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# SOCIAL ALTERNATIVES

VOLUME 34 : 1 : 2015

# COSMOPOLITANISM





**Cover 34/1, Design: Debra Livingston – University of the Sunshine Coast.**

For the cover of this issue on 'Cosmopolitanism', the challenge was to create a dramatic and effective design narrative to represent diversity. The notion diversity is a crucial element to the stories of cosmopolitanism in this journal issue. Recently, I purchased for my grand-daughter a string of paper people called 'cut-out friends'. I then watched her transform the template pattern by painting, cutting and pasting, by making faces and clothes, to create diverse and unfamiliar characters. Her artistic endeavours inspired my front cover design. I used a hand-crafted illustrative technique using water colour and ink to pictorially depict a narrative, a story, of people from all races and cultural communities hand in hand, to represent this issue's theme of 'Cosmopolitanism'.

The notion of a narrative in art was popularised in the 1960s:

In previous decades, what was to be described later as 'Narrative Art' was referred to by individual categories such as 'history' or 'genre' painting. The umbrella term of 'Narrative Art' can apply to any time period and any form of visual narrative, including painting, sculpture, photography, video, performance and installation art' (Lucas Museum n.d.)

Narrative art aims to tell a story: the artists provide clues in their designs to guide the viewer in their understanding of the story. Clues include design features such as such as setting, symbols, colour and form.

Reference

Lucas Museum n.d. *Of Narrative Art*, Lucas Museum of Narrative Art  
<http://www.lucasmuseum.org/collection/narrative-art-1.html> (accessed 15/5/2015).

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- three - five keywords.

Please use Australian/English spelling and follow Harvard referencing. Submit tables, graphs, pictures and diagrams on separate pages. Remove in-text references identifying authors and replace with [name removed for the review process].

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# Cosmopolitanism

GRAHAM MADDUX

## Editor's Introduction

In his recent TV series, *The Human Universe*, Brian Cox says it is reasonable to conclude that we are alone in the universe. Traversing the disciplinary boundaries from astrophysics he then suggests that because we are alone we are precious as the inhabitants of this lonely planet. We all need to live and to survive together. There are strong cosmopolitan implications in this point of view. The conduct of petty wars of retribution, terror attacks, wars on terror, preemptive strikes, drone assassinations, repulsion of asylum seekers and border protections are scarcely conducive to harmony within the world's populations. Couple this with a pervasive carelessness about the plight of others in poor countries, or indeed the plight of the poor in wealthy countries, and the prospects for peaceful coexistence are not good. The world, striated with national boundaries, sees border protection as a powerful statement of collective selfishness. This is not to deny that important responsibilities rest upon states and their governments, but to call for a transformed outlook on the world from within its separate communities. The essays in this collection seek to address problems of separation from various angles.

## The Origins of Internationalism

There is cause for optimism in the growing number of thinkers who regard cosmopolitanism as a means of awakening the populations of the world to a vision of human equality. Martha Nussbaum, for example, revives a version of ancient Stoicism to regenerate humane feelings among Americans (Nussbaum 1997: 59). The term cosmopolitan was first popularised by Diogenes of Sinope, the quintessential Cynic, who claimed to be a 'citizen of the world'. There is an uncertain account that Socrates may have used this term first (Cicero: 108), since he held an unmixed benevolence for all people (Vlastos 1983: 506-7), yet he was a famous lover of his own state, Athens. From his other reflections one would have to think that Diogenes' reply on citizenship was less directed towards a love for humankind than a gruff rejection of the state – a specious reason for avoiding the responsibilities of citizenship. A genuine belief in equality was generated by his moderating followers, the Stoics, whom Nussbaum recommends. Diogenes himself, for all his outrageous lampooning of life in the city and his scorn for polite manners, was unable to live without the audience city life gave him. He lived in the lowliest abode, a cistern, yet he made sure it was located in the very centre of the

city, by the temple of Cybele in the middle of the Athenian agora. Neither Diogenes, about whom it was said that he was 'Socrates gone mad', nor Socrates himself could live apart from their own city-state, and the modern world seems wedded to the state system just as surely.

## Stoic Cosmopolitanism

The precursor to Stoicism was Crates of Thebes, the 'cheerful Cynic', who gave up a large fortune and chose to live indifferent to material possessions in the manner Socrates advocated and Plato taught. Coming to Athens, he was a pupil of Diogenes, and was in turn the teacher of Zeno of Citium, the founder of Stoicism. The later Stoics admired much in the Cynic philosophy. It was a consolation in adverse circumstances caused by the rise of empires under Alexander and ultimately Rome and the loss of vital autonomy in the Greek city states. 'To be no longer citizens of an independent city-state implied the loss of the traditional bonds of Greek ethics' (Ehrenberg 1974: 99). One's own inner resources could fortify one for a radical attack on the rules and customs of the surrounding society.

Lisa Hill and Tony Lynch discuss the force of Stoic cosmopolitanism in this issue. Hill addresses the question of a diminishing social distance engendered by Stoic philosophy and outlines the Stoic theology that envisions the universe, infused with divine fire, as the best of all creations. The rational person will conform gladly with its exigencies, believing that a rightly composed soul is the key to peace and happiness without perturbation (*apatheia*). The fact that we are 'parts of one great body' wherein 'the good of one is the good of all' (Marcus 1916: 9.1) makes harming another person irrational, a form of self-harm: 'the sinner sins against himself' (Marcus 1916: 9.4). As Hill reminds us, Seneca wrote, 'birth is ours in common.' Thus nature instructs us to engage in acts of justice and kindness towards others, wherever they may be. Conflict is both useless and demeaning, and 'what is necessary for self-sufficiency the wise man already has – so there is no point fighting over it' (Schofield 1991: 51). The cosmopolitan is at heart a pacifist.

In a kind of keynote discussion for this volume, Lynch affirms a view that cosmopolitanism is best construed as internationalism. He discerns three versions of



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cosmopolitanism in the ancient world which he argues have their counterparts in the modern: the ethical universe, the empire itself, and the universal church. The modern versions are neo-liberal globalisation, the *Pax Americana* and the universal human rights regime. He looks to a time when the universal ethic of cosmopolitanism is internalised in all people and issues in a political regime. For the time being, the onus is on individual communities. Lynch's paper is provocative and controversial, and it is to be hoped that it will arouse further discussion of this vital topic, as is hoped for all these papers.

### The Outcast 'Other'

In Australia we are living through a time of heightened xenophobia. The prominence of terrorist attacks around the world and recently, a direct assault on Australian soil in Sydney, have understandably made people nervous and resentful. Anger towards the perpetrators and determination to eliminate them with violent measures is hardly conducive to world peace. Moreover, allegedly 'anti-terror' legislation means giving up civil liberties for our own citizens. Constitutional lawyers have been alarmed at the extent to which Australia and other countries have followed the lead of the United States in constricting the liberties of citizens (Williams 2014). Terror legislation has become a tool of concentrated power.

In all of this there is more than a suspicion that our leaders are willing to make vulnerable people scapegoats on whom the public may vent their frustrations. Unbelievably, there remain people who resent welfare programs for the first inhabitants of the continent. Regardless of whether current policies are the most efficient or most appropriate, there is no doubt that Australians owe much more to the Aboriginal peoples than most people are prepared to recognise. Kevin Rudd's 'Sorry' speech was symbolically important, but the contrition needs to be followed up with substance. In this collection, Inga Brasche uses a case study of race relations on Groote Eylandt to demonstrate that Aboriginal people are 'dramatically and inexcusably socially disadvantaged'. Most Australians abhorred the apartheid regime of South Africa but were unaware and careless of the practice within Australia. Groote Eylandt supplies but one example of an effective apartheid system. Brasche concludes by noting that the international community of nations has an interest in Australian practice, which is in breach of the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Equally abhorrent is the current Australian official attitude to persecuted people seeking asylum in Australia. The process of interning people in what have become concentration camps was initiated by a Labor government under Paul Keating, deeply exacerbated by John Howard and the Liberals, and continued by Labor's Rudd and Gillard. A year ago to this day on which I write a young Iranian internee, Reza Berati, was brutally murdered by guards employed by the Abbott Liberal government. All our politicians declaimed that this was a terrible tragedy,

but in a poignant article Waleed Aly said that such an event was an inevitable outcome of a cruel policy that a majority of Australians approve of (Aly 2014).

Recently, prime ministerial aspirant – ostensibly the most 'liberal' of the Liberal Party – Malcolm Turnbull, praised his own government for having reduced the number of children held in detention since the end of the Rudd government in 2013. As with all his colleagues in the Liberal-National parties, he praised John Howard for reducing the flow of leaky fishing boats carrying asylum seekers to Australia, and his present colleague, Scott Morrison, for 'stopping the boats' altogether. He failed to mention the cruelty of the military regime Morrison and Abbott deployed in forcing boats back to Indonesian waters, the loading of people onto enclosed rubber dinghies set off on treacherous seas to make their own way to a dubious safety. The absurd Abbott project for 'border protection' is a deliberate ploy to shade asylum seekers with a flush of danger to the Australian public; straggly, leaking boats are an invasion fleet? While they praise the super-efficient Howard government no one mentions the clandestine operations of 'upstream disruption', the deliberate disabling of already dangerous boats; and we have conveniently forgotten the outrageously disgraceful threat the Howard government made to prosecute and imprison as a people smuggler Arne Rinnan, the benevolent captain of the Norwegian ship, *Tampa*, who rescued floundering refugees and sought to bring them to safety on Christmas Island according to international law (Brennan 2003; Marr and Wilkinson 2003: 27-8). In 2001, Suspected Illegal Entry Vessel no. X sank with three hundred and fifty-three people drowned. The former diplomat, Tony Kevin, claimed that Australian agents had been complicit in its 'disruption' (Kevin 2004) and, if so, were guilty of mass murder. That same year Howard peddled a false report that asylum seekers had been trying to throw their own children overboard, and Howard, gleeful for the chance to stir up public hatred for the 'other', said we don't want 'people like that' in Australia (Weller 2002; Walters 2004). Early in 2015 the president of the Human Rights Commission, Gillian Triggs, released a report into the torments suffered by children in the concentration camps: *The Forgotten Children*. It reveals a deep-dyed stain on the public character of our country, while the Prime Minister's outraged response was as far from statesmanship as could be imagined. Asked if he had any pangs of conscience about the treatment of children, Abbott replied defiantly, 'None whatever'.

The Edmund Rice Centre undertakes as part of its activities a program of detailed research into the ultimate plight of asylum seekers who have been turned back or sent directly back to the persecution they tried to escape. In a disturbing but measured account its director, Phil Glendenning, here details some of the consequences of current policy. 'Stop the boats' really means 'die somewhere else'. The treatment meted out to asylum seekers is as degrading to Australians as it is to the

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victims of institutional abuse: 'Australia's neglect of the human dignity of asylum seekers and refugees' says Glendenning, 'is not being cruel to be kind. It's simply cruel – for nothing so clearly violates the dignity of human persons as treatment that demeans or humiliates'. Some future generation will undoubtedly have to say Sorry to those who suffered under this brutal and illegal policy.

### **Continuing Inequalities**

Prime Minister (and Minister for Women) Abbott's first cabinet contained just one woman. Under heavy criticism, after a year in office he used a reshuffle to include one more. He came to office after being, in some eyes, the most effective opposition leader we had had. It is irresponsible for so many journalists to praise him for his conduct in opposition, even if they criticise him for continuing to be oppositional while in office. It is true that it is an opposition leader's job to be critical of government – searchingly and aggressively critical when necessary. Yet Abbott knew nothing but aggression, and his conduct has been destructive and destabilising, with lasting effects should future opposition leaders wish to emulate him. Political science makes a distinction between 'opposition' and 'contestation'. The former implies vigorous, and where necessary aggressive, criticism of the government, but always with respect for the system of responsible government. Contestation means victory at all costs, regardless of the damage one inflicts on the political system. The most notable object of Abbott's super-aggression was Julia Gillard, who had the insolence to out-negotiate him into the position of prime minister when they both faced a hung parliament. There was an acrid feeling in the air that Abbott could not abide a female in high office, and he pursued her relentlessly, often in sexist terms, or at least in association with followers who were unashamed to subject her to hideous sexist abuse.

That the supposed leader of his country should be allowed to behave in such a manner and even be praised for his effectiveness, is a sign that our country is not yet mature enough to extend courtesy and dignity to a leading woman, nor even to see fit to seek a gender balance within the cabinet. The cosmopolitanism of which we here speak entails the determination to accord full human dignity and appropriate autonomy to all human beings in equal measure, no matter what their race, colour, location, gender, socio-economic status, beliefs or any other measure of discrimination. Abbott is by no means alone in his attitude, which still prevails in much of the political, business and ecclesiastical worlds.

In this collection, Jim Jose confronts the masculinist domination of Western thought by analysing an early work by William Thompson and Anna Doyle Wheeler advocating women's franchise against the claims of the powerful, such as James Mill. Although noted intellectuals

in their day as part of Jeremy Bentham's circle, these little known authors deserve an honoured place in the story of freedom and equality. Jose concludes that for Thompson and Wheeler 'gender equality could not of its own accord be meaningful unless the community in which it was expected to prevail was also a community committed to equality in all its spheres – the workplace no less than the home. Formal political equality in the public sphere would be meaningless if it had to co-exist with private inequality, whether in the domestic sphere of the household or the pseudo-private space of the workplace.'

The injustice of moves against workplace equality exercises Verity Burgmann in her essay on international labour. She shows that working people were essentially internationalists till captured by nationalist elites who could goad them into competition with each other. With the dark shadow of chattel slavery overhanging, socialist workers battled the scourge of racism and espoused the ideal of the brotherhood and sisterhood of humankind – a very cosmopolitan ideal. Indeed, in the early twentieth century the politicised Industrial Workers of the World was the first organisation to embrace oppressed peoples in South Africa and the United States.

In Australia, labour relations are politicised in a particularly vindictive way. John Howard's policy, Work Choices, was a move against the privileges of working people in favour of the profit-seeking class. A few revealed cases of corruption in some trade unions have opened up for Prime Minister Abbott the excuse to tar all worker organisations with a wide brush, and to smear the connection of workers to the Labor Party. A royal commission on union corruption was clearly a move to make 'corruption' an official menace associated with both unions and the Labor Party. It is an insult to ordinary people everywhere in this attempt to diminish the dignity with which our cosmopolitanism accords them.

### **International Connections**

Where wealth and corporate power prevail, politics as the activity of a whole people recedes. Following the failure of a powerful America to join the League of Nations sponsored by its president, Wilson, the United States has kept up an ambivalent attitude to the United Nations that was founded on the League's ruins. The ravages of two world wars were devastating on entire populations, and murderous in the extreme on helpless and innocent Jews. The idea of the United Nations Organization was to bypass conflict by bringing nations together to work out their differences and to plan cooperation. For many cosmopolitans it might be the precursor to world government, which is a problem for us here. George W. Bush was especially contemptuous of the United Nations and had no intention of subordinating US power to international sanction. His biggest concession was to

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say 'let's give those boys down at the UN the chance to do the right thing', before he ignored them.

By contrast, John Langmore here affirms the vital importance of the UN in peacekeeping, giving an account of the extent of its reach and influence. Equally important is its role in development and its articulation of and support for human rights, which become chartered rights under the United Nations. Among its many agencies for the common good are the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, the World Health Organization and the Food and Agricultural Organization. Moreover, the UN has been a leader in the cause against human generated global warming. Australia does not exhibit a similar hostility to the UN as did George Bush, and took its turn on the Security Council with enthusiasm and responsibility. Neither do Australians have a strong feeling that the UN does much to help us, but as Langmore concludes: 'The pivotal fact is that people everywhere long for peace with justice and support institutions and leaders who sincerely seek those goals.'

Australia's quest to win a seat on the Security Council comes to Helen Ware's attention as she discusses Australia's foreign aid programs. Her essay cannot skirt around the self-interest that evidently motivates the programs. Prime Minister Abbott's often-expressed sympathies do not extend to much support for the humanitarian programs of the UNHRC. In the campaign for the Security Council seat, 'aid to non-poor countries such as Grenada was blatantly used in an attempt to buy votes'. Ware begins with former Foreign Minister Alexander Downer's bald admission that helping others is in Australia's best interests, and not to do so would harm the economy. The amount of harm does not seem to be quantified by subsequent governments that have repeatedly cut the budget for international development assistance. Doing so in the attempt to balance national budgets is a serious indictment on Australia because going by median wealth Australia is the richest country in the world. Yet it is difficult to find a scintilla of concern for the equality and dignity of all humankind in Australia's official attitude.

We are obviously looking for a breakthrough into cosmopolitan consciousness in this country. Normally one would expect the medium to be education, as Martha Nussbaum hoped, and in this higher education would be the leader. The very Stoicism that informed so much of the leadership in the ancient world was spread through education (McIlwain 1947). It in turn borrowed foundational instruction from Socrates through Plato's model school, the Academy, which lasted for the best part of a millennium. Ideally education knows no boundaries. At its best, work is disseminated to all interested scholars wherever they may be. Scientific and philosophical

knowledge was not the property of any city or nation, but was communicated for the enlightenment and progress of humankind. Modern universities still strive to present their findings on a world stage. The bind is that, whenever education is viewed as creating an informed and thoughtful citizenship and uplifting community horizons it is best supported by public institutions and funded by the state. It then becomes subject to politics surrounding the conduct of the state. Major upheavals have occurred in Australian higher education following political initiatives. Menzies benefited the system by expanding funding and initiating a generous system of Commonwealth scholarships which opened university places to merit, and Whitlam opened up the system further by abolishing university fees altogether. It was down to a Labor government, under Hawke and Dawkins, who, smitten with neo-liberal notions, rolled back the Whitlam initiative. The tragedy was not so much the reintroduction of fees, coupled with an admittedly fair loans system and time-payment contributions, as the abandonment of Whitlam's vision of an educated community. The 'reforms' were introduced in a lather of rhetoric about how university educated people were economically privileged and were bound to progress to heights in their professions and make more money than the rest of the population. They should therefore be prepared to pay for the privilege. Higher education was on the way to privatisation. The path was then open for Abbott and Pyne to repudiate the Menzies initiative while cynically praising it with Education Minister Christopher Pyne planning to deregulate university fees and cut back public funding. Clearly the effect will be to preserve university education for the already privileged.

In a harrowing account Tim Battin shows how the Australian university system is in crisis. The problem he outlines is threefold: first there is the tightening grip of neoliberal economics on Australian society; second, the political assault on the whole public realm; third, the failure of universities themselves to repel the infection of market ideology and to avoid the pervasive corrosion of academic ideals through managerialism. In all this, university administration has been pusillanimous and often self-serving. In addition to the external assault on public funding for universities (now often reduced to the bureaucratic status of 'institutions'), there have been huge imbalances in the internal distribution of funds, while the teachers themselves have become 'human resources'.

As Battin shows, although education is universal, universities were always proud to be associated with their cities, beginning with places like Athens and Alexandria. This never implied a retreat into fortress isolation, but the point underlines a thread through the essays in this collection. Like charity, cosmopolitanism begins at home. There is remote prospect of Dante's or Kant's world government and, as Lynch argues, such would imply, as



Montesquieu once taught, centralisation and despotism. The US already treats the United Nations as an intruder, but as Langmore says, the UN is more 'the premier club for states'. We all have an instinctive attachment to place, and the world is too big for most people to accommodate, despite the SBS news announcement ('news from home – if you live in the world'). Administration of communities still falls to states.

The cosmopolitan ideal cleaves to the democratic state. Here we must defend a classical notion of democracy, which is founded on the dignity, liberty and autonomy of all human creatures. In democracy, autonomy is only partly surrendered for the sake of agreed collective action. Democracy in this light cannot be seen as a 'realist' description of capitalist control as in the United States (Schumpeter 1952: 169), and possibly we might say with the plaintive Glaucon, 'this commonwealth we have been founding in the realm of discourse ... I think it nowhere exists on earth' (Plato 1941: 313). Of course the original classical democracy in Athens was real, but it held many obvious flaws which we would not wish to reproduce. Yet it generated the essential ideals we associate with democracy in its purest form, and its continuing life in the study of history, archaeology, sociology and political science renews its power as an operative criticism of all modern states that aspire to democracy (Ober 1993: 481-487). Let us recall that all the ideals of original cosmopolitanism radiated from democratic Athens, from Socrates and Diogenes, and of course from the original Stoa that was at the centre of Athens, where the railway line now runs through the *agora*.

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#### brushstrokes

*in grey sunlight swallowed by cloud*  
*you walk past Japanese restaurant fish and chip shop*  
*pizza place the hairdresser as footsteps follow*  
*a clatter of patent leather court shoes*  
*soon overtakes scuttles down the street*  
*a lean woman turns to peer at the lacklustre scene*  
*a fixed stare frown that burrows deep*  
*her black hair drawn back in a bun*  
*you study the lines her geometric outline*  
*coal-black suit with mid-calf skirt*  
*a live portrait John Brack painting*  
*soon scurries off on tiny scuffed heels*  
*and disappears*

JENNI NIXON,  
 BALMAIN, NSW

# The Cosmopolitan Dream: Withdrawal, Empire and the Church

TONY LYNCH

*Cosmopolitanism is a reflection on the right relationship of the ethical universal and the political particular. Traditionally it had three characteristic forms: that of Diogenes, which connected the two through the heroic endeavours of the hero of the ethical universal; that of Empire which connected the two through the administration of an imperialist political particular; and that of the Universal Church, which connected the two through a mediating institution of universal conscience. These three forms survive today in the cosmopolitanism of neoliberal globalisation, the cosmopolitanism of Pax Americana, and the cosmopolitanism of the universal human rights regime.*

## Introduction

'Cosmopolitanism' is more an intellectual's word than an everyday one. I can't think of any recent conversation – even when discussing global issues – in which it has put in an appearance. There is talk of common human decency, human rights, the demands of justice – that is, of a universal human moral community; and there is, though far less often, talk of the need for a 'system of world governance', and, rarer still, for a 'world state'. This talk divides between vaulting moral ambition and claims of practical necessity. There is the moral aspiration that all be equal members of the same moral community, and there are various concerns (security, environmental, economic) that may suggest the desirability of a global political jurisdiction. The moral aspiration has its opponents but reflects a very widespread view, while defenders of a global political jurisdiction are very much a minority, shadowed by charges of wishful thinking on the one hand, and imperialism and tyranny on the other.

