

FORTHCOMING FUNCTIONS AT THE SYDNEY INSTITUTE

SPEAKER	SENATOR THE HON. RICHARD ALSTON (Minister for Communications, IT & the Arts)	
DATE	Monday 23 October 2000	TIME 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE	Mallesons Conference Room, Governor Phillip Tower (Lvl 60), 1 Farrer Place, Sydney	
SPEAKER	PROF. DAVID MENASHRI (Head, Dept. of Middle Eastern & African History, Tel Aviv Uni.)	
TOPIC	<i>Iran - What Chance Reform?</i>	
DATE	Wednesday 25 October 2000	TIME 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE	41 Phillip Street, Sydney	LIGHT REFRESHMENTS
SPEAKER	MICHAEL SEXTON (Solicitor General for New South Wales)	
TOPIC	<i>Uncertain Justice: Inside Australia's Legal System</i>	
DATE	Tuesday 31 October 2000	TIME 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE	41 Phillip Street Sydney	LIGHT REFRESHMENTS
SPEAKER	SELÇUK KOLAY (Discoverer of the wreck of the Australian WW1 sub. AE2 in the Sea of Marmara, Turkey)	
TOPIC	<i>Finding the AE2</i>	
DATE	Thursday 9 November 2000	TIME 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE	Clayton Utz Seminar Room, Level 34, 1 O'Connell St, Sydney	
SPEAKER	CHERYL KERNOT MP (Shadow Minister for Employment & Training)	
DATE	Wednesday 15 November 2000	TIME 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE	Mallesons Conference Room, Governor Phillip Tower (Lvl 60), 1 Farrer Place, Sydney	
SPEAKER	MICHELLE GRATTAN, PAUL KELLY, NEAL BLEWETT & ANNE HENDERSON about Australia's Prime Ministers – based on the forthcoming <i>Australia's Prime Ministers</i> ed Michelle Grattan (Lansdowne). In discussion with GERARD HENDERSON.	
DATE	Wednesday 22 November 2000	TIME 5.00 for 5.30pm
VENUE	Clayton Utz Seminar Room, Level 25, 1 O'Connell St, Sydney	
SPEAKER	GIL APPLETON (Author, <i>Diamond Cuts: An Affectionate Memoir of Jim McClelland</i> [Macmillan])	
TOPIC	<i>Jim McClelland: What Made Him Tick?</i>	
DATE	Tuesday 28 November 2000	TIME 5.00 for 5.30pm
VENUE	41 Phillip Street Sydney	LIGHT REFRESHMENTS
SPEAKER	MAXINE McKEW (ABC Presenter)	
TOPIC	<i>Lunch with Maxine McKew</i>	
DATE	Monday 11 December 2000	TIME 12.30 for 1.00pm
VENUE	BT Training Room (Room 401) Level 4, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney	LIGHT LUNCH WILL BE SERVED

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THE

Sydney Institute

QUARTERLY



VOLUME 4 NO 3
OCTOBER 2000

STEPHEN MATCHETT
reviews Dick Morris -
Machiavelli for today

GEORGINA GOLD
explores drugs and
creativity

**R&D's Sad Story Down
Under** - Josh van Kleef

ANNE HENDERSON'S
problem with boys

JOHN MCCONNELL
on the rise and fall of
political heroes

MEDIA WATCH
on Bob Ellis (again),
Leunig and Mr Teapot,
Maxine McKew's
choice of menu and
Helen Garner
examined

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with Gerard Henderson's

MEDIA WATCH

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The Sydney Institute Quarterly is edited by Anne Henderson and Gerard Henderson. Editorial Assistants are Lalita Mathias and Astrid Campbell.

Editorial Office : 41 Phillip Street, Sydney 2000

Tel: (02) 9252 3366 Fax: (02) 9252 3360

Email: mail@sydneyins.org.au

Website: www.sydneyins.org.au

Layout and typesetting by DT Graphics Pty Ltd, Suite 1/214 Lyons Road, Five Dock 2046. Tel: (02) 9713 5554 Fax: (02) 9713 5553

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EDITORIAL

Can there be a new Brisbane Line – this time round with a southerly aspect? And is there now a Canberra Triangle – out of which some (non-political) stories cannot travel? Contemporary tales about the late Manning Clark certainly indicate that some news in Australia is constrained within geographical boundaries.

The late Professor Clark was Australia's best known historian and, without question, one of the leading Australian commentators of the 20th Century. In other words he was, and remains, news. Contrary to claims in the *Courier Mail* of 24 August, 1996, there is no evidence that Clark did receive the Order of Lenin in 1970 from the communist totalitarian dictators of the (former) Soviet Union. However, as the *Courier Mail* demonstrated subsequently, Clark was the recipient in 1970 of the Lenin Jubilee Medal. Along with a score of high ranking communist officials from North Vietnam, North Korea and East Germany and the like.

The national media gave considerable attention to the fact that the *Courier Mail* had failed to prove that Professor Clark had received the Order of Lenin. But there was little, if any, coverage of the documented fact that he had received the Lenin Jubilee Medal by a high ranking member of Leonid Brezhnev's regime. Namely Nikolai Podgorny, the chairman of the presidium of the Soviet Union. Since then the *Courier Mail* has followed up on Manning Clark's relationship with the Soviet Union. Much of this material is contained in Peter Charlton's address to The Sydney Institute on 26 April, 2000. The *Courier Mail's* research has revealed that, during his visit to the Soviet Union in 1970, Clark delivered in the Russian language an effusive speech praising the USSR's founder Vladimir Lenin.

And there is more. Including correspondence between Clark and the Australian academic Ian Milner (who spied for the Soviet Union). As late as November 1990, Clark wrote to Milner regretting that "1917 fell into the hands of spiritual bullies". By the reference to 1917, Clark meant the communist revolution of 1917. This indicates that as late as 1990 Clark was still looking favourably on Lenin who instigated the 1917 Revolution and suggesting that the man whom he regarded as "Christ-like...in his compassion" had had his ideals overrun by "bullies". The fact is that Lenin was the leading bully of his time.

The *Courier Mail's* researchers have also revealed that the Australian Communist Party received some \$7 million (in today's value) from Moscow in seven separate payments between 1953 and 1966. And that Australian-born journalist Wilfred Burchett was a Communist Party member, despite his claim to the contrary. Moreover it has documented the large payments made by Moscow to some Australian writers – including leftists Katharine Susannah Prichard and Frank Hardy. All this material is news. Yet very few of the *Courier Mail's* stories about the Australian left have received coverage south of the Queensland border.

Just imagine if the *Courier Mail* had discovered that the late Bob Santamaria's political organisation had been funded by, say, the Italian Fascist Party. And that Santamaria had (secretly) received the Benito Mussolini Jubilee Medal. It is impossible to imagine that such news-breaking stories would not have received publicity south of the Tweed. But with the left, different standards seem to apply.

Australia is a geographically vast nation with a modest sized population. It's important that the media cover one another's exclusives. Otherwise some Australians will not know what they are entitled to know.

ANNE GRAFFAN WALKER ON THE CHILD AS WITNESS

Increasingly children are appearing in court. This raises the question – how reliable can children be as witnesses under cross examination in a system designed for winners and losers? What do children understand of the highly technical language used in court? And in all inquiry and questions asked of them, what do children hear in the language of adults? Anne Graffam Walker, a forensic linguist who specialises in courtroom communication in the USA, visited Sydney in August 2000 as a guest of NAPCAN to conduct sessions on how to question children. During her visit she spoke for The Sydney Institute. What follows is an edited transcript of the discussion at the end of that address.

Q: Do you know of any jurisdictions that are trying to teach the practitioners, how to go about interviewing children properly?

AG: Yes. Australia. To be more specific, I was invited to Perth last year where I spent two and a half glorious days before flying back to Kansas. I was very impressed by the people that came to the workshop. They were light years ahead of where we are in the United States as far as training is concerned.

In the United States, people are training across the nation. One of the problems is that they are not retraining. They are not watching, critiquing interviews, giving feedback. Audiences will listen but there's so much to take in, you can only retain a certain amount. You have to do it over and over again. In the UK they also are instituting good programs in talking to children. But it's not getting to the judges. I am training judges, but only a small number.

Q: Could I put forward the idea that in fact the adversarial system of justice is the root cause of this problem. The inquisitorial system might provide an arena where children could be dealt with by a professionally trained judge, rather than being dealt with by a judicial system established in the 1200s by the English.

AG: You are not disagreeing with me at all because that happens to be exactly my point of view. I'm not popular in the United States because I don't like our adversarial system. It's not about justice - truth and justice – it is about winning and losing. And the approach is - I'll use

whatever tools I can. Doesn't matter if this kid doesn't have my confidence. I'm still going to cross-examine her the same way I would you. So I agree with you.

I was a court reporter for ten years, in adult courts, and it didn't take me more than a week on the job to realise that we were asking adults questions that they didn't understand. There would be questions that were too complex and the adult would still answer. And I would sit there taking it down, thinking, wait a minute, nothing happened here. There was a question that didn't make sense and it was answered anyway, and it was going in the record.

First of all, adults don't understand the rules of talk in court. When you go into court all of the normal expectations about conversation are gone. You can't ask a question, you can't decide whether you're going to be humorous, sardonic, angry, sad, or just making a statement. You can't think I've got to be there in ten minutes, sorry, I've got to go. You can't even stand up. You cannot leave the stand. You can't pick the topic. You can't decide, okay I've had it with that topic, I want to talk about something else.

All of these things affect the ability to tell your story. For one thing, somebody else has got charge of it, and the only way you can tell it is through questions and answers – who among us here carries on a conversation by question, answer, question, answer? If you have an event to tell about, you tell about it. And if somebody wants to know something, they ask you. But that doesn't happen in court.

Furthermore, there is frightening research that suggests that 60 to 70 per cent of adults and adolescents never reach the fourth stage of operational thought. They are unable to consider alternatives to a point of view. Or, as we say, my way or the highway. They're not only limited by a lack of education. I've seen "educated" people who just don't get it and who are faced with the adversarial system.

Q: In the last few years we've seen moves to put the language of the law into plain English. What has been done inside the court system to bring the language of the courts into plain English?

AG: Have you ever seen a donkey resist being pulled forward? That's what happens. Judges are terrified of being reversed. Of having an appellant in court say, you've made the wrong decision. A lot of our law is based on precedent. What happened before shall happen forever and ever. Until somebody has the temerity to break that precedent and then it stands.

There are enlightened judges who will impact on our courts. Our federal rules of law mandate that a judge shall control the questioning of his or her court, so that a witness is not harassed and so that the truth may be

obtained. If only they would follow that, they then could, with conscience, intervene when somebody asks one of these outrageous questions and simply say to the attorney, "I can't understand that question...how about putting it in short, simple statements". But not when it comes to getting rid of precious words like "adjudicate" and "allegation" and jargon that we use.

Q: Is your work on language with children in the courts also relevant to the cultural gap that can exist in courts – such as in war crimes trials when witnesses come from all over the world?

AG: We give what we call pattern instructions in the States. Judges give pattern instructions to juries – that is, they tell them how the law should be interpreted. There are some issues that come up over and over again, so they just give the same instruction. Modifying it, of course, with names and case facts. One of those instructions has to do with witness demeanour and how you can judge the credibility of a witness. One of the issues that is never omitted, is eye gaze. You may judge the witness' credibility by the eye gaze, by the body language, by this, by that, by the tone of voice and so on.

Well, you know, occidentals have the notion that eye gaze should be direct. I should be looking at you if I am telling the truth. And if you're not looking, if you're looking down when you're saying something and if you won't look me in the eye, then you must be lying.

But there is no empirical evidence of any kind that links eye gaze to lying. A bald faced liar can look you right in the eye and lie through his teeth. And somebody who is absolutely honest, may simply look down while talking because they are re-living the incident or whatever, and they don't want to look up.

More importantly, eye gaze is culturally determined. In this country, I expect when I look up to find you looking at me. Generally in the direction of my eyes. That's what I expect. And if you're not looking at me, you're not paying attention. But when I speak I can look anywhere I want. So speaker looks, the listener gazes at me. In the unenculturated black culture it is exactly the opposite. The listener looks away, the speaker looks at and doesn't take his or her eyes off the person he's talking to. If you're thinking eye gaze equates to truth telling and you have a totally different view point from the person you're talking to, you're going to be making a mistake.

And the fact that eye gaze, that our notion about eye gaze, is unusual in cultures across the world is something we don't bother to pay attention to. Judges who give this instruction are giving misinformation because in the Asian cultures, in the Hispanic cultures, it is rude to look at somebody directly in the eyes. If you are of a lower station you just don't look at people in the eyes, if they're above your station. It would be arrogant. So you would never think of looking a judge in the eyes,

or somebody who's interviewing you, or an adult, if you are a child, you wouldn't do it – it isn't done.

So there are these huge cultural divides on something as simple as eye gaze. Is that word getting out – no, it's not getting out.

Q: In the family courts of Australia, as I understand it, there is an ability to appoint a representative on behalf of the child. I would have thought something like that would protect the child in court.

AG: You would think so, wouldn't you. We have the same thing. Unfortunately guardians appointed to represent the child sometimes determine what the child's best interest is, and if it's not in the child's best interest. But furthermore, they're not trained anymore than the lawyers or the judges in recognising children's linguistic and cognitive development, so they make the same unfortunate assumptions about the children they are talking to. However, I am training a lot of guardians.

Q: In talking about children in the context of court proceedings, on occasions children are also charged with crimes. Given your concerns about their language capacities, what would you say about the appropriate language of criminal responsibility?

AG: I don't know about criminal responsibility. But I do know if the child has no appreciation of the results of an act, then there should not be criminal responsibility. It is difficult for me to say something like that in view of some of the horrific incidences that we have had in the United States of young teenagers deliberately setting off bombs and shooting children who are running from a school.

We've recently had a six year old who was charged with murder for killing a four year old. The child found a gun. Look at the violence that we allow on television in the States, and the games, the TV games – we shoot people down in them and they get up and there they are in the next frame. Kids don't have an appreciation of the reality of what they see.

