



ACADEMY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES IN AUSTRALIA

# Dialogue

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The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia was established in 1971. Previously, some of the functions were carried out through the Social Science Research Council of Australia, established in 1942. Elected to the Academy for distinguished contributions to the social sciences, the 372 Fellows of the Academy offer expertise in the fields of *accounting, anthropology, demography, economics, economic history, education, geography, history, law, linguistics, philosophy, political science, psychology, social medicine, sociology and statistics.*

The Academy's objectives are:

- to promote excellence in and encourage the advancement of the social sciences in Australia;
- to act as a coordinating group for the promotion of research and teaching in the social sciences;
- to foster excellence in research and to subsidise the publication of studies in the social sciences;
- to encourage and assist in the formation of other national associations or institutions for the promotion of the social sciences or any branch of them;
- to promote international scholarly cooperation and to act as an Australian national member of international organisations concerned with the social sciences;
- to act as consultant and adviser in regard to the social sciences; and,
- to comment where appropriate on national needs and priorities in the area of the social sciences.

These objectives are fulfilled through a program of activities, research projects, independent advice to government and the community, publication and cooperation with fellow institutions both within Australia and internationally.

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## President's column

### National research priorities: back on the agenda



In January 2001 the Prime Minister announced in his Backing Australia's Ability statement that public research funding would be increased by \$2.9 billion over five years, and that it would be directed primarily toward areas of research for 'competitive advantage'. The main research agencies, ARC, NHMRC and CSIRO, together with academies and other organisations were invited to suggest their 'theme based research priorities' to a working Group of the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council led by the Chief Scientist, Robin Batterham.

There was widespread belief among the research community that the priority setting exercise would lead to about twelve broad research priority areas. In my President's column in *Dialogue* 3/2001 I speculated that possibly three

of the twelve research priority areas would have a substantial social science interest and focus. I was betting on government recognition of the importance of additional research to deal with such pressing national issues as sustainable environment, healthy population, and regional and rural disadvantage. The column concluded 'Watch this space for further developments'.

The further developments have now eventuated.

The research community was disappointed when a list of four high-tech priority areas - to be taken up by the ARC - was announced by government at the end of 2001. The winners were Nano-materials and biomaterials; Genome/Phenome research; Photonics; and Complex/Intelligent systems. Many researchers were dismayed that 'public good' research was missing from the list. Others were alarmed by the prospect of a major shift in ARC funds away from fundamental curiosity-driven research toward 'competitive advantage' research. Many, especially social scientists and humanities researchers, were alarmed that ARC, the elite agency which supports fundamental research of excellence across all disciplines, had been targeted to implement the brave new world of priority setting. The scientists especially were unhappy with the inadequate time available to redirect their 2002 research proposals toward the designated priority areas and become reborn as nanotechnologists and complex/intelligent researchers. Everyone was unhappy about the lack of consultation and transparency in determining the list of four priorities.

Research priorities are very much on the agenda in 2002. They are now an integral part of a 'whole of government' approach to meeting national needs and aspirations. In May 2002 the Minister for Science, Peter McGauran released an Issues paper *Developing National Research Priorities*, which set out a framework for determining national research priorities. This was followed in June with the establishment of a Consultative Panel chaired by the Chief Scientist to conduct a nationwide public consultation on the elements of the framework and to invite nominations for national

research priorities. I was invited to become a member of the Consultative Panel, which was made up principally of representatives from sciences, technology and engineering and the business sector. The Panel held public meetings in all capital cities as well as Albury/Wodonga, Kalgoorlie, Armidale, Darwin and Townsville, attended by over 800 people.

The Consultative Panel's report to the Minister is now public. Some of the key points in the report include: wide acceptance of the policy of setting and implementing national research priorities; the concept that priority areas are broad in scope and create national 'wealth' by addressing issues of public good as well as economic development and environmental sustainability; the principle that priority areas are based on research excellence and are supported by a strong foundation of basic research; the necessity for an Expert Advisory Committee drawn from a wide range of expertise to recommend priority areas to the Minister and Cabinet; the leading role of the research agencies and funding bodies (rather than government) in advising how to implement priorities; and, an understanding that the priority areas must produce measurable outcomes and involve ongoing monitoring, reporting and evaluation. Finally, there was widespread acceptance that research priority areas will necessarily require a multidisciplinary approach involving input from both science, engineering and technology and from social sciences and humanities. It is gratifying to note that in every public meeting concern was expressed by representatives of all sectors that social sciences and humanities had been artificially separated from the national research priorities initiative until 2003/2004. The Panel report states: 'The Panel and participants agree that the most worthwhile national research opportunities and problems, by their nature, involve multidisciplinary perspectives. Solutions will include contributions from social sciences and humanities. Social sciences and humanities will be included in the second, 2003/2004 round and this assurance was well received by participants'.

The risk is that the push toward priority setting will be dominated by a science-technology-industry lobby intent on 'picking winners', oblivious to the essential contribution of fundamental research in all disciplines as the foundation of new ideas, creativity and excellence in research.

The government's bold initiative into the area of national research priority setting heralds a new era in which government - and intentionally the community at large - will take a closer interest in the kind of research conducted in Australia and how it contributes to national competitiveness and other socioeconomic outcomes. The initiative is an indication of how the national research and innovation system and, in time, the higher education and industry R&D systems, will be pushed into working together in a more planned and directed way. This will make

Australia more economically competitive through its science and technology, but also provide solutions to pressing problems of health, ageing, population, community, environment, the tyranny of distance, and so on. The risk is that the push toward priority setting will be dominated by a science-technology-industry lobby intent on 'picking winners', oblivious to the essential contribution of fundamental research in all disciplines as the foundation of new ideas, creativity and excellence in research.

National research priorities must be considered within the framework of four principal objectives of public funded research undertaken in Australia:

- Research to enhance the quality of social, family and work life of the Australian and wider community;

- Research to protect and rehabilitate the natural and social environment and the world we inhabit;
- Research to increase economic competitiveness through new ideas, products, processes, and inventions; and,
- Research to enlarge fundamental knowledge and understanding of who we are, and our place in the universe.

All four objectives are advanced by research in science, engineering, technology, social sciences, arts and the humanities.

In 2001, the Academy of the Social Sciences recommended a list of eight priority areas to the PMSEIC working party. They were Children's well-being; Effectiveness of governance; Quality of life; Indigenous Australian culture and well-being; Australian population; Australia in the Asia-Pacific region; Impact of technological/economic changes on society; and Human response to environmental change. In 2002, the list remains highly relevant to the national agenda. But the government's intention, controversially, is to set a limited number of national research priorities in the areas of science, engineering and technology for the 2002/2003 round, and in the areas of social sciences and humanities for the 2003/2004 round. It is therefore necessary to revisit the list of eight and work together with other Academies and interest groups to prepare strong, well-argued submissions for a special set of research programs where a sustained, multidisciplinary, collaborative research effort over a period of, say, five to ten years is likely to have a significant impact on national outcomes.

As part of the public meetings held by the Consultative Panel across Australia, participants were invited to suggest their preferred national research priorities, which together with written submissions, will be sent to the Expert Advisory Committee to help in determining a short-list to submit to Cabinet. The suggestions fell into eight broad categories: Sustainable environment, Effective utilisation of natural resources, Healthy society, Population and regional development, Developing human talent, Industry, innovation and economic growth, Communicating Australia, and Safe Australia. The list is, of course, not exhaustive and by the time final written submissions are due on 9 August there will be many more ideas under consideration.

I speculated in 2001 that the government would announce around 12 research priority areas of which two or three would have a substantial social science component. I was quite wrong, but so was just about everyone else. What of 2002 - in which broad thematic priorities are on the agenda - and for that matter 2003, when social sciences and humanities will be centre stage? Here are my predictions. This year look out for sustainable environment, in particular the issues of salinity and land degradation. Look out for new technologies to support clean energy and renewable energy sources. Also look out for ageing and maintaining a healthy population. In most of these areas social scientists will find plenty of scope and opportunity to make a significant contribution. Despite the arbitrary separation this year between science, engineering and technology and social sciences and humanities, a strong social science contribution will be welcomed.

National priority setting in research presents many opportunities and challenges:

- An opportunity to examine and clarify national goals, and what we as researchers do, what we achieve, and the difference it makes.
- The challenge of a 'social experiment' based on the assumption that designated priority areas will produce significant benefits over and above 'the usual'. It

follows that it will be crucial to monitor, measure and evaluate performance of priority areas against agreed national and international benchmarks. Performance criteria appropriate to research activity in the designated priority area must be specified. A basket of diverse indicators will be necessary to ensure outcomes are properly measured.

- A strong signal and incentive for state governments, regional communities, public research agencies and research institutions to share resources and collaborate in research activity and the application of knowledge.
- An opportunity to build new structures and processes for selection of priority areas, for supporting institutional collaborations, for assessment of research proposals and the award of grants, and for evaluation of research outcomes.

Looking ahead, the national research priorities initiative will have major effects on how we plan and do research, communicate and apply our research findings, nurture research talent, and strive to become more creative and innovative. We will also learn valuable lessons about what is needed to ensure that the national research priority initiative is a net benefit to the Australian community and not, as some fear, a detriment to excellent, curiosity-driven, fundamental research that sustains all disciplines.

**Leon Mann**

### ***IN THIS ISSUE***

From time to time, the Academy pays particular tribute to some among its distinguished ranks of Fellows. Emeritus Professors **Greg Dening**, an historian (although see his self-definition in his own words) now resident in Melbourne, and **John Nevile**, an economist from Sydney, are so honoured in this issue of *Dialogue*.

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*Dialogue* is published three times per year and the deadlines are 1 March, 1 July and 1 November. Contributions are usually commissioned, but offers to contribute are always considered. Length should be negotiated with the Editor, but in general, articles are in the range 3-3500 words.

Letters to the Editor are welcomed, and all correspondence regarding *Dialogue* should be directed in the first instance to

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## Reports from Workshops

### Rethinking Australian Republicanism

#### *Wayne Hudson*

The *Rethinking Australian Republicanism Workshop* was held on 1-2 September 2001 in Brisbane. Professor Jim Walter, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Arts) Griffith University, opened the workshop. Although the referendum about the republic aroused considerable passions at the time, various attempts to revive the debate have proved unsuccessful. It is clear that the main issues through which Paul Keating attempted to encourage Australians to bond with the idea of an Australian republic have dated badly. There is now little interest in the idea that Australians are in some sense historically immature or have failed to complete their national identity process. The idea of breaking away from Britain also seems of marginal relevance to an Australia attempting to place itself more effectively in a globalising international landscape and the idea that becoming a republic would somehow help our image in Asia is harder to sustain in a context in which the complexity of the cultural politics of individual nations is better understood than it was at the time of the referendum. In this context it seemed useful to ask how should we now think about the Australian republic? What ways and means to an Australian republic are likely to be successful? Is there a wider political and social vision with which the republic can and should be associated? Given the failure of a minimalist republicanism conceived in largely legal and constitutional terms, is there any way in which a more expansive republicanism can be made relevant and attractive to ordinary Australians? These are some of the questions addressed in the workshop.

The first day of the workshop was primarily devoted to the problem of constitutional change with a number of the leading national public intellectuals in the area reflecting on the lessons of the failed referendum in 1999 and on the experience of the constitutional convention.

Brian Galligan, Professor of Politics at the University of Melbourne, spoke on 'Renovating the existing republic'. He made a detailed analysis of voting patterns during the referendum and argued that the statistics implied that only a minor change in support is required for such a referendum to succeed. Professor Galligan's analysis argued that in effect Australia has a federal republic, and that republicanising the formal head of state should be considered within that context. There was clear majority support for republicanising the head of state, and an enhanced majority for electing the head of state because various supporters of the constitutional monarchy preferred a head of state independent of politicians. The Australian people should be allowed to vote on their preferences, he argued, and it was the responsibility of elites to facilitate that in an orderly way.

George Winterton, Professor of Law at the University of New South Wales, spoke on 'Choosing the President'. He discussed six models for selecting a republican Head of State, focusing on the forthcoming ARM Issues Paper. He noted that public opinion polls over many years and evaluations of the 1999 referendum vote suggested that the public favoured direct popular election. Only if this method were rejected at referendum or plebiscite, would a different method such as an improved version of the 1999 model have any prospect of adoption. Professor Winterton outlined the difficulties both real and perceived with direct election, and suggested mechanisms for overcoming, or at least ameliorating, them. He stressed the necessity for trusting in the judgement of the people, but this is predicated on a mechanism which offers

high-quality candidates. He accordingly proposed that there should be three avenues for the nomination of presidential candidates: the Commonwealth Parliament (by a two-thirds majority); three State or Territory Parliaments; and nomination by a prescribed number of electors, as in Iceland and Portugal.

The consequences of the unravelling of the post Federation post World War Two social settlement for progress towards a republic were discussed by Associate Professor Linda Hancock, Director, Public Policy and Governance Program, Deakin University. The Republican Movement was viewed symbolically by excluded and disadvantaged groups as an opportunity for new confirmation of rights and principles concerning equality and recognition of the indigenous owners. However, the working through of the Referendum was more focused on a particular view of the mechanics of republican reform. Challenges today, compared with those at Federation, are for a social settlement that embraces new symbolic and institutional elements.

Mary Kalantzis, Dean of Education at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, spoke on 'A stronger conception of the republic'. Professor Kalantzis argued that the Head of State issue might not be worth revisiting. In her view, the real question is the reinvention of Australian identity and our ways of being civil with each other. She called for radical shifts in current policy, and a different approach to the relationship between the individual and the state, based on new forms of civility.

In 'Freeing the captive republic' Dr Mark McKenna, ARC Queen Elizabeth Fellow at the Australian National University, argued that the republic could only be advanced by focusing on the democratic process that will resolve the issue. Republicans should work towards achieving consensus on a suitable three step process – eg, non-binding plebiscite, fully elected Constitutional Convention, referendum. By striking agreement on process, direct electionists, minimalists, and republicans of every persuasion would be free to argue for the model of their choice within an agreed democratic framework. However, when the referendum question was ultimately decided, all republicans would be locked into supporting the model that emerged. If such a political strategy were adopted, republicans could display a spirit of compromise and unity. For all Australians who wish to see the concept of a republic broadened, thereby moving the culture of Australian republicanism away from nationalism towards democratic republicanism, it is necessary to work towards achieving an open democratic process that will facilitate a full national discussion. Only in the process of that discussion will new forms of republicanism emerge.

These contributions led to extensive discussion. Dr John Kane, Head of the School of Politics at Griffith University was sceptical about the possibility of promoting cosmopolitan changes and emphasised the value of theorising democracy in disillusioned rather than idealistic terms. Dr Malcolm Alexander, Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Griffith University, emphasised the importance of developing a new conception of social capital in the context of globalisation and recent changes in the global economy. Dr Haig Patapan, a Research Fellow in the Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance at Griffith University, argued that realism needed to be brought to bear on positive proposals for social reform which might actually reduce political support.

Professor Charles Samford, Director of the Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance was ill on the day but his ideas about ethics and an Australian republic will impact on the published outcomes of the workshop. As a result of Professor

Samford's illness, the workshop concluded a little early but animated conversation was continued at the workshop dinner that evening.

On the second day, the weight of the discussion turned to the wider question of republicanism and social reform. In his paper, 'Globalising the republic', Professor Wayne Hudson, Director of the Centre for Advanced Studies in the Humanities called for new constructive political architecture to continue the process of republicanism in Australia. He argued that a non-traditional contemporary republicanism is now required and that this should recognise the continuing importance of the nation state while moderating nation state governance with cosmopolitan perspectives. Professor Hudson suggested changes to civil society, trade unions and corporations in order to modify them in a cosmopolitan direction.

Dr John Rundell, Director of the TR Ashworth Centre for Social Theory at the University of Melbourne, spoke on 'Citizenship, indigeneity, multiculturalism, federalism'. In a finely crafted and complex paper Dr Rundell outlined three historical examples of mutually present, yet competing models of Australian republics. These are i) a model of national-judicial sovereignty; ii) a model of multicultural corporatism; and iii) a model of cosmopolitan democratic federalism. Each model is posited from the background dimensions of citizenship, which in modernity is constituted as a site of condensation, and not only as a series of claims or practices.

Associate Professor David Carter, Director of the Australian Studies Centre at the University of Queensland, spoke on 'Republicanism and Australian nationalism'. He took up Professor Hudson's theme of constructive political architecture but went on to argue that it might be useful to separate the Head of State issue from any question of republicanism. Indeed he was prepared to envisage a non monarchy in Australia which might well not be a republic in the empty formal sense of being a state without a monarchy. But he went on to argue that republicans needed to take seriously - as a worthy democratic impulse - the popular support for an elected Australian head of state. Even if it were not profoundly republican (and Australian nationalism historically had been 'communitarian' rather than republican) such popular support was the ground from which any adequate practice of Australian republicanism must begin. It need not be dismissed as mere populism. Dr Carter argued that analyses of media publics provided a more complex and layered model of the 'public' than that typically offered in political theory. The diversity of publics suggests that 'mere populism' should not be seen as a serious problem in discussions of methods of electing the President.

