

ANIMALS

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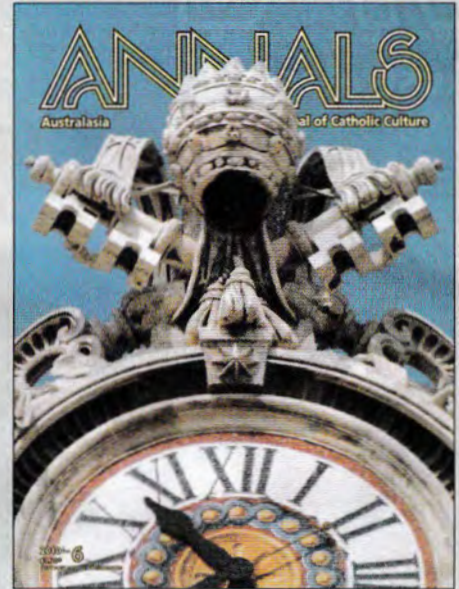
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Front Cover: Facing St Peter's Basilica one will notice two gigantic clocks, one on the left and the other on the right hand side of the façade. Originally there were two bell towers planned for where these clocks stand today. The towers were to be designed and built by the great artist-architect Gianlorenzo Bernini. Work on the twin towers was begun in 1638, but the project had to be abandoned because it was discovered that the ground was not sufficiently stable to bear the weight. The clocks were built from 1786-1790 by Giuseppe Valadier, who was 24 years of age when he began the work. The one on the left has been electrically operated since 1931, and shows Italian time. Its oldest bell dates from 1288. The clock on the right, known as the *Ultramontano* clock, shows European mean time.

Cover Photo: Paul Stenhouse

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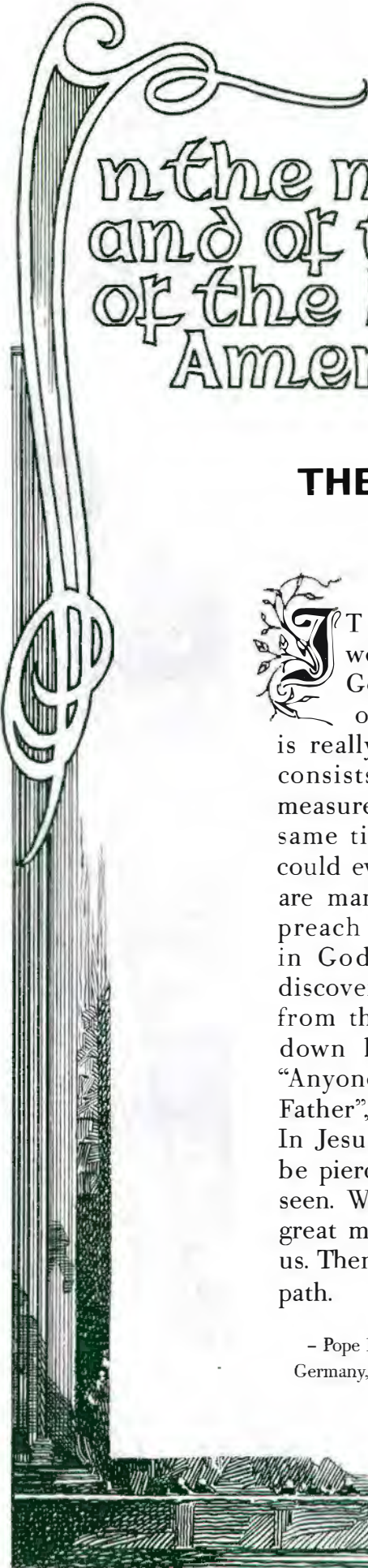
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Do not have Jesus Christ on your lips, and the world in your heart.

- St Ignatius of Antioch, Martyred in 107 AD, in the Colosseum in Rome.



n the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and
of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

THE TRUE FACE OF GOD



IT IS NOT ideologies that save the world, but only a return to the living God, our Creator, the guarantor of our freedom, the guarantor of what is really good and true. True revolution consists in turning to God who is the measure of what is right and who at the same time is everlasting love. And what could ever save us apart from love? ...There are many who speak of God; some even preach hatred and perpetrate violence in God's Name. So it is important to discover the true face of God. The Magi from the East found it when they knelt down before the Child of Bethlehem. "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father", said Jesus to Philip (Jn 14: 9). In Jesus Christ, who allowed his heart to be pierced for us, the true face of God is seen. We will follow him together with the great multitude of those who went before us. Then we will be travelling along the right path.

- Pope Benedict XVI, 20th World Day of Youth, Cologne
Germany, 2005. Homily for the Vigil - Copyright © Libreria
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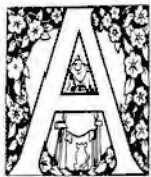
AMEN – SO LET IT BE

CHRISt the world's Redeemer,
The lover of the pure,
The Fount of heavenly wisdom,
Our trust and hope secure;
The Armour of His soldiers,
The Lord of earth and sky;
Our Health while we are living,
Our Life when we shall die.

CHRISt HATH our host surrounded
With clouds of martyrs bright,
Who wave their palms in triumph,
And fire us for the fight.
Christ the red cross ascended,
To save a world undone,
And, suffering for the sinful,
Our full redemption won.

ALL CLORY to the Father,
The unbegotten One;
All honor be to Jesus,
His sole begotten Son;
And to the Holy Spirit—
The perfect Trinity.
Let all the worlds give answer,
“Amen—so let it be.”

— *Christus Redemptor Omnium*, words by St Columba [521-597 AD],
translation by Duncan MacGregor [1854-1923]. From the *Roman
Breviary* for Lauds for Sunday of Week Three of the Psalter.



very witty British columnist by the name of Julie

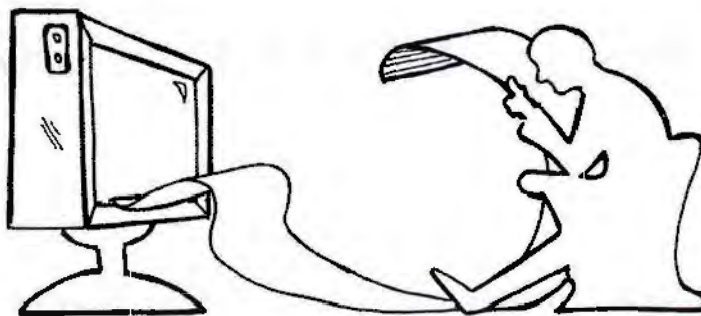
Burchill once remarked on the very English insult 'too clever by half'. We all know what it means and yet it seems to defy any precise explanation. We might say that its meaning is apparent in its application. It has the sense that one might be a little bit clever but, in knowing this, one thinks oneself very clever indeed.

One exceeds one's limit by a half, as it were.

By overstepping the limits of one's cleverness one ends up promoting things that one might never have intended. Much of media satire is of this nature in that it affects left-wing sympathies but ends up supporting right-wing programs.

It is often said that the Catholic Church is obscenely rich, what with all its treasures and cathedrals, and that it should sell off its assets and give the money to the poor. Leaving aside the obvious point that the Church is one of the biggest charity providers, there is something insidious about this argument. The treasures of the Vatican, like those belonging to a country's galleries and museums, are open to all to enjoy, both poor and rich. All can enter into a cathedral, no matter what religion. Even an atheist can enter and enjoy the sights and sounds, the smells and bells. But sell the treasures off and it's not too difficult to see who would end up owning them; the mega-rich and powerful. The poor would have to wait upon the good graces and whims of the rich if they wanted to partake in the beauties that once belonged to everyone.

In short, the too-clever-by-half are arguing for privatisation. Their clever cynicism is merely a prelude to plutocracy. But then again, cynicism has always been the handmaid to pragmatism and, thereby, to worldly power. Little wonder, then, that it favours so-called economic rationalism. At root, privatisation is the logic of the divine right of riches to own anything and everything, especially if it belongs to a public that is not making 'full' use of its assets. The media commentators are commissioned and the language of morality is brought into play, thus we hear of rich prelates and fat monks who live the life of luxury and indulge in all manner of sexual depravity. So it is that The New York Times prints distortions concerning the Pope, every fanciful claim is printed (then quietly dropped when taken to task), and the way is paved that little bit more so that some



TOO CLEVER BY HALF

By ROBERT TILLEY

can get their hands on the treasures of the Church.

Caricatures and distortions have always been used in order to justify moral outrage and the seizing of another's assets. Indeed, it informed the first modern example of privatisation proper; the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII. Privatisation began by selling off the people's religion to the richest and most politically powerful elite, and to this day it strives to finish what it began.

What was Christ's and thus belonged to His flock and, by reason of that, to all humanity, became the beautiful belongings of the plutocrats. The same thing happened with common land, with the fens and, later still, with the Scottish Highlands; somehow what once was public became private. At every stage the too-clever-by-half eased the way for this robbery by cynical wit and affected moral outrage. The people who used this land, they said, were not productive, were indolent, superstitious even, while the rich would make good use of it. In the long run it would help the poor. But it never does.

Thus, all that would happen if the Vatican sold off its treasures is that the money made would disappear overnight into the maw of international charity administration; conferences in exotic locations discussing how to help the poor would proliferate, the offices of the charities concerned would get larger and glossier, and in the end very few of the poor would actually benefit. Only now, in the boardrooms of multinational corporations, there would hang the cream of the world's great art. Cathedrals would become luxury apartments and smaller churches would become expensive restaurants. Of course our media satirists would tut-tut, but as it they who enjoy the patronage of the rich and well-placed then the cathedrals would be open to them, and they could regularly dine in the churches they helped close. Such is the fullness proper of their cleverness; they can have their rectitude and eat it too!

But what of the remaining half of their cleverness?

Well, with that they can, with Henry VIII, in whatever ring of torment he might be, have long discussions about the benefits of privatising hell.

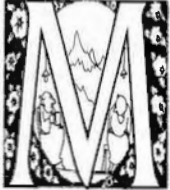


ROBERT TILLEY has a PhD from the University of Sydney. He lectures in Adult Education on Philosophy, Theology and History of Ideas. He also lectures in Greek and Biblical Studies at The Catholic Institute of Sydney [CIS] and in literature and theology at Aquinas Academy.

An example to the Polish nation and the Catholic world

BLESSED JERZY POPIELUSZKO

By Josef Zycinski



MY DEAR FRIEND, you asked me about Father Jerzy Popieluszko. I am convinced that the date of his murder, October 19, 1984, will be remembered as the

death date of another Polish saint. His priestly life was exemplary. In life Father Popieluszko bore witness to those principles he preached in homilies to a relatively small group of parishioners and workers; in death he provides an example to an entire nation.

'Freedom' was a recurrent theme in his teaching, not the freedom you may think, but a Christian notion of freedom as independence of spirit provided by the example of Christ himself who suffered and died and referred all to his Father in heaven. Father Popieluszko was not oblivious of the bondage of his people but he neither interpreted his mission as political nor introduced the category of 'class struggle' to explain painful social phenomena occurring in Poland of the 1980. Participants at the Masses celebrated by him in the Church of St. Stanislaus report that in his teaching the doctrine of forgiveness and the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount dominated those elements which could naturally be expected by a people oppressed by violence and brute force.

In his well-known Solidarity sermons Father Popieluszko wanted primarily to disclose the ultimate 'ontic solidarity' - the solidarity between human ideals and dreams, on the one side, and divine grace generating the spirit of courage, on the other. Preaching the Gospel of benediction and peace for those who cried and were persecuted in the context of the martial law situations, he did not confine himself to repeating vague commonplaces, but gave evidence of a profound unity with those who suffered. When interpreting Christ's words: 'Blessed are the

persecuted . . . he understood the new forms of the persecution inflicted on the innocent and could relate Christ's teaching to their concrete situation.

In his sermons one can find the specific accents in which humanitarian solidarity in suffering leads finally to theological openness and to transcendence. An attitude of intellectual independence and a strength of spirit in the experience of darkness were the principal results of his synthesis. His advice to maintain a peaceful attitude toward all manifestations of ideological hatred appears as a consequence, or realization, of the style taught by Christ himself in the darkness of Golgotha.

I was with Father Popieluszko in July 1984 during his last summer vacation. Walking together among firs of Krynica Forest we discussed his trial which had just opened, and the prospect of reasonable social agreement in the future. He described to me his vision of his role and of the tasks which confronted him in the months ahead. Dominant in this vision was the theological evaluation of all actions, independent of purely pragmatic factors. His mind-set can be explained neither in categories of pragmatic goals nor in terms of psychological

conditionings. 'I treat my life and my present existence,' he told me then, 'as an undeserved gift of God. In 1968, after being drafted from the seminary to the army, I was told by a physician that my future life and my priestly ordination are threatened because of a complex of serious diseases. In spite of this pessimistic forecast I am still alive and my life has been a divine gift not only for me but also for all those who suffer. For them I am to be an instrument of grace.'

In his instrumentality of grace a special period began in August 1980. During the strike in the Warszawa steel factory, the workers asked Primate Wyszynski to delegate a priest who would say the Mass for the participants in the strike. The Primate asked Father Popieluszko to go to the factory as his delegate. He went and participated in what became a solidarity of prayers during the strained days before the rise of the new independent trade union. Praying, listening to confessions, and preaching, he tried to strengthen the workers' belief in their dignity.

When the critical period was over and the sunny days arrived after the official approval of Solidarity, he remained in close contact with the workers, moderating emotions and suggesting Christian solutions to their problems. These contacts became stronger in December 1981 after the introduction of martial law. Some workers of the factory were arrested, but many others went into hiding.

In this new situation his union with them took on a new form, displayed by the care he extended to their families. Material and spiritual help was an elementary sign of solidarity in those days of nationwide darkness. In those moments of crucified hopes Father Popieluszko tried to teach, without emotional clichés, the meaning of the wisdom of the Cross and the manner

Following Jesus

Unless we are ready and willing to die in conformity with his passion, his life is not in us.

- St Ignatius, bishop of Antioch [35-107 AD], writing to the Christians at Magnesia-on-the-Meander, on his way to be put to death in the Flavian Amphitheatre of Rome in 107.

Beg God's Mercy

BY GOD'S OWN almighty will, He has confirmed His desire that repentance should be open to every one of His beloved. Let us bow, then, to that sovereign and glorious will. Let us entreat His mercy and goodness, casting ourselves upon His compassion and wasting no more energy in quarrels and a rivalry which only ends in death.

- Pope St Clement I, Letter to the Corinthians. From *The Roman Breviary*,
Second Reading at Matins for Ash Wednesday.

Christians should adopt in facing new forms of crucifixion.

'One of the ways of confirming my solidarity with the workers in prison,' he told me, recalling the events of 1982, 'was my participation, together with their friends and relatives, in their trials. I could not bear watching young workers being brought handcuffed into court while regular criminals were treated in a much more liberal manner. This experience of injustice and lack of strength gathered us around the altar during the special monthly Masses for the fatherland.'

We have some of the letters sent to him by participants at those Masses. In emotional terms they describe their spiritual evolution from despair to hope. A special collection of these letters contains impressions of former non-believers who after taking part in these Masses discovered new aspects they may have left behind in their youth. The conversion of some and the return to the sacraments of others was a special source of joy for Father Popieluszko. Each new baptism, each return to the community of the Eucharist, provided a practical confirmation of the appropriateness of his actions.

The synthesis of theological principles and humanitarian sensitivity transformed his liturgy into a symbol of independence of spirit. He described conditions of this independence in his sermon of May 27, 1984: 'To live in truth means to live according to our conscience. It is truth that unifies the people and keeps them together. The greatness of truth terrifies the unjust and discloses their lies. Truth is immortal, while falsehood perishes quickly...'

His witness to truth, though broken by his brutal assassination, has imperishable, immortal aspects.

Popieluszko's burial was a testimony of solidarity stronger than death. 'Solidarity does live,' said Lech Walesa at his coffin, 'since you offered your life for her. We will never forget your death. We promise.' These last words, repeated again and again by the crowd taking part in the funeral, transformed the tragedy of the new murder of Cain into vows of national faithfulness. Bouquets of flowers passed from hand to hand above the heads of the people and those bouquets directed toward the coffin appeared as symbolic signs of a subtle beauty replacing the spectre of tragedy and violence.

One of the witnesses at his funeral, after describing it in an underground periodical, concluded his impressions: 'I have been watching the symbolic procession going around the church: in front of the coffin the Primate and concelebrant clergy, behind them solemnly vested metal workers and miners carrying the coffin, and behind them the family and Lech Walesa. When Walesa passes I notice how deeply moved he is. Tears can be seen on his face, his eyes are red. I hear the powerful voice of the bells and the songs, and see the hands kept up as the symbol of victory ... Strong, strengthened by the amplifier, the sonorous voice of the primate sings.



ANNALS AUSTRALASIA 5 AUGUST 2010

'Free Fatherland give us back, O Lord' . . . During my return home, feeling coldness and hunger, I meditate in silence. Since many days Solidarity is called 'former.' The people of little faith repeat that Solidarity is but a legend and myth. . . . But for somebody who, like me, was today in the middle, there is no doubt, however, that Solidarity does exist. She is able to explode again with the same force; the blood of martyrs has sunk into the soil to bring forth a hundredfold harvest.'

What differentiates the dreams of new explosions inspired by the death of Father Popieluszko from the utopian dreams of many present political programs is the absolute lack of physical violence in the former. The power of Popieluszko's mission has been the power of truth. Its force, united with the factor of grace, fastens an attitude of dignity in suffering when the only alternative is inhuman terror. Tears and grace as basic reactions to Jerzy's death testify that his spiritual heritage has been properly accepted by Polish society.

In this death there crossed two essentially different philosophical visions of the world. In the view of Captain Piotrowski, the accused killer, political murder is a natural consequence of the principles of class struggle. It is lawful to eliminate by any means 'enemies of the people.'

By contrast, Popieluszko believed that a non-violent response to oppression, inspired by the truth of the Gospel and by a desire to imitate Christ, would generate a unity among the people which would sustain them along the complicated routes of human life. The solidarity of reactions after this death has vindicated him. The example of workers and actors, professors and farmers united in sorrow and prayers indicates that the categories of class opposition, praised uncritically as universal and basic, are unimportant in interpreting phenomena on the most elementary level of human existence. Any attempts to interpret the multi-dimensional manifold of human existence in vague terms of class struggle imply unsubstantiated reductionism which displaces frontiers between reality and illusions.

The death of Father Popieluszko highlights the vast domain of possible

human choices. In extreme areas of domain one can choose the methods of Cain and approve bloodshed as the most effective of instruments, justified by noble theories of justice and human dignity. As a basic counterproposal there appears the way given by Christ in which dignity is taught empirically in the experience of violence and terror.

It may be true that, from a statistical point of view, the first method may turn out to be much more effective, at least when the statistics of murders are taken into account. It may also be true that statistical appraisal of the effectiveness of Christ's actions during his earthly life could disappoint some defenders of the theology of instant liberation. The testimony of truth exhibited in the drama of Golgotha introduces a framework in which human dignity can hardly be described in pragmatic-statistical categories. Human liberation witnessed from Golgotha is a liberation from fear and despair even in the context of totalitarian power and/or institutionalized violence.

A testimony of such a liberation may be found in the sermon of October 8, 1984, preached by Father Popieluszko in Bytom. Eleven days before his murder he told the people in the style of a last will: 'The virtue of courage is a necessary condition in our conquest of truth and in our struggle against the evil of falsehood. The virtue of courage implies surmounting human weakness, and liberates from fear and fright. The Christian must keep in mind that he should only be afraid of betraying Jesus; betraying Him for a few silver coins of sterile peace ... if I should walk in the valley of darkness, no evil would I fear.'

The paradoxical effect of innocent bloodshed is found in the fact that the light of Christian faith transforms former valleys of darkness marked by the shadow of death into new fields of the hundredfold harvest.

MOST REVEREND JOSEF ZYCINSKI is the Archbishop of Lublin, Poland, and the Grand Chancellor of the Catholic University of Lublin. He is a member of the European Academy of Science and Art and the author of nearly 40 books in philosophy of science, cosmology, and the history of the relationship between the natural sciences and Christian faith. This letter, written to Professor Jude Dougherty more than twenty years ago, is reproduced with his kind permission, to commemorate the beatification of Father Popieluszko on June 6, 2010.

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- Editor, *Annals*

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The scoop The Sydney Morning Herald missed

THE STEVENSON LETTER

By Ian MacDonald



ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON created durable characters: Jim Hawkins and Long John Silver in *Treasure Island*, David Balfour and his uncle, Balfour of Shaws, in *Kidnapped* and Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde in the novel of that title.

His characters have a good and evil duality, a duality earlier explored in *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* by his fellow Presbyterian and compatriot James Hogg, and more recently by Christopher Koch in *The Doubleman*.

None, however, compares to the duality that Stevenson explored in an open letter to the American Congregationalist minister Reverend Dr CM Hyde (not a coincidence of names) who had slandered Jozef de Veuster, known as Damien the Leper.