In a seemingly natural conjunction, many embrace the aspiration for a universal moral community at the same time as repudiating the idea of a universal political ordering, and it may be this is the right thing to do, but if it is, then we have to come to grips with cosmopolitanism. This is because 'the nebulous core shared by all cosmopolitan views is the idea that all human beings, regardless of their political affiliation, are (or can and should be) citizens in a single community' (Kleingeld and Brown 2013).

From Diogenes onwards, cosmopolitanism is that style of thought that reflects on how our membership in the universal human community might fit together with our more local political allegiances. This is a concern with how the ethical universal and the political particular connect. If one renounces the ethical universal – because

local concerns 'crowd out' more universal concerns, or because the ethical is limited to that of one's close community – then cosmopolitanism is off the table from the start; just as it is for the extreme nationalist who insists that the demands of local political allegiance trump all else.

Cosmopolitanism rests on a commitment to the ethical universal in the context of a world of political particulars, and it involves thinking this through without denying the claims of the political. This is why its natural – and foundational – formulation is Diogenes the Cynic's response to the question of whether he was a man of Sinope, '*I am a citizen of the world*', a *Cosmopolitan* (Diogenes Laertius 1925: VI 63). If you think politics is something to be overcome by the ethical, then while idealistic – indeed, implausibly and excessively so – you are not a cosmopolitan, but a utopian. It may be that the cosmopolitan will deny that any particular political obligations reach them, but they will not, because of this, set themselves the task of driving the political from the world.

In what follows I explore three styles of cosmopolitanism, three ways of thinking through the connection of the ethical universal and the political particular, and the three different cosmopolitan strategies they imply. There is Diogenes, who offers us a cosmopolitanism of heroic withdrawal from the political particular into the universal human community of natural virtue. There are the Roman Stoics, who offer us a cosmopolitanism of Empire, of an imperialistic political particular they take to be infused with the ethical universal. And there is the Medieval Catholic Church, whose cosmopolitanism was a matter of its institutional realisation of a universal, extra-territorial, moral authority.



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The interest of these three strategies isn't intended to be merely antiquarian. For I think these strategies encapsulate the dominant styles of contemporary cosmopolitanisms. The cosmopolitanism of the heroic withdrawal from the political particular into the ethical universal of natural virtue is intrinsic to the project of neoliberal globalisation; that of the Roman Stoics in the 'New World Order' of *Pax Americana*; and that of an institutionally realised extra-territorial moral authority in the 'Global Justice' and 'international civil society' movements. If I am right, then there is no better introduction to cosmopolitanism today than through a look at the cosmopolitanisms of the past.

### **Diogenes: the Cosmopolitanism of Heroic Withdrawal**

It is traditional to date cosmopolitanism to Diogenes' 'I am a citizen of the world', and for good reason. Diogenes' claim to be a cosmopolitan cut starkly against the grain of his time. For it is absolutely certain that the Ancient Greeks did not see themselves this way. They were citizens of *this* or *that* polis (hence the question to Diogenes: 'Are you a man of Sinope?'); and it was this particular political unit that constituted their ethical community. They were localist communitarians. They were not universalists, ethically or politically. They lived in a world of friends and foes, where one sought to do good for one's friends and harm to one's enemies. And the greatest foe of all was epitomised in the 'tyranny' of the multicultural empire of the Persians. Against Persia, and Persia only, could most (never all) of the Greek city states come together as friends and act together.

But if this is how it was with the Greeks, what was Diogenes saying? Was he really championing a universal ethical and political community? True, the Greeks did see the ethical and the political as bound together in the form of the polis; but this was a matter of the adjacently placed and the culturally like-minded. To move beyond this community to any larger grouping could only be a result and manifestation of imperialising and tyrannical power. If, then, Diogenes was advocating a world polis, and claiming citizenship of that polis, wasn't he in effect championing the ambitions of the Persian Empire, the greatest, perhaps the only, enemy of all Greece? Was he not advocating universal tyranny?

Of course, he was not. He was separating off the ethical universal from the political particular, not bringing them together, let alone bringing them together on a world scale. When he said he was a citizen of the world, he wasn't invoking a world state or empire, rather he was insisting on the divide between the ethical which, being based on 'Nature', was universal and immutable, and the political, which was a product of 'convention' and so local and variable. His task was to reveal, by the example of his life, the ethical universal of humanity by cleanly dividing the Natural from the Conventional, and embracing the Natural alone. He may have said he was

a citizen of the world, but in the Greek universe this was simply to say 'the polis had to do without him' (Kitto 1968: 159), as, indeed, it would have to do without everyone if, *per impossible*, everyone could live only in the universal ethical community of Nature.

Diogenes wasn't extending the political particular to the ethical universal by advocating for a world state, nor was he a utopian calling for the destruction of all that is political in its name. He was (as he saw it) an ethical hero who had the insight and strength of character to withdraw himself from the communal bonds of the really existing polis. Doing this was a way to show others in as clear a way as they could stand, the ultimate difference between purified human nature, and its impure, local and conventional realisation in the polis. His essential mystery to his fellow Greeks was not the claim to a rare and revealing heroism – that sort of claim was as old as Greece itself – it was his way of being heroic, by withdrawing from the political community of his fellow citizens. As they saw it this was to repudiate, not reveal, his humanity – so Diogenes is 'dog-like', an animal, a *Cynic*.

It is a peculiar irony that the man so often marked out as the founder of cosmopolitanism in terms of citizenship in a world state was using that language to mark out his withdrawal from the conventions of politics into an eternal and immutable ethical realm only truly inhabitable by the moral hero.

### **The Roman Stoics: Cosmopolitanism as Empire**

It was not Diogenes but the Roman Stoics who pursued the cosmopolitanism of world citizenship, and for the obvious reason: they were the administrative and ideological agents of a political particular whose very extension seemed to open the way to the ethical universal. It was Empire that brought the ethical universal and the political particular together, and on a world scale; and it brought them together in the thought and actions of those who manned the Imperial machinery of rule. For these men cosmopolitanism was Stoicism: the high-minded service of an elite of the perfect who alone, says Marcus Aurelius, have:

the capacity to examine methodically and with truth everything that one meets in life, and to observe it in such a manner as to understand the nature of the universe, the usefulness of each thing within it, and the value of each in relation to the Whole and in relation to man as a citizen of that Whole, the greatest city of which other cities are but households (1983: III 23).

Here, cosmopolitanism is not an heroic cleaving to the ethical universal at the expense of the ties of the political particular: it is rather the creed and sensibility of those very people who bring the two together in the

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administration of Empire. To be cosmopolitan is to identify with, and to serve, the ends and interests of the Roman *patria*. The cosmopolitan, says our Emperor, spelling out the core of the imperial faith, 'should continually think of the universe as one living being, with one substance and one soul' (Marcus Aurelius 1983: III 33).

If Diogenes set nature against convention, the natural move of the imperialist is to claim the superiority of the natural over the conventional at the same time as reading the conventional into nature itself. So if for the Stoics the Cosmos – Nature – is a polis (a Cosmopolis) because it is subject to Law, it hardly needs pointing out that this conclusion did not arise from any special, or especially impressive, knowledge of the workings of nature, so much as from knowledge of political laws and their authority – indeed, those of Empire as it swallowed the world – imposed onto nature as onto a blank slate, and reflected back in that neat ideological trick Marx called reification. This is cosmopolitanism as the well-intentioned tyranny of the powerful, for whom all the evidence there is seems to point to their superiority along all dimensions of value, and so insinuates the reassuring and spine-building thought that what they have – and what they are giving and have to give – is what all men, in their heart of hearts, really want and aspire to.

### **The Universal Church: Cosmopolitanism as Extra-Territorial Ethical Review**

Ancient Cosmopolitanism saw Diogenes develop an heroic ethic of political withdrawal. It saw the Roman Stoics embrace the imperialism of Empire as the embodiment of the ethical universal. The Medieval Church (circa 1050-1300) took a third path. It sought a Christian cosmopolitanism that contained both an ethic of heroic withdrawal from the political particular and the Roman Stoics' cosmopolitan duty of political engagement on behalf of the ethical universal.

What made this possible was the special status of the Church as both a manifestation of the ethical universal and an international political particular. Diogenes may have felt anything institutional and organised could only be so through convention, but that was because he did not, in the darkness of his time, perceive the possibility of the Universal Apostolic Church. In one sense it was a matter of convention, but in another sense it was outside convention and eternal, for it provided the earthly dwelling for an eternal and unchanging God.

As an institution it went beyond Diogenes and towards the Roman Stoics by offering cosmopolitanism a mode of collective action. For here we have a class or set of people – the clerisy, with the Pope at their head – who occupy a special, mediating institution set between the timeless ethical universal of Heaven and the worldliness of the political particular in a world of Fallen Nature.

It is not the task of the Church to become an Empire itself, nor is it the duty of the Church to withdraw from the world of political engagement. The Church's role as the cosmopolitan agent of the universal ethical community in a world of political particulars, is to be the voice of 'the law of God' – the voice of universal conscience. It is to consider and to judge the acts and omissions of secular authority from the perspective of a duty of pastoral care that directly connects the individual's soul, through the Church, to the ethical universal that is God's Rule. The moral authority of the Church rests on the fact that it answers only to God and to the universal human community of souls, not to any political jurisdiction or sectarian grouping, however grand, even global, it might be. This is not the cosmopolitanism of individual withdrawal from political life, nor the cosmopolitanism of Empire, but that of the universal conscience of all souls realised in the moral authority of a special, extra-territorial, global institution of direction and review. And of a real – not merely notional – direction and review because (as the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV found out in the Investiture Controversy) its unique mixture of the conventional and the eternal in the name of its pastoral care for all human souls gave it the capacity to excommunicate a disobedient ruler, so dissolving the bonds of political obligation.

### **Contemporary Cosmopolitanisms**

It is my claim that the dominant styles of contemporary cosmopolitanism recapitulate the deep logic of these older cosmopolitanisms. I want now to support this claim, and, in doing so, to draw some cautions and conclusions for modern cosmopolitans.

### **Neoliberal Cosmopolitanism**

It is hardly contentious that modern neoliberal capitalism is cosmopolitan (the world, after all, is *flat* (Friedman: 2005)), but I don't think anyone has pointed out its Diogeneian logic.

Diogenes was not an anti-political revolutionary, nor was his heroic withdrawal from the polis meant to undermine it. His criticism of his fellows was less a call for followers than a matter of condemning them for their sorry state. And so the polis had a use. It was a home or ordering suitable to the unheroic, the weak and mediocre.

Consider now neoliberalism. While it is sometimes said neoliberalism is anti-political, this is just not true. Neoliberals have not repudiated the political nor shunned its capacities for coercion. Far from it. What they have done is to ethically downgrade it from something that might embody the ethical universal into something merely instrumental and remedial. It is useful when dealing with the weak, unheroic and mediocre. And given they can always be expected to be with us, it can hardly be expected to wither away or to dissolve as utopians



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might hope. This is Diogenes attitude towards politics too. And just as Diogenes denigrates the capacity of the political particular to realise the ethical ideal on the basis of an ethic of nature to which all might be called, but only an elite few answer, so it is with the neoliberal cosmopolitan. He or she does have an ethical universal of eternal and immutable nature against which the political is merely a conventional device of remediation for those incapable of living up to the demands of natural virtue. This ethical universal is the absolute obligation of *entrepreneurship*, and it is grounded in what Adam Smith called the universal 'human propensity' to 'truck, barter and exchange' (1950:12).

The entrepreneur is the man of eternal human virtue, but it is a hard virtue sorting out those who can live up to it from those who flee, from weakness, into claims of 'entitlement' and demand that the political look after them. Thus the entrepreneur as moral hero is not identical to Diogenes ideal. Where Diogenes withdrawal from the political isolates him from his fellows, the neoliberal's withdrawal isn't into isolation but into an ethical system of competitive exchange. The ethical realm of nature becomes the *laissez-faire* 'market economy' and the lone ethical hero becomes a member of a special class – that of the 'wealth creators' (in full ideological mode, 'job creators').

If Diogenes does not seek to actively interfere in the political realm, not so the entrepreneur. His is a competitive virtue in the world of truck, barter and exchange, and it demands a certain kind of social environment if it is to flourish. Diogenes might leave the political to the mediocre and their mediocrity but the neoliberal entrepreneur cannot do this. For the mediocre want to claim 'benefits and entitlements', and so undermine the possibility of human virtue. It follows that it is an absolute duty for the virtuous that they actively aim to control and shape the political regime. For unless the political is harnessed to the ends of the entrepreneurial class of 'high achievers', those who are 'losers' will inevitably launch attempts to invert the order of natural virtue. If Diogenes withdraws from the political but still lives as a beneficiary of the tolerance of the Athenian polis, the neoliberal lords of virtue have a duty to intervene in both their individual and class interests. And here is the place where corruption is inevitable. For whatever we think of Diogenes, he demands our respect for the burden of poverty and asceticism he assumed, but not so those whose conception of ethical nature is drawn from Smith. Their ethic demands wealth and power. If Diogenes elicited puzzled admiration from those he condemned and from whom he withdrew, those who shirk the duties of absolute entrepreneurship can be expected to envy and resent their betters. And so the neoliberal cosmopolitan finds himself, despite his wealth and power, forever haunted by the tumbrils of revolution. On the one hand, as an exemplar of natural virtue, he wants and expects admiration and praise; on the other,

as 'winners' whose position depends on creating 'losers', he has justified fears.

### *Pax Americana*

The Roman Stoics knew that nothing could be better than Empire, for Rome was a wonder to the world. It was the exception that determined the end and the standard of all that was valuable and of all value. To be cosmopolitan was to be Roman, and to pursue cosmopolitanism meant extending Roman power to the limits of the earth: and so it is today for our closest political analogue, the United States. It too rests its cosmopolitanism on the doctrine of an exceptionalism that determines all value and all that is of value. This stance can be traced back to the Puritans, and its essence is well expressed by Tom Paine, who, in 1776, in the instructively titled *Common Sense*, bluntly said, 'The cause of America is in great measure the cause of mankind'. This means first that the American political particular is the place where fact and value converge in the ideal political configuration of the ethical universal. And second, that pursuing the aims and ends of that political formation is to be – in the absolute sense of the ethical universal – 'a force for good'. All this was summed up by President G.H. Bush in his 1989 Inaugural Speech:

America today is a proud, free nation, decent and civil, a place we cannot help but love. We know in our hearts, not loudly and proudly, but as a simple fact, that this country has meaning beyond what we see, and that our strength is a force for good (Bush 1989).

It is common to say that whatever one might think of this easy marriage of political power with ethical virtue, at least it has the virtue of 'good intentions', but in fact the picture is both more complicated and less reassuring. What we have – and what, given the identification of Empire with cosmopolitanism, what we must have – is 'good intentions' as pure hypocrisy (Lynch and Fisher 2012: 32-43).

Hypocrisy is saying one thing, and saying it in what is presented as one's own voice, and doing something quite opposed to this. Pure hypocrisy is doing this without guilt – because one is, exceptionally, 'a force for good'. It is the mark of cosmopolitans of Empire that they are pure hypocrites, and this is what they must be to reconcile the necessities and imperative of their political particular with the demands of the ethical universal.

### **Cosmopolitanism as the Ethical Conscience of Global Civil Society**

Cosmopolitanism 'is the idea that all human beings, regardless of their political affiliation, are (or can and should be) citizens in a single community' (Kleingeld and Brown 2013). This means that one option that is off the table is *internationalism*, where this means a community

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of sovereign political jurisdictions. It is off the table because sovereignty, and respect for sovereignty, means that it is the determinations of the political particular, not the ethical universal, that matters most. And this means that in the end the cosmopolitan is not going to be a champion of (say) the United Nations conceived precisely as a body of sovereign states.

If cosmopolitanism is to avoid the Scylla and Charybdis of neoliberalism and Empire, and to escape the whirlpool of internationalism, its natural expression is in terms of an extra-territorial moral authority that has the capacity to further the ends of generalised benevolence and to effectively review political particulars for their compliance with 'the ethical demands of global civil society'. Proponents typically speak of 'the movement for global justice' in the context of an 'emerging human rights regime', and some, at least, like to cast it all in terms of 'cosmopolitan democracy' (Habermas: 2001:58-112).

The idea is that the ethical and the political can be brought together in a mutually facilitating way through a system of 'world governance' that is not a matter of a World State (Empire), is not a matter of the neoliberals cynical manipulation of politics in the service of an oligarchy of entrepreneurial moral heroes, and is not hostage to the sovereignty of the political particular. It is a matter of the ethical jurisdiction of 'private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development' (World Bank 1998) (a matter largely of NGOs), and of something like the International Criminal Court of Justice (an INGO), and a World Parliament elected by, and answerable to, all the citizens of the world.

The analogy with the medieval cosmopolitanism of the Universal Apostolic Church is easy to see and develop. What we have is a call to extra-territorial moral authority in terms of 'third sector' institutions concerned with human welfare and global justice. We have a doctrinal foundation – universal human rights – and, in the form of those who run these institutions, we have an administrative clerisy of virtue. These institutions of universal moral conscience connect, as did the Universal Church, directly to each and every individual and in doing so claim an authority over local and sectarian groupings.

It is a pleasing picture, and an admirable ideal. It is also, as was the Universal Church, located (or trapped) in an impossible, largely imaginary space; and without the Church's capacity to bridge this ideologically by melding the conventionalism of the Church as an institution with the eternity of that Godhead it housed.

Thus two things tend to happen. First – and this is the more innocuous – there is a lot of generalised rhetoric which sounds rather grand but impresses only insofar as it operates on the level of platitudes and 'good

heartedness' allied with a kind of providentialism of the long run that, without the theological underpinnings available to the Universal Church, simply hangs there – an intellectual skyhook:

What form should these [extra-territorial moral] institutions take? A world parliament on the model of the European parliament is one proposal, and the Italian Peace Association has organized world assemblies, taking care to invite representatives of peoples rather than states. As far as individual duties are concerned, the statute of the International Criminal Court has now been approved; if it is effectively instituted, it will at last allow due procedure against the perpetrators of crimes against humanity. Progress is unbearably slow, but political institutions must adjust eventually to the boom of globalization (Archibugi 2000: 146-147).

Only the ICC has any real claim to being a realisation of this cosmopolitan dream, and this leads us to the second thing that tends to happen. For Archibugi has to say that everything turns on whether 'it is effectively instituted'; and he has to say this because, as things stand, the ICC is not an impressive cosmopolitan success story.

In its 11-year history the ICC has only prosecuted Africans. This is both striking and revealing. The ICC was, after all, meant to be 'an independent judicial body that would challenge impunity for the gravest international crimes – genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity' (Roth 2013). It would be nonsense to argue that these crimes have only occurred in Africa, and even more so to contend that Africa alone has seen the most extreme and reprehensible of these events.

So, why the selective focus? Why has the judicial arm of the Universal Church of the Human Rights Regime seen so little and ignored so much? Because, for all its appeal to the ethical universal, as an institutional structure, it is embedded in – is, indeed, a part of – the world of the political particular. Roughly speaking, Africa is politically weak and geopolitically not of first importance to those states that are strong, and are big geopolitical players. Indeed that state and its interests whose support is most essential to the reach of the ICC – the United States – is not even a signatory to the Rome Statute that saw its creation.

Does this matter? Should the cosmopolitan worry about this selectivity of targets, its focus on the weaker and less powerful offenders, and its blind eye to the often worse offences of the stronger and more powerful? Some think not; 'That war criminals still run free where the court cannot act is hardly reason to refrain from prosecution where it can' (Roth 2013). The trouble is that this is just untrue. Justice, as John Rawls reminded us, is crucially a matter of *fairness*, and it is not fair that



some who offend are targeted and others who offend, are not. And it is especially unfair when the explanation for this runs not through ethical considerations, but those of (relative) power. What Roth refuses to acknowledge is that selective justice is not merely incomplete justice; it undermines the very idea of justice itself. It pollutes the wells. It sees this style of cosmopolitanism collapse into the pure hypocrisy of the cosmopolitanism of Empire to which it offers a certain, though ever diminishing, sheen of legitimacy.

### And So?

Does this brief history of three versions of the cosmopolitan dream – Withdrawal, Empire, Church – mean that the dream is, finally, a nightmare? Of course not. There is the ethical universal of common humanity and there are political particulars; and they have, somehow, to live together.

We need to be cosmopolitans and for those reasons of vaulting moral ambition and practical necessity invoked at the start of this essay. What we have to do is to take this on board with as clear an awareness as we can of the dangers we face. We have to keep in mind the possibility of its corruption. Diogenes cosmopolitanism of withdrawal is corrupted in neoliberal cynicism. The corruption of the cosmopolitanism of Empire lies in the idea that simply in virtue of being agent of Empire one is by that fact 'a force for good' for whom all things are permitted; while the corruption of the cosmopolitanism of the Universal Church is the preparedness to indulge in casuistical justification or excuse of the crimes of the powerful.

As cosmopolitans we need a sense of fairness combined with an awareness of the fragility of goodness in the face of our best intentions. At present I think that means that we have to be *internationalists*. Not as the end of our cosmopolitanism, but as what it demands of us now, in our circumstances. Anything more ambitious, any determination that we are certainly 'a force for good', will give us a rapacious economic elite, the pure hypocrisy of Empire, or the self-undermining moralism of selective justice, and probably all three.

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### Stretch Marks

*I learned release  
before inhering grasp.*

*You racked your brain  
to find imagined rain.*

*The male voice of the south  
sounds its apology.*

*My notebook shows the place  
that holds blue signatures to claim.*

SHEILA E. MURPHY,  
PHOENIX, ARIZONA, USA

# Classical Stoicism and the Birth of a Global Ethics: Cosmopolitan Duties in a World of Local Loyalties

LISA HILL

*Do I have responsibilities to strangers and, if so, why? Is a global ethics possible in the absence of supra-national institutions? The responses of the classical Stoics to these questions directly influenced modern conceptions of global citizenship and contemporary understandings of our duties to others. This paper explores the Stoic rationale for a cosmopolitan ethic that makes significant moral demands on its practitioners. It also uniquely addresses the objection that a global ethics is impractical in the absence of supra-national institutions and law.*

What do we owe to strangers and why? Is a global ethics possible in the face of national boundaries? What should we do when bad governments order us to mistreat strangers or the weak? These were just some of the questions to which the ancient Stoics applied themselves. Their answers, which emphasised the equal worth and inherent dignity of every human being, were to reverberate throughout the Western political tradition and directly influence modern conceptions of global citizenship. Yet, how the Stoics arrived at their cosmopolitanism is often imperfectly understood, hence the first part of the discussion. Objections that their ideas were too utopian to be practically useful also reflect misunderstandings about Stoicism, hence the second part of the paper.

