does make the work less useful to the public conversation. After a hard day in the contact zone it was something of a challenge to spend the evenings unpicking the meaning from sentences like the following: "To escape essentialised indigeneity, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people 'must de-couple Indigeneity from disadvantage and marginality from cultural and physical alterity and from callow moral dichotomies'."

One has to assume that Kowal does want people to read her book—but the academic style certainly dissuaded me! Mahood helpfully presents a translation of the sentence she extracted:

> Translated, Kowal's argument suggests that the way forward requires the victimised to let go of the advantages of victimhood, and the stigmatised to relinquish the excoriating pleasures of the hairshirt. It's hard to imagine such ideas gaining traction in the current climate of racial politics, but, as she points out, the existing model is gridlocked in its own contradictions.

Now that is the sort of information that must be kept within the "in group", away from open public discussion!

While Kowal has been in effect hiding her meaning from the "public conversation", at Christmas I was recommended another book which, more helpfully written in plain language

by someone in the "in group", provides a thorough explanation of the reality of the operation of the remote communities. The book is *The Dystopia in the Desert: The Silent Culture of Australia's Remotest Aboriginal Communities* by Tadhgh Purtill, published by Australian Scholarly Publishing in 2017.

If you are looking for a description of the sordid day-to-day dysfunction of many remote communities—the violence and the substance abuse—this is not the book for you. But if you are interested in the pathology of the interaction between the "whitefella" staff and the Aboriginal community leaders in remote gated communities, it is a *tour de force*.

Of immediate relevance is Purtill's recognition of the phenomenon whereby the opposite of "fact" is not in this context a "lie", but a "counter-fact". There is a requirement in certain remote communities that "certain ugly realities at a community level not exist". For every "fact" there is a "counter-fact"—a different version of the essence of the meaning of that fact.

One example Purtill provides is the attitude to documentation such as work time-sheets. Purtill alleges that these are commonly produced post-fact by the administration staff themselves, are readily falsified and often bear little relationship to actual work done. In the local area of the gated community the time-sheets are to be regarded as much as a means of encouragement and reward for good behaviour, or a means to head off bad behaviour, than as a strict record of what days have been worked, start times and finishing times, or total hours worked. In his example, a man who was not working at all was having time-sheets filled in by an administrator as if he was at work, simply as a reward for not drinking alcohol on those days. This is the local "fact" represented by time-sheets. However, once the time-sheet crosses the boundary of the gated community and into the mainstream it becomes "factual" in the terms defined by the mainstream, and thus can be used by statisticians to write rock-solid reports on the efficacy of employment programs in Aboriginal communities.

A member of the community administration staff must be able to believe both versions of reality simultaneously, while at some level being able to know the official admissibility of only one version. As Purtill says:

> Staff and others are expected to confine themselves to the regional vocabulary of acceptable sayables. Between these sayables and the reality there is both a factual gap and an authorised psychology of denial. The overall effect of this gap between "real reality" and "pseudo reality" (the counter-factual reality), and the promotion of the latter over the former, is to deprioritise truth within the regime of service provision and community management.

It is the simple de-prioritising of truth that ultimately poisons relations within the whole community.

By the simple re-definition of terms like "work", the administrative staff have to be able, in their own minds, to reconcile the local definitions of the terms they use, with the use of these same terms with totally different definitions outside the gated communities—and say nothing. But the local re-definition of "work" in the community devalues the whole idea of "work" amongst those who are supposed to be being encouraged to get jobs.

The population statistics on paper of one community I visited suggested a thriving community, but the actual population in residence at the time of my visit seemed to be, at most, one family—a re-definition of the concept of "occupied" to fulfil funding requirements.

Purtill's scepticism on the accuracy of community population figures and census data for his study area, hinting at the prevalence of double-counting in order to improve funding, echoes my own observations. The population statistics on paper of one community I visited suggested a thriving community, but the actual population in residence at the time of my visit seemed to be, at most, one family—a re-definition of the concept of "occupied" to fulfil funding requirements. It would appear to take specialist training to be able to reconcile Purtill's "mythical communities"—the virtual manifestations of the communities as they appear on their web pages—with the on-ground manifestations of the same.

The "out group" appears to be comfortable living with the delusion, as it serves their purposes well to believe what they are being told by the "in groupers": that things are improving in the Aboriginal lands and that money is being well spent. On the other hand, many Aborigines themselves seem to be comfortable with the delusion of the "out group" as long as they are left alone and funding is maintained. Meanwhile, the "in group" hollows itself out in a moral vacuum in between the

two, trying to maintain the delusion.

While in the short term everyone is comfortable enough with the status quo, Purtill asks, and then answers with devastating clarity, what the future is in prolonging the current situation. That his book is not widely known or discussed indicates the self-healing nature of the status quo, like a transplant patient who rejects the organ that is intended to save his life. It is a matter not so much of the inability to learn from past failures as the inability to admit any failures in the first place; to re-cast failure as success by the re-definition of words; the seemingly infinite ability to unlearn anything that threatens to teach.

I cannot do justice to the arguments in Purtill's book without pointing out that the main focus of his thesis includes the contention that the cultural space he is describing in remote gated communities is neither Western nor "classical" traditional Aboriginal but, in reality, a space between traditional Aboriginal culture and mainstream Western culture which involves a toxic hybrid of both. The main players in this space, both indigenous and non-indigenous, skilfully exploit the widespread desire to preserve aspects of what they would regard as authentic traditional culture to leverage agendas of their own.

Of significance are the "*Mununga* Men" or "Adventurous Men" that Rolf Gerritsen talks about in his 1981 book *Thoughts on Camelot*, men with sufficient Western education and local language skills, who are able to place themselves as go-betweens between the administrators and the community. With their knowledge of both "whitefella" ways and Aboriginal ways, such men are able to manipulate the distribution of largesse from the white administrators. With this comes power within the community, and these men act as a separate "dominant" caste, sidelining the old men, the elders who traditionally held power by virtue of their traditional knowledge and control of particular ceremonies. For myself, I'm not convinced that traditional culture represents a realistic solution for Aborigines in the twenty-first century. But that would be a topic for another essay.

Purtill's thesis then is in complete contradiction to the ideas presented by Kim Mahood in her review of Emma Kowal's book. In essence, according to Mahood, Kowal's white administrators are faced with "the irreconcilable contradiction that, in order for the 'gap' to be closed, Aboriginal people must surrender or dilute their aboriginality, thus relinquishing their power and identity". In other words, according to Mahood, the problem is the difficult choice as to which of the two competing and contradictory agendas should take precedence.

According to Purtill, however, with expediencies like the re-definition of "work" to maintain peace within the community there is actually little hope of ever "closing the gap". Indeed, the "gap" constantly widens as the main lesson the community members are being taught is the importance of being able to falsify documents. Therefore the aim of "closing the gap" is not even on the table. On the other hand, with local power moving from the elders to the "*Mununga* Men", there is a constant undermining of their traditional Aboriginality anyway. In fact, it is not the community administrators with their "closing the gap" policies that community members surrender their Aboriginality to, but the "*Mununga* Men", who are the immediate source of largesse. Therefore the aim of preserving traditional Aboriginal culture is also not realistically on the table either.

It is the realisation that the moral justification for their very presence in the Aboriginal lands, the two fronts which they hold most dear—"closing the gap" and preserving traditional culture—are no longer even on the table, that is perhaps more relevant in "hollowing out" the field workers in the Aboriginal industry. But the rest of the industry are safely ensconced behind the curtain of "plausible deniability".

Alistair Crooks is a retired geologist interested in the history of the interaction between Aborigines and government in the past. He is the co-author with Joe Lane of the book ***Voices from the Past: Extracts from the Annual Reports of the South Australian Chief Protectors of Aborigines, 1837 Onwards*** *(Hoplon Press, 2016).*

Peter Smith

In Determined Pursuit of Unhappiness

Every generation of men … have a claim [of politicians]; perhaps not so much a claim to be made happy (for there may be no means of making a man happy) but a claim not to be made unhappy.
—Karl Popper

Before the 2010 federal election Julia Gillard was reported to have questioned the merit of increasing the old-age pension by saying that "old people don't vote Labor". A dastardly cabinet leak to be sure. She denied saying it. Noteworthily, whether she said it or not, no one was the least surprised that such a thing could be said by a modern-day politician. It is where we are: partisan politics favouring one group over another; the principle of governing for all becoming lost in vote harvesting.

Let me give a more recent example. Earlier this year Australia's shadow treasurer excused a policy of increasing taxes on a section of retirees by pointing out that 92 per cent of the population would be unaffected. Turn this around. It means that Chris Bowen was quite happy about imposing a burden on 8 per cent of the population, mainly retirees. He later changed this to only 4 per cent; presumably by counting children or by some other sleight of hand, I don't know. Why was he happy? He calculated that most of those burdened would be unlikely to vote for his party in any event. Thus, few votes would be lost. In fact, in a show of disdain, he invited them to vote against his party if they felt aggrieved.

Bowen is just one among a political class who have lost the sense of representing the interests of all. But it gets much worse once politicians strut the international stage. Then, they have an increasing tendency to think globally rather than nationally. Hang the disadvantage and misery this brings to segments of the population whose interests they are supposed to champion. International trade, immigration and climate change provide rich pickings for globalists. The modern history of trade and immigration can be traced back to the late 1940s; climate change, of course, is of more recent origin.

There is a fetish with free trade among globalists. Only heretics object. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade took effect from the beginning of 1948. It was succeeded by the World Trade Organization from the beginning of 1995. From around 10 per cent of world GDP in 1948, international trade has since burgeoned to be now around 25 per cent. The free trade agenda has been driven primarily by the libertarian-cum-classical-liberal side of the political divide. Let me be heretical. There is no well-based rationale for free trade. Unless, that is, you think that maximising the availability of cheap stuff outweighs all other considerations.

Free trade brings significantly reduced industrial diversity within nations. It brings a loss of skills. It brings entrenched regional unemployment and despair. It brings long and vulnerable supply lines which threaten national security. International trade is like cabbage, broccoli and other leafy greens. Some is an essential ingredient of a balanced diet; yet more is very good for you. But they don't make for a complete eating regime. Let me be clear, the issue is not one of trade versus protection. It is about the extent to which the interests of all of the citizens of a nation are brought into account by their political representatives when they are eliminating trade barriers. The wholeness, integrity and security of the nation-state should not be bartered away for a mess of pottage.

"Refugees are welcome here" is a popular sign held aloft by virtue-signalling do-gooders. Europe takes in many refugees, as do the United States and Australia. (Incidentally, on this criterion, Japan and China are not the least bit virtuous.) Refugees are costly to settle. Many have language difficulties; many are low-skilled, bring culturally-clashing values, and remain a drain on taxpayers and public services. Yet political points are often scored on the "virtue" of bringing in more refugees. Tellingly, refugees are usually settled outside of the enclaves of their enthusiastic supporters. John Howard put it fairly well: "We will decide

who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come." But who is the "we"? Does the "we" include those who become marginalised in their own neighbourhoods?

Outside of refugees; immigrants more generally, including those brought in on work visas, have become an easy means for business to hire cheap labour rather than go through the challenge of hiring and training homegrown labour. Growth in real wages, particularly at the lower end, has been miserly at best over recent decades. There is no mystery. That's what happens when migrants flood the labour market.

Whatever you think of climate change, the measures to counter it, promoted by its international cheer leaders, are calculated to damage the industrial base and living standards of advanced Western nations. India and China, among other non-Western nations, have been given a pass. And that isn't the end of it. Western nations are enjoined to take from their denuded treasury coffers to enrich their poorer cousins. In part, apparently, to expiate their guilt for having in the past put so much life-giving gas (pardon, polluting gas) into the atmosphere.

Notice something about the three articles of faith of modern life canvassed above. All in one way or another impact deleteriously on some citizens more than they do others. All pay homage to globalisation and, as part of that, to the interests of those who used to be called foreigners—though I am not sure whether this descriptor is still politically correct.

We need to take stock. Politicians and governments have lost sight of whose interests they represent. President Trump is clearly one of the few exceptions. Whether he is renegotiating trade deals, or trying to secure US borders and reform immigration laws, or rolling back onerous environmental regulations, his goal, as he says, is to put America and Americans first. Hungary's prime minister Viktor Orban is another in the Trump mould. There aren't many in the West who have not forgotten that their job is govern in the interests of their citizens; all of them, and no one else.

Think of the way Angela Merkel betrayed Germans with her reckless come-hither call to Syrian refugees. Think of the way Emmanuel Macron is careless of the living standards of the French working class in his vanity project to change the world's climate. Think of the way the Coalition government burdens Australian taxpayers and those living in particular working-class outer suburbs with excessive migrant and refugee intakes. Think of the way it has increased power bills and damaged Australian industry with a quixotic quest to lower the world's temperature. Now think of Bill Shorten promising ("threatening" is a more apt word) to almost double the refugee intake and to plague Australia's electricity grid with lots more intermittent, unreliable and costly energy. From about 15 per cent now, Labor intends to have renewables providing up to 50 per cent of total electric power by 2030. To benefit whom? Certainly not the old and the poor, stuck with unaffordable cooling and heating bills.

Is there an answer? Sometimes the key to the way forward is to go back. I will go back in place and time; to America in 1776. "We hold these truths to be self-evident," says the Declaration of Independence, "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Much of the Declaration is devoted to enumerating the alleged offences of King George III against the "thirteen united States" or "Colonies"—as, formally, they still were. But when it came to inalienable rights the concern was the potential of them being abridged by elected government. "Whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these [inalienable Rights], it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government … as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and [here it is again] Happiness." Presumably Safety, in this context, is standing in for Life and Liberty.

Life and liberty are fundamental. The pursuit of happiness, on the other hand, seems somewhat superficial in comparison. But it isn't. As couched in the Declaration, it is central to national wellbeing. Thomas Jefferson, together with his fellow drafters (Roger Sherman, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Robert Livingston), had profound insight and foresight in including the pursuit of happiness.

In the context of the Declaration, happiness wasn't to do with the ups and downs of individual human beings living out their lives. That was not the focus. The focus was the role and responsibility of government. An onus was put on government to uphold the circumstances within which the governed in the thirteen territories had the opportunity to flourish. Or, perhaps, more to the point, to go to my opening quote by Karl Popper, to avoid creating circumstances which engender unhappiness.

The Declaration was a product of its time and place and sat awkwardly, to put it mildly, with the institution of slavery and the inferior status of women. But, putting that aside, it's a safe bet that the Congressional Representatives at the time did not see their role as pitting the interests of some free men against others or of furthering the interests of mankind as a whole. Times have changed for the

better and the worse.

Slavery is long gone in the civilised world and men and women have equal status. Unfortunately, selectively dispensing gifts and hurt among the governed has become part and parcel of political life, as has a proclivity to barter away their interests to curry extranational kudos. We have moved a long way from the sentiments of the Declaration. The key, I suggest, to remedying the poor government which plagues modern nations is to again place the happiness of the governed as an explicit *raison d'être* of governments. Simplistic? I don't think so.

Principle is usually paramount at the beginning of things. It's when things get rolling along that principle becomes hostage to corruptible human nature. That is seemingly inevitable in all walks of life. What this means is that renewal and new starts have always to be part of the future. Eliot Ness did not permanently overcome corrupt dealing between the Chicago police department and criminals. The Australian banking royal commission will not result in bankers becoming forever less greedy and unethical. Equally, politicians and governments need to be regularly brought to account—hopefully short of insurrections and revolutions. Ideally, we need a regular royal commission into politicians and government. The question to be answered would be how far they have strayed from their primary obligation to create the circumstances within which those whom they represent can pursue their individual happiness. The idea of politicians and governments subjecting themselves to scrutiny is a flight of fancy, so I will short-circuit the process. They have strayed beyond any tolerable bounds.

We need to elect politicians whose overriding goal is to create the conditions which preserve and nurture the life, the liberty and the happiness of the citizens of their nation-state.

The world is a troubled place. It always has been and always will be. This means that national governments are often put in position of making difficult choices. Imagine how difficult this becomes if furthering the interests of one's own citizens as a whole ceases to be an absolute imperative; if relativism enters the equation. Not much imagination is required. Western national governments have increasingly practised relativism since the Second World War.

By some barely understood insidious process we have elected and re-elected parliamentarians and governments who see themselves as trafficking in favours for votes at home while, at the same time, peddling the interests of all mankind, or should I say personkind. This is not the sole reason for the cultural and social mess we find ourselves in but I am certain that it forms a major part. Politicians of most stripes have strayed from the imperative of safeguarding and enhancing the interests—the happiness—of those they purportedly represent.

Why people have allowed this betrayal to happen is the pertinent question. In fact, it is the nub of the issue. Apparently, the Brexit vote was largely driven by a rejection of culturally-discordant immigration. Fine, but that had its beginnings in the late 1940s. In case no one was paying attention, Enoch Powell provided a stark wake-up call in 1968. Closer to home, as noted above, the Labor Party is promising to increase the annual refugee intake to 32,000; up from the already excessive number set by the Coalition government of 18,750 for 2018-19. Welcome to more welfare spending, more crime and more cultural discord. Whose interests are uppermost in the minds of political leaders when they devise these policies? Refugees, of course. How about the happiness of Australians? Evidently, that is a racist question. Will Australian voters in sufficient numbers see through it? They haven't yet.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston Smith speculated that if there were hope it rested on the 85 per cent of the population of Oceania who were not Party members. However, the "proles" had their minds filled by "physical work, the care of home and children, petty quarrels with neighbours, films, football, beer and, above all, gambling". What has filled the minds of contemporary voters in the West?

In my own family television took over our evening and weekend lives from the mid-to-late-1950s onwards. Free-wheeling discussions and debates ceased. Any view worth having was projected by learned people (then predominantly men) via the television screen. Now, the internet and all of its offshoots have completed the takeover of all non-working waking hours. It's no wonder the Left saw a defining opportunity in gaining control of the dissemination of news and views on electronic media. Is this the explanation? Have people outsourced their opinion-making to electronic media and to the Left-centric tech companies which manipulate its content via secret algorithms? It seems likely to be at least part of the explanation; up there, arguably, with the Left's takeover of schools and university humanities departments.