When you interview children and then interrogate them, there should be a very strong line between interviewing and interrogating. It is not appropriate to use interrogation techniques with kids. They don't have the tools to defend themselves. They don't have the conversational tools or the linguistic tools.

We had a tragic case in Chicago, in which a seven year old was brought in to the police station on the pretext of getting his help to find something out about a murder. His mother was told that they were just going to use him as a source of information. He was interrogated from the minute he walked in. The police sergeant doing the interview had already determined that this kid was guilty. The sergeant badgered the child and the child kept saying, I didn't kill anybody, I didn't kill her. Until finally, he was worn down. And we know the

technique, saying to the child "You're not going to get into trouble" (which of course is a bald faced lie) "You did it didn't you?" The child finally said, yes. The minute he walked out and saw his mother, he said, "Mum, I didn't do anything." He was still charged with murder and it went to trial. Fortunately for him, somebody read the transcript of the interview and got an expert to look at it. They ruled that the question was inappropriate.

In the States, we give people the Miranda rights – the right to remain silent, to appoint an attorney. And so a seven year old is told he or she has the right to remain silent, to appoint an attorney. I have argued over and over, it is not appropriate to read out Miranda rights to kids. They can't handle it. You need to speak the language of the person you're talking to. And we're not doing it if we speak adult to kids.

Q: Your visit seems to have raised a great deal of media attention. What's the comparable level of the debate in the United States?

AG: There is a lot of concern about children testifying in court. Unfortunately the people who have made the greatest waves are Dr Stephen Ceci and Maggie Bruck who have written a book called *Jeopardy in the Courtroom*, about the experiments that Steve and his colleagues have conducted on suggestibility issues of children. They have some very well grounded scientific, set up experiments.

Let me give you an example - the mousetrap study. They brought children in, with parents' permission. They said, "Have you ever had your finger caught in a mousetrap and had to go to the hospital?" The children they interviewed said, "No, that hasn't happened." They brought them back the next week and said - "Well, we were talking about the time you got your finger caught in the mousetrap and went to the hospital. Did that happen to you?" "No," said most of the children. They brought them back the third week. They did this eleven weeks in a row. And gradually - "Well, let's see, remember the time you got your finger caught in the mousetrap and you had to go to the hospital." "Oh yeah." "Well tell me about the time you caught your finger in the mousetrap and had to go to the hospital." "Well I was in a cellar, it was really dark." Some of the children would begin to build elaborate stories. The more that they were interviewed, the wider and the more details and the more lurid it became.

Children are suggestible. I don't know anybody in the child protective field or in law enforcement or any other field who brings children back twelve weeks in a row and asks them the same question but changes the question just a little bit to say, yeah, well you know we all know you said this and so, tell us about it. Nobody does that. But that's the way this one experiment was set up. There are others similar to that.



AUSTRALIA'S PRIME MINISTERS-

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What did they have
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and not others?
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NEAL BLEWETT
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discuss with Gerard Henderson the successes and failings of some of Australia's best known leaders

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THE SAD STORY OF AUSTRALIA'S R & D

Joshua van Kleef

With the recent release of two more government reports – *The Chance to Change* by Chief Scientist Dr Robin Batterham (August 2000) and *Innovation Unlocking the Future – Final Report of the Innovation Summit Implementation Group* chaired by David Miles - and further ABS figures on Australia's expenditure on Research and Development (R&D), the evidence continues to mount that Australia requires urgent action to stimulate business spending in this area.

Both sides of politics agree that moving towards a knowledge-based economy is essential for ensuring our economic prosperity. However, when most other OECD countries continue to increase R&D spending, to take advantage of the boom in technology based economies, our overall rate has dropped for three consecutive years.

Australia is slipping behind most OECD countries in R&D expenditure in terms of percentage of GDP. The problem of low business expenditure, which has plagued both Liberal and Labor governments, could mean missed opportunities.

Gross expenditure on R&D fell for the third year in a row in 1998-9 to below 1992-93 levels (1.49% of GDP) according to ABS figures released in August 2000.

This puts us behind countries like Canada (1.64%) and Iceland (2.01%) and giants like the US (2.74%) even though these are relative terms. The report from the government's Innovation Summit Implementation Group, the Miles Report, makes the comparison. In absolute terms (\$8.8 billion), "it represents ... only some 16.5 per cent more than IBM's expenditure on research, development and engineering".

While government and higher education institutions slightly increased spending on R&D during the present government there has been a decline in the contribution from business. This has been a direct consequence of changes in the company tax concessions for R&D.

In 1996 the Howard Government reduced the tax concession for R&D from 150 per cent, which it had inherited from Labor, to 125 per cent. This led to a consistent decline in investment in R&D from the private sector which, according to recently released ABS figures, in 1998/99 had fallen to 0.67% of GDP (down from a high of 0.86% in 1995/96). This is a trend that the present government has not been able to reverse.

The Prime Minister regularly stresses the importance of science and innovation in securing Australia's economic future and is eager to quote advice, given to him from Allan Greenspan, the Chairman of the US Federal Reserve Board. When launching the CSIRO Discovery Centre in Canberra on the 31 August, the Prime Minister, a self confessed "devotee" of Mr. Greenspan, quoted his guru:

I have to say that the investment that the United States has made in technology has been one of the main reasons why there's been so much sustained economic growth in that country.

There has been little indication that the Prime Minister has heeded the advice. Although the

R&D AND THE FALLING AUSSIE DOLLAR

The Australian dollar's fall against world currencies such as the US dollar and pound sterling has focussed attention on Australia's reputation as an "old economy". The IMF World Economic Outlook report released in September 2000 shows that Australia rates second highest in expenditure on information and communication technology but rates second last in its production of new-technology.

"IT spending as a share of GDP is extremely high in Australia, but production of IT equipment is a small share of total output." (IMF World Economic Outlook Report – 19 September 2000)

James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, believes the falling Australian dollar is directly linked to Australia's failure to invest in IT industries at the production end. During his visit to Australia in September he said: "You have got to compete ... [with] research and development policy you have got to put the money in and you have not expanded your markets... If you look at the American economic machine you have got innovation, you have got fantastic increases in productivity, you have got extremely good management. This is a country that 10 years ago was lagging everybody ... now it is state-of-the-art in most industries."

James Wolfensohn believes the US dollar's strength is the result of spending on research and development, alongside investment in new-technology products.

government announced, in 1999, that it would double the amount it spent on medical research by 2005, there has been little action on increasing private sector R&D spending. This continues to undermine Australia's move to a knowledge-based economy.

John Howard was right in February 1999 when he said "it has become a cliché ... to talk about knowledge-based industries [and the importance of] knowledge-based employment". It has continued to be true because both sides of politics repeat "clever country" rhetoric like a mantra.

However, neither Labor nor Liberal governments have made any significant gains in fixing the problem. The Hawke/Keating Government did not tackle the problem of low business expenditure on R&D (BERD) which has for the last 20 years has been less than 70 per cent of the average for the top 20 OECD countries (Miles Report). The Howard Government continues to sit on the problem by not acting on recommendations from successive reports.

The Miles Report, released at the end of August 2000, recommends that tax concessions for R&D be increased to 130 per cent from 125 per cent. Such an increase was recommended as far back as 1997 in the government's review of Australian science and technology – *Priority Matters*.

Why then is the government reticent to increase R&D tax concessions?

The government gives two reasons for maintaining its reduced rate of tax concession - the \$10 billion budget black hole and tax rorts which took place under R&D syndication. However, the first of these seems too defensive given that increased R&D spending could very well stimulate growth. Chief Scientist Robin Batterham, author of *The Chance to Change*, writes:

The windows of opportunity to benefit from the current revolution in information technology and biotechnology are at a maximum over the next few years. There are big opportunities based on these technologies, other technologies and telecommunications, where explosive growth creates niches for Australia, not only as a means for greatly enhancing the existing industry base. It is likely that entering the field at a later time will take greater investment and the available rates of return and benefits will be diminished.

If Australia could capitalize on these growth industries it would be in a better position to reduce national debt. The editorial of the *Financial Review* (6 September 2000) reaffirms the urgency:

The release of the report [Miles] at this time has taken on added significance

because of the way the \$A has been sold off, partly due to perceptions of Australia being an old economy.

Without quick action there will be missed opportunities.

The second point, that tax concessions were reduced in order to remove rorts, has clearly sent the wrong signal to business. There is general agreement that the previous (Labor) system encouraged some tax rorts and a more careful evaluation of genuine research needs to be undertaken.

However, in attempting to clean up company research and development, the government continues to cause damage to Australia's overall R&D expenditure. Although the government has announced some action in the area it has failed to reverse the decline of BERD which is a direct result of their policy. The mistake is in the timing with a reduction in tax concessions not being adequately countered by alternatives. This has made an already difficult problem worse.

Australia's corporate culture is by nature one in which R&D expenditure seems to be a low priority compared with other countries (latest figures rank us seventh lowest out of 24 OECD nations in business expenditure on R&D). Clearly then, getting business on board has been and continues to be a difficult problem. On the 19 April this year, Bob McMullan, the then Shadow Minister for Industry and Technology, committed Labor to increasing BERD: "A Labor Government will commit to a target of reaching the OECD average for BERD by 2010."

But aims like this may not be enough, and there is no detail as yet of how a Labor government would reach them. Dr. Carmen Lawrence, who recently took over the shadow portfolio for Industry, Innovation and Technology portfolio, will have to spell out some new ideas on improving BERD. Labor's old policies were not effective. Although there was a slight increase in Australia's BERD as a percentage of the average top 20 OECD countries in the last few years of Labor, the maximum, attained in 1995-96, was only 70 per cent.

It is clear that amongst other measures, action must be taken to improve the amount Australian business spends on R&D. The government has given itself till the end of the year to respond to *The Chance to Change and Innovation: Unlocking the Future*. Potential investors in Australia and those who work in knowledge based industries will be watching the response carefully.

Joshua van Kleef is a Ph D student in mathematics at the University of Sydney



WHERE THE BOYS ARE

Anne Henderson

When Freud asked, a century ago, "What do women want?" he didn't really expect a reply. As Freud saw it, women were hysterical, depressed, dissatisfied and envied his penis.

A century on, women seem to have given Freud an answer. What they want is personal fulfilment and they are getting it. Forget the penis, as Germaine Greer would say. While men will no doubt always better women at throwing a shot put, hitting balls or the speed at which they run and swim, in areas beyond physical dominance women are overtaking men.

Just watch the TV competition between the self deprecating antics of the *Men Behaving Badly* odd couple Down Under and the women of *One Size Fits All*.

Men still appear to rule the world. You hardly see a picture of a woman among the heads of government. But working away at the coalface, from intellectual development to social adjustment and general happiness, women are outstripping men at a disconcerting rate.

Literature on problems with men is a growing field. Where once the sisterhood urged the liberation of women from their lowly status, social scientists, psychologists and commentators now debate the "trouble with men". Topics range from men behaving badly and the importance of fathers to the fact that, in the Western Hemisphere, male suicides outnumber female by a factor between three and four to one.

That Y chromosome. It gives men the edge in athletics, ball games, the swimming pool and hand-to-hand combat. Yet it is now also responsible for social dysfunction - everything from violent crime to joining remedial classes at school. Social interaction, at current levels of sophistication, has outcast the macho. Male persona is under stress.

Or, as renowned psychiatrist Anthony Clare, author of *On Men: Masculinity in Crisis* (Chatto & Windus) argues, "We say men should let out their emotions more. The problem is that when they do, it can be in very destructive ways. It's not just that men are fearful of emotion; sometimes they have emotions to be fearful of."

A ministerial seminar in Britain in 1998 recognised that industrial changes and the social changes which had accompanied this, rather than gender oppression, had left a significant number of boys and young men with real problems. With industrial

shake-up in the last two decades, young women adjusted better to the need to take badly paid, repetitive jobs, to cope with family breakup, manage as single parents and to adjust to the increasing interpersonal skills required in the work place.

Growing concerns in NSW at the decline in educational standards for boys led to the O'Doherty Report of 1994. In June this year, the House of Representatives Inquiry into the education of boys was established with a statement from Dr Brendan Nelson the Committee Chair:

Academically boys' performance is slipping behind girls as early as Grade 3 and there are big difficulties once they have fallen behind... This then impacts on boys' self esteem, their behaviour and how they communicate. This can have far reaching consequences, including a detrimental impact on career opportunities and the danger of alcohol abuse, drug abuse and dysfunctional personal and family relationships.

The figures speak for themselves. In the European Union, 20 per cent more women than men are graduating. On leaving university, women's prospects of employment exceed men's. In *The Atlantic Monthly*, in June 2000, Christina Hoff Sommers attacked feminists promoting notions of girls' disadvantage but conceded that men still command the extremes of success. Nevertheless, she argued:

Data from the US Department of Education and from several recent studies show that ... girls outshine boys. They get better grades. They have higher educational aspirations. They follow more rigorous academic programs and participate in advanced-placement classes at higher rates. According to the National Centre for Education Statistics, slightly more girls than boys enrol in high-level math and science courses. Girls, allegedly timorous and lacking in confidence, now outnumber boys in student government, in honor societies. On school newspapers, and in debating clubs. Only in sports are boys ahead, and women's groups are targeting the sports gap with a vengeance.

Discussion of the problems associated with educating boys, however, can very quickly fall into a familiar reactive pattern. Such has been the success of female educationists to improve educational standards for girls over two decades, it is easy to point the finger. Girls have taken what boys once had, whether supremacy in university places or hard to find employment. So, blame the women. Blame the feminists. Blame the girls.

While by no means exclusive to Australia, this now common theme reached something of a climax in NSW in August, when a group of educators claimed

that excessive number of female teachers was discriminating against boys. Women now account for 80 per cent of teachers in NSW primary schools.

One principal of a prominent NSW private school saw, in the lack of male teachers, a suggestion that serious learning was for girls only. A paper from Hurstville Boys High School stated that female teachers in the early years of school "often treat boys in more negative ways and structure classes in such a way as to alienate some boys". The NSW Secondary Principals Council deputy president Chris Bonner added that "the feminisation of the teaching profession sends a clear and unbalanced gender message to boys".