Ian Hunter, Professorial ARC Fellow in the Centre for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at Griffith University took up the problem of religious citizenship and argued that there might be considerable merit in having the state rigorously regulate religious bodies in certain contexts.

Associate Professor Kay Saunders, of the History Department of the University of Queensland, emphasised the need to involve women in discussions of reform if political changes were to occur.

The following recommendations resulted from the workshop:

1. That the debate about the Republic be revived on a plebiscite model and the issue put to the Australian people by plebiscite, with the technical details to be settled by a constitutional convention.

2. That the case for a republic be restated in terms which do not imply that Australian identity is currently deficient or that the issue is one of 'unfinished business'.
3. That it be made clear to the public that republicanism is about the democratic philosophy underlying our national institutions. It is not about being anti-British nor does it imply a xenophobic nationalism.
4. That the possibility of disarticulating constitutional change from a wider raft of democratic reforms be more widely discussed. Minimalists need to accept that a directly elected President with reserve powers needs to be checked by a body of constitutional doctrine of a broadly republican kind, while maximalists need to accept that constitutional changes may be the wrong context in which to advance many desirable social changes.
5. That steps should be taken to encourage Australians to inform themselves about the principles of democratic pluralism and citizenship, including the need for religious and racial tolerance.

The workshop will result in a book by Wayne Hudson and AJ Brown entitled *Restructuring Australia* to be published by a leading Australian press.

*Professor Wayne Hudson is Director of the Centre for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at Griffith University.*



## **The 2001 Federal Elections**

### ***John Warhurst***

The workshop on the November 2001 federal elections, convened by Professor John Warhurst and Dr Marian Simms of the School of Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts, Australian National University, was held on 15-16 December, 2001 in Canberra. Participants in the workshop were officially welcomed on behalf of the Academy by Ian Castles, FASSA. Arrangements for the workshop were undertaken by Jim Chalmers, an ANU PhD student working with the conveners.

This was the third such election workshop sponsored by the Academy. The previous workshops produced *The Politics of Retribution: The 1996 Australian Federal Election* (Allen & Unwin), and *Howard's Agenda: The 1998 Australian Election* (University of Queensland Press). On this occasion the Academy was the sole sponsor, reflecting the increasing difficulty of attracting Australian Research Council funding for this type of project. So the organisers are enormously grateful to the Academy, as without its support the workshop could not have proceeded.

As usual the participants included a mixture of academics and practitioners. This is a distinctive and most productive element of the election workshops. On this occasion the academics included Academy members Dr James Jupp and Dr Marian Sawer. They were joined by Mr Lynton Crosby, Federal Director of the Liberal Party of Australia, Mr Tim Gartrell, Deputy National Secretary of the Australian Labor Party, Senator Andrew Bartlett of the Australian Democrats and Mr Rodney Cavalier, former NSW Labor government minister.

The other academic members came from each state and the ACT. They included Mr David Adams (Australian National University), Dr Carol Johnson (University of Adelaide), Dr Elaine Thompson (University of NSW), Dr Nicholas Economou and Dr Jennifer Curtin (Monash University), Dr Narelle Miragliotta (University of Western Australia), Dr Rae Wear (University of Queensland), Dr Marcus Haward and Dr Tony McCall (University of Tasmania), Associate Professor Malcolm Mackerras (Australian Defence Force Academy), Prof Dean Jaensch (Flinders University) and Associate Professor Gwyn Singleton (University of Canberra).

The proceedings are under contract to be published by the University of Queensland Press during 2002. These books stand as an academic record of each Australian federal election. As a series, they are of considerable scholarly importance. At the time of writing (March 2002) the publishing process is proceeding according to plan. In addition to those who presented papers at the workshop the book will include papers by others who could not be present. They include Ms Gaye White (National Party of Australia), Mr Ben Oquist (Australian Greens), Mr Frank Hough (Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party), Dr Hayden Manning and Dr Robert Phiddian (Flinders University), Professor Ian McAllister (ANU), Professor Murray Goot (Macquarie University) and Dr Clive Bean (Queensland University of Technology).

The workshop addressed the election from five perspectives. The first perspective included central themes such as the leadership contest (Adams), the ideological contest (Johnson), the media coverage (Simms) and political satire through cartoons (Manning and Phiddian). The second included the accounts by the political parties themselves of the campaign and the final outcome. The third perspective was the state and territory campaigns as observed by researchers from each region. Fourthly there was the perspective of various issues and interest groups, such as business (Singleton), trade unions (Manning), women (Sawer), the ethnic community (Jupp), and rural (Curtin). Finally there came the detailed statistical analysis of the election results for the House of Representatives and the Senate (Mackerras).

More so than in any previous election workshop there was passionate disagreement among the political parties' representatives and some academic participants as to the major cause of the government's comfortable return to office.

More so than in any previous election workshop there was passionate disagreement among the political parties' representatives and some academic participants as to the major cause of the government's comfortable return to office. This election was fought in the shadow of the 11 September terrorist attack on New York and Washington and the *Tampa* asylum seekers' incident in late August 2001. The Labor Party, while admitting weaknesses in its own campaign, remained convinced that *Tampa* and the asylum seekers issue cost them dearly. The Liberal Party believed that their resurgence from a low point in early 2001 began prior to *Tampa* and was caused largely by its own positive campaigning on leadership, stability and the

government's record. Academic opinion ranged between these poles and included considerable criticism of the Opposition campaign. Certainly analysis of the media coverage demonstrated how much domestic issues were squeezed out of the campaign debates by international events, and the cartoons in the metropolitan press were more biting critical of the government than at any recent election. However the media was also critical of the performance of Labor's leader, Kim Beazley. Labor's performance was uneven and the swing to the government was particularly large in New South Wales, one of Labor's traditional strongholds.

Unfortunately, one major test of the impact of the asylum seeker issue on voters, the regular Australian Election Survey (AES) results, were not yet available at the time of the workshop. The organisers had been forced to choose between the demands of the publishers for a timely publication (hence a workshop five weeks after the 10 November election) and the inevitably more drawn-out timetable for producing the results of survey research. This is a constant dilemma for election researchers. Fortunately the book, to be titled *2001: The Centenary Election*, will include a chapter by Bean and McAllister on voting behaviour based on the AES.

*Professor John Warhurst is from the School of Social Sciences in the Faculty of Arts, Australian National University.*



## **Indigenous Peoples and Religious Change: Reassessing Mission Christianity in an International Historical Perspective**

### ***Norman Etherington***

The Workshop was held on the 8-9 February 2002 with financial assistance from the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Australia. The first part of the workshop, held in the conference room of the Cottesloe Beach Hotel included specialist papers from a number of scholars. The second day, held at the Institute of Advanced Studies at the University of Western Australia was devoted to themes designated as chapters in the Oxford History of Missions and Empire.

1. *Professor Terence Ranger*, Professor-emeritus of Race Relations, Oxford University gave an overview of pre-circulated papers, questioned the concept of 'indigenous' in relation to Africa, and addressed the question of mainstream mission churches in studies of religious change.
2. *Professor Norman Etherington*, FASSA, Professor of History, University of Western Australia, supervising editor of the Missions and Empire volume in the

Oxford History of the British Empire delivered a paper on 'The missionary writing machine' which called attention to scholarly neglect of material signs.

3. *Professor Diane Austin Broos*, FASSA, University of Sydney, spoke on 'Environment and person in Western Arrernte lives', raising questions about the resacralisation of landscapes during the conversion process.

4. *Professor John Barker*, University of British Columbia, spoke about the persistence of indigenous concepts of health and illness in 'fully Christianised' communities in Papua New Guinea.

5. *Dr Peggy Brock*, Edith Cowan University, analysed differences in personal accounts of religious change, comparing the diary of Tshimshian man Arthur Wellington Clah (British Columbia) and Arrernte man Moses Tjalkabota (central Australia). Her provisional conclusion was that attitudes toward land and concepts of the sacred reflected differences in the environments of the two men.

6. *Caroline Jeannerat*, a postgraduate student at the University of Michigan, addressed the problems involved in recovering the personal, interior experience of indigenous religious change — based on her experience in reading Berlin Missionary Society Records of South Africa.

7. *Dr Hilary Carey*, University of Newcastle and former editor, the *Journal of Religious History*, spoke on possibilities for recovering the process of indigenous religious change in early New South Wales by using surviving word lists from otherwise extinct languages.

8. *Dr Christine Choo*, University of Western Australia delivered a paper on the role of the Aboriginal laity in the Catholic Mission at Beagle Bay and Broome, West Kimberley.

9. *Dr David Maxwell*, Keele University gave a copiously illustrated talk on the current work and organisation of a Pentacostal movement in Zimbabwe.

The Saturday sessions were devoted to using the insights of workshop participants to criticise and amplify the thematic structure proposed for the Oxford History of Missions and Empire, under the general editorship of Norman Etherington.

#### **Themes for discussion**

- Overview of the missionary movement 18th-20th centuries
- Eighteenth-century missions to the indigenous people of North America
- Missions and imperial politics
- Missionaries and white settlers
- Missions and the emergence of anthropology
- Missions as welfare agencies for empire, including medical and educational services
- Missions and the invention of ethnicity
- Missions and language, including translation & the making of dictionaries for unwritten languages
- The centrality of women as supporters and agents of 19th and 20th century missions
- The 'native convert' as agent and critic of missions
- Narratives of conversion
- The emergence of new religions, cults, 'heresies', including their reception/suppression by colonial authorities

- Missions and decolonisation
- Missions, race and orientalism

This day's discussions were very free, wide-ranging and uninhibited. There was no fixed time-scale controlling the agenda, which was very much appreciated by the participants. The framework of a thematic rather than a regional approach to the book was endorsed, however the conceptualisation of individual chapters was subjected to intense critical examination.

The most fiercely argued section of the day's discussion was the question of 'cultural imperialism'. Whether evangelical Christianity had an imperial life of its own apart from connections with formal colonialism and imperialism divided the participants. It was agreed by the end of the day that the concept of cultural imperialism deserved consideration in a distinct chapter of the book. Various suggestions were made about authors who might be asked to take three of the chapters as yet unassigned. An unexpected but very welcome result of the day's discussion was the decision by Professors Ranger and Barker to become part of the authorial team.

### **Outcomes**

The workshop made a most valuable contribution to the development of the volume on Missions and Empire. A number of the papers are being considered for publication in a special edition of the *Journal of Religious History*. One of the papers is to be published in the *Journal of Religion in Africa*. Dr Brock has undertaken to approach a university press about publication of a group of papers as a book.

*Norman Etherington is Professor of History at the University of Western Australia.*



### **Workshop Program**

Fellows with an interest in the Academy's Workshop Program will have noticed that in 2002 the number of workshops has increased from the usual 4 or 5 per year to 9 (list of topics can be found in the previous *Dialogue* or on the website). Hard work in the secretariat has encouraged other organisations to take an interest in the Academy program and led to both funding contributions and closer collaboration.

On 29-30 May, a workshop was convened by Professors Margot Prior, Sue Richardson and Fiona Stanley on the topic 'Investing in our children: developing a research agenda'. Sponsorship was provided by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services and The Ian Potter Foundation via the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth.

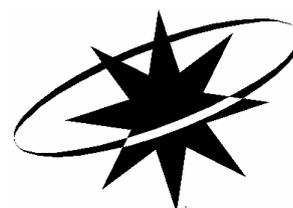
Participants from a wide range of disciplines discussed children, rights and the law; the economics of families and children in Australia; key questions in public health in Australian families; Aboriginal children and the future; child and adolescent mental health issues – future directions; and translating research into policy. Senior bureaucrats in the Family Policy Branch of the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services provided a very useful contribution and insight into the policy-making processes. A blueprint for future research is being drafted by the convenors.

Further challenges in this debate will be offered at the Academy's Annual Symposium and Cunningham Lecture on 11 November 2002. Please mark your diaries and plan to attend.

The Academy publication *A Hundred Years of Women's Politics* (edited by Dr Marian Simms) was launched on 12 June 2002 by Senator Amanda Vanstone in her role as the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women. The launch was the Academy's contribution to events celebrating the centenary of women's suffrage in Australia. In his Preface to the book, Emeritus Professor Peter Karmel, AC, links the new publication to *Women in Australia*, the first major research publication of the Academy forty years ago. Professor Karmel also pays tribute to the contribution the late Paul Bourke made to the Academy and to Australian scholarship. Paul's previously unpublished seminar paper, "Women and electoral politics" is included in *A Hundred Years of Women's Politics* (see Marian Sawyer's comments on that paper elsewhere in *Dialogue*).

Reports on 'Working for the common good' (also held in May) as well as 'Investing in our children' will be published in future volumes of *Dialogue* and on the website. Papers presented at the 'Rural Communities: is the social fabric of rural communities intact or in tatters?' can be accessed on our web address [www.assa.edu.au/workshop/pw.asp](http://www.assa.edu.au/workshop/pw.asp).

Please visit the Academy website [www.assa.edu.au](http://www.assa.edu.au) for the *Workshop Guidelines* or contact Sue Rider ([sue.rider@anu.edu.au](mailto:sue.rider@anu.edu.au)).



## **Voyaging**

**Greg Dening**

### **1967 'Ethnoggng' in Hawai'i**

It is 1967. The Vietnam War grinds hopelessly on. I have just finished my anthropology degree at Harvard. I am flying home via Hawai'i where the anthropology and history departments at the University of Hawai'i have offered me a short term appointment. The airports are filled with young men and women in military uniform. Hawai'i is a giant military camp, a giant military hospital.

I come to the University of Hawai'i with large ambitions to teach a new sort of history. 'Ethnohistory', I call it until the politics in the name disturbs me - there is no reason why the history of first peoples in Oceania or the Americas or Africa should be 'ethno' and the history of empires and conquerors just 'history'. 'Culture contact' won't do either. Cultures don't come in contact. 'Contact' is too wimpish a notion for the story of the violent encounter between the islanders and intruding strangers that I have to tell.

Thirty-five years on, I still won't have a name for it. Maybe 'anthrohistory' would do. 'Anthrohistory' suggests that both sides of my story - of natives and of strangers - are equally subject to my anthropological and historical gaze. But give something a name, and someone will create an association, a journal, and department, and will begin to put boundaries about it. I'm not into boundaries around knowledge.

'Double-visioned history'? I would settle for that if only to challenge the presumptions of so much single-visioned history that is around. It would have to be 'multi-visioned history', though, wouldn't it? Our gaze on the past is gendered, coloured, aged, classed, modern and postmodern - multi-visioned. 'Cross-cultural history'? Yes, if it is accepted that all history across time and space is cross-cultural.

Just 'cultural history'? Why not? So long as we don't waste time debating what 'culture' is. At my last count there were 366 discursive definitions of 'culture'. Let me make it 367 and leave it. Culture is Talk. Living is Story.

The history department at the University of Hawai'i did not know what to do with me. The 'Pacific' history they taught was about empires, navies and wars. Not much 'ethno' at all.

The anthropology department set me to teach first year Ethnology, Ethnology 101. My class was made up of Samoans, Tongans, Filipinos, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese Macaons, Hawaiians and a few sun-dazed and water-logged Anglo-Americans. The textbooks set - not by me - were formulaic descriptions of island societies. There was not much incentive in them to enter into cultural differences. None at all to translate the differences into some representation of otherness.

So I started a practice in Hawai'i that I followed for the rest of my teaching academic life. I taught 'culture' by asking my students to describe it. I taught the past by asking them to tell something of the present in story. 'Ethnoggng', my later students used to call it with affectionate disrespect.

I was persuaded to that practice by a cathartic pedagogic experience. It involved a Hawaiian-born student. I had asked my students to describe something different in their lives. The different did not need to be great - something across gender, religious belief, language, ritual, ethnic custom. Some did marriage ceremonies. Some did *luau*, Hawaiian feasts. Some did their 'pot' parties. A couple of Buddhists did the

Sunday mass I used to celebrate at the Honolulu cathedral. The Hawaiian-born student wasn't much into study of any sort. He 'didn't know what to do'. I asked him what he did on Sundays. He said that he used to play touch football on the beach at Kaneohe. 'Do that', I said.

The Sunday morning beach game was played between Hawaiian-born young men and the US marines based at Kaneohe. There was not much love lost between them. The Hawaiians were resentful that their island had become an army camp. The marines were resentful at the ingratitude for the sacrifices they were making and at being made to feel strangers in their America. The 'touch' in the touch-football was a pretty relative concept. The games were violent, full of subliminal hatred.

I remember very well my student's discovery that a touch football match was so much larger than itself. It was a parable about something else - about identity, about political domination, about macho gendering. He then confronted with some relish how he would make a narrative that matched the excitement of his discovery. He had to perform his experiences, make theatre of it.

History - the transformation of a past, no matter how recent a past, into words or paint or dance or play - is always a performance. An everyday performance as we present our selective narratives about what has happened at the kitchen table, to the courts, to the taxman, at the graveside. A quite staged performance when we present it to our examiners, to the collegiality of our disciplines, whenever we play our role as 'historians'.

All my teaching life I have asked my students to perform their history, to 'make' their history, not to 'learn' it. There is always a gamble in performance. A performance is always to somebody. A performer always has performance consciousness. Performances change the world in some way. Make the world laugh. Make the world cry. Make it serious for a moment.