What is going on inside the heads of those with "refugees are welcome" signs? According to the UN there were almost 70 million displaced persons in 2018. How many are welcome? It's pointless to ponder on this if your mind instinctively orders the wellbeing of family above neighbours, neighbours above other citizens, fellow citizens above foreigners. Those holding the signs are looking at the world in a quite different way. The happiness of their fellow citizens has been relegated to a place behind the happiness of the excluded other. Their minds have been filled beyond anything in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Odd people have always been around. George Orwell had his own unique way of describing some of them in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, published in 1937: "One sometimes gets the impression that the mere words 'Socialism' and 'Communism' draw towards them with magnetic force every fruit-juice drinker, nudist, sandal-wearer, sex-maniac, Quaker, 'Nature Cure' quack, pacifist, and feminist in England." This is a bit unkind to those who drink fruit juice, and I am sure he would come up with a somewhat different list in the modern world. But come up with a list he undoubtedly could and would. And it would be much more heavily populated with adherents.

When Orwell was writing, the common sense of the broad populace ensured that politicians remained grounded and wedded to national wellbeing. Not so much now. Now, common sense has become victim to a media and educational blitz intent on replacing thinking nationally (in other words, wickedly and selfishly) with thinking globally (in other words, nobly).

Globalisation is well on the way to bringing us to ruin. In principle, the remedy is simple. We, the people, need to elect politicians whose overriding goal is to create the conditions which preserve and nurture the life, the liberty and the happiness of the citizens of their nation-state; who will always promote their country's claims over the claims of others; who, even though President Trump has said it, will always put their country and its citizens first. However, in practice, there is a sting in this tale (to corrupt an idiom). Perhaps, in this current age, most difficulty lies not with a paucity of potentially sound-thinking politicians or would-be politicians. Maybe it lies with "we, the people".

We, the people, are not what we used to be. For example, conservative politicians are afraid to call out the cant that surrounds the global warming agenda for fear of electoral retribution. We know what Tony Abbott really thinks but having said it once he had to genuflect to the mob. And can you ever imagine the utopian (in reality dystopian) drivel in Ms Ocasio-Cortez's Green New Deal ever seeing the light of day, never mind being supported by prominent Democrats, in a past time when everybody outside of the fringes had common sense? Of course not.

These days a large and growing body of the population seems intent on being led in a determined pursuit of unhappiness. Maybe the tipping point has not been yet reached in America and Hungary where there are still enough people of sound mind to keep the torch of reason alight. How about in Australia? Use Zali Steggall as a barometer. If she gets even close to defeating Abbott in Warringah, it might be time to consider giving up hope. We, the people, will have shown that we really do get the globalist politicians we deserve.

Peter Smith wrote on "Christianity and the Economic Order" in the January-February issue.

The Ninth Station

The Third Fall

Another tumble. Dust again.
So hard to rise. So hard to walk.
This must be over soon—but when?
Another tumble? Dust again?
The end is near. From now to then
I must not balk—not even talk
Of other tumble, dust again.
So hard to rise. So hard to walk.

Jane Blanchard

Paul Monk

Treason Will Go Unpunished

Readers of this magazine may be aware that for the better part of a decade I have campaigned for release of the Cook Report into the public domain. The very existence of that report, written in 1993-94 for the then Prime Minister, Paul Keating, was long secret; its findings even more so. It is now accepted that the report was written and that its central finding was that ASIO was deeply penetrated during the Cold War, not by one Soviet mole but by a clutch of them—four or five. Those moles were pensioned off, not prosecuted. The official history of ASIO tiptoed around the whole business on specious grounds. The Cook Report remains shrouded in secrecy and attempts by *60 Minutes* to get it declassified were blocked.

In October last year, I met with the Attorney-General, Christian Porter, and put to him the suggestion that, in the light of the acute concern by the Coalition government about Chinese (and Russian) infiltration and influence operations in Australia right now, the Cook Report should finally be declassified. The right kind of release, with his imprimatur, I argued, would educate the public about how hostile intelligence services have, in the past, penetrated ASIO itself, compromising our country's entire effort to maintain the security of its institutions and alliance communications. This would provide a strong support for present efforts to check hostile foreign penetration and influence operations.

He listened with apparent interest and then requested that I draft a formal memorandum for his attention setting out the grounds for release of the Cook Report. On October 25 I sent such a memorandum, with a covering letter. The memorandum read as follows:

A: The Proposal

1. All materials pertaining to Australia that were within the collection of notes brought West to MI6 in 1992 by the KGB archivist Vasili Mitrokhin should be published in Australia with the official support of the Attorney-General.

2. The publication should be accompanied by an essay about the significance of these materials and why they have been withheld from publication since 1992.

3. A central feature of this essay should be a clear and authoritative account of:

• the actions of the Keating government in 1993, when it became acquainted with the documents in question;

• the nature and work of Operation Liver;

• the commissioning of Michael Cook to assess the matter;

• Cook's key findings as recorded in his report to Prime Minister Keating.

4. Should it be deemed expedient on legal grounds that the names of Soviet moles identified by Liver/Cook be withheld, the essay should refer to the moles and suspects by alphabetical letters and explain why names are being withheld.

5. There might usefully, also, be a Preface by you, as the Attorney-General, setting out the reasons for releasing these materials in the present climate and observing that the problem of foreign interference and influence operations, in the words of the current Director-General of ASIO, Duncan Lewis, has now reached "unprecedented levels".

B: The Case for Doing This

I. *ASIO's raison d'être*: ASIO was founded in the late 1940s expressly because it had been discovered, through the Venona program, that there was at least one Soviet spy ring operating in Australia, including Soviet moles inside the Department of External Affairs and within the office of the Minister for External Affairs (then H.V. Evatt). Its *raison d'être* was to pre-empt such a state of affairs ever occurring again. Not only did it fail in that mission, but it was itself deeply penetrated by multiple moles throughout and right up to the conclusion of the Cold War. This is a national scandal for which there has never been any kind of open or satisfactory accounting.

II. *Gaping hole in the official history of ASIO*: The official history of ASIO, the final volume of which

was published in 2016, failed to address this matter in any but the flimsiest and most circumspect manner. However, both the official historian John Blaxland and the former Director-General of ASIO, David Irvine, have publicly admitted that there were multiple penetrations, that the names of at least "a handful" of moles are known and that the damage done by them was "devastating". It is surely high time that the tax-paying and politically or strategically serious citizenry of this country know the truth of the matter.

III. *The unprecedented challenge we face*: This is all the more so because problems of foreign subversion and espionage by no means ended with the Cold War, but are known now to be actually more serious than they were at any point during the Cold War. Given this current context, it would seem to be disadvantageous to the country that almost everyone remains ignorant of what occurred during the Cold War, with the implications that that has for what could be and, in certain respects, clearly is happening right now. There is, I submit, a need for the public and the full spectrum of the intelligence and military establishment to be brought to understand what occurred and the damage it did, in order that the gravity of such matters be grounded not in abstract theory but in historical and documented reality.

IV. *Specious grounds for burying the matter*: ASIO has to date been able to deflect calls for the matter to be put on the public record, but it should not be permitted to protect its unmerited reputation at the expense of the national interest. This preciousness in the intelligence world has strong parallels with the treatment of Blunt and Philby in England. There was, for many years, a disinclination among his old colleagues at MI6 to believe that Philby had been a KGB mole and, when it became perfectly plain that he had been, there was a distinct disinclination to prosecute or imprison him. Were the matter in hand less serious than it is, one would be tempted to liken ASIO's behaviour, also, to the hilarious episode of *Yes, Prime Minister* called "One of Us" (1986), which was transparently inspired by the case of Roger Hollis, Director-General of MI5 between 1956 and 1965, and a refusal within the British establishment to grapple seriously with allegations that he had been a GRU mole throughout his career—from 1938 to 1965.

V. *Timeliness of acting now*: The only way for this matter to be put to rest responsibly and, in present and emerging circumstances, usefully would be for an authoritative account of it, sanctioned by you as Attorney-General, to be entered into the public record and directed pointedly at those who are currently engaged in the service of foreign powers or who insist that there is no appreciable danger of anyone doing that to the national detriment. The time to do this is now, while the foreign influence legislation is fresh and before the next federal election, which may sweep an ALP government to power that will be averse to grappling with this matter and would in all probability be discouraged by senior Labor figures, starting with Paul Keating, from doing what I propose. This is a task that only you, a lawyer, a political cleanskin of impeccable standing and Attorney-General in a Coalition government can now undertake. I beg you to do so.

I added a five-page account of the work I had done since 2010 and how, little by little, my careful claims had been vindicated. I appended several published papers on the subject, including my review of the official history of ASIO and its lamentable treatment of the matter. The Attorney-General's response arrived in my mail box on my return, in mid-February, from a month abroad. Dated February 15, it was characterised as a "final response". I take that to mean that the matter is closed as far as the Attorney-General is concerned.

His letter reads as follows:

Dear Mr [*sic*] Monk,

Thank you for your letter of 25 October 2018 proposing the release of records regarding the Soviet penetration of ASIO, the findings of the Cook Report and Operation Liver, so that you might prepare an official account of Soviet Cold War espionage in Australia.

Access to historical Commonwealth records is governed by the Archives Act 1983 (the Archives Act). Under the Archives Act, you have a right of access to Commonwealth records that are in the open access period unless they are exempt records as defined by section 33 of the Act. Currently, records created up to and including 1997 are in the open access period. The Archives Act defines exempt records to include information whose disclosure would damage Australia's security, defence and international relations.

You can apply for access to any Commonwealth record that is within the open access period by contacting the Reference Service at the National Archives of Australia (the National Archives) through their website www.naa.gov.au.

Alternatively, you could apply for these records under the Special Access provisions of the Archives Act. The Special Access provisions allow certain categories of individuals to seek access to Commonwealth records that are not publicly available. Researchers preparing major works of national significance for publication are one of the categories

of individuals eligible to apply for special access.

In making a decision on a Special Access application, an agency will consider a range of matters including the applicant's intention to publish; the qualifications of the applicant, including previous publications; the benefits and costs to the Commonwealth of granting special access; and any sensitivity related to the records involved. Where Special Access is granted to classified records the requisite security clearances are required as you identify in your memorandum. However, please note that due to the sensitivity of the records you are requesting, Special Access may not be granted. Where Special Access is denied, there is no right of appeal.

The National Archives can assist in preparing your application for Special Access by helping you to identify the records you wish to access. You will find more information about Special Access, including the Application for Special Access to Commonwealth Records form, on the National Archives website. If you would like to discuss making an application for Special Access, please contact Anne McLean, Director Reference Services at the National Archives on (02) 6212 3951 or at anne.mclean@naa.gov.au.

While I appreciate that your proposal to develop an official account would require considerable effort, I am unable to offer any remuneration or assistance at this time.

I wish you well with your research,

The Hon. Christian Porter MP
Attorney-General

How very helpful of the Attorney-General to point out what any serious researcher in such matters knows full well and what *60 Minutes* found, when they applied, under my guidance, for Special Access, in 2015. How very charming of him to wish *me* well with what he styles my research. How wholly evasive of him, on the other hand, to fail entirely to address the substance of my memorandum as regards the case for *him* to act in securing the release of these documents in the public interest.

He will, I trust, be gratified to know that since he has now played Pilate and washed his hands of the matter, I shall simply walk away and allow this crucifixion of the public interest to proceed. I neither can nor will do any more. When I first wrote on this subject, in 2010-11, the silence in response, as several well-informed people remarked to me at the time, was deafening. There appears to be an entrenched, bipartisan opinion in Canberra that the matter remain muted in this manner. Quite why that is so, no one cares publicly to explain. But I shall not make it a matter of private obsession. I've done what I could. I had hoped that Christian Porter, while he was still in the august office of Attorney-General, might finally see fit to put his weight behind an effort to bring the matter out into the open. Instead, he rather oddly wishes *me* well in *my* efforts to do so.

The basic truth has been established, but continues to be deflected. The traitors, if they are still alive, appear to live in comfortable retirement. The message could not be more bell-like in its clarity: in China they execute those charged with treason; here we quietly pension them off. I would be the last to suggest that we should emulate the Chinese Communist Party and shoot people when they are found to have operated for a foreign government—as it did with some thirty of its own nationals just a few years ago, when they were found to have been working as informants for the CIA. But I would have thought that there were many just and appropriate ways to deal with those who worked inside our government as agents of the KGB other than to simply put them out to pasture with their names and records protected. The precedent that sets for those who may well be doing so now on China's behalf (or Russia's or Iran's) is, I'd have thought, one of the things that would cause an Attorney-General to lose sleep at night. Apparently not this Attorney-General.

Well, I have many more satisfying and creative projects to pursue than playing almost a lone hand in seeking to put things to rights in this regard. I shall, therefore, bow out at this juncture; to the relief, perhaps, of all those mandarins of discretion who believe that such things are best consigned to the Special Access files of the National Archives and such Special Access best denied without right of appeal. I feel rather like singing a song as I walk away, to the tune of the Adelaide Crows club song, beginning with the words:

Well done, Christian Por-or-ter
You're a mandarin, through and through
I'm resigning as I ough-ough-ter
And it's all because of you …

The good readers of this magazine and the voters in whichever electorate Mr Porter chooses to stand in, come the election, before the curtain is rung down on his political career, should feel at liberty to add verses to the lyrics as they see fit. As for me, I'm on my way.

Dr Paul Monk is the former head of the China Desk in the Defence Intelligence Organisation and the author of ten books, of which the most recent is ***Dictators and Dangerous Ideas*** *(Echo Books, 2018).*

BOOKS, ARTS & LIFE

The History of Eric Hobsbawm

WILLIAM D. RUBINSTEIN

Eric Hobsbawm: A Life in History
by Richard J. Evans
Little, Brown, 2019, 785 pages, £35

When he died in 2012 at the age of ninety-five, Eric Hobsbawm was probably the most famous historian in the world, as well known in Brazil and Japan as in London. He was also among the most highly regarded, despite (or perhaps because of) his long-term commitment to Marxism. It may seem remarkable that a biography of an academic historian, who held no public offices, as well-written as it is gripping, can be sustained for 785 pages, but this is the achievement of Sir Richard Evans in this monumental biography, one of the best I have ever read about anyone.

Evans is probably best known for his three-volume history of Nazi Germany, and for the evidence he gave in 2000 at the famous lawsuit brought by David Irving against Penguin Books and Deborah Lipstadt about the veracity of the Holocaust. Evans is not a Marxist and, although he knew Hobsbawm, was not close to him. To sustain such a massive biography, Evans has had full access to Hobsbawm's voluminous diaries, letters, financial records and intelligence files compiled by MI5 through bugging the British Communist Party's headquarters. He records in full Hobsbawm's private life, his unfortunate early marriage and his affairs, leaving little to the imagination.

There are many myths about Eric Hobsbawm, the most common being that he was a refugee from the Nazis. In fact, his father was born in London and worked in Alexandria, Egypt, where, implausibly, Eric was born; he was a British subject at birth, entitled to live in Britain whenever he chose to. His parents died young, and Hobsbawm was brought up by relatives in Austria and Germany. He spoke English in the home, and was known as "the English boy" at school. A non-observant Jew, he witnessed the rise of Nazism at first hand; as a teenager, he became a fully committed communist, adopting a viewpoint to which he held firm for many decades. Hobsbawm went to England, along with relatives, soon after Hitler came to power in 1933.

His amazing intelligence and extraordinary memory were evident early. By the time he was seventeen, Hobsbawm may well have been, quite literally, the best read and most erudite teenager in the world. In February 1935, according to his diary, he read plays by seventeen different writers from Aeschylus to O'Neill; in March and April, he read six Shakespeare plays and works by Coleridge,

Chaucer, Fielding, Petronius, Proust, Thomas Mann, Milton, Boswell, Wilfred Owen, Donne, Lessing, Housman, Dryden, David Hume, John Dos Passos, Pope, "and others", as Evans puts it. In January of that year he had bought Volume One of *Das Kapital*, which he absorbed and used "as a textbook", but also, as a work to consult "when I don't want to take the trouble to think ... I look up the place in Marx and I have a complete and brilliant analysis." He was apparently also impressed by Stalin, giving a copy of the dictator's *History of the Communist Party* as a gift to his cousin.

In England, Hobsbawm's brilliance strongly impressed the teachers at his school, St Marylebone Grammar School, and he gained admission and a substantial scholarship to King's College, Cambridge, best known for the number of Etonians who went there. At Cambridge, he gained a starred double first (the highest possible degree) in history and, rather incongruously, became a member of the Apostles, the famous secret society known for its geniuses, communists and homosexuals, Hobsbawm checking two of those three boxes.

After war service (as a sergeant), and despite his already well-known Communist Party membership (he joined it as an undergraduate at Cambridge), in 1947 Hobsbawm was appointed to a lectureship at Birkbeck College, London University's institution for mature students, where he remained for the rest of his working career. This was a rather incongruous post for an increasingly eminent historian, but its venue in central London and the fact that its classes were only held in the evening, giving ample time for research, suited him well. But academic promotion was blocked for many years by several factors. The first, of course, was his membership in the Communist Party. It should be said that he was at Cambridge some years after the members of the notorious "Cambridge spy ring" (Burgess, Maclean, Philby *et al*), and had no connection with it. Unlike them, he had no government secrets to impart to the Kremlin, and was never asked to, according to the extensive secret bugging of the Party's headquarters by MI5. But, during the Cold War, any senior promotion of a known communist raised legitimate fears that he would indoctrinate his students, as well as bring enormous hostile publicity to that university. In addition, his department heads, probably with a strong element of jealousy, simply failed to appreciate Hobsbawm's great gifts. For years, his promotion at Birkbeck was blocked by his department head, a little-known medievalist who appeared to be the embodiment of Conan Doyle's dictum that talent instantly recognises genius, but mediocrity knows nothing higher than itself. Similarly, Hobsbawm applied for the Chair of Economic History at Cambridge, but the post went to (in Evans's words) "an obscure figure who had written on South American banks".

From the 1950s on, however, Hobsbawm produced a stream of the books for which he became internationally known—*Primitive Rebels*, *Captain Swing* (with George Rudé), *The Invention of Tradition* (as an editor), *Industry and Empire* and, above all, his four-volume history of the world since the French Revolution, published between 1962 and 1994, *The Age of Revolution*, *The Age of Capital*, *The Age of Empire* and *The Age of Extremes*, in addition to lesser works and countless essays and newspaper articles. Throughout, his incredible erudition was both evident and striking, a factor which impressed everyone who knew him.