I begin by exploring the Stoic rationale for the *cosmopolis*, the world state, after which I address the objection that a global ethics is impractical in the absence of supra-national institutions and law. Well aware that local loyalties and the jealousy of sovereign states towards their own jurisdictional authority would represent significant obstacles to the practice of a global ethic, the Stoics insisted that the *cosmopolis* could still be brought into existence by those who unilaterally obeyed the laws of 'reason' even within the confines of national borders and in the face of hostile local institutions.

## Background

Inspired by the teaching of Socrates and Diogenes of Sinope (Diogenes the Cynic), Stoicism was founded at Athens by Zeno of Citium in around 300 BCE and was influential throughout the Greco-Roman world until around 200 CE.<sup>1</sup> Its teachings were transmitted to later generations largely through the surviving Latin writings of Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus, C. Musonius

Rufus and Marcus Aurelius, as well as the Greek author Diogenes Laertius via his *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. The Stoics not only influenced later generations; they were extremely influential in their own time. From the outset, Stoicism was a distinctive voice in intellectual life, from the Early Stoa in the fourth and third centuries BCE, the Middle Stoa in the second and first centuries BCE, to Late Stoicism in the first and second centuries CE (and beyond) when Stoicism, having spread to Rome and captivated many important public figures, was at the height of its influence.

## Stoic Cosmopolitanism and Global Ethics

The idea that we should condition ourselves to regard everyone as being of equal value and concern is at the heart of Stoic cosmopolitanism. The Stoics were not alone in promoting this ideal: the Cynics were also cosmopolitan. But it was the Stoics – the dominant and most influential of the Hellenistic schools – who systematised and popularised the concept of the *oikoumene*, or world state, the human world as a single, integrated city of natural siblings. Impartiality, universalism and egalitarianism were at the heart of this idea.

The Stoic challenge to particularism was extremely subversive for a time when racism, classism, sexism and the systematic mistreatment of non-citizens was a matter of course. It was hardly thought controversial, for example, that Aristotle (1943: IV. 775a. 5-15) should declare that 'in human beings the male is much better in its nature than the female' and that 'we should look upon the female state as being ... a deformity'. Similarly, ethnic prejudice was the norm rather than the exception in antiquity. The complacent xenophobia and racism of Demosthenes's 341 BCE diatribe against Philip of



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Macedon would not have raised a single eyebrow in his Greek audience:

[H]e is not only no Greek, nor related to the Greeks, but not even a barbarian from any place that can be named with honour, but a pestilent knave from Macedonia, whence it was never yet possible to buy a decent slave (Demosthenes, 1926: 31).

Reversing these kinds of attitudes (and the behaviour attendant on them) was the self-appointed task of the Stoic philosophers.

### **The Cosmopolitan Ideal, Social Distance and Care for Strangers**

The first step towards promoting a universalistic ethic entailed changing our whole way of thinking about social distance. The Stoics were well aware that most people tend to imagine their primary, secondary and tertiary duties to others as ranked geographically: distance regulates the intensity of obligation and people will normally give priority to themselves, intimates, conspecifics, and compatriots (in roughly that order), before strangers, foreigners and members of out-groups. This view is what is commonly referred to as 'the common-sense priority thesis' or the 'common-sense' view of global concerns. Hierocles, the second century Stoic philosopher, introduces the image of concentric circles to illustrate how we generally conceive of our obligations to others:

Each one of us is ... entirely encompassed by many circles, some smaller, others larger, the latter enclosing the former on the basis of their different and unequal dispositions relative to each other. The first and closest circle is the one which a person has drawn as though around a centre, his own mind. This circle encloses the body and anything taken for the sake of the body ... Next, the second one further removed from the centre but enclosing the first circle; this contains parents, siblings, wife, and children. The third one has in it uncles and aunts, grandparents, nephews, nieces, and cousins. The next circle includes the other relatives, and this is followed by the circle of local residents, then the circle of fellow-tribesmen, next that of fellow citizens, and then in the same way the circle of people from neighboring towns, and the circle of fellow-countrymen. The outermost and largest circle, which encompasses all the rest, is that of the whole human race (fragment reproduced in Long and Sedley 1987: 1349).

But the Stoics wanted to radically change this way of thinking and feeling about others. As Hierocles suggests, we must first become aware of our own prejudices in

order to repudiate them and thereafter substitute them with superior cosmopolitan mental habits:

Once all these [circles] have been surveyed, it is the task of a well tempered man, in his proper treatment of each group, to draw the circles together somehow toward the centre, and to keep zealously transferring those from the enclosing circles into the enclosed ones (Hierocles fragment in Long and Sedley 1987: 1/349).

Humanity must embark on a morally demanding developmental journey that begins (quite naturally) with a variable quality of attachment towards others, proceeding to a state of invariable quality of attachment towards the world at large. The Stoics did not aim to invert the priority thesis (which would mean that the intensity of our feelings would increase the further out we went); rather, they strove for a *sameness* of feeling for all, regardless of social distance. Impartiality was their ideal. To be self-regarding and partial to intimates was not only contrary to natural law; it was a sign of moral immaturity.

### **Why Do I Owe Strangers (and the Less Fortunate) Anything?**

What led the Stoics to this ambitious mission? The answer originates in Stoic theology, which was devised as a philosophy of defence in a troubled world and a rival to the religion of the Olympian pantheon. The Stoic emotional ideal was a combination of spiritual calm (*ataraxia*) and resignation (*apatheia*) that were to be cultivated in order to achieve happiness/human flourishing (*eudaimonia*). The point of religion was to bring order and tranquillity; something the official Greek religion of the Olympian gods was quite obviously incapable of achieving. This religion, with its capricious, sex-crazed, ill-tempered and unpredictable gods who meddled in human affairs from the heights of Mount Olympus hardly inspired calm, let alone compassion. Neither did its unending demands for propitiation and sacrifice promote resignation. So the Stoics devised a less disconcerting religion that spoke of an orderly universe with no divine intervention whatsoever and brought the gods not only closer to us, but *into* us; no longer distant, terrifying others but, quite literally, kindly insiders. 'Reason', the 'mind-fire spirit' existed as intelligent matter, residing benignly in all life and impelling it unconsciously and teleologically towards order and rightness. Humans are not separate from God (or Gods) but a part of 'Him': 'the universe [is] one living being, having one substance and one soul' (Marcus Aurelius 1916: IV.40).

Because the Gods have given each human a particle of God-like intellect ('reason'), we have a natural kinship both with God and with each other (Marcus Aurelius 1916: 12.26). As related parts of the same entity, and

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equally sharing in 'reason', we are natural equals on earth with equal sagacious potential. According to Cicero, everyone has the spark of reason and 'there is no difference in kind between man and man [it] is certainly common to us all' (Cicero 1988: I. 30). Seneca says that the light of educated reason 'shines for all' regardless of social location, which is, after all, merely a matter of luck and social conditioning. As he quite sensibly points out, 'Socrates was no aristocrat. Cleanthes worked at a well and served as a hired man watering a garden. Philosophy did not find Plato already a nobleman; it made him one' (Seneca 2002: Ep. 44.3). Exclusive pedigrees 'do not make the nobleman'; only 'the soul ... renders us noble' (Seneca 2002: Ep. 44.5). Everyone has the same capacity for wisdom and virtue and everyone is equally desirous of these things (Seneca 2002: Ep. 44.6).

True freedom comes from knowledge, from learning to distinguish 'between good and bad things' (Seneca 2002: Ep. 44.6). Being knowledgeable and therefore 'good' is not just for 'professional philosophers'. People do not need to 'wrap [themselves] up in a worn cloak ... nor grow long hair nor deviate from the ordinary practices of the average man' in order to enter the cosmopolis; rather, admission is open to anyone who insists on using their own right judgement, in simply 'thinking out what is man's duty and meditating upon it' (Musonius 1905: Discourse 16). This is the route to both the moral and the happy life: when we learn to live according to the natural law of Zeus, and therefore our natural tendencies, we are enabled to achieve inner tranquillity (Chrysippus in Diogenes 1958: 'Zeno', VII. 88).<sup>2</sup>

### Duties, Harm and Aid

The Stoics insisted that one of the things that allow us to live virtuously in accordance with nature is the correct performance of duties (Sorabji 1993: 134-157). The virtuous agent is beneficent and just: justice is the cardinal social virtue ('the crowning glory of the virtues') and beneficence is closely 'akin' to it (Chrysippus cited in Cicero 1990: I. 20). We should always strive to refrain from harming others since the universal law forbids it (Cicero 1990: I. 149.153; Marcus Aurelius 1916: 9.1; Seneca 2002: Ep. 95.51-3). Indeed, 'according to [Nature's] ruling, it is more wretched to commit than to suffer injury' (Seneca 2002: Ep. 95.52-3).

But the negative virtue of refraining from harm is not enough: virtue must also be positive. It is natural for human beings to aid others (Cicero 1961: III. 62). We are duty-bound to meet the needs of our divine siblings (Marcus Aurelius 1916: 11.4) and it is 'Nature's will that we enter into a general interchange of acts of kindness, by giving and receiving' (Cicero 1990: I. 20). The morally mature person knows that she must 'live for [her] neighbour' as she lives for herself (Seneca 2002: Ep. 48.3).

We have duties of justice, fairness and mutual aid to one another and the needs of others imply a duty to meet them: 'Through [Nature's] orders, let our hands be ready for all that needs to be helped' (Seneca 2002: Ep. 95.52-3). Moral failure is epitomised by an 'incapacity to extend help' (Epictetus 1989: Fragment 7, 4: 447). It is not only neutral strangers who are entitled to our assistance, but also our supposed enemies. Contrary to the 'common notion' that 'the despicable man is recognised by his inability to harm his enemies ... actually he is much more easily recognised by his inability to help them' (Musonius 1905: Fragment XLI). Clearly, the moral demands of the cosmopolitan ethic are extremely high, requiring that we treat impartially even the feared and hated. The need for a high level of moral maturity is one of the reasons why the Stoics placed so much emphasis on the desirability of emotional self-control.

### Universal Versus Positive, Local Law

The extirpation of passionate attachment and the moderation of intense loyalties to conspecifics are basic preconditions for a global ethics. Impartiality is the key to Stoic egalitarianism: the wise person knows that the laws governing her behaviour are the same for everyone regardless of ethnicity, class, blood ties (Clark 1987: 65, 70), and gender (Hill 2001). Judgements about the welfare of others are always unbiased: 'persons' are of equal value and ends in themselves regardless of their social location or proximity to us. Reason is common and so too is law; hence 'the whole race of mankind' are 'fellow-members of the world state' (Marcus Aurelius 1916: 4.4; see also Epictetus 1989: I.9. 1-3; Cicero 1988: I.23-31).

Cicero (1961: III.63) says that 'the mere fact' of our 'common humanity' not only inclines us, but also 'requires' that we feel 'akin' to one another. The siblinghood of all rational creatures overrides any local or emotional attachments because the 'wise man' knows that 'every place is his country' (Seneca 1970: II, IX.7; see also Epictetus 1989: IV, 155-165). In order to 'guar[d] our own welfare we will subject ourselves to God's laws, 'not the laws of Masurius and Cassius'. When family members rule over others we 'demolis[h] the whole structure of civil society' while putting compatriots before 'foreigners' destroys 'the universal brotherhood of mankind'. If we refuse to recognise that foreigners have the same 'rights'<sup>3</sup> as compatriots we utterly destroy all 'kindness, generosity, goodness and justice' (Cicero 1990: 3. 27-8).

The rational agent will put the laws of Zeus before those of 'men' whenever a conflict between them arises, even when this imperils the wellbeing of the agent concerned, as it so often did in the case of Stoic disciples. For example, when in 60 CE Nero sent Rubellius into exile to Asia Minor, Musonius went with him in a gesture of solidarity, thereby casting suspicion on himself in the

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eyes of the lethally dangerous Nero. Upon the death of Rubellius, Musonius returned to Rome, where his Stoic proselytising drew the further ire of Nero who subsequently banished him to the remote island of Gyarus. After Nero's reign ended, Musonius returned to Rome but was banished yet again by Vespasian on account of his political activism.

Musonius thus practised what he preached. He taught that it is virtuous to exercise nonviolent disobedience in cases where an authority orders us to violate the universal law. It is right to disobey an unlawful command from any superior, be it father, magistrate, or master because our allegiance – first and always – is to Zeus and to 'his' commandment to do right. In fact, an act is only disobedient when one has refused 'to carry out good and honourable and useful orders' (Musonius 1905: Discourse 16). Where the laws of God conflict with the laws of 'men', natural law trumps positive law (Cicero 1988: II.11). As Epictetus (1989: 3.4-7) says: 'if the good is something different from the noble and the just, then father and brother and country and all relationships simply disappear'. All the Stoics agree on this point and they directly influenced Kant's views on the same subject, namely, that the universal law 'condemns any violation that, should it be general, would undermine human fellowship' (Nussbaum 2000: 12).

### Realist Objections

It is often suggested that cosmopolitanism in general – and the idea of the world state in particular – is hard to take seriously because it is practically impossible due to the persistence of sovereign states and the localised loyalties that accompany them. On this view, Stoic cosmopolitanism necessarily involves the commitment to a world state capable of enacting and enforcing Stoic principles. However, the *cosmopolis* is not, strictly speaking, a legal or constitutional entity (although, of course, it can be): rather, it is, first and foremost, an imaginary city, a state of mind, open to anyone capable of recognising the inherent sanctity of others and who evinces the Stoic virtues of *sympatheia* (social solidarity), *philanthropia* or *humanitas* (benevolence), and *clementia* (compassion). We become cosmopolites when we work hard to look beyond surface appearances (Seneca 2002: Ep. 44.6) and live in obedience to the laws of reason and of nature, rather than the variable laws of a single locality. These are the qualities that secure a person's membership of the *cosmopolis* and which also conjure it into reality.

We are all capable of being cosmopolites. As Musonius says, the mind is 'free from all compulsion' and is 'in its own power'; no one can 'prevent you from using it nor from thinking ... nor from liking the good' nor from 'choosing' the latter, for 'in the very act of doing this', you become a cosmopolite (1905: Discourse 16). Sovereign states and the citizens within them do not need formal,

supranational structures and legal frameworks to operate as world citizens; they only need to begin acting as *though* the world were a single city which, although composed predominantly of strangers, is nevertheless and inescapably one family of natural siblings. Everyone can and should be a cosmopolite, even if this means challenging the institutional authority of those who rule.

The fact that the *cosmopolis* is an imagined community (albeit constituted by real moral agents committing real acts of 'reason') does not mean that its laws are not more secure once they have been enshrined in positive law. In fact, the Stoics preferred to see the laws of Zeus codified (Bauman 2000: 70, 80). The Roman Stoics, in particular, sought to bring the *cosmopolis* into practical existence through the exercise of power. This is why many threw themselves into the *Sturm und Drang* of politics. The true sage spurns the life of solitary contemplation to devote him/herself to civic life. There is a fundamental human desire to 'safeguard and protect' our fellow human beings and because it is natural to 'desire to benefit as many people as [one] can' (Cicero 1961: III.65); it follows that 'the Wise Man' will 'engage in politics and government' (Cicero 1961: III.68; Diogenes 1958: 'Zeno' VII. 21). Many Stoics sought to influence politics either directly or indirectly. The Stoic philosopher-king, Marcus Aurelius, was the most powerful person on earth during his reign (Noyen 1955), while the Gracchi brothers pushed for many Stoic-inspired reforms such as admission of all Italians to citizenship. Those without formal power sought to influence those who did hold it: Panaetius advised Scipio Aemilianus, Seneca advised Nero while Blossius of Cumae advised Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus (see Hill 2005).

But in the absence of formal institutionalisation the laws of the *cosmos* are still held to be real; we remain bound by them because, as Cicero points out, 'true law' is not 'any enactment of peoples' [statute] but something eternal which rules the whole universe by its wisdom in command and prohibition'. After all, 'there was no written law against rape at Rome in the reign of Lucius Tarquinius' yet 'we cannot say on that account that Sextus Tarquinius did not break that eternal Law by violating Lucretia'. The eternal law 'urging men to right conduct and diverting them from wrongdoing ... did not first become Law when it was written down, but when it first came into existence', which occurred 'simultaneously with the divine mind' (1988: II. 11).

Even if they never managed to constitutionally entrench the *cosmopolis*, the Stoics believe it is realised the moment an agent internalises its moral precepts and begins to act upon them unilaterally. On this view, technically, the world state can be brought into existence by the actions of a single right-thinking person. Therefore it is unclear that a global ethics is meaningless without a world state and without political anchoring practices, and positive laws to guarantee them. At its inception, the



Stoic *cosmopolis* was conceived as a moral mindset: no Stoic ever advocated a legally constituted world-state. One enters the *cosmopolis* in and with one's mind, a mind that is disciplined to absolute impartiality, capable of seeing past social conventions and intent on universally extending benevolence and compassion.

### Concluding Remarks

For the Stoics, we are siblings with a common ancestry who share equally in a capacity for reason. Accordingly, we are all entitled to full recognition. The global state, the *cosmopolis*, is brought into being by this recognition: it is a function of the capacity to be impartial and to appreciate that there is an inescapable duty to aid anyone in need, regardless of their social location or social proximity. The Stoics knew that this was a hard task requiring not only a high degree of emotional control and moral maturity but also a willingness to resist social convention and local practice. Their injunctions to reasonable behaviour were made in full knowledge of the fact that the desired anchoring practices would most likely be absent; nevertheless, they expected their disciples to adhere to them, not only in the absence of such practices but even in the face of *hostile* anchoring practices, whether in the form of laws or norms.

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### End Notes

1. Although the school wasn't officially closed until 529 CE.
2. Happiness is synonymous with wisdom and virtue in Stoicism.
3. Habendam, or what is held or is due to one.

### Every Breath

*It's interesting to consider that  
every breath I take  
has already been breathed  
been part of another breath.  
Perhaps that dog over there,  
smelly and hairy, licking its own arse.*

LYNNE WHITE,  
GWYNEDD, WALES

# The Thin Black Line: Living Apartheid on Groote Eylandt

INGA BRASCHE

*The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples charts and formalises international concern for the plight of Indigenous communities. It is well known that the majority of Aboriginal communities are socially disadvantaged in comparison with white Australians. A case study of the confined communities on Groote Eylandt demonstrates graphically the extent of social dislocation and disadvantage of Aboriginal people. An effective apartheid system has prevailed there since the arrival of white missionaries, who sought to isolate 'stolen' children from contaminating influences of white and black communities. Tensions have been exacerbated since the arrival of large-scale manganese mining and the spreading influence of the individualism of the capitalist system, with whites enjoying luxurious surroundings in isolation from dilapidated black communities badly affected by alcohol abuse. Despite generous royalty compensation for the disruptions caused by mining, mismanagement and traditional tribal rivalries have kept most Aborigines in dire poverty.*



## Introduction and Personal Positioning

Race and associated disadvantage is not simply a black and white issue on Groote Eylandt in East Arnhem Land, Australia. The intersections of racism on Groote are far more complex and cross colour lines, border lines and blood lines. This paper will look at the dialectics of power in the communities on the island and subvert common assumptions about their origins. Whilst it is an undeniable fact that the Anindilyakwa people of Groote, as with Indigenous Australia at large, are dramatically and inexcusably socially disadvantaged, this paper will investigate how white imposition has merely exacerbated a pre-existing social hierarchy which pitched black against black, and how the segregation of communities has intensified cross-cultural antagonism.

(Source: Brasche 2006 Rowel Highway, road between black and white communities)

The cosmopolitan ideal envisages a world of human equality irrespective of race, nationality, caste, class, education, wealth or social standing, yet the complex social terrain of Groote Eylandt both before and after European contact has meant that the realisation of the ideal is made more complex by the intersections of race, power, culture, and capital.

I lived and worked as a Remote Area Lecturer on Groote Eylandt and traversed these racial intersections daily, both professionally and socially. Having lived in a recently democratised and post-apartheid Namibia for a number of years prior to moving to Groote, I was struck by the

geographical separation of black and white on the island, however developed a nuanced understanding of the complex and historical dimensions to this separation. The Rowel Highway, or the 16km of sealed road between the white mining town of Alyangula, and the nearest Aboriginal community of Angurugu always struck me as a powerful metaphor of the physical separation of largely white and black communities. The manganese dust coming from the trucks travelling between the mine and the port had rendered one half of the road a deep black. This one lane represented the one-way exit of the island's main resource or the one-way passage to the global economy. Yet it also represented the limited route of access of the Anindilyakwa to the spoils of Alyangula. This paper will draw from empirical material through the lived experience as well as historical and theoretical material. Whilst some aspects of life on Groote Eylandt have changed since my extended time on the island with the fluctuations of mining activity, the experiences of black and white on Groote Eylandt continue to be very different, and the internal Anindilyakwa social unrest continues.



Source: Angurugu Community Government Council 2006

## History and Segregation

### apartheid

noun: any system or practice that separates people according to race, caste, etc [Afrikaans, from apart APART = -heid -HOOD] (Oxford Dictionary 2014).

Groote Eylandt, Dutch for 'Big Island', lies on the western side of the Gulf of Carpentaria, in north east Arnhem Land and is about 630km east of Darwin. Abel Tasman named the island in 1644, perhaps unaware there was a much bigger island 50km to the west. The Anindilyakwa

people of Groote Eylandt had been in contact with the Macassans of southern Sulawesi (Indonesia) long before Europeans took an interest in the island, and a largely harmonious and mutually beneficial relationship based on trade endured for more than two centuries (Cole 1973). Macassan visits to the region ended in 1907 when the Australian Government, in a policy familiar to contemporary times, declared the northern coast off limits to the Indonesian fleets (Clark et al. 2008). As visits were only ever seasonal and transitory, Macassan encounters had left social organisation and practices largely unchanged.