NSW Teachers Federation women's co-ordinator Michelle Rosicky defended women teachers - they are not to blame for the poor performance of boys she said. Perhaps the more relevant question to ask is why are young men not entering the teaching profession - a profession where salaries are poor, morale is low and career prospects eclipsed by so many other professions? Not a job for the ambitious bread winner perhaps?

Arguments against the feminising of the teaching profession link neatly with those from proponents of traditional learning methods such as the case put by Janet Daley in *City Journal* (Winter 1999). To Daley the problem in the classroom for boys is progressive educationists who have rejected "male virtues and values".

Progressives have dismantled traditional studies of literature and grammar which "once equipped every properly educated person" and allowed education to become a "personal exercise...aimed to enlist and gratify the child's emotions" and reward enthusiasm and personal involvement more than objective knowledge and accuracy. This of course, as Daley sees it, suits girls who become tractable and co-operative at a younger age than boys, are able to empathise with others at an earlier age and are better than boys at identifying with imaginative others and seeking to please.

In other words, boys are falling behind because the style of learning, adopted over two decades, doesn't suit them. Says Daley: "By deriding competition and working hard to strengthen individual self-confidence (which girls often lack), schools have loaded the system very heavily in favour of female achievement and male failure."

Turning back the clock to the education of the 1950s is hardly an answer though to the problem of boys. The world of the internet may require quickness at communication skills, but adaptability rather than a year's supply of facts seems to be the way to go. What's more, development of the empathetic side is as needed in boys (if not more so) as in girls.

Kathleen McDonnell, in *Kid Culture* (Pluto 2000), recounts her experiences conducting writing workshops in schools. Little boys, she found, were

unable to write stories that included girls, while the girls could include both male and female protagonists - "In the boys' universe, females essentially did not exist. The protagonists in boys' stories were always, without exception, male, and all the important relationships were between males. Even the violence was done by males to other males."

McDonnell recognised this as the "buddy" genre so common in Hollywood movies:

If a female character managed to make her way into the story, she almost never figured significantly in the action, but served instead as a plot device - usually a princess who spends the duration of the story in some off-stage castle waiting to be rescued.

When McDonnell tried asking a couple of her boy students to produce stories with female leads they couldn't manage it. To McDonnell the results were not surprising: "Everywhere children look, only one side of the equation is being represented. By and large, only one story is being told - the male quest tale."

But, if little boys need more male role models to develop successfully again, how is it that little girls are doing so well with so few of their own role models in popular culture? Could it be that, in being forced to make do with male protagonists for so long, girls have adapted to male domains, and found them to their liking? If so, the cause of contemporary masculinity's doldrums actually lies with men.

For in seizing the day, young women are finding they can manage without men. As the *British Weekly Telegraph* reported recently in a headline "Single girls simply want to have fun", the shortage of eligible men has left many women in their 20s and 30s happy to lead the single life. A documentary researcher put it plainly - women are less concerned about finding a husband because they are fulfilled in their friendships and careers.

Psychologist Anthony Clare believes men remain intrinsic to women's progress if only because they will always be needed to protect women from the darker side of masculinity, the fact that men can terrorise women if they choose to. What unsettles many men, however, is today's assertiveness in women who appear to be ignoring this. Who think they can rely on a civilised, ordered, socially engineered civic community to protect them. And who, if men don't satisfy them, can make do on their own.

It is said that men define themselves as being what women are not. Hardly appropriate these days. Instead it seems more a time for men themselves to ask, "What do men want?" And, if only for the sake of those little boys following on, find the answers.

- Anne Henderson is the editor of The Sydney Papers



ZERO TOLERANCE, ZERO RESULTS

Georgina Gold

*In Xanadu did Kubla Kahn
A stately pleasure-dome decree,
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.*

*So twice five miles of fertile ground
With wall and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Emfoling sunny spots of greenery.*

Excerpt from *Kubla Kahn*
by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

*"If you're not a rebel by the age of 20, you've got
no heart. If you're not establishment by the age of
30, you've got no brain"*

(Kevin Spacey, *Swimming with Sharks*)

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, one of Britain's most famous poets, was also one of Britain's most famous laudanum users – a liquid form of opium, which in Coleridge's time was available from any friendly doctor or apothecary. It's generally believed that Coleridge wrote *Kubla Kahn* in an hallucinogenic state. The climax of the poem revolves around wanting to revive "a vision" of an "Abyssinian maid" which he sees after having fed on honey-dew and having "drunk the milk of Paradise". There is a myth surrounding the poem due to its abrupt ending. Apparently while Coleridge was sitting at his writing desk (or passed out on a comfy couch) his "artistic" visions were disturbed by a knock on the door by a gentleman from Porlock ... he was never able to return to that same ecstatic state of cerebral expansion and thus could never finish the poem.

Within the literary world there is huge debate over the validity and literary merit of the poem. Is it right to elevate a poem to literary greatness when it was written under the influence of depressants and hallucinogens? This same debate still rages over the works of Timothy Leary, William Burroughs and, even more recently, Irvine Welsh. It is not so much a debate over literary merit, as moral responsibility. Is a work of art debased if it is created using the support of drugs.

Coleridge's life, of course, was not all damsels and domes of pleasure. He suffered from horrific nightmares and painful withdrawal symptoms, intensified by his love/hate relationship with the drug. However, his most powerful and beautiful writings were influenced by that relationship and his struggle through addiction. Coleridge is regarded as a literary elite ... an honourable member of high society. Back in the early 1800s it was socially, legally and politically acceptable for Coleridge to dream of bohemian states of well-being, frolic in sacred rivers and fertile ground while snorting snuff up his nostrils and creating magnificently beautiful poetic visions.

So, if Coleridge can do it, why can't we?

How different are Coleridge's experiences of tripping with laudanum, from what youths in the rave sub-culture are doing and experiencing today?

In short, very different.

Coleridge dabbled with mind-expanding drugs in an age where opium use was (mostly) acceptable, legitimate and justified. Today's raver youths face political, social and legal extinction.

Throughout history, drug taking has been viewed as a normal aspect of society, from tribal rituals to snuff boxes. From peyote of the American Indians, to tobacco of the Incas, to marijuana of the Caribe Indians, drugs never have been far from the human experience. It is only very recently that drug taking and altered mind states are deemed socially abhorrent.

The rave scene and its long-term association with drugs has a turbulent history of negative media representation – from Anna Wood (15 year old ecstasy victim) to Happy Valley (summer dance party where a 26 year old man died). Drugs are bad, music with a repetitive beat is socially damaging, and the people that enjoy these tribalistic gatherings are freaks and misfits that can't get a job. Raves are purported to be the devil of the techno-generation. Marginalised by the media, raves are seen by the wider society as being morally reprehensible – a socially depravity.

The death of Anna Wood marked the first time the Australian rave scene was seriously interrogated by mass media and government.

Anna Wood's death was a tragedy. But, it was a tragedy of errors. The media, seizing an opportunity to sensationalise the evil underbelly of the drug world, used her untimely death to stigmatise and marginalise the rave and drug scene.

Fair enough. But to magnify the story, many fallacies were told. In (much) later reports in *The Sydney Morning Herald* it was revealed that 15 year old Anna had not, in fact, died from ecstasy, but rather from lack of oxygen to the brain most probably caused by vomiting. Traces of ecstasy, cannabis and benzodiazepines were found in her blood. The

coronial findings revealed that "tests for ecstasy in her body produced a reading of 0.05 milligrams per litre of blood – less than half the lowest reading ever recorded for an ecstasy-related death in the world" (SMH 8 February, 1996).

On the night of her death, Anna's friends say that she used fake ID to gain entrance to the Phoenician Club where she took an ecstasy pill given to her by one of her friends.

Later in the night Anna's body reacted strangely to the pill. Anna spent hours in the toilets throwing up before her friends decided to take her back to one of their houses. There Anna spent hours convulsing, slipping in and out of consciousness. It was after 10 o'clock *the next morning* before her friends called Anna's parents and the paramedics arrived. By that time, Anna was semiconscious and was in respiratory arrest.

Anna's friends were scared. They did not want to be found out as being drug takers. They did not want to be arrested. They knew they were breaking the law and drug taking was seen to be bad. If, perhaps, they had been more educated and less fearful of potential consequences, the outcome may have been very different.

Anna Wood's death led to a crackdown on the rave and drug scene, supported by community and government leaders. NSW Premier Bob Carr ordered that the Phoenician Club, where Anna had taken the fatal pill, have its liquor licence revoked and its functions licence removed – the Phoenician would no longer be able to host rave parties, driving the rave scene further underground. The more underground the rave scene is, the fewer quality controls exist and less chance of a supervisory capacity to be present.

A dichotomous relationship has grown up between policemen, legislators, social commentators and rave-goers since the media frenzy surrounding the death of Anna Wood. The media again went berserk after the death of a 26 year old man at this year's major summer party, Happy Valley. Headlines such as "Wasted Life" and the emotively charged "...fatal drug culture" littered the press for days afterwards, reinforced by Anna Wood's mother's incensed cry that "ecstasy will continue to kill partygoers as long as our authorities persist with harm-minimisation policies, instead of zero tolerance" (*Daily Telegraph*, 21 February, 2000).

A little education and a bit more investigative research might help in calming the moralisation and media histrionics directed towards party culture.

The 26 year old man that died at the Happy Valley dance party had been awake for three days and had taken a cocktail of drugs in large doses. He had mixed speed, ecstasy, LSD and alcohol. In addition, in the coroner's

CHERYL KERNOT

at the Sydney Institute

SPEAKER : CHERYL KERNOT MP (Shadow Minister for Employment & Training)

DATE : Wednesday 15 November 2000

TIME : 5.30 for 6.00pm

VENUE : Mallesons Conference Room,
Governor Phillip Tower (Lvl 60),
1 Farrer Place, Sydney

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SENATOR RICHARD ALSTON AT THE SYDNEY INSTITUTE

The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Senator Richard Alston, will address The Sydney Institute in October. Here's your chance to find out where Australia is heading along the information, communications highway. Bring your questions - datacasting, free to air, the ABC, whatever.

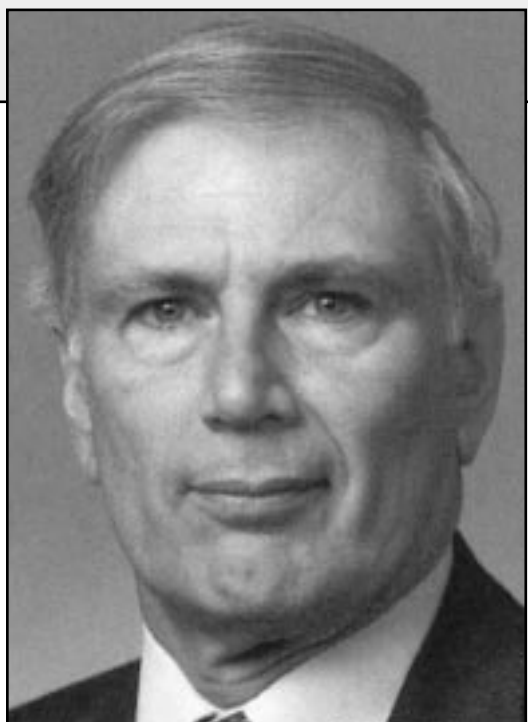
DATE : Monday 23 October 2000
TIME : 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE : Mallesons Conference Room,
Governor Phillip Tower (Lvl 60),
1 Farrer Place, Sydney

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report it was found that ecstasy had not, in fact, killed him, but rather a highly dangerous, and in this case, fatal drug called PMA (paramethoxyamphetamine). Paul Dillon, information manager at the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, confirmed that "PMA was a chemical mixture inadvertently concocted as a part of ecstasy manufacture" (*The Age*, 15 May 2000). Six Australians died from taking PMA between 1995 and 1997.

If, as in the Netherlands, ecstasy testing had been available at the Happy Valley dance party, this young man's death could have been avoided. In the Netherlands, the government has established a policy of "normalising" drugs and drug taking. They call it "harm reduction". The Dutch government believes that if people are going to take the drug, then they should do it in the safest way possible. The Ministry of Health, in conjunction with the City Council and NIAD (Netherlands Institute for Alcohol and Drugs) funds an organisation called "Stichting Adviesburo Drugs" that sets up ecstasy testing safehouses at raves. Ecstasy testing takes about two minutes. Ecstasy testing does not validate or condone drug taking, but rather recognises that a prominent scene exists and that testing can minimise danger.

The club and party drug ecstasy was made available by chemist Alexander Shulgin in the 1970s when he introduced the drug to those interested in drug-assisted psychotherapy. Psychotherapists viewed the drug to be moderate in its effects.

An article entitled, "Valley of Death" (*SMH*, 22 February, 2000) describes recreational drug use as being "an illegal activity voluntarily indulged in by willing youngsters" and that "young people will never be able to be stopped from using the wide range of illicit drugs".

This is fact. Young people will not be stopped from taking drugs, just as American prohibition in the 1920s did not stop adults from drinking. It simply drove it underground.

However, media representation of ecstasy and raves has not always been wholly negative. An interesting media war regarding raves and ecstasy use erupted after the 2000 New Year's Eve celebrations. In an article entitled "Love is in the Air" (*SMH*, 4 January 2000), a senior Bondi policeman reported that "the big topic of conversation amongst the officers on the night was how the widespread use of ecstasy has really calmed things down".

Bondi, renowned for its violent New Year's Eve celebrations, which in previous years had escalated to riot proportions, was remarkably placid this year. Mobile Home, a branch-off of the Sydney superclub Home, took over Bondi Beach for the NYE celebrations. "Dozens of bored (Bondi) police" established a prominent presence expecting the usual

drunken rioting and excessive violence but instead were greeted by "thousands of partygoers with smiles beaming from faces with dilated pupils". Police, it seems, had nothing to do. "Not a single fight" erupted.

Police maintained that it was easy to pick out those who had used the drug with "their broad, dopey smiles, dilated pupils and rapid chewing of gum". At the three major parties in Sydney, it was reported that there were more than 35,000 people dancing the night away, and not one fight or arrest had been reported.