I knew Hobsbawm rather well, over many years, and like others, was astonished by his learning and memory. I once became impressed by a book published in 1916 by Josiah Stamp, *British Incomes and Property*, an outstanding analysis of Britain's very complex income tax system, and mentioned this work to several senior historians in London, none of whom had ever heard of it. In contrast, when I mentioned it to Hobsbawm, the story was different: without pausing, he fully agreed with me about its superlative merits, on which he enlarged for ten minutes or so, although he almost certainly had not opened the book in twenty years.

Hobsbawm remained a Marxist for nearly all the rest of his life, although he almost certainly altered his outlook substantially in old age. He remained a paid-up member of the British Communist Party until it dissolved itself in 1991, remaining faithful to it even as very many intellectuals left it after the Hungarian uprising in 1956. Around 1968, at a dinner party, Michael Strait, an American, "made some bitter comments about the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia". Hobsbawm replied that "there are more political prisoners in the United States today than there are in Czechoslovakia", a statement, if accurately reported, Orwellian in its mendacity. At the time of the 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary, he found fault with some aspects of the intervention, but concluded: "If we had been in the position of the Soviet government, we should have intervened." Many similar statements, echoing the Party line, are given in Evans's book.

There are many mysteries about Eric Hobsbawm's life and beliefs, but the most obvious one is: how on earth a man of his commanding intellect, consistent originality and international perspective could,

decade after decade, sublimate these qualities to slavish support for Joseph Stalin, a crude mass-murdering dictator, to his even more mediocre successors, and to the even dimmer leadership of the British Communist Party. Broadly, of course, this was because Hobsbawm came of age in the 1930s, the "devil's decade" of fascism and mass unemployment. But so did many others, most of whom later repented of their folly.

At the heart of Hobsbawm's belief system, in my opinion, was his relationship with his Jewish background—or rather, the black hole which defined this relationship. He was in Berlin in 1933 on the day Hitler came to power; several members of his family perished in the Holocaust. Hobsbawm later admitted that he was intellectually unable to confront the Holocaust. When the American historian Arno Mayer sent him the typescript of a book on the exterminations, Hobsbawm wrote back: "Since the first material on the camps came out in the early fifties or late forties, I have kept away from it ... I have found it too difficult to face emotionally." A French publisher who is Jewish declined to publish a translation of *The Age of Extremes* because it barely mentioned the Holocaust, discussing it in perhaps eight or ten lines, much less than the space that Hobsbawm gave to the Dadaist movement in modern art; Auschwitz was not mentioned at all.

Hobsbawm was an unremitting universalist, hating all nationalisms and national identities, and perhaps not understanding them. He believed that class and dialectical materialism determined history.

Although he may well have softened at the end, Hobsbawm was of course an atheist with no religious connections to Judaism. So far as I am aware, he said nothing whatever about Soviet anti-Semitism. He apparently never visited Israel, and in 2005 signed a left-wing petition condemning Israeli policy on the West Bank. The Jew he mentioned most often in his vast output was Karl Marx. As George Canning put it in another context long ago, Hobsbawm was "a friend to every country but his own".

Of course, when he was writing about Korea or Mexico, this gaping void was irrelevant, but in my view was symptomatic of a void extending far beyond the Jews. Hobsbawm was an unremitting universalist, hating all nationalisms and national identities, and perhaps not understanding them. He was a Marxist, who believed that class and dialectical materialism determined history. But Jews are arguably the ultimate particularistic people, whose religious claim is that they were "chosen", and who have been persecuted and massacred on religious and then "racial" grounds, not because of economic class. Hobsbawm's *oeuvre* may be seen as an attempt to negate and evade this reality, an attitude which permeates his work. (It is also somewhat similar to the attitude of E.P. Thompson towards Methodism in *The Making of the English Working Class.* Thompson was the son of Methodist missionaries in India; his condemnation of the baneful effects of Methodism during the British industrial revolution is one of the most striking sections of his book.)

Perhaps, too, Hobsbawm's attitude extended to his treatment of America, which may be seen as a kind of Jewry Writ Large, a "chosen people" in "God's own country". Hobsbawm never understood America and, like many European intellectuals, detested its unbounded capitalism, lack of a European welfare state, gun violence and lowlife popular culture. Rather unexpectedly, he was also a noted jazz critic, writing many columns under the pseudonym "Francis Newton". His writings on jazz strike me as somewhat jejune, showing a dislike for virtually any jazz produced after its "authentic" phase from about 1915 to 1935. These points seem to me to be arguably central in understanding Hobsbawm's viewpoint.

A matter of importance about which more needed to be said concerns Hobsbawm's attitude towards E.P. Thompson (1924–93), the Anglo-Marxist historian who was, it might be argued, Hobsbawm's great rival. Seven years younger than Hobsbawm, Thompson was educated at Oxford and was also, like Hobsbawm, a member of the Communist Historians' Group; the two knew each other over many years. In 1963 Thompson published *The Making of the English Working Class*, his 800-page *magnum opus*, which has been described as "incontestably the most important work of history of the post-war period". Famously "seeking to rescue the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the 'obsolete' handloom weaver" and others from "the enormous condescension of history", in contrast to Hobsbawm's internationalism it was exclusively British in perspective. It appeared fortuitously at the start of the period of student unrest, and became the favoured historical work of thousands of radical students and also of many lay radicals who were deeply interested in the exploitation of their working-class ancestors in Yorkshire or

Wales, but had no real concern about poverty in Ecuador or Silesia. Had Thompson gone on from *The Making of the English Working Class* to produce, as everyone expected, further volumes on British factory capitalism, industrial cities, trade unions and the Labour Party, he, rather than Hobsbawm, would certainly have been regarded as the king (or, perhaps, first party secretary) of Anglo-Marxist historians. But in 1971 he unexpectedly quit academic life to become a full-time activist for nuclear disarmament, writing little or nothing on history, and producing no successor to *The Making of the English Working Class*. For eight or ten years after its publication, however, Thompson had completely upstaged Hobsbawm as the guru historian of the far Left, as well as other prominent Anglo-Marxist historians like Christopher Hill and John Saville. In Hobsbawm's autobiography *Interesting Times* and elsewhere, one can discern an element of resentment towards the younger man. One would like to have this more thoroughly discussed.

Did Hobsbawm moderate his views as he aged? There is a good deal of evidence for such an interpretation. There is, for instance, the economic success he increasingly enjoyed as a world-famous writer. By 1989-90 (Evans supplies the data from Hobsbawm's financial records), entirely in addition to his salary as a professor, Hobsbawm earned £91,557, serious money at the time, from royalties, lecture fees and "renting out property". He had a Swiss bank account, and (like many others) employed a tax accountant to find every last deduction, especially for his numerous overseas trips. He received advances of £90,000 each for *The Age of Extremes* and *Interesting Times*. He was elected a member of the prestigious Athenaeum Club on Pall Mall and had a country house in Wales. When asked how he squared this with his Marxist beliefs, Hobsbawm replied, "If you are on a ship that's going down, you might as well travel first class."

It was widely noted by reviewers that *The Age of Extremes* no longer used social class or class conflict as its framework. Remarkably, it seems that during the last part of his life Hobsbawm voted for the Liberal Democrats, not for a left-wing party. He also began to receive sharp criticism from left-wing sources as well as from conservatives, in particular from feminists, who noted the absence of women and women's issues from his books, and, as well, for his alleged ignoring of blacks and of African history.

It seems that he even made peace with his Jewish background. At his funeral service, at his request a rabbi recited Kaddish, the Jewish prayer for the dead. In Evans's book there is a photograph of Hobsbawm's grave, at Highgate Cemetery, near the tomb of Karl Marx. It is very plain, stating only his name and dates and the word *Historian*. The photograph shows the gravestone covered with many pebbles, traditionally placed by mourners on Jewish graves. One god failed; another older one perhaps took its place. Could Hobsbawm have gone the whole hog, and become a Tory? Stranger things have happened.

We may never see his like again, a matter for regret and sadness. But we are unlikely ever to see again the historical conditions which were responsible for his viewpoint, for which there should be rejoicing.

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Katrina Gulliver

Melancholy Occurrences in Sydney

Murder, Misadventure, and Miserable Ends
by Catie Gilchrist
HarperCollins, 2019, 400 pages, $35

In September 1866, a boy walking his dog found a severed head on waste ground between Bathurst and Liverpool streets in Sydney. A piece of burnt torso was found nearby. The victim was a woman, and she had been dead two or three weeks. The Sydney coroner, Henry Shiell, convened an inquest.

This book is the story of such inquests. Shiell, as Sydney coroner from 1866 to 1899, had the responsibility of investigating all unnatural, unexpected or violent deaths. He also investigated all deaths in hospitals and jails. This kept him busy, sometimes heading to several deaths in one day.

The inquest would be held in a nearby hotel or tavern, as was also the case in England. In New South Wales a publican's licence required him to make such space available. A jury would be assembled of local citizens, and curious bystanders could also attend. Inquests were (and still are) public in New South Wales.

The coroner could request an autopsy, although pathology was in its infancy, so results were not always conclusive. This was all in a world without refrigeration, so in a Sydney summer, a corpse got pretty ripe while the death was investigated. Still, the civilians of the coroner's jury would clasp their

handkerchiefs to their noses and troop into the dead house to see the remains. For the inquest to be valid, the jury had to see the body.

After assessing the evidence, the jury would decide whether the death was by misadventure, illness or foul play. The coroner would issue a verdict.

Gilchrist leads us through some of Shiell's cases, and the criminal trials that resulted. These cases reveal the variety of issues faced by the coroner. He was never "off duty", and could be summoned at any hour to deal with a death. (This was a point of contention for Shiell, who regularly petitioned—largely unsuccessfully—for a pay rise.)

Each case offers us a glimpse of life in Sydney in the second half of the nineteenth century. Gilchrist has used reports from the coroner's investigations, court records (if there was a prosecution) and newspaper accounts to lace together the stories and illustrate the landscape in which they occurred.

We get glimpses of the kind of people who ordinarily leave only light traces in the historical record—people whose lives would never make the newspaper, but whose deaths were brought to the attention of the coroner.

Shiell himself was a prototypical son of the empire. A scion of a planter family in Montserrat, he may have been educated in England (although precisely what and where he studied is unclear). His father was a younger son, so no money trickled down to his branch of the family tree. In 1853, like so many younger sons, he emigrated to New South Wales. Taking the path of the connected-but-broke, he found his way onto the ladder of civil service, first as a district registrar, then a police magistrate. He was appointed Sydney coroner in 1866.

The role of the coroner goes back to the Middle Ages, and the public inquest and coroner's jury form part of the transparency of common law. In nineteenth-century Sydney, the coronial inquest was also a tool of social improvement, with juries able to issue "riders", or advice for legislation to prevent similar deaths. These could include mandating drain covers, or cow-catchers on the front of trams. Such riders were not always followed, but showed how members of the public (on the jury) felt that lessons should be learned to avoid future fatalities.

Sydney was a lively place back then. The city was growing rapidly: from 90,000 residents in 1861 to 225,000 in 1881. Its residents faced the risks common to all Victorian cities—tuberculosis; poor sanitation; runaway horses; all manner of industrial accidents. They also faced dangers from one another—although as Gilchrist points out, murder was rare. The annual homicide tally was in the low single digits during the 1870s.

When a murder did happen, it was a focus of interest. Particularly ghoulish cases would always draw the public's attention. The severed-head case was covered exhaustively by all the papers, in lurid detail. The victim turned out to be Annie Scott, murdered by her husband William, who was eventually hanged for his crime. A hundred people watched his execution. For those who couldn't make it, William Scott was displayed in effigy in Sydney's waxworks, along with other local villains.

But Sydneysiders then, as now, were more likely to end themselves than each other—and all apparent suicides also came within the coroner's purview. The harbour took the lives of many, and some suicidal Sydney residents had also discovered the cliffs at the Gap. People jumped (or fell) in front of trains and trams, or used a cutthroat razor literally. In 1869, the Spanish Consul General leapt naked from the upstairs window of a house on Macquarie Street. Doctors attributed the tragedy to mania and temporary insanity (better that than a verdict of *felo de se*, "self-murder").

One of the saddest cases is that of Alice Buckland. In 1875 this unfortunate young woman took her life by drowning. She was pregnant and discovered that her lover (who had courted her under an assumed name) was already married. She travelled to Bondi and walked into the sea.

A series of such deaths led to public outcry and calls for changes in the law—to punish the crime of "seduction", particularly with a promise of marriage. This effort got nowhere (something Gilchrist attributes to many politicians' own peccadilloes). But there was a growing sense that suicides were to be pitied rather than condemned, and particularly that young women and girls could be victims of society's moral code. Alice Buckland's death led to a change in the law regarding suicides, in the removal of the *felo de se* designation. A verdict of suicide would no longer render the deceased guilty of a felony.

Other women in similar situations to Alice took a different path, and wound up on the coroner's table as victims of botched abortions. They either died quickly from loss of blood, or a few days later from infection. (Given that a common technique was to shove a spike blindly into a woman's uterus, it is remarkable that anyone ever survived.) But the

loose regulations of the era facilitated such quackery. There was no law in New South Wales against using the title "Doctor" without credentials, and there was money to be made butchering desperate girls. (Fraudulently claiming a medical degree was not outlawed until 1900.)

The other desperate remedy, infanticide, was epidemic. Small bundles were found in alleys and parks, and under trees. These deaths all came before the coroner too. But it was hard with the medical knowledge at the time to prove a child had been born alive and died later, rather than having been stillborn. So barring obvious signs of violence, the mother (if she was ever found) was more likely to be charged with "concealing a birth"—and these small lives didn't make it into the murder statistics.

Some of the cases covered are not criminal, just tragic. The toddler who drowned in a privy. A publican's daughter who slid down a banister and hit her head on the landing, dead age seven. Two boys, eight and nine, dead from eating a toadfish at Coogee. Death by fire was horrifically common, often of women and girls when their skirts caught a spark from a fireplace or candle.

In adopting the nineteenth-century style for much of her writing, Gilchrist produces prose more purple than a Prince tribute. An industrial accident is a "melancholy occurrence". After a pilot boat sinks in a storm, "The ravages of nature's fury plunged Sydney into a melancholy gloom". Nobody is in financial trouble but they are in "pecuniary distress", or succumb to the "demon drink". We even learn that a market was a "sensory olfactory wonder to watch and behold". (If you are a stickler for typos and grammar, this probably isn't the book for you—HarperCollins should have secured the services of a copy editor.)

Nonetheless, each case unfolds like a mystery story, and I found myself gripped. We get glimpses of the kind of people who ordinarily leave only light traces in the historical record. The working class, the uneducated—people whose lives would never make the newspaper, but whose deaths were brought to the attention of the coroner. The testimony from these cases reveals these hidden members of the community, and the manner of death gives us insights to their life. As Gilchrist writes, "it is both curiously strange, but also sometimes, strangely familiar".

Katrina Gulliver, who has a PhD in history from Cambridge University, reviews books regularly for the ***Spectator****, and has written for the* ***Australian****,* ***Reason****, the* ***Atlantic*** *and other publications.*

Gary Furnell

Steadfast in the Midst of Chaos

The Woman Who Was Chesterton
by Nancy Carpentier Brown
American Chesterton Society/Saint Benedict Press, 2015, 266 pages, US$16.95

The American author Nancy Brown was the keynote speaker at the 2018 Australian Chesterton Society conference at Campion College. In the first of her two presentations she spoke about her research which resulted in this excellent biography of Frances Chesterton, the gentle, creative and loving wife of English literary giant Gilbert Chesterton. Many *Quadrant* issues include a reference to G.K. Chesterton, so his work has continuing interest and value. His wife is almost a hidden figure, yet it is very likely that Gilbert would not have been free to think as deeply and to write as voluminously as he did without the careful ministrations and management of Frances. Anyone who esteems G.K. Chesterton owes much to his wife. Who was she? What was she like? How happy was their marriage? What happened to her after Gilbert died? Nancy Brown's book, *The Woman Who Was Chesterton*, is the best attempt yet published to answer these questions. It is a book that has not attracted a fraction of the attention in Australia that it deserves.

The fact that Frances Chesterton has not garnered the interest accorded to her husband worked in Nancy Brown's favour. There were resources, archives and family memorabilia untouched, unopened and unshared until the diligent Illinois researcher brought them to light. In her presentation at Campion College, Nancy Brown recounted her excitement at discovering and reading letters and notes that no previous biographer of either Gilbert or Frances had accessed. She made excellent use of this bounty, knowing it was especially valuable because Frances did not plan to leave favourable material after her for any future biographer.

Frances was not a vain woman. She was a practical, cheerful, thoughtful and faith-filled woman. She was also often ill, and grieved for years over her inability to have children. Nancy Brown, all the while honouring the dignity of Frances Chesterton, opens and chronicles the ebbs and flows of Frances's personal, family and medical trials, and her many joys.

Her family, the Bloggs, lived in Bedford Park, a fashionable London suburb favoured by artistic types. Her father was a diamond trader. It was a

lively household. The Yeats family, William and his sisters, lived nearby and visited, as did the painter Camille Pissarro. Frances received an excellent education, taught first by two German sisters who emphasised learning through play, outdoor activity, gardening and nature studies. Later, Frances attended St Stephen's Anglo-Catholic college. There she was taught English, French, Greek, Latin, German, mathematics, and divinity. Crucially, her commitment to High Church Anglicanism was strengthened during these years. Frances, her brother, sisters and friends, formed a debating society, the IDK Society. When members were asked what IDK stood for, they could answer accurately yet mysteriously, "I don't know."

Frances loved literature and wrote plays and poetry. However, the family was shadowed by death. Two of Frances's sisters died in infancy. When Frances was fourteen, her father died. Frances's elder sister died aged twenty-four in a cycling accident. These deaths badly affected Frances's mother for a number of years. The family was plagued with depression. Frances's brother, Knollys, after years of the illness, committed suicide when he was in his forties. Frances's mood often darkened in cloudy and rainy weather. Moreover, she lived with frequent physical pain: she emerged from puberty with one leg shorter than the other, which resulted in lifelong hip and back pain. The pain sometimes wore her down and required periods of bed-rest to provide some relief. When she felt better she returned to her busy life. Gilbert was to say that Frances displayed "the asceticism of cheerfulness".