In 1921 The Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS), who had been active in Arnhem Land for some time, set up a mission station on the Emerald River of Groote Eylandt (Cole 1973). This was the beginning of a dramatic change to the social and cultural landscape of Groote Eylandt, and the beginning of organised and institutionalised racial segregation down colour rather than clan lines. The mission was originally established with 'half-caste' children who had been taken from the Roper River region, around present day Ngukurr. In keeping with the protectionist policy of the day, the Anglican bishop Newton of Carpentaria stated:

There must be a separate establishment for half-caste children ... [as] the tendency of the half-caste is to sink to the level of aborigines (Newton in McMillan 2001:102).

It was believed that by separating the children from the destructive influences of white culture, and by removing them from primitive, pagan Indigenous influences, these children could be educated and civilised in a place so remote that former ties would not hinder their progress. These children were used as manual labour to further establish the mission:

[Half-caste children] ... were held in a state of exile and isolation, living under harsh conditions and somehow dealing with the loneliness that removal from their families entailed ... Barbaric punishments were introduced to counter minor breaches of discipline. For answering back, children were chained up to posts or clamped into stocks in the church or in the grounds (McMillan 2001:107).

The mistreatment of the half-caste children and their indentured labour continued with accusations levelled against the missionaries, government authorities and the police. On 24 October 1933, Constable Vic Hall wrote to the Chief Protector of Aboriginals in Darwin stating:

Accusations against the Police and Aboriginal Department involving charges of ill-treatment,



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brutality, and every black offence against humanity, decency and law, even down to accusations of wholesale murder, are continually brought by the Missionaries (Hall in McMillan 2001:135).

And on November 4 1933, Constable Ted Morey wrote to the Chief Protector of Aborigines stating:

It is evident that this seclusion of half-castes of both sexes cannot possibly be of any noteworthy benefit to them. They are virtually the drudges of the Mission and appear to be no more than the missionaries' unpaid servants (Morey in McMillan 2001:135).

The cruelty of the practice of forced separation from one's family is now understood, but on Groote there was an added cruelty. Children were forbidden from social interaction with the world outside the mission and placed on an isolated island. This island already had a reputation in the region of being a harsh place with fierce warrior tribes who were feared amongst surrounding East Arnhem communities and intensely protective of their women (Thomson 2006:110). The descendants of these children still live on the island and continue to face discrimination and exclusion from the Anindilyakwa people as they struggle to negotiate their own identity, as will be further examined later in this paper.

Inevitably, traditional hunting practices and movement around one's country on the island were altered as the local Anindilyakwa people began to settle around the mission. This social, geographical and cultural shift was an intentional aspect of mission establishment and colonial practices and gives a clear illustration of physical and psychological enclosure, a people 'under surveillance' and a 'tribal system shaken to its foundations' (Smith 1926: 256).

Segregation and the disruption of social and cultural identity also meant the departure from traditional collectivism, a nomadic lifestyle and habitation in demarcated country owned by specific families. For the Anindilyakwa, the traditional owners of the land, this change was indicative of the evolving ideology of mercantile capitalism in the area, where collective responsibility and provision for one's family was being replaced by responsibility for oneself and one's soul, and increased dependency on external industry. By 1950 almost all of the Anindilyakwa clans living on the west of the island, together with some from Bickerton Island, had settled at the Angurugu mission (Cole 1988: 12). This was an almost incomprehensibly rapid social, cultural, geographical and physical change in less than thirty years.

Of course, the background to missionary and colonialist activities on Groote Eylandt were the Government policies of the day and reflected shifting ideologies as to the most appropriate strategies regarding Aboriginal welfare. These ranged from protectionism and assimilationism through to the current policy of self-determinism and entrepreneurialism. The move from communitarianism to individualism has been forced upon colonised Indigenous peoples across the globe and whilst tempting to idealise the past, Indigenous people themselves acknowledge that intra-community envy and jealousy have always existed in hunter-gatherer communities (Pearson 2011). Problems are exacerbated when market capitalism, supposedly the great social leveller, is thrown into the mix. The greatest social, economic and cultural shift for the Anindilyakwa on Groote Eylandt took place with the establishment of mining operations.

In 1963, Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited (BHP) commenced prospecting for manganese on Groote Eylandt before establishing their subsidiary, Groote Eylandt Mining Company Pty Ltd (GEMCO). Manganese is a metal ore used in making steel, and GEMCO is one of the largest producers in the world. Negotiations between Keith Rowell for BHP and George Pearson for the CMS (Church Missionary Society) were completed with both parties satisfied that royalty payments and conditions of operation were in the best interest of both the company and the Anindilyakwa people of Groote Eylandt. It is important to note that the multi-million dollar per annum royalties were and are considered to be extremely generous by comparative mining corporation standards.

It is also telling that the white missionaries were the key negotiators acting for the Anindilyakwa people as this plays into the evolving ideological shift from communitarianism to individualism and its inherent dependency on capital. The royalty negotiation and mining lease arrangement, 'was made to help compensate Aborigines for the loss of exclusive use of reserve lands and the disturbance to their way of life' (Cole 1988: 20). In 2013, 4.8 million tonnes of manganese were mined on Groote Eylandt (Mining Link 2014).

### **Contemporary Geographical Impacts and Personal Insights**

Groote Eylandt comprises 14 clans or family groups on Groote and the land is divided along these clan lines. There are three communities on the island – Alyangula, the 'white' mining town, Angurugu, the Aboriginal community and former mission station on the western side of the island, and Umbakumba, another Aboriginal community on the eastern side of the island. Keith Cole wrote of Alyangula in 1988:



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the reality of Anindilyakwa not being allowed to use the extraordinary facilities on offer further exacerbated racial difference and inequality. Until recently the Anindilyakwa were unable to even shop at the much more extensively stocked supermarket in Alyangula. Article 21 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which Australia became a signatory to in 2009, states:

Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security (2008: United Nations Article 21).

It should be noted that our time on Groote Eylandt coincided with a marked rise in violent incidents in the two Aboriginal communities on the island including assaults, aggravated assaults, arrests of armed persons, and suspicious death (Conigrave et al. 2007: 31) which was largely attributed to the failure of management of, and access to, alcohol.

The issue of alcohol management on the island is complex. In 1964, when mining operations commenced, one of the conditions imposed on GEMCO by the traditional owners was that the company must minimise the social impact of the mine on the Aboriginal communities and in particular must minimise the impact of alcohol (NT Licensing Commission 2005). However in the years that followed, alcohol exerted a rapidly increasing adverse effect, causing major community disruption, including increased violence:

... the 1980s are described by community members and other witnesses as years of great violence. By 1986, Groote Eylandt had one of the highest imprisonment rates reported in the world, and it was assessed that the majority of crime was alcohol related. As a result of meetings and discussions, all the Aboriginal communities decided that their residents should no longer be allowed to become members of the licensed club (Conigrave et al. 2007: 13).

Despite this, alcohol continued to be either purchased or otherwise illegally obtained via a thriving black market. Crime rates increased and there was reported to be regular violence related to alcohol, with the resulting community tensions involving weapons continuing often for days and occasionally resulting in deaths (N.T. Police Report 2004: 19).

As mentioned, the establishment of the mission stations drew clans away from their traditional lands and had them

living alongside each other in close proximity. Though traditional lands are no longer inhabited, traditional enmities remain. Combined with housing shortages and often fuelled by alcohol, these enmities erupt on a regular basis in both Angurugu and Umbakumba. It is not uncommon for an argument between individuals to escalate rapidly into a clan-based and even on occasion moiety-based war.<sup>2</sup> On such occasions, the community, including school, council, shop, and clinic would be shut down, hundreds would gather with weapons such as spears, machetes and star pickets in hand, usually at the oval, with the group proceeding to meter out the age-old tradition of pay-back. Policing policies varied on this form of confrontation – with the superintendent during my time on the island allowing for supervised 'payback', but without weapons and with police and ambulance on hand to deal with the consequences. Such events were a surreal and frightening thing to witness.

Due to the massive royalty payments, combined with fortnightly welfare payments, the Anindilyakwa are wealthier than many Aboriginal people in Australia. However the social and living conditions in the Aboriginal communities are extremely confronting and anomalous to the relative wealth of the communities. Alyangula is the wealthiest postcode in the Northern Territory, and yet Aboriginal people, including the Anindilyakwa, remain the most socially disadvantaged group in Australia with unemployment and infant mortality rates significantly higher and life expectancy 18 years less than their non-Indigenous counterparts.<sup>3</sup> To have such disparate conditions in such close proximity on a small land mass undeniably contributes to the general antagonism that exists between the black and white communities on the island. The physical or geographical separation of the communities is no accident, and serves as a fitting example of contemporary social, economic and cultural enclosure that is antithetical to the cosmopolitan ideal. Such separation can have devastating consequences, such as described by an Anindilyakwa woman from Angurugu, cited in Conigrave et al:

When a man was hurting a woman, the police were not here. They were in Alyangula. By the time they arrive, the woman might be dead (2007:31).

Royalty payments are distributed to six associations that are clan-based organisations and administered through the Anindilyakwa Land Council. Unsurprisingly, the twice annual distribution of royalty payments, termed 'black Christmas' by the Anindilyakwa, often brought with it much community tension and unrest due to their traditionally rigid social hierarchy. Combined with this, the Anindilyakwa people are negotiating a divisive system of commerce at odds with their communitarian history. The arrival of GEMCO did not herald the end of nomadic



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practices, including movement around the island and a hunter-gatherer lifestyle, as the Anindilyakwa had been living at the missions of Angurugu or Umbakumba since the 1920s, and economically had largely become dependent on rations, pensions, child endowment or training allowances for sustenance (Cole 1988). However the arrival of GEMCO and the establishment of a white mining town further polarised the people of Groote Eylandt in entrenched clan-based social hierarchies, and brought extraordinary wealth and privilege to this small island which largely benefit only a few.

The profound socio-cultural consequences of economic change and the flow of capital on Groote have been neither carefully investigated nor adequately acknowledged. These have occurred on the back of political contests and social policies, which have undermined community organisation producing deculturation (Pearson 2004; Latouche 1996). Money alone through royalty payment does not comply with modern corporate ethics in regards to Corporate Social Responsibility. GEMCO have in recent years attempted to invest in other aspects of community development such as through their Indigenous Ranger programs, environmental rehabilitation and even recently recognising the need for a social anthropologist to record the cultural traditions of the Anindilyakwa before they are lost with the passing of elders. However a precedent has been set and since 1964 cash compensation for social, geographical and cultural dislocation has become the expectation of the Anindilyakwa.

### **Socio-Cultural Impacts**

The greatest threat to Aboriginal culture has not been the activity of the missions. Rather it is the impact of an aggressive, acquisitive, exploitative white society, on a people whose way of life for thousands of years has been the most dissimilar as possibly can be (Cole 1983: 46).

Inevitably, the identity and socio-cultural landscape of all Aboriginal people in Australia – regardless of their geographical isolation, urban or remote, salt-water or desert people – have been irrevocably changed through European contact. Of course this seems obvious. However in looking at the impact this contact has had on contemporary Anindilyakwa, we are given some clues as to why they have been more culturally affected than neighbouring Arnhem communities. Identity formation is always a dynamic and fluid process, but in the case of Groote Eylandt, the Anindilyakwa identity has mainly been affected by the two historical agents of change mentioned previously – the missionaries and the mine. The missionary impact could be seen to represent the European sensibilities of the day, with an emphasis on personal salvation. However as mentioned, this paved

the way for a more dramatic paradigm shift in local and personal identity – the creation of the individualist consumer. Forever altered were the traditional hierarchies of clan, with power and authority now vested with those whose associations received the greatest royalty payments, or those on whose land the most manganese was mined.

Other than the harmonious contact with the Macassans, the Anindilyakwa had very little contact with the outside world until the arrival of missionaries. 'Otherness' on Groote Eylandt is exacerbated by the geographical separation of the white mining community from the Aboriginal communities. Similarly, other Aboriginal communities in East Arnhem in which I worked, such as the Yolngu or Nungubuyu people, seemed far more interlinked (socially and culturally, through marriage, clan and language) with neighbouring communities. The Anindilyakwa, however, are very much viewed as outsiders to this East Arnhem connectedness. The Anindilyakwa language is completely distinct from those of surrounding mainland communities leading to geographical linguistic isolation.

One of the most tragic aspects of contemporary life on Groote Eylandt that could be seen as a result of European settlement and policies of enclosure and displacement has been the discontinuation of ceremony. It has been around twenty years since the last group of boys went through ceremony; which is almost a generation missed. At a meeting I attended in March 2005, the issue of ceremony weighed heavily on the two elders present. I asked why boys were no longer taken through ceremony and was told that not only was there nobody to take the boys through ceremony (one elder was on dialysis and another was too old), but they did not know of a single boy in the community who demonstrated the appropriate qualities to be initiated. Recent changes to the Liquor Management Act on Groote Eylandt have meant that there has been a reduction in criminal activity. However, there still remains substance misuse and associated social dysfunction on the island. As ceremony indicates future leadership, so a lack of ceremony speaks of a lack of future cultural custodians and leaders.

This is a profound tragedy and means, for example, that whenever there is a funeral on Groote, people are flown across from Numbulwar, on the mainland, in order to carry out the funeral ceremony largely in another language, using Nungubuyu<sup>4</sup> not Anindilyakwa songs. Funeral services are Christian and largely conducted in English, with a brief, Nungubuyu-led ceremony afterwards at the burial.

Besides the black/white antagonism and the social estrangement that largely persists between races on

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Groote, there are significant hostilities amongst the Anindilyakwa people themselves, which have their foundations in thousands of years of enmity, yet have been exacerbated by European social re-ordering and enclosure. With the establishment and growing dependence on missions or reserves, traditionally warring families were forced to live next door to each other, or in otherwise much closer proximity than had traditionally occurred. Groote is geographically a big place, and prior to European engagement, there had been enough space for each clan to hunt and survive on their own 'country' or land. Again, referring to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 10 states:

Indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories. No relocation shall take place without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, with the option of return (2008: Article 10).

Of course, a return to life on pre-European traditionally demarcated land is neither practical nor desirable for the Anindilyakwa. Yet geography notwithstanding, throughout history the Anindilyakwa have maintained a rigid and categorical, tribally determined class system. This hierarchy is deeply obvious in all aspects of life. It affects the dynamics whenever a group of Anindilyakwa are gathered. As discussed earlier, the most powerful family group on the island own the land where manganese is currently being mined, and those families at the bottom of the ladder have no way of altering their social position. Those of mixed descent, whose lineage was more closely linked with the communities of Ngukurr and Borroloola but whose whole lives had been lived on Groote, existed in an even lower social standing. As the descendants of 'stolen' children who were brought across to the mission, these *yella fellas*, as the Anindilyakwa referred to them, had to negotiate complex roles and responsibilities whilst being dramatically discriminated against. Such discrimination was acutely obvious in the classes I taught on Groote.

This class system was often at the heart of much of the tension and violence of Groote Eylandt. This classist orientation is antithetical to generally accepted Australian egalitarianism and the principles of the cosmopolitan ideal. As Cox writes, 'Civic virtues come from building on what we have in common rather than by using our differences to create in-groups and out-groups and fear driven competition' (Cox 1995: 10). However, on Groote Eylandt this orientation also pre-dates European contact.

Many Anindilyakwa struggle with substance misuse and the social despair that comes from a culturally dislocated

people with conflicted identities. All of this has contributed to Groote Eylandt's reputation as one of the most violent communities in Australia. More individuals have been incarcerated per head of population on Groote than in any other community in the world (Johnston 2006). Groote also has the highest policing rate per capita in the Northern Territory.

## Conclusion

On 21 November 2006, an article was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* entitled 'Girl left to the mercy of rapist, court told':

Northern Territory health workers and police ignored the plight of an 11 year old indigenous girl who a man raped in public and then took as his so-called 'promised wife' for nine years under the guise of traditional Aboriginal law ... In the Northern Territory Supreme Court, **Justice Mildren said nobody on Groote Eylandt, including white people, stepped in to help the girl**, identified as LM. She was only 12 when she was forced to live as the wife of the man, Owen Bara, [who] fathered her three children, one of whom he brutally assaulted when she was five ... **Justice Mildren said the 'police who know everything on Groote [Eylandt]', relatives and teachers also failed to intervene** [bold added by author] (Murdoch 2006).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to engage with issues of traditional Aboriginal law. What struck me about this article, however, was that Justice Mildren asserted that the white community, and authorities had turned a collective blind eye to the plight of a young, vulnerable Aboriginal girl. Groote Eylandt is socially a small place, with a total population of just over two thousand. How could something so horrific have endured for so long without intervention?

The geographic and socio-economic disjunction between communities, combined with a stratified and socially dislocated Aboriginal community, transitory social services personnel, largely disengaged white population and numerous other factors mean that cases like this sadly do slip beneath the radar. When communities are estranged and fractured from within, the dialectics of race, class, power and social responsibility become blurred.

Sixteen kilometres of sealed road separates black from white on Groote. The socio-cultural and the economic are not so easily separated. The circulation of capital, the re-ordering of traditional social organisation, the payment of mining royalties and the forced social and physical segregation of communities has intensified the stratification of the Anindilyakwa on Groote Eylandt, complicating the question of where power lies and who

has agency over the lives and futures of the Anindilyakwa. This question speaks to Article 26 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which states that:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.
2. Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired (2008: Article 26).

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## End Notes

1. It should be stated that the social service personnel on the island such as the community development workers, teachers, nurses etc were also quite a transitory population. Staff turnover was high and recruitment often difficult as the volatility of the island made it a challenging place to work.
2. The Aboriginal social and natural world is divided into two moieties: in East Arnhem Land these are called Dhuwa and Yirritja. This organisation determines everything from people's lands, songs, animals, totems, marriage partners etc.
3. Source: Anglicare Inequality in Australia Report 2006.
4. Nungubuyu are the largest group from Numbulwar – the mainland community closest to Groote.



# Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Human Dignity

PHIL GLENDENNING

*In 1954 the Menzies government committed Australia to the 1951 Refugee Convention which reaffirmed the dignity and equality of all persons, and bound this country to the humane treatment of asylum-seekers, who were never to be turned away or harmed by the recipient government. In recent years Australia has flouted these rules and turned asylum-seeker policy into a paramilitary campaign against refugees. The Keating government first began incarcerating asylum-seekers for the purpose of processing them, while successive governments under Howard, Rudd and Gillard intensified the harsh treatment handed out to boat people in response to xenophobic attitudes uncovered in opinion polls. The Abbott government sought to outdo its predecessors by exacerbating Howard's deliberate denigration of boat people as distinctly 'other', turning military forces against them, and crowding them into oppressive camps which are damaging to the physical and psychological health of the internees, especially the many children among them.*

In February 1949, Australia's then Prime Minister Robert Menzies made a very interesting comment about the first successful challenge to the White Australia policy. Menzies argued that policy 'must be applied by a sensible administration, neither rigid nor peremptory but wise, exercising judgment on individual cases, always remembering the basic principle but always understanding that harsh administration never yet improved any law but only impaired it, and that notoriously harsh administration raises up to any law hostilities that may someday destroy it' (cited in Maley 2014).

Five years later when Menzies committed Australia to the Refugee Convention in 1954, the Second World War and the negotiations to deal with all the refugees the war had produced were fresh in the Australian memory. His Liberal government embraced the humanitarian purpose of the Refugee Convention. This was a serious step. It involved some clear and concrete legal, moral and practical obligations for Australia to recognise: the individual right to seek asylum; the right not to be subjected to penalties for arriving without a visa; the right to be free from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; the right not to be arbitrarily detained and the right to non-discrimination. The nation made a long-standing commitment in law to never turn away refugees who arrive on our shores and seek our help.

The notion of *human dignity*, an idea that is broadly accepted as a basic value, is central to the Refugee Convention (Schachter 1983: 1). Whilst the notion of human dignity may not be particularly well defined to some, everyone 'knows what it feels like when it's missing' (Lynch 2009: 1). It is central to many of the world's major

foundational documents: Article 1 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights says that 'All people are born free and equal in dignity and rights'. This is echoed in Article 10 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, and paragraph two of the Preamble of the United Nations Charter. In short, the notion of human dignity means that every human should be treated as *an end and not a means* (Kant in Rachels 2014). Thus, people should never be perceived or treated merely as instruments or objects of the will of others and that nothing is so clearly violative of the dignity of the human persons as treatment that demeans or humiliates them (Schachter 1983: 3).

## A Punitive Scheme

Sixty years after Australia signed the Refugee Convention and 66 years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, things have changed in Australia. When we apply those principles and aspirations to the Government's policy and treatment of asylum seekers and refugees the inherent worth of the human person is not reflected. Today, a punitive scheme denies asylum seekers many inherent rights. Individuals are detained for seeking refugee status (in contravention of the Australian Government's obligations under the 1951 Convention). It denies fundamental rights to refugees such as the right to work and family reunion (again, included in the 1951 Convention as part of a signatory state's obligations) (Davies 2013: 28). Today, in a very real sense, we treat asylum seekers and refugees as if we were at war with them.

Secrecy, usually surrounding war, is now part of asylum seeker treatment. In January this year, Australian navy

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and customs officers returned 60 people to Indonesia in an orange lifeboat that landed on a remote coral reef in West Java. They disembarked and disappeared into the jungle (Power 2014: 1). It took a month for the Government to tell the Australian people. Since then, other lifeboats and at least seven asylum seeker boats have been sent back. We do not know what became of the first 60 or any of the other people.

The increase in asylum seeker boats, coupled with the horror and tragedy of hundreds of people drowning at sea trying to get to Australia, contributed to a situation where both major parties decided that in order to stop boats they would punish the people who arrived under the headline of 'saving lives'. The Liberal-National Coalition elected in September 2013 now officially refers to asylum seekers who arrive as 'illegal maritime arrivals' – even though under Australian law it is not illegal to seek asylum in Australia, and those arriving should not be punished for the method of their arrival. They are referred to as 'illegal' yet are not charged with any offence.

In opposition, the Coalition had campaigned ceaselessly that by ending the Howard Government's Pacific Solution and Temporary Protection Visas, Labor had created 'pull' factors that resulted in 50,000 asylum seekers in five years entering Australia by boat. The clearly significant 'push' factors such as the severe deterioration of human rights and violence in Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Iran and Iraq, were all but ignored.

