

ABR goes to London

Hot on the heels of our inaugural *ABR* Forum in Canberra on March 28, when a capacity audience attended the session on life-writing at the National Library, *ABR* will host its first event in London on Tuesday, June 8. Peter Rose and Morag Fraser will present an evening of readings and ideas, with special appearances by Clive James and Peter Porter. We're delighted to be able to present this special event in association with the Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, Kings College London. The event will run from 6 to 8 p.m. Bookings are essential: please direct them to kirsten.mcintyre@kcl.ac.uk. *ABR* has many subscribers and supporters in the UK; we look forward to meeting them — and to reaching new ones.

More reasons to subscribe to ABR

ABR subscribers are entitled to a range of discounts and preferential bookings. These will be of considerable interest in coming months, as we plan a series of major events, commencing with Readings@Miettas at Federation Square on May 1 and 2, and also featuring an 'Evening with ...' on August 4, which promises to be one of Melbourne's literary highlights of the year (more details in the June/July issue). To qualify for all discounts and benefits, you must be able to quote your *ABR* subscriber number when reserving tickets. It appears on renewal notices and on the cover sheet that accompanies your magazine each month. If you don't know your number, please phone the *ABR* office manager, Dianne Schallmeiner, or e-mail her: abradmin@vicnet.net.au.

Trifecta at Black Inc.

Black Inc.'s new trio of anthologists is almost in place. We already know that Frank Moorhouse will edit *The Best Australian Stories 2004*. Now comes the news that Robert Dessaix will take on *The Best Australian Essays*. Dessaix, the author of several books, has already edited anthologies, including *Australian Gay and Lesbian Writing: An Oxford Anthology* (1993). We await confirmation of a major coup with the editorship of the poetry anthology. It should be quite a 2004!

The Kiriya Prize

Inga Clendinnen, who will deliver the Quarterly Essay Lecture at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 1 during Readings@Miettas, is having a good year, having just won the 2004 Kiriya Prize for non-fiction for *Dancing with Strangers*. She becomes the first Australian to win the Kiriya Prize, which is worth a total of US\$30,000. (Shan Sa, author of *The Girl Who Played Go*, won in the fiction category.) Clendinnen has also been short-listed for the Douglas Stewart Prize for Non-Fiction.

Call of the wild

The Taronga Foundation Poetry Prize is on again. The competition is open to young people aged nineteen and under, with prizes divided into three age categories. Poets are encouraged to write on any topic, with a special Wildlife Prize for the most outstanding poem dealing with issues of wildlife conservation and the environment. Random House Australia will publish the best poems in an anthology. Entries are open until 21 May. Entry forms are available from schools, universities and libraries, or at www.tarongafoundation.com.

Talk about tyrannical

The April issue of *ABR* took an appallingly long time to reach some subscribers in Queensland and Western Australia. Despite being sent to Australia Post on March 31, it didn't arrive until mid-April, in some cases. Apologies for this delay, which we are investigating with Australia Post. Meanwhile, please continue to fax in those cover sheets notifying us when you receive your copies. It all helps.

You can say that again!

On April 3 *The Age* published this letter to the editor from Denis Cartledge of Kallaroo, WA: 'I almost fell off my lounge chair laughing. The Government has warned Australians not to go to Gallipoli on Anzac Day as they could be in danger. They are eighty-nine years too late. I will bet thousands of diggers are convulsed with laughter, wherever they lie. It is too much.'