I suppose that I have always hoped that my students would make the world serious for a moment, persuade it that the truth was more complicated than three-second bytes and two-inch headlines.

### **1971 'Max Crawfording' at Melbourne**

Alan and Jean Martin had offered me a senior lectureship in History and Sociology in the birthing days of LaTrobe University. The three years I had with them were the seminal years of my academic life. There is something very sweet about the beginnings of educational institutions. There is nobody there to say 'this is how it is done'. Every year is different as the achievements and failures of the last year are measured against the highest ideals. And the students are all there because they want to be, not because some social imperative tells them they should be there.

John La Nauze had said to me when I told him in 1964 that I was going to Harvard and not Oxford, to do anthropology and not history: 'Denying, this is the end of your academic career'. I never expected to return to Melbourne. So I was somewhat stunned when Melbourne offered me the chair of history in 1971. I then felt ashamed of myself that I accepted the offer so readily. I owed so much to Jean and Alan Martin and felt that I had let them down.

Perhaps in the long term I paid my debts to them if in the short term I caused them pain. They both had long term visions for universities and their disciplines. I came to Melbourne with the sense of freedom and excitement that they had bred in us all. There was more reflection on and experimentation in the educational process at

LaTrobe than would happen in the older universities for many years. I came to Melbourne with an appreciation of what was being done at LaTrobe that undermined many presumptions about Melbourne's privileged position.

I had been one of the early cross-discipline appointments in the humanities and social sciences in Australian universities. I had also been one of the early flow-backs at the professorial level from the new universities to the old. I came to Melbourne with strong anti-territorial values and a belief that the only way for change was through institutional altruism. Altruism is seen to be a wimpish sort of philosophy in both the hierarchies of privilege and the competitiveness of economic rationalism.

One of the first things I did at Melbourne was to call a meeting of all the heads of history departments, and of the subdisciplines such as economic history and history and philosophy of science, of Australian universities. There was equality in numbers between those representing older and newer universities. It was also the first step in which the privileged position of Melbourne and Sydney was undermined by the establishment of the Australian Historical Association. I had hoped that *Historical Studies*, of which I became Chair of the Board, would become the journal of the whole historical discipline and maybe the journal of the profession, not the department at Melbourne. That never really happened, though one of my small triumphs was to appoint Paul Bourke, from Flinders and out of American Studies, to be editor.

I soon discovered that the worst job in the world is being Head or Chair of Department. I made many mistakes that I deeply regret. But I also discovered that there was considerable freedom in being a professor. I didn't need to drag a department along with me to enjoy that freedom.

There are many highlights in my teaching that bring me joy in the memory of them. The many varied representations of the *Bounty* my students performed - from art exhibitions, to radio plays, to published articles, to poems. For nearly fifteen years one of my classes used to 'ethnog' Anzac Day. I remember meeting up with Ken Inglis one year in the dark of the dawn service and he joined our breakfast seminar as we waited for the march to begin. I remember that the fact that we had the seminar on Anzac Day under the flags of the Melbourne Australian Rules football teams seemed especially pertinent to him!

I remember contracting with several classes not to 'do' essays, but to write a book. My part of the contract was to take them to Sydney for a week to work in the Mitchell Library. We always stayed at Manly, had our seminars on the ferry going over and coming back, and at lunch in the Botanical Gardens. Total engagement in research without distraction was as rewarding for them as it was for me. I look with pride at two books that were published from that contract.

I used to half joke in the department that the three great obstacles to learning were continuing assessment, the highlighter and the copying machine. The highlighter deprives students of real experience in note taking. The copying machine leads them to believe that having copied something they have read it. Continuing assessment drives students down to a safe mediocrity and does not give them the freedom to gamble. Worse, it denies them the opportunity of reflecting over the totality of what they have learned.

For myself the four great learning moments of my intellectual life were the four general examinations in the four disciplines that have dominated it. Three years of scholastic philosophy were examined by a two hour oral in Latin by a board of three.

Four years of theology were examined in a similar way, then four years of theology and the three years of philosophy for the final examination as a Jesuit. I loved the general examination at the end of three years of history in the Melbourne honours degree. We returned to our first and second year subjects with the experience we had had of all three. Then a separate fourth year generals examination was the icing on the cake. Anthropology at Harvard ended with two two and a half hour oral examinations, one called Generals, the other called Specials. There was no syllabus for these examinations. All you knew was that there would be a physical, a socio-cultural anthropologist, a linguist and an archaeologist on the board of the Generals, and three specialists in your field in the Specials. In none of these general examinations was empirical data the focus. The focus was on synthesis, stamping your knowledge with your own signature. They served me well.

I took the title 'Max Crawford Professor of History' with pride. My undergraduate experience of Max were in the years when his own and his wife's health drained his energies. But he had led the world in historical education with his honours degree, with his emphasis on research, and with the introduction of Theory and Method of History for third and fourth years honours students. I was honoured to take a title that forever stamped the department with a reflective mode of historical inquiry. It was easy to take the name of a scholar who had just written as I was appointed 'The School of Prudence or Inaccuracy and Incoherence in Describing Chaos', *Historical Studies* 15: 1971: 27-42. His brand of liberal humanism and the imprint of the young Marx on his thinking gave me a lineage of the mind I was happy to say was mine.

#### **1974 Beach crossings**

I am flying over an immense ocean. I am sitting nervously behind two gesticulating French pilots. They point to every button on their instrument panel as if it is the subject of some great philosophical or mechanical crisis. It is December 1974. We have just taken off from Tahiti's Faa airport in a wet season storm. We are flying on a northeast tack over 1500 km of open sea to Fenuaenata, the Land of the Native People. I would not have then called the people Enata or their islands Fenua at that time. My visit would give me the cultural courtesy and the academic courage to call them what they called themselves and their land. I would have called them in 1974 what the Spanish outsiders called them 400 years ago, the Marquesas.

I am apprehensive. The Land and its Natives have already changed my life. But I have been to the Land and met its Natives only in libraries and archives. I know that I am Stranger to them, and I know the cost of every Stranger's intrusion. The sadness of their story has affected me ever since I began to learn it. Inevitably I come with a sense of trespass. Their terrible story and my knowledge of it has been the capital of my life. The rewards of twenty years study of them to this time in 1974 had been great. I bring to them in my luggage the pride of my academic life to this time, my first book about them. I know all my shortcuts in that book. I know all its tricks of camouflage for my ignorance. Early in my studies of the Land, I had read Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). It had shaken me to my core. In a world of victims, he wrote, there are no innocents. No one can write two-sided history who in some way benefits by the power of the victors. No one can mediate between the disempowered living and the voiceless dead. All of us writing in a history so terrible as that of the Pacific - or of the Americas or of Africa for that matter - have had to resolve that dilemma for ourselves. No doubt we all do it differently. For me, giving the dead a voice has been reason enough for my history. I am with Karl Marx, too. The function of my history is not so much to understand the world as to change it. If

my history by story and reflection disturbs the moral lethargy of the living to change in their present the consequences of their past, then it fulfils a need. I have not silenced any voice by adding mine.

It was a near miraculous moment for me when we discovered through a break in the clouds that we were above the island and the very valley to which I had been thousands of times in my mind. We touched down on something like the deck of an aircraft carrier on the island of Hiva Oa.

I remember my emotions as we approached Vaitahu down the straits between the islands of Hiva Oa and Tahuata, and saw the winds rushing down the valley to ruffle the waters of the bay. I don't know how many times I have noted that wind in my notes and how a whaler or a naval vessel dragged its anchors before it. I stood in sad awe at the place where the Spaniards after celebrating high mass had recreated a Golgotha scene by placing the bodies of those they had killed on three stakes and piercing their dead hearts with a spear. I walked about the hill where the French in 1842 had built their fort from which they had slaughtered those who had resisted their prostituting the women and enslaving the men and killing hundreds with their lack of hygiene.

There is a triviality about these places where terrible things have happened that is mystifying. A place of a massacre becomes a caravan park, a place of suicidal flight becomes a barbecue site. I don't know how one puts history into these sites, let alone memory, but I am confident that history and social memory will come to them.

An old man, Teifitu, gave us hospitality. He was a direct descendant of the *haka'iki*, or chiefs of the valley. An ancestor of his had been killed by James Cook's men because he had stolen a halfpenny nail. Another had looked after the beachcombers I had come to know. Just three generations before, others had scrawled their signs on the documents giving away their land. The French *Ministre de Marines* insisted the documents should be in triplicate. I had held all three copies in my own hands in the archives in Paris. I would sit with Teifitu into the night and in my poor French and poorer Marquesan tried to translate what Edward Robarts, the beachcomber whose journal I had edited, said to him of his past. I still have the names he wrote in my field notebook that joined Teifitu to those I knew.

I learnt much about crossing cultures from Teifitu on the beach at Vaitahu. One thing was that I learned to hear the silences within myself. Another thing was that I learned to discern the continuities that outlive all the discontinuity of cultural change.

We had not finished with the Land. We flew to Ua Huka to join an old French naval landing craft for the five hour voyage to Nukuhiva. The bare dry hills of Ua Huka are most untropical, more like Mexico, even to the corrals and all the other signs of a cowboy culture. We met up with a Swiss professor who was in high excitement at his time among the 'primitives', his word. '*Crains, crains*', 'Skulls, skulls', he kept saying – 'in a canoe in a cave!'

Nukuhiva was a hazy blue in the west. It was three hours before we could discern anything of the island's landscape. We approached Nukuhiva from its southeast corner, and could see its north and south coast stretching away. All was abrupt cliff in the blue haze of the sea.

As we moved along the south coast, I began to recognise bays. Taipivai came first. Its valley and the high cliffs that hedge its waters stretch miles back into the hinterland of Nukuhiva. Taipivai was the valley that Herman Melville experienced as 'Typee'. He had run with Tobias Greene from the *Acushnet* in July 1842 and made his

three weeks beachcombing into a *Narrative of Four Months Residence Among the Natives of a Valley in the Marquesas Islands* (1846).

*Typee* was a brave book. It roused much anger for its immorality, but more because it challenged commonly held prejudices. Melville saw the beach as a tawdry place where nothing came across in beauty or fullness, where everything was a misanthropic, half-pointless, tattered remnant. He saw Enata in the rags of civilisation and saw the rags as a parable of the larger cultural dump the Land was becoming. To those who saw everything of civilisation as good and everything of savages evil, Melville's perception that the good could be evil and the evil good was uncomfortable. The reading public denounced it as deceiving fiction.

For me, it was a moment of tense expectancy as we first caught sight of the vertical lines of light coloured rocks that were the navigators' signpost to the entry of Taiohae Bay and then turned carefully through the narrow entrance, to be overwhelmed, as every visitor must be, by the massiveness of the bay's encircling mountain ridge. It was as if we were in some giant's maw.

I found that the towering mountain ridges foreshorten all perspectives. A grey-brown veil - no, a grey-brown shroud - of trees slips down the slopes of the ridges and over the distinctive features of the valleys. The French had imported mimosa - for the homely comfort of their troops of African and Mediterranean origin - and a thorny lantana - for a protective hedge against native incursions. The mimosa had spread like a spring tide in an estuary. It made a bland canopy over a landscape that had been coloured with the varied greens of the breadfruit, banyan, palm, banana, paper mulberry, ironwood trees among many and the rainbow hues of hibiscus, gardenia and frangipani.

I soon realised how leached of story, memory and history is a dead, veiled and strangled landscape. I felt very inadequate to my task. I felt depressed at my own silences. I did not know how I would give life to all the lifeless rubble around me or give voice to things so speechless. I know now, decades on from 1974, that I was at the nadir of my understandings. I had beaches to cross.

*Islands and Beaches* (1980) was the book that came out of these crossings. A very rewarding thing happened to me in the millennium year, 2000. Fenuaenata, The People of the Land, the Marquesans, through their Association Eo' Enata, published a French translation of *Islands and Beaches* in a splendid edition. It was a great honour for me. I was humbled to be giving these sad and silent islands a history that they could never before read.

*Islands and Beaches* was an important book for me. Forty five years ago I made a discovery that changed my life. I discovered that I wanted to write the history of Oceania in a double-visioned way. I wanted to write the history of Pacific islands from both sides of the beach. I began to read the voyagers - Cook, Bougainville, Bligh, Vancouver, La Pérouse - then the whalers' logs, missionary letters, beachcombers' journals, not so much to tell their stories as to see what their unseeing eyes were seeing, life on the other side of the beach as the islanders actually lived it, not as it was framed in the mind-galleries of outsiders. What attracted me most of all were the beachcombers, those who left their ships and 'went native', those who crossed beaches.

Beachcombers. There were hundreds of them in the years I was interested in - the mutineers of the *Bounty* among them. They were a peculiar breed. They were as varied as humanity itself, and as good and as evil. They were always a scandal to the

societies they left, deemed traitors to it. They took freedoms that other men (there were no women among them in these years) didn't dare or want to take. They soon found that their beaches were dangerous places. If they were wise, they did not bring any material goods with them. These would be taken from them, with their lives if they resisted. What they couldn't bring with them was all the cultural and social support, including language, that made them who they were. To survive, they had to enter into native society in some way, its language first of all. They had to bow to the realities of politics and social relationships. They had to be good mimics and actors. They had to be able to read gestures and understand the ways in which power and class and gender can be in a colour or a shape or a look.

So for me, who wanted to see across the beach, the beachcombers' eyes saw more than most. I began to 'see' the Land, Fenua, The Marquesas, through a beachcomber's eyes, Edward Robarts and a lone nineteen year old missionary beachcomber, William Pascoe Crook. They both wrote long manuscripts of their experiences in the Land. *Islands and Beaches* grew out of that seeing.

*Islands and Beaches* freed me in many ways. It gave me courage to take risks in the theatre of cross-cultural writing. The metaphors 'islands' and 'beaches' allowed me to escape the tunnel vision of an island topic and to discover the many ways in which there are liminal spaces and boundaries in life. I experimented structurally in the book, balancing the two requirements of the historical endeavour, narrative and reflection, in a quite explicit way. I gained a freedom especially by giving back to Enata - The People - of Fenua - The Land - something of their own identity in how they named themselves and their islands. But more importantly, how they structured their identity in the opposition of native (*enata*) and stranger (*haoe*). It was a first and small step in inverting the priorities of our cross-cultural gaze.

'Life is a Beach', the T-shirts in every seaside resort proclaim. Yes, life **is** a beach, though the truth of that is not as hedonistic as the T-shirts are meant to imply. Life is the marginal space between two unknowables - its before and its after. All of living is a crossing. Living is all the crossings within one crossing.

It is the process in these crossings that intrigues me. The process, not so much the change. Not essences and polarities that never were, but creative unfolding. How does one catch creative unfolding, movement, in words? Music might catch the flow of things, and so might painting. But there is stasis in a word that describes the world as *things*. 'To arrest the meaning of words, that is what the Terror wants', Jean-François Lyotard once wrote. And Herbert Marcuse put his slant on the idea: 'All reification is a process of forgetting. Art fights reification by making the petrified world speak, sing, perhaps dance'. I want to write history that avoids both the Terror and the forgetting.

Poetry might keep my words alive, make them dance. It wouldn't shame me to tell my stories in poetry, or at least to write my prose poetically. Let me be more ambitious than that, though. Let me represent all the crossings that are in even one beach crossing. They are all there - yours, mine - whether we know it or not, whether we like it or not.

All living is in flow, but our cultural living is sentenced, paragraphed, chaptered. In all the passage moments, in all the crossing moments, of our cultural life - in becoming adult, or married, or healthy, or educated - in all the specifying moments of roles - gender, age, status, kin - the normal times of living are interrupted by times of defining, moments of marking, occasions of abnormality. We sometimes call these

marking and abnormal times ritual. They are always theatre: moments of in-between, moments of seeing, moments of reflection. Beaches.

## **2002 'Adjuncting'**

I am at a privileged time in life. I write day in, year out. I am more writer than professor, though writing, I believe, is always a profession of self, living and other. When you have been writing academically for nearly fifty years, as I have, you begin to wonder if you have anything more to say. Anyway, the one thing an historian can be sure of is that somebody is coming who will say what I have been really saying when I appeared to be saying something else. Culture is a very elliptic sort of talk. It does not need to be repetitive, though.

I am still a sort of a professor. An 'adjunct professor'. I am not sure what 'adjuncting' is or is meant to be, but as I experience it, it is like academic grandparenting. I adjunct by presenting workshops to doctoral students in the final years of their research. 'Challenges to Perform', the workshops are called. They focus on the creative imagination in the presentation of scholarly knowledge. My students are from all disciplines - medicine, architecture, anthropology, literature, history, linguistics, music, dancing, painting. And they are from all universities. The staff, I invite to perform for these students are from all disciplines, too - astrophysics, ethnomusicology, novelists, filmmakers, environmentalists among all the others. They cannot speak to their specialism so much as their experience.

These workshops are what I think a university should be. They present the resources of the whole university to those most capable of using those resources. We soon discover that we learn by exchange. We all, staff and students, are inspired by one another.