The next day, a senior Sydney policeman released a statement saying that Bondi police did not endorse the use of the drug ecstasy. An article entitled "Police deny drugs love-in" (*SMH*, 5 January 2000) reported that the "claims that widespread usage of the illegal drug ecstasy was responsible for the low number of arrests and fights in Bondi on New Year's Eve" were "absolute garbage".

Ecstasy use should not be advocated or condoned. It is a dangerous pastime. But it is no more dangerous than drinking, smoking or driving a car. In fact, ecstasy use is far less dangerous than any of these activities. In a report by the Drug and Alcohol Directorate issued by the NSW Health Department, *Survey of Ecstasy (MDMA) Users in Sydney*, it states that "reports of problems arising from ecstasy use are relatively rare given its widespread use". Libby Topp, National Drug and Alcohol Research Clinic, stated that "We really need to get off the idea that everyone who has an ecstasy is going to die". Topp refers to a recent European review which estimates that "the risk of dying from taking one ecstasy tablet at one in 3.4 million compared with a risk of one in 84,500 of dying from skydiving" (*SMH*, "A drug called E" 6 December 1997).

Not everyone, though, should try skydiving.

Abstinence is not an answer. Zero tolerance does not work. Zero tolerance only succeeds in making the drug and rave scene less visible – pushing it further underground and afield. A zero tolerance policy and an "us and them" attitude will only further marginalise youth in its attempts to find a space in the adult world.

A normalisation and harm minimisation policy, supported by comprehensive drug education, will only take away the aura and mystery surrounding the rave and drug culture, bringing it out into the open, into a sphere where it can be quality controlled and supervised.

But then again, if Coleridge had been "supervised" maybe we wouldn't have read of his stately pleasure-dome and caverns measureless to man.

Georgina Gold is completing her Master's of Public Policy at Macquarie University



BOOK REVIEWS

John McConnell

**THE MACHINE:
LABOR CONFRONTS THE FUTURE**
Edited by John Warhurst
and Andrew Parkin
Allen & Unwin, pb 2000
rrp \$35.00
ISBN 1 86448 721 6

*H*ow should the Australian Labor Party regard the Hawke and Keating years?

The Hawke and Keating Governments held office in total for 13 years from 1983 to 1996. They responded to changing circumstances by introducing significant economic reforms. They lowered tariff barriers. They recognised the benefits that greater market place competition offers consumers and the economy. They stepped tentatively in the direction of workplace bargaining. Do they provide a Labor model of what to do or what not to do? Or should Kim Beazley and Simon Crean seek to recapture more traditional ALP ideology? Indeed is there a "third way" that the ALP should be setting its sights on?

Labor's future directions remain unresolved following the National Conference held in August. Sure, free trade triumphed over the fair trade vote. But union officials gained a commitment that a future Labor government would restore arbitration and the AIRC to centre stage. And Doug Cameron of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union intends to target marginal seats in a bid to influence tariff and manufacturing employment policy. There is substantial work for the ALP to do on developing social and economic policy.

In *The Machine: Labor confronts the future*, editors John Warhurst and Andrew Parkin write that the ALP is at a crossroads. The party's future direction, they say, remains uncertain. There are signs of organisational disharmony. Warhurst and Parkin raise the spectre of a return to the dark and undisciplined days of party brawling in public. Sometimes party options are expressed within exclusive compartments. One view concentrates on policy issues. Another view restricts discussion to campaign strategies and tactics. Any intersection is neglected. Moreover, the challenges confronting the Labor leadership also encompass membership, style of leadership and relations with interest groups.

John Warhurst is Professor of Political Science at the ANU. Andrew Parkin is Professor of Political and International Studies at Flinders University. What type of political party the ALP has been and what sort of party it is in the process of becoming are key themes throughout the eighteen chapters in *The Machine*.

The challenge for Kim Beazley, state Professors Warhurst and Parkin, is "to forge a policy balance between the needs of upwardly mobile middle-class families and the needs of Labor's traditional working-class constituency". They believe the party needs "to respect Labor's traditional commitment to social justice while responding to the changing economic and social circumstances of the new millennium." Quite a challenge as they note.

Parkin and Warhurst make brief comments on the ALP under a variety of headings - for example, a working class party, a machine party, a politician's party, a factionalised party and a social democratic party. *The Machine* includes a range of contributors.

Clem Lloyd discusses a national machine submerging federalist spectres. Clive Bean believes the ALP should adopt policies that will appeal to followers of the party's traditional philosophies. He discusses the significance of the ALP's loss of votes in 1996 among manual workers, young voters and all categories of church attendance, while recognising the rebound that occurred at the 1998 federal election.

Haydon Manning expects union leaders to continue as privileged opinion-makers and power-brokers within the party albeit with some decline in influence. He believes that party policy should aim to modernise the economy while recognising social unease with the pace and scope of change. Haydon Manning who lectures at Flinders University also addresses the potential for globalisation pressures to divide workers. For example, how the interests of workers in export industries conflict with the interests of public sector employees and manufacturing workers.

Further potential for conflict emerges in Marion Sawyer's chapter. Economic reforms under Hawke and Keating together with the development of factions as an overriding force, she believes, occurred at

expense of women. Labor women have yet to succeed, she believes, in changing the way the party thinks. EMILY's list, she notes, may bring tensions surrounding feminism to a head.

Tim Batten believes in a big public sector. Batten who teaches at New England University supports high public sector capital spending. He favours an incomes policy that allows for an expanding public sector, but not wage tax trade-offs. His personal preference remains set mid-way between a central command economy and free market capitalism.

Nick Economou advocates the politics of inclusion in responding to environmental pressures. He desires a return to the style of arrangements that applied during the days that Graham Richardson had responsibility for the environmental portfolio. Will Sanders recommends innovative use of concepts in order to decolonise indigenous Australia. James Jupp analyses the party's ethnic connections.

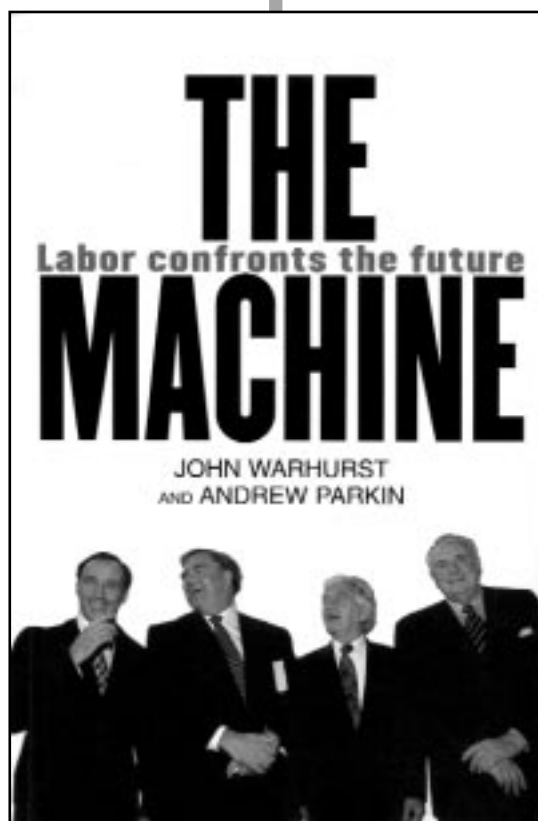
The remaining chapters look at the ALP's state and territory branches. In general these contributions are particularly interesting and are very informative. They shed light on state and territory factional

struggles. Some of these chapters include details on branch structure, factional composition and branch stacking allegations.

Graham Hudson believes the Victorian branch is "arguably the most factionalised branch of the party, and one of the most factionalised political party units in the world". Factions within Victoria, he says, amount almost to parties within the party. They have their own executives, memberships and policies.

Then there are union factions. Labor and union factions involve an interwoven pattern of personalities and issues. Meanwhile super or mega-unions act to concentrate political influence in fewer hands. The Queensland branch, comments John Wanna, is the richest state branch in Australia and is influenced particularly by the Australian Workers' Union.

John Warhurst sees the ACT as highly factionalised, with an old-style left-wing orientation. Marcus Howard believes factional brawling is on the decline in Tasmania. WA, argues Anthony Sayers, is under the control of a small clique of party and union



officials. Dean Jaensch discusses the reasons why there is a high potential for fragmentation in the Northern Territory.

Marian Simms concludes that the NSW branch is the most conservative state on social and moral issues.

**STEVE BRACKS AND JEFF KENNETT:
MY PART IN THEIR RISE AND FALL -
AN INSIDER TELLS**

By Barry Donovan

Information Australia hb 2000

rrp \$38.45

ISBN 1 86350 304 8

A year has passed since Victorians surprised themselves. Unexpectedly, the 1999 state election resulted in a change of government. Jeff Kennett and the Coalition government were shown the exit sign. Into office, with the assistance of independents, came Steve Bracks and the ALP.

It was a shock result. Jeff Kennett had dominated the state political scene for some years. The general opinion was that it would take the Labor Party two elections to close the gap.

During 1999, Jeff Kennett decided to do a campaign solo. Ministers were muzzled. Jeff Kennett personified the government to the media. He even operated a personal website. It wasn't the only factor of course, but charisma was converted into perceived arrogance.

Now, Barry Donovan, a former media adviser to Bob Hawke and John Cain and senior media adviser and acting chief of staff for the state Labor Parliamentary Party while John Brumby was leader, has penned a breezy book entitled *Steve Bracks and Jeff Kennett: My Part in their Rise and Fall - An Insider Tells*.

Readers should not expect a litany of inside revelations. The first few chapters recall early days in New Zealand, a sea voyage to London and time spent there.

Eventually, Barry Donovan moves to Melbourne where he becomes an industrial reporter. This brings the author into regular contact with ACTU officials including Bob Hawke and Simon Crean.

It was a time when the ACTU entered into an arrangement with a city store and confronted retail price maintenance. It was also a time when there were anti-conscription and anti-Vietnam moratorium marches, strikes and clashes over the penal clauses of the then Arbitration Act. (Barry Donovan is married to Megan Stoyles who gained prominence during an anti-Vietnam war demonstration wearing a T-shirt declaring "Make Love Not War.")

In 1979, Barry Donovan opened an office as a media adviser and consultant. His office was in a house owned by the Builders' Labourers Federation. The author bestowed "friendly media advice" on Norm Gallagher and his men. Barry Donovan claims to be the first journalist to move from newspapers into private consultancy to work with the labour movement on a professional basis.

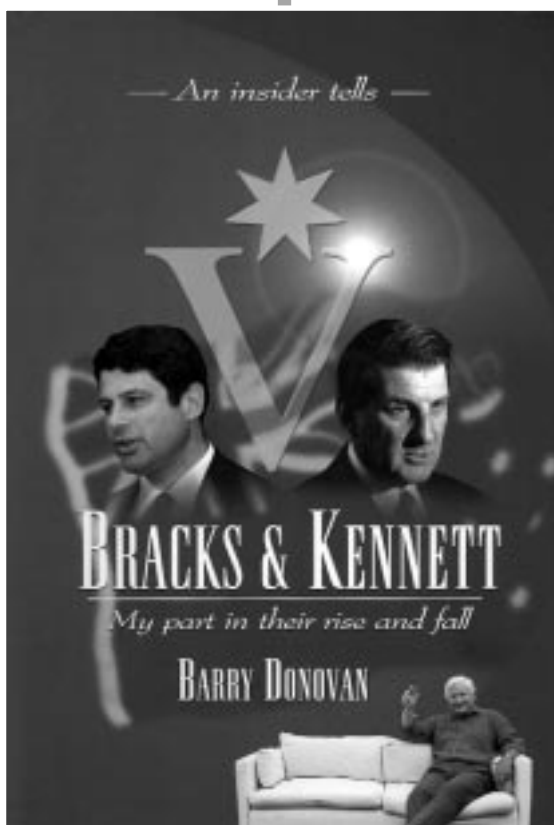
The author played an influential role in structuring a media unit for the Cain Labor government. The unit operated like a newspaper office. Journalists covered specialist rounds. There was a chief of staff. There were coeditors. The daily aim was to produce positive stories throughout the media. Barry Donovan's major involvement in speech writing appears to be confined to one piece for John Cain and John Brumby.

There's a fair sprinkling of quotes throughout the book's 200 pages. What some journalists published in the press at the time. What Barry Donovan wrote at the time. Barry Donovan includes some comments on Steve Bracks. Steve Bracks played a key role in developing state Labor's electoral policy platform. This role both raised his status within the party and assisted Bracks when he replaced John

Brumby as leader prior to the election.

Barry Donovan portrays Steve Bracks as a patient politician, one who is devoted to process.

John McConnell is the co-author of several senior textbooks



REVIEW OF THE REVIEWERS

Stephen Matchett

Welcome to post-modern politics where deals are done in smoke-filled cyber-rooms and where the superior spinners gleefully explain how they are ignored by a wise electorate. It's the world of Dick Morris columnist and campaign condottiere whose three books purport to proclaim the dawn of a new Athenian (that's Athens, Tennessee) age of participatory democracy.

In describing the democratic politics of the Great Republic, Morris is not cursed with false modesty. His largest work *Behind the Oval Office: Getting Reelected Against All Odds* (Renaissance Books, 1999) explains how to become, or, in the case of his then client, William Jefferson Clinton, stay president.

In *The New Prince*, (generously subtitled *Machiavelli Updated for the Twenty-First Century*, presumably to avoid confusing admirers of Antione de Saint-Exupery) he broadens the advice for aspiring statespersons of more modest ambitions, (Renaissance Books, 1999).

In *VOTE.com* (Renaissance Books, 1999) he explains how the Internet will ensure that the people govern as never before or, as the subtitle puts it, presumably to assist people with little time for reading "How big-money lobbyists and the media are losing their influence, and the Internet is giving power back to the people".

All three books are new additions to long established genres in American journalism. For all his breathless zealotry, Morris is just another in the long line of political pundits. The backroom confessional is as old as the desire of the dismissed courtier to turn a quid or seek revenge. There are more than a couple of books on how to succeed in politics without really trying. And breathless claims for innovations that will finally make American democracy democratic roll around with the frequency of congressional polls. Ten years ago campaign finance reform was going to do the trick. Before that the solution was to break the power of the Secret Intelligence State.