In 2012, the Labor Government responded to political pressure from the Coalition and reintroduced off-shore detention centres in Nauru and Papua New Guinea. Asylum seeker arrivals then increased to record levels, with 25,173 asylum seekers entering Australian waters by boat in the year to 30 June 2013. The fact that asylum seeking numbers had increased across the globe was also largely ignored Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) 2014a).

From then, the processing of claims was slowed considerably, and hundreds of Sri Lankan boat arrivals were returned without an adequate refugee status determination. Australia's treatment of those who had travelled directly from Sri Lanka was, and remains, deeply troubling. So too, is the fact that Australia is working actively with the government from which people are fleeing. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees described this policy of excluding many Sri Lankans from access to the refugee determination process after a cursory initial interview and then returning them as 'enhanced screening' and 'unfair and unreliable' (Maley and Parnell 2013).

## The Price of Punishment is Very High

The Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) is concerned that Tamil asylum seekers have been possibly *refouled* and protested Australia's decision to donate patrol boats to Sri Lanka and ignore the country's human rights record (RCOA 2013). The Edmund Rice Centre (ERC) believes that a number of people returned in 2013 have been jailed on return and subjected to inhumane treatment. In contrast to most of Australia's allies, the Abbott Government in 2014 refused to support a United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR) investigation into human rights abuses in Sri Lanka at the end of the civil war and into current abuses including disappearances and extra-judicial killings. Furthermore, Human Rights Watch has condemned Australia's position (Pearson 2014: 1; see Bennett 2013).

In the lead up to the 2013 Federal election, the war on asylum seekers reached a new low. In July, Kevin Rudd's Government signed a 'Regional Resettlement Arrangement' with Papua New Guinea. As a result, all future boat arrivals were to be sent to PNG to be detained and to have their refugee status assessed, and if found to be in need of refugee protection, they would be settled permanently in PNG, but never in Australia.

Once elected, the Coalition wanted tougher measures and decided to use the military. Their policy, 'Operation Sovereign Borders', headed by a three-star general, included turning back boats when 'safe to do so' in a military-style operation. Asylum seekers who had reached Australia by boat before July lost access to government-funded legal aid, and were to be offered only temporary protection if found to be refugees. They have no family reunion rights.

The harsh restrictions imposed on asylum seekers did not, and do not, apply to Government funding. Unlike other areas of Government spending, which are facing severe budgetary cut-backs, the Government – like its predecessor – is quite prepared to spend extraordinary amounts of taxpayer monies to implement its punitive policies. Australia spends approximately \$1.2 billion to run Manus Island and Nauru detention centres that are part of an entire program costing in excess of \$4 billion (Burnside 2014). In 2013, the UNHCR spent \$3.3 billion to care for over 40 million refugees worldwide (Towle 2013). Thus, Australia currently spends more than the entire global budget of the UNHCR to lock up a few thousand people. In fact, Australia's expenditure dwarfs the entire UNHCR budget for South-East Asia, that is, only \$103 million (Towle 2013).

A re-allocation of Australian resources to the UNHCR and other multilateral agencies, in cooperation with Governments of the region, could be a step in the

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right direction towards a sustainable regional solution for protection. It could assist people to access work, education and health rights whilst waiting to have claims processed. Without such rights, asylum seekers have little choice but to get in a boat. The extraordinary amount of money Australia spends could also assist the achievement of the UNHCR's three durable solutions of re-settlement, local integration and safe return. Australia chooses not to do this.

### **From Humanitarianism to 'Border Protection'**

The Howard Government's Pacific Solution resulted in asylum seekers languishing on Nauru for years awaiting a determination. When that determination was finally made, the vast majority of asylum seekers were found to be *bona fide* refugees and were resettled in Australia. Many needed immediate and substantial medical treatment for the psychological trauma caused by their prolonged detention. Moreover, the Howard Government also sent rejected asylum seekers back to the countries they had fled. This had dire and tragic consequences. Research by the ERC (2006: 39-42) found that in Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Iran, Iraq, and Colombia, returned asylum seekers and family members were killed. Many more are missing.

To understand the current situation with mandatory detention, Manus Island, Nauru and the militarised tow-backs of Operation Sovereign Borders, we need to go back ten years to the time of the *Tampa*. In 2001, 433 asylum seekers *en route* to Australia were refused entry to Australia, excluded from seeking protection under Australian law, and were instead expelled to Nauru for processing of claims and 'human warehousing'.

Around the time of 9/11, John Howard linked the issue of boat people with notions of 'border protection'. Those arriving in Australia by boat and asking for protection were deemed to be 'queue jumpers' (a term UN Human High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, says is only used in Australia) (Pillay 2011). The fact that no real queues and no real protections are accessible in the region for those *en route* to Australia did not obstruct the prosecution of this policy.

The 'queue jumper' narrative, and its twisting of the traditional Australian sense of a 'fair go', has permeated so deeply that it has enabled both parties to construct these extraordinary policies and laws. That it is factually wrong has not mattered. Given that only 1% of the world's asylum seekers are re-settled (RCOA 2014b), the notion of a queue is a myth. For those seeking resettlement, it is more accurate to say that what they actually obtain is a ticket in a lottery.

The attachment to 'border protection' conveyed the idea that Australians needed to fear asylum seekers who arrive

by boat and that they were a risk to the community and secure borders. In fact, what asylum seekers do when they get to the border is to seek protection within it. This is no threat to border security but an endorsement of it.

### **Stopping the Boats: 'Die Somewhere Else'**

Whilst the stated aim of the policy was to protect lives and prevent drownings at sea and to break the 'people smugglers' business model', the policies of both major parties still require people to get in a boat and come to Australian waters before significant action is taken. In a courageous speech to the Parliament in March 2014, Labor Member for Fremantle Melissa Parke summed up this point clearly: 'If we are really concerned about people taking dangerous boat journeys why then are we punishing people when they have already made the journey and survived it?' (Parke 2014: 1). If politicians were truly serious about stopping boats in order to protect human life then a serious policy response would involve significantly increasing our humanitarian intake instead of reducing it by 6,250 (as has been done under the current government) (RCOA 2014a), working with other countries in the region and the UNHCR to make conditions safer in transit countries while speeding up and adequately resourcing the processing of claims.

Those who fled into the jungle in West Java after being towed back to Indonesia are still asylum seekers fleeing persecution. They still need to have their claims assessed and if found to be refugees (as over 90% of boat arrivals in recent years have been) they need to find a place of safety and security. The reality is that these people:

... may well still die fleeing persecution on a different sea or trapped in an airless container. We do not reduce the risk to these people by taking away one of their escape options; we merely displace the risk to another time and place. Through the tow back actions – illegal under international law – we also further imperil our formerly close relationship with Indonesia and our reputation (Parke 2014: 2).

We also undermine the reciprocity needed to make any regional framework effective instead of saying to those seeking protection 'die somewhere else'.

The UN Human Rights Council concluded that the continued detention of the refugees, who have been in detention more than four years, is 'cumulatively inflicting serious psychological harm' and is in breach of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Gordon 2013). It is the opposite of the Menzian call for wise, non-rigid administration of policy.

Children experience the impact of these policies most profoundly. In March 2014, the Australian Human Rights



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Commission released a report on its investigation into the plight of children in detention on Christmas Island. Every picture drawn by the children was signed with their boat ID number. Psychologists reported that the children referred to each other by their number and not by name. The institutionalisation, indeed the dehumanisation, of these children is all-pervasive and they will take a very long time to recover (Peer 2014). It is a matter of public record that the Pacific Solution saw unaccompanied children and adults disintegrate mentally and emotionally. Psychologists speak of the reality of 'asylum seeker syndrome', the result of prolonged detention, as a new form of mental illness (Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) 2012: 8).

### **International Condemnation**

The practice of punishing asylum seekers and refugees, rather than protecting them, has not gone unnoticed by the international community. In August 2012, Australia was found guilty of almost 150 violations of international law over the indefinite detention of 46 refugees, who had negative ASIO assessments, in one of the most damning reports on human rights in this country by a United Nations committee (Gordon 2013).

The NGO statement delivered recently at a meeting of the UNHCR Standing Committee in Geneva (International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) 2014: 3) catalogued a long list of policies that failed to honour Australia's commitment under the Refugee Convention. Australia was condemned for: expelling asylum seekers to Nauru and Manus Island; suspending permanent Protection Visa grants for refugees who arrived by boat; decreasing the number of refugees accepted under the Humanitarian Program; pushing back asylum seekers to Indonesia; denying access to refugee status determination; and detaining vulnerable groups, including children. Independent and authoritative bodies such as Amnesty International and the UNHCR (Maley and Parnell 2013) have reported that conditions on Manus Island are cruel and degrading, and amount to arbitrary and unlawful detention.

What is common in international observations is the fact that compared to the rest of the world Australia's proportion of accepted asylum seekers is tiny, hosting only 0.3% of the world's refugees (RCOA 2014b). Australia does not have a crisis. By contrast, one-third of the population of Lebanon are refugees, and 50% of them are children. The Lebanese suspended the start of the school year in 2013 in order to organise double shifts so that each child could go to school (Gutierrez 2014). Instead of sending in the military and locking people up, Lebanon has called for more teachers.

Positive alternatives are available if the political will existed to return to the bipartisan commitment to a humanitarian response that characterised Australia's treatment of refugees for many years. While Australia's interception and detention activities breach standards in international law, domestic legal remedies are limited. Australia does not have a bill of rights in its constitution or in national legislation, and rights under international law do not automatically become incorporated into Australian law. The Refugee Council of Australia has argued for years that the positive alternative to all that we are seeing lies in incremental improvements to the treatment of asylum seekers and refugees in countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Bangladesh and, where possible, attempting to influence conditions inside countries of origin such as Burma, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Pakistan, accompanied by an effective regional framework. The current issues facing Australia will not disappear until governments in Australia and the Asia-Pacific begin to realise that collectively they have much more to gain by working together on a regional approach to refugee protection than by trying unilaterally to turn their backs on those in need.

### **The Politics of Perception and Reality: A Willed Ignorance**

Many Australians are increasingly expressing concern at what is being done in their name (Power 2014: 4). These hopes will need to be mobilised. Unfortunately, much public argument regarding the foundations of refugee policy in Australia often assumes that immigration causes unemployment, reduces the standard of living and strains social services. Prior to the 2013 election the Liberal candidate for the seat of Lindsay, near Penrith in western Sydney, went so far as to go on national TV to declare that the reason Australians from her area were opposed to asylum seekers was because the 'traffic is so bad'. The Refugee Council of Australia found that only 23 asylum seekers lived in that part of Sydney. There was simply no evidence to support her position. In fact, academic research indicates exactly the opposite; that immigration stimulates the economy, creates jobs and provides tax revenue (Stevenson 2005).

There is an accompanying reality that those expressing negative views about asylum seekers and refugees will not change their views even if they encounter the facts; they would prefer to believe the myths. Author Christos Tsiolkas (2013) refers to this as a '*willed* ignorance' that he sees as uniquely Australian. As many of the old certainties have been washed away as a result of increasing globalisation and the global financial crisis, uncertainties and anxiety about the future offer an opportunity for political leaders to look for solutions, or find someone to blame. From Pauline Hanson's One Nation, through

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the *Tampa*, to the PNG solution, our leaders have seen asylum seekers as an easy target, especially if they are nameless, faceless and locked up. The negative perception provides a repository for deeply held anxieties. When coupled with political leaders who are not only prepared to legitimise but also inflame these inaccurate and hostile perceptions, they become embedded and a justification for further mistreatment of highly vulnerable people. It is instilling a perception and capitalising on it for short-term populist gain.

The Liberal Party, since the time of the *Tampa*, has always understood asylum policy as a matter of perception rather than reality. Their sudden switch to the secrecy of Operation Sovereign Borders indicates this. Precisely because refugees do not drive down living standards or cause unemployment or clog up the roads of western Sydney, stopping the news about boats works infinitely better than stopping the boats themselves.

The constant proclamation of crisis and the need to 'win the battle to protect the borders' convinces voters that they should be threatened by boatloads of asylum seekers. The Government understands that without daily reports, the refugee issue will begin to disappear from view. That would not necessarily be a bad thing if there were bipartisan support to develop policies that protect people in the region rather than punish those who have no other choice but to get in a boat.

The Australian Labor Party has been caught and wedged. If, in opposition, Labor highlights each new boat arrival, it fires up a refugee hysteria that will always favour the conservatives; if Labor says nothing, the Government wins.

### **The Missing Consideration of Ethics**

Throughout all of this what has been missing is a serious consideration of ethics. Why, for instance, should the need to repel asylum seekers, even at the cost of their lives, be accepted without question? Actually, Manne (2013) presents a perfectly reputable case that a mass influx of refugees would be all to the good. Punishing one innocent group in order to deter or scare others is unethical and immoral.

This conscious and calculated cruelty is not a necessity – it is a choice. It displays a disturbing disregard for the overwhelming evidence of the deep inhumanity and damage caused. This damage is determined by the policy driving it all: deterrence and stopping the boats. We make safe transport impossible by forgetting that so long as there is persecution, people will seek safety. Even when the Government claims that the boats have stopped, as they will, the needs for asylum have not – we have just

handed our responsibility, along with the people, to our poorer developing country neighbours.

The current situation is not sustainable. Menzies' reflection that harsh administrations ultimately perish has been proven true in history. Until then, the reality is that when a Government gives priority to the liberty of bigots but actively denies due process and freedom to some of the world's most vulnerable people, the country has an ethical dilemma at the heart of its national leadership – on both sides of politics.

The ethical rock on which our approach must be constructed is the conviction that cruelty is an unjustifiable abuse of the human dignity of people we are obliged to protect (Manne 2013). Compassion must remain a fundamental civilising strength, as is evident in Australia in times of natural disasters, bush fires and floods. Compassion is not a weakness.

Clearly, the billions of dollars Australia currently spends to detain, isolate, torment and tow-back asylum seekers could be used by the UNHCR, other multilateral organisations and our neighbours to encourage process and processing within the region, and build a reciprocity essential to international law and relations (Harris-Rimmer 2014: 1). Post-Vietnam history indicates what is possible given sound leadership (as shown by the Fraser and Hawke Governments), a bipartisan commitment to human rights and human dignity, and a commitment not to use the issue to inflame fear and ignorance. However, it is complex, difficult and long-term, and will require leadership and vision.

The harsh treatment of asylum seekers has a brutal logic and an accompanying narrative: the harsher the treatment, the more brutal the penalty, the more effective the policy. Returning people to Sri Lanka to arrest and torture is considered acceptable. Rejecting Hazaras fleeing from the Taliban is considered acceptable, despite the fact Australia spent 12 years fighting the same Taliban in our longest ever war. It is now considered acceptable to remove a child to a place like Nauru or Manus, where detention is degrading and harmful and there are no guarantees against further harm or abuse, all in order to deter others. This process is effectively holding children hostage to seek a domestic political outcome.

### **When People are Treated as a Means and Not an End**

Reza Bahrati was a 24 year old Iranian Kurd seeking protection who was killed on Manus Island in a facility established by the Australian Government and funded by Australian taxpayers. He was dragged from his room and bashed to death. He was in our care. He had committed no crime. The tragic appalling deaths of people at sea do

not justify his death nor can they justify the continuance of the harsh regime that led to it. It is not acceptable under any circumstances for a person fleeing a brutal regime to be killed by the people supposed to protect them. It was a conscious choice to create the conditions that enabled this to happen. It is what happens when humans are treated as a means and not an end; they get killed.

Menzies was right. The Howard, Rudd, Gillard, Rudd and Abbott Government's harsh administration of asylum seeker and refugee policy has not improved Australian law. It has, as Menzies predicted, deeply impaired it by ignoring the human, moral and legal obligations made explicit in the Refugee Convention. These human, moral, legal – and practical – implications of the Convention do not exist in isolation from each other. They need to be fused so as to produce policies based on 'protecting not punishing people; that promote rather than abuse human dignity; and that minimise rather than increase harm' (Manne 2013: 9).

The human dignity, and human rights as fundamental as life and liberty, of asylum seekers and refugees are currently being violated gravely and violently. As Paul Keating said in his famous Redfern speech to the Stolen Generations, 'we did these things because we could not imagine what it would be like if they were done to us'. And so, when we deny the poor and the vulnerable their own human dignity and capacity for freedom and choice, it becomes a denial of both our collective and individual dignity, at all levels of society. This institutionalised cruelty ultimately diminishes all.

Australia's neglect of the human dignity of asylum seekers and refugees is not being cruel to be kind. It's simply cruel – for nothing so clearly violates the dignity of human persons as treatment that demeans or humiliates.

The long-term effects are unknown but it would not be at all surprising 30 years from now to see a Prime Minister of this country rise in the Parliament and offer an apology on behalf of the nation to refugees and asylum seekers and their families for the damage caused by the cruel and inhuman treatment that is being done to them today.

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#### Wanting

Traces of wishing in the loosed  
 seeds of a dandelion  
 shape the day in its ephemera:

pale green buds blown  
 along bitumen soft with sun – sky  
 in leaf-cut pieces,  
 shadows unmade in a shift of air.

From the glass room there is a view  
 seen & heard – blue horizon beyond the ugly  
 speedboats, jet skis.

The cat clicks her eyes across window  
 and finds a language for birds,  
 for wanting.

Jo LANGDON,  
 GEELONG, VIC

# On the Necessity for Gender Equality: Anna Doyle Wheeler and William Thompson and 'Equality in Community'

JIM JOSE

*A genuine community requires equality among its citizens. In 1825 Anna Doyle Wheeler and William Thompson mounted a strong refutation of James Mill's argument against the enfranchisement of women in his Essay on Government. There was no rational basis for the subordination of women, but under the individualist dispensation of classical liberalism, marriage was tantamount to white slavery. Against the prevailing individualism they advocated cooperative socialism. Their work had implications for cosmopolitanism as they argued for a radical restructuring of society on the basis of full gender equality in the workplace and the home. In their view, this was the necessary prerequisite for all other forms of equality and the realisation of a free and just society.*

Within and between cultures, across the generations, the 'quest for community' (Nisbet 1953) has occupied the thoughts of many a political philosopher. What sort of community is appropriate for realising human happiness? Should human happiness be the rationale for community? Irrespective of particular goals, how should an ideal community be organised? Are there necessary connections between particular goals and the organisational structures of a community? And so on. These questions are certainly familiar and feature prominently in writings speculating on what an ideal community might look like. Communities exhibit many characteristics and may be organised on the basis of any one of (or combination of) kinship, religion, race, gender, trade, conquest, revolutionary history or some other commonality around which people are willing to mobilise and establish a coherent identity that endures over time (Nisbet 1973: 1). However, the basis of and for a community is one thing, its characteristic features are another. At a minimum these characteristics should include 'a modest standard of living, [be] conservative of natural resources, [have] a low constant fertility rate and a political life based upon consent' and be successfully adapted 'to its environment and ha[ve] learned to live without destroying itself or the people next door' (Le Guin 1982: 96). This is a view of community as humanly inhabitable, and one that would be consistent with a cosmopolitan approach (e.g. Delanty 2009; Cheah 2006; Nash 2003; Beck 2002; Turner 2002; Archibugi et al., Held and Köhler 1998). Of course, not everyone would agree that a community need exhibit any or all of these characteristics, especially those who see communities in terms of rigid hierarchies and all-powerful authority figures (Nisbet 1973), and hence would deny a need for egalitarian social relations, consent based politics,

human regulated fertility, and perhaps coexisting peacefully with its neighbours.

The principle of egalitarian social relations, in particular the goal of gender equality, has been a key concern in discussions of ways to realise humanly habitable communities. With a few notable exceptions men's dominance over women and the masculinist basis for social and political organisation has been taken as self-evident for most historically enduring communities. Indeed, the opening sentence of Nisbet's study of community and social philosophy notes that '[t]he history of Western social philosophy is, basically, the history of men's ideas and ideals of community' (Nisbet 1973: 1). To be fair to Nisbet, in the context of his academic heritage, his use of 'men' most likely was intended to be understood generically (as inclusive of men and women). It is unlikely that he was commenting on the masculinist basis for community or the masculinist biases within Western philosophical thought. However, his comment provides a useful segue to consider a remarkable work published in 1825 that provided a vision of a humanly inhabitable community within which egalitarian gender relations were at its centre.

The book in question was *Appeal of One Half the Human Race, Women: Against the Pretensions of the Other Half, Men, to Retain Them in Political, and Thence in Civil and Domestic, Slavery; in Reply to a Paragraph of Mr. Mill's Celebrated 'Article on Government'*. The Appeal was formally attributed to William Thompson (1775-1833), an Irish landowner, socialist utilitarian and feminist who by

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1800 was spending most of his time in London. However, there are strong grounds for attributing co-authorship to another person, namely Anna Doyle Wheeler (1785-1848?), also born in Ireland but by 1825 was living in London where she hosted an intellectual salon. Space precludes explaining the extent and significance of Wheeler's authorship and why she should be given equal credit with Thompson. Suffice it to say here that there is sufficient textual evidence to warrant granting her authorial status (see Dooley 1996: 56-7, 69-70, 89-90), not to mention Thompson's own acknowledgment of her significant contribution in his 'Introductory Letter to Mrs Wheeler' with which the *Appeal* begins (1970: iv-xiv). Both had established reputations as intellectuals of note – Thompson was known to and debated with John Stuart Mill (Mill 1873: 128) and was described by his Irish critics as the 'red republican' (Pankhurst 1954: 4) and Wheeler was known in France as the 'goddess of reason' (Pankhurst 1954: 73) – and both were frequent (and welcome) guests at liberal philosopher Jeremy Bentham's residence in Queen's Square (Dooley 1996: 22-24, 67-68; Pankhurst 1954: 15-17).