Imagination scares many of those who feel that their duty is to be in touch with the real world. Imagination is equated with fantasy by many. But imagination is not necessarily fantasy. Imagination is hearing the silences because I have heard so much else. Imagination is taking the cliché out of something that has been said so many times before. Imagination is finding a metaphor that someone will see, a word that someone will read. Imagination is discovering a structure for a hundred thousand words that will make it seem just like a hundred words. Imagination is not breaking the rules of scholarship but taking the function of those rules and making them fly.

Inevitably, I tell my students what I have said in this piece. I urge them to perform their true stories and to discover the performative element in the past. 'Be mysterious', I tell them. Present the most complicated truths by story. 'Be experiential'. Observe from within. 'Be compassionate'. Write with the whole body, not just the mind. 'Be entertaining'. Hold the readers' attention within the creative structures of the writing. 'Be reforming'. Change the world.

\* \* \*

Is there one thing more that I would like to say? Yes, there is. In fact there are two. They are the two sides of the one coin.

The one thing is that territoriality is our enemy. The other is that altruism is our ally.

Territoriality in disciplines, in departments, in universities, in cities, in states, in nations is our enemy. Exclusiveness kills the creative imagination. We cross territorial boundaries, we cross beaches, when we give a little of ourselves. We hear when we silence ourselves.



Emeritus Professor Greg Dening is currently voyaging around Australia.

#### Notes

I have made these ideas public over a number of years: Greg Dening (1966). *Performances*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press; (1998) *Readings/Writings*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press; (1993) 'The theatricality of history-making and the paradoxes of acting', *Cultural Anthropology* 8: 73-95; (1994). 'The theatricality of observing and being observed: "Eighteenth-century Europe" "discovers" the ? century "Pacific"', in Stuart B Schwarz (ed) *Implicit Understandings. Observing, Reporting and Reflecting on Encounters Between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 451-483.

My debt to the ideas of others is great: Victor Turner (1982). *From Ritual to Theatre*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications; Roland Barthes (1989) 'The reality effect', in *The Rustle of Language*. Berkeley: University of California Press: 141-148.

Liotard is quoted in Michel de Certeau (1988). *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press: 165; and, Herbert Marcuse (1980) in Michael T Taussig, *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press:154.



## **The teacher**

***Iain McCalman***

I want to pay tribute to Greg Denning as a teacher. Of course I could say something about his extraordinary achievements as a published historian, especially because I happen to think that Mr Bligh's *Bad Language* and *The Death of William Gooch* are two of the best books written by a contemporary historian in any field. Still, they've been praised by scores of scholars all over the world, most of them better qualified for the task than I. However, I can bear recent witness to Greg's brilliance as a teacher, which is how I have encountered him since 1997 when he took up an Adjunct Professorial position in the Australian National University's Centre for Cross-Cultural Research (CCCR). It is a convention of our trade to say that the best teachers make the best writers: in Greg the processes are genuinely inseparable and always will be.

I'd been somewhat involved in the genesis of the ANU's Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, which came about, by an ARC Special Research Centre grant in 1996. Knowing that Greg had officially retired from the University of Melbourne (where he is still an Emeritus Professor), I asked if he'd be willing to act as an intellectual catalyst and guide to our fledgling project. It was a logical thing to do: in so many ways Greg is the founding father of modern cross-cultural history. He began practising this calling at the ANU with Professor John Mulvaney in the 1950s and he's shaped the field since. He and Bernard Smith were our models when designing the CCCR; we wanted the Centre to foster the kind of history that they had pioneered.

I was startled to discover, however, that what Greg wanted to do at the Centre was teach. Most Emeritus Professors, especially those like Greg with a burning drive to research and write, can't get away from teaching fast enough. For him, though, teaching lies at the heart of our enterprise as writers and researchers; it is our duty, our necessity and our pleasure.

More than that, Greg wanted to make us teach too. His first instinct was to urge us to give something back for the privilege of having a comparatively well-funded research centre. I'm ashamed that he had to point it out, but grateful that what he suggested proved to be so inspirational. He wanted us to introduce a new program of postgraduate teaching that could become a key-stone of the Centre's intellectual mission, and, if possible, a model for the country. Greg pioneered the first of what we now call our Visiting Scholar programs. They're intensive two-to-three week thematic teaching courses for postgraduate students from all around the country. In 1998 Greg led the first one on 'Voyaging and Encountering', and the following year he convened what has now become an acclaimed annual event, his course 'Challenges to Perform: The Creative Imagination in the Presentation of Knowledge'.

It's difficult to describe the character and impact of Greg's short courses; they're hybrids - part seminar, part colloquium, part workshop, part theatre, part life-encounter. They're incredibly hard work for teacher and student alike, and, at the moment at least, they lead to no formal qualification. In a world of ubiquitous credentialism, they're purely educative. Not despite, but because of this, students flock to attend them, and afterwards they rave about them in a way that I've never heard before. They praise them for being inspirational, practical, rigorous, intellectual, collegial, radical, and creative. I've participated in several in a minor way and I've been electrified. With Greg, I've also come to believe that we need to persuade universities and governments to institute a scheme of this kind as an essential component of the Australian postgraduate experience.

While attending these courses I've glimpsed some of the sources of Greg's genius as a teacher and writer. For a start he believes - no, he knows - that what the students

are doing must be treated as the highest form of creative endeavour. It's a salutary reminder of how blasé academics have become. With good reason, perhaps, we are inclined nowadays to be depressed and depressing about our profession. Greg restores our sense of calling. He recovers for both teacher and student the idealism, the hope and the longing to create and perform that first drew us into the profession. There is not a grain of condescension in his attitude to his students: as a result, he demands of them a total and remorseless commitment. And they give it because they feel that for two weeks at least they've become fellow performers alongside him, artists engaged in a precious common enterprise - to push their creative possibilities to their utmost limit.

they've become fellow performers alongside him, artists engaged in a precious common enterprise - to push their creative possibilities to their utmost limit. You can see students suddenly understanding for the first time that history really is something that they must make for themselves out of the textual debris that have chanced to survive. You can watch them realise - and it's both an exhilarating and frightening moment - that writing a thesis can be a creative, imaginative, and joyous act, and that it must be woven out of their own fabric as people living in the present.

Greg instils in his students a sense of trust because he is so personally courageous. He doesn't ask anything of them that he is not willing to do himself. He is always prepared take risks, to extend his own limits. Above all, he is not afraid to fail; he is not constrained by the thought of attracting ridicule from the likes of Keith Windshuttle. He never ceases to experiment. He refuses to let teaching history - something he's been doing for half a century - slide into cliché or become in any way perfunctory or predictable. He excites students to make the subject fresh for themselves, to glory in its difficulty, to be awed by its mystery, to be thrilled by its élan, to hear its silences, to struggle to overthrow its orthodoxies, as every generation must.

At the same time, Greg Dening offers no shortcuts. He does not disguise the fact that our calling is demanding - even exhausting. Students have to produce their work in rapid time. They have to be prepared to subject themselves to searching collective and individual criticism. They have to learn to discover and face their shortcomings as well as their potentialities.

Come to think of it, we all need a dose of Greg.

*Professor Iain McCalman is Director, Humanities Research Centre and President, Australian Academy of the Humanities.*



## Professor Dening's Exercises

**Tom Griffiths**

Greg Dening is still teaching. As Adjunct Professor at the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research at the Australian National University, Dening runs ten-day workshops for doctoral scholars from around Australia. He jokes that it is 'academic grandparenting'. He also confesses that he sees it, 'if the truth be known, as a secular academic retreat, a sort of intellectual spiritual exercises'. Greg first did the full thirty days of Ignatius Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* when he was 16.

In a funny, sad and profound essay called 'Ethnography on My Mind', Dening has analysed his earlier life and training as a Jesuit for its enduring imprint on his thinking. For those of us who have come to know Greg since he left the Jesuits and the priesthood in 1970, this essay is a typically generous gift of himself, a window on how his religious discipline came to inform his history. As one of his fortunate students, I am shown my teacher in the making, and I recognise with delight the truth of his reflection that, in his 70s, Greg is indeed still doing 'spiritual exercises'.

Retreats, he recalls, were a time to restore one's fervour. He describes the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, as a slim and sparse text, 'all design and structure, not substance and content'. They shaped a retreat – whether it be the full thirty days, which Greg did twice, or the shorter eight-day version he did every year for twenty years – into acts of imagination and meditation. They scripted an open-ended drama of the soul in which the players had agency and opportunity, but also the security of support and structure. The days followed a rhythm of intensity and ordinariness, of exultation and lethargy, rationality and celebration. There was a progression from uncertainty to decision.

Every prayer event was preceded by acts of imagination and meditation. In Dening's words, Loyola insisted on 'the careful construction of an ambience that corresponded with the goal of the particular exercise, using darkness or sunlight, closed or open spaces to create a reflectiveness'. One's imagination was primed by this 'Composition of Place', by this sensual projection into a site of contemplation. One recommended method of evoking these images was to place oneself in the scene by successively 'seeing', 'smelling', 'hearing', 'touching' everything in it.

For fifteen minutes the night before, 'Points of Meditation' were to be prepared. They aimed to define 'the significance of the narrative' that one pondered. 'They were in fact moments of art', Dening recalls, 'of creative thinking and writing. Often they were performed to others, often listened to as others performed them.' And they were balanced by a fifteen-minute reflection after the meditation, in which one became a critic of one's own theatre of preparation and performance.

Dening has always been his own best ethnographer, forever practising what he preaches, and he has reflected superbly on how these rituals and expectations meant that he has been under some obligation to be a 'professor' – about the way he understood the world and our human existence – since the age of sixteen. Here I am using his words, and observing his actions, to help me understand his enduring power as a teacher.

It is a crisp, clear Canberra morning, and Dening begins the workshop by gathering the twenty chosen scholars in a circle of conversation and telling them that this is his ideal of what postgraduate education can be: a community where we can expose our

vulnerability because there is equality and trust, where we can gamble because the consequences are not hurtful, except perhaps to our pride.

'Each of you is the expert on your subject', he assures us (we are sceptical of this), 'but no-one else wants to know what's in your head' (we recognise this!). *Here* is the challenge, then – to engage others, to make connections, to join a world conversation.

So Denning leads us away from a precious or adversarial sense of originality – as something defined without or against others – towards a robust celebration of intellectual debts and dialogues. Knowledge grows out of conversation, and 'conversation' can be informal, spontaneous, equal, erotic, unpredictable, public, social, civil and unbounded. 'We begin', he says, 'by plumbing the depths of our own plagiarism'. We begin with admiration.

These are deliberately dangerous words in the modern university – *vulnerability, gamble, celebration, plagiarism, admiration*. I have seen some of Denning's students and colleagues made uneasy by them. Some scholars yearn for a more easily recognisable 'critical culture', and for the heroic cut and thrust – and black and white – of battle. Others contrive their originality by smoothing away their debts.

'Long ago', Greg wrote in 1994, 'I discovered two things that were important to me and my happiness. I discovered that I didn't feel threatened by the skills and talents of my students (and my readers), and that I had no time to be gladiatorial about knowledge when I so much enjoyed celebrating it.'

Denning is impatient with thinkers who want the last word, and with disciplines that claim a final truth. He is bemused by 'the culture of envy' in academia and the 'blood sport' of debunking. It is not the nature of Denning's criticism to boundary-ride or point-score; rather, it is to rejoice, inspire and imagine. In his volume of essays and reviews, *Readings/Writings* (1998), Denning introduces us to historian John Stilgoe's evocation of 'loomings', that magical visual experience where the tricks of an oceanic horizon may bring distant objects shimmeringly close. Stilgoe writes in *Alongshore* (1994) that 'seamen and seers can sometimes see over the horizon, beyond the curve of space if not of time'. Denning's gaze (always seawards) seems to project over both curves, and what he sees shimmers. He has been pleased to be called 'a magical realist'.

He criticises as he teaches: by indicating further possibilities, by enlarging the subject, by lifting one's eyes to a more distant horizon and then asking what may lie beyond it. Here we approach the experience of his students, forever compelled to look beyond what they might have thought achievable, forever 'offered handlines that seemed just out of reach', as one recalled. 'I have always felt that learning requires a little "cognitive dissonance"', Denning has reflected. His teaching strategy, then, is to expose his students to exciting and sometimes bewildering freedoms – above all, the freedom to experiment and fail (safely). When I tutored for Denning, I came to realise just how generous he is to those who chance their arm – he is determined to reward originality and creative courage, even if it goes awry. The way to fail is not to stretch yourself.

'Don't rail against the limits', he urges the assembled doctoral scholars. 'Discover them, play with them, extend them.' As a Jesuit, Denning knew 'what it was like to be totally enclosed by rule and formality'. He had to learn how to make rules enabling, how to use them creatively and mischievously, how to respect them at the same time

as transcending them. He has a rule about rules: 'Don't let anybody hide behind the "bad faith" of saying they have to do something in a particular way.'

So the workshop, like Loyola's exercises, is all design and structure at the same time as being frighteningly, excitingly open. The ten days engulf us yet do not exhaust us. There are planned spaces in them. Dening has written that the essence of style in performance 'lies in the rhythm that allows silence and space between key concepts'. The weeks are governed by a series of rhythms – of alternating staff and student presentations, of programmed mornings and free afternoons, of intensity and ordinariness, of performance and judgement. There are four themes (perhaps echoing the four weeks of the full exercises), and each takes two days, and they come between single days of introduction and conclusion. Many of the themes focus on the senses: they might be 'Seeing', 'Hearing', 'Writing', 'Reflecting', even 'Dancing'. The two weeks resolve in a celebratory lunch.

All participating scholars are expected to give a 'performance' of fifteen minutes. Here's how Greg describes the task:

*These performances will be subject to critical review in the session. This review will take into account not just your literary abilities, but such performance details, such as your posture, your voice, your capacity to catch the rhythm of your writing, your presence – the sorts of things that might be relevant to radio, tv, lecture hall, interview appearances. Your ability to perform your piece in exactly 15 minutes, no more than a few seconds over or under, will be especially under review.*

It is, then, a piece of theatre, a 'moment of art'. You don't 'take a long run up to it', as Greg would say. It is whole in itself. You prepare for it carefully. And then you do it.

The scholars are assigned to small groups of five, and each group performs every second morning. These constellations of fifteen-minute performances become the highlight of the workshop and quickly outshine the 'staff' presentations. The degree of experimentation increases as the days pass and as the audience's trust and expectation rise. And the individuals within each group begin to work together in creative and surprising ways while preserving their own fifteen minutes of fame. They begin to indulge in 'the careful construction of an ambience', by playing with the senses and doing surprising things with an academic space. This crescendo gives the whole workshop the shape of a fine piece of music.

As a student of Dening's in my undergraduate years at the University of Melbourne, I am reminded of a day in 1977 when a group of students studying 'Social and Reflective History' transformed a lecture theatre into the seaswept deck of the *Bounty*, and the audience became absorbed in the action of hoisting the sails, battling the Horn, arriving in seductive Tahiti (we were each given a flower), and then sucked into the maelstrom of the mutiny itself. I remember how Greg looked that day. He could hardly believe the cleverness of his own children.

We knew that our teacher was always thinking, always exploring, always pushing the boundaries as he urged us to do. In my fourth year of History Honours, I was one of a class of six to whom Dening gave the task of writing a book together. The commission took our breaths away, but we did it. And sometime later it was published.

Social and Reflective History was a remarkable experimental space designed by Dening in the 1970s, in which unusual forms of teaching and response could be tried

– he offered oral examinations, writing-in-class, lectures by students, writing workshops (these were ‘tutorials’ *where people actually talked*), collaborative ethnographic fieldwork, immersion in archives. We knew that our teacher was always thinking, always exploring, always pushing the boundaries as he urged us to do. In my fourth year of History Honours, I was one of a class of six to whom Denning gave the task of writing a book together. The commission took our breaths away, but we did it. And sometime later it was published. And so in the postgraduate workshops today he talks about note-taking, headings, formatting, writing that first sentence and the last, surviving low moments, ‘hitting the wall’, creative indexing, copy-editing, authorial presence, crossing disciplines. Students are still stunned to find someone ready to talk about these things.

He had come across a letter written from a Xavierian serving abroad in the first world war, a letter from a mud-filled dugout to the mother of a dear friend killed by a piece of shrapnel as he cooked breakfast for his mates. It was a letter of utter devotion and love, and of compassion for the woman who would read it. Greg decided to read the letter to us, I guess, so that we could feel the raw emotion of the archive, and so that we would know and always remember that, however playful he encouraged us to be, history is not a game.

One day in Social and Reflective History Greg lectured to us from his current research – he was writing a history of his old school, Xavier College – and we sat and listened in the steeply ranked seats of the old hall to his accounts of discoveries in the archives. He had come across a letter written from a Xavierian serving abroad in the first world war, a letter from a mud-filled dugout to the mother of a dear friend killed by a piece of shrapnel as he cooked breakfast for his mates. It was a letter of utter devotion and love, and of compassion for the woman who would read it. Greg decided to read the letter to us, I guess, so that we could feel the raw emotion of the archive, and so that we would know and always remember that, however playful he encouraged us to be, history is not a game. It was a long letter and Greg read it slowly, his voice faltering, but he

got to the end. Then he waved his hand apologetically at us and walked out the door. The lecture was just twenty minutes in, and yet it seemed, suddenly, to be over. I suppose Greg doesn’t know that we sat there in silence for some time, first looking at the door through which he had disappeared and might, for all we knew, suddenly reappear, and then uncomfortably at one another. We gradually and quietly dispersed.