In February 1890 Stevenson sent the letter from the Union Club to *The Sydney Morning Herald*, then and today the preferred newspaper of its members either for stimulation or for dozing under.

Now the full, invaluable text of the letter has been made available in a booklet *The Prophecy of Robert Louis Stevenson: Damien of Molokai the Leper Saint*.

The distinguished Irish writer and film producer Don Mullan is the editor. He provides a foreword which opens with the words of Stevenson's prophecy, 'When Damien of Molokai shall be named a saint,' a prediction fulfilled in October last year.

Mullan follows up with a quotation from Mahatma Gandhi:

"The political and journalistic world can boast of very few heroes who compare with Father Damien of Molokai. It is worthwhile to look for the sources of such heroism."

The Reverend Keith Dury, a Presbyterian, provides the cover

illustration and Father F.E. Burns PE of Melbourne writes the introduction.

These elements create the setting for the letter in full, forged white hot on the anvil of anger by a great writer at the top of his form. Unlike Dr Hyde, Stevenson, though sick, had visited Molokai after Father Damien's heroic death there.

Extensive quotations would spoil the rolling, implacable momentum of the letter itself. One may suffice:

"If I have at all learned the trade of using words to convey truth and arouse emotion, you have at last furnished me with a subject. For it is in the interest of all mankind, and the cause of public decency in every quarter of the world, not only that Damien should be righted, but that you and your letter should be

displayed at length, in their true colours, to the public eye."

Don Mullan distills the Stevenson inspiration succinctly from the writer's own words: 'Damien ... is my father ... and the father of all who love goodness.'

Given the letter's impassioned eloquence, the temptation is to imagine *The Sydney Morning Herald* editor in legend mode bellowing: 'Stop the presses!' or even 'Clear the front page ads!'

Instead he rejected the letter and it was largely forgotten. Gavin Souter, Australia's greatest journalist-historian, was surprised when told of it. In writing the official history of Fairfax, *Company of Heralds*, he said that he had seen nothing about the letter in the archives.

Study of Souter's meticulous chronology, however, suggests that the editor who fits the time frame would have been William Curnow, and it is likely that the newspaper's general manager Samuel Cook and its law firm would also have been involved.

From this it could be argued that the rejection was not simply through dimness or prejudice. Sydney was then building a reputation as a libel-lawyer's cockpit to rival London, a reputation which, despite reforms, it has not lost.

Nonetheless in his biography of Stevenson, the pre-eminent authority John Cairney states that the letter was published in Sydney and in Scotland. Cairney now returned to his native Scotland after a long sojourn in New Zealand, has played Stevenson on stage and is planning a play about him and his friend, the poet W. E. Henley (inspiration for Long John Silver).

Royalties from sales of *The Prophecy of Robert Louis Stevenson* go to the HIV Foundation established by Desmond Tutu, Archbishop Emeritus of Southern Africa. Details for obtaining copies from Father Burns faburns@optusnet.com.au

IAN MACDONALD is the pen-name of a well-known Sydney journalist.

Conflicting Kingdoms

PAUL VALLELY, an experienced British journalist, sums up the matter well. News values, he says, include factors such as novelty, conflict, power, scandal, titillation, and self-interest. Opposed to these are what he calls "Kingdom values," the values cherished by the Church. Under this heading he lists love, justice, compassion, self-sacrifice, fidelity, perseverance, community, forgiveness, solidarity, and mission. "It would be an exaggeration," he writes, "to suggest that these two sets of values are polar opposites but there are clearly huge areas of disparity."

- Avery Dulles, S.J., 'Catholics in the world of Mass Media,' Lecture for the Salesian Guild, Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio, January 23, 1999.

The six-hundred-and-sixteen families upon which the curse of the pillaged English Monasteries fell [Part I]

THE HAND OF GOD OR MERE COINCIDENCE

By Paul Stenhouse, PhD



MURICE BARING, a member of the well-known banking family, and a convert to Catholicism, was in Russia at the height of the Bolshevik revolution. He relates an incident that occurred in a Russian village when a band of atheists (calling themselves 'Bezbozhniks', i.e. 'Without God-ites'), arrived, mocking the faith of the peasants. The leader of the Bezbozhniks addressed a gathering of the villagers and taking a sacred ikon said: 'I will spit on this ikon and you will see whether fire comes down from heaven to kill me, or not.' He then spat on the ikon and said to the peasants: 'You see, God hasn't killed me.' 'No,' said the peasants, 'but we will.' And they did.¹

Growing Used to Sacrilege

The retribution for the sacrilege of the Bezbozhnik was swift in the instance recounted by Maurice Baring. But mention sacrilege these days, and you will be rewarded with a pitying glance, an uplifted eye or a dismissive wave of the hand. 'Sacrilege' is as unfashionable a concept for many of our contemporaries as is the existence of the God whose majesty it offends.

Sacrilege means the profanation of something or somebody or some place set aside for the worship, glory and service of God.

We rightly deplore the use of lead in petrol, and fear carbon monoxide poisoning. The 'green-house' effect is as lamented as the use of asbestos or the pollution of the sea by oil leakages. Yet sacrilege is more lethal, for it can kill the soul, not just the body; and it offends not simply nature, but the God of nature.

Sacrilege, whether acknowledged

or not, is no longer the shocking thing it was for our Catholic ancestors. It has become part of the air that we 'liberated' moderns breathe; the staple diet of the dead or dying hearts of materialistic western societies, of big business, especially the publishing business, of many 'educators,' of politicians, and of the entertainment industry, especially of the unrelenting, if ephemeral, media.

Hearts of Flint

THIS THING [the suppression of the Abbey] was not a little grief to the convent and all the servants of the house, departing one from another, and especially such as with their conscience could not break their profession. It would have made a heart of flint melt and weep to have seen the breaking up of the house, the sorrowful departing (of the brethren And, every one had everything good, cheap, except the poor monks, friars and nuns who had no money to bestow on anything. This appeared at the suppression of an Abbey hard by me, called Roche Abbey – a house of White monks, a very fair built house, all of freestone, and every house vaulted with freestone and covered with lead.

- Statement by a man who as a youth witnessed the sacking of Roche Abbey on June 23, 1538, and the expulsion of the Cistercian Abbot and his seventeen monks. See *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries*, by Cardinal Gasquet, London, G. Bell and Sons, 1920, p. 357.

As young religious, I and my contemporaries used to be warned: 'sancta *sancte* tractanda sunt', i.e. 'holy things must be treated holily'. This needs repeating in a world grown used to hearing God's name, and the names of his saints, not just taken 'in vain' (i.e. lightly) but often coupled with obscenities and blasphemies.

The French Revolutionaries, Napoleon and successive atheistic governments in France helped make sacrilege fashionable, as did the Nazis, the Fascists, and the Communists in Russia, Eastern Europe, China, Spain and Mexico. But they were not the first, and recent history in the Middle East and Balkans, to say nothing of Rwanda, a number of Latin American countries, and East Timor, has shown that they are by no means the last.

Sacrilege in modern times is multifaceted. Catholic faith and practice, morality and tradition are not only questioned, they are sacrilegiously derided and dismissed as irrelevant, or ridiculed by TV producers, journalists, radio commentators, pop or movie stars, or politicians, many of whom arrogate to themselves prerogatives that properly belong to the Church, to bishops and priests and others legitimately authorised to teach or comment on matters of faith and morals.

Abuse of the Catholic Church is, sadly, also not uncommon among many Protestant sects whose vehement denunciation of the Mass, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Sacraments, the authority of the Pope and of the Church, even holy water and the sign of the Cross, constitutes sacrilege.

The Curses

Archbishop John Whitgift, 1530-604, the Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury who attended Queen

Elizabeth I in her last hours and crowned James I, warned the queen to beware lest she incur the curse that afflicted her father when he usurped the rights of the Church, and sacrilegiously confiscated lands, buildings and wealth intended for the glory of God, not of the house of Tudor.

He pointed out to Elizabeth that countless kings, queens, nobles and private individuals had endowed the monasteries, convents, priories, cathedrals and chapels, guildhalls and chantries 'and entailed a curse upon the alienators of them. God prevent your majesty from being liable to that curse.'

The curse to which the archbishop referred has come down to us in various forms.

One that is given by Dom Edmond Martene, OSB (1654-1739)² is too long to give in full. It ends thus: **May** evildoers, thieves and those who prey on the possessions and rights and liberties of the **Monastery** of ... find their lot thrown in with Chora, Dathan and Abiron who descended living into hell; with Judas and Pilate, Caiphas and Annas may they be punished with never-ending torment. So that they may never have fellowship in heavenly peace with Christ and his saints, but rather fellowship with the devil and his companions in the torments of hell. **May** they perish eternally. Let this be.'

Lest some readers think this curse is a bit tough, we should note that earlier on, the prayer to safeguard the holy place begged God not to punish the evildoers etc 'if they repent of their evil-doing. If they are willing to make amends for what they have done, then may the blessing of Almighty God come upon them, as well as the reward for good works.' The curse only follows if the evildoers persist in their evil-doing.

Another curse adds: 'May they be cursed in their cities, in their fields, in their castles, in their islands, in the fruit of their womb and in their homes. May they be cursed when they go out, and cursed in all places. May the heaven above them be of bronze, and the land they till be of iron... if they be not ashamed, and repent of their evil-doing, grant that they be eternally cut off from the heavenly host and the land of the living, and may they be banished now and for evermore.'

When donors granted money to be used for endowing the saying of Masses for the repose of their souls and those of their families, or as alms

'By the Grace of God'

IHAVE, by the grace of God, been always a Catholic, never out of communion with the Roman Pontiff; but I have heard it said at times that the authority of the Roman Pontiff was certainly lawful and to be respected, but still an authority derived from human law, and not standing upon a divine prescription: Then, when I observed that public affairs were so ordered that the sources of the power of the Roman Pontiff would necessarily be examined, I gave myself up to a most diligent examination of that question for the space of seven years, and found that the authority of the Roman Pontiff, which you rashly – I will not use stronger language – have set aside, is not only lawful; to be respected, and necessary, but also grounded on the divine law and prescription. That is my opinion; that is the belief in which, by the grace of God, I shall die.

- From St Thomas More's address to the judges and jury by whom he was condemned on perjured evidence by the Solicitor General Richard Rich, to be hanged, drawn and quartered – a sentence later commuted to beheading. Anne Bolyn's father, brother and uncle was among the judges. He was martyred on July 6, 1535

for the poor, or for the building of Churches or the providing of chalices and other consecrated objects to be used in the liturgy of the Mass, it was usual for a curse to be added: 'Should anyone, therefore, which I by no means believe will be the case, steal or otherwise alienate what I have offered and dedicated, let him be held accountable to the Lord God, under pain of sacrilege. If anyone should try to alter my provisions by any stratagem or propositions ... let such a one be anathema.'

Henry VIII's Greed

In the twenty-seventh year of the reign of Henry VIII all monasteries not having £200 per annum in revenue, were confiscated. In the thirty first

year, all the rest of the monasteries throughout the kingdom. In the thirty-second year all the hospitals and hospital churches of St John of Jerusalem in England and Ireland, with all their lands and possessions were confiscated to the Crown. In the thirty-fourth year all colleges, chapels, chantries, hospitals, fraternities and guilds were confiscated to the Crown. Had Henry not died in the next year who knows what would have been next on the list: bishoprics and Cathedral Churches probably.

In all, Henry VIII took possession of 374 lesser monasteries, 186 great monasteries and abbeys, ninety colleges, 110 religious hospitals, 2,374 chapels and chantries.

The Warning

No-one seems to know for certain who first warned the lay possessors of monastic lands of the dangers that lay in wait for them for the sacrilege they committed. Perhaps it was Dr Feckenham, the last Benedictine Abbot of St Peter's Monastery at Westminster who in his famous *Caveat Emptor* warned the avaricious plunderers of the Catholic Church property to beware of the consequences for themselves and their children. Regrettably, his warning fell on ears so deafened by the tinkling of gold and silver that like Ananias and Sapphira³ they could not hear the footsteps of those coming to bury them.

Many years later, Sir Henry Spelman, a Protestant who had gained possession of the sites of the Abbeys of Blackborough and Wormgay in Norfolk, became embroiled in expensive lawsuits that eventually dispossessed him of the Abbey lands, a circumstance that brought him financial ruin and convinced him of the 'infelicity of meddling with consecrated places.'

The accounts that follow are taken from Sir Henry's now forgotten work 'The History and Fate of Sacrilege ... published for the terror of evildoers' in 1698.⁴ Written in 1632 it lay unpublished for years 'lest it give offence to the nobility and gentry.'

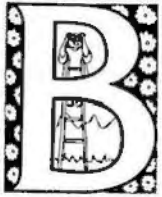
Next Month: What happened to the king, his family and those directly involved in the plundering of the monasteries.

1. *What I saw in Russia*, Thomas Nelson & Sons, [undated] p 357.
2. *Ancient Rites of the Church [De Antiquis Ecclesiae Ritibus]*, tome ii, book iii, cap. 3.
3. Act 5, 1-6
4. London, Printed for John Hartley, over against Gray's Inn, in Holborn, 1698.

By 2007 the average family home in Australian capital cities cost seven times the average annual wage

HELPING YOUNG MOTHERS

By George Cardinal Pell



BEFORE THE RECENT political turbulence, an important piece of legislation passed quietly through both Houses of Federal Parliament. It was a rare moment of bipartisan approval for a parental leave scheme. From next January 1st, 18 weeks parental leave at the national minimum wage will be available to all mothers on the birth of their child and almost 150,000 a year will probably apply.

Like every other country in the Western world Australia's birth rate is below the replacement level. But it is improving and not radically lower.

It is tempting to blame the contraceptive pill and the attitudes it produces, but a more important reason is the cost of housing. Many women would like to have more children, but feel they cannot afford to do so.

Thirty years ago the price of an average family home in the capital cities was three times the average annual wage. By 2007 it was seven

times average earnings. What one breadwinner could do then, now requires two wages. Capitalism has brought unprecedented prosperity, but capitalism puts an extra price on children.

At the 2007 election neither major political party supported this policy, but the change is welcome. I did not realize until recently that Australia was one of only two First World countries without such a programme.

Debate will run on about what is the best number for our annual migrant intake, but this is a different issue. Governments should help mothers who want to have children and the Baby Bonus moved effectively in this direction.

Tony Abbott's Opposition supported the legislation but they propose the more radical measure of six months parental leave that would replace a mother's full time wages.

As nearly 60 per cent of women are in paid employment before giving birth and 26 per cent of them are back at work within six months, the Abbott scheme would strengthen the bonding between mother and child and ease the home repayment pressures.

While parental leave schemes in the Western world vary, most are closer to 18 than 26 weeks, but most are a percentage of pre-birth earnings rather than a minimum wage. France, Germany, Spain, Austria and Denmark grant 100 per cent replacement pay. The U.S.A. has no such scheme and Canada gives 55 per cent of pre-birth earnings.

The Abbott proposal certainly needs a second leg to give comparably generous support to mothers at home, but I suspect a percentage replacement pay is the way of the future.

The Catholic Church is Telegenic

WE CAN, of course, urge the media to do better. When they misrepresent Catholic teaching or practice they should be called to task. Generally speaking, religious reporting is inferior to the reporting of politics, finance, and sports, which often contains a considerable amount of expert analysis. The media can perhaps become more self-critical with respect to the stereotypes they tend to manufacture. We may hope for a greater supply of well-informed and able religious journalists such as Peter Steinfels of *The New York Times* and Ken Woodward of *Newsweek*. Although we cannot expect that the secular media will deliberately promote the Gospel, the possibilities of evangelizing through the media should not be entirely discounted. It must be recognized, in the first place, that the Catholic Church is enormously telegenic. Its antiquity, its continuing vitality, and its universality make it fascinating to the media of our time. As demonstrated by Franco Zeffirelli's *Jesus of Nazareth* – to mention only one example – the Gospel story retains abiding power to captivate and move large audiences. The Church has a long and fascinating history filled with heroism and drama. Deeply imbedded in a multiplicity of cultures, it has liturgical and cultural expressions corresponding to many of them. It has extraordinary monuments in art and architecture, music and literature. It has majestic ceremonies and personalities of extraordinary stature, including some remarkable saints and popes of the present-century.

- Avery Dulles, S.J., 'Catholics in the world of Mass Media, Lecture for the Salesian Guild, Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio, January 23, 1999.

This comment by the Cardinal Archbishop of Sydney appeared in Sydney's *The Sunday Telegraph*, July 4, 2010

Exploring the Mysteries of Autism

EXTENDING A HAND OF FRIENDSHIP

By Wanda Skowronska



IN TWENTY YEARS experience as a psychologist working in schools, I have witnessed an increase in the numbers of children diagnosed with Autism and Autistic Spectrum Disorders [ASDs]. Having an autistic child can cause immense distress to parents, siblings and teachers and it is necessary to have effective lines of communication between parents, the school and professional organisations to help the child develop as many skills as early as possible and to give the family respite where needed.

Why are there more children with autism? Is it that the criteria of diagnosis have widened? Is it simply being diagnosed more frequently? Are environmental factors exacerbating the situation? A recent study was done by the American Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network project examining the prevalence among 8-year-olds, using consistent criteria for diagnosis. The report concluded that 'average prevalence of ASDs identified among children aged 8 years increased 57% in 10 sites from 2002 to the 2006.'¹ While acknowledging ever better detection of the disorder the study also speaks of a 'true increase' in the risk of children developing ASD symptoms, which tends to occur in a male - female ratio of about 4:1. The reasons for the increase are much debated and the cause of ongoing research.

As a defined disorder, autism is a relative 'newcomer' to the psychological lexicon. In 1943 an American psychiatrist of German background, Leo Kanner (1894-1981) published his landmark paper, identifying characteristics of what he termed a new 'emotional disorder,' early infantile autism.² He was not the first to use the

term as Swiss psychiatrist and friend of Carl Jung, Eugen Bleuler (1857-1939), had done pioneering research into schizophrenia in the early twentieth century and had used the term 'autism' to describe his schizophrenic patients' disconnect from reality. Kanner, however, made important distinctions describing autism in the following way:

Although these children present the combination of extreme autism, obsessiveness, stereotypy, and echolalia, they differ from schizophrenia in that the condition is present from birth, and they are able to maintain a purposeful and intelligent relation to objects that do not threaten their aloneness.³

Thus Kanner observed the fact that the disorder seemed present from birth and did not prevent 'purposeful and intelligent' activity. He placed much emphasis on the solitariness, lack of empathy, lack of reciprocity and obsessive nature of the child's activities, qualities that have increasingly become 'mainstream knowledge' about autistic children.

In a strange historical irony, another researcher was working on the same problem at the same time as Kanner and made similar observations. In Vienna Hans Asperger (1906-1980) wrote his 1944 paper about children in whom he identified a lack of empathy, little ability to form friendships, one-sided conversation, intense absorption in a special interest, and clumsy movements. His observations were to be refined into what was eventually known as Asperger's Syndrome (which English psychiatrist Lorna Wing popularised in her writings in the 1980s). Asperger's observations differed from those of Kanner in that he restricted his study to those who had language skills (Kanner's children lacked adequate language, this was one of the main features he noted in autism).

Children with Autism and Asperger's Syndrome were found not to differ in their *social impairments*. However, those with Asperger's talk more [and hence are diagnosed later than children with autism as they seem to be more 'normal'] and often have problems with physical co-ordination. But in talking more, they do not communicate more. The talk of those with Asperger's is none too 'social' as it is more of a lecturing type on an obsessive interest, with little interest in the listeners. Some years ago, a young school boy used to tell me the names of hundreds of reptiles whether I wanted to hear it or not. Asperger referred to some of his children as 'little professors'. Such children cannot 'read' the expressions on others' faces, nor 'read' others' intentions or emotions, things many of us take for granted and can often do in a flash. In fact some have argued that children with autism and Asperger's lack a theory of mind - that is, they do not understand that minds reflect, evaluate and make inferences about their own and other minds.³

Cousins or brothers?

HYRCANUS, son of Alexander Jannaeus had his ears cut off by Antigonus, son of Aristobulus. Aristobulus and Hyrcanus had the same grandfather, also called Hyrcanus. They were not brothers, but cousins, though they were called brothers. It was customary in ancient times for cousins to be called 'brothers'. The latin for 'brother' is 'frater'; the latin for 'cousin' is 'fratruelis'. Hyrcanus was put to death by Herod in 30 BC.