The *Appeal* was a book length response to James Mill's claim in his 1820 'Essay on Government' that women did not need to be enfranchised. The essence of the *Appeal* was aptly captured by the phrase, 'equality in community', the title of Dooley's (1996) excellent study of the writings of Thompson and Wheeler. The *Appeal's* emphasis on the interdependent nature of gender equality and community would be sufficient to render it a remarkable work. However, there are a number of other reasons that also contribute to the standing of this book. First, it provided a definitive refutation of Mill's arguments against the enfranchisement of women, and in so doing it demonstrated that meaningful gender equality is the necessary basis for a genuinely humanly inhabitable community. Without gender equality the idea of community remains incomplete. But it is remarkable for a number of other reasons that should be noted but which unfortunately cannot be pursued here. Second, the *Appeal* provided a clear demonstration of the weaknesses of liberal utilitarian premises upon which Mill's argument rested (Thompson and Wheeler 1970: 171-73; Dooley 1996: 134-7). Third, it also produced one of the most radical statements ever published in favour of women's full social and political freedom, even more so than Mary Wollstonecraft's (1792) influential treatise published over 30 years earlier. And fourth, it provided James Mill's son, John Stuart Mill, with many of the core arguments with which the younger Mill's reputation as a nineteenth-century feminist now rests.

The *Appeal* is divided into two parts preceded by a preface by Thompson entitled 'Introductory Letter to Mrs Wheeler'.

The preface acknowledged publicly Thompson's debt and commitment to Wheeler's feminist analysis. The first part of the essay examined the structure and key moves of James Mill's general argument. The second part then proceeded with a close examination of three questions. The first question looked at whether in fact women's interests, either as daughters or as wives, could be included within their men's interests. That is, were such interests identical? For the second question they asked, even if it is the case that men's interests can subsume women's interests, does this in itself constitute a sufficient reason for denying women civil or political rights? The third question was whether any guarantee of equality could be given without at the same time granting civil and political rights. Their short answer to all three of these questions was No: women cannot rely on men to take care of women's interests, nor can this be a reason for denying women political rights, and genuine equality for men and women cannot be achieved on the basis of unequal civil and political rights.

Both Thompson and Wheeler embraced a general utilitarian approach, but from a socialist perspective. For Bentham the principle of utilitarianism was that 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number ... is the measure of right and wrong' (Bentham 1791: 93), and which for Bentham was the basis for government. Bentham's principle of utility also derived from the idea that humans are largely pleasure-seeking and pain-avoiding creatures. However, for Thompson and Wheeler, this did not mean that being pleasure-seeking and pain-avoiding entailed being selfish by definition, nor did it follow that human beings were by nature aggressive. People would only be aggressive and selfish, argued Thompson and Wheeler, in a society that encouraged that to be a norm. Thus Thompson and Wheeler drew the conclusion that the emerging socio-economic system of their time, what they termed 'competition' (Thompson and Wheeler 1970, 151), needed to be transformed so that more appropriate values and behaviour were possible. They thought that taking into account the feelings and interests of others was quite consistent with the principle of maximising the greatest happiness for the greatest number. That is, being able to empathise with others and being sensitive to their needs and having sympathy for others would enable greater happiness to emerge. In this way a more benevolent, as opposed to selfish, community focused outcome could be developed.

Thompson and Wheeler rejected the view of human nature assumed by James Mill. For Mill, human beings were pleasure-seeking, selfish individuals who pursued power to further their own selfish ends. That is, each individual would pursue what was in his (or her) own best interests at the expense of all others if needs be. This Mill



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regarded as a universal law of human nature, what he called a 'grand governing law of human nature (cited in Thompson and Wheeler 1825: 7). It applied to each and every human being. It brooked no exceptions. This was the very foundation of Mill's rationale for the political rights of men. It was the argument that he and others following him in the liberal tradition used to justify the nature of some degree of democratic representative government. Each man had different interests that were specific to him. He would pursue these as he saw fit. No other man could act for him, or at least judge on his behalf what were his best interests. Thus men had to have political and civil rights to enable each to pursue their own best interests. In this way they would achieve what was best for themselves as individuals, and consequently the sum total would be to the betterment of the wider society.

Thompson and Wheeler used this very premise, the very foundation of Mill's argument for men's political and civil rights, to show that this was precisely why women needed these self-same rights. They pointed out that this 'grand governing law' was supposed to cover all humans, yet women and children did not seem to be covered by it. If it was the case that men were such selfish, power-seeking individuals then how was it, in their relations with women and children they suddenly became benevolent and caring? It must be a modern miracle; or as Thompson and Wheeler (1825: 11) exclaimed at this point, 'wonderful alchemy of modern philosophy in the hands of such a magician'. On Mill's own premise there were no grounds for assuming that individual men would look after anyone's interests but their own. There were consequently no grounds for assuming that, despite this, men would look after women's interests. This alleged identity of interest was grounded then not in principle, but in custom or habit. Thompson and Wheeler were willing to concede that the habit of privileging men might have had its origins in historical periods when women's lack of physical strength relative to men told against them (Thompson and Wheeler 1825: 155). They conceded that superior strength might once have been the basis for political rule. They also acknowledged that physical prowess with respect to labour meant that in the past the rewards for labour could therefore be justified as belonging disproportionately to the stronger (Nyland and Heenan 2003: 251). Thus, men by virtue of their generally superior physical strength could lay claim to greater entitlements and hence shaped relations between men and women to suit themselves.

However, Thompson and Wheeler also pointed out that in the newly emerging industrialising economy, physical strength was increasingly unimportant as new production processes changed the physical nature of work. Of key importance for their argument was the fact that physical strength was no longer the basis for political rule. In

the political arena it was persuasion and consent that now formed the basis for political rule. This was one of the key tenets of liberal political philosophy. But if men wanted to argue that superior strength was the basis for political participation then it was still not necessary that it be a sex-specific quality. Thompson and Wheeler suggested that 'the simple test for the exercise of political rights, both by men and women, be the capacity of carrying 300 lbs weight' (Thompson and Wheeler 1825: 120). In their view, superior strength as well as superior intelligence was merely a means to a further end such as greater happiness for the greater good. However, such means cannot 'constitute the title', that is the entitlement to, or justification for, happiness. They concluded that in the absence of a logical or principled basis for women's subordination, the only rational explanation for its continuation must be because men like such an arrangement.

Throughout the *Appeal* there is a running critique of the institution of marriage to demonstrate the falsity of Mill's claims about the identity of interests of husbands and wives. For Thompson and Wheeler (1825: 64-65) marriage was little better than a 'white slave code' and wives were, in every sense, literal slaves of their husbands. One of the arguments against women's rights that they tackled was the argument from debilitation. That is, women should not be granted the same political and civil rights as men because they were periodically debilitated by pregnancy and childbirth. Women were the ones who give birth, and this occasionally leaves them indisposed and unable to participate in various activities to the same extent as men. Yet neither of these issues was, for Thompson and Wheeler, of much relevance in the modern era. They also pointed out that pregnancy and child-bearing was not as debilitating as it was made out to be. Moreover, men get sick and debilitated, often as a result of self-indulgent behaviour, but no liberal thinker suggested that this should be ground for denying them political and civil rights. Thompson and Wheeler also constructed an interesting argument to counter the claims that time devoted to child-bearing would mean that women could not discharge their civic duties properly (1825: 143-5). Their discussion of the child-bearing issue highlighted two things that were often implicit in men's arguments about women's capacity to engage in civic duties. First, men's arguments were no more than special pleading to justify their non-involvement in such work. Second, their arguments were really about retaining their privilege of not having what they regard as their normal routines interrupted.

Thompson and Wheeler also took their critique a step further by arguing that it was not enough for there to be changes merely within the existing society. So long as the

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system of 'individual competition' prevailed, equal political rights were never going to be enough. In their words:

Yes, it is only under the system of voluntary associated labor and exertion and equal distribution, that justice can have free scope, that the equal rights of all can prevail, and that women can become in intelligence, virtue and happiness, the equals, of regenerated men. How much unlike, how much superior to, the bullying, suspicious, and mere sensual creatures that are now called men (Thompson and Wheeler 1825: 150).

By 'voluntary associated labor' they meant a cooperative form of socialism, a community of equals. Hence the socio-economic system itself had to change, not just its political shell, but also its central organisational features. Thompson and Wheeler argued for a different social system in which labour was performed in a cooperative fashion. Men and women would work together in smallish communities, pooling their resources such that they would be equally available to all. Each would contribute according to their talents and capabilities. Women would not necessarily have to labour as much as men. Their contribution would depend on their physical capacities at the time. But the same would also be true for men. Moreover, the whole community would be responsible for the care and education of the children. If a woman should lose the father of her children then she would still have the community as a whole to turn to for support. There would be no need for her or her children to resort to more desperate measures such as prostitution to survive.

For Thompson and Wheeler, relations between the sexes would only become truly free and equal, and therefore form a proper basis for the realisation of human happiness, when the socio-economic system was changed. This would remove the 'means of persecution' from men in that women's love and respect then would have to be earned not bought. This required not just equal civil and political rights but a change to social institutions within which these rights were understood and applied. In this way 'all useful talents and efforts for the common good [would] be equally appreciated and rewarded' and hence provide a 'true haven for the happiness of both sexes, particularly of women' that would remove the motivation for 'men to practise injustice' and concomitantly for 'women to submit to injustice' (Thompson and Wheeler 1825: 202-3). For central to their understanding of community was the view that the organisation and structure of the community also shaped the nature and behaviour of its inhabitants. This is underscored in their phrase cited above, 'creatures that are now called men' and their expectation that men of the future would be 'regenerated'. They recognised that neither women nor men were by nature inferior and

superior respectively. Rather it was in the organisation of the society and its institutions that produced women, and men, with natures, psychologies, sexualities, and behaviours that lent themselves to particular relations of domination and subordination (Thompson and Wheeler 1825: 55-67, 76-81). The issue was not just about gaining equal rights. It was about liberation and hence it would entail some significant changes to the social structure. But the benefits as they saw them would apply equally to both women and men, as is revealed in the very last sentence of their book where Wheeler (see Cory 2004: 116-119) exhorts her women readers to take action: 'As your bondage has chained down man to the ignorance and vices of despotism, so will your liberation reward him with knowledge, with freedom, and with happiness' (Thompson and Wheeler 1825: 213).

In their view gender equality could not of its own accord be meaningful unless the community in which it was expected to prevail was also a community committed to equality in all its spheres – the workplace no less than the home. Formal political equality in the public sphere would be meaningless if it had to co-exist with private inequality, whether in the domestic sphere of the household or the pseudo-private space of the workplace. For Thompson and Wheeler neither the household nor the workplace was exempt from the need for gender equality. While the historical moment for their solution of 'voluntary associated labour' might have passed, though that is itself debatable, their key point about the relationship between gender equality and the community in which it is to exist still stands as strongly today as in 1825. Gender equality means equality in community (Dooley 1996), and there can be no equality in community without meaningful gender equality.

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#### Removal Method Mindscape

Cage-pipe perception fogged like a paramour's first looking glass, display case

Cage-pipe perception knuckle clamps snapped off outside after library floor flood

Gooseneck nirvana dream-drip filtered down, filed off by cuticle pushers on high dosage infotainment-innocence

Gooseneck heaters slid atop rusty steam radiators during jackhammer-rodeo deconstruction

Yellowcake confabulator-escalator was overcrowded with ghost-ferry Driver's Ed buccaneers

Yellowcake search party tumblers floated on cash register withdrawal condensation

Ebola vroom-whirling past stocked perfume counter foreground big screen

Ebola tourist brochure duct taped to the elephant's undertrunk for future understory

DAVID S. POINTER,  
MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE, USA



# Cosmopolitanism and the Labour Movement

VERITY BURGEMANN

*Cosmopolitanism and labour movement internationalism are closely connected, historically and philosophically. Enlightenment cosmopolitanism was an important source of inspiration to nineteenth century socialists who developed the principles of socialist internationalism, expressed most famously by Marx and Engels in their injunction that the workers of the world should unite. They argued, in effect, that workers were natural cosmopolitans for they materially benefitted from communion with each other across national boundaries to reduce industrial competition. This article explores the changing fortunes of cosmopolitanism and internationalist sentiment within labour movements over different historical periods. It argues that since the 1970s internationalism has become a dominant principle in labour movement circles worldwide and has been pursued with particular urgency in the past few decades in the period known as globalisation, which has rendered the cosmopolitanism at the heart of labour movement internationalism all the more pertinent.*

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' famous rallying cry 'Workers of the World, Unite!' owed much to the cosmopolitan spirit of the Enlightenment. Gregory Claeys argues that William Godwin then Robert Owen began a process in which eighteenth century cosmopolitanism was restructured into the socialist internationalism to which Marx and Engels were indebted (1988: 235). The International Working Men's Association (the First International) that Marx and Engels founded in 1864 is rightly regarded as the parent of labour internationalism; its task was continued by the Second International, which in 1889 declared the first of May as the day of international workers' solidarity. Socialist internationalism was stalled by the Stalinist project that rendered the Third International a public relations bureau for the Soviet Union and its satellites; but it was again resurrected in the Trotskyist Fourth International from 1938 onwards, which placed great emphasis on socialist internationalism.

The broader labour movement has to varying degrees embraced the principles underpinning socialist internationalism: capitalists benefit from out-competing other capitalists – a war often carried out along nationalist lines; by contrast, workers suffer from contest with other workers, so solidarity across national borders protects workers from industrial competition with each other. Therefore workers – those who sell their manual or mental labour to employers – have a material interest in labour internationalism. Engels even claimed workers were 'by their very nature, free from national prejudices and their whole disposition and movement is essentially humanitarian, anti-nationalist' (quoted in Hobsbawm 1988: 254).

If cosmopolitanism is 'natural' to the working class and labour internationalism its instinctive expression, how does this ideal compare with historical reality? Peter

Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker (2000) describe the emergence of a cosmopolitan working class as early as the seventeenth century. Their account suggests this class could be seen as cosmopolitan not only in its composition but also in its consciousness, because its solidaristic behaviour across multiple boundaries of difference earned for it the metaphor of the many-headed hydra, 'an antithetical symbol of disorder and resistance, a powerful threat to the building of state, empire, and capitalism' (Linebaugh and Rediker 2000: 2).

From the early seventeenth century to the metropolitan industrialisation of the early nineteenth, rulers of the Atlantic economy invoked the hydra myth to describe the difficulty of imposing order on increasingly global systems of labour. They variously designated dispossessed commoners, transported felons, indentured servants, religious radicals, pirates, urban labourers, soldiers, sailors, and African slaves as the numerous, ever-changing heads of this monster, which developed among themselves new forms of cooperation against those rulers, from mutinies and strikes to riots and insurrections and revolution (Linebaugh and Rediker 2000: 3-4).

The hydra myth, they contend, provides a means to explore multiplicity, movement and connection, the long waves and planetary currents of humanity. Multiplicity was indicated in the multitudes who gathered at the market, in the fields, on the piers and the ships, on the plantations and upon the battlefields: 'The power of numbers was expanded by movement, as the hydra journeyed and voyaged or was banished or dispersed in diaspora, carried by the winds and the waves beyond the boundaries of the nation-state' (Linebaugh and Rediker 2000: 6). This proletariat was not a unified cultural class, it was not a single race: 'It was *motley*, both dressed

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in rags and multi-ethnic in appearance. Like Caliban, it originated in Europe, Africa, and America ... It was *vulgar* ... It was *planetary*, in its origins, its motions, and its consciousness' (Linebaugh and Rediker 2000: 332-3).

These 'planetary wanderers' (Linebaugh and Rediker 2000: 353) came to Britain in increasing numbers from the nineteenth century onwards. Satnam Virdee (2014) has described how former slaves of African-American and Caribbean descent, Irish Catholic labourers, African and Asian lascars and seamen, along with Jewish migrants escaping pogroms all made their home in Britain, ensuring its working class was multi-ethnic long before West Indian immigrants started arriving in 1948. 'All historians know', claims Eric Hobsbawm (1988: 9), 'that travelling men, emigrants and returned emigrants were the essence of early labour movements'.

Virdee (2014) describes how workers in all their diversity – black, brown and white, English, Scottish, Irish Catholic, Jewish, Asian and Caribbean – contributed to the making, un-making and re-making of the British working class. He argues that widespread racism did not emerge until after the collapse of Chartism in the 1830s/1840s ended 'the heroic age of the proletariat' (Virdee 2014). Thereafter, racism was consolidated among workers between the 1850s and the 1940s, as British elites ideologically incorporated most components of the working class into the imagined nation, so working-class solidarity across racialised boundaries became more scarce – but never entirely absent. As Hobsbawm (1988: 15) affirms, the fact remains that the working-class movement did teach, by precept, example and practice, the equality of peoples and the brotherhood of man – and woman.

Virdee (2014) concedes working-class institutions suppressed racist divisions amid the new unionism of the late nineteenth century. Socialists supported Jewish and other migrants engaged in struggles for union organisation. During the 1920s and 1930s, the Communist Party of Great Britain – led by Indian, Irish Catholic and Jewish members – fashioned a strategy to challenge English working-class attachment to racism and Empire. The Communist MP for London's Battersea was Indian. By the 1970s, the mainstream British labour movement was actively challenging racism. Virdee (2014) describes the campaigns by organised labour and youth, such as the Anti-Nazi League and Rock Against Racism, to fashion anti-racist/anti-fascist social movements on an unprecedented scale.

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Labour movement internationalism was indeed marginalised until the 1970s, identified with syndicalist and socialist currents. Yet it persisted with remarkable

vigour in many instances, fanned after 1905 with the founding in Chicago of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), which aspired to build One Big Union for all the world's workers. In North America, it organised and mobilised immigrant, non-white and itinerant workers then neglected by conventional trade unions. The influence of both the Chicago IWW and its Detroit-based rival IWW spread beyond the United States and Canada, to South America, Europe, Britain and its settler colonies.

In the especially hard case of South Africa, for example, from 1910 the IWW and socialist parties it inspired, opposed racism and mobilised workers across racial lines; and from 1917 formed syndicalist unions amongst coloured workers, commencing with the Industrial Workers of Africa (Van der Walt 2007: 234). The Congress of South African Trade Unions today carries on its masthead the IWW slogan 'An Injury to One is an Injury to All'. A comparative study of the IWW in South Africa and the USA argues the IWW was the first organisation in both countries to fully embrace oppressed peoples: African Americans, black Africans and other workers of colour; that it did so 'in two highly racist countries, in a highly prejudiced period ... the apex of European imperialism, makes their efforts all the more remarkable' (Cole and Van der Walt 2011: 70).

British socialist leader Tom Mann supported IWW principles. During his Australian sojourn of 1902-1910 he argued within the Victorian Socialist Party (VSP) he led that socialism and cosmopolitan internationalism were inseparable. He maintained socialists had purposely adopted a single-colour flag, not a tricolour, as representing the oneness of the human race: 'the Red Flag denotes human solidarity, based upon the political, social, and economic freedom of all peoples' (*Socialist*, 22 Sept 1906). He expressly used the vocabulary of cosmopolitanism. Our comrades, he wrote, were members of a world-wide Brotherhood and Sisterhood: 'No narrow nationalism can satisfy our people. Nothing short of Cosmopolitanism can really satisfy a world citizen' (*Socialist*, 31 July 1908 editorial). Capitalists were relying on workers of different countries regarding each other as enemies, to checkmate the overthrow of capitalism, but socialists would not be fooled: 'True to your colours, comrades, absolutely International, genuinely Cosmopolitan! Salvation for all, irrespective of Sex, Creed, Race or Colour' (*Socialist*, 28 Aug 1908).

Mann explained in 'A Letter to the Young Men of Melbourne' that Laborism was parochial, insular, and sectional, whereas Socialism was 'thoroughly International and absolutely Cosmopolitan' (*Socialist*, 11 Jan 1908). In this period when internationalism was the preserve of the labour movement's far left, amongst the many reasons why socialists and syndicalists distinguished themselves from the Australian Labor Party (ALP) was Labor's racism. For example, the

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pamphlet for Harry Holland's Australian Socialist Party candidature for West Sydney at the 1910 federal election announced that, unlike the ALP, the socialist movement was international:

No flag have we, nor nation, nor cult nor creed have we;  
The wide earth is our country – our clan Humanity!  
The interests of the Working Class ... are the same in all countries... We are against every form of exploitation and oppression, whether it be against a class, a party, a sex, or a race (*International Socialist Review*, 26 Feb 1910).

The Socialist Labor Party (SLP), closely connected with the Detroit IWW, noted that the Labor objective aimed at the creation of a national sentiment and the promotion of racial purity so it favoured the erection of race and colour barriers to prevent the attainment of the Socialist ideal – the solidarity of the World's Workers (*People*, 13 April 1907). In its report to the Second International's 1907 Stuttgart Congress, the SLP quoted this objective, and commented that the Labor Party therefore rejected the international character of the labour movement and deliberately placed an obstacle in the way of progress (*People*, 18 May 1907). Likewise, when 300 Chinese cabinetmakers were refused union membership, it commented that the union had missed a splendid opportunity to demonstrate international solidarity, 'the oneness of labour', and make Chinese workers the friends of Australian workers instead of their enemies. 'The workers of the world are wage slaves subject to capitalist conditions, therefore the Industrial Workers of the World takes in all workers irrespective of race, color or creed' (*People*, 11 July 1908).

In calling on workers to join, the Chicago IWW (n.d.: 14) explained it was composed of wage-workers only, but that these were of all nationalities, speaking all tongues, yet all of one nation, the working class: 'There are no barriers of race, creed, color, sex, age or skill, to entrance into its fighting ranks.' Its members paid allegiance to no imaginary boundary lines and claimed no country except the world; being property-less and landless, they had no patriotism nor reason for patriotism. It was essential, in the interests of all workers, young and old, skilled and unskilled, black, brown, or brindle, to organise on lines made necessary by economic conditions (*Direct Action*, 9 Oct 1915: 2).

In 1914 its popular newspaper *Direct Action* claimed that, just as capital was becoming cosmopolitan, so were the people themselves. Workers of all nations were compelled to work side by side in the same industry and this tended to break down the old national hatred that for centuries had characterised the craft unionist; the modern proletariat was to be found everywhere propagating the doctrine that the workers of the world

should unite and capture the earth for their own use (*Direct Action*, 31 March 1914). *Direct Action* referred to Labor MPs as 'patriotic parasites' (*Direct Action*, 11 March 1916) and heaped scorn on Labor racism:

Contrast the narrow parochial outlook evidenced by the 'white Australia' policy with the world outlook of Karl Marx, when he sent his famous cry ringing down the ages: 'Workers of all countries, Unite'. Such was the tendency of capitalism with the development of faster and cheaper methods of transportation, and the only solution was class organisation, irrespective of colour or creed (*Direct Action*, 1 July 1916).