In her twenties, Frances worked at the Parents' National Education Union (PNEU), a body dedicated to supporting the teaching efforts of parents and governesses. She lived at home. Frances introduced herself to Gilbert when he was invited by a mutual friend who had fallen for Frances's sister to attend a meeting of the IDK Society at the Bloggs' house. Chesterton was an obscure book reviewer at the time, a tall, dishevelled but obviously brilliant and witty young man. He was attracted to Frances immediately; she was a beautiful young woman with crinkly brown hair, a clear complexion, a frank manner, and she was a Christian who lived her beliefs. Gilbert was moving from agnosticism towards theism and he found the integrity of her faith refreshing. He later wrote that a voice sounded in a flash in his mind when he first spoke with Frances. His intuition told him:

> If I had anything to do with this girl I should go down on my knees to her; if I spoke with her she would never deceive me; if I depended on her she would never deny me; if I loved her she would never play with me; if I trusted her she would never go back on me; if I remembered her she would never forget me.

Chesterton's intuitive flash was accurate. After some months courting, he proposed to Frances and was accepted. Their engagement lasted three years as Gilbert sought to establish a career as a writer to support a wife. The Blogg family had their misgivings: Gilbert was careless about his looks and his appointments (true) and hopeless with money (also true). But they underestimated Frances's ability to manage these foibles.

Once they were married, Frances provided Gilbert with a hat to cover his unruly hair and a cape to cover his less than pristine clothes. The cape and hat became his signature look. Gilbert gratefully placed his appointments and his money in her hands. Frances resigned from the PNEU but remained involved with the union. Gilbert's career, reputation and fame were burgeoning; helping him was a full-time job. Frances corrected his manuscripts, undertook the proofreading and negotiated the contracts with publishers. She hired the secretaries and the household help and maintained volumes of correspondence with friends, associates and family members. She nursed him when he was sick, injured or toothless—as he was for months while dentures were being prepared.

She often travelled with him to ensure he arrived at his destination. It was essential for her to travel with him on overseas speaking engagements because without her he got lost, forgot his notes, missed trains and didn't look after himself. Further, she loved hearing him speak; he was a wonder to her, and she delighted to see that he was a wonder to other people too. Over the years, when their health permitted, they travelled to Spain, Italy, France, Switzerland, Palestine, the United States, Canada, Poland, Malta and Belgium. Chesterton's books, stories, poems and essays had an international reputation for insight, wit, common feeling and inventiveness.

Frances somehow found time for her own poetry and children's plays. Her poems were set to music and anthologised, and her plays were performed in theatres and at Christmas pageants. She also wrote toy theatre plays and dramas for the Chesterton's home theatrics—a small stage was built in a large room of their Beaconsfield home. They loved to entertain their neighbours and friends, and especially nieces, nephews, godchildren and neighbourhood children.

Frances and Gilbert couldn't have children; three operations and a decade of trying to conceive

proved fruitless. For years Frances could not look at a baby without tearful grief over her own childlessness. Eventually, she accepted her condition and found consolation in other people's children, especially the children of her sister and the children of her and Gilbert's many friends. The Chestertons were so welcoming and delighted children so much—there were puppets, miniature dolls, toy theatres, boxes of dress-ups, a large and beautiful garden designed by Frances, and many pets including a donkey named Trotsky—that some children stayed for weeks at a time and repeated the visits every year.

Life was incredibly busy for thirty-five years. Gilbert was a journalist, deeply involved in the running of various newspapers. The work caught him up in controversies and the exposure of corruption. It was draining and distracting work. Fortunately for us, Frances and a close friend of the Chestertons, Father O'Connor, noticed that the busyness distracted Gilbert from the more important work of writing books. Frances worked hard to protect his time so he could write what he wanted to write and he was indeed prolific, but it is also the case that there were more books planned that he never got around to writing. Throughout all this hectic activity, Frances continued to write her own poetry and plays, attending to their publication and performance. She also found time to nurse her ailing mother, Gilbert's ageing parents and ill friends. Hilaire Belloc visited once, developed pneumonia, and remained with the Chestertons for a month; Frances nursed him back to health.

She also found time to nurse her ailing mother, Gilbert's ageing parents and ill friends. Hilaire Belloc visited once, developed pneumonia, and remained with the Chestertons for a month; Frances nursed him back to health.

As Nancy Brown chronicles all this, she does not uncover any taint of morose martyrdom in Frances. Certainly, Frances was sadder on days of gloomy weather, and she worried that the depressive trait in her family might overwhelm her. Frequent sickness and chronic pain were a burden; worries about money were common because some of the newspapers Gilbert supported had failed. She worried about Gilbert's health too, which was frail despite his great frame. She battled to help him meet his newspaper deadlines, and sometimes he had episodes of weariness and depression. He loved beer, sausages and cigars, none of which were good for his health. Frances tried to direct him towards better habits.

When Gilbert became Catholic, Frances was troubled for a time because she was very happy in the High Anglican church. After some years of questioning and soul-searching, Frances moved too into Catholicism and that disjunction between them was healed. Both Gilbert and Frances experienced periods of loneliness when they were separated by hospitalisation or speaking commitments. They liked being together. They were gentle with each other. They admired each other. They were best friends as well as lovers. Gore Vidal once wrote that love is a fan club with only two members. Gilbert and Frances were dedicated fans of one another.

There was great pain for Frances when this closeness ended with Gilbert's death after yet another illness. He had been unwell for months, often tired and losing concentration while writing, but he'd recovered from so many sicknesses that it was still a shock when he died. He was sixty-two years old. Frances never recovered from the loss. The chapters dealing with her widowhood are heart-rending. Frances is portrayed in her bereavement as finding consolation in her Christianity; but it didn't bring Gilbert back to her, and her religion could not hold her hand, stroke her hair, or laugh with her. She battled on, but was horribly wounded, lost and lonely even as friends and family tended to her. She couldn't bear that Gilbert didn't need her any more; her key role in life had disappeared with him. She had his legacy to care for, and some shared projects to complete, but widowhood was distressing. She died, from cancer, two years after Gilbert.

One of the strengths of Nancy Brown's work is her loving objectivity. She admits that she grew to love Frances Chesterton as she learned more about her, but this doesn't stop her telling the truth about Frances or Gilbert, or their family members. Gilbert himself observed that love is not blind—it is full of insight. Thus, a faithful priest can criticise the Church with a more trenchant accuracy than any sceptic; a biographer who loves her subject, without sentimentality, is capable of seeing more of the truth, not less—and of being *fairer* with the truth.

The Woman Who Was Frances is not a piece of soppy hagiography. It is filled with the realities of life: the bouts of depression, and an abscess big enough to corrupt three of Frances's teeth are among the many details. What emerges with clarity is the love the Chestertons had for each other

and for many other people, their constant battle with sickness, the frustrations of fame, the struggle with childlessness, Frances's unexpected literary creativity, the deeply orthodox spirituality and the sharp pain of loss.

Nancy Brown describes herself as a wife, mother and home-schooler, all noble roles, but not a scholar. Still her book has a wealth of scholarly-type accoutrements which add to its value, including a list of sources, an index, a timeline, a list of the known published works and music of Frances Chesterton, some of the obituaries of Frances, full texts of the wills of both Gilbert and Frances, and the text of the funeral card of Frances Chesterton. Also, there are eight pages of well-chosen photographs. I've read the book twice: easy to do because Nancy Brown tells the story in a brisk and accessible style. No doubt, I'll read it again; it is that good. Brown writes that Frances Chesterton is "an example of steadfastness in the midst of chaos, hope in the midst of fears, a life of unselfish service, humility and joy in the midst of sickness and death".

Frances Chesterton's poetry has been overlooked. This poem was written during her widowhood after a visit to Rome, a place she and Gilbert loved.

Sun and Shade

I who walked with you in the sun
But now walk in the shade
How can I feel the warmth and light?
I am afraid.

Afraid to enter in these holy doors
Where once you prayed with me
How can I glory in the Mass
In poverty?

Poor I am, lacking your tender love
Not even the widow's mite
To cast into the treasury heap
With such delight

That I could add to your vast store
Of generosity
That gave your mirth, your love, yourself
In boundless charity.

Gary Furnell, who lives in rural New South Wales, is a frequent contributor of fiction and non-fiction. His most recent story, "Conversation in the Hearse", appeared in the April issue.

Taste

I rather like poems about minor calamities, bursts of tiny delights, the sun warming the tender skin of the elderly. Also, the way palm fronds conduct themselves during a southerly, dishevelled, exposing the softness of their billowing arms. Pastries in display cases do something for me too. Even cupcakes iced in gelato colours, adorned with miniature decorations … Can you see my preference for the words "miniature" and "tiny", an inclination towards the distilled in a world favouring often the big and the overwhelming? People with the patience to follow a complex recipe—well, that's not me, but I like to taste what they cook. Babies in prams kicking chubby legs make me hover—how difficult not to take a bite. If you write something about a paper straw, I will be fascinated. You could try a ladybird, a pocket-size umbrella. The generalised angst of the human condition, however, may be hard for me to get a handle on. Watch that man with the disabled daughter moisten his finger after her cupcake is eaten and relish the last crumbs. Consider the rainbow-coloured wristband tied to a letterbox on the way to the park or the miniature plastic bucket and spade we found half-hidden on the beach at Bronte and packed with us for years on every visit to the sea.

Libby Sommer

Joe Dolce

My Brilliant Friend: Passing the Bechdel Test with Ease

I prefer to think of myself as being inside a tangled knot; tangled knots fascinate me. It's necessary to recount the tangle of existence, both as it concerns individual lives and the life of generations. Searching to unravel things is useful, but literature is made out of tangles.

—Elena Ferrante

My Brilliant Friend (*L'amica genial*) is the initial eight-episode miniseries in a planned thirty-two-part production of *The Neapolitan Novels*, a quartet of books written by the enigmatic Italian writer Elena Ferrante and translated into English by Ann Goldstein. It is a co-production between American cable network HBO and Italian networks RAI and TIMvision.

I say *enigmatic* because, despite having sold over 10 million copies of the books in forty countries, the author's true identity remains unknown. Elena Ferrante is a pseudonym, and she defends her right to anonymity as one of the keys to her method.

Ferrante's own description of Lila, by the elder narrator (also named Elena), in the very first chapter of the opening novel, could be autobiographical:

> She wanted to vanish; she wanted every one of her cells to disappear, nothing of her ever to be found. And since I know her well, or at least I think I know her, I take it for granted that she has found a way to disappear, to leave not so much as a hair anywhere in this world.

My Brilliant Friend and Ferrante's other three Neapolitan novels are set against a backdrop of six decades of upheaval in post-war Italy, including the rise of the gangster-economy in Naples and the approaching sexual revolution. It is an epic coming-of-age story (or *bildungsroman*) of two young friends and the members of nine interlocking families in their poor and violent village—the Cerullos, the Grecos, the Carraccis, the Pelusos, the Cappuccios, the Sarratores, the Scannos, the Solaras and the Spagnuolos.

The story is told in the form of a narrative flashback by the elder Elena Greco and begins in 2010 when sixty-year-old Elena, a successful writer, receives a phone call from her childhood friend Lila's son, Rino, worried that his mother has disappeared. Elena and Lila went their separate ways long ago but she reassures him that this disappearance was undoubtedly a conscious decision by his mother, who always said when she was young that she might to do this some day. As she recalls her old friend, Elena begins to write down everything she can remember about their childhood together and we are transported back to 1950s Naples.

Both girls attend elementary school and are encouraged by their spinster teacher, Maestra Oliviero, to pursue higher learning and rise above their common status. She tells them, "If one wishes to remain a plebeian, he, his children, the children of his children, deserve nothing."

Elena is bright and hard-working, but for Lila learning is effortless. She is a prodigy who, by first grade, has already taught herself to read and write. Elena's father, against the wishes of her mother, and with the encouragement of Maestra Oliviero, agrees for his daughter to pursue higher middle school education in Ischia, but Lila's more traditional father refuses to pay for any more schooling, especially for girls, insisting instead that she go to work, with her brother Rino, in the family shoe shop.

Elena and Lila's relationship is a complex blend of love, envy, generosity and rivalry. Elena progresses through middle school to higher school, while Lila continues to educate herself at home. Applying her natural genius to her father's business, Lila designs the prototype for a new kind of shoe that she believes will make them rich. She is also growing into a stunning young woman and becomes the object of the attention of the males in her village, especially Marcello Solara, the son of the head of the local Camorra. Lila refuses his advances, preferring Stefano Caracci, whose father runs the local grocery and who agrees, as part of their marriage arrangement, to finance Lila's father's shoe business.

When she turns sixteen they marry, but Stefano breaks his word to Lila by extending an invitation to the dangerous Solara family, and her rejected suitor Marcello, who arrives at the reception wearing Lila's artisan shoes.

Like the piano in Jane Campion's film *The Piano* and the floating glass cathedral in Peter Carey's *Oscar and Lucinda*, the stylish shoes that Lila has designed, after abandoning her dreams of higher education, become the central metaphor of the first series. Ferrante writes: "She was struggling to find, from inside the cage in which she was enclosed, a way of being all her own, that was still obscure to her."

My Brilliant Friend was first adapted for the stage by April De Angelis, and directed by Melly Still, with a premiere in 2017 at the Rose Theatre in Kingston-upon-Thames, presented as a five-hour, two-part production. It received consistently enthusiastic reviews, the *Observer* writing, "Intensity wins through ... as if Ferrante has materialised in front of us."

The television series was directed by the Italian director Saverio Costanzo, who won the Best Director award at the 2014 Venice International Film Festival for *Hungry Hearts*. The script was co-written by Laura Paolucci and Francesco Piccolo, e-mailing suggestions back and forth to Ferrante, who also continued to help during the filming, contributing extra dialogue.

Could a television adaptation, directed by a man, possibly capture the heart of the books? In fact Costanzo, raised in a family surrounded by women, was Ferrante's own choice, and he considers her particularly adept at unravelling what he refers to as "feminine taboos". He commented on her descriptions of the interior life of women:

> It's as big as a universe! So I saw myself floating in this enormous universe, saying, "I don't know anything about life. My understanding is so limited compared to theirs."

The music was composed by post-minimalist German-born British composer Max Richter, who has worked extensively in opera and for the stage. He wrote the sixteenth-century-style music for the 2018 film *Mary Queen of Scots* and composed an avant-garde score for the ballet *Woolf Works*, based on three books by Virginia Woolf—a melange of classical music and sound composition intertwined with Virginia Woolf's actual voice recordings.

At first you hardly notice the music in *My Brilliant Friend*, as it seamlessly entwines around the story. On closer listening, however, there is a sharp distinction between ambient soundscapes, which Richter excels at, and melodic compositional themes, which are slightly predictable and mechanical. But the score suits the drama and doesn't distract from the sensitivity of the drama. The music falls somewhere between Philip Glass (without his insistent repetitive minimalism) and Michael Nyman (without Nyman's simple and memorable melodic ideas).

Katherine Bromwich of the *Guardian* observed the shooting of the series in Naples:

> The scale of the project is staggering. It is one of the largest sets in Europe, spreading over two hectares. An enormous warehouse contains re-creations of several characters' apartments; all windows, doors and furniture are period originals … Ludovica Nasti, who plays the strong-willed [younger] Lila, strides around fearlessly, introducing herself to the assembled journalists ... She says her favourite scenes were throwing rocks at boys and the argument with her father in which he throws her out of a window ... She is a child model and points out she is from Pozzuoli, just outside Naples, "like Sophia Loren".

The combination of fragility and remarkable strength that Nasti brings to the role of the young Lila comes in part from her real struggle, and victory, over leukaemia, for most of her twelve-year-old life. When informed by the director that she would have to have a 1950s-style bob for the film, she replied: "I got mad ... I've been bald for a long time and finally I had long hair."

Executive producers Paolo Sorrentino and Jennifer Schuur auditioned 9000 girls for the parts of Lila and Elena who could speak the Neapolitan dialect (even many Italians will need subtitles to understand it) but also looking for "classical" faces. The four main actors who were chosen (two for the girls as children, and two when they were teens) had no previous acting experience.

The television adaptation is mostly faithful to the novel, but where the first series concludes with Elena returning to support Lila at her disastrous wedding reception, the first book closes slightly differently: with Lila simply staring in shock at the shoes, which she has painstakingly designed and made, there on the feet of her ex-suitor Marcello. This is a betrayal, not only of her bond with her new husband, who has lied to her, but also a public humiliation of her integrity. It is a very unsettling ending. In the film version, however, it was probably judged unwise to leave the audience in such

a state of unease, so the final scene was added of Elena returning to comfort her friend, giving us hope for some redemption and light in the next series.

Sonia Saraiya wrote in *Vanity Fair*:

> The biggest difference … between the book *My Brilliant Friend* and this adaptation is that the show knows it's a tragedy, and consciously puts itself forward that way. The book—which is so conversationally written it's like a volume of whispered confidences—is not so sure about how sad its surroundings are.

Ferrante has said she considers *The Neapolitan Novels* to be a single work that she was persuaded to publish in separate sections due to commercial considerations. She has expressed satisfaction at the way the first novel was adapted to the screen.

It's difficult to write anything definitive about Ferrante because she remains fiercely protective of her real identity, saying that "books once written have no need of their authors". Ferrante may be the first public figure to insist on complete anonymity. She argues for the writer's *right* not to be known, enforces a "one country, one interview" promotional policy and has said that she is prepared to lie in interviews in order to shield her privacy.

Many critics have become amateur detectives, trying to be the one to uncover who Ferrante really is. She has admitted that she was born in Naples in 1943. She has an expert knowledge of Italian politics, and has referred to herself as a mother, although some believe she is unmarried. She works—"I study, I translate, I teach"—and has a degree in the Classics. The Italian journalist Claudio Gatti wrote in the *New York Review of Books* that Ferrante has provided information about herself in many interviews, but "information that was false. The Neapolitan seamstress mother, the three sisters, her life in Naples. They were all lies."

In a talk with Elissa Schappell in *Vanity Fair*, Ferrante responded to allegations that she is really a man:

> If there's no author photo of a woman then the game is up: it's clear, in that case, that we are dealing with a man or an entire team of virile male enthusiasts of the art of writing. What if, instead, we're dealing with a new tradition of women writers who are becoming more competent, more effective, are growing tired of the literary gynaeceum and are on furlough from gender stereotypes. We know how to think, we know how to tell stories, we know how to write them as well as, if not better, than men … I hold that male colonisation of our imaginations—a calamity while ever we were unable to give shape to our difference—is, today, a strength. We know everything about the male symbol system; they, for the most part, know nothing about ours, above all about how it has been restructured by the blows the world has dealt us.