- Ed Annals

It is interesting to note the differing emphases in the identification of autism in Kanner's and Asperger's work. In fact when speaking of autism nowadays, it is more common to speak of Autism Spectrum Disorders – or ASD – as there have been more variations of autism noted in the psychiatric nomenclature. For instance there are those children who may have some features of autism but not all of them, and they can acquire the unwieldy diagnosis PDD-NOS, shorthand for Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified. However a definition of what is generally known as autism is as follows

Autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) are a group of developmental disabilities characterized by atypical development in socialization, communication, and behavior. ASDs typically are apparent before age 3 years, with associated impairments affecting multiple areas of a person's life.⁶

Those with autism often don't babble as babies and fail to develop language at the expected milestones. It is generally believed that there is a genetic component to this developmental disorder and that the area of the brain associated with language development fails to form normally. Children with autism come from all ranges of intellectual ability and disability. The film 'Rainman' starring Dustin Hoffman popularised the story of an autistic man with brilliant though restricted savant abilities. Indeed I once interviewed the parents of a 5 year old autistic child who were proud of his ability to tell me what day of the week March 19 would fall on in the year 2058 or whatever year I cared to nominate. The calculations were instantaneous. The boy did them in a manner other children would say their 'ABC's but he could not communicate with his peers. Neither did they wish to know these abstruse calculations. Neuropsychologist and author Oliver Sacks refers to various autistic savant musicians, human calculators, artists and engineers in his must-read fascinating book entitled *An Anthropologist on Mars* [1995]. He describes little 'Stephen', who when his peers were drawing stick figures, could draw detailed 'unchildlike' representations of St Paul's Cathedral and Tower Bridge in London.⁷ Stephen knew the names of other students in his

'Belonging to the Lord'

WE ARE at Jesus' disposal. If he wants you to be sick in bed, if he wants us to proclaim His work in the street, if he wants us to clean the toilets all day, that's all right; everything is all right. We must say, 'I belong to you. You can do whatever you like.' This ... is our strength, and this is joy in the Lord.

- Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta

class but had no desire to communicate with them – showing that defining mental aloneness that characterises the lives of such children who have no problem engaging with objects, often in a ritualistic manner, excluding all that interferes with this.

A valuable insight into autism has come from an American woman Temple Grandin, now in her fifties and diagnosed with autism. Temple's mother noticed something strange about her daughter when at six months she stiffened in her arms, at ten months clawed at her like a trapped animal and did not develop language. Temple was taken from doctor to doctor, her mother reading what she could along the way, in order to work out what was wrong. Eventually, a specialist familiar with Kanner's work, diagnosed Temple with autism at age three.

Temple's determined mother proceeded to look upon this as a challenge, hiring volunteers to work, day in day out, with her daughter to try to develop some language skills. Temple had the typical social and communicative impairments of autistic children. She spoke little and in a monotone, could spin a coin for hours on end and was lost in her own world. But she also had a brilliance in designing buildings and a special affinity with animals. She was able to navigate the social and emotional minefields of school and eventually became a Doctor of Animal Science, a professor at Colorado State University, a best selling author and consultant to the livestock industry in animal behavior.

Temple could visualise complex designs long before highly professional

engineers could do so. She had to learn not to call other engineers 'idiots' for not understanding what she could do easily. She also felt a special affinity with animals, especially cows, and liked nothing better than lying in a field next to her cow friends, who seemed to like the experience too. Described as 'high functioning autistic' Temple has come to understand that there is 'another world' out there.

She knows she is different, that she cannot understand what is involved in human social interaction, and that mysterious thing called empathy. She has described the process of seeing human beings interact as if she were observing some strange species, as if she were 'an anthropologist on Mars.' In fact Oliver Sacks used this expression as the title of his book which included a description of his visit to Temple in Denver where he observed at close hand her isolated but intensely concentrated life.

Temple also relates that she thought about God. As a child, unbeknown to others, she used to clamber onto rooftops gazing up at the stars in the night sky for hours on end, trying to understand what was above and around her.

Temple spends most of her time on her work, avoiding social occasions because she does not understand them. Despite her incomprehension of social life, however, she has tried to put into words what it is like for her to be autistic. She has helped many parents understand what goes on 'inside' the minds of their autistic children. She describes their hypersensitivities recalling that as a child she would put her hand over her ears and scream when an ambulance went by and felt as if a nail were being driven through her head, so sensitive was she to the sound. A woollen cap on her head felt like rough sandpaper.

Other autistic children can have hypersensitivities to light and smell, and parents need to find the trigger of the child's distress so they can avoid it. Temple also relates that she has difficulty with generalisation and needs many examples to 'get' a concept. In her autobiography *Emergence: Labeled Autistic* [1986] she relates that her mind is 'completely visual.' While she has designed big steel and concrete livestock facilities she says 'remembering a phone number or adding up numbers in my head is

difficult? As for *concepts* she says:

If I have to remember an abstract concept I 'see' the page of the book or my notes in my mind and "read" information from it. ... When I think of abstract concepts such as human relationships, I use visual similes – for example, relationships between people are like a sliding glass door that must be opened gently or it may shatter.⁸

While most of us would find it hard to appreciate life inside Temple's world, the sharing of her thoughts has been invaluable. She has certainly opened a new area of understanding, and now others with autism, like Donna Williams (author of *Nobody Nowhere*, 1992), have also written about how it is from within.

I found myself lining up to have my copy of Temple's book autographed when she visited Sydney in 2003 to give a lecture. When my turn came she took the book speaking in a monotone – there was no eye contact on handing it back. Her cowboy boots, Texas jeans and shirt looked charming – in fact Temple says she wears the same kinds of clothes, jeans and boots every day.

From her visual world in which she sees events as 'movie reels,' communing with animals, gazing at stars, light and sand for endless hours, she has done something we might not have expected from her – reached out from her remote, silent world to our strange realm of noise and myriad connections and in the best way she could, has offered the hand of friendship.

WANDA SKOWRONSKA is a registered psychologist who works as a counsellor in inner city schools in Sydney. She has done voluntary work for the Catholic pro life organisation Human Life International, and is a regular contributor to *Annals*.

1. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss5810a1.htm>
2. Leo Kanner. "Autistic disturbances of affective contact". *Nervous Child*, Vol 2, 1943, 217-250.
3. Ibid, 217.
4. Hans Asperger; tr by Uta Frith. "Autistic Psychopathy in Childhood". in Frith U. *Autism and Asperger Syndrome*. (Cambridge University Press, 1991: 1944), 37-92.
5. This is discussed in Dan Zahavi's *Subjectivity and Selfhood*. (Cambridge, Ma, The MIT Press, 2008), 179 ff.
6. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss5601a1.htm>
7. Oliver Sacks, "Prodigies" in *An Anthropologist on Mars* (NY: Borzoi Books, 1995).
8. Temple Grandin, *Emergence: Labeled Autistic* (California: Warner, 1986), 131.

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– Editor, *Annals*

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At the time of the first raids, the RAAF did not have a single fighter aircraft in Australia – not one.

WHY DID JAPAN ATTACK DARWIN?

By Michael O'Connor



AN MACDONALD'S review of Peter Grose's book on the bombing of Darwin (Annals, March, 2010) triggered a long unanswered question in my mind. Why did the Japanese bother? It was not a prelude to an invasion of the Australian mainland because the Japanese, as we now know, believed that Australian could not successfully be invaded. Certainly, if the intention to invade had been formed, Darwin would have been about the worst point of entry because of the total lack of landside infrastructure. The only road to the south was impassable in the wet season and not much better for the rest. Only a relatively short length of primitive railway ended at Birdum about 800km south of Darwin leaving a gap of almost 1000km to the railhead at Alice Springs,

My interest is engaged primarily because my family were residents of Darwin at the time and our house was badly damaged in that first raid on 19th February 1942. My mother, sister and I were evacuated by sea in December 1941 but my father was still in town, a doctor at the hospital. Our house was badly damaged and all my parents' belongings lost.

That first raid on the morning of 19th February 1942 was by 188 fighters and bombers from four aircraft carriers, *Kaga*, *Akagi*, *Hiryu* and *Soryu* and concentrated on the mass of shipping in the harbour and on the town itself. With *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku*, all four carriers had taken part in the attack on Pearl Harbour that launched the Pacific war. All four were to be sunk at the Battle of Midway less than four months later. About an hour after the first raid departed, a second

comprising 54 land-based bombers from Kendari attacked, this time concentrating on the RAAF base. Air raids on Darwin continued sporadically until late in 1943.

In every Australian account of the raids that I have ever seen, there is a concentration on that first day and the domestic reaction to them. Indeed, in much of the Australian writing about the Pacific War, there seems to be an isolationist sensibility that ignores the vastly wider ramifications of the conflict. The war is seen then and perhaps more so now as a conflict solely between Australia and Japan. Britain seems to have been written out of our view of the Pacific War and the American role is discussed primarily in terms of its impact upon Australia.

In the case of Britain, we tend to be familiar with the conflict between the two prime ministers, John Curtin and Winston Churchill, over the use of two veteran Australian infantry divisions, the 6th and 7th. Churchill wanted them to defend Burma although, by the time they could have arrived, Burma was lost. Curtin very properly insisted that they be returned to Australia and eventually they were: the 6th with some delay and the 7th in time to relieve the embattled militia units on the Kokoda Track. Yet we tend to forget that Britain fought a long and arduous campaign to defend India and eventually to recapture Burma while the very large British Pacific Fleet was initially based in Australia. Some of its supporting installations are still, 65 years later, being used by the Australian Defence Force.

For the Americans, General Eichelberger's Sixth Army, the US Navy's Seventh Fleet and General George Kenney's Fifth Air Force all fought under General Macarthur who was the Supreme Allied Commander

Recent anti-Christian violence in Indonesia

THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY of the Indonesian Committee of Religions for Peace, Theophilus Bela, notes that from 2009 to today at least 17 Christian churches have been attacked by fundamentalist Muslims or by local authorities. On July 21, 2009 the authorities in Bogor – for reasons that have never emerged – razed to the ground the Protestant church of Parung Panjan. Since 2008 the Catholic church of St John the Baptist at Parung in the district of Bogor has been the victim of attacks and provocative actions of Islamic extremists. The faithful could not attend Mass at Christmas time in 2008. On December 17, 2009 the St Albert's Catholic church was attacked by at least 1,000 Islamic extremists. Then there was the church burnt down at Tlogorejo in the sub district of Temanggung. On January 23 this year hundreds of Muslims burnt down the Protestant church of Sibuhuan in the province of north Sumatra, while a Pentecostal church was burned down at Padanglawas.

- *Corrispondenza Romana*, February 14, 2010.
Translated from Italian by Paul Stenhouse

for the South-West Pacific Theatre. The Royal Australian Navy was integrated into the Seventh Fleet and, apart from those units fighting in Europe, the Royal Australian Air Force made up a large component, perhaps half, of the Fifth Air Force. By law, the Australian Army's very significant contribution was limited to operations south of the equator unless volunteers were employed but such units as were available would have required a different supply organisation and this was understandably not acceptable to the Americans. The Australian attitude, both official and popular, seemed to be that as long as Australia was safe from invasion, we had played our part. Indeed, there was much political controversy over continued operations in New Guinea against by-passed Japanese garrisons despite our obligation to the welfare of Papua New Guineans in occupied Australian territory.

There is also an almost total lack of awareness in Australia of the Guadalcanal campaign that was strategically directed to cutting Australia off from the United States. It was vital for us that the Japanese thrust be stopped and reversed, and Australian ships and aircraft played a small part. After Japan's defeat at Midway, the Guadalcanal campaign became a struggle of attrition over six hard months before it could be called won. If Japan had won, the flow of American supplies and troops to Australia would have been seriously threatened.

Was Darwin, then, important? Lord Jellicoe, the former British First Sea Lord, thought so. In 1919 he had advised the Australian government to build a first class naval base at Darwin but nothing was done then. By the late 1920s, some minor attempts were made to build Darwin's defences but by 1941 little had been achieved. Darwin at the time was a small bush town with virtually no hinterland to support it. The so-called road to the south was a bush track impassable in the wet season. Darwin's supplies came by sea and were so dependent upon the variable good will of the North Australian Workers Union that beer supplies were invariably stowed at the bottom of the ships' holds to ensure



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that the rest was unloaded before the next wharves' strike.

Darwin's frontier character was illustrated by the Administrator's practice of walking about with a loaded shotgun under his arm. By late 1941, the defence installations comprised some heavy anti-aircraft guns, a naval fuel installation and a good airfield shared by civil aviation and the air force. Troop numbers were small and short range anti-aircraft guns for use against the low flying Japanese fighters were restricted to World War I light machine guns.

At the time of the first raids, the RAAF did not have a single fighter aircraft in Australia - not one. The obsolete fighters we had sent to Malaya had all been lost in action while the more modern aircraft in the Middle East were committed to that theatre. Our more or less modern Hudson bombers were actually based upon a civil airliner, the Lockheed Electra, and were rated as reconnaissance rather than strike aircraft.

So why did Japan bother with one massive and one large raid on 19th February 1942? The official history of the Royal Australian Navy suggests that it was to cover the Japanese invasion of Timor but that is questionable because there was nothing in Darwin or elsewhere that could have stopped that invasion. Possibly the carrier-based raid simply took advantage of an opportunity while Nagumo was *en route* to his next task, the attacks on the Royal Navy's Eastern Fleet and its bases in Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, at the beginning of April.

Incidentally, Nagumo's rampage from Pearl Harbour to Ceylon and all points between still ranks as one of the most wide-ranging and devastating uses of naval air power in history.

The answer to the question seems to me to be derived from a consideration of Japan's overall strategy. Admiral Yamamoto had warned the Japanese government that he could create havoc for the Allies for about six months, after which the

productive capacity of the United States would gradually overwhelm Japan unless peace could be made. In that six months, Japan's strategy was to gain control of the resources of South East Asia, especially its food, rubber and, most importantly, oil. With an extended defence perimeter, Japan might be in a position to negotiate a secure peace. The Japanese navy wanted to extend that perimeter to an occupation of Australia but the army insisted it did not have the power to do so.

Japan achieved that initial objective but ran hard up against the Allies' insistence that only unconditional surrender, rather than a negotiated peace that would have left Japan with secure resources would be an acceptable outcome. But Japan had also eliminated every Allied base that would threaten Japan's hold on those resources. With one exception - Darwin! The Japanese understood that strategic naval and air forces based at Darwin would threaten the oil installations especially in Borneo. Perhaps they could have invaded and occupied Darwin, especially since that town had no hinterland supporting it. But they depended instead upon a series of little more than nuisance air raids until late in 1943. Also it took the Australian and American allies that long to build the base in Darwin and the Stuart Highway as a supply route from the railhead at Alice Springs.

Any serious strategist understands the compulsion of geography and the fact that Darwin offers the ability to dominate the whole of Indonesia with strategic naval and air capability. The Japanese understood that in 1942, and Indonesia understands it today.

Indonesia understood, in 1999, that Australia's intervention in East Timor with a superior navy and air force left that country with no option but to concede independence. That is why all serious Indonesians whose primary strategic concern is with China want a friendly Australia at their back. It is also why Australian strategists understand that to a considerable degree a friendly Indonesia guards Australia.

MICHAEL O'CONNOR is a former patrol officer in Papua New Guinea. He also served in the Royal Australian Navy as an intelligence officer.

Jews and Islam

REMEMBER, my co-religionists, that on account of the vast number of our sins, God has hurled us in the midst of this people, the Arabs, who have persecuted us severely, and passed baneful and discriminatory legislation against us, as Scripture has forewarned us, 'Our enemies themselves shall judge us' (Deuteronomy 32:31). Never did a nation molest, degrade, debase and hate us as much as they Although we were dishonored by them beyond human endurance, and had to put with their fabrications, yet we behaved like him who is depicted by the inspired writer, "But I am as a deaf man, I hear not, and I am as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth." (Psalms 38:14). Similarly our sages instructed us to bear the prevarications and preposterousness of Ishmael in silence. They found a cryptic allusion for this attitude in the names of his sons: "Mishma, Dumah, and Massa" (Genesis 25:14), which was interpreted to mean, "Listen, be silent, and endure." (Targum *Pseudo-Jonathan*, ad locum). We have acquiesced, both old and young, to inure ourselves to humiliation, as Isaiah instructed us "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair." (50:6). All this notwithstanding, we do not escape this continued maltreatment which well nigh crushes us. No matter how much we suffer and elect to remain at peace with them, they stir up strife and sedition, as David predicted, "I am all peace, but when I speak, they are for war." (Psalms 120:7). If, therefore, we start trouble and claim power from them absurdly and preposterously, we certainly give ourselves up to destruction."

- Moses Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen*, quoted in *A Maimonides Reader*, Isadore Twersky, Baker and Taylor, 1972, pp.457-458.

JOHNNY WEEKEND

By John Leary, MSC



JOHNNY WEEKEND has already been mentioned; Johnny was a younger brother of Minnie. From the time of his birth he was a very sickly child. At the age of three (about) what with flu and its complications Johnny was at death's door. At the mission – there was as yet, no nurse, no airstrip – Kalambi, Johnny's mother, brought him to me. The little fellow was just a skeleton, a faint pulse registering his tenuous grip on life.

'You get the doctor plane,' said Kalambi, half question, half command, but with infinite trust. I weighed up the odds. The nearest airstrip was some fifteen miles down river at Woolianna.

It was the wet season. The country was flooded. All roads were out. There was no boat. It therefore meant a long walk for me with Johnny on my shoulders and two swollen creeks to swim, 'Tommys' and 'Bamboo'.

Decidedly the odds were completely against Johnny being alive at the end of the journey.

I drew Kalambi's attention to this, suggesting it might be better for Johnny to be let die among his own. Kalambi insisted on getting the 'doctor plane,' so over the radio I made arrangements to meet the plane at Woolianna in five hours' time.

The journey began with Johnny slumped over my shoulders. Every so often I stopped to feel Johnny's pulse fearing he might be dead. Apart from the faint pulse there was no other sign of life, not even a murmur.

The pair of us negotiated Tommy's Creek, I holding Johnny with one hand and swimming with the other, making for the opposite bank as the flood waters rushed us down stream.

Having arrived at Charlie Dargies farm, Charlie endeavoured to convince me that it was impossible to cross Bamboo Creek.

The water was half a mile up the road and the creek was roaring in flood into the river.

Also, there was a big crocodile in the area. I insisted, saying that the medical plane would be waiting.

Charlie then stripped off and offered to follow with his .303 rifle. All went well until wading along the road had to give way to swimming. At this juncture Charlie thought it was time for him to stop, with apologies. As best he could, he would cover me with his rifle.

In no matter of time Johnny and I were sucked into the swirling current completely at its mercy, content simply to stay afloat in the hope that we might eventually arrive at the airstrip side of the creek.

So it happened. I emerged with Johnny still slumped across my back, with torn shirt and many scratches. Another mile walk and there was the medical plane with Sister Nichols all dressed in spotless white awaiting us, she took one look at Johnny and asked 'but don't they want him to die in his own country?'

I informed her that I had suggested the same, but it was evident they wanted him to live in it. Besides, after all the two of us had been through the past five hours, surely Johnny should be given a chance, be it ever so small.

Sister agreed, with a lot of misgiving. Johnny spent many months in Darwin Hospital where I often visited him. Eventually he returned to the Daly with a clean bill of health. Today he is a robust-looking man, married, with three children.

Nankikurungurr means 'Deep Water'. It is one of the principal language groups, along with the Waugaman, Marathiel, Maringar, Mulluk Mulluk and Nangiomeri, on the Daly River, 250km south of Darwin in the Northern Territory.

FATHER John Leary MSC who died on January 19 last year and was buried at Wadeye [Port Keats] in the Northern Territory, spent almost all his priestly life working among aboriginal communities on Bathurst Island, Wadeye, the Daly River and around Darwin. *May this much loved missionary priest rest in Peace.*

Convictions about God

PEOPLE TODAY are surrounded by an atheism of indifference, not even by a positive hostility to theism, but really by an indifference. The God question is taboo and suppressed. And so it is not enough for people to learn about God from outside themselves. Whoever wants to live a convinced and genuine Christian life in the secularized desert where the God question is taboo must, therefore, want to be involved with God, in the deepest experience of his or her person. In the past everyone said: "God exists." Consequently, each individual had to say: "Then I guess it is true!" But from what source does today's person draw an absolutely firm conviction about the existence of God, according to which he or she can live and die? I think the only solution consists in this: one must try to lay bare the wellsprings for such a conviction deep within the human person. In the final analysis it is unimportant whether you call such a personal, genuine experience of God, which occurs in the deepest core of a person, "mystical."

- Karl Rahner, *Faith in a Wintry Season, Conversations and Interviews with Karl Rahner in the Last Days of his Life*, Crossroad, New York, 1991 p.115

Communism is treated more sympathetically than Conservatism

A CONSERVATIVE CONUNDRUM

By Ciles Auty



OR THE FIRST time in many years I was recently lucky enough to spend my favourite month of the year in the Northern Hemisphere – June – in the precise area where I used to live before coming to work in Australia.

The suburb in question was Hampton Court where vast royal parks plus the river Thames – to say nothing of Hampton Court palace itself – give the area a distinct and uplifting character.

Unsurprisingly perhaps I now find myself swamped, for the first time since I came to Australia 15 years ago, with acute feelings of nostalgia.

I certainly intend no disloyalty to this country itself – of which I am now a citizen – nor to my Australian friends, in admitting why, in spite of the daunting logistical problems involved, I now at least contemplate leaving.