Contents

LETTERS	Clive James, Andrew Norton, J.V. D’Cruz and William Steele, Boey Kok-Choy		4
CONTRIBUTORS			6
POLITICS	Chalmers Johnson: <i>The Sorrows of Empire</i>	Dennis Altman	9
	Leonie Kramer (ed.): <i>The Multicultural Experiment</i>	John Lack	10
POEMS	Kevin Brophy		12
	Chris Wallace-Crabbe		35
LA TROBE UNIVERSITY ESSAY	Where Are We in the War on Terrorism?	Gareth Evans	13
MEMOIR	Philip Jones: <i>Art & Life</i>	Peter Rose	17
	Peter Skrzynecki: <i>The Sparrow Garden</i>	Richard Johnstone	19
	Patricia Page: <i>Across the Magic Line</i>	Shirley Walker	20
	Ron Clarke: <i>The Measure of Success</i>		
	Cathy Freeman (with Scott Gullan): <i>Cathy</i>	Bill Murray	21
BIOGRAPHY	Neil McDonald: <i>Damien Parer’s War</i>	Brian McFarlane	23
	Stephany Evans Steggall: <i>Can I Call You Colin?</i>	Margaret Robson Kett	24
	Peter Thompson and Robert Macklin: <i>The Man Who Died Twice</i>	Gideon Haigh	25
DIARIES	Paul Brunton (ed.): <i>The Diaries of Miles Franklin</i>	Joy Hooton	27
RELIGION	Peter Carnley: <i>Reflections in Glass</i>	Muriel Porter	29
CULTURAL STUDIES	Ron Burnett: <i>How Images Think</i>	Ilana Snyder	30
	Peter Yule (ed.): <i>Carlton: A History</i>	Ian Morrison	31
	Barbara Creed: <i>Media Matrix</i>	Liz Conor	32
ASIAN STUDIES	Nicholas Tapp and Gary Yia Lee (eds): <i>The Hmong of Australia</i>	Helene Chung Martin	33
	William H. Coaldrake (ed.): <i>Japan from War to Peace</i>	Vera Mackie	34
PEN	Lam Khi Try		35
GALLERY NOTES	Sublime Cocktail	Mary Eagle	36
FICTION	Peter Goldsworthy: <i>The List of All Answers</i>	Gail Jones	37
	Alan Wearne: <i>The Lovemakers: Book Two</i>	David McCooey	38
	Joan London: <i>The New Dark Age</i>	Paul Hetherington	40
	Andrew McGahan: <i>The White Earth</i>	James Bradley	41
	Kate Finlayson: <i>A Lot of Croc</i>	Susan Varga	42
	Peter Mews: <i>Bright Planet</i>	Gillian Dooley	43

	Nicholas Shakespeare: <i>Snowleg</i>	Michael McGirr	44
	Roger Wells: <i>Levin's God</i>	David Nichols	45
	Catherine Padmore: <i>Sibyl's Cave</i>		
	Charlotte Wood: <i>The Submerged Cathedral</i>	Anna Goldsworthy	46
CRIME FICTION	J.R. Carroll: <i>Blindside</i>		
	Jon Cleary: <i>Degrees of Connection</i>		
	Kerry Greenwood: <i>Earthly Delights</i>	Rick Thompson	47
PHOTOGRAPHY	A Small Town at War: The Drouin Collection	Jim Fitzpatrick	49
POETRY	Jeri Kroll: <i>The Mother Workshops and Other Poems</i>		
	Robyn Rowland: <i>Shadows at the Gate</i>	Lisa Gorton	56
LAW	Wilfrid Prest and Sharyn Roach Anleu (eds): <i>Litigation: Past and Present</i>		
	Brian Walters: <i>Slapping on the Writs</i>	Grant Bailey	57
JOURNALS	Chris Healy and Stephen Muecke (eds): <i>Cultural Studies Review: Charlatans</i>		
	Julianne Schultz (ed.): <i>Griffith Review: Webs of Power</i>		
	Ian Britain (ed.): <i>Meanjin: Only Human</i>		
	David Brooks (ed.): <i>Southerly: Face to Face</i>	Robyn Tucker	58
YOUNG ADULT FANTASY	Isobelle Carmody: <i>The Winter Door</i>		
	Justin D'Ath: <i>Shædow Master</i>		
	Garth Nix: <i>Grim Tuesday</i>	Elizabeth Braithwaite	60
YOUNG ADULT NON-FICTION	Robyn Annear: <i>Fly a Rebel Flag</i>		
	Dyan Blacklock: <i>The Roman Army</i>		
	Jacqui Grantford: <i>Shoes News</i>		
	Karl Kruszelnicki: <i>Bumbreath, Botox and Bubbles</i>	Stella Lees	61
FIRST WORD	Michael Gilchrist: <i>Daniel Mannix: Wit and Wisdom</i>	Edmund Campion	64

Letters

ABR welcomes letters from our readers. Correspondents should note that letters may be edited. Letters and e-mails must reach us by the middle of the current month, and must include a telephone number for verification.