In the third novel, *Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay*, the character of Elena authors a feminist text which is admired by a respected literary critic, but Ferrante insists:

> As to the definition of "feminist", I don't know. I have loved and I love feminism because in America, in Italy, and in many other parts of the world, it managed to provoke complex thinking … I am a passionate reader of feminist thought. Yet I do not consider myself a militant; I believe I am incapable of militancy.

Rhiannon Lucy Cosslett, in the *Guardian*, said: "How revolutionary it still feels to see female friendship explored onscreen in this way. It goes without saying that it takes the Bechdel Test and turns it into ragù." The Bechdel Test was named after US cartoonist Alison Bechdel, who first used it in 1985, and created it to gauge the representation of women in fiction. It is based on three measurements: 1. Does the work feature at least two women? 2. Do the women talk to each other? 3. Do they talk to each other about something other than a man?

But Rachel Cooke of the *New Statesman* said: "I read the first of the Neapolitan novels, thought it all telling and no showing, and promptly took the other books in the series, already purchased in hot anticipation, to Oxfam." Of the television series, she remarked:

> Ludovica Nasti and Elisa del Genio, who play Lila and Lenù [Elena's nickname] as small girls, are amazing: as sly as they are artless, as knowing as they are guileless. Their smudgy, sad faces hold the attention as the histrionic plot does not.

Sophie Gilbert, in the *Atlantic*, countered:

> The trick of the Neapolitan novels is that they feature some of the rawest scenes of female brutality and body horror in literature, contained within covers that seem to promise beach reads or romance novels instead. Lila and Lenù's friendship is intoxicating because, like Lila, it's gorgeous and savage, thrilling and toxic all at once.

The language of the novel is sublime in ways that the dialogue of the series can only approximate. Although the following excerpt is recited as a voice-over, the images on the screen—a Cronenberg-like surreal montage of millions of insects crawling out of drains—distract from the brilliance of the writing:

> To cause pain was a disease. As a child I imagined tiny, almost invisible animals that arrived in the neighbourhood at night, they came from the ponds, from the abandoned train cars beyond the embankment, from the stinking grasses called *fetienti*, from the frogs, the salamanders, the flies, the rocks, the dust, and entered the water and the food and the air, making our mothers, our grandmothers as angry as starving dogs. They were more severely infected than the men, because while men were always getting furious, they calmed down in the end; women, who appeared to be silent, acquiescent, when they were angry flew into a rage that had no end.

The magnificent period cinematography by Fabio Cianchetti more than makes up for these kinds of literary compromises and his images are a feast for the senses.

This article was written after watching the series, reading the book, then re-watching the series—while re-reading the book! Calum Henderson of the *New Zealand Herald* did a similar thing:

> Watching the TV series and reading the book at the same time, each taking turns to nudge a little bit ahead of the other, probably isn't the ideal way to consume either format. But both have their strengths and I find that each enhances, rather than detracts from, the other. For a TV adaptation, that has to be the ultimate praise.

The follow-up to *My Brilliant Friend*, based on the second book of the series, *The Story of a New Name*, will be released later this year. It begins in the aftermath of Lila's wedding as the Solara family strengthen their grip on her families' shoe business. Elena begins dating Nino Sarratore, remaining a virgin, but is seduced by Nino's father, Donato Sarratore. She graduates and enrols in a free university in Pisa and meets the intellectual Pietro Airota, from a respected family. He proposes to Elena, who accepts. Elena writes a book, containing a fictionalised account of her night with Donato Sarratore, which is acclaimed by critics.

The projected third and fourth series, *Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay* and *The Story of the Lost Child*, will also follow the novels closely. Elena becomes pregnant and abandons writing, temporarily, in favour of motherhood. Lila discovers that her son, who she believed was Nino's, is actually Stefano's. Elena learns that her younger sister is sleeping with Marcello Solara. Nino, who promised Elena he would leave his wife for her, refuses to do so but Elena accepts a three-way relationship and moves to Naples to be near him. Now raising three daughters, she finds herself in financial strife. She is having difficulty finishing her next novel so she sends a personal memoir of her and Lila's childhood to her publisher instead, expecting rejection. Instead, the memoir is accepted, published and becomes successful. Elena moves back to her old neighbourhood in Naples, which has now degenerated due to the increasing drug trade, run primarily by the Solara family. Elena's published memoir, by inadvertently revealing illegal dealings, gets the Solara family into trouble with the law. The Solaras sue Elena but Lila supplies proof of the accuracy of Elena's claims and she and Elena write an article documenting the Solaras' crimes. Lila's daughter is kidnapped and they suspect the Solaras. Returning to present time, Lila still hasn't been found and they begin to fear the worst. Then Elena receives something from their childhood days in the mail that suggests that Lila is alive and well.

In the interview with Schappell, Ferrante said:

> God only knows what goes on in the mind of a friend. Absolute trust and strong affections harbour rancour, trickery and betrayal. Perhaps that's why, over time, male friendship has developed a rigorous code of conduct. The pious respect for its internal laws and the serious consequences that come from violating them have a long tradition in fiction. Our friendships, on the other hand, are a *terra incognita*, chiefly to ourselves, a land without fixed rules … and at every step there is above all the risk that a story's honesty will be clouded by good intentions, hypocritical calculations, or ideologies that exalt sisterhood in ways that are often nauseating.

Director Saverio Costanzo, scriptwriters Laura Paolucci and Francesco Piccolo, and Ferrante, have absorbed all the best elements of the classical 1950s Italian films from Bertolucci and Pasolini to De Sica and created their own insightful view of this period, written from a woman's perspective. You will feel welcome traces of *Mamma Roma* and Anna Magnani, as well as *Two Women* and the young Sophia Loren. *My Brilliant Friend* is a magical and rewarding experience that places you directly in mid-twentieth-century Italy, inside authentic small-town family life.

Christopher Heathcote

First Words: Three Centuries of an English-Language Wonder

This year marks the 300th anniversary of that hand-sized wonder, the English novel. All was triggered when a London printer of Pater-Noster Row, behind St Paul's Cathedral, took a risk on a book-length fictional tale set entirely in prose. Penned by the journalist Daniel Defoe and marketed by a bookseller friend in Fleet Street, this inventive narrative found a keen readership during 1719. Several other working writers followed Defoe's lead, their efforts being referred to around the city's coffee-houses as the *nouvelle* or "new thing".

There was an eventual rumpus, dubbed the "Battle of the Books". The literati of Georgian London, who never doubted the artistic and moral superiority of verse over prose narrative, judged novels an unsavoury commercial fad. That is why Alexander Pope's satire of mediocre writing and journalism, *The Dunciad*, mentions Defoe, while Jonathan Swift parodied the best-selling *Robinson Crusoe* with a mock novel, *Gulliver's Travels*. But the "new thing" persisted.

Talk of novels ever since has tended to fix on character and plot. Generations of readers have been absorbed in the fictional lives of Jane Eyre or Soames Forsyte, Mrs Dalloway or the Artful Dodger, Emma Woodhouse or Hercule Poirot, explaining personality traits, discussing behaviour. And everyone relishes a good storyline twist: Jim Dixon delivering the "Merrie England" lecture, Winston Smith going to Room 101, the reappearance of Magwitch.

Opening passages can grip the attention, particularly a novel's initial sentence. Those first words are designed to set off the imagination—see how Aldous Huxley thrust 1930s readers into the future when beginning *Brave New World*:

> A squat grey building of only thirty-four storeys.

Squat? *Only* thirty-four storeys? Huxley's nine words suggest much. This is not our world. It's bigger, more constructed. And the building's greyness hints of monotony. There's also economy, a sense of things being minimal and undecorated, shared by buildings and words. The verbless sentence is short and lean; which translates as an efficient and functional imagined world.

Compare that with an opening sentence by Thomas Pynchon. He opens *The Crying of Lot 49* with a sentence which is lengthy, excessive, overpacked with words:

> One summer afternoon Mrs Oedipa Maas came home from a Tupperware party whose hostess had put perhaps too much kirsch in the fondue to find that she, Oedipa, had been named executor, or she supposed executrix, of the estate of one Pierce Inverarity, a California real estate mogul who had once lost two million dollars in his spare time but still had assets numerous and tangled enough to make the job of sorting it all out more than honorary.

There is a breathlessness to this. The sentence goes on and on and on in a way that makes you feel you are running out of air; there are not enough commas, which is deliberate, and there are the trivial asides. It's like hearing someone gossiping on a telephone. The clichéd talk and excessive detail of this sentence are pitching to an urban reader of a different time from Huxley's audience. Modernity has lost its sparkle and life is immersed in consumerist clutter. Things not only seem plentiful—having them brings inconvenience. They are a burden on your time.

Here is another overlong opening, a celebrated sentence by J.D. Salinger, who uses punctuation to replicate the pace and rhythm of a voice:

> If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth.

We have the impression of a youth talking. Besides the sentence's cadence and overall measure, the vocabulary conveys much about the speaker's character, adding slang touches to give tone ("lousy childhood", "kind of crap"). This voice continues in an informal and confiding, at times insolent manner through all 192 pages of *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Refraining from such a direct address, with its implications of an individual viewpoint, Sam Selvon uses conversational language throughout what is a third-person narrative:

> One grim winter evening, when it had a kind of unrealness about London, with a fog sleeping restlessly over the city and the lights showing in the blur as if it is not London at all but some strange place on another planet, Moses Aloetta hop on a number 46 bus at the corner of Chepstow Road and Westbourne Grove to go to Waterloo to meet a fellar who was coming from Trinidad on the boat-train.

Reading this spicy Jamaican patois in *The Lonely Londoners* is to start ingesting aspects of the "Windrush" experience of post-war Britain as broadly encountered by West Indian émigrés.

Rating these sentences highly is not cultural snobbery. Huxley and Salinger, Pynchon and Selvon put language to work. Dip into their novels and you see the skill of the author, his professionalism and inventiveness, from the opening line. In comparison, the average commercial paperback starts with a sentence more like this: "I'd been hearing about the Tennis Club for years, but I'd never been inside of it." This is how the hard-boiled detective novel *Black Money* by Ross Macdonald begins, although that line is soggy and weak. You anticipate next will come a description of the club, a lame one, too. Curiously, with careful pacing and a firm narrative drive, *Black Money* is Macdonald's best thriller. Its high reputation is deserved, yet the first line is flavourless and bland. Especially irritating are the two words—"of it"—at the sentence's end. They sit there like a lumpy kink on a cat's tail.

Most books start with dull sentences. It's not a convention. The novelists don't intend to write bad lines. They just don't seem to have the necessary mix of inventive ability and craftsmanship. So their opening lines are flavourless and bloated. John Grisham's best-selling *The Firm* could have begun with this: "He was hungry; with his background, he had to be." But this decent sentence appears halfway down the first page, which instead starts off lamely: "The senior partner studied the resume for the hundredth time and again found nothing he disliked about Mitchell Y. McDeere, at least not on paper." What a dreary line.

Many popular authors claim Raymond Chandler among their key influences. Few of them understand him in depth. Chandler had judgment and literary flair in spades, as is instantly evident with the tight sentence beginning *Farewell, My Lovely*:

> It was one of the mixed blocks over on Central Avenue, the blocks that are not yet all Negro.

This opening stands alongside the best in modern prose fiction. It has a structure like the sentence from *Black Money* cited above, but Chandler makes language perform. Readers today shudder when they encounter this opening sentence, because it's not politically correct. That's the point—it never was. Chandler mentions the unmentionable. His words tell us we are in America, at a clear point in its history, and the narrator is white, urban, educated, and prefers straight talk. So he's not afraid to voice unpalatable truths, like how neighbourhoods will change ethnically. But is the sentence's last word bigoted? It is significant this narrator uses the polite *Negro* rather than vulgar alternatives.

Here's a variation of that abrasive type of opening line, this time by Graham Greene:

> "That nigger going down the street," said Dr Hasselbacher standing in the Wonder Bar, "he reminds me of you, Mr Wormold."

That second word offends, and it is *meant* to. We are about to slip into 1950s Cuba, and the line is already sketching it in. This sentence launches *Our Man in Havana*, and the speaker is one of those Teutons who flocked to Latin America after Germany lost the war. Notice the bar's name, Wonder Bar, which conveys a gaudy cheap dive while echoing the German word *wunderbar*. A point is also being made about Havana not being wonderful, an irony that is very British, and very Greene. The casual way Hasselbacher is chatting indicates he is talking to someone who won't take offence at the comparison. This man's name is Wormold—"old worm" rearranged—which is apt for a timid character. Greene's first lines signal much.

Opening sentences that carry several clauses are often weak. But some authors handle them with a swagger. Here is another opening bar scene, this one by Angela Carter:

> The bar was a mock-up, a forgery, a fake; an ad-man's crazy dream of a Spanish patio, with crusty white walls (as if the publican had economically done them in leftover sandwiches)

> on which hung unplayable musical instruments and many bull-fight posters, all blood and bulging bulls' testicles and the arrogant yellow satin buttocks of lithe young men.

This hurdy-gurdy description launches *Shadow Dance*. There is a delicious zaniness to the mounting imagery, and the reader anticipates a journey into the fantastic. Mind you, Carter really knows word-craft, launching her sentence with a firm Latinate tricolon which would please a Roman orator (mock-up, forgery, fake); then ending on a more shaggy extended tricolon (blood and testicles and buttocks) cheekily interwoven with Saxon alliteration. Try to top that.

Kenneth Fearing is not as technically flamboyant, yet there is an understated invention to this opening line which runs to a mischievous paradox:

> I first met Pauline Delos at one of those substantial parties Earl Janoth liked to give every two or three months, attended by members of the staff, his personal friends, private moguls, and public nobodies, all in haphazard rotation.

Look closer at the rising order of that list of invitees: staff, friends, moguls, then nobodies. The author might have halted with the deflationary *nobodies*, but, after a comma, he shoots off a deftly nuanced oxymoron ("haphazard rotation"). In other words, the planning is a veneer. Things are hit and miss at these lavish parties.

Given this sentence opens a novel titled *The Big Clock*, connecting *haphazard* with *rotation* does not bode well. The story's setting is a New York media company—a caricature of Henry Luce's Time Inc.—and much is made of staff working to clocks, schedules and deadlines. Time will soon be ticking down for the narrator, a reporter anxious to solve a murder before a closing deadline. He'll be in the frame if he doesn't. The author milks the language of time management throughout his thriller, building the urgency.

The poet Sylvia Plath wrote one novel, *The Bell Jar*, which opens with a memorable line. She does this by positioning an attention-catching clause in mid-sentence:

> It was a queer, sultry summer, the summer they electrocuted the Rosenbergs, and I didn't know what I was doing in New York.

This would be an undistinguished sentence if not for the insert. The punctuation is ungainly, yet those six words about the convicted spies Ethel and Julius Rosenberg leap out like the "pow" sign in a Pop Art canvas. They not only cement time, place, mood; they inject foreboding. And, yes, the narrator, a young innocent from the Mid-West who has won a New York trip, is on track for disaster. This may explain that fourth word, *queer*—the city is where danger lurks ready to prey on unwary, decent folks.

Philip Kerr's period thriller *The One from the Other* likewise opens with a gem. As with Plath, it mixes weather, mood and history. But Kerr does not insert a clause. Instead he shapes a quick dual sentence, with a line fragment extending from a first sentence proper:

> I remember how good the weather was that September. Hitler weather, they used to call it.

First sentences are significant, although some novelists excel when devising an overall opening paragraph. This one by David Goodis, which sets off his novel *Dark Passage* at a brisk pace, is outstanding:

> It was a tough break. Parry was innocent. On top of that he was a decent sort of guy who never bothered people and wanted to lead a quiet life. But there was too much on the other side and on his side of it there was practically nothing. The jury decided he was guilty. The judge handed him a life sentence and he was taken to San Quentin.

Those clipped sentences tell you about Parry. Their bluntness conveys his decency. He is a man of few words, a mister average, not deep, who says things as he sees them. This prose is firm and factual with no fudging or frothy phrases. At the same time the succession of short sentences conveys where he is, how all has followed a step-by-step process. For Parry, there is no manoeuvring. He's caught up by circumstances. This is where an absence of emotional colour to language is significant: the sentences have that same procedure-based coherence of the legal system. And, as in a police report or judicial notice, he is already a bare surname. The scales have tilted against Parry, even though the second line affirms his innocence.

Rhythm is critical here. Notice an absence of commas. There is a short sentence (five words), another short one (three words), then a long one of twenty-two words. They establish a pulse. We move to another long sentence, which at eighteen words is around the same length, then back to a short again (six words). This rhythmic pace is propulsive, driving the reader along. The novel shifts between those lengths. It will be several short sentences, then a long one. Or a couple of long ones, then a short. For a time Goodis's style was so admired that script writers for the television crime drama *Dragnet*

modelled Sergeant Joe Friday's dialogue upon it.

Dark Passage is American "pulp fiction", yet that certainly doesn't mean it is defective writing. To position the author in his 1940s context, Goodis was struggling with, learning from, and reacting against this prose crafted by Ernest Hemingway:

> In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains. In the bed of the river there were pebbles and boulders, dry and white in the sun, and the water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels. Troops went by the house and down the road and the dust they raised powdered the leaves of the trees. The trunks of the trees too were dusty and the leaves fell early that year and we saw the troops marching along the road and the dust rising and leaves, stirred by the breeze, falling and soldiers marching and afterward the road bare and white except for the leaves.

This watershed passage opens *A Farewell to Arms*. A lilting rhythm to the words, drawing us along, is immediate. It stems from the author's progressively lengthening sentences (syllables are measured throughout); how he punctuates, deploying the commas sparingly; his cadenced use of the conjunction *and*. Then there is his choice of clear concrete words. There are no adjectives, adverbs or qualifying terms. Hemingway sticks to nouns and verbs of few syllables; so you could read any of these sentences to a child, and they would grasp it without trouble.