Clearly such a decision reflects nothing on the wonderfully varied topography and climate of this country.

Rather it is a feeling of unease about tendencies which, in spite of obvious points of comparison found elsewhere in the Western world, strike me as likely to remain incurable here – during my lifetime, at least.

I have related in *Annals* already that when I arrived here to work at *The Australian* in 1995 my feet had barely touched the tarmac before an extremely hostile article ‘about’ me appeared in *The Age*.

The latter was based entirely on interviews with people in the UK and elsewhere who were known to disagree strongly with my views. There was certainly not the least pretence of journalistic balance nor any attempt to contact any of my former journalistic colleagues or editors who might have provided a very different picture.

This was merely my first but by no means my last exposure to a peculiarly Australian form of spiteful bias which has more than a little in common with a code once attributed to Welsh rugby union players “let’s get our retaliation in first.”

Karl Jung and Freemasonry

KARL JUNG first became acquainted with Freemasonry during his student days. There were many thriving lodges in Paris, but as a German he had little chance of joining. Opportunities were plentiful in Switzerland, however. As a stranger in a strange land, Jung gravitated naturally toward the local Masonic community as a way of assimilating into Swiss society. Then, as now, Freemasonry provided unique opportunities for making friends and advancing one’s career through a network of individuals from a variety of occupations and social, political, and religious backgrounds. ... Masonic lodges were places where nationalists could congregate and conspire, where anti-papists could vent their spleens, and where philanthropic projects could be planned and carried out. Jung’s own hospital and clinic projects in Basel were no doubt expedited by his relationships with the secret Masonic brotherhood.

- Richard Noll, *The Aryan Christ*, Random House New York, 1997 p.13.

The Age’s article described me as an arch-conservative – a term clearly intended to be some kind of ultimate in terms of condemnation.

Indeed, in 15 years of living here I have heard only one other person regularly so described: Cardinal Pell.

So what exactly are the terrible thoughts which ‘arch-conservatives’ are supposedly held to foster?

In my own case I would admit immediately to credence in truly timeless as distinct from temporary or evanescent cultural values and rather suspect – while having no authority whatsoever for saying so – that Cardinal Pell similarly favours eternal rather than temporary – let alone fashionable – spiritual and moral values.

Before coming to Australia I should perhaps admit that I had never heard the adjective ‘conservative’ employed as a regular term of abuse.

Indeed to confirm that my impression was not merely a personal one, I turned to a work of reference which is clearly intended to be a leading academic handbook for students of Australian history – it actually says so in its preface – i.e. *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*.

To my surprise I find that even communism is presented more sympathetically than conservatism in the lengthy sections which cover such competing ideologies. To my further astonishment these were not written by ignoramuses nor by those entirely unaware of world history but by ‘leading’ Australian academics.

What if anything does this tell us about the tenors of thought which spread outward from this country’s supposed ‘repositories of moral wisdom’, our universities?

Were not most Australian universities like those of the rest of the Western world founded to encourage Christian principles?

So what role does overt sympathy for communism or Marxism have to play in this?

Wherever and however it has presented itself, communism has always been an implacable enemy and persecutor of Christianity and Christians.

So why does it enjoy such a high profile apparently in the affections of certain of Australia's academics?

In neither Australia nor Britain have overtly communist parties – such as the ACP – ever achieved more than 1% of a democratic vote cast in national or federal elections.

Communism thus has the status more of a virus than of an ideology – especially so because of the pains taken by many of its present and past adherents to conceal their membership and involvement.

Indeed a lengthy article by Bob Carr, former Labor premier of NSW in *The Spectator* of 17 July reveals the extent of Labor's overlap with the ACP throughout the Cold War. Unsurprisingly perhaps its title is *Sleeping with the Enemy*. It chronicles, to my mind, an especially inglorious chapter in this country's history.

However it is another current article, this time in the July/August edition of *Quadrant* which better explains my acute unease about any future life here for non-aligned resident writers. This is called *Death by Silence in the Writers' Combat Zone* and is the work of a former colleague at *The Australian* Shelley Gare.

Those familiar with my writing in these pages will be familiar with my

Despotism and Deism

NOW A MAN preaching what he thinks is a platitude is far more intolerant than a man preaching what he admits is a paradox. It was exactly because it seemed self-evident, to Moslems as to Bolsheviks, that their simple creed was suited to everybody, that they wished in that particular sweeping fashion to impose it on everybody. It was because Islam was broad that Moslems were narrow. And because it was not a hard religion it was a heavy rule. Because it was without a self-correcting complexity, it allowed of those simple and masculine but mostly rather dangerous appetites that show themselves in a chieftain or a lord. As it had the simplest sort of religion, monotheism, so it had the simplest sort of government, monarchy. There was exactly the same direct spirit in its despotism as in its deism. The Code, the Common Law, the give and take of charters and chivalric vows, did not grow in that golden desert. The great sun was in the sky and the great Saladin was in his tent, and he must be obeyed unless he were assassinated. Those who complain of our creeds as elaborate often forget that the elaborate Western creeds have produced the elaborate Western constitutions; and that they are elaborate because they are emancipated.

- G. K. Chesterton. "The Fall of Chivalry," in *The New Jerusalem*

assertion that a condition I characterise as 'secular Christianity' has been largely supplanted as an influence in Australian life during the past 40 years by the collective 'orthodoxies' of post-modernism.

Such orthodoxies as political correctness, feminism, multiculturalism, relativism, gender issues and revisionist history are all part of a Marxist-inspired, antinomian cultural revolution which has achieved its principal effects largely through the effective seizures in Western countries of the arts and education in the name of ideology.

Characteristically, the proponents of such ideology are much more interested in controlling culture than in any open

or democratic debate. The 'culture' they have in mind would be effectively totalitarian and certainly not open to such contradictory ideas as may be found in the pages of *The Spectator*, *Quadrant* or even of this excellent magazine.

GILES AUTY was born in the UK and trained privately as a painter. He worked professionally as an artist for 20 years. Publication of his *The Art of Self Deception* swung his career towards criticism. He was art critic for *The Spectator* from 1984 to 1995. He continues to devote himself to his original love - painting. He is a regular contributor to *Annals*.



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JUNK SCIENCE



CAST YOUR MINDS back to 1960. John F. Kennedy is president, commercial jet airplanes are just appearing, the biggest university mainframes have 12K of memory. And in Green Bank, West Virginia at the new National Radio Astronomy Observatory, a young astrophysicist named Frank Drake runs a two week project called Ozma, to search for extraterrestrial signals. A signal is received, to great excitement. It turns out to be false, but the excitement remains. In 1960, Drake organizes the first *Search for Extraterrestrial intelligence* [SETI] conference, and came up with the now-famous Drake equation: $N=N*fp\ ne\ fl\ fi\ fc\ fL$ where N is the number of stars in the Milky Way galaxy; fp is the fraction with planets; ne is the number of planets per star capable of supporting life; fl is the fraction of planets where life evolves; fi is the fraction where intelligent life evolves; and fc is the fraction that communicates; and fL is the fraction of the planet's life during which the communicating civilizations live. This serious-looking equation gave SETI a serious footing as a legitimate intellectual inquiry. The problem, of course, is that none of the terms can be known, and most cannot even be estimated. The only way to work the equation is to fill in with guesses. And guesses – just so we're clear – are merely expressions of prejudice. Nor can there be 'informed guesses'. If you need to state how many planets with life choose to communicate, there is simply no way to make an informed guess. It's simply prejudice. As a result, the Drake equation can have any value from 'billions and billions' to zero. An expression that can mean anything means nothing.

– Excerpted from 'Extraterrestrials cause Global Warming', an address given at the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, in 2003 by the late Michael Crichton, medical doctor and popular novelist.

The unravelling of a cherished myth

DARWIN, DAWKINS AND DECEIT

Reviewed by DR BRIAN POLLARD



John Lennox, who is a Professor of Mathematics at Oxford University, wrote his book as a scientific refutation of the claims of Richard Dawkins, whom he regards as representing atheistic scientists everywhere, about the universe and its origins. Dawkins' position is that any person who claims not to believe in (Darwinian) evolution is either 'ignorant, stupid or insane,' thus insulting thousands of his colleagues at a stroke. Another, Peter Atkins, thought that 'there is no reason to suppose that science cannot deal with every aspect of existence.' Gould, however, cautioned 'science simply cannot (by its legitimate methods) adjudicate the issue of God's possible existence,' implying that if scientists claim to have eliminated God, they must have used illegitimate scientific methods.

Lennox's aim was to 'examine whether we and the universe with its profusion of galactic beauty and subtle biological complexity is nothing but the products of irrational forces acting on mindless matter and energy in an unguided way'. Since the self-styled New Atheists or Brights argue that there is strong scientific evidence for atheism (against Gould's *caveat*), they should not object to others using scientific evidence to help arrive at a different metaphysical position, namely theistic design. In particular, he finds it curious 'that those who claim there is no such thing as truth expect me to believe that what they say is true'. He makes effective use of citations in the scientific literature by those who think like Dawkins but which let the cat (of deception) out of the bag.

He discusses Intelligent Design, a concept which was rubbished when it first appeared, on the grounds that it was simply 'crypto-creationism' in

God's Undertaker: Has Science buried God?
by John Lennox, Lion Hudson plc.,
paperback 224 pp., \$24.95

disguise. But Thomas Nagel, an atheistic professor of philosophy, argues that ID is very different from 'creation science' and that he has become 'sceptical of the claims of traditional evolutionary theory to be the whole story about the history of life'. His view is that 'the presently available evidence comes nothing close to establishing the sufficiency of the mechanisms to account for the entire evolution of life'. A necessary distinction has to be made between microevolution, which refers to the adaptation of species to their environment over time (an adaptation that is known to be just as easily reversed when conditions change) and macroevolution. The latter refers to such topics as the origin of the universe,

the origin of life and the origin of the extraordinary complexity of nature and human intelligence, with its ability to conceive knowledge, truth and beauty.

Dawkins regards religious faith as an evil to be eliminated because he says it is invariably blind, having no evidentiary basis. That is his end point, leaving him culpably unaware of or not wishing to explore, the fact that Christians insist that faith and evidence are inseparable. His ultimate rejection of religious evidence is based on his prejudice that it could not possibly be true. Francis Collins, head of the Human Genome Project, responds that Dawkins' depiction 'does not describe the faith of most serious believers in history, nor even those of my personal acquaintance'. In labelling religious faith as blind, Dawkins seriously undermines his own credibility, in light of the abundant scientific evidence already available and now extensively elaborated in this book.

In a chapter devoted to the study of science itself, we read that the concept of the scientific ideal of cool, rational and independent observations leading to unbiased and dispassionate conclusions is now a simplistic myth, if it was not always so. Scientists, like others, bring their own preconceptions to bear on every situation. With remarkable candour, Richard Lowent, an atheist Harvard geneticist, stated in 1997 'Our willingness to accept scientific claims that are against common sense is the key to an understanding of the real struggle between science and the supernatural. We take the side of science in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs...because we have a prior commitment...to materialism. We are forced by our *a priori* adherence to...a set of concepts that produce natural explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated'. And then, to drive the point home, 'Moreover, that materialism

Europe's Dilemma

MUCH IS MADE of European multiculturalism, the continent's willingness to allow Muslims from the Middle East, Pakistan, and Turkey to live separate lives without assimilating fully into European society. But such "tolerance" reflects in part a fear of radical Islam and terrorism. It is almost as if the more Europe takes pride in its own multiculturalism, the larger its ethnic ghettos expand — and the more its native populations grow bitter against the foreign-born.

- Victor Davis Hanson, 'History Returns to Europe,' *National Review on line*, June 3, 2010

is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine foot in the door'. Such comments go far to explain their views on the origin of matter and of life itself.

One way of making complex things seem simple is to create an impression that they can be reduced to simple propositions after all, and that simple explanations will then suffice. Dawkins states 'The universe is *nothing but* a collection of atoms in motion, human beings are *simply* machines for propagating DNA, and the propagation of DNA is a *self-sustaining* process. It is every living object's *sole* reason for living'. Francis Crick writes 'You, your joys and your sorrows, your sense of personal identity and free will are *nothing more than* the behaviour of a vast assembly of nerve cells'. How differently these statements read when the italicised words are removed.

John Polkinghorne comments 'If Crick's thesis is true, we could never know it'. It relegates 'our experiences of beauty, moral obligation and religious encounter to the epiphenomenal scrap-heap'. Using the tool of massive reductionism is one of the ways unaided science can attempt to derive rationality from irrationality.

Science has now demonstrated that 'Cosmology on an unimaginably large scale, and elementary particle physics on an incredibly small scale, have gradually laid bare for us the spectacularly beautiful structure of the universe in which we live'. This prompted Einstein to observe 'The most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible,' to which Lennox adds 'The very concept of the intelligibility of the universe presupposes the existence of rationality capable of recognising that intelligibility'.

What responses do these discoveries bring from the *Brights*? E. Tryton writes 'Our universe is *simply* one of those things that happen from time to time'. Peter Atkins believes that 'Space-time generates its own dust in the process of *its own self-assembly*' (my emphases), to which Keith Ward responds that it is 'logically impossible for a cause to bring about some effect without already being in existence'. More intelligent scientists, such as Stephen Hawking, are moved to observe that, for example, 'a mathematical model cannot answer the question of why there should be a

The Copts of Egypt

THE NUMBER of Copts is not yet certain. Local government statistics speak of 6 million whereas the Coptic Church speaks of 12 million. The figure of 10 million is certainly closer to the truth. Clashes between Muslim and Coptic communities are frequent. The Egyptians are the most religious people in the world in terms of pious practice, but also in terms of bigotry. The Copts feel despised and deprived of many rights, especially their freedom of worship (as demonstrated in the difficulty of building a church) and freedom of conscience. They occupy an insignificant place in society and government. As an example: out of 454 Egyptian parliamentarians, only three are Christian, or less than 1%, while the percentage of Christians in Egypt is at least 10%.

- Source: Mercatornet.

universe for the model to describe,' while Lennox, in one of his pithy asides, writes 'The world of strict naturalism, in which clever mathematical laws all by themselves bring the universe and life into existence, is pure (and poor) fiction'.

The so-called fine-tuning which estimates the staggering odds against the concurrence of so many critical factors, at the right moment and in the right proportions, to permit the universe to come into existence at all, is dealt with at suitable length. As just one example, to produce the exact amount of entropy (a measure of disorder) at the moment of origin of the universe, Sir Roger Penrose calculated that the 'Creator's aim must have been accurate to 1 part in 10 to the power of 10¹²³, a figure greater than the number of all the particles in the universe. Astrophysicist Hugh Ross, taking most factors into consideration, made a rough but conservative calculation that the chance of finding one planet such as ours in the universe was about 1 in 10³⁰. An alternative suggestion of parallel universes has been proposed, for which no evidence exists but which, even if true, begs the question of their origins. Philosopher Richard Swinburne thought 'To postulate (large numbers of other) universes, rather than one God to explain the orderliness of our universe, seems the height of irrationality'.

Hoyle admitted that nothing had shaken his atheism as much as these enormous odds against chance playing any real part in the existence of life. He concluded that 'there are no blind forces in nature worth talking about'.

Though the living world is replete with mechanisms of mind-bending complexity, ultra-Darwinists are warned

not to be fooled by the 'appearance' of design - it was not designed, it was evolved. They are reminded by one professor 'Evolution is accepted, not because it can be observed or proved by logical argument, but because the alternative is clearly incredible'. Though Dawkins would have it that 'natural selection accounts for the form and existence of all living things,' logic tells us that random mutation and natural selection have no innate creative power. Postulating an unobserved Designer is no more unscientific than postulating unobserved macroevolutionary steps. Indeed, experiments with *E.coli* bacteria over 25,000 generations have shown the opposite, namely that the strain steadily evolves rather than evolves over time.

The apparently simple question of how life began remains unanswered, even after all the rigorous scientific endeavour of recent decades. All Dawkins and his co-Darwinians can produce are wishful speculations. We now know that the cell structure is essentially the same for all living systems on earth from microbes to mammals. The meaning of the genetic code is the same while size, structure and component design are virtually identical in all cells, and there is not the slightest hint of an evolutionary sequence among all the incredibly diverse cells on earth.

Not only is the origin of life still obscure, but further scientific discoveries raise the bar to comprehension ever higher. One huge difficulty is how to account for the enormous complexity of proteins, the building blocks of life and the controllers of every cellular function,

New Atheist Noise Machine at Work

FOR THE SAKE of argument, let us set aside questions about the truth of religion vs. the truth of science. Suppose there is no such thing as religious truth, as Richard Dawkins argued in *The God Delusion*. Allow that the "New Atheist Noise Machine," as American University communications professor Matt Nisbet calls it, has a privileged grasp of the truth. Even with these concessions, it still appears that the New Atheists are behaving like a boorish bunch of intellectual bullies. There is something profoundly un-American about demanding that people give up cherished, or even uncherished, beliefs just because they don't comport with science. And the demand seems even more peculiar when it is applied so indiscriminately as to include religious believers with Nobel Prizes. What sort of atheist complains that a fellow citizen doing world-class science must abandon his or her religion to be a good scientist?

- Karl W. Giberson, USA Today, May 27, 2010

via DNA. Twenty amino acids are involved in making proteins and all must be in the right place to enable every protein to function as required. Since living organisms contain hundreds of thousands of proteins, the chance of producing these by chance are calculated at more than $10^{10,000}$ to 1. Sir Fred Hoyle likened these odds to the chance of a tornado sweeping through a junk yard and producing a Boeing jet aircraft.

But doesn't the fossil record support evolutionary theory? Stephen Jay Gould said 'The extreme rarity of transitional forms in the fossil record is one of the trade secrets of palaeontology,' and Niles Eldridge of the American Museum of Natural History wrote 'We palaeontologists have said that the history of life supports (gradual adaptive change), knowing all the while that it does not'. Since evolutionary theory depends on gradual development over many generations to explain the origin of new species, what is the position now, in view of such comments? Colin Patterson is quite definite 'I will lay it on the line - there is not one such fossil (ancestral or transitional) for which one could make a watertight argument'. So much for the Tree of Life beloved of the evolutionists, purporting to show all species arising from an original common stock.

Lennox deals extensively with the complexity and functions of DNA in a fascinating chapter which had this reader reeling at the wondrous reality of its design. Of course, he was not

original in this revelation but it never ceases to amaze. He surmised that if we went to Mars and found a long sequence of piles of titanium cubes in a line extending to the horizon, each pile containing the number of cubes in the same ascending order as the prime numbers, we would surely conclude that an intelligent input was involved, whatever may have been its nature. But if something much more complex, say the DNA molecule, was discovered, a naturalist scientist would presumably conclude that it was the result of chance and necessity.

When we meet Dawkins saying 'You don't need to be a mathematician or a physicist to calculate that an eye or a haemoglobin molecule would take from here to infinity to self-assemble by sheer luck,' we are at once keen to know how he explains such things by unguided natural selection alone. He postulates that the process is a kind of cumulative sieving or selection, where the results of one sieving process are fed into the next. This produces a kind of orderliness that can be thought of as a combination of chance and necessity. Without here going into such an explanation, Lennox is able to show that Dawkins has introduced into the argument two mechanisms that bear every sign of an intelligent mind, so that the mechanisms that are supposed to be produced are already contained within the organism. What he has really shown is that sufficiently complex systems such as languages of any type,

including the genetic code of DNA, are not explicable without the pre-injection of the information to be sought into the system.

This learned book of over 200 pages, the product of a fine intellect, contains a wealth of valuable scientific information, both central and peripheral to its main theme, most of which could not be included here. It is not only a worthy addition to the number of similar books which have already been reviewed in this journal, it is probably the best to date. A single fault stands out - the index is most inadequate.

Lennox towers over the comparatively puny figure of Dawkins and, as all respectful debaters should, he has the grace to assume the highest motives in his opponent, whenever possible. Regrettably, however, events subsequent to the writing of his book have shed further light on Dawkins the man, light provided by himself.

In 2006, Dawkins said 'I am utterly fed up with the respect we have been brainwashed into bestowing upon religion'. By 28 March 2010, he had clearly had enough. He wrote a piece in the *Washington Post*, following publicity given to sexual abuse by some Catholic priests and allegations that, as Cardinal Ratzinger, Pope Benedict XVI had failed to act as he should have, allegations which were effectively answered though the answers were almost totally ignored by the media.

In that article, which was copied around the world, he referred to the Pope as 'a leering old villain in a frock, who spent decades conspiring behind closed doors for the position he now holds,' and to the Catholic Church as that 'whole profiteering, woman-fearing, guilt-gorging, truth-hating, child-raping institution, while it tumbles, amid a stench of incense and a rain of tourist-kitsch sacred hearts and preposterously crowned virgins, about his ears'.