When workers, mostly Spanish and Italian, conducted a successful strike at an Innisfail sugar mill, *Direct Action* stressed these men knew how to stick together: 'Solidarity is a wonderful factor nowadays, and the old parochial ideas are dying out, which divided the workers in the past. One Big Union for all workers whatever the creed or language. United, the working class are invincible' (*Direct Action*, 1 Oct 1915). IWW leader Tom Barker explained that coloured and white, Mohammedan and Catholic, beer chower and teetotaler, Socialist and conservative, were all subordinate to industrial slavery. The mode of production was international, callous, cold-blooded and brutal. The IWW, therefore, stood for 'Revolutionary Economic International working class unity' (*Direct Action*, 1 April 1915).

The IWW made practical efforts to mobilise Japanese workers in the Queensland sugar industry, Italian and Slav workers in Western Australia and Chinese workers in the Northern Territory; it distributed literature in Chinese, Hungarian, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Polish, Lithuanian, Flemish, Italian, Spanish, Russian and Portuguese; and the Broken Hill IWW appointed an organiser to work exclusively amongst Italians, nominated a Russian and a Bulgarian to work amongst their respective compatriots – and recommended all workers should learn Esperanto (Burgmann 1995: 88-90).

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From the 1970s, internationalism became less the preserve of the far left and was embraced by mainstream labour, encouraged by decolonisation and the rise of new social movements. For example, Australia Asia Worker Links (AAWL) was established by union activists in Melbourne in 1979 and flourishes still. As part of the labour movement in the Asia Pacific, it promotes international solidarity among workers in the region by developing exchange programs, education projects and information networks (AAWL 2014). As Leo Panitch (2001: 369) observed, '*labour is changing in ways that make it a more inclusive social agent*'. The



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Enlightenment cosmopolitanism that inspired Marx and Engels is arguably a more significant influence within the labour movement now than at any time since they famously advised the world's workers to unite.

Contemporary labour internationalism – or transnationalism as it is increasingly called – involves unions utilising transnational networks and organising global resistance campaigns by acting across borders (Burgmann 2008: 241-243). At a more formal and institutional level, global unions emerged from the late 1990s; and in 2006 a single peak body, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), was formed whose founding Constitution declares:

It has been the historic role of trade unionism, and remains its mission, to better the conditions of work and life of working women and men and their families, and to strive for human rights, social justice, gender equality, peace, freedom and democracy.

More than ever in its history, confronted by unbridled capitalist globalisation, effective internationalism is essential to the future strength of trade unionism and its capacity to realise that mission.

The Confederation calls on the workers of the world to unite in its ranks, to make of it the instrument needed to call forth a better future for them and for all humanity (ITUC 2014).

To make the trade union movement 'inclusive, and responsive to the views and needs of all sectors of the global workforce', the ITUC pledged to 'combat racism, xenophobia and exclusion and defend the rights and interests of migrant workers and their families and work for tolerance, equality and dialogue between different cultures' (ITUC 2014). George Myconos argues that the new transnational network of labour organisations that now includes ten Global Unions has become more globally oriented and internally integrated (2005: 148).

In *The Communist Manifesto* of 1848 Marx and Engels not only called on the workers of the world to unite, but also produced a remarkably prescient description of the trajectory of capitalism:

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe ... The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world-market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country ... It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production ... it creates a world after its own image (Marx and Engels 1970: 37-39).

Peter Waterman (1998: 1-2, 214) argued 150 years later that, in the global informational capitalism of the twenty-first century, with the internet enabling unions to connect easily with each other across national borders, it was easier for the labour movement to draw sustenance from the nineteenth-century Marxist presentation of the labour movement as an anti-capitalist internationalism; and he describes many examples of rank-and-file labour internationalism – which he terms 'global solidarity' – in both the developed and the developing world (Waterman 1998: 205-206). At a more bureaucratic level, the Global Unions website, aided by language-translation software, makes possible electronic bulletin boards, email-based discussion groups, global online video conferences and access to global databases on multinational corporations and management strategies. Myconos (2005: 129) agrees that transnational labour's utilisation of new communications technologies promotes innovative solidaristic activities.

Labour organisation is not only better able but also now more inclined to chase capitalism to the furthest corners of the globe. Amory Starr (2000: 88-9) notes:

As assembly lines have stretched across the globe and production processes [have been made] sufficiently flexible to make it easy to exchange one workforce for another nearly anywhere, unions have recognised the need to build global organizing capacity ... Labour's new awareness has overcome the divide that formerly positioned first world workers' standard of living as dependent on third world workers' cheap labour ... It has enabled workers to challenge the logic of 'international competitiveness', recognizing that such a logic will drive all wages down ... Unions are widely recognizing the need to bring the standards of all workers up in order to make all workers safe.

For instance, Victoria Carty's study of transnational labour mobilisation in Mexican *maquiladoras* reveals that the North America Free Trade Agreement has prompted workers in North America and Mexico to recognise that they share a common enemy:

Jobs have been exported from the North to the South on an unprecedented scale. This means jobs for workers in Mexico, but under exploitative conditions. This has negative consequences for workers in both countries. To combat these forms of abuse workers are collectively focusing their anger ... globalization is creating common interests ... that transcend both national and interest-group boundaries (Carty 2004: 304).

Strikes in Rio Bravo in 2000 and Puebla in 2001 were backed by the AFL-CIO (the United States peak union

body) and achieved significant improvements in wages and conditions. AFL-CIO speaking tours urged workers in the North to recognise that workers in the South were also victims of NAFTA and encouraged awareness that solidarity across borders was crucial in forging resistance (Carty 2004: 306).

Labour transnationalism is facilitated by the processes that render it necessary. Beverly Silver (2003: 5-6, 41, 64) shows how, as the labour movement is weakened in sites of disinvestment, it is strengthened in sites of expansion, creating new, strategically located working classes, which produce powerful new labour movements that succeed in improving wages and working conditions. The potential for collaboration is enhanced by transnational corporate employment patterns in which an injury to workers anywhere can be resisted by workers elsewhere.

Kim Moody (1997: 309) argues that the material substance of working-class internationalism is at hand. If capitalism is now more global than ever, so too is the working class it creates: 'Even within most nations, the world-wide class that is still forming also crosses borders with greater regularity, is more ethnically diverse, and international in nature.' Moody describes how a new inclusiveness was expressed in 'social-movement unionism', which emerged in the 1990s in North and South America, South Africa, South Korea, and the more industrialised parts of the third world. It understood the need to counteract the way globalisation sets workers against each other, along lines of nationality, ethnicity etc, and utilises prejudice to increase profits (Moody 1997: 269, 271, 290, 309).

Mainstream unions around the world have also responded to this challenge of workforce fragmentation, indicating increased awareness of the need to integrate marginalised workers, including immigrants (Burgmann 2008: 243-246). For example, Solidaires, Unitaires, Démocratique in France, organising in the transport and communication sectors, has been a prominent opponent of deportation of immigrants without residency papers (Taylor and Mathers 2002: 101-2). In 2004 even the AFL-CIO – which has long been singing the IWW hymn 'Solidarity Forever' – reversed its decades-long opposition to undocumented immigrants, finally endorsing broad amnesty for undocumented workers (Smith 2006: 309). The biggest May Day demonstration in US history was in 2006, because unions mobilised in solidarity with illegal, immigrant, mostly casual labourers, demanding citizen rights within the USA (Waterman 2014). The Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) has lobbied governments to recognise acquired skills and accreditation of immigrants to foster their immediate inclusion into the workforce. 'As union members, we have a responsibility to say "NO" to racism in all its forms' (CUPW 2014).

An example at the Global Unions' level is Union Network International (UNI), which represents 20 million workers in 900 unions, including call-centre and IT workers. UNI emphasises that it 'fosters international solidarity' (UNI 2004). Its response to off-shoring and outsourcing reflects this: 'UNI would like to state that it would be dangerous to respond to employer initiatives to relocate work to other countries with arguments that could be misconstrued as xenophobic or protectionist' (UNI 2004: 1-2). It explains that, as companies act globally, so trade unions must act together across the world to limit the costs globalisation imposes on societies in both the source and destination countries (UNI 2004: 4).

Socialist/labour internationalism is a highly classed close relation of cosmopolitanism. Echoes of cosmopolitan sentiment can be heard even in the most militantly working-class-conscious expressions of internationalism such as in this IWW poem published shortly before the world descended into chaos wrought by nationalist rivalries:

Heart aflame, and by love driven, nation parted  
now no more,  
We are gathering for the battle that the seers  
foretold of yore;  
From all peoples we are coming, far and wide the  
world around,  
And the fight shall not be ended till the last slave's  
freedom's found (*Direct Action*, 15 July 1914).

Globalisation has rendered the cosmopolitanism at the heart of contemporary labour internationalism all the more pertinent.

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## Street stall

Tonight the weight that measures  
every touch

is feathers, small bones. Here  
we are caught in lights

and by the trams and taxis  
bundled

roses, over-  
priced in yellow yet –

it's the proteas that stop us  
in shadow & neon stems

severed and hidden in paper less  
soft than it looks.

There are depths we don't  
dare push into

touches such as this that  
still us from our giddy steps.

Jo LANGDON  
GEELONG, VIC



# The Attraction of the United Nations

JOHN LANGMORE

*People everywhere seek peace and security with justice. The United Nations is the principal international institution committed to implementing a global ethic aiming for those goals. Its Charter requires member states to settle their disputes peacefully through preventive diplomacy and mediation or failing these, coercive means such as economic sanctions. Only when these have proved ineffective will the Security Council authorise use of force. Many countries jump quickly to military means to address conflict. This sequence is required when international action is necessary to protect civilians who are being abused by their government. The UN General Assembly's Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a wide-ranging statement of principles for strengthening human dignity and has become the foundation for many focused conventions on the rights of particular groups. UN funds, programs and agencies are major contributors to the global infrastructure for efficient and equitable international economic, social and environmental relations.*

Cosmopolitanism was one of the intellectual bases that led to the formation of the United Nations (UN). Immanuel Kant's *Toward Perpetual Peace*, published in 1795 proposed a federation of nations, and is regarded by some scholars as the culmination of Enlightenment cosmopolitanism. Adam Smith wrote of 'the great society of mankind' and Kant advocated the political unification of humanity underpinned by an international law. Such ideas continued to inspire international institutional experiments (Thomas 2014: 72). The failure of the League of Nations motivated planning of a more comprehensive and demanding model for international governance. Led by President Franklin Roosevelt's internationalism, the United Nations was established in 1945 by the Allied countries to prevent repetition of the horrors of World War II.

The attraction of the UN is that it is the principal international institution committed to implementing a global ethic aiming for peace and justice. The purposes expressed in Article 1 of the Charter set high aspirations for the Organisation and for its Member States:

maintaining international peace and security ... by peaceful means and ... settlement of international disputes; to develop friendly relations among nations based on ... equal rights and self-determination of peoples ... ; to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character ...; and for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends (UN 1945: 3, 4).

International dispute settlement – peaceful conflict resolution – is a fundamental and essential requirement for improving human wellbeing. So the central work of

the UN is of profound importance to every person in the world. The commitments to the international rule of law, to economic and social development and to human rights are essential for the wellbeing of all.

The centrality of those ideals is a major part of the appeal of the UN. The other foundation of its legitimacy is its nearly universal membership. The UN is the political heart of the international system. It is the premier club for states. Membership of the UN is one of the symbols of statehood. A delegation from Timor Leste led by President Xanana Gusmão was welcomed by the President of the UN General Assembly after decades of struggle, an interim UN administration and a UN-conducted plebiscite. Gusmão responded to the packed chamber, the emotional intensity of the occasion showing that this international recognition was the culminating point in the Timorese struggle for independence and international recognition.

## Peace and Security

The Security Council has 'primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security' (Article 24, UN 1945). Article 25 requires member states to carry out the decisions of the Council (UN, 1945: 16), making it the most powerful body in the UN system. David Bosco remarks early in his authoritative book: 'The Security Council is like no other body in history' (Bosco 2009: 3). The permanent five members (the P5: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States) account for 28 per cent of world population (UNDESA 2013); 44 per cent of global economic output (World Bank 2013); and are militarily dominant: for example they hold 99 per cent of nuclear weapons.

The intention of the founders of the UN was that the P5 lead action for maintenance of global peace: however,

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the Cold War prevented that mode of operation. Nevertheless, when now all permanent members and four elected members agree, all UN member states are required to accept and carry out the Council's decisions. There are few limits to the Council's authority. Many influential resolutions have been adopted by the Council which have resolved or reduced conflicts. Its members have been fairly criticised though for failures to agree on concrete action to resolve some international and civil conflicts and to prevent or curtail atrocities. Most recently, the deadlock over what to do about the Syrian civil war has justifiably been widely condemned – but who outside the Council has proposed a comprehensive, effective strategy? The use or threat of use of the veto is occasionally the cause of deadlock. The veto has been used over 270 times since 1945 but its use has tended to decline and it was not used at all in 2013. The Council generally operates by consensus, resolutions being vigorously debated and finally agreed after compromise, but deadlock can prevent action when there is intense conflict of interest.

There has been a dramatic increase in the Council's capacity to agree since the end of the Cold War. In the mid-eighties the Council rarely met more than about once a week; and there were only five small peace operations on which annual expenditure totalled less than US\$ 200m (Bellamy and Williams 2010: 64); and there were few resolutions. Bosco writes that by the early eighties 'the air had gone out of the building' (Bosco 2009: 146).

In contrast, during the year 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2014 the Council adopted 55 resolutions, 26 Presidential statements, and issued 113 statements to the press, all of which required detailed negotiation (UN General Assembly 2014: 10). In mid-2014 there were 17 peace operations, 12 political missions and offices, and 19 subsidiary bodies to oversee the work of particular peacekeeping missions, sanctions regimes or thematic issues' discussions. In relation to every peacekeeping and political mission, reports were delivered by the Special Representatives of the Security General (SRSG) and often by chairs of relevant panels within the Peacebuilding Commission. As well, the Council kept 42 questions on its agenda relating to its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. For example, protection of civilians in armed conflict continues to be a major topic; as does the evolution of peacekeeping operations; and counter-terrorism. The Council is not only the central forum for discussion of issues relating to peace and security, but the unique focus for some of the most publicised and intransigent conflicts.

The Security Council oversees about 85 per cent of the UN Secretariat's total expenditure (excluding spending by the funds, programs and agencies), mostly for peacekeeping, that amounts to over US\$7 billion

annually (UN General Assembly 2014). This pays for just under 120,000 military, police and civilian personnel. In comparison, in 2014 the Abbott Government budgeted US\$ 29.3 billion for Australia's defence, four times the UN global peacekeeping budget. UN peacekeeping is highly cost-effective.

An important question is whether elected Security Council members can be influential in a situation where the P5 are dominant. In brief, they can if they are clear about their goals, build networks with other Council members and member states outside the Council, maintain firm commitment to purposes they have decided to pursue, and use imagination in their advocacy. Australia's success in leading the negotiation of the first ever Council resolution on Small Arms and Light Weapons (Resolution 2117 2013), and after many months of quiet diplomacy of Resolution 2139 (2014) in February on access for humanitarian aid workers to Syria, are clear examples. Elected members have greater scope for flexibility than the P5, which tend to be locked into their positions.

All UN Member States are required to 'settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered' (UN Charter Article 2: 3). This means that parties to a dispute must seek solutions by peaceful means such as diplomacy, negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement or regional arrangements (Article 33). When these are not effective, coercive measures may be used such as economic sanctions (Article 42). Chapter VII of the Charter gives the Security Council the capacity to authorise the use of force when other measures have failed to contain aggression, as it did when intervening in Libya in 2011. An obligation of membership of the UN is that when use of force is agreed to be necessary, states must make armed forces available to the Council and give the UN assistance such as a right of passage (Articles 43, 48). The engagement of NATO and some other countries including Qatar with Libya in 2011 were an example of such action. However, despite many proposals, there has so far never been agreement to establishing a permanent UN standing force.

UN Member States can only use force in two circumstances: when authorised to do so by the Security Council, or in self-defence against an armed attack. That is why the US, UK and Australian invasion of Iraq in March 2003 was inconsistent with the Charter and considered by most countries to be illegal. That was a particularly clear example of major states failing to implement their commitments under the Charter.

Australia continues to neglect the imperative of seeking peaceful conflict resolution. Neither of the Defence White Papers in 2009 and 2013 gave attention to a means of identifying the causes of disputes, or of non-military

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means of reducing tension, or attempting to resolve conflict. Preventive diplomacy by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is our first line of defence. Yet that Department currently receives only about 3 per cent of national security spending. However, the 2014-15 defence budget of A\$29.3 billion is 7.1 per cent of the Commonwealth's expenditure (Thomson 2014: vi). This was a real increase of 6.1 per cent in a budget in which aid was severely cut and most areas of social spending were reduced. Both recent Labor and Coalition governments have failed to adequately support Australia's preventive diplomacy. Australia now has fewer overseas posts than any other member of the G20 and fewer than we had in 1995. *The Australia in the Asian Century White Paper* outlined an international strategy with more vitality, but implementation of that required increased funding for DFAT that was not forthcoming. The Abbott Government then abandoned the Asian Century White Paper.

### Principles Underlying the UN

The principles set out in Article 2 of the Charter include, in addition to those already mentioned: the sovereign equality of all states; acceptance of obligations set out in the Charter; and non-interference in the domestic affairs of any state. None of those can be absolute: each has been interpreted in the light of other principles, other articles of the Charter, other treaties, and conventions and exigencies.

The end of the Cold War allowed a resurgence of UN peace-making and peace-keeping activity. During the 1990s the UN became not only a stage but also an actor in global governance. Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore (2007: 41) write in the *Oxford Handbook on the UN* that in the 1990s: 'The expansion of peacekeeping operations, both quantitatively and qualitatively ... made the UN a consequential player in the security field' (Barnett and Finnemore 2007: 41). Some of these peacekeeping missions such as those in El Salvador, Namibia and Cambodia were effective but two in particular, in Rwanda and Bosnia, were catastrophically misjudged. After the US took sides in the Somali intervention and a score of American troops were killed and their bodies dragged through the streets, US public opinion became hostile to peacekeeping and President Clinton rejected attempting to stop the Rwandan genocide. Other states such as the UK and France also refused to assist because Rwanda was not strategically important to them; and the UN Secretariat did not push hard enough for action.

After the genocide in Rwanda there was intense, anguished debate about what lessons could be learnt. Should the international community have the power to protect vulnerable people when their government fails to do so? After an inquiry by a Commission co-chaired by Gareth Evans and Mohamed Sahnoun, an eminent

Algerian diplomat, along with much debate amongst foreign ministries, delegates and within the Secretariat, there was agreement at the UN summit in September 2005 that when a state fails to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity, the international community has a Responsibility to Protect (R2P) those people (UN General Assembly 2005, Para 139). When time is available, that responsibility involves taking a similar series of steps in other forms of conflict resolution including attempting preventive diplomacy, political pressure, mediation and, failing these, the imposition of sanctions. After such peaceful means have been tried, the Security Council can authorise military intervention. It is clear from the extent of the qualifications around the 2005 Summit agreement, that international intervention is recognised as a last resort to be used most reluctantly.

In addition to R2P, the UN has developed criteria for planning peace-building after conflicts. It has set standards for, and successfully implemented, free and fair elections in many countries under difficult conditions. Following the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were based on the decisions of the Millennium Summit in September 2000, the UN became the global forum that set an ambitious new development agenda not only for itself but also for Member States. The MDGs swiftly became the central goals of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, national bilateral aid organisations, and for the host of NGOs involved in development work. UN action can enhance prospects for international cooperation. It can debate, agree on and diffuse international norms and policies around the globe, as described in *The United Nations Development Agenda: Development for All*, a summary of the goals, commitments and strategies agreed at the UN world conferences between 1990 and 2007. Several of those conferences set the targets that became the politically potent Millennium Development Goals.

There is a tendency to assign an increasing number of tasks to the UN without providing the funding, staff or authority to tackle them effectively, and then to blame the organisation for failures. The financial resources provided to the UN Secretariat are minute, at about A\$2.9 billion or 40 Australian cents a year per person of the global population. This is only a third more than the budget of the University of Melbourne. Some countries including the US remained in arrears for long periods. Conservative Congress members argued that this was a means of pressuring the UN to improve its efficiency. The US Congress agreed to President Obama's urging in mid-2009 to pay US arrears – after nearly 20 years of debt.

### Human Rights

A major innovation soon after the establishment of the UN was the negotiation of the Universal Declaration of



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Human Rights (UDHR), which is one of the principal means within the UN system for fostering human dignity. The General Assembly quickly established a committee to draft the Universal Declaration and this was adopted by a meeting of the General Assembly chaired by Dr Evatt, Australian foreign minister at the time, on 10 December 1948, despite reservations by some countries. Nevertheless it was passed without a single dissenting vote. Not only does the opening preamble affirm 'faith in fundamental human rights', but Article 35 states that the UN shall promote 'universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion'.

Many remember the Universal Declaration for the political rights it describes, but it is also an expression of commitment to economic and social rights, such as the right to work, the right to education and social security, the right to an adequate standard of living for health and wellbeing, and the right to rest and leisure. Professor Paul Kennedy describes it as 'by far the largest bid that has ever been made, before or since, for the international prescription of human rights ... it is, surely, one of the greatest political statements in world history' (2006: 180).

Many governments at the time thought that since the Universal Declaration was adopted by the General Assembly, it was not binding on states; that it was simply a political declaration that could be adopted or disregarded at will. Immediately it was adopted, however, innumerable groups and individuals such as bar associations, parliamentarians, human rights activists, intellectuals, writers, faith groups, trade unions and women's movements started campaigning for its implementation. Groups who had experienced discrimination, persecution or repression used it as the basis for their campaigns for justice and freedom. In addition, the media was given a touchstone against which to compare what governments were actually doing. Professor Gillian Triggs writes that, 'In many respects, [The Universal Declaration of Human Rights] has come to represent customary law' (2006: 884). The Universal Declaration has been the basis for negotiation of other conventions establishing human rights for particular groups such as women, children and people with disabilities.