What makes the trio of titles interesting is less Morris' commonplace ideas and self-important prose than his desperate attempt to secure the future of the

political life he so obviously loves and to boast about his achievements along the way.

Morris also knows that these are sadly cynical times; that the presidency is less important than it used to be when there was an evil empire to confront and that the US electorate now only votes if it can find time between the end of *Jerry Springer* and the start of *Oprah*. So he goes to great lengths to point to the flaws in the American system of government but also to demonstrate that there are solutions, solutions that he just happens to have with him.

These books are the work of a creature of the system who is determined to convince his readers that everything they disliked about the political establishment was never really all that bad, but that if even if they were, things are about to improve. In essence Morris spins to variously denounce or dismiss the significance of spin. It's a disingenuous theme at best when the enduring motif of the books is the consultant as savant, even hero but it is also very much part of Morris public-persona.

Dick Morris loves politics, not in the abstract but in the day to day struggle for power – and it shows in the way he earnestly argues why policy and popular authority are what matters while lovingly dwelling on the pleasures of exercising influence without responsibility.

This is a man most comfortable with the boys in the backroom and while there may be times when he yearns for the limelight it is not his natural home, something made demonstrably apparent when Morris spoke at the Sydney Writers Festival in May this year.

Morris was there to spruik *VOTE.com* and did a thoroughly unconvincing job. He began by comparing the Sydney Town Hall where he was speaking to New York's Cooper Union, where Lincoln had once spoken and added that the size of his Sydney audience was far greater than it would have been in the United States and what a politically literate mob Australians obviously were. Perhaps the small audience was uncomfortable with the unlikely and obsequious comparison but they heard him out in polite silence and Morris was reduced to ploughing on to explain how direct elections via the Internet were the future of democracy.

For all his experience in winning the great and powerful to his views and his work as a newspaper columnist and television pundit, it was not a polished performance. It certainly appeared to fail to convince the panel, John Howard's former chief of staff Grahame Morris and NSW Special Minister of State, John Della Bosca, both of whom politely knocked over much of Morris' argument in rejoinders that were far more cogent and much funnier. And when

these two hard men of left and right respectively are the audience charmers it's pretty clear that the star turn laid an egg.

Dick Morris is hardly the first backroom operator not to perform well in public. But just as he was not good with the big public set piece his books similarly lack the intellectual consistency of a thesis that is thought through and tested over years of reflection.

Morris' philosophy of winning elections is little more than a series of one-size fits all homilies for all occasions. Hardly surprising in the work of a practical campaigner, they are mixtures of practical advice born of great campaigning experience and self-justification rather than an applied philosophy of the electoral process.

At the heart of his books are three basic ideas: firstly that by occupying the ideological centre a politician can force opponents into adopting extreme positions which frighten the voters. Secondly that the quality and cost of a politician's marketing is secondary to the importance of his or her ideas and thirdly that the Internet will force politicians to be accountable to their constituents. None of this is rocket science but because Morris communicates it with the genial authority of the insider letting us all into the secret of electoral success it is easy to mistake his glib generalities for political wisdom.

The most interesting of the three books, *Behind the Oval Office*, is the one that pontificates least. For a work by a marketing communicator it is a thoroughly bad book. It rambles and does not stay on message. But it does provide a fascinating insight into the life of Clinton's courtiers. And it is one of the best primers on how incumbents can run for re-election throughout their entire term, rather than just the official campaign, assuming of course they have very large buckets of money for polling and even bigger ones for advertising.

Unsurprisingly the book's hero is Dick Morris and while Bill Clinton is portrayed as a smart enough politician with a good heart those around him are either mad with power or drunk on ideology - and then of course there was Hillary. They were all blind to what Dick could see, that the Clinton Presidency could recover from the whipping the Democrats took in the 1994 Congressional elections, if only they listened to what the polls, not the Party, foretold.

But because Dick Morris is human his political wisdom did not extend to other aspects of his life and because he is an American he has to tell us all about it. Thus the book includes a note from the author in which he apologises to the Clintons, Al Gore and the staff of the White House in general for his hubris and folly in betraying their confidences to a prostitute.

Readers with a taste for the trivia of confessional politics may recall that Morris unwisely conducted a relationship with a sex worker whose sense of professional discretion did not extend to chatting with tabloid journalists.

It's a confessional touch that pops up throughout the book and which might have made Dick feel better, but for anybody raised in the "never complain, never explain" school of public life it has a cringe making.

It's all the more unsettling in that Morris is Talleyrand-like in the courteous understatement he uses to describe struggles for the President's support against the people he portrays as the White House establishment, notably Democrat veterans Harold Ickes and Leon Panetta and the short-term wonder-boy George Stephanopolous.

According to Morris his enemies in the White House were well meaning if limited ideologues who had led the President to the brink of failure and would cheerfully see him fall over rather than adopt the pragmatic, patriotic course that Dick proposed. There must have been some spectacular stoushes as the prophet Morris slugged it out for control of the political agenda with the orthodox Democrats.

But you can only guess at the venom because Morris is always polite as he explains how he relied on the objective data of the polls to defeat the blind rhetoric of the courtiers around the President. Consider, for example, Morris on George Stephanopolous:

George is well known for his untamed bangs, very fine and jet-black. He is short, bright and thirty-something, (now only thirty-five). Most often he could be found in his little cubbyhole office next to the Oval Office, where he sat folded into his chair, feet on his desk, in the summer in his seersucker suit, working the telephones while surfing the TV channels with his remote control in a desperate search for news. He wanted to be the first to know anything. (*Behind the Oval Office*, 133)

and compare it with George's first take on Dick:

He was a small sausage of a man encased in a green suit with wide lapels, a wide floral tie, and wide-collared shirt. His blow-dried pompadour and shiny leather briefcase gave him the look of a B-movie mob lawyer, circa 1975 - the kind of guy who gets brained with a baseball bat for double-crossing his boss. But his outfit was offset by the flush of power on his pasty face. (George Stephanopolous, *All Too Human: A Political Education*, Little Brown, 1999, 131)

Morris is adept at settling scores with the thin blade of understatement and it is very easy to accept his modestly expressed explanations of who was good and who bad in the struggle for political control of Clinton. But it's hard to look bad when your enemies can make themselves look as mean-minded as George.

People who have worked in a politician's office, any politician's office, will relate to Morris' chronicle of the endless tarantella danced by those who seek to make policy in the political shadows. As he puts it, "a skilled president doesn't give direct orders. He uses the alternation of praise and blame to get what he wants". (*The New Prince*, 140)

But for those naive enough to still hope that there is more to public office than the politics of personality what makes the book particularly interesting is the dimension as an operations manual on running for re-election.

Morris would have it that his greatest political achievement is "triangulation", the idea that a leader can seize and hold the electoral high ground by looking at the aspirations of both parties rather than their tactics and finding a third way to meet everybody's aspirations. Of course the leader has to keep moving, finding new positions and coming up with new ways of distinguishing him or herself from the competition, but always keeping command of the middle ground.

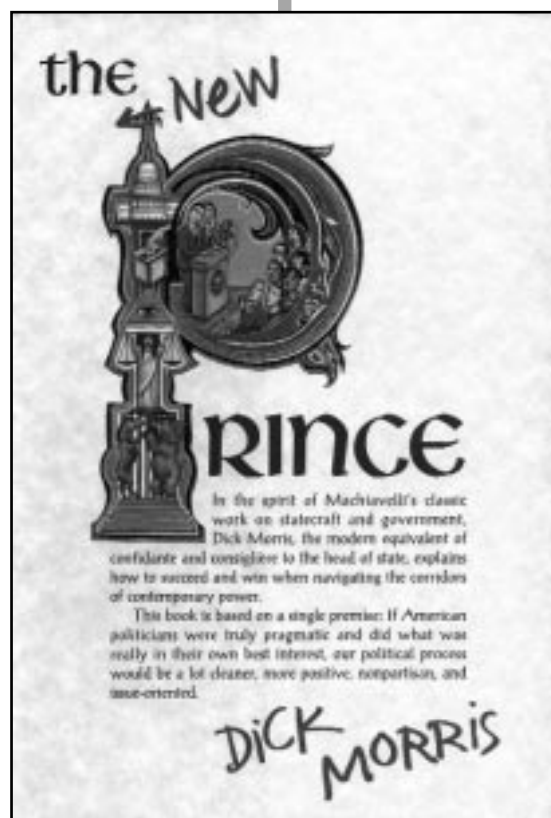
It's hardly an original idea. Richard Hofstadter, suggested it in 1948 when he defined the American political tradition with:

Above and beyond temporary and local conflicts there has been a common ground, a unity of cultural and political tradition, upon which American civilization has stood. (*The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It*, Jonathan Cape pb edition, 1971, XIV)

But what Morris lacks in originality he makes up for in the role he delineates for the campaign strategist. And when Morris is not describing his fights in the White House and his own self indulgence, *Behind the Oval Office* sets out how an office holder can assure electoral success by constantly looking for innovative

ideas that can be explained in a soundbite and will sell to all but the ideologues of left and right.

The self-described Morris in this book is an awesome political operator, constantly polling, continually testing new policy positions and putting new advertisements to air - all part of an integrated strategy to hold the centre and push opponents into ever more extreme positions.



The Morris strategy for Clinton had the president advertising his positions on those over-simplifications of human problems Americans call "issues" from September 1995, over a year before the presidential election. The advertisements were on subjects the polls showed were significant with swinging voters in key states and before they went to air they were market tested.

As Morris describes it, the long campaign was a masterpiece of applied marketing research of a sophistication that no brand campaign could ever aspire to. The book's last 250 pages are reprints of briefing notes and advertising proposals to build the market-share (otherwise known as electoral

support) for the Clinton brand (otherwise known as presidency). For marketing communication professionals it demonstrates a remarkable political talent.

But Morris is far too subtle to let this image stand. He may not have been able to resist showing off his enormous talent for political polling and advertising but for the game he loves to continue he needs to assure his readers that politics was not just about having the money to spend on permanent advertising campaigns. Thus he describes how the White House's advertising successfully portrayed the Republican controlled Congress as flinty ideologues in the budget shut down of the Civil Service in 1995:

What made the ads work? Was it just that we had enough money to run them a lot? Can anybody with enough money win an election? No. The graveyards are full of rich men and women who tried to buy their way into office and failed totally. ... The key is to advertise your positions only if the public agrees with them. If the public

won't buy your basic premise, it doesn't matter how much you spend or how well your ads are produced; they won't work. (*Behind the Oval Office*, 152)

Dick has an answer for the woolly idealists who might think that this is about pandering to the electorate rather than courageous policy making. Shaping policy on according to how well announcements will poll is at the heart of good government:

The best metaphor I can think up is that of a sailboat. You can't just decide to go from there to there in a straight line. This is a democracy – you have no motor, you just can't order a tax cut or any other major program. So you combine two elements to calculate how to go from here to there: where do you want to go? And where does public opinion – metaphorically, the wind – want you to go? A demagogue does not need to make such a calculation. He simply goes where the wind of public opinion dictates. He irresponsibly raises his sails without seeking to dictate direction and catches as much wind as he can to go as fast as he can. A dictator just starts his motor and goes. An inept politician ignores the wind, sets his rudder according to principle alone and capsizes valiantly. (*Behind the Oval Office*, 84)

The political consultant is just a Bonapartist meteorologist, reading the weather charts of public opinion and using polls as plebiscites to set the political course – nothing more.

There is more of the same in *The New Prince*. If he had not retired from consulting for the life of an Internet guru and columnist, this slight collection of handy hints for candidates would read as a promotional tract for Morris' consultancy. Dick sets up problems caused by "old politics", and then provides solutions, solutions based on trust in the wisdom of the American electorate, as assisted by astute polling and brilliant creativity.

But throughout the book there is the same desperate attempt to avoid making politics look like, well politics, and for much of it he describes a political future shaped less by Machiavelli than Pollyanna. Sure American politics is controlled by high-spending special interests that focus on conflict but this is not what the American people want:

Voters have become vastly better informed, more centrist, more sophisticated, and increasingly disgusted with the negative tone of our politics. But politicians and the news media don't get it. Politicians only dish out and the media

only cover the most negative, simplistic, distorted, and partisan rhetoric possible. Too often our elections are a race to the bottom - a context to see who can sink the lowest. This is not just and government, it's stupid politics. (*The New Prince*, xv)

And the times they are a changing. Funnily enough what they want is exactly what Dick delivers, advice on how to keep the spin positive and how to provide answers to policy problems that everyone will love. Cynicism is often the last refuge of the naive but Morris says he is out of the spin doctoring business. But just because the man is out of politics doesn't mean that he will not defend the world he loved.

And *The New Prince* is just that, a defence of both the craft and even moral worth of the life of politics as practised by Dick Morris as a Democrat machine warrior in New York and as a consultant to Democrats and Republicans alike for 20 years. Thus he argues that pragmatism is the highest form of politics because right-thinking pragmatists do whatever is necessary to stay in the game. And because they are ipso-facto right thinking the pragmatists motives are always good and pure.

But having established the importance of the campaign managers Morris then assures us that the American people are too smart to fall for spin. Instead of rhetoric the people want to know where a candidate stands on the issues, or at least those of them that can be explained in a 30 second TVC or news-grab. They don't want negatives, they want ideas that will help address their problems and they are sick of the politics of image:

Message over money, issues over image, positives over negatives, substance over scandal. Candidates can best win elections and can most effectively govern by developing attractive answers to our most pressing problems and duelling with the solutions their adversaries present. Democracy has once again become a dialogue where cogency, persuasiveness, and resonance with the popular will are the keys to winning. (*The New Prince*, 49)

It's the political version of the old advertising adage, "consumers are not idiots they are your spouse" but it sets up a straw-person in arguing that electoral success only requires the appearance of deference to what the polls tell you. It also ignores the fact, at least in Australian politics, that even in the most consensual of politics there are times when the electorate wants to make a choice between policies rather than endorse whoever is most practised at being all things to all persons. Steve Bracks and Jeff Kennett hardly ran into each other in a mad rush for the middle ground.