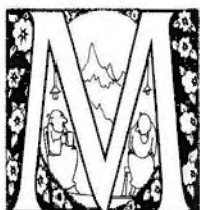
Dawkins has completely removed any future need for anyone to wonder why a Divine foot cannot be allowed in the door; and why it has nothing to do with science.

DR BRIAN POLLARD is a retired anaesthetist/palliative care physician with an interest in bio-ethics. Most of his professional life was spent in private practice as a specialist anaesthetist. He was Director of anaesthetics at Concord Hospital NSW, and founding Director of the Palliative Care Service there.

Lord Macaulay communes across the generations

COMPULSIVELY READABLE

By R. J. STOVE



MACAULAY – or, to give him his full name and peerage, Thomas Babington Macaulay, first Baron Macaulay – died exactly a century and a half ago. No historian who ever lived has aroused a greater range of emotions, from deep love to wild hate. The deep love became evident in his own day, when his *History of England* and his numerous essay collections achieved a commercial success now associated exclusively with supermarket tabloids and with Oprah-endorsed chick-lit.

Affection also characterised both his chief biographers, namely, his nephew G.O. Trevelyan (whose *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* appeared in 1876) and his spiritual heir Sir Arthur Bryant (whose mostly admiring, though intermittently censorious, single-volume account *Macaulay* dates from 1932).

Throughout the former British Empire, schoolteachers long accorded Macaulay's name a reverence that in classrooms of 2009 is confined to Gandhi, JFK, Martin Luther King, and Nelson Mandela. Even Ignatius Reilly, the ferociously anti-Protestant hero of John Kennedy Toole's *A Confederacy of Dunces*, quoted with approval the Protestant Macaulay at least once.

This firm admiration existed alongside equally firm detraction. After Macaulay's death Matthew Arnold, never a guru to stand idly by when there was a mindless slogan in need of publicising or a literary reputation impudent enough to arise without his help, bestowed on Macaulay a downright demonological role as 'the great apostle of the Philistines.'

Arnold thereby introduced into popular currency a noun as devoid

of meaning, even in his own time, as 'fascist', 'Islamofascist,' and 'racist' are nowadays. In 1931 Cambridge history professor Sir Herbert Butterfield, who differed from Arnold in having a genuine philosophical impulse, devoted his renowned pamphlet *The Whig Interpretation of History* to criticising triumphalist historical narratives in general, and by implication Macaulay's own. With his insights, Butterfield – who, it so happens, shared Macaulay's Protestantism – helped clear the air, and he always paid Macaulay's outlook the compliment of seriously arguing with it.

Very different was the personal vendetta waged against Macaulay soon afterward by one Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill, who

seethed at Macaulay's refusal to deify Churchill's own forebear, the Duke of Marlborough. Churchill taxed Macaulay with having 'vilified Marlborough's early life in order by contrast to make the glories of his great period stand out more vividly.' Ancestor-worship is doubtless an honourable enough trait, but in writing *Marlborough: His Life and Times* (1933-38), Churchill had no compunction about serving up cartoon historiography far more objectionably shrill than anything ever perpetrated by his intended target.

A 1958 survey – *The Jacobite Rebellion*, by Anglo-Irish historian Sir Charles Petrie – shows how Churchill accused James II of displaying, in 1682, physical cowardice extending to manslaughter. Churchill's accusation

Bide Your Time

THE BEST START that a leader can have is a widespread sense of the need for strong leadership. When the executives start muttering, "If only we had any policy at all we'd be fine", "If those idiots upstairs could make up their minds about anything we'd be able to get down to work", "How can I give a production forecast if no one knows what we're supposed to be making?" and finally "What we need is someone to come in and bang all their heads together" ... that is the time for the outsider to step in. It was the aimlessness and corruption of the French Directory that cleared the ground for Napoleon, the division and conflict of the triumvirate that conditioned the Roman Republicans to the dictatorship of Augustus, the exhaustion after interminable baronial wars that made the English willing to accept the stern measures of Henry II (after Stephen) Edward I (after Coeur de Lion and John and Henry III) and Henry VII (after the Wars of the Roses). In that sort of situation, not only are people willing, even anxious, to accept the sort of firmness they would have resisted in more confident times: they are waiting with a halo in their hands for any head that looks worthy to receive it.

- Antony Jay, *Management and Machiavelli*,
Hodder and Stoughton, 1967, pp. 152.

rested on no more secure a basis than a politically motivated letter written 60 years after the event by Marlborough's widow, and it wilfully ignored three eyewitness reports on James' behaviour.

Whilst reviewers at the time were inconsiderate enough to point out Churchill's reckless agenda, no such scruples afflicted American Churchill cultists. Leo Strauss – whose own knowledge of English politics in the late Stuart era could have been fitted on the back of a postage stamp and still have left room for his name and address – dubbed Churchill's filial *agitprop* 'the greatest historical work written in our century.' The best that non-Churchill-cultists can say for *Marlborough: His Life and Times* is that at least its words are Churchill's own, whereas 'his' *History of the Second World War* is now recognised (thanks to David Reynolds' superbly researched 2004 analysis *In Command of History*) as having been mainly ghost-written, when not simply plagiarised from Rear-Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison (who threatened to sue). Meanwhile, such invective as Arnold's and Churchill's prompts the question: Will the real Macaulay please stand up?

The real Macaulay's career consisted of broadly disinterested public service and little else. Born in 1800, he never married; and if he had a love-life or even a lust-life, he kept it dark. Bryant refers scornfully to debunkers 'seeking ... evidence of sexual perversities and scandals, rather as little dogs seek out truffles,' yet one doubts if any canine,

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however industrious, could ever dig up vices which would incriminate Macaulay.

Young Tom loved the sound of words as few other children do. When but four years old, and having been scalded by spilt coffee, he responded to his hostess's concern with the assurance: 'Thank you, madam, the agony is abated.' Someone who talked like this at the age of four could hardly be tongue-tied as an adult. From his redoubtable father, Zachary Macaulay – statistician, veteran anti-slavery activist, and erstwhile governor of Sierra Leone – he inherited evangelical fervour, an exalted conception of duty, and at the same time an 18th-century tough-

-mindedness that precluded such vague pious uplift as Woodrow Wilson subsequently taught the world. He attended Cambridge, to little effect, since he had already read so much that ordinary students bored him witless.

No other great writer in the English pantheon has surpassed Macaulay for sheer learning. Milton alone came close. Macaulay knew at first hand all the surviving productions of all the leading Greek and Roman authors. Naturally he felt bound to study them in the original languages (no nonsense about depending on mere English translations). He also knew every major French author, recent or ancient. Again, he studied those authors in the original tongue. During adulthood he acquired enough German to read Goethe and Schiller. He could read Luis de Camoens's epic 16th-century poem *The Lusians* in Camoens's own Portuguese. On the Elizabethans and their Italian contemporaries, he had wider expertise still. When he said of Milton's *Comus* that 'It is as far superior to *The Faithful Shepherdess* as *The Faithful Shepherdess* is to the *Aminta* or the *Aminta* to the *Pastor Fido*', he assumed every reader would recall these three works as having been created by, respectively, John Fletcher (1579-1625), Torquato Tasso (1544-95), and Giovanni Battista Guarini (1538-1612).

Within Macaulay's world-view, 'dumbing down' existed neither as a phrase nor as a concept. 'Every schoolboy', runs one of his more sanguine pronouncements, 'knows who imprisoned Montezuma, and who strangled Atahualpa.' Every schoolboy in *Beverly Hills 90210*, one wonders? Every schoolboy even in Macaulay's own lifetime, when many schools' curricula comprised no more than elementary spelling, arithmetic, and Bible classes, all punctuated by near-homicidal floggings? That said, it should be noted afresh that Macaulay never lacked readers in his own day. And publishers ate up his output, even as they privately felt a certain alarm at his prose's sheer authoritative exuberance. One of his very first patrons, the *Edinburgh Review's* editor Francis Jeffrey, marvelled: 'The more I think, the less I can conceive where you picked up that style.'

Vocations to the Priesthood

Figures from the Church's Statistic Yearbook for 1997 were given in a June 4, 2000 Zenit News Agency report, which stated, "In 1978 there were 63,882 seminarians; at present there are 108,517, an increase of 69.87 percent. The increase in Africa and Asia, in fact, is incredible. Over the last twenty years, these two continents have seen an increase of 238.50 percent and 124.01 percent, respectively." Over the past twenty years, vocations have increased in every continent around the globe. In America, the number of seminarians has increased from 22,011 to 35,000 in the last two decades.

- Jason Evert, *This Rock*
(San Diego: Catholic Answers Inc., January 2002).

In Macaulay's Britain, libel legislation had yet to be passed, and duelling had grown unfashionable. Thus, British periodicals' warfare attained an *ad hominem* belligerence which would never again be witnessed among Anglophones until the 1930s.

Macaulay's antagonists, when in benign mood, contented themselves with misspelling his name 'Babington' as 'Babbletongue'. Harsher and more typical was the ultra-Tory magazine *Blackwood's*, which in its October 1827 number expressed for Macaulay the loftiest contempt: 'We scarcely ever met with a more striking specimen of frothy, shallow, pointless feeble declamation – of puerile, low, scurrilous "sound and fury, signifying nothing"'. When Wordsworth died, *Blackwood's* obituary notice called the Lake District poet 'a fat ugly cur'. If we must sometimes regret the way Macaulay dished it out, we should remember that Macaulay also needed to take it.

Perhaps the zenith of Macaulay's dishing-out propensities came with his onslaught upon J.W. Croker, a Tory boss whose slide from moderately talented scholar to party-political goon – bungling party-political goon, at that – anticipates with eerie perfection the metamorphosis of some academics in our own time. Croker ill-advisedly released, in 1831, a new edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, with annotations as lavish as they were inaccurate. Macaulay, who had forgotten more about Dr Johnson (and much else) than Croker would ever learn, let him have it from the opening sentence:

'This work has greatly disappointed us. ... We are sorry to be obliged to say that the merits of Mr. Croker's performance are on a par with those of a certain leg of mutton on which Dr. Johnson dined, while travelling from London to Oxford, and which he, with characteristic energy, pronounced to be "as bad as bad could be, ill fed, ill killed, ill kept, and ill dressed." This edition is ill compiled, ill arranged, ill written, and ill printed. Nothing in the work has astonished us so much as the ignorance or carelessness of Mr Croker with respect to facts and dates. Many of his blunders are such as we should be surprised to hear any well educated gentleman commit,

The Crusades

The Crusaders or the Christians who fought the war did not pretend to have done it based on the Gospels: instead, they did it in defence of Christianity (or so they thought), or for the defence of their national state, or for the defence of what they considered to be their rights. That is to say, as men belonging to a culture, a nation, a tradition, they went to war. They did not act in the name of the Gospel.

- Samir Khalil Samir, SJ and Wafik Nasry, SJ, *111 Questions on Islam: Interviews of Samir Khalil Samir, conducted by Giorgio Paolucci and Camille Eld, Ignatius Press, 2002, pp. 71-72.*

even in conversation. The tomes absolutely swarm with misstatements into which the editor never would have fallen, if he had taken the slightest pains to investigate the truth of his assertions, or if he had even been well acquainted with the book on which he undertook to comment. We will give a few instances.'

And give them Macaulay does, on subjects as diverse as Juvenal, Thucydides, Suetonius, Herodotus, Demosthenes, Pitt the Elder, the 17th-century Scottish Royalist general Montrose, and the correct translation of the Greek term *philokerdes*.

One might wonder what the polymathic Macaulay did when neither reading nor writing. The answer is, not a lot. His tenure as parliamentarian, and later as minister – he held cabinet rank in the governments of two Whig leaders, Lord Melbourne

and Lord John Russell – allowed him expansive leisure for his studies, politics being then considered a hobby for gentlemen rather than a full-time job. Though no debater, he gained bipartisan respect as an orator. Future Tory Premier Sir Robert Peel, a lifelong opponent, admitted after one Macaulay utterance: 'Portions of that speech were as beautiful as anything I ever heard or read.'

In 1835 Macaulay, crushed by the death of his sister Margaret, wrote to his closest friend Thomas Ellis: 'What a blessing it is to love books as I love them – to be able to converse with the dead, and to live amidst the unreal.' Not the kind of reflection to be heard from the lips of modern policy wonks. Eventually even his undemanding administrative duties came to annoy him; and in his last years, worn down by cardiac trouble, he would have endorsed the sentiments that Evelyn Waugh confided to his diary in 1943: 'I ... don't want to influence opinions or events, or expose humbug or anything of that kind. I don't want to be of service to anyone or anything. I simply want to do my work as an artist.'

Of course Macaulay the artist had his flaws. When he wrote, opportunities for archival research in the present-day sense had hardly begun. These days, any teenage halfwit with Google access can trawl through more 17th-century primary sources in an hour than Macaulay could have obtained in a decade. To cite Bryant:

'At the time when Macaulay⁴ was working, English historical scholarship was at its lowest ebb.



Those who blame him for his neglect of documents might as justly censure Napoleon for failing to use machine-guns at Waterloo. ... Of technical training for his task he had scarcely any, for there was then scarcely any to be had?

The miracle is not that Macaulay made mistakes, or that he glorified King William III with a zest incredible to us, who have access to more data about William's political corruption and erotic perversions than Macaulay ever knew or than we ever wanted to know. Rather, the miracle is that despite his weaknesses he remains compulsively readable. And at times profound, because his summary of the historian's function packs as much wisdom into one sentence as others have dragged out over several dozen pages:

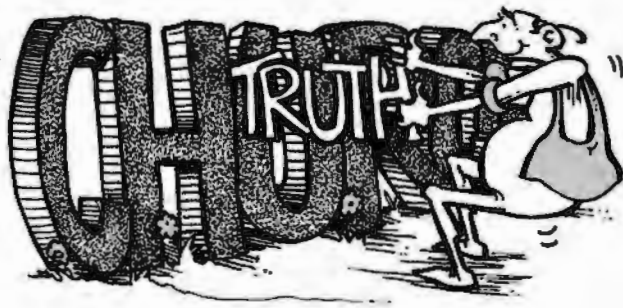
'The real use of ... studying the annals of past times, is to preserve men from the contraction of mind which those can hardly escape whose sole communion is with one generation and one neighbourhood, who arrive at conclusions by means of an induction not sufficiently copious, and who therefore constantly confound exceptions with rules, and accidents with essential properties.'

For all his biases, Macaulay sought the truth. A thinker who, like Macaulay, risked ostracism by rebuking Queen Victoria to her face - when the sovereign referred to her 'ancestor' James II, the tactless Macaulay shot back: 'Not Your Majesty's ancestor, Your Majesty's predecessor' - would hardly have taken the 20th century's blood-drenched Caesars at their own ethical rating, had he lived to witness them.

Before he could attain his hopes of finishing the *History of England*, Macaulay died, on 28 December 1859. No latter-day chronicler can equal Bryant's exquisite closing paragraph:

'They found him sitting upright in his chair, with a book still open at his side. The heart had stopped, and the historian had become part of that which he had made it his business to record.'

R. J. STOVE lives in Melbourne. A slightly different version of this article appeared in the December 2009 issue of *The American Conservative*.



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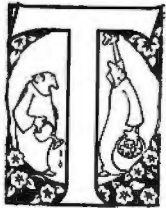
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A guiding hand through the labyrinth of the global financial crisis

SUBPRIME HOUSE OF CARDS

By Patrick Quirk



THE SUBPRIME lending crisis of 2007-2008 may be the best example we will see in our lifetime of the difficulties faced in assigning responsibility for globalized financial near-catastrophe. Citizens, regulators and governments are keenly interested in allocating responsibility for the crisis and in finding ways to lessen its effects, as well as pursuing malefactors.

Finding the “fault” in the systems of subprime, and of those behind it, will take a great deal of energy and wisdom. There can be no doubt that greed, at many levels, played an important part in the bubble and its burst. So too did the “unknown unknowns” of economics in an imperfect world. But exactly who were the players and the “game” of mortgage securitization? There were at least eight groups central to the process:

1. Borrowers. Unfortunately the “check a pulse, qualify for a mortgage” era led into the strange world of the “Ninja borrower” - “No Income, Job, or Assets” - and the mirage of endless credit. Borrowers who take out such loans on the basis of their good credit may be described as “prime” and those with lesser credit, “subprime”. Political pressure for “affordable housing” and the American dream of home ownership added to a bubble and arguably hurt those who were meant to benefit the most, including minority groups.
2. Originators and brokers. Originators are banks or bank-like institutions that “originate” loans in the sense that they are directly involved in lending

money to the borrowers described above. Examples included Countrywide Financial, the largest U.S. mortgage lender. Originators earn fee income when they write loans, but such loans are then on-sold as part of the securitization process; in simplest terms, they (usually) do not retain any substantial interest in the “bricks and mortar” against which the loan is secured. Mortgage brokers assist originators by finding new borrowers and thereby earn a commission. This gives brokers an incentive to increase the number of loans written.

3. Loan ‘servicers’. These specialist companies often take over the day-to-day running of a portfolio of mortgage loans. For a fee they will become contractually responsible for collecting loan repayments from consumers/borrowers, for overseeing collateral, and perhaps undertaking a foreclosure if that becomes necessary. It is not uncommon for there to be many servicers performing different

roles over the life of a loan.

4. Ratings agencies. Ratings agencies have been aptly named the platypuses of the financial world because of their hybrid nature: They are “private entities that wield public power.” In 1975 the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) designated them as Nationally Recognized Statistical Rating Organizations (NRSROs) and they play an important role in the financial world: they tell investors about risk by providing a “rating”. Their role in the magic of the asset-backed securities market was to apply their skills to the bonds produced when a securitization took place.
5. Investment banks. Investment banks provide a staging point for lenders seeking to sell off their mortgages. Their basic role is to make deals. In the context of subprime, their role is to “sell through” the mortgage loans to willing purchasers for appropriate prices, depending on the quality of the loans. Quality of the underlying housing loans will vary, as will the quality of the underlying asset (the house itself), and so there arose an incentive for investment banks to “slice” up parcels of loans of differing quality and to sell them at appropriate prices. Higher quality bonds (typically called “CDOs” - collateralized debt obligations) are easier to sell than are the risky lower grade “toxic waste” issues. The latter are sold in a variety of ways, including hedge funds, which in some cases seem to ‘bet’ on rising real estate prices to increase the value of

Not just weight loss

THESE forty days [of Lent] instituted by the apostles should be given over to fasting which means not simply the reduction in our food, but the elimination of our evil habits.

- Pope St Leo the Great, *Sermon 6 'On Lent'*. From the Roman Breviary, second reading in the Office of Matins for the Thursday after Ash Wednesday.

their holding, generate positive ratings, and attract more (risky, but high return) investment. The actual operation of such hedge funds has been likened to that of a uniquely designed, one-off, high performance motorcar whose inner workings are kept secret, even from its ultimate purchasers. It should also be remembered that the money that is actually raised by floating the “bonds-linked-to-real-estate-lending” in the first place goes back into the very same housing market to provide more loans, thereby supporting an already rising market.

6. Supervisory bodies and accounting standards. The regulatory quilt that covers the above players is rich in variety and jurisdiction. Inside the U.S. market, the first line to draw is between commercial banks (e.g. JP Morgan Chase, Citigroup), which are overseen by the Federal Reserve System, and the investment banks (e.g. Lehman Brothers, Goldman Sachs), which are partly overseen by the Securities Exchange Commission (“SEC”). Local regulators in other countries include the Financial Services Authority (Britain), the *Autorite des Marchés Financiers* (France), BaFin (Germany), and CNMV (Spain). There is also a level of “soft” regulation in place via International Financial Accounting Standards and what is known as the “mark to market” or “fair value” standards. In the USA in 2007 a division of the SEC known as the FASB (Financial Accounting Standards Board) also applied this standard in a definitive move away from the more traditional “book value” accounting. Because these standards mark to market, once the market (for, say, CDOs) dries up or contracts, they must be written down to low or zero value thus precipitating potential panic in the markets.
7. The U.S. real estate market.

Failed Nations

THE REAL TROUBLE with Somalia, is not that it is a failed state, but that it is a failed nation. It has never developed the kind of secular, territorial, and law-minded loyalty that makes it possible for a country to shape itself into a nation-state, and not simply an assembly of competing tribes and families. The same is true of many other places where Islamists are produced. Even if, as in the case of Pakistan, these countries function like states, they are often failures as nations.

- Roger Scruton, 'The Defense of the West: How to Respond to the Islamist Challenge'.

Some aspects of the U.S. real estate market and related lending practices deserve particular attention in light of the subprime crisis. First, all players appeared to be in the thrall of an unrealistic expectation that real estate prices would continue to rise without stopping. Second, the use of short-term (“honeymoon”) interest rates to attract borrowers who were incapable of sustaining the higher rate when it cut in. Third, the use of 100% (or greater) loan-to-value (LTV) ratios allowing borrowers to purchase homes with very little money down in the (vain) hope that rising prices would provide a cushion and effectively make up for the want of a deposit. Finally, prepayment penalties were employed which made it nearly impossible for borrowers to re-finance once the mortgage burden became too heavy.