I do not think that the final bit of this ‘performance’ was scripted. I’m sure that Greg, like us, was deeply moved by the letter, but also perhaps by his presumption to make it public. And by the futility of words, especially words of translation and mediation. He suddenly wanted the original words, the words from the trench, to hang in the air; he did not want to dilute their power. Unscripted this ending might have been but it could not have been better theatre. Once you engage in ‘performance’, you involve the audience, you gamble, and you never quite know how the dice will fall.

Denning tells us that the Jesuit tradition of theatre is long: ‘Loyola was confident that soul and body, mind and imagination, physical environment and human feelings were bound together. The best teacher was performance. The best way to “discern spirits” was to perform.’

At the beginning of the workshop, Denning said: ‘we never learn the truth by being told it, only by experiencing it’. The ritual of performance puts that maxim into practice.

And for those who question the possibility of criticism in an environment of such trust and generosity, Dening's answer might be this: 'It is difficult to fool oneself as a performer. We recognise restlessness, boredom, silent disapproval in an audience too easily. We know what we do not achieve in performances.'

Dening aims to be mysterious. He does not want to be gnostic, but he does want to be mysterious. It gives his readers, his students and his audience freedom; it leaves them work to do; it invites a continuing conversation. Such mystery can be unsettling; he acknowledges that it can create trauma as well as exhilaration. And the community created by this secular academic retreat – by the very nature of its cohesion and intensity – may leave one or two personalities feeling marginal, because they are irritated or puzzled or unmoved. Perhaps they are suspicious of the fervour.

In these intellectual spiritual exercises, there is anxiety, discovery, reflection, climax, catharsis – and, finally, celebration. The exercises are over and we are bound together by them, and changed by them. There has been passion and poetry and, yes, perhaps even decision. We know that we have been in the presence of a great teacher (and a lifelong learner), and that Dening's words – written and performed – make life better and more vital, and the world more wonderful and more disturbing. At the celebratory lunch, speeches are spontaneously made, and Greg indulges us with another ritual. He has a certificate to give each of us. He stands in the middle of our circle and presents it to the first person alphabetically, and that person presents the certificate to the next, and so on. It's a way of acknowledging how much we have learnt from one another. And as Greg says before the lunch: 'The biggest plus of these two weeks could be that you've found a reader, or two or three. The reader is always right.'

And so, although there is celebration and sadness and parting, there is no ending, and there is no closure. The conversation goes on.

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### **Sources**

Greg Dening's essay. 'Ethnography on My Mind' is in his (1996) *Performances*, Melbourne. I have also drawn on Ivan Brady's interview with Greg in Donna Merwick (ed) (1994). *Dangerous Liaisons*, Melbourne, as well as Greg's 'Challenges to Perform' postgraduate workshops at the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, Australian National University, since 1999.



## **Economics and Values<sup>1</sup>**

***J W Nevile***

A few years ago a joke was going around about an occasion when a group of Treasury economists hired a bus to take them to a conference. On the journey the brakes in the bus failed, it went over a cliff and everyone in it was killed. Two people were discussing the accident. 'I feel sorry for the bus driver' said the first. 'Yes replied her companion, 'but the real tragedy was that the bus was only half full'.

Whether or not the joke is funny is a matter of opinion, but few are left wondering what its point is. Whether or not economists have a bad name may not matter except to them. But the general perception of the discipline of economics is important. Many of the difficult problems facing our society have a large economic component and economic policy decisions affect everyone's lives. Also any backlash against them has at least the potential to produce widespread effects. If economists are written off as uncaring, hard-hearted people, the valuable insights that economics can provide about ways to increase the common good are also likely to be dismissed.

This article argues that two factors play a large part in causing the bad reputation economics has in the minds of many Australians. The first is that, more often than not, economists fail to make explicit the values underlying their policy prescriptions. This leaves listeners, or readers, with the impression that what is being recommended follows directly from standard economic analysis when it depends equally on the values of those putting the recommendations. Sometimes it is explicitly claimed that the recommendations are the inevitable outcome of standard economic analysis. For example, Sloan<sup>2</sup> claims that those opposed to the policy prescriptions of economic rationalism are 'anti-economists.' It is not surprising that those who disagree with economic rationalism consider economics a flawed discipline.

The second thing is a shift in the way economists regard their subject and what they think is central to it. The nature of this will be taken up later but it has as a by-product a lesser interest in the pattern of income distribution across a country and more interest on questions of production and exchange. Modern economics has as its main focus the questions what is to be produced and how it is to be produced, and the market, or exchange, system which enables this to be done much more efficiently than it could if every household was largely self sufficient. The diminished concern for income distribution also reflects values – not judgements about whether income distribution is important, but judgements about the sort of discipline economics should be and hence about the sort of issues that economics can discuss. The end result of this is an impression that economics is a discipline that glorifies the market and ignores questions of equity or 'social justice'.

### **Values and economic policy**

Standard economic analysis assumes that it is impossible to compare the gains realised by one person with the losses suffered by another. Hence, economics can only recommend a change as unambiguously desirable if it makes at least one person better off and no one worse off. Any change in economic policy in the real world benefits some groups of people and harms others, as does maintaining the status quo. Thus, economists, purely as economists, can never argue that particular economic policies are desirable. Of course many economists do this, often very vigorously. Some economists make explicit the values underlying their policy recommendations eg, that they believe the benefits of an increase in income of poor people outweighs the costs of a fall in income of rich people. Others fudge the

standard criterion and hold that, relying purely on economics, they can recommend policy changes if the winners can fully compensate the losers and still be better off. The losers do not actually have to be compensated. Whether they are or not is a political question, not an economic one, at least in the eyes of economists who adopt this approach.

This second approach completely ignores questions such as whether in practice it is possible to identify those individuals who are winners and losers and whether compensation is at all likely or even feasible. Inevitably economists who adopt it recommend policy changes which will benefit the rich at the expense of the poor or which imply that increasing output should have priority over protecting the environment. Not all the policies they advocate do this, but enough do to give economists a reputation as people who believe that maximising total material wealth has priority over any other social values.

The second approach can also be criticised for failing to observe the standard distinction between positive and normative economics. Positive economics is the study of what is, and normative economics (including all policy advice), is concerned with what ought to be or what is desirable. Since normative economics takes into account what is considered desirable it depends on value judgements on which men and women may continue to differ, however intelligent and knowledgeable they may be. On the other hand, according to conventional wisdom, positive economics is value free so that any two intelligent people should be able to reach agreement on the correctness or otherwise of a proposition in positive economics, through rational discussion and empirical observation.

However, even the value free nature of positive economics is not beyond dispute. Although most economics departments teach that positive economics is value free, this is challenged by a minority of economists. I argue that positive economics is not free of value judgements in at least two respects. Deductive reasoning should conform to the rules of logic, which are certainly value free. But in general positive economics is not just a matter of deductive reasoning. It also requires an appeal to empirical studies. Moreover, the facts that an economist studies are not facts produced in carefully controlled conditions in a laboratory. They are facts thrown up by real world situations and some judgement is required in interpreting the facts. This judgement is heavily influenced by the values of the person making the judgement. For example, the case for reducing government regulation of, and intervention in, the economy rests on the empirical judgement that cases of market failure are uncommon, that is, if left to itself, it is very unusual for the market not to produce an efficient outcome. Economists who place a high value on political and personal liberty are suspicious of government intervention and regulation, which they see as reducing personal liberty. It is perhaps not surprising that such economists generally make the professional judgement that market failure is rare. Given the values that they hold, the costs of unnecessary government intervention are high. From this viewpoint it is responsible to be very cautious in claiming that market failure exists.

Other economists are more concerned about the costs of not intervening when to do so will be beneficial to the economy. If there is market failure, the people who suffer are usually the economically weak, who may well experience very real poverty. This is particularly true of the labour market where a major symptom of failure is involuntary unemployment. Economists who put a high value on economic security for all, and on preventing anybody falling below a certain level of income, are far more likely to make the professional judgement that market failure is an important

problem in an unregulated capitalist economy than are those with a libertarian social philosophy.

In any attempt to test an empirical hypothesis there is the possibility of two types of error: that of accepting a false hypothesis and that of rejecting a true hypothesis. What weight one puts on the relative importance of each type of error depends on the consequences of each type of error and one's value judgements about the relative undesirability of each set of consequences. It is entirely proper for economists to allow value judgements to influence their policy prescriptions. It is improper, and more importantly incorrect, for them to claim that these policy prescriptions flow simply from the laws of economics or even just to imply this by ignoring completely the influence of value judgements in the formulations of policy advice.

The second reason why positive economics is not value free is the very human tendency to give more weight to empirical observations that tend to support one's preconceived ideas, than to those that tend to disprove them. If you doubt this, consider the case of media commentators who are economic rationalists. On numerous occasions they point out that in the United States, where there is a deregulated labour market, there is a relatively low level of unemployment; whereas they never mention that in the United Kingdom and New Zealand the unemployment rate is much the same as in Australia, although their labour markets are more deregulated than is the case in Australia.

In many circumstances, this very human tendency to give more weight to observations that tend to support a position already held is not improper. It may be appropriate, especially when one's preconceived ideas rest on a firm empirical foundation. But it is important to acknowledge that in practice one's preconceived ideas often rest on the values that one holds, as well as on deductive reasoning and empirical observation. Because many economists value highly the way the market works overall to co-ordinate economic activity, they often discount evidence that the market does not work well.

The practice of ignoring underlying value assumptions and using the status of economics to back up policy recommendations goes back a long way. Attacks on economics are not new either, but in the last 20 years or so they have been fiercer and more widespread than ever before. The reason for this is probably that in previous times the values that economist relied on to underpin their public pronouncements did not clash so much with those held by large sections of the articulate public.

However, today the dominant school of thought in economics in Australia is based on values which not only clash with traditional Australian ways of solving social problems but which are in conflict with those expressed by many articulate people in our community. These economists are, of course, those who have been dubbed economic rationalists.

### **Economic rationalism**

Economic rationalism is not a tightly defined school of thought, but it is possible to describe its central tenet. An economic rationalist is one who believes that there are very few exceptions to the rule that the market is the best way of deciding what is to be produced and how it is to be produced. Moreover, an economic rationalist maintains that, if market failure does exist (that is the market is not the best way of deciding what is to be produced and how it is to be produced), the consequences are

usually of less importance than those of the government failing in this respect and are easier to correct.

It is noticeable that my definition of an economic rationalist places emphasis on production, on what is to be produced and how it is to be produced. Some economic rationalists argue that unequal income distribution is important to create the right incentives, but most say little about income distribution, about who gets and who should get the goods and services that are produced. Certainly, they argue that market incomes should be determined by the market, for example, that wages should be fixed by market forces with the minimum of interference in the form of minimum wage laws or award wages and conditions laid down by the Conciliation Commission. While there are honourable exceptions, most economic rationalists imply that if this results in an unacceptable pattern of income distribution, they leave it to social security to take care of those whom market forces leave living in poverty. It is not clear how this role for the social security system is to be reconciled with the push for low taxation and minimal government.

Economic rationalism is the Australian version of a political movement known in other English speaking countries as market liberalism (sometimes referred to as economic liberalism or neo-liberalism). Like most great economists of their generation, the founders of this movement wrote to change the world, not just to increase knowledge. The father figure of market liberalism, Hayek, explicitly started a political crusade. His best known work is not that for which he received the Nobel prize in economics but his classic in political philosophy, *Road to Serfdom*. Hayek saw that post Second World War society was moving away from individualism. He acknowledged that this was due to politicians' implementing what the public desired, but argued that therefore public opinion should be changed through the writings of himself and like minded economists and political philosophers.<sup>3</sup>

The best known exponent of market liberalism, Milton Friedman, drew inspiration from Hayek, whom he praised for his 'influence in strengthening the moral and intellectual support for a free society'. In turn Friedman threw himself wholeheartedly into the movement to change public opinion with numerous magazine articles, TV appearances and the famous book *Free to Choose*, written with his wife.

Market liberalism, is firmly based on a social philosophy sometimes called libertarianism. This social philosophy places great emphasis on the freedom of the individual. To quote Friedman

As Liberals, we take freedom of the individual, or perhaps the family, as our ultimate goal in judging social arrangements.<sup>4</sup>

Friedman makes it quite clear that freedom has nothing to do with freedom from want etc, but with freedom to do as one wishes without restraints imposed by other people. Constraints imposed by lack of means do not raise problems of freedom. Robinson Crusoe could have no problem of freedom while he was alone on his island, even if he starved to death. (The example of Robinson Crusoe is taken from Friedman himself<sup>5</sup>). Monopolies are thought of as limiting freedom but not lack of resources or capabilities or talents. Consequently, for Friedman the role of government is strictly limited.

Not surprisingly, in Friedman's eyes the major function of government is to protect freedom: from fellow citizens as well as from those outside the country. This involves preserving law and order, enforcing contracts and encouraging competitive markets. Friedman also acknowledges that government can, on occasion, help to achieve

goals that it would be very difficult or expensive for individuals to achieve. However, he argues that states should be very cautious in using government for this purpose.<sup>6</sup>

By no means all economic rationalists in Australia have the clearly thought out political philosophy of Hayek and Friedman. Some probably have just a distrust of large government and a feeling that 'little people' get 'pushed around' by bureaucracy. They should not be condemned for this, but their failure to acknowledge, or perhaps even to realise the part it plays in forming their judgements about appropriate policy, is not helpful.

### **Economics as a science**

There is another more subtle reason why many economists argue for minimal government with the market itself determining a very large part of economic outcomes. Many economists have a not ignoble desire for economics to be as scientific as possible. Inasmuch as this leads to caution about what economic analysis can demonstrate it is to be applauded; but it often does not work out that way. The desire for scientific economics gives value to having a core of theory which as far as possible unifies the discipline. The general view is that at the centre of this core of theory is a theorem which states that if all markets are perfectly competitive they will produce an optimum result, or at least a result that is optimum in the sense that it is impossible to make anyone better off without making at least one person worse off. On the other hand, according to this theory, government intervention results in a situation where, after removing the intervention, the winners could compensate the losers and still be better off. Whether appropriate compensation is likely to occur or even to be remotely feasible is not considered by the theory.

Now any halfway competent economist knows that this theoretical result depends on a large number of restrictive assumptions which are not fulfilled in any actual economy. However, there are questions to which useful answers can be obtained by assuming that the real world is like that postulated by this economic theorem. It is easy to slip into the false belief that this is usually the case. Many economists proud of their theory, and their ability to manipulate it, assume that this theory can be applied in any situation they wish to discuss, without checking if a particular issue is one for which the theory provides a useful framework of analysis.

Underlying this is a hidden value that economics should be based on a rigorous unified theory and that the theory should be as universally applicable as possible. This contrasts with another, now rather old-fashioned view, that there should be many economic theories, each useful in a particular problem, rather like the way a dentist has different tools for different tasks.

This core theorem and related theory is better adapted to studying exchange (or the market) than the pattern of personal income distribution in a country (or some other unit). Hence, there has been a noticeable diminution in interest in income distribution over the last fifty years. When I was an undergraduate, *Punch* defined an economist as a person with a cake, a protractor and a sharp knife. As long as a decade ago a panel, set up by the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee to review the teaching of fourth year honours courses in economics, found that not one university in Australia had a unit on income distribution in the fourth year. Of course, even if income distribution is rarely taught as a separate subject in Australian universities many economists still are active in this area. But they are on the periphery of mainstream economics.

Most economists spend most of their professional time studying markets of one sort or another. This need not lead to any love of markets. Medical scientists spend most

of their time studying disease but they do not glorify it. However, markets do have many good features, and economists tend to ascribe value to markets as such. Almost all economists agree that the market is a good servant. Unfortunately some forget that it is also a bad master. A well functioning market is a means to an end, not an end in itself.

### Conclusion

Whether or not economists have a bad name may not matter, except to themselves. But the reasons set out in this article for the current reputation of economics do matter. Reasoned public discussion of economic policy is impossible when the different values underlying different policies are completely ignored. If electors are to make informed decisions, public discussion of the values underlying policy decisions is important.



*John Nevile is Emeritus Professor in the School of Economics at The University of New South Wales.*

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- <sup>1</sup> This article was written for this occasion, but draws heavily on Nevile, JW (1994). 'Economic Rationalism, On throwing out the bathwater, but saving the baby', *Australian Quarterly*, 66, 1, Autumn; and (1998). 'Economic rationalism: social philosophy masquerading as economic science' in B Cass and P Smyth (eds). *Contesting the Australian Way*, Cambridge University Press: 169-179.
  - <sup>2</sup> Sloan, J (1993). 'Labour-market reform: an economist's perspective' in King and Lloyd (eds), *Economic Rationalism: Dead End or Way Forward*, Allen & Unwin: St. Leonards, NSW: 132.
  - <sup>3</sup> Hayek, FA (1949). *Individualism and Economic Order*, Routledge & Kegan Paul: London: 108.
  - <sup>4</sup> Friedman, M (1962). *Capitalism and Freedom*, Phoenix Books: Chicago: 12.
  - <sup>5</sup> *ibid.*
  - <sup>6</sup> *ibid.* 2 & 3.