Dick Morris does not like conflict and for all his talk about the "issues" his entire credo of public life is focused on coming up with saleable solutions without being too bothered whether they are workable ideas. And for the candidate to keep ahead of the competition new ideas have to be rolled out everyday, just as Clinton advertised his legislative agenda to erode the popularity of the GOP House majority in 1995-96. The only marketplace of ideas that counts is not the floor of the legislative chamber or the op ed pages of the broadsheets or even the party room or cabinet, it's the polls. The politician who slumps in the polls is morally out of office:

Each week's poll is a vote of confidence the president must win to govern ... Once upon a time elections settled things for the term of office. Now, they are mere punctuation marks in an ongoing search for popular support and a functioning majority. Each day is election day in modern America." (The New Prince, 73, 75)

Morris was probably too busy polling for Homecoming Queen candidates to have done much undergraduate politics in college because he seems a little hazy on the idea of representative democracy. As for silly old Edmund Burke's idea, that elected representatives must follow their conscience, well it wouldn't poll well at all.

Certainly the idea of the polls as a permanent plebiscite on the performance of elected officials may smack of demagoguery to some but to Dick it's the answer to what ails American democracy. Funnily enough it just also happens to fit in with his new scheme, now that he no longer makes presidents for a living, the Internet.

If the Internet had not existed Morris would have had to invent it because it answers all the problems that he sees in American politics. The big money to run TV campaigns isn't required to communicate on the Internet. You don't have to have spin-doctors to deal with the media punditocracy when you can communicate direct with the voters via interactive homepages. Most importantly the www means that people can vote directly and immediately in a digital democracy.

Goodbye James Madison and "the mischief of faction" in representative government (*Federalist Papers 10*), hello Thomas Jefferson with the on-line open all hours nation-wide cyber-town meeting. Or perhaps hello Robespierre. As J.A. Talmon put it:

Robespierre searched for safeguards against "representative despotism". They were two: constant popular control over the Legislative body, and direct democratic action by the people. Robespierre dreamt of an assembly hall with a public gallery large enough to contain twelve thousand spectators." (The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy, London, 1970, 98)

Morris' vision will appeal to everybody who thinks that the people's will is always pure, always clearly expressed and always to be acted on. The reality of where he wants to take us is apparent at the site he created to put his ideas in action, <http://www.vote.com/>. The site provides a vote of the day on national issues and Morris guarantees that

every vote will go to the relevant official. The national page features questions like, "End Affirmative Action in University Admissions?" or "Should Congress Override President Clinton's Veto of the Estate Tax Cut?"

The New York State page asks questions such as "Should New York's Quick Credentialling Program for Teachers Be Expanded?" and "Who Should Win the Senate Race between Hillary Clinton and Rick Lazio?"

Each issue features a pro and con statement and people who are registered with the site are assured that their yes or no response will go to the relevant candidates or officials.

It's a superior form of talkback radio and has the same obvious faults. It doesn't provide the practising politician with any demographic or psycho-graphic information on the cyber-voter. And it is susceptible to manipulation.

For example, the national site includes the question, "JonBenet Murder Case: Should Police Publicly Clear the Parents as Suspects?" It must have escaped Morris' notice but the rule of law does not rely on the opinions of the punters. The New York site asks "Is



Lazio leading because Jews believe Hillary made anti-semitic remarks?" The pollsters call this push-polling and it's hardly calculated to inspire a balanced response.

Deborah Bogle (*Australian*, 8 June) pointed to the susceptibility of manipulation by the very special interests Dick says cyber-democracy will defeat calling the site *Vote.com@redneck.com*. For Morris it's just the people talking, or rather, singing. As he put it in an interview with Jennifer Byrne on ABC TV's *Foreign Correspondent*.

It's kinda (sic) like political karaoke - we give you a mic and you can sing anything you want... Is it leadership... is it democracy? Well, we certainly do need leadership in our society, it certainly should play a role, but frankly in the U.S. at least leadership has got so corrupted by campaign contributions, by big money in politics, that you don't know where the special interests end and the leadership begins, and I think we need a massive dose of democracy in the U.S. ... the internet can present the first truly global method of people expressing their opinions (<http://www.abc.net.au/foreign/interv/morris.htm>)

The book pages did not bother with Morris but the political commentators certainly had a look at his idea of on-line democracy and most of them pronounced themselves sceptical at best. Kerry O'Brien expressed a common view when he asked Morris whether all his talk of a new democracy amounted to nothing more than politics as usual on-line:

Politicians will use polls as a barometer of what the public wants to hear and might throw the public some bones whilst still pursuing the vested interests that you talk about, which is surely underscored by cynicism, which is precisely why people are rebelling against the institution of politics. (<http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/stories/s127980.htm> Transcript 17/05/00)

Gerard Henderson, (*The Age*, 18 July) was less interested in Morris' ideas than the vigour with which ALP intellectuals like Mark Latham and campaign-masters like John Della Bosca had taken them up:

The over-the-top adulation for Dick Morris underlines the weakness of the NSW Labor Right. With some notable exceptions, in particular Bob Carr, the faction is intellectually light. In the mid-1980s it used to be said that a Liberal Party intellectual was defined as someone who had read two books. In the NSW Right, any financial member who can name either (i) six little-

known US presidents or (ii) four insignificant battlefields of the American Civil War is automatically classified as an accomplished historian

For some the politics was personal. Anne Summers (*Canberra Times*, 15 May) liked the message but did not think much of the messenger. She used half her space to detail Morris' personal failings and his capacity to serve both Democrat and Republicans simultaneously before summarising the *VOTE.com* argument without any critical analysis. But just in case anybody might think that she could approve of a dubious man with a good idea she concluded by suggesting that Morris' idea was self-serving:

Although Morris predicts that most political advisers will not survive ... he is making damn sure that he won't be among the casualties. Given his record as a survivor, he's got to be odds-on.

For out and out distaste Bruce Wolpe (*The Age*, 19 May) took the prize.

It sounds personal, but it's pure business: I hate Dick Morris. It's too late to save Australia from the influence of his ideas ... but it's time to unspin the wunderkind.

Like Summers, Wolpe could not separate the idea from the man and would not countenance that as a mercenary Morris could serve opposing causes, especially when he did so at the same time:

This isn't wag the dog, nor is it cognitive dissonance; this is amorality. Richard Nixon was merely criminal. He would never work for a Democrat president - he'd find it immoral. Of course, a professional can change conviction and inclination and work the other side of the street. But not both sides of the street.

Nor was Wolpe overwhelmed with Morris' vision of cyber-democracy,

It sounds great - instant, universal, political populism. It has surface appeal - what could bring us closer to the original Greek ideals? - but the implications are terrifying. The last thing we need are politicians even more responsive to the cyber-electrodes stuck into them by activists. We need a little leadership and a little less raw populism.

But it was the man rather than the idea that made Wolpe most suspicious:

Give Morris a political situation, and what flows from his head to the machinegun that is his mouth is pure brilliance - in

comprehension, analysis, creativity and prescription. It's mesmerising. But always consider the source.

Of course none of this was personal, Bruce told us so. The distaste for the man at the expense of his ideas was not, however, universal.

David Humphries (*Sydney Morning Herald* 21 August 1999) played it straight in a brief treatment of *The New Prince* which suggested that the idea of citizen initiated referendums which turns up every five years or so may get another go on the basis of Morris' vision of the cyber-poll:

What should democratic theory hold to be paramount: that the "wiser" heads of our elected representatives are better placed to know what is best for us - even if we don't like it and, by extension, would vote against it - or that they are beholden to public opinion and elected solely to give effect to it? ... The American's analysis is nothing new, even here. It helps articulate, for instance, the reluctance of would-be supporters of an Australian republic to vote for it as long as the parliament, not the people, chooses the head of state. The debate over citizen-initiated referendums, which drives public policy in California, was waged in Australia five years ago. It was put down but not, I suspect, killed off. What distinguishes Morris's book from others that have catalogued voter disillusionment and disengagement is that he claims to foresee, with certainty, a way around the modern-day obstacles to Jefferson's ideal of decision-making town meetings.

Sadly, having set out the argument. Humphries did not bother discussing it but he pointed the direction for other commentators, including some outright supporters. And when it comes to populist rhetoric can Paul Sheehan ever be far away? Readers may remember Paul Sheehan for his celebrated analysis of social problems a couple of years ago, *Among the Barbarians*, a book well regarded by public intellectuals such as Alan Jones. Sheehan has long argued that the new class elites deny ordinary people a say in government so it's no surprise that he loved Dick's cyber-democracy:

Anyone worried about the fate of politics in Western society should talk to this guy. He is a good news machine. Morris believes the United States, and Australia, are about to see a political revolution, driven by the Internet, which will deliver democracy back to the grass roots and away from control by the media and

special interests. Big money politics, driven by big spending on TV, will go, like the US TV networks, the way of the dinosaurs. (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 May)

The most articulate praise came from the policy-focused end of the intellectual spectrum in a piece by Mark Latham (*Financial Review* 30 August 1999) on *The New Prince*: "(Morris) makes the rest of us look like flim-flam on the atlas of public life." Morris' tactic of triangulation does not have the same intellectual pedigree or social democratic policy purpose of the "Third Way" which Latham advocates but the tactics to sell them are similar.

Latham agrees with the Morris perception that elections are won in the intelligent centre where independent, cynical voters look for solutions to problems that affect their lives rather than the flummery of image-based politics or the strait-jacket of partisan special interest positions:

With the old, predictable politics of Left and Right in terminal decline, scores of good ideas are available for positive campaigning. On the back of a little courage and conviction, this should be a golden age for reform-minded socialists.

Latham saw the Morris strategy as not only showing the way to electoral salvation with "a cross-over agenda for Labor" with the Internet providing the party with the means to speak to the voters direct: "The key to information-age politics is to cut out the middle-man. That is, to flatten hierarchies and establish a more responsive relationship between public institutions and the public." But it takes ideas for this to work, as Latham acknowledges:

The new prince of politics needs to base his work on a practical campaign of ideas, the small bricks of progress which build a more capable society. He shouldn't be scared of taking on vested interests and defining himself by the extreme rhetoric of his opponents.

And therein lies the difference between conviction politicians like Latham and mercenaries like Dick Morris. Throughout his books Morris presents himself as a brilliant political tactician who uses small poll-tested initiatives to create the illusion of a political program. His manifesto relies on anti-spin and how to use it to win election as an anti-politician.

Dick Morris' philosophy of government could even be a question on his www site. Is winning elections not everything or is it the only thing?



ARTS WARS

With one column Andrew Norton (LI B, BA hons) started a war of words over the value of an Arts degree. Stephen Matchett looked on from the ramparts.

Want to encourage humanities academics to demonstrate the capacity for reasoned, well-expressed arguments they supposedly inculcate in their students? It's easily done, just suggest that the degrees they teach offer a paltry working future to graduates - and then take cover.

This at least is what happened to Andrew Norton (*Australian*, 20 July), a former adviser to Education Minister Kemp, who suggested that Arts graduates are under-employed and under-paid compared to people with vocational qualifications and that what Australia needs is fewer and better BAs. He went on to suggest that their career prospects would be brighter if they combined a humanities degree with another, presumably more useful, qualification.

Norton was careful to state that he was not attacking "a liberal arts education" but his lead, "Question: What did the Arts graduate say to the commerce graduate? Answer: Will you have fries with that?" definitely did not encourage a positive reception.

And the response from the academy was swift, and if not terrible, at least prolix.

Jane Richardson (*Australian*, 20 July) tried to establish a sensible framework for the debate by suggesting that Norton's generalisations should be treated as exactly that and that his suggestion that unmotivated Arts students should best study something else, such as health and engineering, made little sense.

What the influx of unmotivated and possibly unsuitable students would do to employment rates in those areas is not discussed.

It was a gallant attempt to calm the coming tempest but never likely to succeed.

Norton had one predictable supporter, Padraic P. McGuinness (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 July) who agreed that the universities were producing far too many graduates whose mediocre arts degrees did not help them find rewarding work. McGuinness found ample causes for this unhappy situation, the rise of managerialism in the universities, the inability to reward the best academics appropriately, the mixed quality of students and institutions and the levelling impact of uniform funding across the system.

But most of all he went where Norton had not ventured and blamed the academics:

There is so much glaring self-interest, the protection of public sector and academic jobs and so much cant about the "idea of a university", applied ethics acting as a cloak for crude political agendas, and nostalgia for the concept of leisured scholarly dabbling, that no-one takes the rhetoric seriously anymore. It is the academic "progressives" who are primarily responsible for ruining the universities.

As far as friends went that was Norton's lot and the rest of the responses to his piece were at pains to variously point out that his methodology was wrong and that his values were barbaric, often both.

Inevitably the quality of the replies was mixed. Professor Malcolm Waters (*Australian*, 26 July) offered a remarkably frank explanation of why poor employment outcomes for Arts graduates, if such could be proved, were the fault of governments for cutting funding and students for not being smart:

Students entering Arts courses have, on average, lower tertiary entrance scores than students entering some other courses. It would not be surprising if a larger number of less able students graduating from areas in which staff-student ratios have doubled during the past decade should perform less well in employment markets than they did previously.

There were also the predictable arguments, such as that from Professor Stuart Macintye, (*Australian*, 21 July) that the humanities and social sciences were flourishing because students recognised the benefits of critical thinking skills, intellectual flexibility and social engagement acquired in studying Arts and so on and so on:

At the University of Melbourne we style the Bachelor of Arts 'the critical degree'. To be critical is not to stand aloof. The life of the intellect finds fruition in application to all corners of human practice and that must include the workplace. We see Arts as the critical degree in the breadth of its coverage, its capacity for enrichment and its practical application.

What's more, "the Arts Faculty is increasing the opportunities for undergraduates to gain work experience"!

Associate Professor Alan Dench (*Australian*, 26 July) added that large numbers of Arts graduates were also necessary to save us from censors and regulators:

Does Mr. Norton envisage the state as directing people, using market forces, to spend their lives and their intellectual efforts exploring only those things that the state, at some point, deems suitable or ideal.