8. Miscellaneous inhabitants of the U.S. real estate market. These include real estate developers, homebuilders, title companies, and loan brokers. This large group has been described as the

“Homebuilder-Realtor-Mortgage Banker Industrial Complex” and undertook to create “a mythology that said you could not have enough housing and it was up to the government to make sure that happened.”

So what is securitization? Essentially, it is the process by which loan risks are distributed beyond their originators. It has been variously described as “factoring on steroids,” a form of “alchemy”, and even as fiscally “seductive”. References to drug use, sex, and a means of manufacturing gold from base metals are frighteningly appropriate given the *consequences* that have been observed to flow from the attempt.

The process of securitization is relatively simple: transform money flows that originate in the mortgage market (in this case, housing) into bonds in such a way as to lower the overall cost of borrowing for a corporation debtor. Examples of the process abound in the financial and legal textbook literature. An essential part of any securitization is the creation of a “bankruptcy remote” legal entity that will hold the assets on which the bonds are based. These assets could be credit card receivables, home mortgage payments, motorcar loans, sports-venue revenues, income from pubs, and have even included revenues from intellectual property rights to music.

“Bankruptcy remoteness” is a (somewhat courageous) lawyer term for a distinctive attribute of a purposely created legal entity (called inter alia, an SPV, a Special Purpose Vehicle) that lawyers believe is quite unlikely to ever become subject to the claims of creditors in the event of bankruptcy of the originator (bank). By isolating the “assets” from the “originator” the collateral is in one sense “purified” of the liabilities of the originator (lending bank) and so (theoretically) of greater value to the lender or bondholder whose money is secured against the asset.

If the originating bank goes bankrupt, its securitized assets will not be dragged into the mess because the bank no longer “owns” the assets – they have been sold on to other

investors. The downside for the bank's other (non-secured) creditors is that they no longer have access to these assets and so bear a greater risk in the event of bankruptcy. It bears noting that Enron made significant use of SPVs and off-balance-sheet companies in its accounting and business structures.

Apportioning blame in a financial crisis is difficult, but in the case of the subprime debacle the imagination is stretched beyond normal limits. Corporations notoriously have "no body to kick and no soul to damn" and this suggests simplicity in their nature. But while there is no shortage of corporate and regulatory "bogeys" in the myriad of financial products affected by the crisis, the complex effects of the subprime crisis suggest very complex causes. We will attempt to refine those causes.

In *Economy and Society*, Max Weber wrote that a bureaucratic discipline "is nothing but the consistently rationalized, methodically prepared and exact execution of the received order, in which all personal criticism is unconditionally suspended and the actor is unswervingly and exclusively set for carrying out the command."

If we apply this idea to the securitization factories (bureaucracies) of the investment banks that "sold" these financial products we indeed find a kind of bureaucracy at work. A bureaucracy of banks, brokers,

regulators and originators, all of whom stood to profit from the trade and none of whom had any interest in pointing out the weaknesses of the core concept of bankruptcy remoteness. As Zeitlin has put it "[A] bureaucracy, no less than a factory, tends to mould a person's psycho-physical being in an effort to adapt it to the demands of the organization. In short, bureaucracy 'functionalizes' human beings." Put another way, the idea that one can enter commerce and expect to trade without any (or almost without any) possibility of going broke is silly, and ought not to be contemplated by any sensible economic actor. Not even governments expect to trade forever without citizen support (in the form of taxes) and the only way one could come to such a conclusion would be to (i) focus almost exclusively on the procedure (method, alchemy) of securitization at the expense of its economically limited (illogical?) substance, and then (ii) implement such alchemy through a form of bureaucracy thereby avoiding exposure to independent reason.

The form of bureaucracy is perhaps novel – stretching as it does across many banks, brokers and institutions – but it is arguably real and something more than a mere collective hallucination or collaboration in financial fraud. The fact that it was government support (Fannie Mae) that first led to the secondary mortgage

market only adds to the argument that, once privatized, such transactional structures should be subject to the full force of the market at large, and will be, despite the (illusory) collective wisdom maintaining that it will not.

A few other criticisms flow from the above. Firstly, we must consider the separation of the asset from the originator in the overall securitization process. Todd Davenport, writing in *American Banker* observed recently that "Whether the government or investors force it, change is coming to the country's credit markets. A key element of that change will be reuniting asset originators with some responsibility for their products. Their dissociation emphasized volume rather than quality, put fees in front of interest and principal repayment, and further commoditized lending."

This bifurcation of asset and ownership is reminiscent of the collective farms of socialist Russia – if everybody is responsible for the asset then nobody really cares what happens to it. When that asset has been on-sold a number of times, the incentives to check credit-worthiness of borrowers, or the quality of the asset, becomes less and less until the critical point is reached and disaster falls, perhaps more through carelessness than any active adverse event.

Second, there is the problem of blurred exposure and spreading risk. Quoting *American Banker* once again: "The initial crisis, though precipitated by delinquencies and traditional credit problems, spread because investors could not draw borders around their exposure." This raises the problem of market players' obvious inability to measure their risk in meaningful ways – an inherent malfunction in the feedback that markets are supposed to supply to their participants. One is here reminded in part of the early forms of English life insurance, which degenerated into a form of gambling based on the life expectancies of (mostly) foreign monarchs.

A policy could be taken out over the life of almost anybody in an attempt to insure against the "risk" of untimely death. Newspapers were known to publish the odds on how long a notable

Illusions and the Art of Wonder

THERE'S SOMETHING that remains barbarous in educated people, and lately I've more and more had the feeling that we are non-wondering primitives. And why is it that we no longer marvel at these technological miracles? They've become the external facts of every life. We've all been to the university, we've had introductory courses in everything, and therefore we have persuaded ourselves that if we had the time to apply ourselves to these scientific marvels, we would understand them. But of course that's an illusion. It couldn't happen. Even among people who have had careers in science. They know no more about how it all works than we do. So we are in the position of savage men who, however, have been educated into believing that they are capable of understanding everything. Not that we actually do understand, but that we have the capacity.

- Saul Bellow, *A Half Life*, an autobiography of ideas, *Bostonia* magazine, Nov/Dec. 1990, pp.302-303.

but frail member of the establishment might survive. Human nature being what it is, this even became an incentive to “arrange” such untimely deaths in the hope of a windfall gain. The English Parliament finally put a stop to this market by the requirement that the insured have an “insurable interest” – meaning that only the lives of close relatives could be covered by the policy. Presumably these relatives were worth more alive than dead, and we observe how defined exposure avoids the dangers of abusing an otherwise legitimate business model.

Third, the question of moral hazard, a concept that also springs originally from the insurance industry. In the world of finance, moral hazard is used to cover “any situation that rewards a debtor for financial misbehaviour.” Government bailouts are one example of a moral hazard. So too is deposit insurance, especially in a world where structured financing became “too big to fail”.

Acting responsibly before the temptations of moral hazard requires unusual fortitude, even more so in the light of shareholder demands, and a world of historically low interest rates. Some also argue that the Federal Reserve acted irresponsibly in keeping interest rates so low in a market where house prices were rocketing. Others have warned that we must re-learn (so soon!) the lessons of the East Asian currency crisis; bad decisions have to be let run through to those who made them.

Fourth, formal rationality and blooming complexity in the economic sphere has arguably brought a disregard for thrift in favor of over-consumption. It is no mistake that Time Magazine highlighted America’s need to “keep shopping” after the 9-11 attacks.

Finally, one cannot discount over-reliance on proclaimed experts as an important factor. These packages were often created by quantitative researchers (“quants”), which have been described by the Washington Post as “a motley crew of math wonks, computer scientists, PhDs and electrical engineers, many of them immigrants from China, Russia and India.”

Is there a way to prevent another

Separation from Rome

CERTAINLY NO ONE raised a question about the Pope’s dispensing power [in the case of Henry’s marriage to Katherine] after the accomplished fact, not even the King himself for a very long time, and when he first applied to Rome for a divorce it was not the dispensing power that he disputed. He only sought to make out that the dispensation granted by Julius II was founded on inaccurate information, and was not large enough to cover the whole circumstances of the case. In this he found himself mistaken, and after having moved heaven and earth to get a cardinal sent from Rome to sit with Wolsey in a legatine court for the trial of the cause, he had for a time sorrowfully come to the conclusion that he was sure to be beaten, and must remain bound to Katharine. But Cranmer suggested an appeal to the universities, which would give him a pretext for acting without papal sanction at all, leaving the accomplished fact to be judged afterwards; and in addition to this Thomas Cromwell suggested the more potent weapon of royal supremacy followed by statutes of treason to make the King’s will respected. Now it was out of these suggestions, first of Cranmer and afterwards of Cromwell, that Henry VIII framed for himself the policy which ended in separation from Rome.

...it was quite evident that in the Parliament of November 1529 a crusade had begun at the King’s instigation against the old and hitherto undisputed liberties of the Church. Next year the King’s duplicity was still more apparent.

- James Gairdner, *Lollardy and the Reformation in England, An Historical Survey*, Macmillan and Co, Ltd, 4 vols, London 1908, vol. 1, pp.385-387.

GFC? Charles Fried wrote in 1964 that “an important, indeed a crucial technique for moving another to act is to make the desired performance the right thing for him to do, that is, to put him under a moral obligation to act in the desired way.” It comes down to this: how do we get a broad range of actors in the financial world to do the right thing, at the right time, in future situations? Three bedrock principles suggest themselves.

First, assets should be presumed best left on the balance sheets of those who

originated them. This would leave the consequences of poor lending decisions where they first began – at the feet of those who made the decision to lend in the first place. Bad lending decisions should not be “on sold” except in the most transparent manner possible.

Second, utopian dreams of “bankruptcy remote” businesses and constantly rising prices must be recognized for what they are. They must not be supported by lawyers, accountants and ratings agencies that are paid commissions and fees to perpetuate the dream.

Finally, modern bureaucratic structures that reach across institutions must not be allowed to dictate fashion when the Emperor clearly has no clothes.



PATRICK QUIRK is Associate Professor, Ave Maria School of Law, Naples, Florida. This article is based on Subprime (Ir)responsibility, in Anton Rauscher (ed.): „Verantwortung in einer komplexen Gesellschaft / Responsibility: Recognition and Limits“ (Reihe Soziale Orientierung, Bd. 20, Verlag Duncker & Humblot) 2010.

*Is there a modern day Aussie Biggles or Anne of Green Gables?
If there were, it wouldn't get published!*

IT'S FADING AWAY!

By Bede Donnelly



WELL, HOW did you know I was talking about the humble book? Will it survive an electronic attack, more insidious than the rash it developed with the mushrooming of the magazines market? It is a serious question that has much broader implications than were recognised by the recent government enquiry into tariffs. To capture that debate in one or two frames, the protection of the publishing industry to save jobs is as sensible as stuffing ceiling vaults with low-grade insulation, or digging up the local park to make room for another one. The point is that books are for reading, not for making jobs, *per se*.

The shelves in the bookshops are still full but, the issue of course, is local content. More problematic is the related question, where has all the enjoyable local stuff gone, all the simple books of literary humour, good living and relaxing book-length reading? For the kids, is there a modern day Australian *Biggles* or an Aussie *Anne of Green Gables*? Simply, if there were, it wouldn't get published!

The whole publishing industry is skewed toward the controversial, the confronting and the cynical. A few special new works break through, but in general, the writer has a hard time getting agents and publishers to read new work, whatever the quality. Ideally, it must be saucy, controversial and preferably both, with the bishop in the bath-tub on the cover page, or a captivating line of cynical prose on page one.

Biographies of left-leaning piously intellectual know-all, are popular. That is where the big money is. Authorship

is the first casualty, but the national culture is also under the wheels.

And what about this *e-book* plague that is about to erupt on the market? Like switching to digital TV, it's the next universal pain! But perhaps there will be upsides!

If authors can't find publishers, the e-book is the only way to break into the market, with paperback editions down the track.

The growth of e-reading depends upon the readers' willingness to read on a hand-held e-reader. But it is also dependant upon purchasers' willingness to buy online. There are very real security problems in posting your bank details or credit card on the internet, but not if you use E-Bay's PayPal. If you register with Paypal, you need never again disclose your personal and financial details on the internet and the cost of a transaction is minimal. Have a look: <https://www.paypal.com/>. Reading from a lightweight electronic device will take off if the quality is right, and the price!

E-book readers now sell for around \$600 but that won't last. The providers cannot keep selling them at two thirds the price of a good lap-top computer with less than half the functionality! Even so, there has to be a persuasive case for acquiring one.

Cost advantages will prove significant. Given a few years, there will be a variety of e-book publishers and direct sellers who will offer significant price savings. There will always be a demand for traditional reading materials but the e-book will win a piece of the market.

It may well be the collateral savings that will drive the market. The e-reader public will plug into the computer to *cherry-pick* reading from two or three

newspapers and magazines. They will also enjoy tapping into a limitless supply of history, natural science and anything else that appeals, free, from the internet and read it on the e-book reader, at leisure, in bed or on a bus or train.

Soon, every new book, whether hard-copy or not, will also be available on e-book format. And you might email a page to a friend, and wirelessly connect to your TV so the whole family can watch any video you care to download, just like a pay-TV service, but considerably less costly.

Keep your e-reader under your pillow because the kids will be sure that it is a *must-have* for school. Now why wouldn't Kevin O7 give one to every school child? It sounds sillier than the lap-top give-away, but e-readers would be a great deal less costly and more manageable than the lap-top computers and not much heavier than their sandwiches. Loading up their digital work at home or at school would avoid costs of individual broadband, maintenance, and software, the very factors that will make the lap-top plan unworkable. That kind of development would give e-reading a lift-off and drive down prices.

We all resist change but there are good reasons for anticipating good outcomes here.

Watch out for a new wave of quality e-literature and improved reading capacity in younger members of society. It won't be all good; nothing is these days: but it must be better than having Dan Brown as master of the universe for want of competition.

DR. JOHN BEDE DONNELLY is a Canberra based writer and Annals subscriber, soon to release his first e-book, *Slave of Mickle Fortune*. <http://BerthongStreet.com/>



MEDIA MATTERS

By JAMES MURRAY

Prefect Rule

Much, too much, is being made of Julia Gillard's sudden, first woman prime ministership. This is a clear case of what New Zealand did yesterday (with the redoubtable Helen Clarke), Australia does today.

Will it continue to do so as a result of the Fudge-'n'-Spin election? Gillard (Norman-Welsh name meaning, resolute) is still out of focus, a Box Brownie snap not a sharp, digital-camera image.

Yet it is clear how she sees herself. At heart she is a high-school prefect. Her decision on school uniforms being worthy of subsidy is one clue. Another is those braid-trimmed jackets she wears; they are modified school blazers.

She should drop her 'Tory' pearls for a Prefect's lapel badge.

Welsh witchery

Gillard was quick to announce her non-belief in God, intriguing those who had filed her under, 'lapsed Baptist'. Nonetheless although you can take yourself out of a religion, you may be unable to take the religion out of yourself.

In promoting her policies, Gillard described Australia as 'our sanctuary'.

Sanctuary! Now there's a concept that harks back to Christendom when refugees and others, such as wayward hacks, could find safety before the altar in churches.

Gillard's description was surely an echo from her Welsh ancestry; her native country was celebrated for the staunchness of its Catholic recusants. Indeed it can be argued that the Welsh became Baptist and Methodist by default only after an ill-considered decision by continental English, counter-Reformation seminaries to refuse Welsh candidates for the priesthood.

'Anything but Anglicanism' sums up Welsh sentiment; the Church of England was disestablished in 19th century. Wales; it lingers as established in its country of origin, possibly until it is replaced by the caliphate desired by a growing number of its citizens, immigrant and native born.

The Baptist and Methodist strain in Wales strongly influenced its politics. Accordingly Welsh socialism at its best was Christian socialism.

How could it be otherwise? When the Welsh sing: 'Bread of heaven! Bread of heaven! Feed me till I want no more!' they are singing of the eucharistic bread that fed the faith of their Catholic ancestors not secular, sliced white bread – or a mess of jargon about going forward.

Abbott habit

In a sense Gillard's opponent Tony Abbott (like her a child of immigrants) has always worn his Riverview school blazer. And his Catholic faith on his sleeve. But his surf life-saving kit, not his fire-fighting overalls, became the sly focus of photographers and cartoonists.

Now, however, he is wearing in effect one of

Malcolm Fraser's old suits, the one Fraser wore when he called an election thinking he was facing Bill Hayden and found himself up against Bob Hawke in part-nun mode: sober but not quite steadfast and demure.

Gillard has emphasised the coincidence by saying Hawke is her model.

No more than Fraser had Hawke's measure does Abbott have Gillard's

May the better immigrant win.

Rudd gored

Your correspondent was not a fan of the Rudd style, hence his sobriquet here: Prime Minister

Feeling Sluggish?

'Human beings, as a species, have no more value than slugs.'

- *Earth First! Journal* editor John Davis, quoted Daniel J. Flynn, *Intellectual Morons: How ideology makes Smart People fall for Stupid Ideas*, Crown Forum New York, 2004, p.57



Plenipotentiary. But the generalised rubbishing of Rudd, particularly by those who once were sycophants, prompts the offer of a cover-all self-intro for the former PMP on the stump.

'Hi, my name is Kevin. I'm from Queensland. I'm here to take the blame for everything so that my colleagues can continue to shorten the odds in the advancement of their careers.'

In joke

Funeral undertakers have them. So do barbers, butchers, doctors and lawyers: in-jokes involving their avocations. Hacks also have them. One of the funniest is the running gag in *The Australian*, warning the ABC about recycling material.

Hoot! *The Australian*, drawing material from *The Times*, *The Sunday Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* and, less obtrusively, *The Sun* and *The News of the World*, is the world's most magnificent recycling machine.

Undoubtedly the ABC's 24/7 TV-radio news hub will test this kind of print recycling to destruction through the droning of print hacks on television (and interlinked radio), either rehashing something already written or rehearsing a new line.

For habituated, older readers this may be a stimulus to buy copies of newspapers and magazines; for younger readers the medium is the message and the message is: seen that, heard that don't need to read that.

Result: circulations fall, ratings rise.

Scissor copy

Is modern recycling no more than an accelerated version of what, well within living memory, was common practice: London-based hacks scissoring from British newspapers items of interest and popping them in air-mail envelopes for despatch to Australasia?

Yes and no. Even at this early stage of ABC hub operation it is clear that chopping and dicing news tends to destroy context and with it coherence. No matter how technology-savvy

reporters are (and your correspondent admires their seemingly tireless ability), the integrity of their copy cannot survive such re-hashing.

Overload to chaos stage comes in various forms of social media. amateur and professional. Oh, for a clay-tablet edition of *The Tower of Babel Bugle* to prove the point.

White ice

Blanche D'Alpuget is more formidably talented in writing imaginative fiction than factual biography. Her new book about her second husband, Bob Hawke, on the basis of extracts and interviews, falls somewhere between the two.

Writers, Graham Greene said, have a splinter of ice in their heart. D'Alpuget shows that she has the tip of the cliché iceberg in hers. Hawke, by going along for this second take, shares the iceberg.

Too harsh? Only for those who can gloss over the fact that Hawke's first wife Hazel is still living, grace and dignity intact despite incurable dementia.

D'Alpuget is never less than provocative. With Kerry O'Brien, during his double-bill interview with her and Hawke on *The 7.30 Report*, her provocation was charming, transforming him

from O'Brien, the persistent Kerry-blue terrier, into O'Brien, the playful red-setter.

Apropos Paul Keating, her provocation condescended about his lack of formal education from the heights of a former hackette atop a pile of books.

Keating's riposte was predictable; it included a synopsis of who did what during the Hawke-Keating years and who should be praised for floating the Australian dollar.

Shouldn't this be a matter for blame? Inevitably floating of currencies led to trading in currencies, creating the mindset that led to trading in a variety of derivatives and thus to the Global Financial Crisis, still rumbling in the belly of the beast known as The Market.

The Network 10 telemovie, *Hawke? Wrecked* by bloated advertising. Enough already!

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When Silence is not Golden

THE FACT is that we have allowed ourselves to become involved in external affairs, and the contrast between the honour that we have received [of the priesthood] and the way in which we carry out the duties of our office, is very great ... for the people entrusted to our care are abandoning God and we remain silent. They have fallen into wicked ways and we do not utter a word of reproach.

- St Gregory the Great 590-604 AD.
Homily xvi, 3, 14 from The Roman Breviary,
Second reading at Matins for Saturday of
the 27th week of the year.

An interview with Father Dennis Murphy MSC

THE BOY WHO LOOKED OUT OF THE WINDOW



FATHER DENNIS, how long have you been a priest?

In December 2009, I completed 58 years of priesthood. But somehow it seems to me neither long nor short. My years and my priesthood have become an essential part of me. And looking back or forward, I am content.

When and how did this start?