Then there's imagery. The author is describing countryside in the Veneto region of northern Italy during those early weeks of the Great War. This rural autumn is portrayed as serene, attractive, clean, fresh, but it is overtaken by movement and busyness. A river runs, troops march, dust rises, a breeze stirs, leaves fall. And about those troops. Three times they are said to be going along the road, the cumulative effect suggesting there were many, many marching soldiers. Then, at paragraph's end, tranquillity has returned although change has occurred. The empty road is white with dust and littered with dead leaves.

Contemporaneous readers saw symbolism, too. After a funeral the minister recites the phrase "ashes to ashes, dust to dust" over the grave. Likewise, the troops move "down" the road as if going graveward, while raising a dust which coats all as they march. As well, that image of bare tree trunks powdered with dust foreshadows the wasteland of trench warfare.

Hemingway's opening is purged of "voice", quite deliberately so. Even as he was trying to achieve this, other modern writers like the English novelist Jean Rhys were reinventing how "voice" might be handled. She opens *Good Morning, Midnight* like so:

> "Quite like old times," the room says. "Yes? No?" There are two beds, a big one for madame and a smaller one on the opposite side for monsieur. The wash-basin is shut off by a curtain. It is a large room, the smell of cheap hotels faint, almost imperceptible. The street outside is narrow, cobble-stoned, going sharply uphill and ending in a flight of steps. What they call an impasse.

This carries mood so effectively. It doesn't only describe place, which is urban France. It suggests how the narrator, Sasha, has hit dead end. Her being trapped is not only conveyed in the room's squalor, but in small turns of phrase: the basin is "shut off", the street is an "impasse". Those words hint this is what Sasha's current life is: shut off, stuck at an impasse, which is French for "dead end"—*impasse* means literally "no way". And it's all set in present tense. So the language makes it *now*, saying, "This is where I am at, and what I am trapped in."

Notice, too, how Rhys has the paragraph start out with the room talking. It's effectively saying, "Here you go again, you haven't learned, have you?" Having inanimate things feel or talk—the pathetic fallacy—was associated with syrupy Victorian writing, so most modern authors spurned the device. Rhys makes it suit her purposes by having such a harsh opening: the room moralises, and by using the "Yes? No?" it shoves all in Sasha's face. This is like the cop at the police cells saying you're a deadbeat, a loser; although Rhys has the room pass judgment. Of course, this is a device. Really Sasha is judging, and finding herself wanting. Here you are, girl, she's thinking, back at this again, you fool.

The passage by Rhys reinforces how essential awareness is to literary genius. Great writers exhibit heightened understanding. And it's part of the demand reading fiction makes on us—of our reading meaningfully—not to confuse sentiment or cant with wisdom. Certain openings aspire to lofty insight into human nature, but they exhibit more a studied cleverness.

Some fans of Jane Austen idolise her first line to *Pride and Prejudice*—"It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." She rough-drafted that at the age of twenty-one, and it shows. Many youngsters sometimes strain to craft sentences like this. Teachers who have marked student essays recognise the attempted pearl of wisdom from someone with simulated knowledge of the world's ways. Compare that early opening with Austen

twenty years later, in *Persuasion*, when the passage of life has matured, and ripened, her. Here is that other Jane at full throttle:

> Sir Walter Elliot, of Kellynch-Hall, in Somersetshire, was a man who, for his own amusement, never took up any book but the Baronetage; there he found occupation for an idle hour, and consolation in a distressed one; there his faculties were roused into admiration and respect, by contemplating the limited remnant of the earliest patents; there any unwelcome sensations, arising from domestic affairs, changed naturally into pity and contempt, as he turned over the almost endless creations of the last century—and there, if every other leaf were powerless, he could read his own history with an interest which never failed—this was the page at which the favourite volume always opened: ELLIOT OF KELLYNCH-HALL.

Instead of describing the appearance of a key character, we are told of his mental habits, which reveal much about his personality, and also the world of the subsequent story. This is full-bodied social satire, yet it stays above condescending caricature. If we are amused by Sir Walter's imaginative life—a snobby fixation with status, pedigree and smug pleasure at his own family's condition—he is not a one-dimensional comic figure. There is psychological depth here. And it shows how wisdom in late Austen arises from a capacity to understand human foibles.

Daniel Defoe gave writers two ways of opening a fictitious story when he invented the English novel. One was to have the narrator introduce himself or herself, stating the locality they hail from as well as positioning them socially:

> I was born in the year 1632, in the city of York, of a good family, tho' not of that country, my father being a foreigner of Bremen, who settled first at Hull. He got a good estate by merchandise, and leaving off his trade lived afterward at York, from whence he married my mother, whose relations were named Robinson, a very good family in the country, and from whom I was called Robinson Kreutznaer; but by the usual corruption of words in England, we are now called, nay, we call our selves and write our name Crusoe, and so my companions always called me.

This is how Defoe's first effort, *Robinson Crusoe*, of 1719, begins. It was an instant best-seller. Defoe used variants of this format over the next twenty months in his follow-up novels *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, *Captain Singleton* and, another runaway success, *Moll Flanders*.

He minted a different method in 1722, when he shifted to an anonymous narrator for *A Journal of the Plague Year*. He now opened by sketching a context for what will happen:

> It was about the beginning of September, 1664, that I, among the rest of my neighbours, heard in ordinary discourse that the plague was returned from Holland; for it had been very violent there, and particularly at Amsterdam and Rotterdam, in the year 1663, whither, they say, it was brought, some said from Italy, others from the Levant, among some goods which were brought home by their Turkey fleet; others said it was brought from Candia; others from Cyprus. It mattered not from whence it came; but all agreed it was come into Holland again.

Despite slight differences both openings supply background, the when and the where. A modern reader may find them long-winded. Defoe's sentences go on and on due to early customs of punctuation. Commas are rampant, and he handles semi-colons like medieval cathedral builders with flying buttresses, putting in another when he wants to keep adding. Often a Defoe paragraph is an inordinately drawn-out single sentence.

Early imitators repeated these mannerisms—until the publisher Samuel Richardson took up a goose quill in 1740. If you have waded through much eighteenth-century literature, the opening line of his first novel, *Pamela*, stands apart:

> Dear Father and Mother, I have had great Trouble, and some Comfort, to acquaint you with.

This beginning is not only brief. The author foreshadows events related over the next two pages, as well as the tangled tale which will unfold across several hundred pages in this two-volume work. Where Defoe pulls the reader in by addressing him or her like a garrulous speaker who doesn't pause for breath, Richardson announces. No details, no contextual colour, just the enticing bald statement of serious news to relate.

It takes a strong craftsman to use this innovation successfully; which is probably why the long, discursive opening held sway among early novelists. Still, the form was given a twist by Henry Fielding who imported into fiction customs from the sermon and the moralising essay. We see this with

his *Joseph Andrews*, of 1742, penned as a riposte to Richardson. Spurning the rustic matter-of-factness of *Pamela*, which he loathed, Fielding began with a lofty reflection:

> It is a trite but true observation, that examples work more forcibly on the mind than precepts: and if this be just in what is odious and blamable, it is more strongly so in what is amiable and praise-worthy. Here emulation most effectually operates upon us, and inspires our imitation in an irresistible manner. A good man therefore is a standing lesson to all his acquaintance, and of far greater use in that narrow circle than a good book.

Literary mischief is afoot here. Fielding's sermon-style opening sets the reader thinking he is being serious; although once into the story, it is apparent that with those remarks the author was having a sly dig at novels, and the ostentatious talk now becoming attached to popular fiction. This went over the heads of some readers—and writers—which led to the pretentious sermonising stuck at the opening of countless leaden novels.

Long-winded first paragraphs were settled in English fiction until century's end. Ann Radcliffe moved towards a tight opening with her romances, progressively trimming her first sentence in each successive book. By 1794, with *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, she had cut back the wordy opening common in novels to:

> On the pleasant banks of the Garonne, in the province of Gascony, stood, in the year 1584, the chateau of Monseiur St Aubert.

This is lean prose when set against Radcliffe's contemporaries, although there is a clunkiness brought out by punctuation. There's no flow, no easy rhythm here, which may indicate the romance genre was losing steam. Contrast that first sentence with this one:

> Scarcely had the Abbey-Bell tolled for five minutes, and already the Church of the Capuchins thronged with Auditors.

Here is a break into something new. It starts off *The Monk* of 1796, a racy gothic novel by Matthew Lewis. It's not just a matter of concision. Using a single comma, he tightens the descriptive focus. This ensures the reader's attention is not laboriously taken Defoe-like from one thing along to another, then the next, adding on excessive descriptive detail. Instead Lewis uses direct, concrete, scene-setting.

By this point all the literary techniques and devices existed that start up most English novels. From *Ivanhoe* to *The Solid Mandala*, from *Brideshead Revisited* to *Riders of the Purple Sage*, the first sentence stems from literary constructions developed by these innovators. There is only one further innovation, for which we appear indebted to Charles Dickens. We see him adroitly employing it to start *Hard Times*:

> "Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to the Facts, sir!"

This bombast plonks the reader right in the middle of things—the novel starts mid-conversation as a key character, Mr Gradgrind, is holding forth. Merchant, factory owner, banker, principal citizen of Coketown, Gradgrind presents himself through the book as a pinnacle of civic virtue. But by its end we know him to be the source of local corruption.

Readers find that the Gradgrind circle prospers by concealing "Facts". Gradgrind's companion Mrs Sparsit is a malicious parasite; his upper-class friend Mr Harthouse is an idler and seducer; his son Tom is a closet gambler, and frames a decent man for theft; Gradgrind himself conceals his true past, banishing his mother under another name to a distant town. So besides introducing this opinionated figure and his public persona, the opening passage craftily prepares one of the novel's driving themes: moral hypocrisy and deceit.

Entering a fictional world mid-conversation is demanding. Few authors can carry it off. John Marsden has a novel pivot on a tantalising query uttered by a teenager to his best friend. The two youths have been just knocking about, eating fresh strawberries, and are about to play kick-to-kick with a football. Here is the opening line:

> "Do you believe in ghosts?" Horatio asked him.

Re-presenting Shakespeare as a novel can be asking for trouble. But Marsden's *Hamlet* is a gripping page-turner. Reading that opening sentence, I was hooked.

Christopher Heathcote, who lives in Melbourne, wrote "From Bullitt to Dirty Harry via the Supreme Court" in the March issue.

Christopher Akehurst

The Threats to Australia's Prodigious Heritage of Church Architecture

For a country with a comparatively short architectural history Australia has a remarkable number of fine buildings. A string of distinguished architects designed them, working comfortably in a repertoire of Western styles from Georgian and Classical Revival to Art Deco and even Bauhaus to give this country some of the most notable buildings of their kind in the world. I do not exaggerate. The magnificent dark-and-light-stone-banded interior of St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne is the most accomplished example anywhere of the work of William Butterfield, perhaps the greatest of the English Gothic Revivalists; St John's Cathedral in Brisbane—completed, almost incredibly, at the end of the secularised twentieth century—testifies to the genius of a later Gothicist, J.L. Pearson. That neither of these architects was Australian (one shouldn't have to say this but there is a cult of *faux*-patriotism, much fostered by the ABC and media, that construes *Australian* as a superlative) in no way derogates from their buildings as local structures nor from the achievements of locally practising masters of Gothic revival and Neo-Gothic such as the Blackets, William Wardell, J. Horbury Hunt and Alexander North. Then there are the dozens of other notable cathedrals and churches in all states, and the host of parliamentary, government, civic, academic, commercial and cultural buildings throughout the land, and, as Robin Boyd pointed out, an eclectic range of private houses in town and country. Whether Australia is still the lucky country in the sense that Donald Horne snidely dubbed it in 1964 is a moot point, but there is no doubt at all that it remains supremely fortunate in its heritage of architecture.

Among these buildings it is the churches that we should especially value. First, because it is all but inconceivable that places of worship will ever again be built here on such a scale. St John's in Brisbane and the soaring Medieval-inspired Catholic cathedral in Bendigo were anachronisms even as their spires arose. Second, because churches are vulnerable. The need for most of them, particularly those built to hold hundreds of worshippers, has long since ebbed along with Matthew Arnold's sea of faith, and they are at risk of demolition or internal subdivision into revenue-producing offices with a small "worship space" in a corner or, worst of all, profanation through conversion into flats and "town houses" with trapezoidal windows cut into their walls and layers of solar panels on their roofs. The fate of perhaps a score of unused churches in the once strongly Presbyterian and Catholic Victorian provincial city of Ballarat is a chilling foretaste of what could soon be happening everywhere. That de-Christianised city's principal Presbyterian church, built like the others largely on the proceeds of gold and wool, whose spire is one of the city's few landmarks, is about to be "redeveloped" as apartments; the Uniting Church, to which its ownership devolved, having declined to sell it to the Anglicans as a cathedral because, it has been reported locally, the developer offered a higher price.

But there is another perpetual threat to surviving churches and this comes from the people who actually use them, or more specifically and usually, the professional clergy. And sad to say, the threat is strongest in the body that owns the largest number of Australia's architecturally distinguished and substantial churches, the Roman Catholic Church. In fact there is scarcely one Catholic church in the whole country that has not been to a greater or lesser extent altered—*vandalised* would be in most cases the more precise word. From outside they look just as when they were built, but inside, no. Not since the altar-smashing Protestant reformers in the sixteenth century, or indeed the secularisers of the French Revolution, has there been destruction of ecclesiastical fittings and *objets d'art* on such a scale. And as with the reformers and the revolutionaries, the iconoclasm was justified on the grounds of progress, in this case progress towards the brave new Church of the future, as envisaged in the destroyers' interpretation of what can now be

seen as a supreme exercise in ecclesiastical folly, the Second Vatican Council (1962–65), usually referred to as Vatican II.

Vatican II mandated certain changes to the Catholic liturgy. In themselves these were modest enough—a simplified Mass, use of the vernacular—but they were appropriated by a powerful, partly German-influenced protestantising party in the Church that regarded the Council as an opportunity for the Catholic Church to undergo its own Reformation. These latter-day reformers saw themselves as "filled" with "the spirit of Vatican II", a spirit that they spruiked, somewhat prematurely, as a "new Pentecost" (its real results can be observed all around us now, in the demographically reduced status of the Catholic Church in the West).

Not at their least energetic here in Australia, the protestantisers seized on the Council's liturgical revisions as a justification for much vaster changes to the church buildings in which the ritual novelties were to be enacted. The typical Catholic sanctuary with its altar and tabernacle and six candlesticks was not congenial to the protestantisers who, as the ecclesiastical equivalent of secular leftists, manoeuvred themselves as leftists always do into positions of authority from which they could impose their own "vision". They wanted bare sanctuaries—or no sanctuaries at all—in supposed emulation of primitive Christians in the catacombs, with the altar pushed out into the middle of the congregation and reduced to a table like an ironing board or butcher's block, on which their version of the Mass, interpreted by them not as a sacrifice but as a communal *agape*, could be celebrated with everyone gazing on (a) to show that it wasn't the priest alone who celebrated the liturgy and (b) to make sure the laity weren't just sitting there letting their minds wander but (a favourite phrase) "actively participating".

To this intent existing churches had to be "reordered", generally with little concern for the integrity of their architecture or fittings. Architectural or artistic beauty was no protection against alteration and removal; the reorderers, like their sixteenth-century predecessors, prioritised function. It was a field in which the United States led the Catholic world. The high priest of American reorderers, Father Richard Vosko, author of *God's House Is Our House: Re-imagining the Environment for Worship*, a manifesto of radical church renovation, is quoted as describing pre-Vatican II American cathedrals (of which he has worked on thirteen) and other churches as "designed to house a liturgy of a different age and genre—a different, pre-Vatican II understanding of what liturgy is". Defective to protestantisers on that account, these historic buildings had to be dragged metaphorically kicking and screaming into the ecclesiologically enlightened late twentieth century. Churches were to become, to paraphrase Le Corbusier, machines for worship.

Sometimes in church porches or in parish histories you will find a photograph of the church as it was before about 1968. Comparing that with its present appearance reveals that in not a few cases a clean sweep has been made of the former fittings and furnishings—altars, pulpits, communion rails, statues, decorative floor tiles, even old-fashioned pews with kneelers. Comfy chairs on carpeted floors have been substituted for the pews and tiles, wooden tables and lecterns have replaced altar and pulpit. Some churches have been reoriented in plan with the altar aligned with one of the side walls. (This is called "horizontal" orientation and expresses, according to one notable reorderer, "God's presence in and with the community", as opposed to the conventional "vertical" orientation with God at the far end. Obviously to those who think like this God is not beyond space and time.) Although no great aesthetic merit can be claimed for some of the fittings removed, the replacements are usually worse, having been designed in the infantile "contemporary" idiom of forty years ago. Worse than the loss of fittings is the architectural loss deriving from the hollowing out, the emptying of a church whose altar and other furnishings were components of its logical form. The damage is beyond calculation.

Worse than the loss of fittings is the architectural loss deriving from the hollowing out, the emptying of a church whose altar and other furnishings were components of its logical form. The damage is beyond calculation.

All this took place for the most part without the disapproval of bishops and others who could have stopped it, they being themselves in many cases (the late Archbishop Guilford Young of Hobart springs to mind) as zealous as their clergy in their promotion of "the spirit of Vatican II". The desire for change under the influence of the new reformers spread with astonishing speed. Priests in particular who had been brought up in and seemed happy with the "old" Catholicism embraced the new with gusto. Real opposition came largely from the laity.

There were plenty of objections to the changes from individual churchgoers, especially from those whose families had donated the discarded objects, but these objections of course were dismissed as "reactionary" and as not being on-message with what "the spirit was saying to the Church".

The high-water mark of reorderings was reached in the late 1990s (if one seeks a peak example it could be the removal in that decade of the *tempietto*, the canopy under which the Blessed Sacrament was exposed for adoration, and downgrading of the high altar in what was once the many-candled national shrine of traditional Catholic eucharistic devotion, St Francis's church in Melbourne). With the new century the tide of destruction slowed, partly of course because there wasn't much left to reorder. In the past two decades there has been some hope, even indication, that with natural changes in fashion, and under the conservative influence of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI in recovering Catholic identity, and above all by the ageing and retirement of the "spirit of Vatican II" enthusiasts, the worst of the vandalism was over.