And as for Norton's insensitive materialism in suggesting that many arts graduates would never earn much money Katharine Thornton, (*Australian*, 26 July) asked the question:

How much is a high salary? More than \$50,000 a year? More than \$70,000? Why is there this assumption that earning a high salary is so important?

Ask anybody with a mortgage in Sydney.

Robert Manne (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 July) provided a superior version of the standard argument. Manne is best known as a public intellectual who has written on public policy for the broadsheets for the years and his experience showed. While his colleagues carped and complained Manne simply rejected Norton's premise outright in a well-written column designed for an audience outside the academy. It was a clever piece that made a virtue of everything Norton decried:

If Norton's article is evidence of anything it is how completely the old myth of the university as an unworldly community of scholars and students committed to the life of the mind, has been overtaken by a new alternative idea, of the university as the engine of national economic growth and the launching pad for the lucrative individual career.

There was no argument that the humanities had any instrumentalist utility and Manne simply avowed their study for their own sake. Most important, he made the argument that very few of his colleagues ever suggest; that is that even if the Arts attract students who, "are ill-equipped, by their schooling, for university study of any kind", this does not diminish the importance of reading the big books.

He made the point by referring to an honours level course he teaches in which students read a raft of 20th Century political thinkers, from George Orwell to Germaine Greer:

The course is demanding. Yet students are flocking to it. The conversation is often passionate and intense. The quality of the written work is high. Many students, I think, have some instinct that something of importance is going on.

Manne believes in the moral authority of ideas, and that their study at university level must survive.

Which is all well and good but it is no definitive answer to questions of what level of public support their study should receive and what sort of employment their study leads to.

It took former academic Fiona Stewart (*Australian*, 25 July) to present the traditional defence of a humanities education in a contemporary context. Hers was a far superior piece to those of most of the academic practitioners, if only because she did not make the academics' mistake of arguing the issue out on Norton's chosen terms, "The debate has remained focused, however, on short-term employment patterns and strict graduate performance comparisons."

She went on to criticise the academics for being out of touch with the world for which they claim they prepare students for:

Academic understanding of the outside world has again revealed itself lacking. Indeed, it is nothing short of astounding - and worrying - that such a debate can take place with no reference to the knowledge economy, and to fundamental shifts in lifestyle and work that are occurring.

Stewart argued that the emerging knowledge economy is a golden age for the liberal Arts graduate. With the "shelf life" of the knowledge in specialist degrees less than two years the skills in demand are the ability to acquire and analyse new information not mastery of an existing body of knowledge and skills that will soon be out of date:

Linked to this commodification of knowledge is a shift in how we think about work ... it is employability and a worker's skills that are important. A good liberal Arts education is the best way to achieve this. To be a worker in the knowledge economy is to possess and apply skills that are likely to be generated through an Arts education (this may or may not be a degree). ... When the skills of a liberal Arts education are coupled with basic literacy in information technology, graduates will be ready to participate fully as - knowledge workers - in the new economy.

It's a position not a million miles away from Andrew Norton's suggestion that humanities students should study joint degrees and one better expressed and better presented than the generality of academic responses to his column. Any bets that somebody in an Arts faculty once taught Stewart the art of essay writing?



GERARD HENDERSON'S MEDIA WATCH

CHRISTOPHER P'S POLL WATCH

There's no believer like a converted believer. As readers of *Media Watch* will be aware, once upon a time *Australian Financial Review* (sometimes called *the Fin.*) columnist Christopher Pearson was a dedicated follower of left-wing fashion. You know the type. When Cambodia fell to the communist Khmer Rouge in 1975, your man CP headed to the Adelaide University Staff Club to drink to the success of Pol Pot and his comrades - see Christopher Pearson's essay in Peter Coleman's edited collection *Double Take: Six Incorrect Essays* (Mandarin 1996). He later came to regret this gesture. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s and into the early 1990s, CP voted Labor. Right up to, and including, 1993 when CP gave a big tick to Paul Keating and the ALP. CP's political conversion took place soon after that. Around the time that political fashion Down Under moved away from the left and the social democratic ALP and towards political conservatism and the Liberal-National Party Coalition.

As an *AFR* columnist, CP writes on a number of issues. But he has the habit of injecting on-going political assessments into his pieces - irrespective of subject matter. Usually to the effect that (i) John Howard and the Coalition is going well in the electorate and/or the polls (ii) Kim Beazley and the ALP is going badly in the electorate and/or the polls. Along, on occasions, with some autobiographical data.

• 1 May 2000

In bygone days, no doubt, CP would have celebrated May Day with many a chorus of *The Red Flag*. Along with some fellow leftists at, say, the Adelaide University Club. Let's all join in - for old time's sake:

**Then raise the scarlet standard high
Beneath its folds we'll live and die
Though cowards flinch and traitors sneer
We'll keep the red flag flying here**

However, on May Day 2000 the former self-declared conscientious objector and now born again conservative told *AFR* readers that, on the previous 25 April, he went "for the first time" to an Anzac Day "dawn service". In fact, apparently to make up for a life time of Anzac Day no-shows, he "went to three in a row". Now, that's some dawning. In an autobiographical flash-back, CP reflected that "as a baby boomer who cut his teeth on Alan Seymour's *The One Day of the Year* and [Vietnam] Moratorium

marches" he had "never expected to be much moved by such occasions". Anyrate, CP's inaugural Anzac dawn service was a memorable affair. Reminding the columnist of the "resurgence of civic sentiment among the young and the waning influence of boomer values..." which CP himself used to endorse. Before his conversion, that is.

All this led CP to reflect on John Howard's important speech at Anzac Cove on 25 April 2000. After praising the Prime Minister's written oratory, CP focused on the Newspoll recording of the standing of the political parties. Commenting: "It'll be interesting to see the impact of the Gallipoli speech".

Alas, there wasn't any. The Newspoll taken on the weekend of 29-30 April 2000 (and published in *The Australian* on 2 May 2000) indicated that primary support for the Coalition had dropped from 44 per cent to 40 per cent while that of the ALP had risen from 43 per cent to 44 per cent. Of itself, this meant little. Followers of opinion polls know that they measure the (recent) past - not the present. Moreover, they are primarily valuable for indicating medium to long term trends. The statistical error factor, prevalent in all polls, makes comparisons between one poll and another of little use. Except to CP - who clearly gets excited by each and every poll. Especially when they can be interpreted as success for the Coalition and disappointment for Labor.

• 8 May 2000

This time CP reflects on the needs of part-time artists under the New Taxation System. But not for long. The final quarter of his column is devoted to, yes, another analysis of the polls. He bags journalists Michelle Grattan and Andrew Bolt for suggesting that Kim Beazley has a chance of winning the next Federal election. CP interprets the Newspoll (published in *The Australian* on 2 May 2000) which has the Coalition at 40 per cent and Labor at 44 per cent in the following manner:

In mid-April the Coalition was one point ahead of Labor in Newspoll. By the end of the month Labor had gained an extra point. With the GST and interest rate rises to play with, the ALP should be streets ahead at this point in the electoral cycle if it is to have much hope of victory in 18 months' time.

There was no reference to the Prime Minister's Anzac Cove speech. And no reassessment of CP's very own

IRAN

- WHAT CHANCE REFORM with PROF DAVID MENASHRI

Professor David Menashri is head of the Department of Middle Eastern and African History at Tel Aviv University. He is also Principal Research Associate at the Moshe Dayan Centre for Middle Eastern and African Studies. His extensive publications and books include *Iran after Khomeini: Revolutionary Ideology versus National Interests* (1999) and the forthcoming *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran: Religion, Society and Power*.

**Don't miss this chance
to up date on the situation
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more of the same?**

DATE : Wednesday 25 October 2000
TIME : 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE : 41 Phillip Street, Sydney
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suggestion that this would have a favourable impact on the Coalition's showing in the polls.

• 22 May 2000

Another poll. Another column. CP refers to the "shambolic dimensions" of Kim Beazley's leadership. The Newspoll (published in *The Australian* on 18 May 2000) revealed that, on primary votes, the Coalition was leading Labor by 45 per cent to 43 per cent. CP interprets this as a "five point surge" to the Coalition – and attributes this to "Howard's oratory at Gallipoli, his successful trip and to Peter Costello's carefully crafted fifth Budget".

As it turned out, the following Newspoll (published in *The Australian* on 30 May 2000) revealed that Labor had moved ahead of the Coalition again – by 43 per cent to 40 per cent. CP makes no mention of this in his *AFR* column.

• 5 July 2000

The Fin. headlines CP's most recent column: "What a 'serious' Labor leader should do." There follows CP's advice on what line Kim Beazley should take on a range of issues from industrial relations to reconciliation. CP declares that the Labor leader is "probably too soft to lead his party". But he also reflects that "it's just a pity that the Federal Government wasn't more strategic in thinking about how to maximise its moral and rhetorical advantage". If only John Howard and company would listen more closely to CP.

• 17 July 2000

CP returns to the polls – again. This time with a prophecy about the forthcoming Newspoll:

I wouldn't be surprised if this Tuesday's Newspoll captures momentum towards the Government, reflecting not only the ALP's disarray but also dramatic improvements in consumer confidence, broader acceptance of the GST, the containment of inflation and further reduction to unemployment.

CP signed off with a suggestion that Kim Beazley might be replaced as Labor leader – by New South Wales premier Bob Carr. This despite Bob Carr's assurance that he is not interested in entering Federal politics. As it turned out the Newspoll in question (published in *The Australian* on 18 July 2000) revealed both the Coalition and Labor on 44 per cent. So much for CP's prediction.

• 7 August 2000

Once again, CP predicts problems for Kim Beazley. At issue is the ALP's handling of the Coalition's attempt to prevent single women and lesbians from participating in the IVF program. CP asks: "...Where were his [Kim Beazley's] minders when he needed them? Who was advising him?" For, according to CP, the Labor leader "had badly misread the politics of IVF and the attitudes of blue-collar voters".

• 4 August 2000

CP reminds readers (if such a reminder were necessary) that:

Last week I predicted problems for Kim Beazley. It's a sure sign of leadership difficulties when second or third-order issues [e.g. IVF] become a focus for division and, rather than being quickly neutralised, turn into crash through or crash tests of the leader's authority.

CP looks into his tea-leaves and sees the IVF issue as one of the "potential triggers for a double dissolution". He opines that such "an election on family values could conceivably deliver him [John Howard] not just marginal seats...but de facto control of the Senate".

As it turned out, the Newspan published in *The Australian* on 15 August 2000 had the Coalition at 44 per cent compared with Labor's 42 per cent. Not quite double dissolution material. Nevertheless, for a while, it seemed CP's prophecies might be predicting the (Newspan) future. Really. But only for a while.

• 21 August 2000

CP returns to an all-time familiar theme:

The authoritative Newspan last week had the Coalition two points ahead of Labor. Beazley's advisers had been hoping the enforced tranquillity of the [ALP] National Conference might have enhanced his prospects. All it did was boost his rating as preferred PM, a measure in which Howard still leads by five points. Beazley is consolidating himself in the role of a likeable but unelectable leader.

There followed an update on the likely consequences of the IVF debate. According to CP "in a general election Howard's stance will cost the Coalition some votes but, unlike Beazley's, no seats". It's as certain as that.

The last Newspan for August (published in *The Australian* on 24 August 2000) put the Coalition and Labor at 44 per cent each. John Howard was leading Kim Beazley by 42 to 36 in the "who would make the better prime minister?" category. The Prime Minister's satisfaction rating was 42 per cent compared with a dissatisfaction rating of 48 per cent. The comparable figures for Kim Beazley were 41 per cent and 46 per cent.

What to make of all this? Only that the polls are fairly close, especially in view of the margin for statistical error. Moreover, on any objective analysis, both John Howard and Kim Beazley have relatively high approval, and relatively low disapproval, ratings. In view of this, there is little reason to make predictions about which party will win the next Federal election. Still less to allege that either political leader is "unelectable" – particularly on the basis of such fine

UNCERTAIN JUSTICE WITH THE SOLICITOR GENERAL

Michael Sexton began his legal career as an academic and writer and commenced work as a barrister in the mid 1980s taking silk in 1998. He is now the Solicitor General for NSW and is about to release his seventh book – *Uncertain Justice – Inside Australia's Legal System* (Lansdowne).

The cost of litigation, the backlog of cases before the courts, the unpredictability of judgments – all suggest that justice is usually the preserve of people with infinite time and patience and very deep pockets. Is this true? Can it be changed? What does our legal system tell us about ourselves. Hear Michael Sexton suggest some answers.

SPEAKER : MICHAEL SEXTON
(Solicitor General for NSW)

TOPIC : *Uncertain Justice: Inside Australia's Legal System*

DATE : Tuesday 31 October 2000

TIME : 5.30 for 6.00pm

VENUE : 41 Phillip Street, Sydney
Light refreshments

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margins. John Howard should start favourite to win the next election, likely to be held in late 2001. However there is nothing in Newpoll results which justify CP's barracking. As at the end of August 2000, the Coalition was not consistently in front. Nor, on the available evidence, was Kim Beazley unelectable.

Media Watch's advice to Christopher Pearson is to junk the prophecy and stick to the facts. But such a prescription is difficult for a convert. Especially one who so recently wore his (leftish) heart on his sleeve. Clearly, *The Red Flag* is passé. But let's sing on anyway:

**Then read about our CP's views
In the Fin – and let us muse
What fun a prophet saw the light
Around the time he joined the right.**

MAXINE McKEW'S DIGESTION

While on the topic of prophets and converts – or converts and prophets – consider the case of *Age/Sydney Morning Herald* columnist Robert Manne. Some time in May, Associate Professor Manne had "Lunch with Maxine McKew" – as per *The Bulletin* series. Described as an "academic author/broadcaster", RM was soon into prophecy. Around the time entrée was served, it seems. As he told Ms McKew:

...I think disaffection with the GST will be quite enough for there to be a change of government. And I voted for John Howard in 1996. Something I deeply regret.