In primary school I was always close to the bottom of the class. But I was in no way discontented; I just took it for granted. One of my school reports mentioned, "Dennis spends most of his time in class looking out of the window". Perhaps that's where my real interests were! When I was about twelve, a taste for personal prayer developed in me; Our Lord became very real to me. This fitted in naturally with my other boyish interests. I began to feel a desire to serve God in some special way. I decided to become a 'missionary' in the Pacific Islands; stories about them had impressed me, like adventure stories I suppose, but different all the same.

Was this the connection with the MSCs?

Partly. A friend of mine told me he had decided to become a Missionary of the Sacred Heart. His uncle was an MSC missionary on Bathurst Island. I decided to apply with him. I had never even heard of them before. The assistant Parish Priest tried very hard to get me to go to the Sydney Diocesan Minor Seminary, but I was not attracted. Somehow, I knew instinctively it was not what I was looking for. So I went to the MSC Apostolic School in Douglas Park to do my secondary studies. The study of Latin, Greek, French and English literature opened a new, exciting world of study and learning. Perhaps I discovered there what I had been

yearning for while looking out of the window in primary school. I am certain that I owe completely to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart any success in my academic life, then or later.

So you were a priest, in a sense, from a very early age?

Not really. I found it harder each year to return to the Apostolic School even though I was happy enough there and felt I belonged. The hardest step of all was leaving home to enter the novitiate. For six years this was a passing experience, but it called for a renewed decision each time.

Wasn't such a life too sheltered for your own good?

Let me put it this way. I would certainly consider it intolerable today and not to be repeated. However, at

the time, I read an autobiography of a famous Australian Navy Captain. His description of his time as a cadet showed me that Douglas Park was a much easier and more human place. The priests and lay brothers there were very friendly. Discipline was strict, but I did not find the place oppressive. No doubt, I missed certain aspects of a normal adolescence but I really don't think I was then sensible enough to avoid making a mess of things in 'life in the world' as we called it. The chances are that I would have continued 'looking out of the window' for the rest of my life – intellectually and spiritually. So, I always return to Douglas Park with a feeling of gratitude and of 'coming home'. I have no doubts that I have gained more than I may have lost. I must admit, however, that some of my companions still look back on the place with unhappy memories.

Wouldn't a longer direct experience of the world have helped you more as a priest?

Maybe. I don't know. The Lord has his ways. Though I remained genuinely pious with a real love of Our Lord and his Mother, I went through powerful temptations against faith during my years at Douglas Park. Whenever I return there, I usually spend some time on a hill behind the former seminary remembering when I once ran down it in a state of high exultation, my mind flooded with exciting, even fearsome, ideas. It was only at a later date that I would come across them in Nietzsche! I doubt whether I would have come through such an experience successfully on my own in any other environment, and do so with my faith strengthened. During those early years I received a grace that convinced me Our Lord had a purpose in all my trials and temptations, preparing me to help others more effectively in future.

Martyr's Testimony

Christ was of David's line, He was the son of Mary; he was verily and indeed born, and ate and drank; he was verily persecuted in the days of Pontius Pilate and verily and indeed crucified; and gave up the ghost in the sight of all heaven and earth and the powers of the nether world. He was also verily raised up again from the dead, for his Father raised him; and in Jesus Christ will his Father similarly raise us who believe in him, since apart from him there is no true life for us.

- St Ignatius of Antioch [martyred in Rome 102 AD] Letter to the Philadelphians, *Roman Breviary*, Second Reading at matins for Thursday in the 27th week of the year.

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What was your formation at that stage?

Our interior life was left pretty much to ourselves, though we had regular conferences twice a week which, in general, were pertinent and helpful for our age group; and the Director called us up for occasional short personal talks. The emphasis was more on their assessing and, above all, helping us to assess what we were doing or not doing. Their aim, maybe not fully conscious, was to lead us to accept personal responsibility for improving our day-to-day life at every level. There was little, if any, probing into us psychologically; much less trying to find others to blame for what we were doing or not doing. With its pluses and minuses that would be for a future

generation. This does not mean that our formators lacked astute perception. On the contrary! This traditional spiritual accompaniment (spiritual direction), going back to the early desert Father, has been resurrected and made respectable in our time by William Glasser and called 'Reality Therapy'.

Did you have doubts about being a priest?

Yes, but not in the way you probably suppose. Though I was enjoying and doing very well in my studies, I was attracted to life as an MSC lay-brother. It seemed so ordinary and yet so spiritual. At least three times, I asked to be a lay-brother during my formation – in the minor seminary, in the novitiate and in the scholasticate. Not long before my

final vows and departure for further studies in Rome, my Director told me bluntly, "Forget it! You're not good enough to be a Brother!" I really think he had a point! When Cardinal Micara, in St John Lateran, Rome, placed his hands on my head, and many priests came forward and did the same, but above all, when people I did not know came up to me after the ordination and asked for my blessing, I knew I was a priest forever no matter what. It has been hard at times – all life is – but I have no regrets.

So what is the relationship between your priesthood and your MSC religious life?

They are two sides of the same coin. For me, a priest's function is, on behalf of the Church, to make Christ present in the world by being a living sacrament of him in worship, word and pastoral care. To do this as it should be done, Christ must live and reign in a priest's heart. That is specifically what my MSC religious life can help me do, provided I take it seriously.

Father Dennis, looking back over 58 years, what has been your biggest problem as a religious and priest?

Me!

Well, despite that, you seem to have had a number of important responsibilities: 18 years lecturing in Scripture, Rector of a National Late-Vocation Seminary, Provincial Superior, Assistant General. How do you explain that?

Apart from the first task, for which I was especially trained for seven years at the Gregorian University and the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, the other tasks came to me as a complete surprise, even a shock. This is not just 'humility' on my part; some people who knew me well were even more surprised at it! However, I can honestly say that no matter what has come my way, the memory of a boy at the bottom of the class, gazing out of the window, keeps me in my right place. Then the advice of the Lord rings true for me: "When you have carried out what you are ordered to do, you should say, 'We are servants and deserve no credit; we have only done our duty.'" (Luke 17:10).

FATHER DENNIS MURPHY, MSC is a graduate of the Biblicum in Rome. He taught Scripture for many years in Australian seminaries. He was for six years Provincial Superior of the Australian Province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, and for twelve years Assistant General of the Order, based in Rome. He is now stationed in India.

Puzzling happenings in a world allegedly governed only by material and physical laws

THE CURIOUS CASE OF MARIA TALARICO

By Leslie Rumble, MSC



ONE OF THE MOST remarkable cases in the history of psychological experiences, one which has never been solved and which never will

be solved – I do not hesitate to make that seemingly extravagant statement – occurred in January, 1939. The European press rang with it at the time, and the details concerning it have been enshrined in text-books on psychic phenomena by the leading Continental experts in that elusive field of modern research.

Catanzaro, capital of the Province of Calabria, is built on the slopes of a rocky hill, some six miles inland from the shores of the Gulf of Squillace, at the southern extremity of Italy. It has a population of about 50,000 [in 2010: 93,000 *Ed.*] inhabitants, and is a centre on which roads converge from the many farming districts reaching far inland from the coast.

One of these roads crosses a bridge over a shallow stream before entering the town; and under that bridge, on the morning of 13th February, 1936, was found the dead body of a young man of about twenty, named Giuseppe Veraldi. He was lying in the bed of the river, his head badly gashed where it had hit the rocks after he had thrown himself from the bridge on the preceding night.

The police entered full details of the case in their records; the time he was found, the clothing he wore, the wounds in his head, and all they could gather concerning himself and his affairs. An inquest was held. The verdict was suicide. But no one had the slightest idea why Giuseppe Veraldi should have taken his own life.

Such tragedies, of course, occur in all parts of the world. There is nothing astonishing in the fact that this particular suicide should have happened in Catanzaro; nor is it unusually mysterious that no sufficient motive for it could be found. But wait...

Three years had passed by. The Giuseppe Veraldi case had long ceased to be a topic of general conversation in Catanzaro. Only his widowed mother and a few close relatives nursed their sad memories of his tragic death, which they were still at a loss to explain.

One morning in January, 1939, however, a young girl named Maria Talarico, then seventeen years of age, was walking across the bridge over the stream with her grandmother. They had come from a nearby farm, the grandmother to do some shopping in the town; Maria, a sturdy common-sensed peasant girl, to attend a class in a course of agricultural instruction for which she had enrolled.

When half-way across the bridge Maria suddenly stopped, gazed over the parapet, stared at the river-bed for

a few tense moments, and then fell unconscious on the roadway.

Taken home by a farmer who had happened to be passing in his cart, she recovered consciousness on the way; but, as soon as she entered the door of the house, she said to her mother in the deep, resonant voice of a full-grown man: 'You are not my mother. My mother lives in the wooden cottage, and her name is Catarina Veraldi. I am Pepe.'

Pepe was a familiar contraction of Giuseppe's name; and Maria's voice was that of Giuseppe Veraldi. Neighbours quickly gathered. All thought Maria possessed by the devil; and her conduct certainly seemed to confirm that opinion.

Still speaking in Giuseppe's somewhat harsh voice, she demanded that her 'mother' be sent for, although her real mother sat looking at her through streaming tears. Maria, however, ignored her; and whilst waiting for Mrs Veraldi to come insisted that a bottle of wine be brought, some cigarettes, and a pack of cards, inviting those around her to join in a game to

Michelangelo and Julius II

PEOPLE sometimes wonder why the Renaissance Italians, with their intelligent curiosity, didn't make more of a contribution to the history of thought. The reason is that the most profound thought of the time was not expressed in words, but in visual imagery. Two sublime examples of this truism were produced in the same building in Rome, not more than one hundred yards from each other, and during exactly the same years: Michelangelo's ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and Raphael's frescoes in the room known as the Stanza della Segnatura. Both of them we owe entirely to Pope Julius II.

- Sir Kenneth Clarke, *Civilisation*, 1971 ed. With thanks to Roger Sandall.
See: http://www.rogersandall.com/Spiked_By-the-Skin-of-our-Teeth.php

fill in the time.

Given a pencil and paper, and asked to write her name, she wrote: 'I am Giuseppe Veraldi.' It was in Giuseppe's own handwriting.

Drinking and smoking, she addressed the men there as Toto, Elio, Rosario and Damiano, although such names belonged to none who was present. All recognised them, however, as the names of the dead man's one-time boon companions. Of the four of them, Toto had emigrated to Argentina, in South America, soon after Giuseppe's death.

At last Mrs Veraldi arrived. Maria, stopping the card-playing, said to her in what the astounded woman recognised as her son's voice: 'My friends murdered me. They threw me into the river-bed; and then, as I lay there, they battered my head with an iron bar and tried to make the whole thing look like suicide.'

Having made her statement, she got up, and before anyone could make a move she almost threw herself out the door, ran to the bridge, climbed the parapet, and fell into the river-bed. When the others, who had quickly followed her, arrived, she was lying in the exact position in which Giuseppe had been found, and was crying out in his voice: 'Leave me alone. Why are you hitting me?'

The dead man's mother cried out: 'Pepe, cease tormenting that poor girl. Go away from her.' At once Maria returned to her normal state. Shakily, she stood up. When she spoke, it was in her own voice. They led her home. She had no recollection of anything that had happened from the moment she had first fallen unconscious on the bridge when crossing it with her grandmother.

Nine years later, in 1948, a letter arrived in Catanzaro, addressed to Mrs Catarina Veraldi. It was from Tucuman, in the far north-west of Argentina, near the foothills of the Andes; and it was signed by Luigi Marchete, who had been known as 'Toto' among his intimate friends in Catanzaro. The letter had been left among his papers, to be posted in the event of his death.

Luigi had done well in Argentina, acquiring a great deal of property. He died, however, in 1948, and in his posthumous letter confessed to Catarina Veraldi that he had murdered her son in 1936. Elio, Rosario and Damiano

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had helped him; but it was he himself who had battered in Pepe's head with an iron bar through jealousy over attentions Pepe had been paying to a woman named Lillina.

After the murder Toto had fled to Argentina under a false name, with forged papers. But his conscience had always tortured him, and he begged Catarina's forgiveness. To make some kind of reparation he had made her sole heir to all his properties.

The police could act on this confession; but since Elio also had died, only Rogario and Damiano could be apprehended. Both received gaol sentences for their participation with Toto in the crime.

When the news of these extraordinary developments was published, not only Catanzaro, but every town in Europe whose papers

gave headlines to the incredible story was set talking again.

Every detail described by Maria Talarico in her abnormal trance-like state had been confirmed.

It could not have been a case of merely natural clairvoyance. Maria was a normal, healthy, matter-of-fact peasant girl, who had never shown any signs of psychic tendencies or powers.

Nor could any merely natural clairvoyance be reconciled with her being suddenly thrown into a trance and afflicted with a complete change of personality, which suddenly ceased at a word of command from the dead man's mother. Maria was certainly subject to some outside influence.

Was it, then, a case of devil-possession? But the serious purpose behind it all, the vindication of justice and the pinning of responsibility on the murderers, could scarcely have been of much appeal to the devil, the 'father of lies and a murderer from the beginning.'

All seems to point in one direction – namely, that the discarnate soul of the murdered Giuseppe had taken possession of Maria. If a hypnotist can make a subject speak and behave in unnatural ways, there is no reason why the disembodied spirit of Giuseppe – granted God's permission for a return to this world at all – could not have exercised some such influence over Maria.

But why pick on Maria Talarico, who had not had the slightest connection with the affair? Also, whilst many instances of *diabolical* possession have been recorded, where is there any other case in history in which the body of a person still living in this world has been possessed by the soul of a *deceased human being*?

It is all very bewildering; and one can only leave it at that. The basic facts of the above case are summarised by Abbot Alois Wiesinger, O.C.S.O., in his book *Occult Phenomena in the Light of Theology* (1957), pp. 245 - 247.

DR LESLIE RUMBLE was, in his day, one of the most widely-known priests in the English-speaking world. His two-volume *Radio Replies* sold many millions of copies world-wide, as did his numerous pamphlets on aspects of Catholic faith and doctrine and on various non-Catholic Churches and sects. He died in 1975. In response to many requests we printed the fifth of his fourteen articles on psychic phenomena which first appeared in *Annals* in 1958. *Next month*: Who Wrote on the Slate?

Mary

Is Mary MacKillop, saintly founder of the redoubtable Sisters of St Joseph, as envisioned by writer/director Kay Pavlou.

Produced by Rosemary Blight and originally released in 1994, the film is a mix of dramatic reconstruction and talking heads: Father Peter Gumpel SJ who had carriage of Mary's canonisation process at the Vatican, Sisters Margaret McKenna and Sister Marie Foale of her order and Clare Dunne, broadcaster and biographer (best remembered as the co-star with Walter Chiari in *They're a Weird Mob*).

What still enlightens it is the lustrous performance of Lucy Bell as Mary. On foot or on horseback, in the street or in the classroom, she captures Mary MacKillop's dauntless spirit.

Her mentor Father Julian Tennis on Woods (Brendan Higgins), a distinguished scientist, is less fairly treated: fiercely credulous in an episode of false possession involving nuns of the order.

More might also have been made of two factors: first, Mary MacKillop's father, a Scottish Highlander had trained for the priesthood. Thus in dealing with Irish clerics, her Scottish Highlander background of endurance for the faith did not predispose her to over-respect their Irish Catholic background. Second, the Irish clerics are etched in deepest black; the film makes no mention of the Jesuits who aided Mary MacKillop during the period of her excommunication.

Producer Paul Brennan is to be commended for negotiating revival seasons at Sydney's top neighbourhood cinemas (Hayden Orpheum, Cremorne and the Randwick Ritz) during the run-up to the formal, canonisation of Mary MacKillop by Pope Benedict XVI, scheduled for October this year in Rome.

Trivia disclosure: in the 1960s the late, great Fred Zinnemann considered the possibility of a movie about Mary MacKillop following a brief synopsis by this reviewer. He decided to pass on the basis that his movie *The Nun's Story*, starring Audrey Hepburn, had said what he wanted to say in praise of nuns.

G★★★★SFFV

MOVIES

By JAMES MURRAY

Me and Orson Welles

The Me of the title is Richard Samuels based on actor Arthur Anderson. No need to identify Orson Welles. His Mercury Theatre company production of *Julius Caesar* in New York is the focus of the tragi-comedy. The year is 1937 before he scared radio listeners out of their wits with his hoax broadcast based on *The War of the World* by HG Wells.

What needs to be said is that Christian McKay who plays Welles turns in a performance of such flawless authenticity you could swear that by some form of computer magic he had been transported from the shadows of the Welles masterpiece, *Citizen Kane*.

This is embodiment acting of the highest calibre enhanced by the circumstance that McKay was discovered in a 50-seat, off-Broadway theatre in a play called *Rosebud*.

Samuels/Anderson is played with superbly fine judgement by Zac Efron, more celebrated for teen-age candy floss musicals.

Director Richard Linklater, working from Holly and Vince Palmo's script (based on Robert Kaplow's novel), smartly intercuts scenes of the players' private lives, their rehearsals for the classic, done in still imitated fascistic style, and – most difficult – the first-night production on stage at the Mercury Theatre for which the Gaiety Theatre stood in. That's the Gaiety Theatre, Isle of Man, which has an independent tax regime.

PG★★★★SFFV

South Solitary

Writer/director Shirley Barrett gives us a lighthouse on a desolate island off the Australian coast. In 1927 Meredith (Miranda Otto) arrives there with her uncle George Wadsworth (Barry Otto). She is a spinster with a past. He is stickler for detail, determined to make good sloppiness resulting from the fact that the previous head keeper shot himself.

The assistant keeper Harry Stanley (Rohan Nichol) has a wife Alma (Essie

Davis) and a roving eye which turns to Meredith. More shy is the Welsh war veteran Jack Fleet (Marton Csokas).

Solid material, fine actors. But despite their best efforts, amid storms emotional and meteorological, the movie has a detached feeling. Perhaps it's the period.

M★★★★NFFV

Skin

Life produces situations that writers cannot even dream of: during South Africa's apartheid era, Sandra Laing who looked black was born to white Africaaner parents.

As a result of apartheid rules and legal tussles she went through the psychological trauma of being classified not white but coloured, that is, mixed race.

Director Anthony Fabian makes great use of locations from the veldt to shanty towns and extracts every ounce of irony from the episode. As the young and adult Sandra, Elle Ramangwane and Sophie Okonedo give marvellously shaded performances (no pun intended).

Her mother is played by Alice Krige. Sam Neill, complete with Africaaner accent, plays Sandra's father Abraham. He who believed in apartheid but not for his beloved daughter - a vivid illustration of the doctrine's intrinsic madness, given that legal testimony showed that a high proportion of white Africaaners have black blood in their veins.

The advent of Nelson Mandela helped to change Sandra's life as it helped to change so many.

M★★★★NFFV

Second-Hand Wedding

So many movies have been based on weddings that it might seem impossible to conceive a variation. Writer/director Paul Murphy has, one that is hinted at in the title.

Schoolteacher Cheryl Rose (Holly Shanahan) aims for perfection. Her boyfriend, her father and the people of her beachside hometown in New Zealand are with her.

The only fly in the wedding cake is her mother Jill (Geraldine Brophy), also a teacher. She has a hobby that could spoil the wedding.

In resolving the problem Murphy, his cast and crew create a banquet of laughter.

PG★★★★SFFV

Boy

Writer/director Taika Waititi does a Charlie Chaplin and stars in his own movie as Alamein, president of the Crazy Horses bikie gang. (Total membership three, including himself).

His older son Boy (James Rolleston) mourns his beautiful mother while facing the reality of caring for a brood of siblings and indulging in fantasies about being Michael Jackson.

Using flashbacks and cartoon drawings Taika Waititi structures his movie as a broken mosaic, sadly yet brilliantly symbolic of the broken family. One of the differences that distinguishes humans is the ability to make tragedy or comedy from similar sets of circumstances. What Taika Waititi has done is make his comedy from material similar to the tragedy of *Once Were Warriors*.

M★★★★NFFV

Centurion

Writer/director Neil Marshall has said that his movie about the Roman occupation of Britain was inspired by boyhood memories of Hadrian's Wall and by hearing a story about a Roman legion – the Ninth – that disappeared into the mists of Caledonia.

As Quintus Dias, the centurion of the title, Michael Fassbinder gives a performance that sets the mark for an enthralling cast of characters: the warrior Pict Etain (Olga Kurylenko), the benign witch Arianne (Imogen Poots), Virilus (Dominic West) and the veteran soldier Bothos (David Morrissey).

This is woaded Picts in hand-to-hand fighting with armoured Romans, shot by cinematographer Sam McCurdy and his first and second units in the snowy wastes of the Scottish Highlands. Fake heads roll. Fake bodies are eviscerated. Fake blood is spilled by the bucketful.

Centurion is also a pursuit movie in which Roman battle survivors on foot are hunted by a vengeful band of Picts on horseback.