## A tribute to John Nevile GC Harcourt

John is a splendid economist and a wonderful human being. As with the best of his generation of economists he has combined his contributions to economics with an explicit social conscience. He has always tried to understand the real world, especially that part of it which takes in Australia, and in particular to work out why economies malfunction and what may be done within democratic constraints to make them function better. He passionately dislikes injustice; he objects to the fact that those least able to defend themselves bear the brunt of the malfunctionings of the system. Conscious of the good fortune associated with his family background and his own subsequent employment, he has always been determined to see that poverty and unemployment are eradicated. He is as well an exemplary university citizen, giving his time selflessly to others, both students and staff, and to the outside community, to which Ross Milbourne's affectionate and appreciative account of John (in the September 2001 *Economic Record*) bears eloquent witness.

John was a pioneer in Australia with his research on growth and cycles which he showed were indissolubly mixed like love and marriage used to be, and his seminal empirical analyses of the impact of fiscal policy on growth and distribution in the Australian economy. Trevor Swan beat him to it as far as being the first to fit Australian data empirically within a Keynesian framework, but John was the first to publish the results of such a pioneering and useful project. (Trevor's paper was written in the early 1940s but only entered the public domain after his death in January 1989, see TW Swan, 'The principle of effective demand – a "real life" model', *Economic Record*, **65**, December 1989: 378-98.)

I am sure that John will not mind me telling the following tale. Mike Artis and Bob Wallace were presenting the findings of their own pioneering study of Australian fiscal policy at the ANZAAS meeting in Melbourne in January 1967. Bob told me about it at the time. When preparing this tribute, I checked the details with Bob. Here is his account. 'Our focus was on the autonomous (primary) impact of the budget. Was [it] in the right direction? Or was it perverse? We didn't have a model of the economy and the size of the multiplier was not our focus. However, in the discussion I said a multiplier for  $\Delta G$  of  $[1^{2/3}]$  looked about right. John then said (with a happy smile) that it was encouraging that the Artis and Wallace work gave a result very close to that of his econometric model. Mike and I did not let on at that session that our  $[1^{2/3}]$  was 20 minutes on the back of an envelope but we told you. I hope John will be pleased to learn how we did it!' (How they did, I suspect, was to take the expression for the full economy multiplier (on pp 244-46 of Harcourt, Karmel and Wallace, *Economic Activity*, 1967),

$$k = \frac{1 - m}{1 - c(1 - t)(1 - m)},$$

and substitute the values of  $c = 4/5$ ,  $t = 1/4$  and  $m = 1/6$  in the expression to obtain  $k = 1^{2/3}$  – I hope!)

Like Eric Russell, John recognised early on the central role of the decisions of the Arbitration Commission in the macroeconomic processes at work in the Australian economy. As a result he has always put forward sensible policies which take his findings into account. Most of his recommendations over the years matched those of Eric, whose understanding of the Australian economy I consider to be second to

none. Because Eric was my most important mentor in Australia, my own policy recommendations over the years were always greatly influenced by Eric's framework of analysis. Needless to say, the fact that John's matched Eric's brings comfort and confidence (though I would be less than honest if I did not admit that, to my everlasting shame, it was only when I started visiting the University of NSW in the late 1990s that I realised how much John and I had overlapped).

A passionate fighter for rights and justice and a balanced, warm, caring person, John should, of course, be saluted by the Academy and his fellow Australians.

In recent years John has been a leading, sane voice in opposition to the excesses associated with economic rationalism and the misguided view that the market is the premier institution to be used in every aspect of economic, political and social life.

Most of all, I admire John for his integrity, his kindness, his care for others, his excellent company and the feeling his presence gives that if our 'miserable subject', as Keynes called it, can attract and keep such 'damn good bloke[s]' as John (Milbourne 2001: 227), it can't be all that bad. A passionate fighter for rights and justice and a balanced, warm, caring person, John should, of course, be saluted by the Academy and his fellow Australians. Good citizens who use their many talents to the full are rare; John Nevile belongs in that rare company.

*Emeritus Professor GC Harcourt AO is a Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge.*



### **Among the rare breed...**

#### **Peter Kreisler**

I feel honoured to speak about John Nevile. I first met John in a hotel in Bloomsbury, where he interviewed me for a position at the University of New South Wales. Since then, well over a decade ago, he has been both my colleague and my friend. We have collaborated on many things, including the organisation of conferences, and co-authoring of many papers. John is among the rare breed of economist who has contributed to discussions in pure theory, to applied economics and to economic policy. He has advised politicians, the unions, and the church. The range of his contributions is extremely broad, to say the least.

John Nevile was Professor of Economics at UNSW (1965-1992), and is now Emeritus Professor and Visiting Professor. He was elected a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia in 1972 and was President of the Economics Society of

Australia from 1980 to 1984. John has been a member of government advisory bodies and has also been a consultant for major Australian Government inquiries, for the unions, and for the IMF. In 2000 he received the Distinguished Fellow Medal of the Economic Society of Australia. The award was a recognition of a long, varied and distinguished career both as an academic economist and as a key contributor to policy.

The Medal stressed three main areas of scholarly work. First, his pioneering contributions to quantitative work, namely, in 1962, the first published econometric model of the Australian economy, followed three years later by the first published simulation study of the Australian economy co-authored with J Duloy. These studies provided the model on which much subsequent policy was evaluated. They also formed the foundations for the second area cited, John Nevile's work on fiscal policy, which culminated in the publication of the very influential book: *Fiscal Policy in Australia* in 1970. This was effectively the handbook for Keynesian economists for the 1970s, providing an intelligent and sophisticated analysis of the working of fiscal policy in a small open economy like Australia's. Unlike many other Keynesians, John Nevile was always moderate in his claims for the ability of fiscal policy to influence key economic variables, while acknowledging its limitations. He has continued to contribute to our understanding of the way in which fiscal policy works; in particular, John has provided the means by which we can disentangle the effects of fiscal policy on the economy; an extremely complex inter-relationship where it is difficult to gauge whether its overall impact on the economy is contractionary or expansionary. John Nevile provided the means to calculate this, and has provided definitive measurements, which he has kept up to date.

John is well aware of the limitations of fiscal policy as an instrument of economic policy. Some of these relate to the effect of policy on the weaker members of society. This became an important theme of interest, and related to the third area cited for the award, his work on economics and ethics, which include critiques of economic rationalism, as well as substantial contributions to the analysis of economic justice and to equity and distributive issues with its concomitant effect on social justice.

In addition, John has made important contributions to our understanding of the economy and of economic theory, covering an extremely wide range of issues: analysis of growth (both in its purest theoretical form and in its practical manifestations), inflation, tax, education, immigration, limitations of textbook economics, and his overriding concern with issues of distribution and equity.

Keynes once described the characteristics of a true economist:

[G]ood, or even competent, economists are the rarest of birds . . . the master-economist must possess a rare *combination* of gifts. He must reach a high standard in several different directions and must combine talents not often found together. He must be mathematician, historian, statesman, philosopher – in some degree. He must understand symbols and speak in words. He must contemplate the particular in terms of the general, and touch abstract and concrete in the same flight of thought. He must study the present in the light of the past for the purposes of the future. No part of man's nature or his institutions must lie entirely outside his regard. He must be purposeful and disinterested in a simultaneous mood; as aloof and incorruptible as an artist, yet sometimes as near the earth as a politician.

There are very few economists anywhere who fulfil Keynes' requirements. John Nevile is, I believe, one of these. His early contributions to econometric modelling and to economic theory show his understanding of mathematics, yet his work is always well written and readable. As an historian of the economy and of economics, he has used the past in order to understand the present and to provide guidance for the future. His works in ethics and values in economics shows his command of philosophy, while his policy work reveals the statesman. In his work on human rights and questions of equity, fairness and social justice John is 'as near the earth as a politician', though without the essential faults associated with most politicians.

This summary of John Nevile's career does not, however, give us a picture of John Nevile, the man, who is kind, gentle and decent; dedicated to economics, and to the good he believes that it can do. A great economist, Alfred Marshall described the ideal characteristics of economists as having 'warm hearts and cool minds'. This description well fits John who has, throughout his career, attempted to use economics to improve the lot of the disadvantaged in society. His high ethical standards, reinforced by his Christianity, have left him discontented with those 'economic rationalists' and other free market gurus, who are prepared to let the less able sink, while blaming them for their lack of success. From the 1980s and continuing until the present, at times of great changes to the economy, John continually emphasised the moral shortcoming of policies which resulted in giving the victors the spoils, leaving very little to the losers of economic reform.

For John, economics should be a vehicle for improving the lot of society, and thereby for doing good. He has been extremely critical of those who advocate increased efficiency and improved profit at the expense of the worse off in society. He is no friend of economic rationalism, not only casting serious doubt on the validity of the underlying economics, but also rejecting the central message, that efficiency has a cost, which must be borne by those less able to defend themselves from the consequences.

For John, economics should be a vehicle for improving the lot of society, and thereby for doing good. He has been extremely critical of those who advocate increased efficiency and improved profit at the expense of the worse off in society. He is no friend of economic rationalism, not only casting serious doubt on the validity of the underlying economics, but also rejecting the central message, that efficiency has a cost, which must be borne by those less able to defend themselves from the consequences. John is rightly critical of those who argue that economics is value free. This is often incorrectly used to argue that there is no alternative to the policy suggestions of economists. As he demonstrates in his comments elsewhere in *Dialogue*, economics cannot divorce itself from values, despite the fact that many economists believe in a value free, positive economics. This, coupled with the discipline's obsession with markets at the expense of questions relating to distribution, which are perceived as being normative/value laden has led to 'an impression that economics is a discipline that glorifies the market and ignores questions of equity and "social justice"'. It is important to note that this is not in the nature of economics; rather it is an aspect of the current practice of orthodoxy.

The earliest economists saw, as an important purpose of economics, that it attempt to improve the lot of the poor. This emphasis changed significantly in the last half of the twentieth century, where maximising efficiency and growth of material output was

seen, by most economists, as providing their *raison d'être*. This was justified, as John points out, as part of the project of making economics 'positive' – value free. The extreme version of this is embodied in economic rationalism, the belief that markets are the most efficient way of determining what and how much is to be produced. Unfortunately, this view has captured many prominent economists and policy makers, partly because of the myth of it being value free. The distributive consequences of such policies are dismissed as not being of concern to economists, due to the value laden nature of the problem. John exposes this view as being fundamentally flawed. Similarly, the related view pushing the 'scientific-ness' of economics by stressing the theorem of market efficiency without acknowledging its limitations, has done much damage to the reputation of economists.

It is in his acknowledgement that while markets may make a good servant they make a bad master; and his stress on the need to expose the underlying values of policy statements, that John shows the path towards the redemption of economics. Economics is an important subject. It encompasses the study of society, and has important implications for many aspects of life which effect us in the most profound ways. Much of John's work, certainly in the last few decades, has represented an attempt to rescue the subject from those who would lead it onto a path where its practitioners would mistakenly accentuate social problems, instead of alleviating them. John has shown that their cures often have worse effects than the disease!

In all his work in economics and for the cause of social justice John Nevile has maintained his own high ethical standards. He is, in every sense of the phrase, a true scholar and gentleman.

*Associate Professor Peter Kreisler teaches in the School of Economics and is Deputy Director of the Australian Human Rights Centre and the Centre for Applied Economic Research in the University of New South Wales.*

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## Comment



[The most recent Occasional Paper published by the Academy, *A Hundred Years of Women's Politics* (ed Marian Simms) included a previously unpublished seminar paper by the late Professor Paul Bourke. The following is a response to that paper.]

### A Dialogue with the Late Paul Bourke

#### **Marian Sawyer**

I was delighted to see the Academy publish your work-in-progress paper from 1995 'Women & Electoral Politics'. I didn't have the opportunity to discuss it with you then, but when I read it this week, just after the centenary of the Commonwealth Franchise Act, I felt at once there were issues I wanted to engage with.

First of all can I say how refreshing it was to see you grappling with the influence of both enfranchised and unenfranchised women on the character of the political nation. You have gone far beyond the somewhat token acknowledgement of gender often found in electoral studies. In political science intellectual curiosity is often limited to whether women differ from or are the same as men in their political behaviour.

You tease out the connections between the abolition of the property franchise in the United States and the relative ease with which women could be visualised as members of the political nation. You argue that American suffragists had an easier time than their British counterparts because they were simply extending an already-accepted version of citizenship based on personhood to include female citizenship and female virtues.

You were interested in the gender change in the state that preceded the enfranchisement of women and was interconnected with it - the politicisation of domestic concerns as you put it; the domestication of politics as it has been described by others. Virtue was pressed on the state, rather than simply being the domain of women and clergymen. The temperance movement helped this gender change along, the transformation of the 'night-watchman' state into the state concerned with child welfare, education, public health.

I was also delighted by your shift to visual analysis of Hogarth's famous series on the Oxfordshire election of 1754. You contrast this series with an American series by George Caleb Bingham a century later, in which women do not participate in the drunken 'treating' as portrayed by Hogarth, but rather are depicted standing on balconies holding banners saying 'protect women from vice' or 'protect the children from drunkenness'.

I should have liked to extend this analysis by reference to the role of electoral reform in making elections safe for women, well before enfranchisement was actually achieved. The many British observers who wrote descriptions of elections in the Australian colonies after the introduction of the secret ballot in the 1850s, were amazed at how sober and orderly elections had become, more like a religious or civic ritual than the display of drunken violence and intimidation they were used to. This 'civilising' of the electoral process long preceded the granting of women's suffrage although, as you argue, the participation of women was widely viewed as reinforcing

the trend to more orderly elections. Without the preceding elimination of violence and intimidation would women's participation have been possible at all?

William Gladstone commented that the ballot removed the major argument against women's enfranchisement. Because you only list Australian innovations in electoral governance in the period from the 1890s, you do not include the earlier innovations of the secret ballot and written nomination, both of which had the kind of gender implications in which you were interested. In Lower Canada three people were shot dead during violence at the hustings in 1832; as a result a bill was adopted depriving women of the right to vote, on the ground that it had become too dangerous for the weaker sex. In Australia one can hardly imagine the women candidates of 1903 delivering their nomination speeches under the hail of dead cats, rotten fish and even stones, that was common on the hustings and often depicted in election sketches. According to Gladstone, stones missed his head by only 12 inches when he delivered his first nomination speech.

Opponents of the suffrage believed that once women had political equality they would no longer be content to perform their unrequited domestic duties - and so who would mind the babies and who would cook the dinner? Supporters argued that women would not neglect their housework - merely extend it to the larger home of the state which was in need of their expertise as it developed welfare functions.

You speak about the intense rehearsal of public discourse about private matters in the Australian debates over the franchise, the gendered discussion of nationality and citizenship and the sense of Australian exceptionalism. You cite the 'sameness' argument that was put for women's suffrage. You don't discuss the difference arguments that were used both by opponents and supporters of women's suffrage. As I have often pointed out, the argument used most consistently by Australian opponents of the suffrage, including Sir Edward Braddon in the debate over the Commonwealth Franchise Bill, was the argument from social economy. Opponents of the suffrage believed that once women had political equality they would no longer be content to perform their unrequited domestic duties - and so who would mind the babies and who would cook the dinner? Supporters argued that women would not neglect their housework - merely extend it to the larger home of the state which was in need of their expertise as it developed welfare functions.

You were very interested in the construction of the Commonwealth roll in time for the 1903 election, and the mobilisation of state officials, particularly the police for this purpose. You compared this with a census in its assumptions that the whole population should be captured by the exercise, and saw it as preparing the way for introduction of compulsory enrolment in 1911. You saw the preparation of the Commonwealth roll as a somewhat Foucauldian mechanism for securing the compliance of the population. I would probably provide a slightly different perspective, drawing attention to social liberal assumptions about how the common good was served by active citizenship. The duties of citizens included voting as well as sending children to school, serving on juries and submitting to compulsory conciliation and arbitration.

You were also interested in postal voting and suggested that it was largely devised to facilitate women's voting and hence to ensure that everybody was encompassed, even if they were fulfilling the 'noblest duties of life' - namely pregnancy. Of course postal voting was not at first introduced to cater for pregnant women or women too

delicate to attend the polling booths set up in schools and temperance halls. (The location of polling booths within a hundred yards of a public house had been prohibited since 1856 in South Australia.) Postal voting was introduced in 1890 to ensure the 800 seamen on the electoral roll in Port Adelaide were able to vote, although it was immediately extended by Charles Cameron Kingston to cover the engine-drivers and railway men in his own electorate of West Adelaide. In 1894 postal voting was made available to South Australian women prevented from attending a polling booth 'by the state of their health', regardless of whether they would be away from the district. Sir John Downer was sure that every member of parliament would prefer his lady relatives voted by post than 'amid the bustle of the open polling booth'. This preference was not shared by women, who turned out in higher proportions than enrolled male voters, most notably in 1896. The South Australian postal voting provisions were picked up in the Commonwealth Electoral Act of 1902, as you rightly state.