Scholarship and stylishness

Dear Editor,

On the subject of my poem (*ABR*, March 2004) about William Dobell's *Cypriot*, Judith Pugh is no doubt correct about the scholarly facts (*ABR*, April 2004). At the moment, I am searching the poem for a single fact I got right. The only possible benefit of my blunder is that it might help draw even more attention to one of the greatest paintings in the Australian heritage — a painting which really did, after all, focus on the stylishness of a European male at a time when the stylishness of the Australian male was not yet even a concept. That was my subject: but I agree that scholarship should always set the limits before imagination gets to work.

Clive James, London, UK

They make a desolation and they call it Treasury

Dear Editor,

If Dr David Kemp's ill-fated 1999 university reform package, on which I worked as a member of his staff, had become law, then Simon Marginson's essay 'They Make a Desolation and They Call It F.A. Hayek' (*ABR*, April 2004), identifying the influences of the free-market economists Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, might have been persuasive. As it is, writing instead on the Nelson reforms, Marginson is wide of the mark. Just how far Dr Nelson had strayed from Hayek's and Friedman's liberalism was highlighted by an appearance I made, in October 2003, before the Senate Inquiry into his reforms. Senator Kim Carr, a member of the Socialist Left, and I agreed that the legislation gave the government (not the market) too much power, and should be voted down in the Senate. We have never agreed on anything before.

The final package, as amended in the Senate, is better than the original legislation. But it is still a long way from being a functioning market system. It's true that by 2006 price signals will come from most undergraduates, but they will be too faint to have any dramatic effects. With a twenty-five per cent price cap, fees will vary little, and the revenue, while useful, won't transform any university. This glimpse of fee-setting freedom is accompanied by an enormous increase in bureaucratic interference. The allocation of HECS places to universities and disciplines will be managed tightly from Canberra. Incentive schemes universities cannot afford to reject will control teaching and governance practices in ways they do not now.

The origins of a system like this are not in Hayek or Friedman, and not even in the Keynesian world nostalgically described by Marginson. What the new system most resembles is old-fashioned socialist central planning.

But we should not look for the genesis of these reforms in the writings of intellectuals. Their real origins are in a mix of Treasury's cost-shifting and the Education Department's micro-managing tendencies. The names of those to blame can be found in the Commonwealth's departmental directory, not a history of economic thought.

Andrew Norton, Carlton, Vic.

Hybrid voices

Dear Editor,

Thank you for publishing Hsu-Ming Teo's review of *Australia's Ambivalence towards Asia* (*ABR*, February 2004). We are gratified that Teo recognises the importance of our book. Nevertheless, we feel that some of her readings significantly misrepresent us. She betrays a certain eagerness to promote her own values and positions to the detriment of reviewing ours.

We stand accused of having 'dumped' petty grievances in our book alongside serious and urgent problems. Specifically, *Turtle Beach* is said by Teo to be 'a text already so problematic that the analysis of minor issues almost seems like overkill'. Leaving aside our puzzlement at the implication that problematic texts do not bear close analysis, the criterion by which certain issues are deemed 'minor' or 'petty' is not made clear, nor are such issues exemplified. We are left to suspect that the inextricable interlinking of the intimate, personal sphere of life with the political one is being overlooked, and that the significance of the former is thereby being derogated. We deemed it important to show the characteristic relations between Australia and its others on all levels; the imagined minutiae of *Turtle Beach* shed light on the public interactions of states, and vice versa.