The Picts speak Gaelic and the the Roman soldiers like British squaddies. Fair enough. Their long history has entitled The Royal Scots to the

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nickname 'Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard'. Marshall brings his story to an end with a murky, slightly implausible double-twist.

Some may detect similarities to the storyline of Rosemary Sutcliffe's *The Eagle of the Ninth*. That enduring masterpiece of historical fiction has also been made into a movie and is scheduled for release.

TBA★★★★NFFV

Inception

The premise: a techno-discipline that enables people to participate in and even manipulate the dreams of others for criminal purposes. So far so arcane. Leonardo DiCaprio plays an expert who has been taught the discipline by his father (Michael Caine).

To assist DiCaprio and his offsider (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) through the maze, writer/director Christopher Nolan has assembled a constellation of stars: Marion Cotillard, a killer-temptress, Ken Watanabe, a criminal tycoon Ellen Page, a student, Cillian Murphy, a tycoon's heir and Tom Berenger, a crooked lawyer.

Nolan shows the panache he displayed in *Dark Knight*. At the edge of enthrallment, however, scepticism nibbles. Okay, people dream. Do they have IMAX-screen size dreams; do these include dreams that look like out-takes from a James Bond movie, any number of other thrillers or the *X-Files*.

It may be that in this way Nolan is satirising the Hollywood dream

factories which have given millions the opportunity for dreaming while awake.

Clever. But too clever by at least half and hour. Popcorn eaters should allow for this through buying jumbo buckets which, munched slowly, may last as long as the movie.

M★★★★NFFV

The Sorcerer's Apprentice

Whizbang comedy thriller for all ages in which director Jon Turteltaub casts Nicolas Cage (star of Turteltaub's *National Treasure*) as Balthazar Blake, an ageless master sorcerer set down in present-day Manhattan.

Blake has been searching for an apprentice and finds him in the unlikely shape of Dave Stutler (Jay Baruchel), a nerdy lecturer at the New York University.

Their magic-training sessions are interrupted by arch-enemy Maxim Horvath (Alfred Molina) who also hinders Dave's awkward courtship of a beautiful student (Teresa Palmer).

Producer Jerry Bruckheimer has an obsession with crash-bang car chases. For him Turteltaub and his computerised special effects crew create a chase of fantastic energy through Manhattan.

In a nice tribute, Turteltaub also includes his version of the dance of the mops and brooms from Walt Disney's classic *Fantasia*.

Will Dave survive all this and more to save the world as Hollywood knows it and get the girl?

TBA★★★★SFFV

Cairo Time

Writer/director Ruba Nadda makes vivid use of her location city, Cairo in all its multitudinous splendours and miseries. The great Patricia Clarkson plays Juliette, a glossy magazine hackette in the city for a rendezvous with her husband Mark (Tom McCamus) delayed in Gaza through his duties as a UN official.

During the waiting period Juliette meets her husband's friend and colleague Tareq (Alexander Siddig). As inevitably as the square on a right-angled triangle, Juliette falls in love with the courtly Tareq as he guides her through city markets, to a wedding, along the Nile and to the pyramids of Giza.

Ruba Nadda's movie is a love-letter to Cairo (though her home base is the less exotic Toronto). Her emphasis is on Cairo's Islamic aspects with little or no reference to its enduring pre-Arab, Coptic-Christian culture. In her depiction of the romance, she displays immense tact, maintaining a tense discretion as to its eventual outcome. Essentially, however, she has updated the story of the romantic sheik whose charms beguile a western woman, a story that was creaky when Rudolph Valentino (born Rudolpho d'Antonguolla) created the Hollywood prototype in *The Sheik* (1921).

M★★★NFFV

Creation

Tendentious title. The movie is about Charles Darwin; accordingly it is about evolution rather than creation. But *Evolution* would be a duller title. And *Working Hypothesis* would be overlong.

Paul Bettany and his wife Jennifer Connelly do bring a subtly evolved sense to their beautiful underplaying of Mr and Mrs Darwin, living a scholarly, rusticated life with their children while he does field research for his masterwork, *On the Origin of Species - By Means of Natural Selection*.

Scriptwriter John Collee worked from the biography *Annie's Box's* by Randall Keynes, great-great grandson of Darwin. Under the direction of Jon Amiel the script has evolved into a well-crafted biopic.

Toby Jones and Benedict Cumberbatch come on as Darwin's scientist urgers and friends, Thomas Huxley and Joseph Hooker. But the movie turns on Annie (Martha West), favourite of Darwin's 10 children whose death may have contributed to his atheism, as much as his theory.

Did Amiel really need to link Annie in a flashback to a monkey befriended by Darwin? Other flashbacks link to Darwin's intrepid journeyings. No mention is made of his less than favourable view of Australia's evolution

It would have been fascinating to hear a character, perhaps Darwin's Anglican parson (Jeremy Northam) predict unintended consequences from the master work: social Darwinism. These have included eugenics, Nazi master-race theories and Africaner apartheid, the later in conjunction with

literalist interpretation of the Bible.

But courtesy the BBC the British are creating comforting legends of the Victorian era as Hollywood created inspiring legends of the Wild West for Americans.

PG★★★SFFV

The Most Dangerous Man in America

Henry Kissinger described Daniel Ellsberg thus after he leaked to newspapers what became known as *The Pentagon Papers*.

At a critical point in 1971, these showed that successive American presidents had concealed vital information about their conduct of the Vietnam war.

Ellsberg's action was so fully covered world-wide that no elaboration seemed necessary. Director's Judith Ehrlich and Rick Goldsmith's documentary proves the assumption wrong.

By interviewing Ellsberg as he is today they establish that he was no wide-eyed peacenik. Indeed they draw from him the remark that one of his happiest times was commanding a Marine unit in action during the Vietnam war. Ellsberg, therefore, was a former military officer driven as much by criticism of the conduct of the war as by moral indignation.

The documentary lacks overall balance, however. No mention is made of the oppressive nature of the North Vietnamese regime whose policies drove opponents, including Catholics, into South Vietnam. No mention either of the contribution made by non-American countries including Australia, New Zealand and the Republic of South Korea.

All the emphasis is on the Vietnam war's utter futility. Reference might also have been made to those who believe that the war gave needed time to other countries in the region to strengthen their democratic structures.

PG★★★SFFV

Karate Kid

The original *Karate Kid* of 1984 was followed by two sequels. Is this Chinese, kung fu variation really necessary? At first sight no. But the prowess of Jackie Chan and the charm of Jaden Smith (son of Will) give it more than a mimic curiosity value.

As Noriyuki (Pat) Morita did in the original, Jackie Chan, the Master of 100 movies, plays the broken-down handyman who teaches a frail kid how to defend himself against a school bully and his gang.

The producers deserve a special Oscar for getting the Chinese government involved enabling director, Harald Zwart, to make powerful use of Beijing street scenes, Olympic Games buildings and the Great Wall of China.

Some of the kung fu scenes are too violent. They are offset by scenes in which the kid is taught the value of quiet, habitual, respectful discipline. Result: this version of *Karate Kid* could be the one that teaches boys not to throw their clothes on the floor.

M★★★NFFV

Winter's Bone

Father vanished, mother sick, Ree a teenager seeks to care for her younger siblings while authorities threaten foreclosure of their dilapidated family property. Only in the Ozark backwoods of Amercia? Well, no. Look no further than the mortgage belt of any major city.

That's what gives writer/director Debra Granik and her co-writer Anne Rosellini's movie its foreboding power. That and Jennifer Lawrence's performance as Ree: quiet, tough, persistent.

Her only available relative is a reluctant uncle. Her neighbours, into trafficked cocaine rather than traditional moonshine whisky as their drug of choice, aim to block her search.

In resolving this hard-scrabble situation, Debra Granik does not miss a heartbeat.

R18+★★★NFFV

The Horseman

Writer/director Steven Kastrissios had a problem: how much violence can your show in depicting a violent, evil subject.

His hero Christian (Peter Marshall) is determined on revenge after being sent a video of his daughter's last hours. Along the way he picks up Alice (Caroline Marohasy) as his determination takes him on a blood-boltered track.

Kastrissios was also producer/editor of the movie which for this reviewer's

taste goes to extremes of crudeness in trying to solve the problem.

R18+★★NFFV

The Special Relationship

Dennis Quaid gives a mirror-image performance as President Bill Clinton in all his shifting, and shifty, triumphs. The beauty and cool elegance of Hope Davis as Hilary Clinton are flattering.

Michael Sheen and Helen McCrory play Tony Blair and his wife Cherie in what is a reprise of their roles in *The Queen*, roles which they may play into pensionhood as film-makers transform the rush of print material – diaries, memoirs, bigographies – coming from the Blair-Brown years.

The mix of archival and dramatic reconstruction footage is always risky. Director Richrd Loncraine does not completely avoid a tendency of the mix to become historical fudge.

In creating context, the Lend-Lease deal, for example, is pictured as totally benign whereas in negotiating it Britain had to cede certain territorial rights. Unremarked also is the irony that as Prime Minister, Blair oversaw the payment to the last cent of Britain's war-time debt to the United States.

The production is credited to the British Broadcasting Corporation and America's Home Box Office. Presumably HBO put up the bulk of the budget; certainly the United States gets the best of the first-class fudge.

M★★★NFFV

Grown-ups

Four school friends meet again at the funeral of their football coach. The leader of the quartet, played by Adam Sandler, has become a successful Hollywood honcho with a glamorous wife and a couple of spoilt-brat kids.

After the funeral, the quartet adjourn for a re-bonding session to a lakeside house, once the focus of their teenage adventures. Beer, hijinks and revelations ensue. Sandler's movies fall into the expansive category: 'movies that people go to see' rather than 'movies that critics praise'.

He is a Marxist – of the Marx Brothers variety who has also been influenced by anarchism (Three Stooges variety) and dictatorship (Jerry Lewis variety).

Occasionally he pushes too far as in scenes where a wedding singer mimes soulfully and melodramatically to a rendering of *Ave Maria*. Yet Sandler is as much a happy-ender as the late,

great Frank Capra. Beneath the showbiz Marxism anarchism and dictatorship is a strong message about the importance of the family.

PG★★★SFFV

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WE are happy to announce that four commentaries on the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of St John by Father Michael Fallon, MSC, have been published and are now available from Chevalier Press.

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DON'T let us imagine that patience means a tame acceptance of the inevitable, sitting down with folded hands and hoping that somehow better times will turn up. It means action, bestirring ourselves and making the best of things; doing God's will, not merely submitting to it.

— Monsignor Ronald Knox, 'The Fisherman,' sermon published in *The Tablet*, 24 June 1939. From *Pastoral and Occasional Sermons*, reprinted 2002, Ignatius Press

A CHURCH IN NEED

A Nation where God was Banned

ALBANIA

Mark von Riedemann interviews Dr Maria Doro

What struck you the most when you first went to Albania?

What touched me was the difference between the two countries. It is very near Italy and only 60 kilometres from the Port of Brindisi to the port in Vlore in Albania. Albania had not changed – it is something like it was a hundred years ago; very few cars on the streets, bad footpaths and shortages of electricity.

The life of the people is linked to a very archaic agricultural system; there are many shepherds. But what touched me was the warmth of the people. Albanians are very welcoming towards foreigners. Hospitality is highly valued and even if they are in a difficult situation, they share what they have with their guests.

Am I correct in saying that under Communism there was an electric fence that went around the country?

There was a kind of a fence, for example along the border with Yugoslavia surrounding the lake. There are no trees on the border to this day. The trees were all cut down in order to prevent the people from leaving the country. No one was permitted to leave the country, and people who were caught were executed and their families punished. I met people who could not finish their studies because a distant cousin tried to escape.

Even movement within the country was forbidden. People in the mountains, who were economically deprived, were forbidden to migrate to urban areas because living in the city was a privilege reserved for loyal members of the regime. There was complete cultural isolation and the people were forbidden to listen to foreign news and music. As a consequence, people were unaware of events in the outside world over that period and they were fed on a distorted view of the outside world.

How terrible was the persecution of the Church?

They started with the killing of about sixty priests and many nuns and the arresting of all the other priests. There was suppression of religious orders and closure of Catholic schools. I met a Stigmatine Sister in Shkoder whose convent was closed. There were about ninety of them. They went back to their homes but continued to be nuns and people brought children to them to be baptized in secret. Some of these sisters were novices and they waited and could only wear their religious habits again in 1991 when they were in their seventies.

You are a medical doctor. You've been working in Albania since 1995 and you are going as a volunteer during your holidays. What medical challenges do you see?

The St. Egidio Community helps particularly in the health and educational sector. The health sector is ill equipped, like most of the public sectors in Albania. So we assist with donations for medicine and health equipments for hospitals. And particularly the north, which is the poorest part of the country, we are supporting 14 pediatric clinics especially to help in the fight against childrens malnutrition.



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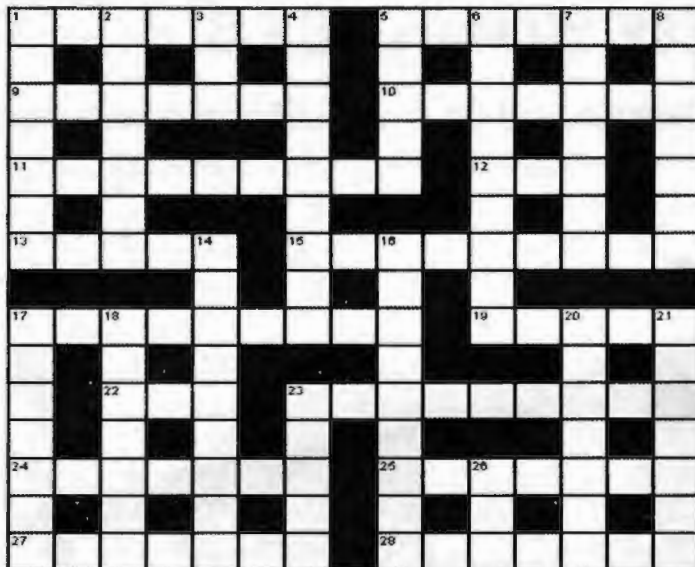


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ANNALS CRYPTIC CROSSWORD No. 19



ACROSS CLUES

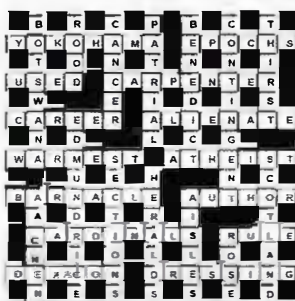
1. Merciful Lutheran initially found in concrete compound (7)
5. Jacob's grandfather has Egyptian god separating sailor and a son of Noah (7)
9. Leading Anglican joins one in five like Thomas the Angelic Doctor (7)
10. Seraphs cover central sound of bell calling people to prayer (7)
11. Timed Abel changing into madman (9)
12. & 20. down. Secure lace and get married (3,3,4)
13. Very big learner with terrible rage (5)
15. After sick turn, get nett return on goods illegally obtained (3-6)
17. Agreement between states on thin rope swallowed by cat (9)
19. Construct frame (3,2)
22. Lincoln leaves Mugabe for a fool (3)
23. Arrange notice for a general admission of sinfulness and an entreaty for forgiveness (9)
24. Playhouse is to change at three (7)
25. Of extreme force in canvas shelters say (7)
27. Stops of in France with little sister Eliot (7)
28. Former spouse performed in 24 across and demanded payment (7)

DOWN CLUES

1. Maronite saint to burn off bell-bottom (7)
2. Duo race around South American republic (7)
3. Ham producer leaves homer for a very long time (3)

4. Gave evidence in court trial I filmed, leaving out fifty thousand (9)
5. Saying from a mad agent (5)
6. This rogue can become virtuous and upright (9)
7. Most godly to fib amidst a great crowd (7)
8. Young girl, over ten, now starting vocation (7)
14. After removing top of melon Bill stretches (9)
16. I lent Rita change for a certain type of Mass ceremony (5,4)
17. Established creed about a leading Tibetan (7)
18. Book 1, 2, 3 and 4 (7)
20. See 12 across
21. Sailors left finish to prognosticate (7)
23. Every second one in Belfast supports church cooks (5)
26. Beverage found in remote areas (3)

SOLUTION TO CRYPTIC NO. 22



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Since 1991 the economic situation in Albania has improved of course, but there are still plenty of needs in the health sector and people are still suffering. Infrastructure is lacking and there are still shortages in electricity. This is very difficult for the people.

There somehow seems to be silence about the country from the international community. Do you feel this and why?

For forty years under Communism it was impossible to know anything about

Albania. Now, the situation is surely different. From a general point of view, I would say, that Albanians are very interested about other countries and languages but there is no reciprocity among the Western Europeans and the US.

Italians, for example tend to be misinformed about Albania. Their perception is based on the first Albanians they encountered in 1991: poor refugees. Now the situation is different. Albanian migrants overseas

should assist in changing the perception by the international community and through tourism. There are many wonderful places to visit in Albania.

What is the Catholic Church's role in this reconstruction effort?

The Church has carried out very important work in Albania. It aided in the reconstruction of the society in terms of human development and in the communication of the Gospel. This started in the beginning especially with the aid of the universal Church. Many missionaries - priest and nuns - came from Italy, Kosovo, Croatia, India and Philippines and Germany. They went to Albania. They helped to rebuild the churches, schools and clinics.

In the beginning the Church was forced to become a proxy administrator because the state was non-existent or ineffective. I think, that the Church is a very important point of reference not just for the Catholics but for everyone including those without a clear religious identity because the Church is a witness of Christian love which has no strings attached, and with compassion which is uncommon in that society.

What is the attitude of the people to the Church which has lived with them during their difficult times?

It is very trusted and respected not only by the state but by the other religions because the Church helps everyone without distinction and the people recognize this.

What about the relationship between Muslims and Catholics in Albania? It seems to be quite harmonious.

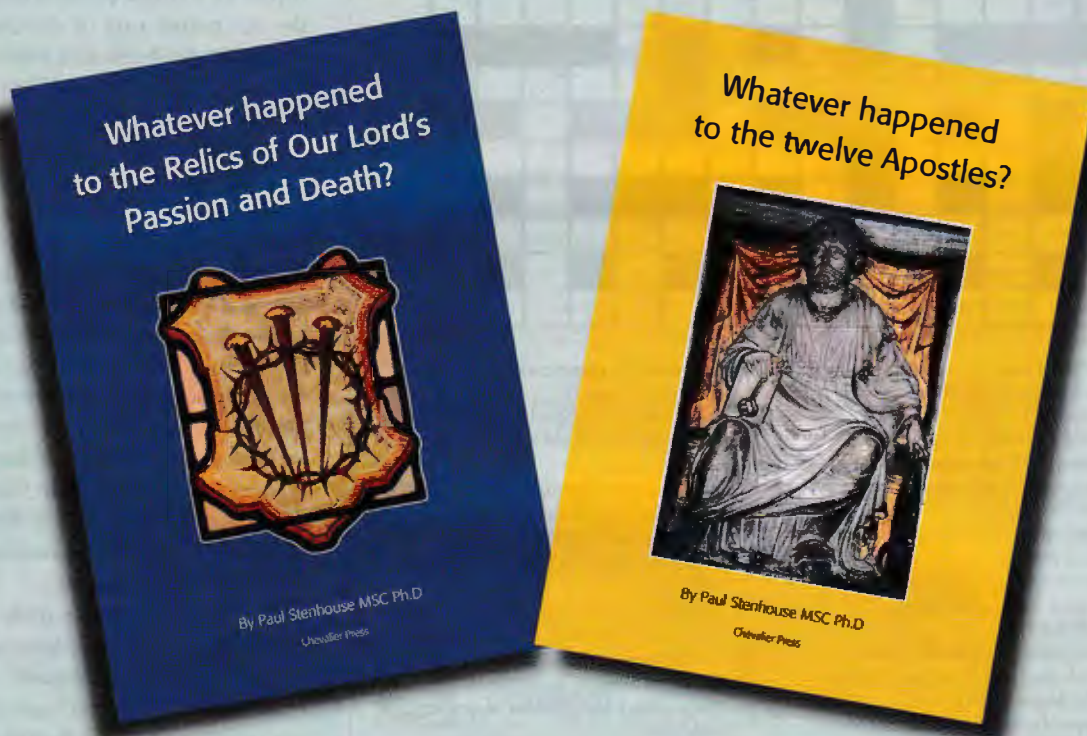
Yes it is up to now. Catholics and Muslims co-exist peacefully. Catholics would visit the Muslims during their feasts and vice versa. Now there are some signs of fraying in the relationships because of the events internationally that are reflected as well in Albania, but generally the relationship is quite good and there are a lot of intermarriages.

DR. ANNA MARIA DORO is a member of the St. Egidio Community. For 10 years she has been helping in Albania as a medical doctor. MARK VON RIEDEMANN is Director of *Catholic Radio & Television Network* [CRTN] for "Where God Weeps," a weekly TV & radio show produced by CRTN in conjunction with the international Catholic charity *Aid to the Church in Need, Koenigstein, Germany*. To donate, see our advertisement on page 43 of this issue of *Annals*.

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