You also infer that it was problems experienced by women voters in Queensland that led to the disenfranchisement in 1907 of 'wifebeaters, habitual drunkards or those with more than 12 convictions for drunkenness in the previous year.' In New South Wales, however, similar provisions were introduced in 1893, before women's suffrage, and remained in force until 1928. Perhaps it had more to do with the political agenda of moral reform with which women were associated with before enfranchisement - the 'wowsersism' that aroused the unflagging hostility of the *Bulletin* and its cartoonists.

You discuss the way in which the discourses of labour included moral discourses attractive to women as well as class discourses. This was of course true, but the evangelical social liberalism that agitated against the 'sin of cheapness' and other social evils was not restricted to labour. It came out of a broader social liberal inheritance associated with the quest for equal opportunity not only across class but also gender lines. The social liberalism that instigated not only the compulsory education acts but also compulsory conciliation and arbitration, old-age pensions that were non-contributory (so as not to discriminate against the mothers of the nation) and progressive income taxes based on the individual (not the family) as the unit of account. I discuss these issues at greater depth in the edited book on the history of Australian electoral governance I published last year (*Elections: Full, Free and Fair* Federation Press) and in my forthcoming book on social liberalism (*Waltzing Matilda*, Melbourne University Press). I should have enjoyed your comments on these books, and to have engaged in further debate over the role of gender in shaping Australian political history.

*Associate Professor Marian Sawer AO is in the Political Science Program at the Australian National University.*





Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia  
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OCCASIONAL PAPER

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## A Hundred Years of Women's Politics

*Edited by Marian Simms*

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## Academy News

### Annual Symposium



The theme of the 2002 Annual Symposium will be 'Taking Good Care of Our Children'. Fellows and other interested readers are urged to attend the Symposium and associated Cunningham Lecture on Monday 11 November, to be given this year by Professor Fiona Stanley. The Sunday night Fellows' Colloquium will be convened by Professor Stuart Macintyre, and focus on 'Anti-Intellectualism'.

## Research Program

### Postgraduate Training in the Social Sciences

On 5 July, Lenore Manderson met with the Deputy General Manager of the University of Queensland Press to discuss possible publication of the outcomes from research undertaken by the Academy's research team, into Postgraduate training in the Social Sciences. As a result, *Investment in Social Capital* is now scheduled to be published in time for distribution at the Academy's annual general meeting in November this year. The book will be published as part of the series, Australian Cultural History, and produced simultaneously as a journal and a book.

### The Economic and Social Costs of Unemployment

The University of NSW Press has now published *The Price of Prosperity: The Economic and Social Costs of Unemployment* which 'identifies for the first time the nature and impact of these costs at three distinct levels: those imposed directly on unemployed people and their families; those that affect the nature of community life; and those that give rise to economy-wide effects on Australian society'. The issues are addressed by a group of leading researchers from a broad range of social science disciplines, covering the impact of unemployment on family life; on specific groups including young people, retrenched workers and indigenous Australians; and on poverty, health, psychological wellbeing and criminal activity.

The Academy in conjunction with the Don Dunstan Foundation is holding national seminars in Adelaide, Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney in August and September to promote the book. Details are as follows:

Melbourne 7 August. Peter Saunders (Fellow), Overview; Lois Bryson (Fellow), 'Unemployment, social policy and community life 1960s to 1990s'; Bruce Headey (University of Melbourne), 'Psychological impact'.

Adelaide 13 August. Sue Richardson (Fellow), Overview; Lois Bryson (Fellow), 'Unemployment, social policy and community life 1960s to 1990s'; Michael Webber (Fellow), 'Effect of retrenchment from old declining industries'.

Sydney 3 September. Peter Saunders, Overview; Don Weatherburn (Fellow), 'Impact on crime'; Bruce Chapman (Fellow), 'Youth unemployment'.

Brisbane 8 October. Peter Saunders, Overview; Stephen Bell (University of Queensland), 'Contours and dynamics of unemployment'; Boyd Hunter (ANU), 'Costs of indigenous unemployment'.

Venue details are on the ASSA website.

### **The Sustainability of Australian Rural Communities**

Professor Chris Cocklin (Monash) and his research team have now completed research for the six rural case studies arising from its investigation into rural sustainability: Narrogin (WA); Tarra/Yarram (Vic); the Gilbert Valley (SA); Guyra (NSW); Tumbarumba (NSW) and Monto (Qld).

The Academy and Chris Cocklin are grateful to members of the ASSA project committee for providing referee reports to ensure a peer-reviewed publication. Charles Sturt University's Margaret Alston has agreed to oversee the production of the case studies with proposed circulation in November. Completed chapter drafts are anticipated to be finalised at the end of the year with a view to the preparation of the manuscript for publication. Potential publishers are to be approached early in 2003.

### **Rethinking Wellbeing**

The first workshop for the Wellbeing research project was held in Melbourne on 25-26 April. Papers given by contributors and via international conference call included:

- Health and wellbeing: issues of measurement and context.
- Measurement of positive health across cultures and its implications for policy.
- The economist's dilemma: theorising and measuring wellbeing.
- The relationship between health and subjective wellbeing.
- Alternative measures of wellbeing: what are the populations at risk?
- Wellbeing on hold: assessing health and wellness in refugees and asylum seekers.
- Does gender make a difference?
- Testing transferability: how robust are the concepts of social capital and agency?

First drafts of chapters are to be provided by the end of July in preparation for the second workshop which will be held in Melbourne on 15-17 September. All contributors have been assigned individual paper discussants to ensure maximum integration and debate among the team. Lenore Manderson has already submitted a detailed 40 page publication proposal to Oxford University Press, New York.

### **Building a Better Future for Our Children**

At the end of May the Academy submitted two Expressions of Interest for ARC Linkage - Learned Academies Special Projects 2003: 'Us and Them: Anti-Elitism in Australia' and 'Building a Better Future for our Children'.

We are delighted that the ARC has short-listed the latter research project. A fully developed proposal from the research team led by Margot Prior, Sue Richardson and Fiona Stanley has now been sent to the ARC committee for assessment.

The key questions for the proposed research project are a) are recent social and economic changes making it substantially more difficult for sizeable numbers of families to bring their children up well? And b) are greater difficulties for families causing the growing signs of distress among substantial numbers of Australia's children and adolescents?

## **International Program**

### **Netherlands Exchange**

The joint AAH-ASSA Netherlands Exchange Scheme, in conjunction with the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, will welcome *Dr Irene van Kamp*, a specialist in environmental psychology, from 27 July - 8 August 2002. Dr van Kamp will engage in a project on noise sensitivity among residents of the area near the Sydney Airport. Her host will be Dr Soames Job, Department of Psychology at the University of Sydney.

*Dr HJM (Eric) Venbrux* will also be sponsored by the Joint Australian Academies. He will be hosted by Professor Jon Altman, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University from 2-15 August 2002. Dr Venbrux's field of specialisation is cultural and social anthropology and he is an expert on Tiwi art.

### **Building bridges with the British Academy**

The British Academy, established by a charter of incorporation in August 1902, is the national learned academy, which encompasses the humanities and social sciences in the United Kingdom.

The British Academy's centenary conference was held in London from 3-5 July 2002, attended by representatives of over 40 Academies and learned societies from Europe,



*President of the Academy, Professor Leon Mann, together with Professor Iain McCalman, President of the Australian Academy of the Humanities (and Fellow of ASSA) and Sir Nicolas Mann (centre), Vice President of the British Academy, at the signing the agreement between the three Academies.*

the United States, and Asia. Professor Leon Mann, representing the Academy of the Social Sciences, and Professor Iain McCalman, representing the Academy of Humanities, were invited to attend the Conference and participate in the program of events to celebrate the Centenary.

During the course of the centenary celebrations ASSA, together with the Academy of Humanities, signed an Agreement on academic cooperation with the British Academy. The agreement is for a scheme to support British and Australian scholars in the fields of the humanities and social sciences working on joint research projects. Applications prepared by scholars from the UK and Australia working together will be invited each year (submission date 30 September) for funding available from 28 February in the following year. The scheme provides for one grant of up to 4000 sterling and the equivalent in Australian dollars each year, or two grants of up to 2000 sterling and the Australian equivalent each year, towards travel and living expenses relating to the joint research project. ASSA / AAH will be responsible for the Australian contribution, while the British Academy will be responsible for the UK contribution. In meetings with Professor Sir Nicolas Mann, Vice President and Foreign Secretary of the British Academy, interest in encouraging joint research projects in such fields as immigration and refugee policy, relations between Commonwealth nations, and social impacts of new technologies, was discussed. However, applications will be welcomed for joint research projects across a wide range of topics in the social sciences and humanities.

The conference began on 3 July at the British Museum with a symposium chaired by Keith Thomas (a past president of the British Academy). In the symposium, 'Visualising the Past', Fellows from the humanities analysed some of the ways in which historians, archaeologists, artists and writers have sought to visualise the historic and prehistoric past. This was followed by a symposium on globalisation chaired by Amartya Sen, in which Fellows from the social sciences examined the mixed effects of globalisation on economies in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America as well as some unanticipated social consequences. The Conference continued on 4 July at the British Academy's headquarters with a symposium on the 'Idea of an Academy', examining the *raison d'être* of academies and their values and strengths. Participants included Presidents of the British Academy, Royal Society, Royal Society of Edinburgh, Royal Academy of Engineering, and the Academy of Medical Sciences. This was followed by a session on the role of academies and learned societies in intellectual life, in which Presidents of academies from eight countries – China, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Russia, USA and Australia (Iain McCalman) - discussed the future role of Academies from their national perspectives.

The day ended with the Centenary Dinner, at which the speakers were Lord Runciman, President of the British Academy, and Lord May of Oxford, President of the Royal Society.

On the final day of the conference overseas guests were treated to a visit to the Tate Modern Art gallery and a cruise on the River Thames, while the British Academy's annual general meeting was in progress.

During the course of the Conference, the British Academy and ASSA and AAH exchanged gifts. ASSA and AAH were each presented with the British Academy's Centenary Medal, a bronze medallion engraved with the Academy's seal, while ASSA and AAH presented the British Academy with an Australian hardwood plaque with bronze inlay inscribed with greetings to the British Academy on its centenary.

### **Australia-France Program**

The Academy of the Social Sciences and the French Embassy in Australia have agreed on a strategy to form stronger research relationships between scholars in the two countries. One expression of this agreement is to provide a funded program to initiate and/or enhance joint research activity. This call for projects is coordinated by representatives from the Academy of Science, ASSA, CSIRO, the Rural R&D Corporations, the CNRS, and the Secretariat of the FAIR program (French Australian Industrial Research).

Proposals from Fellows will be reviewed by ASSA and the French Embassy and decisions will be based on merit. ASSA has committed \$5,000 and the French Embassy will allocate a larger sum depending on the number and quality of the applications. In 2002 the Embassy is supporting five projects for a total of \$32,000.

Applications from all disciplines are welcome but projects with interest to both French and Australian scholars are expected. Special attention will be paid to projects relevant to Pacific island studies where research relating to indigenous/ non-indigenous contact is topical and important. The funding is available to support research activities, including research visits from cooperating scholars traveling to France, to Australia, or to a research site. The application form is available online at [www.ambafrance-au.org/science](http://www.ambafrance-au.org/science) and the deadline for receipt of applications is 28 July 2002.

### **AASSREC Biennial Conference, November 2003**

The Academy is supporting the AASSREC Secretariat in the planning of the biennial conference of the Association of Asian Social Science Research Council (AASSREC) to be held in Canberra on 11-15 November 2003. Delegates from sixteen Asian and Pacific countries will attend. Professor Fay Gale, as President of AASSREC, is taking a leading role in the planning around the theme *Youth in Transition*. A group of scholars in this field will meet in late July to discuss the structure and key issues of the conference.

In 2003 the Academy's Annual Symposium will be held in conjunction with the first day of the AASSREC conference, where a number of key speakers will be invited to address the topic.

### **UNESCO Social Science Network**

The UNESCO Social Science Network met in April to consider proposals for funding from the UNESCO Australian National Commission. Two proposals have been endorsed by the Network and will be forwarded to the National Commission Selection Committee for consideration for funding in 2002/03:

- *Qualities of Peacemakers*, a pilot project involving the gathering of research data from children and their teachers in Australia with the focus on concepts of the qualities of peacemakers. The project will have high potential for follow through opportunities with children and schools in a number of countries in the wider Asia-Pacific region, and in providing training materials for teachers. Project team includes Fellow Professor Margot Prior, previous Chair of the LaTrobe University Institute for Peace Research; Associate Professor Di Bretherton, Director of the International Conflict Resolution Centre, who has worked on peace education programs around the world, and Ms Yung Le who has been involved in developing

and promoting Associated Schools Programs activities in Viet Nam through her work in the UNESCO Hanoi Office.

• *Gender, Migration and Governance in Asia*. This interdisciplinary, internationally comparative project will examine feminised migration in Asia in the context of rising civil activism at both national and transnational levels. Its main goal is to investigate the ways in which grassroots transnationalisation generated by migrant women and local residents constitutes a force for democratic governance in the context of an integrated regional economy, resulting in weakened nation states. The proposal directors are Robyn Iredale, APMRN Secretariat, University of Wollongong, Dr Nicola Piper, Regulatory Institutions Network, Research School of Social Sciences, ANU and Dr Keiko Yamanaka, Department of Ethnic Studies and Institute for the Study of Social Change, University of California, Berkeley.

On 6<sup>th</sup> May, members of the Network attended a lunch with Mr Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO who was visiting Australia as a Guest of Government.

■ *Ian Castles*, AO, former Vice President and Executive Director of the Academy, has been invited by the ABC to deliver the 2002 Boyer Lectures.

■ Mrs Pam Shepherd has resigned as Executive Assistant to spend more time with her grandchildren. The Academy thanks her for her quiet efficiency and ready smile and wishes her well. Her place has been taken by *Shirley Chapman*, and we welcome Shirley to the Secretariat team.

**Sir Leslie Melville, KBE**, formerly of the Australian National University, died on 29 April 2002.

**Emeritus Professor Oliver MacDonagh**, formerly of the Australian National University, and Executive Director of the Academy, died on 22 May 2002.

**Dr Allan Martin**, formerly of the Australian National University, died on 31 May 2002.

**Emeritus Professor Alan Richardson**, formerly of the University of Western Australia, died on 26 June 2002.

*Obituaries* will appear in the *Annual Report*.





## Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia

*Promoting the Social Sciences*

### **DONATIONS AND BEQUESTS**

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For confidential advice on making a donation or bequest, contact the Academy's President, Professor Leon Mann, or Honorary Treasurer, Professor Gavin Jones, through the Academy office.

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## Books



***Australian Ways of Death, A Social and Cultural History 1840-1918.*** By Pat Jalland. South Melbourne: Oxford University Press 2002.

Most of humanity passes away quietly and anonymously leaving small trace of their lives or deaths. The success of Pat Jalland's book is in her recovery of the 'death practices and rituals' which prevailed and changed in Australia between 1840 and the pandemonium of death in the First World War. Historians commonly claim that their specific focus can illuminate the wider culture: death is an improbable spotlight but Jalland uses it to expose the character of the colonial world to an extraordinary degree. She demonstrates that death has a history that can be charted and periodised. Australian death is mostly recoverable at the extremes of society - among the very rich and also among the poorest and the most marginal. The majority between remains mainly silent.

The reason for this polarity lies in the sources from which the history of Australian death is reconstructed. Plutocratic death was often commemorated publicly and expensively. Better-off families were more careful of posterity and retained detailed accounts - often wrenchingly sad - of the manner of their deaths as well as their grief and mourning. At the other end of the scale, the scandalous and pitiful deaths of poor people in grotesque institutions sometimes generated official inquiries. Death in the outback was sometimes sensational enough to attract fervid newspaper attention.

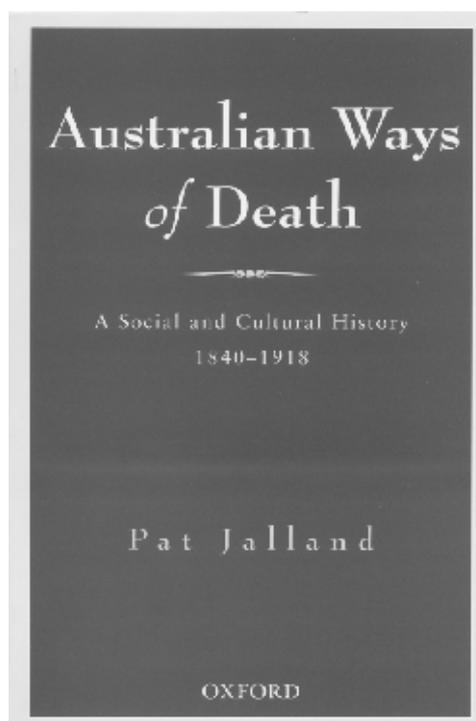
Black-edged condolences, mortuary books and commissions of enquiry provide the best evidence from which Jalland re-creates the 'multiple modes of death' and 'death practices' of Victorian and Edwardian Australia. This is traditional historical scholarship in its best sense: written with pellucid clarity, underpinned with dense and thorough documentation, informed by running comparisons with other times and other places, and always evoking the emotional immediacy of experience. It is like an expert guided tour of Australia's archives during which the best examples of each category of death are located and set in the essential context of the times. It avoids the two principal hazards that loom over the historical treatment of death: mawkish sentimentality at one end and statistical *rigor mortis* at the other.