However, we are more disconcerted to be accused of a 'sneering attitude' to Asians who promote a liberal human rights agenda in their own countries. 'In denying the intellectual "compradors" a say in their society because they have imbibed the value system of the West, the authors are guilty of ethnic or cultural essentialism,' thunders Teo. This charge is based on a number of false premises.

Firstly, we do not identify acceptance of Western values with 'comprador' status. Our observation about 'Third World compradors who will mimic whatever political garb is in fashion' is cited, but wrenched violently from its context, as consideration of the paragraph immediately following in our text makes clear: 'Tempting though it may be for some, not everything from the West need be rejected outright in an Asian context. Nor should somewhat homologous indigenous traditions not be honoured. There are Asians

somewhat “liberal” in training and conviction ... who are hardly mimicking compradors.’

Furthermore, *we* do not deny anyone a say in their society, nor do *we* deny agency and authenticity to those individuals and groups who might prefer (certain) Western values. Such denials are not for us to make because, as *we* point out in our book, ‘the ultimate acceptance or non-acceptance of social reality, its pace and its terminologies, should remain in the control of indigenous people and be exercised through whatever social and psycho-cultural mechanisms they prefer to live by’. *We* do claim that Asian groups apparently promoting Western cultural and political agendas often have yet to ‘sell’ their acceptability and relevance in their own countries; and that those Asians lauded as champions of Western liberal democracy, such as Kim Dae-Jung, may well on closer inspection emerge as champions of something not so Western, liberal or democratic after all.

Our book recognises, illustrates and honours diverse and hybrid voices both in Asia and in Australia. *We* are, merely, cautious about the rush to Cyclopean and unreflective acceptance of the Western liberal human rights agenda and its Asian (and other) promoters. The demonstrated failures of this agenda seem sufficiently stark to warrant serious consideration of alternatives. Teo’s point of departure, however, seems to be that this agenda, however flawed, is self-evidently worth pursuing at home and abroad. She is entitled to her view, but it has informed her reading of our book to a regrettable extent.

J.V. D’Cruz and William Steele, Clayton, Vic.

It’s a puzzle

Dear Editor,

Australia’s Ambivalence towards Asia, by J.V. D’Cruz and William Steele, triggers different impulses in your reviewer, Hsu-Ming Teo (*ABR*, February 2004). To Teo, it is variously ‘thoughtful’, ‘enlightening’, ‘thought-provoking’ and ‘desperately needed’. I agree. What puzzles me is her concerns that the authors are guilty of ‘cultural essentialism’, and that they attack Western-educated middle classes of Asia. D’Cruz and Steele, in Chapter 4, discuss at length people and societies on the concrete–abstract oriented cultural continuum. They conclude: ‘There are no societies that are purely concrete or purely abstract, there being no pure types.’ D’Cruz and Steele deal specifically with ‘hybridity’ in Chapter 1. Citing Fiona Nicoll, Jacqueline Lo, Tseen Khoo and Ien Ang on Asian-Australians, they make the point: ‘One would have to walk around [hybridity] to avoid it, and each little journey acknowledges its existence even more firmly.’ The authors are pluralists; anything but essentialist.

On Teo’s second concern, D’Cruz and Steele, in Chapter 3, allude to the temptation of Western-educated middle classes of Asia ‘to pass off their legitimate but sectional class interests as if they were those of the whole society’. I do not read the authors denying the Western-educated élites their legitimate interests. It seems to me that they question only the

right of these élites to speak for the whole society. The authors’ preferred position is clear in their commendation of Mohamed Jawhar Hassan, the director of the Malaysian Institute for International and Strategic Studies, who more inclusively calls for the twofold objective of ‘poverty eradication and civil society’.

Ambivalence, if nothing else, has provoked thinking, including one review diametrically opposed to Teo’s critique of cultural essentialism. Geoffrey Barker (*Australian Financial Review*, 29 December 2003) accuses *Ambivalence* of ‘dangerous relativism’! What to Barker is relativism is to Balthasar Kehi, of Melbourne University’s Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics (‘Letters to the Editor’, *AFR*, 7 January 2004), the denial of ‘public discourse among peoples with different value orientations’. Kehi’s sentiment echoes a central argument in *Ambivalence*: Western disempowerment of the Asian experience, ‘centring one [Western] brand of morality, then claiming it is everybody’s’.