On reflection, this is a familiar Manne position. Once a free market advocate, he came to regret that. Once a monarchist, he came to regret that. Once a Gough Whitlam fan, he came to regret that. Once an opponent of multiculturalism, he came to regret that. Once a critic of Paul Keating, he came to regret that. Once a monarchist, he came to regret that. Once a John Howard supporter, he came to regret that. And so on (re which see *The Sydney Institute Quarterly*, December 1999).

After her lunch, Ms McKew reported that: "Unlike a good section of his peer group at the University of Melbourne in the 1960s, Manne was a dedicated anti-communist". Really? Can this be the same Robert Manne who, as a student at Melbourne University in the late 1960s/early 1970s joined the extreme left Labour Club and who marched in the May 1970 Vietnam Moratorium. Well, er, yes.

In the late 1960s Robert Manne's fellow Labour Club members included some who had taken around the hat to raise funds for the communist Viet Cong. At the time, Viet Cong soldiers were engaging Australian soldiers in the field. In 1970 Robert Manne marched in the Vietnam Moratorium – the aim of which was the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all Allied forces from Vietnam. Fellow marchers included pro-communist leftists chanting:

"Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh" and calling for a communist victory in Vietnam. Strange associates for a self-proclaimed student "dedicated anti-communist".

Back to "Lunch with Maxine McKew". Some pudding; or will coffee do?

BOB ELLIS DRIBBLES ON

Meanwhile the word from Melbourne is that Bob Ellis's appalling rhyming doggerel is continuing apace in *The Sunday Age* each month. It's almost impossible to select the worst lines. If only because one month's junk is no better than the previous, or subsequent, offering. Here is an extract from Bob Ellis's pathetic/hyperbolic musings on "June 2000" (published in *The Sunday Age* on 9 July 2000).

**George Bush fried one more innocent
black man,
A habit he's picked up from years in Texas.
Whose average voter shoots coons when
he can
Then pistol-whips his wife, eats T-bone
and relaxes.**

Then here is another pathetic/hyperbolic stanza from "September 2000" (published in *The Sunday Age* on 8 October 2000) – this one focusing on the 2000 Olympics:

**The whole world saw and liked us, and
acclaimed us,
However many times John Howard
shamed us
By clapping with a grin the self-same aliens
That he and Ruddock won't let be
Australians:
Iraqis, Afghans, Kosovars, shattered
Timorese.
Our warm Olympic welcome never goes
as far as these.
And though he smirked and honked and
long applauded,
He looked each passing day more dreary,
scared and sordid
(Or so it seems to me, I might be wrong
To fail to praise this drongo in my song,
Which is a song of glad surprise and
pleasure
At how our nation, in the end, became
our national treasure).**

All of which means that, amidst the hyperbole, Bob Ellis does not like George W Bush or John Howard all that much. Big deal. Moreover, it seems our Bob does not like himself all that much. Or, rather, his (blokey) past. On 22 July 2000 he reviewed Joyce Carol Oates's novel *Blondie* for the *Courier Mail*. Or did he? On reflection, it seems that Bob Ellis reviewed his own life – seeing parallels between the way men treated Marilyn Monroe (1926-1962) and the way he (Ellis) treated women. Looking back in

(sort of) anger, Bob Ellis saw parallels in Marilyn Monroe's life:

The accumulation of this gender tyranny and butchery made me ashamed, at 58, to be a man, especially a man of my time. We did evil things to women back then, in that golden age of easy sex: the lies that got them into bed, the lies that got them aborted, the breezy betrayals that got them, at 30, out of our way and the further lies that reeled their replacements....

But, wait, there was more:

It is clear from this book and from what I know of my life and the lives of others (one in particular who made headlines out of me) that men and women are forever resembling war, a war for vital advantage with foetal casualties, a war of attrition, betrayals, pyrrhic victories, tactical retreats, butcheries, moppings up. We do not like each other very much, except for the time when one of us surrenders, gives up the thing we most hold dear to serve the mate that demands it, and is happy for a time...

And more still:

I could be wrong about this, and in denial of the wife I have, the good companion of 34 years of children, quarrel, forgiveness. But it seems to be that Oates has dredged up from hidden depths of hatred, betrayal, exploitation, abject submission, casual butchery, self-loathing and the worst thing, self-denial and self-betrayal in a woman's condition and brought them into the light. And we should read with care this marvellous accusing book and take note of the lives we lead so briefly on earth, and live better. And be kinder to one another. A Sorry Day for Women might be in order. I could write the speech.

No doubt Bob Ellis would. And, no doubt, in rhyming doggerel. A la his (poetic) efforts in *The Sunday Age*. Perhaps a bit like this:

58 Times SORRY – A Poem

In times gone by I had plenty of fun, though.
Treating sheilas just like the late Miss Monroe.

In old age now, as a moralising bore,
It's time to renew the accumulated score.
Of gender tyranny, butchery, deceit,
From all that lying beneath another's sheet
And declare it all in the Saturday Courier Mail
Depicting, in some detail, my self-loathing tale.

Those were the (darkened) days of easy sex
At 58, let's settle for a lie-down plus a Bex.

I'm so SORRY now, I'll even take rejection
At least it's easier than striving for erection.

LEUNIG AND MR TEAPOT – ONE PERSONA

Let's hear now from another convert. Namely *Age/Sydney Morning Herald* cartoonist and all round philosopher Michael Leunig. Once something of a leftist libertarian who made his mark in the leftist journal *Nation Review* of recent memory, in his mature years Mr Leunig has become something of a socially conservative moraliser. With a monarchist bent. As the following snap shot illustrates:

• **21 August 1999**

The Age reports that Michael Leunig is now a monarchist. Here is the creator of Vasco Pyjama, Mr Curly, Goatperson, Mr Tea Pot Man et al at his wordy best:

I'm finding that I have quite unexpected feelings about this. I never saw the monarchy as a political structure, but as a cultural structure, and I have a poetical affection for what it was. I have Irish, German, even English in me. I never used to stand up when the anthem was played at the pictures...but there's a favourable feeling I had when I was a child – and I saw the Queen as a child – and it was a happy time. We might be losing the dreaming of this country, a part of it anyway. In every country town you'll see a little picture of her, and we'd suffer to lose this. There'd be an outpouring of Queen-grief, if you like.

Mr Leunig opined that the preservation of the constitutional monarchy was both "irrational" and "archaic". But he declared his suspicions of those who believe that "we can reinvent ourselves". He equated this view with "cultural rationalism" - a term he equated with "economic rationalism". He declared that he had no affection for either phenomenon. Easy, eh? So let's keep Elizabeth II as Queen of Australia and junk economic reform.

• **29 October 1999**

The Sydney Morning Herald's Opinion Page carries a lengthy piece written by Leunig on Australian identity and all that:

The loss of personal and cultural identity in Australia in our recent history has been so comprehensive that we are scarcely able to recognise it, let alone describe it honestly to ourselves in depth and detail. Nor can we feel much grief. We have instead a sense that something strange is happening, something we don't understand.

Leunig then commenced naming the losses. Including the loss of "meaning", "employment",

AUSTRALIA and TURKEY - Past and Present

Selcuk Kolay runs and owns a museum in Turkey. An avid explorer of history, it was he who found evidence of a submarine in the Sea of Marmara believed to be Australia's lost WWI submarine - the AE2. Sent to take part in the Gallipoli assault in 1915, the AE2 was captured by the Turks. With the help of the Australian Government, and diver and photographer Mark Spencer was able to identify the sub as the AE2. Two years on, Selcuk Kolay returns to Australia to speak about progress in raising the AE2 and the developing cooperation between old enemies - Australia and Turkey and the Gallipoli experience that has cemented the ties.

DATE : Tuesday 9 November 2000
TIME : 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE : Clayton Utz Seminar Room, Level 34, 1 O'Connell Street, Sydney

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"public assets", "nature in urban life", "happiness and security with the breakdown of family and community", "respect for the innocence of children", "peace and quiet and simplicity in the pace of modern life". No doubt, even loss itself. Are you still following? Anyrate, there was more. Including the "loss of folk ways", the "loss of decency and fellowship in the civic situation" and the "loss of beautiful idiosyncrasies and delightful eccentricities". And so on. There were no names, no pack drill. Just a list of (alleged) losses unaccompanied by any factual evidence of any kind. In short, pure Leunig. In short, pure feeling.

And there was a "Long to reign over us" message as well. According to ML, Australians are told "we can unload some of our anger about the mess we've got ourselves into onto the Queen...". Just who told us this? Alas, Leunig didn't say.

• **23 May 2000**

The Age runs a Leunig cartoon with an all-too-familiar message. Headed "Infantile Statistic Poem" the words were as follows:

**Working university - educated women
 With no religious belief
 Are statistically less likely to have babies
 To some babies that might be a relief.**

Maybe. However one is not quite sure how the Leunig off-spring fit into this picture. If at all. These days, as a moral conservative, Michael Leunig gets a run in the Christian press. In addition there is a Leunig fan site on the web. The latter refers to "Leunig, his wife Helga and their four children..." According to the *Sydney Catholic Weekly* (23 April 2000), "Michael Leunig and his second wife Helga, a photographer, live with their two young children on a property in...north-eastern Victoria."

It is not clear whether Helga Leunig is a university educated woman or whether or not she professes religious belief. Nor is it evident whether there was any issue from Michael Leunig's first marriage - and, if so, whether any recourse was had to institutionalised child care. Leunig's entry in *Who's Who In Australia* makes no reference to either union or to any children. Yet there is space for a reference on Honorary D.Litt from La Trobe University. Well done.

• **29 April 2000**

Retired sex therapist Bettina Arndt writes a sympathetic article on Michael Leunig in *The Age*. She recalls ML's controversial 1995 cartoon headed "Thoughts of a Baby Lying in a Child Care Centre". This contained such self-mocking thought of a baby-in-child-care reflecting, interalia: "Call her cruel, ignorant, selfish bitch if you like, but I will defend her; she is my mother and I think the world of her." This commenced Leunig's campaign - at the age of 50 - against infants being placed in child care.

• 2 May 2000

Michael Leunig appears on ABC Radio's *The World Today* program – talking about childcare. In an interview with Damien Carrick, ML:

- maintains that "individual sensitivities of the child" damaged by institutionalised child care "might not emerge until that person is 40 years of age"
- claims that it is "immensely developmentally important for the mother" that "mothering" be undertaken by a mother, as distinct from a childcare worker. Or, apparently, a father
- suggests that "it's becoming a natural expectation" that: "You have a child; you pop it into a crèche and you get on with the job. It's becoming a cultural norm"
- alleges that the "dreadful fact" is that institutionalised childcare results from "an economic decision"
- regrets that "we cannot pause from our economic plan of life" due to our urge "to get the house owned in five years and it may be a holiday house"
- and regrets that in "the world in which we live", economics has become the "overriding profound human need"

Unfortunately, Leunig does not reflect the fact that well-paid professional male cartoonists may be able to get by more readily than lowly paid female employees.

• 2 July 2000

Michael Leunig appears on Rachel Kohn's ABC Radio National program *The Spirit of Things*. In a DEEP AND MEANINGFUL interview, Leunig reflects on the fact that, as a child, he was "hurt" and his "feelings were so often insulted". That out of the way, he identifies with one of his creations by declaring: "Goatperson is something that I guess I always was". And he opines "I think there is a great invisible, healthy world going on out there of people who are not writing books...or reading the newspaper terribly much". Well, perhaps. Yet Leunig overlooks the fact that those "out there" who are reading newspapers are the very people who make possible Leunig's comfortable remuneration. Even a rural based cartoonist cannot live by Goatpersons and Teapots alone.

In the midst of the Kohn-Leunig-heart-to-heart she asked the "deeper self" question. And he gave the "deeper self" reply:

Rachel Kohn: Michael, you've had several years exploring your deeper self in psychotherapy. Where else have you searched?

Michael Leunig: I hear myself repeating this thing of going back to childhood. And it seems relevant but psychotherapy that I was involved in, because there are many psychotherapies and they are so different and many that the word scarcely has meaning, that there was an inquiry and a concern that I recognise existed

when I was first consciousness. And psychotherapy seemed to be a natural, delightful kind of progression, a part of the continuity of growing you see. So I guess I always had a - would you call this a religious impulse or a wondrous attitude to life?, I don't know - the capacity to feel deeply or to think about what is invisible.

No further questions, your Honour. *Media Watch* will sponsor a dinner for two – or three, if Mr Curly turns up – if anyone can tell us just what Leunig is on about.

AN IRRIGATOR REFLECTS

These days Leunig is not the only near baby-boomer who is finding himself/herself closer to God than they ever expected. Circa 2000 Leunig partakes of the occasional Anglican communion. And writer Helen Garner has been known to deliver the occasional sermon at Evensong (or some such time). It was fitting, then, that Ms Garner wrote the foreword to Michael Leunig's *Introspective* (New Holland, 1998).

Meanwhile Helen Garner has been busy with her own self-reflection. Most notably with her "Love thine enema" piece in the *Good Weekend* (20 May 2000) following her visit to the Koh Samui spa resort in Thailand. Without going into (disturbing) details, it's all about a kind of colonic irrigation. Or, as Ms Garner puts it, the "two daily enemas or 'colemas' which are an essential part of the [Koh Samui] cleanse and fast regime". Decades ago, Catholics headed to isolated parts to fast and reflect in silence about God and all that. Nowadays Leunig fans and the like head off to isolated parts to fast and reflect in silence about their bowel movements. It's called progress.

Let's skip Helen Garner's accounts of Days 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8. Let's just focus on Day 6 as Ms Garner reflects on life's (enema inspired) overflows. So to speak.

...I must admit that I like the colemas. Quite a lot, actually...I love just lying there in the cool, staring up at the crisscross weave of the ceiling and listening to sounds drifting in from the world... This dreamy pleasure can only be infantile – the body's memory of lying swaddled in the cot, long, long before toilet training, and being languorously aware of one's bowels. Sensing their fullness without guilt or anxiety, and being allowed to let go.

Still, to some, Thailand seems a long way to go for bowel awareness. Especially since – on Day 7 – such is our Helen's tranquillity that she expresses a secret desire to fast for "ever". In which case there would be no point in colonic irrigation. No point at all.