In the United States, which is always ahead of Australia in fashion, and where untold damage had been done, the tide had demonstrably turned, and a not inconsiderable number of gifted architects such as Duncan Stroik (professor of architecture at Notre Dame University), James McCrery, David Meleca, Steve Baker and the venerable firm of Cram and Ferguson were being commissioned to undo the radical reorderings (for which traditionalists had invented the term "wreckovation") and restore Catholic churches to a recognisably Catholic appearance, as well as to build an astonishing number of new churches. The work of these architects, much of it remarkably accomplished and beautiful in an historical way, can be seen on their abundantly illustrated websites. Their influence is at last beginning to be felt in Australia. Sidney Rofe, architect of the Benedict XVI Retreat Centre at Grose Vale outside Sydney, is one designer forging a reputation for his tradition-inspired work. Edward O'Hanlon is another. At the same time there is evidence that the battle here is far from won and there is life in the wreckovators yet.

St Vincent de Paul's, a large cream-brick church built in 1959 in the green-gardens Melbourne suburb of Strathmore, is described on the Victorian Heritage Database as "a fine and intact example of the work of Cyril C. Kelly, a prolific Catholic architect whose designs for churches and monasteries are characterised by a hybrid conservative/contemporary style". Intact it might have been when that was written but it certainly isn't now. The interior of the chancel, with its imposing altar and what the heritage report notes as its "unusual baldacchino", was gutted in a recent renovation and the altar and baldacchino discarded. They were replaced by a pipe organ standing bang in the middle of the chancel where the altar used to be. An insignificant altar stands in front of the organ. Perhaps because the unadorned facade of an organ was felt to make the chancel look like a concert stage, little flecks of timber like wood chips were mounted on it to semi-disguise the pipes, and a crucifix was added. If St Vincent's had been built as a contemporary church, the effect would be not altogether unpleasing; but it wasn't, and any merit in the new design is outweighed by the destruction of an intact sanctuary and fine workmanship that didn't fit in with the parish's current ideas.

Although an organ behind the altar is quite common in European Baroque churches, it is normally placed high up so as not to compete visually with the altar, which in a Catholic church is supposed to be the focal point of the interior. Even when the "spirit of Vatican II" was at its full flood, it was rare to find a heritage-listed building treated with quite the same level of contempt for its architect's intentions as St Vincent de Paul has been.

Then there is the Carmelite church in Middle Park, Melbourne, an exuberant 1927 brick and cement "blood and bandage" edifice in the neo-Romanesque style, the work of the prolific A.A. Fritsch. It recently acquired a favourite contrivance of Vatican II enthusiasts, a font, lectern and altar in a row down the middle of the nave. There are now several other examples in Australia of this arrangement, which is supposed to emphasise the "balance" of "word and sacrament" but has the additional (deliberate?) advantage of leaving less space in the nave for pews so that diminished congregations don't look so small. (At least at Middle Park the original fittings were left intact in the original sanctuary, thus respecting the "golden rule" of adapting historic buildings to contemporary requirements: if you must change things, do nothing irreversible.)

Radical changes to church buildings are not necessarily to be blamed on architects, who act on instructions, but can more often be laid at the door of a newish species of ecclesiastical "expert", the "liturgist", toiler in a vineyard of largely American invention. Before Vatican II there was no need for liturgists (there were liturgical scholars who studied the history and philosophy of liturgy, which is quite another thing) because the liturgy of the Mass and other rites and the specifications of the objects and furnishings required were fixed and determined by rubric. Many rubrics were dropped during Vatican

II, giving the "liturgical consultant" of today the freedom to busy himself (or more often for some reason herself) with making liturgy more "relevant" and adapting the "liturgical environment"—that is, the church building—moving furniture around, installing overhead screens and dreaming up exercises in symbolism such as aquatic installations with water flowing out of fonts and over pebbles to indicate the "lifegiving spirit". And it is from liturgists that a further indication has come that the spirit of wreckovation has not run out of steam, and that Australian churches are still at risk of "re-imagining".

The Australian Catholic University in Melbourne has a "Centre for Liturgy" which last February arranged a symposium with the Catholic bishops' National Liturgical Architecture and Art Board under the scriptural title of "Where Your Treasure Is, There Will Your Heart Be Also" (the precise application of which to church reordering seems obscure—perhaps they meant "Where Your Treasure Was …" for disgruntled donors of cast-out objects). Among the topics to be "explored" by what the website called "all those who care about the places of Catholic worship" was "the re-ordering of re-ordered churches". This sounded promising, if what was meant was putting the churches back to the way they ought to be. Alas, that seems not to have been the intention at all.

The real future of church design is going to be undoing the damage and re-establishing a church architecture and design that recognises continuity rather than rupture and reconciles the best of the past with the new.

For lo and behold, a "keynote speaker" invited to enlighten the assembled "clergy, parishioners, architects, artists, teachers, liturgists, designers" was the aforesaid Richard Vosko. Talk about looking to the past rather than the future. Vosko's design philosophy goes back fifty years. He has been at the forefront of "spirit of Vatican II" reorderings for the half-century that has seen hundreds of American churches stripped of their fittings. Anyone interested in ecclesiastical design knows Vosko's liturgical and theological principles backwards. If they are the inspiration for the "guidelines" promised by the February event it is hard to see how the symposium could hope to fulfil another of its stated purposes, that of ensuring that "damage is not done to the heritage value of our churches during any work undertaken to make them fit for sacred use".

Nor are Vosko's ideas sympathetic to one of the few growth areas in the contemporary Roman Catholic Church, that which is represented by the widespread re-introduction of the traditional Latin Mass, especially in the United States, and the emerging traditionalist constituency among the young.

But the traditionalist young are still relatively few in number and many of the old see nothing to object to in what might be termed the school of Richard Vosko. So it was hardly an encouraging start for the preservation or restoration of traditional church interiors in Australia (not only Catholic, since Anglicans and others often follow where Catholics lead) that the Australian Catholic University gave Vosko a further forum to expound his principles. Indeed, they need hardly have bothered, since when you think about it the kind of thing Vosko advocates is everywhere to be seen in this country already. It's a case of *si monumentum requiris circumspice*, when the real challenge—the real future of church design, assuming churches have much of a future—is going to be undoing the damage and re-establishing a church architecture and design that recognises continuity rather than rupture and reconciles the best of the past with the new. What a pity Professor Stroik wasn't invited.

As it happens, he might as well have been. By a pleasing irony, the news report in the Sydney *Catholic Weekly* (January 16, 2019) announcing the conference, complete with photograph of a (Brisbane) progressive parish's emptied-out church (it looks like the concourse of a major railway station when the last train has gone) carries a link to a related article, "Timeless beauty has facelift at Lewisham". Here, juxtaposed, we see the kind of thing the Voskoites would die a thousand deaths rather than countenance: a restored Puginesque interior with wall stencilling; high altar and reredos (and freestanding altar for flexibility), communion rails. The church, St Thomas Becket's, is one of Sydney's oldest. Its restorers, Edward O'Hanlon and QOH Design, have reminded contemporary liturgists and designers of what can be done when the past is imaginatively respected and interpreted according to its own aesthetic, historical and theological principles, something the Melbourne symposium did not exactly shout from the housetops.

Christopher Akehurst wrote on the Second Vatican Council ("Good Pope John and His Wonderful Idea") in the October 2012 issue. He writes regular articles on church architecture for the ***Melbourne Catholic****.*

STORY

Sue Me, Sweetheart

Elizabeth Power

Vincent had been patronising Pip's restaurant for nearly twenty years. Just as he did every Thursday, he crossed to table twelve and sat facing the room, catching the wine waiter's eye. Henry, who had been bringing him a half bottle of Jacob's Creek shiraz for longer than he could remember, poured a little into a gleaming glass and paused, eyebrows raised as though uncertain of Vincent's approval, before filling the glass.

"Thank you, sir. Enjoy your meal," he said as always and withdrew, allowing the winsome waitress Carlotta to take his place.

She smiled. "Hello, Mr McKendrick. Will you have the usual?" Vincent nodded and folded the *Financial Review* to better focus on the falling dollar.

Pip, the chef and owner, made the best meat pie Vincent had ever eaten. When Carlotta returned with his order he noticed with intense pleasure the double serving of peas prepared as only Pip knew how—mashed with a little virgin olive oil, a dash of balsamic, finely chopped mint and ground black pepper.

As Carlotta reached across with the plate, a woman of such ample proportions that she had trouble squeezing between the tables nudged her roughly, sending the contents of the plate flying into Vincent's lap. The pie collapsed on contact and the pea puree made a spectacular landing. Carlotta was mortified.

"Oh, Mr McKendrick! Oh sir! Oh, I'm so sorry! Oh, you poor, poor thing!" She rescued most of the shattered pie. The puree of peas was another story. After scooping up as much as possible, she snatched a red paper napkin from the table and attempted to remove the verdant stains from Vincent's pale grey pants. Arms helplessly raised, he watched the proceedings grim-faced as the dewy-eyed waitress scrubbed on. Suddenly she paused in her ministrations and her slim white hands sprang to her mouth.

"Oh crikey!" she gasped.

Vincent glanced down at the once pearly perfection of his tailored slacks to find the green splatter had become streaked with vermilion from the napkin. The art-loving Pip later described the result as "a poor man's Jackson Pollock".

"Oh sir," Carlotta implored, clasping her hands, "how will you ever forgive me!"

Her lustrous brown eyes filled with tears. Her lips, the colour of the most recent embellishment on Vincent's trousers, trembled as she grasped his hand and pulled it to her bosom. "Oh sir, what can I do to make amends?"

Nothing like this had ever happened to Vincent.

"I'll have them dry-cleaned," she pleaded, tears spilling over and weaving their way down her cheeks as she glanced nervously to see if the incident had attracted Pip's stern gaze. Vincent felt his hands grow damp and his normally sluggish heart

began to hammer insistently behind a small splash of puree on his shirt front.

Even Jessica, an attractive young lawyer in his firm, had never affected him so intensely. When she terminated their liaison, she explained that no matter where they were she never felt she had left the office. "Lighten up, Vince," she would plead. "There's more to life than litigation." But her requests went unheeded, and she finally had to resign and move to Melbourne because of his unwelcome persistence in wooing her.

Vincent had avoided any further romantic forays until he found himself gazing into Carlotta's tear-filled eyes. He gulped. "I assure you there is no necessity to exhibit such an overt manifestation of remorse," he said. "Adequate compensation can be made, my dear, without any further restitution, notwithstanding any damage which may or may not have been sustained because of the aforementioned incident, if the perpetrator would agree to accompany the injured party to dinner on her next night off."

Carlotta blinked and wiped her sodden cheeks. "Are you asking me ...?"

"Would you ...?" Vincent's eyes were anxious.

"A date ...?"

"Yes, yes," breathed Vincent, "on the first possible occasion that this establishment agrees to dispense with your services."

So it was settled, and on the following Monday night Vincent Cedric McKendrick, senior partner in the legal firm of McKendrick, McCracken, McCawley and Hobart, sat opposite Carlotta Brown and fell hopelessly in love.

As for Carlotta, she was both bemused and confused. She was flattered by his attentions but not quite ready for the barrage of flowers and gifts which arrived almost daily. She had recently parted company with Darren, who had never sent her a single daisy, and whose idea of a romantic evening was to give her a ticket to go and watch him play football. The end came when Darren went berserk after a goal was overturned and he had to serve a one-match ban.

"It's not the end of he world," sighed Carlotta.

"Yes it is," snarled Darren. There followed a period when his anger-management was an issue and Carlotta was forced to take out an apprehended violence order against him and change addresses.

So Vincent opened up a whole new world to her. When, before long, he asked her to be his bride—at least she decided that was the gist of what he said—Carlotta, flattered by the proposal, the growing pile of lavish gifts and proud of his achievements in the legal field, stammered her acceptance. A cluster of diamonds appeared on her left hand and a few days later she withdrew a coat of perfectly matched Arctic foxes from their nest of pink tissue and wrapped herself in its sumptuous softness while her flatmate Phoebe gasped and made breathless pronouncements like "Wow!" and "Holy cow!"

At Vincent's behest, Carlotta resigned from Pip's establishment but her joy was not unconfined. As she confided to Phoebe: "At least I knew what Darren was talking about." She thumbed through a book titled *Everything to Know about Australian Wine*, determined to demonstrate to her fiancé that she knew the difference between a chardonnay and a shiraz.

One evening, as the betrothed couple sat sipping Moet from crystal flutes, Carlotta gently suggested that Vincent might modify his language so that she might have a chance of gauging his meaning.

"I never know whether to answer yes or no," she explained.

Vincent smiled, patted her hand and said, "I have noted your objection, dearest, but the way our partnership is structured there is no absolute requirement for any communication between us to be bipartite so a negative or affirmative response becomes irrelevant, my love." Carlotta murmured something in a dove-like way which made Vincent's heart burn so fervently that he asked the maitre d' to turn up the air-conditioning.

Discouraged, Carlotta slumped in her chair and began to feel thoroughly miserable. "I want to go home," she whimpered.

Vincent patted her hand again and smiled. "Make a motion or put a resolution and I'll consider it—that is, of course, if you show just cause," he said, winking.

Carlotta fled and Vincent, mystified, called for the bill and thumped the table absently with the pepper grinder.

Carlotta was not to be mollified. Vincent pleaded with her, showering her with red roses, but Carlotta had had enough. "Enough's enough, Vincent," she said. "I'm so sorry but we're not suited. I can't see you any more."

Vincent's grief turned to despair. His despair turned to rage. His rage burgeoned into revenge. Vincent Cedric McKendrick sued Carlotta Brown for breach of promise and demanded that she repay the $47,405.60 he had spent while wooing her. She offered to return the shiny red Mazda, his late mother's Arctic foxes and the fistful of diamonds, but the offer was declined, as a full refund on what were now used goods was not deemed possible.

"Besides," Vincent opined, "the champagne has been consumed and is therefore irretrievable and all the floral tributes are by now, at best, moribund."

His fiancee, normally so calm and patient, had a complete change of temperament and tossed five dozen withered rosebuds onto her former lover's veranda. She then drove the nifty little red Mazda into his fence, knocking down thirty-five pickets and annihilating his best azalea bush.

Vincent's rage increased to white-hot fury. His list of punitive damages grew daily.

Phoebe offered Carlotta advice. "Why don't you write to Vincent and ask if there's some way of settling the dispute other than by repaying the money, which you can't afford?"

Carlotta wrote to Vincent, and received a prompt reply stating that he was still willing to marry her and waive the amount owing "on the conditions hereinbelow set forth"—one of which was that she marry him before the last day of the month. Sniffing victory, he finished his letter on a cordial note. "Please feel free to call at my office during business hours if you have any queries regarding the matters raised and the conditions contained therein. My door will always be ajar should you wish to avail yourself of the opportunity to discuss any of the aforementioned." He signed it, "Yours truly, Vincent."

Phoebe read the letter and offered more valuable counsel: "I think you should talk to my boss, Charlie Hope. I guarantee he'd give Vincent a run for his money."

Carlotta knew of Charlie Hope's reputation as a canny lawyer, well-versed in matters matrimonial, and recalled Phoebe's many stories of how he had extricated clients from sticky situations. That's what I'm in, she mused, a sticky situation. Phoebe made an appointment for the next day and when Carlotta arrived, wan from lack of sleep, ushered her into her employer's presence.

Charlie Hope leant back in his swivel chair and rocked slightly as Carlotta related her story. He noted her demure mode of dress, her lowered lashes, her trembling lip and her sweet little sighs. "I can see what that bastard sees in this chick," he thought.

When Carlotta finished her tale of torment, he pursed his lips and sat thinking

before he made his pronouncement.

"Marry the shit, then divorce him and take him to the cleaners."

Carlotta looked more miserable than ever. She was losing weight, her once rosy complexion was pale, her eyes dull and fearful. "Marry him?" She was aghast.

Charlie Hope nodded in sympathy. He sat watching her through narrowed eyes, the tips of his fingers pressed together as his wily legal mind ticked over, searching for a solution. Carlotta caught a few phrases he muttered and then discarded as his mind took another tack—"diminished responsibility", "unsoundness of mind"—but each time he slowly shook his head.

"Yes," he said finally. "I've got it."

When Vincent heard his beloved's voice on his office telephone that afternoon, he rudely banished his secretary mid-sentence and stammered with delight. Of course he would meet her at Pip's for dinner. Of course, of course at his favourite table. And yes, yes, at eight the following night. His hands were shaking, and he took the rest of the day off.

The next night he arrived early, requesting Henry to open a bottle of French burgundy to allow it "to breathe for a satisfactory period prior to imbibing". He then sat back, his eyes on the door, his upper lip damp in anticipation.

At ten minutes past eight Carlotta made her entrance—thick lustrous hair upswept, swathed in the late Mrs McKendrick's furs, shod from toe to knee in fine Italian calf—another of Vincent's earlier gifts. As she wafted between the tables she greeted old customers effusively, as they gazed after her in wonderment. Where had they met such a stunning creature—Randwick perhaps?

As Vincent rose to meet her, she flung her arms round him and kissed him fulsomely, leaving a scarlet brand across his startled mouth. He stammered a nervous greeting, his eyes alarmed. Perhaps she's just ecstatic to be back with me again, he thought, and forced a tiny smile.

"Wow!" squealed Carlotta, checking the wine label. "French! Hey, everybody!" She held the bottle aloft and turned to address her fellow diners. "Get a load of this. It's imported!"

Vincent Cedric McKendrick sank as low as he could into his chair and shielded his tortured expression with Pip's dinner menu, which was expansive enough to have been designed for just such a purpose. How could anyone have changed so grotesquely in such a short time? Where was his adorable, reticent rose who blushed so readily and so prettily? Where was his softly cooing dinner companion who hung on his every word, her gentle brows arched in wonderment as she pondered each phrase he uttered?

"Guess what?" Her query was aimed at a lone diner at an adjoining table. "We're getting hitched. How about that!"

Charlie Hope had booked the table the day before. He wouldn't have missed the performance for a month in the criminal court.

"May I offer you my felicitations," he intoned, half rising and holding his wine glass aloft. "And my heartiest congratulations to the lucky man. You certainly have a prize."

"Gee thanks," smiled Carlotta. "That's really cute. Wasn't that cute, honey?" Carlotta turned to receive the approbation of her fiancé, who had shrunk further behind his menu.

"Cease this display of crass exhibitionism this instant," he hissed through clenched teeth.