Ambivalence is an ‘important polemic’ (‘Off the Shelf’, *The Australian*, 3 December 2003) that is ‘not for the faint-hearted’ (Dewi Anggraeni, *Eureka Street*, January–February 2004). Feel free to disagree with it: that is the essentialism of relativism. I’ll celebrate that freedom.

Boey Kok-Choy, Rowville, Vic.

Contributors

Dennis Altman is Professor of Politics at La Trobe University. His new book, *Gore Vidal's America*, will be published next year by Polity.

Grant Bailey has a background in law, linguistics and literature, and works as an editor in Sydney.

James Bradley is a novelist and reviewer.

Elizabeth Braithwaite is a Melbourne reviewer.

Kevin Brophy teaches Creative Writing at the University of Melbourne. His latest poetry collection is *Portrait in Skin*.

Helene Chung Martin, a former ABC China correspondent, is an honorary research fellow at Monash Asia Institute. Her next book, *A Lazy Man in China*, is due for release by Pandanus later this year.

Liz Connor is an ARC postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Melbourne.

Gillian Dooley is an Adelaide librarian and reviewer.

Mary Eagle is a Canberra writer and critic.

Gareth Evans, Australian Foreign Minister from 1988 to 1996, is President of the Brussels-based International Crisis Group, an independent global conflict prevention analysis and advocacy organisation; he is also a member of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change due to report to the UN Secretary-General in December. His essay is an edited version of his speech to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations on 30 March 2004.

Anna Goldsworthy is a Melbourne-based pianist and writer.

Lisa Gorton is a poet and critic.

Gideon Haigh is a Melbourne journalist. His many publications include *The Battle for BHP* and *Bad Company: The Cult of the CEO*.

Paul Hetherington has published seven collections of poetry, most recently the verse novel *Blood and Old Belief*.

Joy Hooton, one of the authors of the *Oxford Companion to Australian Literature*, now writes poetry and fiction.

Richard Johnstone is a Pro Vice-Chancellor at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Gail Jones teaches in the Department of English, Communications and Cultural Studies at the University of Western Australia. Her new novel, *Sixty Lights*, will be published this year by Random House.

Margaret Robson Kett is a Young People's Services Librarian and reviewer who lives in WA.

John Lack teaches History at the University of Melbourne.

Stella Lees is co-author of *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*.

David McCooley is a poet and critic and has published widely on Australian poetry.

Brian McFarlane's *The Encyclopedia of British Film*, published in 2003, has now been reprinted, and the second edition will appear in 2005. He is currently co-authoring a book on the British 'B' movie.

Michael McGirr's biography of the Hume Highway, *Bypass*, will be published by Picador in September.

Vera Mackie co-edited (with Paul Jones) *Relationships: Japan and Australia, 1870s–1950s*.

Ian Morrison is Curator of Special Collections in the Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne. His latest book is *A New City: Photographs of Melbourne's Land Boom*.

Bill Murray teaches modern European history at La Trobe University. He recently edited (with Arnd Krueger) *The Nazi Olympics: Sport, Politics and Appeasement in the 1930s*.

David Nichols is an academic and writer living in Melbourne. His 1997 book *The Go-Betweens* has just been updated and reissued by Verse Chorus Press of Portland, Ohio.

Muriel Porter, a senior lecturer in journalism at RMIT University, Melbourne, is an Anglican laywoman. A member of the Australian Anglican General Synod, she writes regularly for *The Age* on religion. Her most recent book is *Sex, Power and the Clergy*.

Peter Rose is the Editor of *ABR*.

Ilana Snyder teaches in the Faculty of Education at Monash University.

Rick Thompson teaches film at La Trobe University.

Robyn Tucker recently completed a PhD on histories and cultural difference.

Susan Varga is the author of the award-winning biography *Heddy and Me*. Her novel, *Happy Families*, won both the Braille Book of the Year and the Audio Book of the Year awards. Her last book, co-authored with Anne Coombs, was *Broometime*.