A central question here is the transmission of imported rituals of death: Jalland argues that Australians modified and weakened the derived British model. The emigrants' journey itself was a preparation for a tougher and more perfunctory culture of death. In the Bush it was virtually impossible to replicate the conventional forms of observance. There was less opportunity to prepare for death and the fabric of religious observance was decidedly frayed. The convention of 'The Good Christian Death' was subverted by distance and by the greater randomness of death in the colonies. Nevertheless the Church, in its different forms, still provided a means of consolation and redemption which resisted secularising tendencies until the end of the century.

Jalland investigates the rituals of death with ethnological intensity demonstrating, for instance, the marked variations imposed by gender, class and wealth in the adopted social forms. These were reflected in the growing 'business of death' and the associated funeral industry. Death was evidently stratified like life itself, and women shouldered more of the social burden of death than men, a point to be accounted in

the balance sheet of colonisation. A 'satisfactory death' required a proper process of spiritual preparation and contrition associated with a scale and depth of religious commitment now alien to much of modern Australia. The most striking impression is the strength and uniformity of conventions within which so many of the dying and the bereaved expressed their feelings. Jalland quotes many of these 'sentimental and dramatic' outpourings: they are often harrowing and occasionally ascend into piercingly poetic expressions of personal despair or catharsis. Some of these domestic accounts of death are as fine as anything in Victorian fiction, the more so because they are unmediated and unselfconscious.

Death scenes, sensitively described, occupy centre-stage in *Australian Ways of Death*. But this book is also about the course of social change that shaped the phenomenon. Death was then more proximate and unpredictable: in the 1850s half of all deaths were of children under the age of five; a generation later the rate of death from typhoid in Melbourne was thrice that of London; the use of opium was a common substitute for religion; women were more likely to die in child birth than in old age; the proportion of deaths occurring in institutions in Australia was much higher than in England - a fact which prompts Jalland into a penetrating discussion of old age and destitution in colonial Australia society. Too many of the poor in late colonial Australian society were 'hurried into eternity' and Jalland shows the creditable role played by the medical profession in initiating institutional reform. Life in the Bush



was proximate and careless, with more suicide and more accidental death, than as now, and marked with little ceremony if any. Much of the evidence for this part of the story derives from assiduous antiquarians who have been surveying the sites of 'The Lonely Graves' of the outback with great enthusiasm.

The ideal of the Christian death slowly declined towards the end of the nineteenth century which Jalland attributes to the impact of Biblical criticism, evolutionary theory, and a growing disillusion with orthodox religion. Even before 1914 religion was being displaced in the observances of death: the prospect of heaven became less important than the memory of the departed. Medical science helped to transform all attitudes to death and the 'new secularised temper' was powerfully reinforced by the War. 'Modern death' was 'medicalised', the causes of disease and death increasingly attributed to specific medical causes rather than to some form of divine intervention. The conventional spiritual construction of death, Jalland suggests, gave way to a greater concentration on the physical aspects of dying: in the War there was a further tendency to 'denial' and a suppression of overt grief in favour of a grim stoicism.

Death for any historian or social scientist must be one of the least approachable subjects. Jalland's achievement is to assay changes in the cultural and emotional currents over the rapidly receding nineteenth century. Many of the issues with which she deals are timeless and her treatment of the individual psychology in the stages of grieving, as well as the power of social conditioning, are models of clarity for both past and present.

Her final chapter anticipates a promised treatment of death in twentieth century Australia and it will be intriguing to see how the problems of organisation, selection and documentation change in the new century, and indeed how death itself has changed. The present volume provides a remarkable perspective on Australia from a most unusual angle.

### **Eric Richards**

***Australians and Globalisation. The Experience of Two Centuries.*** By Brian Galligan, Winsome Roberts and Gabriella Trifiletti. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

The central argument of *Australians and Globalisation* is that Australian governance and citizenship have been subject to significant global influences from the very beginning of European settlement and that we get a very misleading impression of the impact of globalisation if we start from the assumption that states are normally sovereign and independent entities. There is a short Introduction followed by seven chapters, with one on conceptual issues and three pairs of chapters, dealing with issues of governance and citizenship respectively, covering the period between settlement and Federation and the two further 50-year periods which bring us to the present.

This historical structure allows the authors to show that the substance of citizenship is not necessarily linked to the existence of an independent nation state: by the end of the nineteenth century, they argue, most Australians had become citizens of their own colonies. They became effective citizens of Australia at the time of Federation, while still formally remaining British subjects, although Australia's right to make treaties with other states (an important aspect of its sovereignty) was not recognised by Britain until the Imperial Conference of 1923. Australia therefore has a rich and complex citizenship heritage, which, in the authors' view, is often poorly understood by academic and official discourses. They suggest, for example, that Australian Citizenship Council's 2000 Report, *Australian Citizenship for a New Century*, was looking in the wrong place for the foundations of Australian citizenship, primarily because of its 'fixation on diversity' (p 25). Later chapters examine the significance of Australia's international treaty obligations, focusing especially on human rights and the ways in which, following principles agreed by an international conference of judges in Bangalore, 1988, Australian courts have invoked international rules in reaching their judgements. Finally, their discussion of more recent developments suggests that the public sector reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, which themselves reflect significant global influences, have seriously weakened the substance of citizenship by turning citizens into customers and clients, and that the health of civil society requires state intervention and a political will which has, in fact, been seriously lacking.

There are important points here, which undermine many simplistic accounts of Australian citizenship and of globalisation, but there is also a sense in which the book does not fully live up to its title. While recognising that the concept of globalisation, like those of citizenship and governance, is highly contested, the authors nevertheless insist that its core is 'the spread and intensification of free-market capitalism as a world system based upon advances in information and communication technologies, plus the changing social relations that are a consequence' (p 17). An immediate difficulty here is that there is little discussion of the spread of free-market capitalism in this book - let alone of information and communication technologies - while the discussion of global influences on Australian citizenship and governance, which takes up the greater part of the book, demonstrates that globalisation has to be understood far more broadly than their own definition would seem to allow. The more general problem is that, by focusing on the spread of free-market capitalism and its consequences, this definition leaves little space for the role of governance at either a national or a global level in determining both the manner in which the spread of free-market capitalism in fact takes place and what its social and political consequences will be.

To be fair, there are places where the authors recognise the importance of this governmental role, for example, in their call for state intervention and political will in dealing with the socially divisive consequences of global neo-liberalism. Or again, the authors note that Australia moved in the 1980s from being a protectionist 'outrider' in the empire of free trade to become 'a champion of liberal trade orthodoxy and a fervent member of its international organisations' (p 142) – but they offer no sustained assessment either of the forces behind this fundamental change in Australian governance or of its consequences. On the same page, they refer to a backlash against 'the consensus ... in favour of freer world trade' among economic elites and governments. Backlash there certainly is, but it is dangerously misleading to describe the internationally dominant view on free trade as representing a *consensus* among economic elites and governments: important aspects of global economic governance are disputed, not just in the streets and in the work of leftist intellectuals, but also by many governments and by members of the economic elite itself – as recent works by Jagdish Bhagwati, George Soros and Joseph Stiglitz eloquently attest. Fundamental issues of economic governance are in dispute here, and they should surely be examined in any serious discussion of Australians and globalisation.

**Barry Hindess**



## **Opinion**

### **Asserting the Value of the Social Sciences and the Humanities to Australia's Future**

***Peter W Sheehan & Millicent Poole***

The Social Sciences and the Humanities require urgent attention. Their value would seem obvious given the clarion call by Government to realise the vision of Australia as an innovative nation, but 'innovation' is an ambiguous term and it has many meanings. At a political level, almost total emphasis has been on the instrumental value of research and the value of its application. The 'need to become clever' says Government, on one of its policy overviews for Science and Technology, is being clever at applying Science and Technology to solve our environmental problems and thus contribute to '. . . the development of better solutions'. There is sparse mention in contemporary debate about the very real relevance of big matters of the mind and of the intellect. Such are far less calculable in terms of definable outcomes or products of significance, yet the cultural survival and societal welfare of Australia are at stake.

Government clearly has trouble in making the general case and demonstrating genuine commitment that flows to actual resourcing. We have had calls for the Australian higher education system to be more responsive to the country's social cultural and economic needs, and for Australia to become a better, more innovative country. Reference has to be made in that appeal to the importance of the Social Sciences and the Humanities for their capacity to develop invaluable conceptual analytical and communication skills which are necessary for a mature identity to emerge. Yet the case now, as in the past, remains frustratingly at the rhetorical level. Social Sciences and the Humanities provide the organisational, legal and economic frameworks that contribute to our understanding of our social and cultural institutions and of the social consequences of change. The Humanities and the Social Sciences facilitate innovation and technological change. Australia will only negotiate changes associated with globalisation and the knowledge economy if it recognises that these are human, as well as technological or trading revolutions.

#### **Defining identity**

The struggle to define the contributions of the Social Sciences and the Humanities frequently overlooks the essence of each. The Humanities deal with the critical analysis of value and meaning, what some have called the critical transformation of existing knowledges that involve uncertainty and doubt, and the lack of totally predictable outcomes. Humanities scholars have appealed to the process of 'critical reflection' that constitutes the Humanities – 'the continuous interaction between producing results and modifying and destroying them'. Given its nature, the so-called utility of the Humanities must incorporate the ability to offer radical criticism of current practices and norms whenever necessary. The Humanities are 'investments in thought and records of perceptions' and research of that kind has relevance to skills – but should not be defined primarily in terms of them or just in terms of social utility, even if major useful outcomes do result. To pursue the utility path is to politicise the Humanities excessively and make them servants to the needs and interests of particular groups. Such pursuit instrumentalises scholarship in the Humanities in a way that subtly negates or destroys the very processes that define it.

The Social Sciences are broader and somewhat different in their function. They are much more concerned with factual data, less integrally dependent for their identity on the critical analysis of value and meaning, though still nevertheless relevant to that goal. They have more easily available to them a virtual arsenal of tools of the trade for collecting relevant data, analysing it and interpreting it – for the most part in an overall less subjective way. The Social Sciences, by their nature, have a greater probability of yielding useful results that fit significantly with particular interests. But just as with the Humanities, practical interests and instrumental goals should not define the essence of that pursuit, and research in Social Sciences should not be defended primarily in terms of them. If this happens, the nature of the essential character of Social Sciences scholarship will be ignored, and its potential benefit for formulating innovative policy will be curtailed.

It is arguable that the main goal of the Humanities is to make sure debate is kept open on issues that profoundly affect Australians individually, culturally, and spiritually. The Humanities debate is ultimately about universal, ethical questions. Such debate is relevant to the Social Sciences as well. The Humanities and the Social Sciences usefully reflect whatever challenges national need and they are both vital in helping to reform Australia's higher education system.

The mechanisms and procedures for attributing resources for research in the Humanities, and the Social Sciences, play little heed to the real character of these disciplines. Publications practices, data collections, definition of socio-economic objectives, and the method of distribution of research resources are all much more heavily oriented to the Natural Sciences than to the Humanities and Social Sciences; and this has been so for a long time.

Perhaps now we are at the 'cross-roads', it is time for all of us to redress the imbalance at long last.

Let us take Australian business, and Australian urban regeneration as just two examples of pressing need, unable to be addressed effectively by the present comfortable rhetoric.

1. The important role of the Humanities and Social Sciences in **Australian business**.

- Business is about converting 'ideas' into monetary value. Australia needs graduates capable of thinking, decision-making, teamwork, communication and problem solving to engage in the critical reflection that makes this possible.
- The Humanities and Social Sciences enhance the skills of the Australian workforce and provide the knowledge and skill base required for the 'new economy'.
- Wealth is being generated by 'creative industries'. Investment in humanities-based industries and research activities is of clear economic benefit.

2. The important role of the Humanities and Social Science in **Australian urban regeneration**.

- Urban regeneration is not just a geographical issue – community and social development are also needed.
- Social Science and the Humanities strengthen civil society by advocating cultural tolerance, reducing crime, and exploring aspects of citizen responsibility which has to be a major task of education in this country for the future.

### **Some resource implications**

Looking at the data, the clear majority of higher education research lies in the areas of Natural Science, Medical Science, Technology and Engineering. The discrepancies are not surprising when one considers the range of factors involved. Funding is disproportionately greater for the Natural Sciences than for the Humanities, the Social Sciences and the Health Sciences. Natural scientists are relatively large players in attracting sizeable sources of funding, and there are distinct (but meaningful) profile differences in the pattern of publication output and research income attracted across disciplines. Whilst funding for the most part is distributed according to perceived benefits, the disciplines which can make the most obvious case for 'high performance' are the ones which are best supported.

Concerns about income and productivity are relevant, but the debate about them misses the essential crises concerning the domains of scholarship that we are highlighting. Government must argue and behave differently in order to get proper appreciation of what Australian education does and communicates in an education sector that is diverse.

The major limitation on funding at the moment is the focus given to the functional, economic, utilitarian ethic that fits our culture. Strategic concerns have to be met before financial support can be provided; and this presents us with one of the major challenges for the higher education system in general which will be reflected in the forthcoming cross-roads debate. There is something very Australian about this country's obsession that research must be useful, propelling it with an ethos that is more concerned with short-term change than long-term benefit.

The contributions of the Humanities and the Social Sciences to Australian culture are greatly underestimated by the extent to which they have been affected by the allocation of resources. Government, for example, has long resisted the advice that 'contributions to knowledge' require the status of a national priority. Recent 'innovation' funding, and ARC-named priorities, identify almost totally with the advance of Science and Technology. Knowledge for its own sake has no meaning for Australian culture unless it serves practical and useable ends. This view of knowledge is reflected by government, and it is a risky and dangerously selective view.

Pressing matters of national priority abound and they are given scant attention.

Such include:

- Indigenous peoples;
- The social fabric of rural communities;
- Globalisation and educational futures;
- Re-visioning identity, citizenship and ethics;
- Cognitive and cultural aspects relating to the transfer and take-up of new knowledge;
- Global population mobility; and
- Ageing and the quality of living.

The current imbalance in research funding needs to be addressed, if we are not to be a nation prepared to know less and less about itself. Government itself needs to be especially aware of the necessity for university education to foster the demands of responsibility that an openly managed society and economy impose. This highlights

the particular relevance of a liberal education, what Professor Marian Quartly calls the 'grounding that gives students their adaptability to the needs of the workplace, creates the foundations for lifelong learning, and makes it possible for graduates to become discerning citizens both at work and in the community at large.'

### **Conclusion**

Our main conclusion is that the Humanities and the Social Sciences are being ignored at the nation's peril. Their contribution to the advancement of knowledge and the welfare of the Australian culture must be recognised.

While it is clear that government favours an economic rationalist perspective (despite claims to the contrary), detailed focus in the debate ahead must address the broader, more general functions of tertiary education in Australia and the contributions that the Humanities and the Social Sciences make to social, civic and cultural life in Australia.

The debate ahead must give substance and reality to the principles normally associated with sound university learning and good scholarship. Government, and academia alike, must argue for the retention of the Humanities and Social Sciences within the turmoil of the political arena – they must be reflected in the initiatives and policies of government that benefit Australia.

The Social Sciences and the Humanities are extraordinarily relevant in advancing knowledge, in promoting skills, and in helping to produce a more mature and wiser national and cultural identity. Government actually needs to restore 'the balance'. There is more to scholarship in these disciplines than to defend doing it, and government should show a genuine appreciation of the absolute worth of what they can and do contribute. The important role of the Humanities and Social Sciences must be affirmed in practice as well as rhetoric, if Australia is to grow and prosper in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They are integrally concerned with pressing social issues such as unemployment, inequity, environmental sustainability, globalisation and the impact of knowledge and ideas on democratic traditions and citizenship. It is enormously risky to continue to ignore them and fail to resource them.

*Professor Peter W Sheehan AO is Vice-Chancellor, Australian Catholic University and Professor Millicent Poole is Vice-Chancellor, Edith Cowan University.*



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**The ESD Process: Evaluating a Policy Experiment** Edited by Clive Hamilton & David Throsby. Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and Graduate Program in Public Policy. Canberra: 1998.

**Contemporary Perspectives on Social Work and the Human Services** Edited by Ian O'Connor, Paul Smyth & Jeni Warburton, Addison Wesley Longman: 1999.

**Howard's Agenda: The 1998 Australian Election** Edited by Marian Simms and John Warhurst, University of Queensland Press Australian Studies: 2000.

**Social Security and Social Development in East and Southeast Asia**, Proceedings of a Workshop. Edited by Peter Saunders. SPRC Reports and Proceedings, No 143, August 2000.

**Health and Medical Research: Contribution of the Social and Behavioural Sciences** Edited by Paul R Martin, Margot Prior & Jeanette Milgrom. ASSA and APS, Canberra: 2001.

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