"You say the cutest things," sighed Carlotta. At an almost imperceptible nod from the next table, Pip himself arrived to ask if the lady would like to be divested of her furs.

"Allow me, madame." Pip was at his most courtly, bowing deferentially as he slipped the coat from her bare shoulders, revealing a dress so brief in every direction that conversation stopped dead and Charlie Hope was quite unable to prevent the escape of a low appreciative whistle. Carlotta turned once more to face her public, extended her arms and made a little bob. She was rewarded by appreciative applause.

"Sit! Sit this instant!" Vincent was apoplectic. Carlotta threw herself into the lap of her hapless betrothed and twittered, "Kiss me, kiss me, kiss me!" Carlotta rained a flurry of little kisses on his brow, his eyes, cheeks and burning ears, saving one until last. This she delivered with a little flourish right on the tip of his nose.

Soup grew cold on tables throughout the hushed room as diners' appetites turned from food to romance.

"When are we getting married, honey? Remember, you promised!"

Vincent Cedric McKendrick, senior partner in the reputable firm of McKendrick, McCracken, McCawley and Hobart, could take no more. Thrusting Carlotta aside, he struggled to his feet, fuming.

"The person to whom I made that commitment no longer exists. Therefore I am no longer ethically constrained to abide by any aforestated contract and shall not be deemed to be in breach of said contract and should not be precluded from availing myself of the right to decline to do so."

Carlotta hesitated a moment and then enthused, "Why that's terrific, honey. I've always said you have a way with words."

"Can't you absorb anything through that dense cranium of yours? There will be no nuptials. None! Keep your ostentatious animal pelts and your vulgar sparklers and your thigh-high bootees. I never want to see you again. Do you understand?"

He clutched his chest, and Pip, concerned that his diner might expire there and then and frighten his customers, ushered him out, beckoning to Henry to call a cab.

"That was bloody magnificent," enthused Charlie Hope, rising from his chair. "Would you care to join me?"

Carlotta whisked the burgundy across to Charlie's table as he drew out a chair for her.

"I'm sure," she opined as she poured the ruby liquid into two gleaming goblets, "that you will find this a particularly elegant red, complex in character, distinctive and quite individual with perfectly integrated oak. It has a soft but firm finish and I think you'll find it well-balanced with a lengthy palate ..."

"I'm sure I will," grinned Charlie, raising his glass. "Here's to us!"

Elizabeth Power is a retired journalist and playwright who lives in Splityard Creek, Queensland.

SWEETNESS & LIGHT

Tim Blair

Tim Soutphommasane, our former $346,250 per year Race Discrimination Commissioner, recently happened upon an Australian Associated Press court report that utterly enraged him.

To be fair, that report would have enraged anybody. It listed a series of allegations levelled at a man who was said to have terrified a large Islamic family as they attempted to enjoy a picnic in a park south of Sydney. The rowdy fellow allegedly threatened to kill members of the family before driving his car in muddy loops around them, yelling obscene anti-Muslim abuse all the while. According to police accounts, some family members were in tears by the time officers arrived and arrested the accused.

"What a terrible experience this must have been for the family targeted," Soutphommasane responded on social media. No argument there. But then Soupy put on his enchanted race discrimination goggles, which enable him to detect motives and place blame despite a total absence of evidence. "Such violent conduct doesn't happen in a vacuum," Soupy ruled. "For too long, certain politicians and media have been fomenting anti-Muslim hate. Hope it is met with the full force of the law."

And there you have it. A Muslim family are allegedly abused and Detective Souperman immediately nails the culprits: "certain politicians and the media". You can guess who he meant. They tend to appear frequently in comments Soupy leaves at his virtuous little Twitter site.

A perspective realignment may have taken place inside the now sociology and political theory academic's head a few hours later, however. That initial AAP report did not name the alleged offender or provide any background details. But subsequent reports did, the very same day.

The accused turned out to be one Sharaf-Deen Yusuf, a homeless forty-three-year-old man of Nigerian background. Furthermore, Yusuf at one point in his early April hearing requested that Legal Aid be withdrawn from his case.

"I feel discriminated against," Yusuf told the presiding magistrate. "I'm a black man, I'm a Muslim and I don't think he [the solicitor] likes me at all."

Now, I'm not a very spiritual person, but surely this is evidence of Bill Leak's handiwork from the hereafter. He's crafted a perfect humiliation for stupid Soupy, whose baseless pursuit of the late cartoonist over racism claims should have seen the entire Australian Human Rights Commission dashed to atoms.

We'll leave Soupy now to Bill's further gentle ministering and consider instead the welter of perspectives cast all about the place following the horrific shooting deaths of fifty mosque attendees in Christchurch, New Zealand. Australian white supremacist and accused terrorist Brenton Tarrant's self-absorbed manifesto, published online prior to the alleged murders, provided opportunity for pundits across the political spectrum to place blame wherever they wished.

Among individuals and influences accused of inspiring the slaughter were US President Donald Trump, Serbian nationalism, France, America, "words", YouTube identity PewDiePie, death row inhabitant Dylann Roof, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini, columns in Australia's *Daily Telegraph* and *Herald Sun*, "European ideas" and even former first daughter Chelsea Clinton.

Just a theory, but maybe Tarrant was responsible. Best leave that to the courts. Also fascinating were the changed perspectives of many who had previously commented on terrorism. Following the deaths of nearly 3000 people in the 2001 9/11 attacks, the *Sydney Morning Herald*'s Peter FitzSimons apologised to the killers: "We are sorry. We are desperately sorry that the world has now moved to the point where it is on the edge of an abyss from which there can be no return. We accept that such hate as drove the planes into the World Trade Centre towers can only have come from incredible suffering, and we are desperately sorry for that suffering, even if we are yet to come to grips with its specific cause."

He hasn't apologised for Tarrant's "incredible suffering", which apparently is at the root of terrorist acts. Five years ago, the ABC's Jonathan Green had a few deep thoughts: "Could be any day now ... the sudden indiscriminate smack of a terrorist attack. Our best defence is of course our cultured reason. Our tolerance. Our audacious confidence in the fundamental goodness of others. Maybe even our sense of humour."

Not seeing much "fundamental goodness" myself out of that Christchurch cowardice. Neither is Green. Perhaps the biggest perspective shift came

from Ten's Waleed Aly, who had this to say when two Islamic killers murdered three people and severed the limbs of sixteen others in bomb attacks on the Boston Marathon:

> We're finally maturing in the way we handle terrorism. Gone is the triumphalist rhetoric of the "War on Terror", with its ridiculous promises of a terrorism-free world and the ultimate victory of freedom over tyranny.
>
> In its place is a far more sober, pragmatic recognition that terrorism is a perpetual irritant, and that while it is tragic and emotionally lacerating, it kills relatively few people and is not any kind of existential threat.

No big deal, then. But Waleed was not quite so sanguine post-Christchurch. "I'm gutted and I'm scared and I feel overcome with utter hopelessness," he said on Ten's *The Project*. Terrorism is evidently an irritant no longer:

> While I appreciate the words our leaders have said today, and in particular Scott Morrison's comments and his preparedness to call this terrorism and the strength of his comments more generally, I have something to ask.
>
> Don't change your tune now because the terrorism seems to be coming from a white supremacist. If you've been talking about being "tough on terrorism" for years in the communities that allegedly support it, show us how tough you are now.

They're a lot tougher now than Aly was then. Consider, please, the wrath that would have deservedly come down upon Morrison or anyone else had they dismissed the Christchurch massacre as a mere "irritant" that killed "relatively few people and is not any kind of existential threat".

As Waleed himself said, "Don't change your tune now." But he did, and so will Tim Soutphommasane.

When in office, former Prime Minister John Howard used to say that he held the second-most important job in Australia. The most important, even above being PM, was being captain of the Australian cricket team.

It's surprising, then, that Malcolm Turnbull didn't pick up on this and focus his ambition on the higher calling. As it happens, the very same tactics he used to become PM could also have worked if he had sought our cricket captaincy.

From the outset, Turnbull's social circumstances and background would have placed him advantageously among the sort of folk who enjoy senior administrative and commercial roles with cricket. There is some considerable overlap in Australia between sport and politics. His time as a legal adviser to Kerry Packer could just as easily have been spent as a cricket broadcasting adviser, further drawing Turnbull towards his ultimate aim.

Turnbull's closing submission in the British *Spycatcher* case could, with a couple of small alterations, be a cricket coach's speech on the virtues of practice: "The fact of the matter is that nothing is achieved in this world, particularly politically, other than with persistence, and persistence involves repetition and it involves argument and re-argument."

Or, alternatively, batting and more batting. Next, rather than trampling over Peter King to become the Liberal candidate for Wentworth, our imagined cricketing Malcolm would have done the same to a New South Wales Sheffield Shield captain. As a leading campaigner for an Australian republic, Turnbull's insights into Ashes Tests between Australia and England might have attracted much attention in the press, building Turnbull's profile.

Upon reaching the sport's senior ranks, Turnbull would then turn his eye upon the gentleman currently leading our national team. His undermining of that captain coinciding with thirty straight Test defeats, Turnbull times his captaincy bid to perfection.

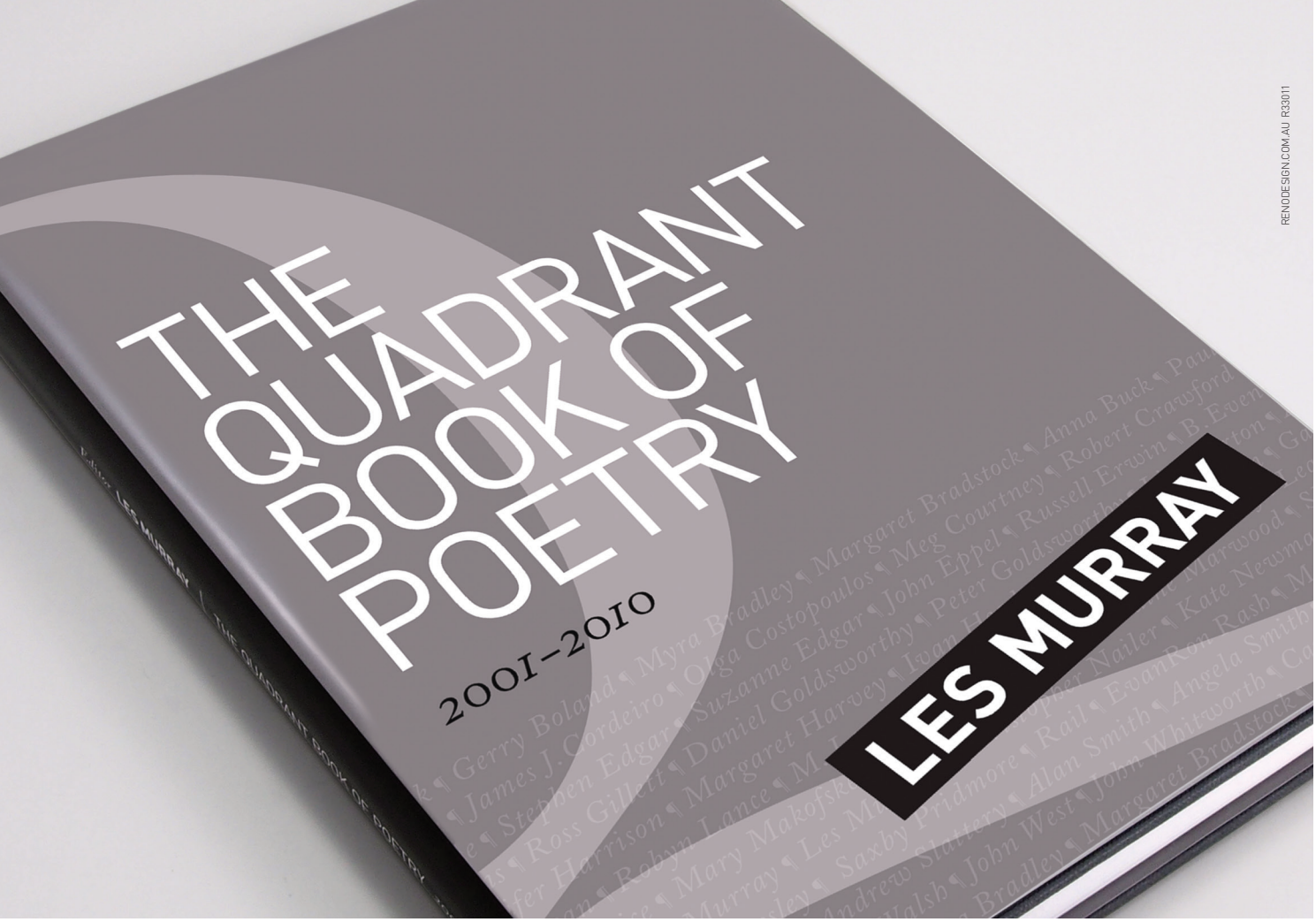
At this point, every single one of Malcolm Turnbull's career moves in the aim of one day becoming the Australian cricket captain has paid off. He has cultivated contacts in cricket administration, cricket journalism and among cricket followers. He has a number of supporters within the Australian cricket team who believe Turnbull is a worthy force for modernising our summer sport.

Even opposition captains and players hail the rise of Turnbull. When Cricket Australia eventually calls a vote, Malcolm Turnbull is finally appointed captain. His life's destiny is fulfilled.

For a time, all is well. It's the off-season, so Turnbull does little but enjoy the adulation of his fans. Opinion polls show he is vastly more popular than the previous captain, and hugely more popular than any rival team leaders. Some in the media imagine he may remain captain for decades.

Then summer is upon us, and the First Test commences in Brisbane. Turnbull strides out to open the batting, determined to lead from the front. He carefully scans the field and prepares for the bowler's first delivery. It is a short ball, rising towards the batsman's helmet. A moment later, as the ball clatters into his faceguard, everybody watching the game realises something that had completely escaped them during Turnbull's ascent.

He doesn't know how to play cricket.



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— BOB ELLIS, *TABLE TALK*

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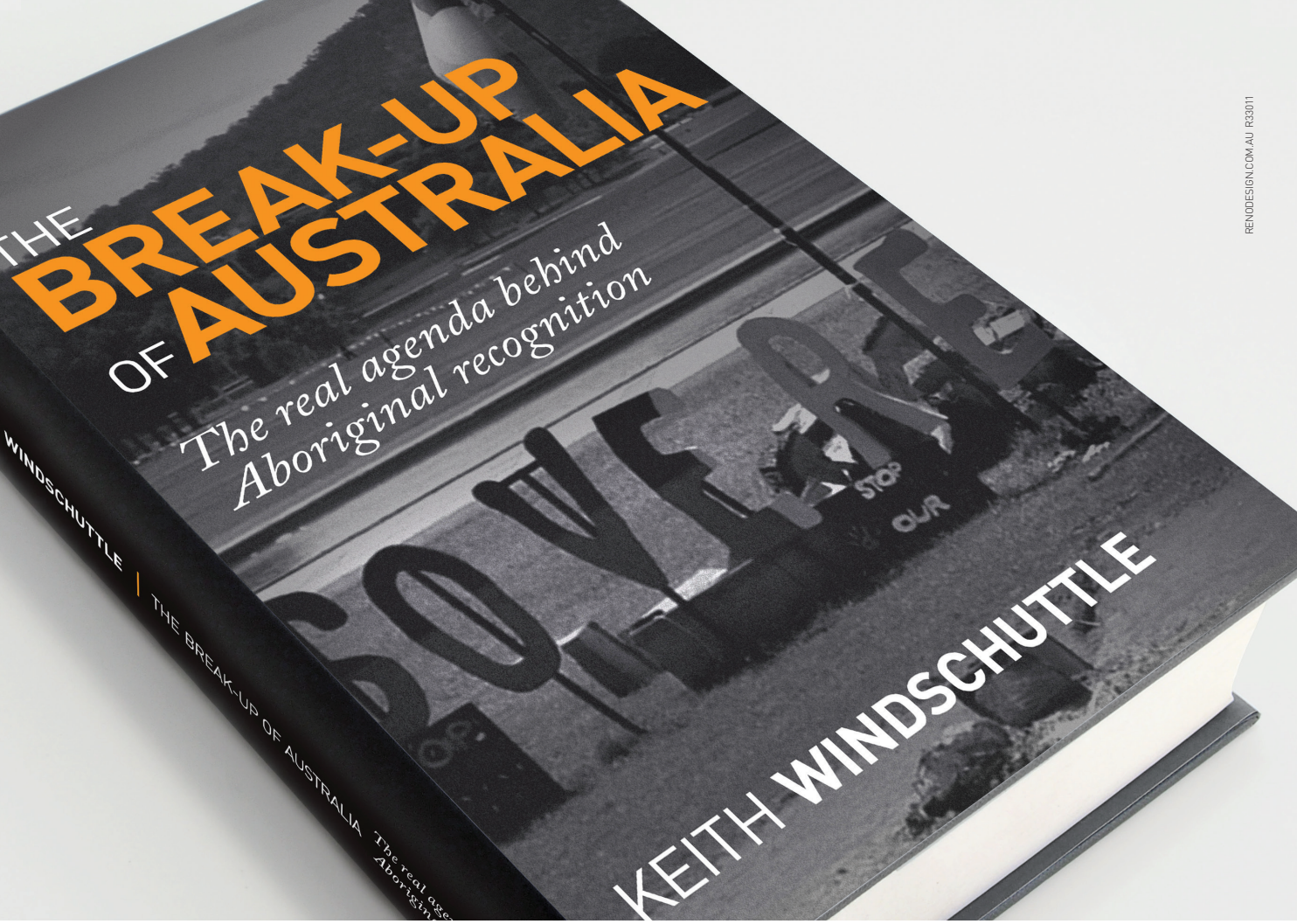

THE BREAK-UP OF AUSTRALIA

THE REAL AGENDA BEHIND ABORIGINAL RECOGNITION

KEITH WINDSCHUTTLE

THE HIDDEN AGENDA OF ABORIGINAL SOVEREIGNTY

Australian voters are not being told the truth about the proposal for constitutional recognition of indigenous people. The goal of Aboriginal political activists today is to gain 'sovereignty' and create a black state, equivalent to the existing states. Its territory, comprising all land defined as native title, will soon amount to more than 60 per cent of the whole Australian continent.

Constitutional recognition, if passed, would be its 'launching pad'. Recognition will not make our nation complete; it will divide us permanently.

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