Shirley Walker is an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of New England, Armidale. Her most recent publication was *Roundabout at Bangalow: An Intimate Chronicle*.

Chris Wallace-Crabbe is a poet, critic and essayist.

Australian Book Review

May 2004, No. 261

ISSN 01 55-2864

Registered by Australia Post

Published by Australian Book Review Inc.

PO Box 2320, Richmond South, Victoria 3121

Editor Peter Rose

Deputy Editor Aviva Tuffield

Office Manager Dianne Schallmeiner

Cover Designer Chong Weng Ho

Printer Doran Printing

Chair Robert Manne

Treasurer Matt Kumar

Board Members Peter Craven, Michael Crennan, Morag Fraser, Ramona Koval, Vicki Nicholson, Russ Radcliffe, Peter Steele

Editorial Advisers Don Anderson, Peter Bishop, Isobel Crombie, Bridget Griffen-Foley, Kerry Goldsworthy, Paul Hetherington, John Hirst, Paul Kane, Patrick McCaughey, Pam Macintyre, Bruce Moore, Allan Patience, Craig Sherborne, Ilana Snyder, Clare Wright

Editorial Assistant Anne-Marie Thomas

Volunteers Cinzia Cavallaro, Ben Day, Emily Fraser, Sue Kyte, Robyn Tucker

Telephone: (03) 9429 6700

Fax: (03) 9429 2288

E-mail: abr@vicnet.net.au

<http://www.vicnet.net.au/~abr/>



ABR is most grateful for the generous support of our chief sponsor, La Trobe University.



ABR has been assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body; Holding Redlich; and Arts Victoria. We also acknowledge the generous support of our national sponsor, the National Library of Australia.

Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes. Editorial matters should be directed to the editor; advertising/marketing ones to the assistant editor; and subscription queries to the office manager. Letters to the editor will only be considered for publication if accompanied by a telephone number, for verification. Major articles are refereed.

Subscription rates (all prices include GST)

One year (ten issues)

Individuals: \$67.00

Institutions: \$76.00

Students/pensioners: \$55.00

Overseas (airmail) Asia/NZ: Individuals: \$87.00

Institutions: \$95.00

Overseas (airmail) Rest of World: Individuals: \$115.00

Institutions: \$125.00

Two years (twenty issues, Australia only)

Individuals: \$124.00

Institutions: \$142.00

Students/pensioners: \$99.00

Additional copy to the same address (Australia only)

One year: \$40.00

Two years: \$80.00



Our cover this month features a portrait of Mrs Josephine Smith, taken by Jim Fitzpatrick in 1944 as part of a study of the inhabitants of the Victorian town of Drouin. Then aged eighty-four, Mrs Smith was a fully qualified gravedigger, spending much of her free time planting trees at the Drouin Cemetery and keeping the graves tidy. Paid thirty shillings for the eight hours' hard work required to dig each grave, Mrs Smith took up her 'hobby' to help her third husband when a bout of ill health prevented him from digging the graves unaided. Impressively fit herself, Mrs Smith claimed to keep her strength up by drinking a bottle of stout after completing each grave and by eating plenty of 'plain' food.

Jim Fitzpatrick had initially studied medicine at the University of Sydney, but left during the Depression and found work as a newsreel cameraman for Cinesound. With the declaration of war in 1939, he became an official war photographer and set a world record by surviving thirteen amphibious landings in the Pacific. Fitzpatrick was one of eighteen journalists and photographers in the observers' plane to witness the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, and spent an hour on the ground afterwards, photographing the devastation. He was twice awarded 'World's Best Picture of the Year' by *US Camera*, and continued to work for the AIS for forty years. More of his photographs are featured in an essay starting on page 49.



Jim Fitzpatrick b.1916

Josephine Smith digging a grave at the Drouin Cemetery, Victoria [1] 1944

gelatin silver photograph: 15.9 x 21.5 cm

Drouin Collection an24219358