### **Global Public Goods**

While the Charter is the constitution of the UN, the powers, functions and procedures of the UN have evolved through the innovations, experimentation and interpretations of delegates, the Secretary-Generals and the Secretariats of all the major organs. UN sponsored funds that promote institutions established to meet specific global needs programs and agencies, have a major role in global governance while providing infrastructure essential for global integration and efficiency as well as equity. Some like the International Maritime Organization or the World Intellectual Property Organization are a direct recognition

of an essential service required for efficient functioning of the global economy. Others like the International Labour Organisation were established long before the UN, in that case to address industrial injustices recognised after the First World War and to reduce motivation in other countries for spreading of the Communist revolution in Russia.

The economic, social and political crises caused by the Second World War motivated the establishment of many institutions. The UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was originally established to provide health and welfare services to children in war-ravaged Europe but within a few years was concentrating on services for children in developing countries. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) was designed to respond to hunger and to strengthen agriculture. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) were the forums in which countries often took the leadership in initiating organisations to work on social, cultural, environmental and economic issues not covered by the IMF and World Bank. This was partly because development-related issues are of greatest importance to developing countries, which came to have the majority of seats in those forums after their independence. Kennedy contrasts these 'soft agencies' with the hard agencies whose purpose is security and economic growth. He notes that the hard agencies have their HQs in Washington and New York but the soft agencies are spread around in Geneva, Vienna, Paris, Rome, Tokyo and Nairobi (Kennedy, 2006, 144).

Some of these global institutions are weak, underfunded and have gaps in their membership, such as the UN Environment Programme. However this has not constrained the prophetic forecasting of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) nor prevented the negotiation of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Other funds, programs and agencies are effective because they focus on a specific set of issues or technical requirements and draw on particular areas of professional expertise. Examples include the World Health Organization, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and the World Food Programme – which is one of the largest aid organisations in the world. The imperative for the work of the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has multiplied with the global explosion to over 51 million refugees in 2014. Some agencies have substantial capacity to influence the degree of compliance with policy and others have little more than the opportunity to put moral and political pressure on member states through praising or shaming. All receive income from member states and some are also generously financed by voluntary contributions from governments and philanthropic foundations.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is an impressive example. It was established in 1946 with the objective

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of the 'attainment by all peoples of the highest possible levels of health'. It now has a membership of 193 countries and two associate members (states join each of the UN funds, programs and agencies separately). It has a staff of around 8,000 recruited from 150 countries and had a budget of \$4 billion in 2012-13, 24 per cent of which is compulsory dues and 76 per cent voluntary contributions about two thirds of which are from governments. The WHO has many functions in aiming to improve health, one of which is to deal with pandemics. Our planet is 'united by contagion' and epidemics like HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, polio and ebola need to be addressed globally if they are to be effectively controlled. This imperative for global collaboration has potent lessons for global governance in general. Some of the WHO's most lauded successes have been fighting infectious diseases, including the design of child vaccination programs, the reduction of the crippling skin disease yaws by about 95 per cent by 1964, and the reduction of polio cases by about 99 per cent by 2006.

The WHO was responsible for one of the UN's most spectacular successes – the global eradication of smallpox. Now the major global pandemics are HIV/AIDS and ebola. After substantial delays in the multilateral system – which mirrored those in most countries – UNAIDS was established and this has been complemented by the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to which the Gates Foundation has been a huge contributor. During the last decade, treatment has rapidly expanded but is still not close to meeting the need. The WHO acted much more decisively to control the spread of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and the fear of an avian flu epidemic. But the WHO, like most countries, was too slow to recognise the seriousness of the ebola outbreak in West Africa, and it has also been delayed by the unwillingness of Member States to provide funding or personnel to combat the epidemic. The Abbott Government's initial response was both entirely irresponsible and mean spirited.

### **Affirming the UN**

The UN's record is mixed: there have been disasters as well as striking achievements, but the imperative for its existence and work is clear. Its greatest achievement has been the fact that there has not been a third world war, and associated with that, the decline in the number of violent conflicts since the start of the 1990s to which UN peacemaking was a significant contributor (Themnér and Wallensteen 2012: 568).

Scepticism about the value of the UN is generally based on doubts about its effectiveness, but lessons have been sought and learnt from major mistakes and there is a continuous process of reform. The UN is a human institution with the normal plethora of human failings. The systemic difficulties are the deliberate underfunding by the wealthiest countries and risk

avoidance by excessively pressured and habitually micromanaged bureaucrats. Seventy years of history has entrenched the UN as part of the established machinery of international affairs. So it is essential to frequently review effectiveness and continue the constant process of adaption of its structures and mechanisms to reflect the evolution of global relations. It is certainly necessary to learn from failures but it is also vital to celebrate successes, and there is a widespread tendency to do far more of the former and little of the latter.

The UN has a vaguely positive image amongst Australians and other peoples, though many regard it as having little to do with their wellbeing. For example, when the Lowy Institute invited respondents to their annual survey in 2010 to list 12 foreign policy goals in order of importance, only 34 per cent thought that seeking a seat on the UN Security Council was a very important goal, ranking it second-last (Hanson 2010: 7). A year earlier 71 per cent of respondents agreed that Australia should seek a seat. After Australia had decisively won the seat in October 2012, 59 per cent thought that Australia's time on the Council would be 'good for Australia' (Oliver 2013: 15).

This article is therefore written as an affirmation of the value and importance of the UN. My own experience of the institution is that incremental evolution of policies is normally possible provided they are the result of careful thought, preparation and wide consultation. It is also encouraging that every year 70 plus graduate students of international relations at the University of Melbourne voluntarily decide to take my subject 'The UN: Review and Reform', many because they would like to work in the system or cooperate with it. The pivotal fact is that people everywhere long for peace with justice and support institutions and leaders who sincerely seek those goals.

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### Superior (Not the Lake)

I live where pine light simplifies  
my kettle and my whittling  
and my desk.

You invented me. I give you  
credit and  
the rest.

Let us relent to being hinged  
smoothly as  
accidental wilderness.

Surrendering to autumn  
walks, where chance forms,  
line the lake with pathways.

SHEILA E. MURPHY,  
PHOENIX, ARIZONA, USA

### Ticket

'In the dream of cities I've seen I've seen that city  
before'—Eleni Sikélianòs

Slipping out of the pages  
of poems on California

this ticket from an Otago  
bus has been kept  
as new –

paper bright with  
the feel & gloss of wax.

There are cities  
you stand up in  
in sleep – and after:

impossible not to  
feel such cold

knowing blue  
shadows stretched  
long on snow.

Whole days melt  
from touch,  
and remembering

becomes a pastime  
best forgotten. Picture

postcards slip quickly  
from sills full  
already with sun.

In dreams of cities,  
there are cities you've seen

and those you haven't.

JO LANGDON  
GEELONG, VIC



# Cosmopolitanism, National Interest, Selfishness and Australian Aid

HELEN WARE

*Australia is a rich country, which, if it is to be seen as meeting the cosmopolitan criteria for a good international citizen, has a responsibility to assist the poorer countries of the world. Each new federal government looks to the aid program to imprint its own ideology and judges whether aid funding is in the light of overall national needs. The Abbott Government is party to this revisionism. AusAID has been abolished, incorporated within the Department of Foreign Affairs; the aid budget has been slashed with new geographical and sectoral foci introduced alongside a heavy stress on the national interest. Aid for trade and economic policy conditionality are back in fashion. Yet much of the Abbott Government's allegedly new framework represents a return to the concerns of earlier Coalition governments. Regrettably, this change to a less cosmopolitan and more selfish Australia has attracted very little public concern or debate.*

... in an increasingly globalised world, it is in our self-interest to help. Not to do so would harm our own economy. By promoting growth in developing countries, the aid program helps foster stability and expands trade and investment opportunities for Australia. Through aid, we are also addressing many threats to our own prosperity, such as HIV/AIDS, illegal migration, refugee flows, global environment problems and narcotics (Downer 1997 in ACFID 2014: 5).

It is a sad feature of Australian political life that the nature and size of Australia's international development assistance program receives little public attention. This paper will discuss the aid programme and consider how far, if at all, it matches up with cosmopolitan ideals of the behaviour of Australia as a 'good international citizen' (Evans and Grant 1995: 35). In the 1990s, disinterested altruism and pragmatic realism alike required 'an extension into our foreign relations of the basic values of the Australian community ... to assist through substantial aid programs the economic and social development of those countries struggling with debt, poverty or national calamity' (Evans and Grant 1995: 35).

In terms of median wealth, Australia is the richest nation in the world. Such wealth brings global responsibilities. The nearest thing to altruism on the part of sovereign governments is the provision of aid to distant countries where they have few direct interests. The cosmopolitan ideal counsels investment in the wellbeing of humans in need, wherever they are. Thus, Van Hooft (2009: 19) argues that the 'genuine outlook of ethical cosmopolitanism' requires willingness to aid those suffering from natural or man-made disasters, including extreme poverty and global solidarity with struggles

for human rights and social justice. A clear example of cosmopolitan ethics would be Australian aid to Africa and most of Australia's voluntary contributions to the United Nations and other multilateral organisations. Unfortunately, our recent campaign for a seat on the Security Council obscured this altruism when aid to non-poor countries such as Grenada was blatantly used in an attempt to buy votes. In 2014-15, budget cuts and geographical refocusing will reduce Australia's aid to Africa to near vanishing point.

## Defining National Interest(s)

New governments are keen to review both the aid program and its cost. Nothing about the current Coalition government's view of the world, whether demonstrated in its aid program, its attitude to the ebola epidemic, its treatment of asylum seekers or its approach to climate change, would suggest any desire to practise cosmopolitan ethics or to be a good international citizen. Prime Minister Abbott is at pains to be seen to be putting a narrow, partisan view of Australia's interests before any concern for human rights or global welfare. The two areas of foreign policy where he has shown a keen personal interest: the downing of the Malaysian plane MH17 over Ukraine, and the sending of a new wave of Australian troops to the Middle East, demonstrate a desire for macho action rather than a concern for the welfare of foreign nationals. Australia is now willing to spend tens of millions of dollars searching for a missing plane with a few hundred passengers who have already died, but quibbles over increasing ebola prevention and treatment aid from \$18 million to \$42 million to save hundreds of thousands of lives. When Treasurer Hockey said: 'Ultimately you can't put a price on protecting human beings and that's what we are doing', he was referring to bombing Iraq and Syria in a 'humanitarian mission with

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military elements' costing \$400-500 million a year ('There are clear and achievable objectives in Iraq, says Tony Abbott' 2014). Sadly, the Treasurer's generous sentiment does not also apply to humanitarian funding for UNHCR programs for refugees. Australia had already cut off all bilateral aid to Iraq before sending troops, on the grounds that *Iraq was not within our region of interest*.

The Abbott Government has now re-joined 'serving the national interest' to the objective of the aid program. 'The national interest' has become a mantra for Coalition foreign policy. Now, 'the purpose of the Australian government's aid program is to promote Australia's national interests through contributing to economic growth and poverty reduction' (DFAT 2014c). In part, this is simply a gesture towards those in the Coalition and the general public who want taxpayers' money spent at home. Under the first Rudd Government the objective was to 'help people overcome poverty', with the rider that 'this also serves national interests by promoting stability and prosperity both in our region and beyond'. The question in 2014 has been just how much practical difference yet another change in wording will make. Many bureaucrats and politicians in private conversations would recognise that decision makers are often faced with competing national interests and the need to choose just which of several national interests to support. In the singular "The national interest" is erroneous as a description of the empirical reality, substitutes tautology for explanation and is unhelpful as a guide to policy' (Thakur 2013). Talk of aligning the diplomatic and foreign aid elements of foreign policy is just talk – they were already closer than Siamese twins. Three key areas to examine for changes are the total budget; aid's geographical focus; and its sectoral break-down (i.e. whether aid is given to promote health and education or economic management and trade). When the Abbott Government decided to place AusAID within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, many feared the diplomats would determine the geographic distribution of aid, not appreciating that the greater risk was trade officials determining the sectoral focus through 'Aid for Trade'.

### **Aid Volume as a Measure of Commitment to International Citizenship**

Measuring trends in aid volume is not simple; should cuts be measured against last year's expenditure, against prior spending adjusted for inflation, or against promised spending (Treasury 2014)? In recent years, Australia's aid program had expanded significantly. By 2012-13 the average annual increase over the past 12 years was 10.1%, as compared to an overall average of 6.7 per cent over the past 30 years. In January 2014, the Abbott Government announced a \$5 billion aid budget to grow in line with inflation over the forward estimates producing a saving of \$4.5 billion over four years as against most recent projections. In 2008-9 the Rudd Government had committed Australia to an Official

Development Assistance (ODA) target of 0.5% of gross national income (GNI) by 2015-16. However, in both the 2012-13 and 2013-14 budgets, the Labor Governments had already deferred achieving this target by a year each time (saving \$5.7 billion) (Treasury 2014). The largest January 2014 cuts, each in the region of \$100 million were to Africa, global environment programs and humanitarian emergency response funds; precisely the areas most likely to be shunned by a government opposed to a cosmopolitan view of the world.

On December 15 2014, through its Midyear Economic and Fiscal Outlook, the Abbott Government announced the biggest aid cuts ever to be made to the Australian program. By 2017-18, the total cuts will represent 33% as against a previous record cut of 17%. The cuts as announced cover the largest ever to be made in a single year of \$1 billion or 20% in 2015-16 as against the previous record of 12% and \$323 million in 1986-7. As a consequence, by 2016-17 Australian aid will be at its least generous level ever at 0.22% of GNI. Australia will fall from 13th to 19th place among the 28 OECD donors (Howes and Pryke 2014). As yet, the Government has not announced where these cuts are to be made. The NGOs said little over the Christmas break and now fear the cuts will affect their funding and that of the civil society organisations with which they work.

### **The Geography of Aid**

Geographically, Australia faces the problem that our Pacific neighbours tend not to number amongst the poorest countries in the world (PNG is an exception although due to be resolved by sales of energy and mineral resources). Altruism close to home is becoming more difficult as Asian countries become richer. Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Timor Leste are now lower middle income countries with the economic resources, if not necessarily the political will, to tackle poverty by themselves. The top twenty recipients of aid across the world in descending order are Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Pakistan, Tanzania, Vietnam, India, West Bank and Gaza, Iraq, Sudan, Nigeria, Mozambique, Uganda, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Bangladesh and Indonesia. The top ten recipients of Australian aid, again in descending order, are Indonesia, PNG, Solomon Islands, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Philippines, Timor Leste, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Cambodia. However, over the period 2005-2013 our aid to Afghanistan represented only 10-20% of our combined military-aid effort in that country (Howes and Pryke 2012: Fig. 3). The highly contested issue as to whether military expenses, debt relief and refugee processing should count as aid is too complex to cover here. Although Maputo is regionally and economically closer to Perth than Tarawa is to Sydney, Africa is no longer on the Australian aid agenda.

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Even in terms of crass self-interest, it is not self-evident why we should focus on the Pacific. Before the latest as yet unallocated cuts, almost as much was spent on the tiny Pacific Island Countries (PICs) as on the whole of East Asia, and three times as much as on Africa and the Middle East put together. Our Pacific focus has already made the Solomon Islands the second most aid dependent country in the world (after Liberia, which has had two civil wars), with more than 60% of its GNI coming from aid (Hayward-Jones 2014). This is as unwise as it is unsustainable. The Marshall Islands, Tuvalu, Samoa, Palau and Tonga are all also extremely aid dependent with 20% or more of their GNI coming from aid (see data.worldbank.org). Yet many Pacific leaders dislike Big Brother Australia, preferring New Zealand, which delivers fewer lectures on good governance and is more willing to fund politicians' dubious pet projects. Australian conservatives argue that aid to the PICs should be conditional on abandoning customary communal land tenure (CIS 2014). Some Asian regional countries have now 'graduated', as it is called, when development and aid succeeds to the point where countries are developed enough to rely on their own resources, and even become aid donors in their turn. Notable examples are China and India.

### **The New Aid Landscape**

Today aid faces a perfect storm: with the integration of AusAID (known as 'WasAID' to the staff) into DFAT; budget and staff cuts and the move away from the strategic aid framework of the previous Government that is undermining impact in the short run whilst the new aid effectiveness reform agenda remains very vague (Howes and Pryke 2012).

Foreign Minister Julie Bishop's key policy speech to the 2014 Australasian Aid and International Development Policy Workshop (Bishop 2014) opened with the hope that we can all share the same goals. We want to find ways to make Australia's aid program work more effectively, to help improve people's lives. We want to find the very best ways to alleviate poverty and improve economic outcomes and to build stability and prosperity, particularly in our region of the Indian Ocean, the Asia Pacific (Bishop 2014). What is meant by the Indian Ocean remains unclear (Commonwealth of Australia 2013).

The Minister's 'new aid paradigm' is a vague managerialist term that could cover almost anything. Internationally the term is understood to refer to a coherent donor view not necessarily shared by recipients. This new donor paradigm replaces the much attacked structural adjustment paradigm, which had earlier replaced the project paradigm. This latest version combines two elements: the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) developed by the World Bank supposedly in

consultation with both governments and civil society, and the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations system (Renard 2006).

### **Aid and the Private Sector**

The Minister's policy highlights 'a recognition that the private sector is a major driver of growth and it is a powerful contributor to development programs'. The examples she chose are revealing. One is the International Finance Facility for Immunisation which uses donor funds to back the issue of bonds on the capital market, but somehow these donor funds, paid as returns to bond holders, 'get away from the old model of government handouts because ultimately our overseas aid is an investment in our region, an investment in the people, an investment in the future and we expect solid returns from that investment'. It is hard to avoid the impression of selfishness personified even in immunising babies. Her other example is the \$20 million that Australia is contributing to the Philippines Public Private Partnership Centre (PPPPC) to prepare tenders to award 26 public-private partnership infrastructure projects that are valued at \$7 billion. Given Australia's experience with public-private partnerships, together with the levels of corruption in the Philippines, this would appear to be an extremely high risk project but this, together with a similar Indonesian project, is what the Minister says she means by 'economic diplomacy' (for PPPPs see Hayllar and Wettenhall 2010).

Perhaps aware that almost all countries below PNG on the Human Development Index are in Africa, from which Australia is withdrawing, the Minister stressed this:

... doesn't mean that we will walk away from humanitarian efforts, it doesn't mean that we don't have global responsibilities, it doesn't mean that we will take money away from multi-lateral organisations that have a broader sweep. But when it comes to our direct aid support, the focus must be on our region (Bishop 2014).

### **Aid for Trade (A4T)**

The Minister's policy defining speech confirmed that 'Aid for Trade will be fundamental to our policy approach. For every single dollar invested in Aid for Trade, an estimated \$8 in additional exports will be created in developing countries'. Regrettably, Ministers do not have to provide sources for statements like these, but there is absolutely no evidence that Tuvalu or Tonga can dramatically increase their exports (since there are limits to how many postage stamps or tapa mats an island can sell). In so far as the ability of PNG and Timor Leste to improve their exports, it will not be because Australia is working with partner governments to build the critical institutions and



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the policies they need to facilitate trade; it is because they are selling off their natural resources in the forestry, energy and mining sectors. The controversial World Bank (2009) study on which the Minister appears to be relying, was actually based on spending just some US \$11.7 million more on A4T in the policy area, since no country should need repeatedly to reform its trade:

Just as traditional diplomacy aims to achieve peace, economic diplomacy aims to achieve prosperity. Prioritising economic growth doesn't mean a lesser focus on human development or poverty reduction – they are both sides of the same coin. We will invest in better quality education, enabling young people to get to schools they need to contribute to the economy (Bishop 2014).

Under the Abbott Government, Australia proposes to empower women and girls, not because they too have human rights but because this is 'one of the best ways to promote economic growth in our region' (Bishop 2014). Even the most moderate feminist might question this instrumental approach in which 'we are going to support women starting businesses, building their skills, stepping up to leadership roles' because when 'women are able to actively participate in the economy, the formal labour markets, then everyone prospers' (Bishop 2014). When the Minister met with women's groups in PNG they put assistance with combatting domestic violence before starting businesses, but their views were sidelined.

One novel cosmopolitan aspect of Australian aid is collaboration with China as a fellow donor. As recently as 2012 Australia gave aid to China; now China's designated aid budget, alongside its massive infrastructure and trade loans programs were about the same size as Australia's before the December 2014 cuts.

The two countries work together in carefully selected sectors where human rights issues and potential trade competition can be avoided. Thus China and Australia collaborate in PNG to combat malaria as part of a trilateral arrangement 'that can draw together the different strengths of the countries. Australia is a trusted and effective donor, China is a newly developed economy (sic) and PNG's economy is going through a transition' (Bishop 2014). In the upper middle income Cook Islands, Australia, New Zealand and China combine resources to improve domestic water supplies: 'economic diplomacy' indeed.

### **Effectiveness is the Watchword**

Every new government says that it is going to improve the effectiveness of the aid program – a strategy which can always demonstrate the faults of the previous government

and may save money. To anyone who has ever dealt with DFAT, the idea of the Department having a culture capable of measuring effectiveness is risible. This is not because DFAT officers are frivolous, but because the whole culture of Foreign Affairs is attuned to different matters where gestures count and results, even if measurable, can rarely be attributed exclusively to Australian actions. It is near impossible to measure the effectiveness of Australia expressing its views on Ukraine or the Middle East. Could anyone but a diplomat justify the effectiveness of spending \$11.6 million of aid money in Tuvalu, population eleven thousand people, with a GNI of over \$5,000 per capita? There is a school of thought that developed countries should abandon their aid programs and simply hand over the cash to poor individuals via their mobile phones. Experimenting with this in a country with a population the size of Tuvalu might be worth trying. Or, following the New Zealand example, Australia could allow broad immigration from the PICs with the migrants supporting the population back home through remittances. Given the likelihood of sea level rises, this could well be preferable to continuing aid projects. Australia has spent over two billion dollars in the Solomon Islands on the Regional Assistance Mission (RAMSI) (including \$350 million military expenses). That is over \$3,500 dollars for each and every woman, man and child. Given better education outcomes and universal literacy, which should have been made the aid priority for the country long since, labour mobility and remittances may too be the solution here as was proposed by the former Development Coordinator for RAMSI (Lake 2013).

### **The Problem with Benchmarks**

Before the December 2014 aid cuts, DFAT called for submissions on aid benchmarks (DFAT 2014a). There are two major problems with this government's devotion to the use of benchmarks for aid delivery. One is the sheer difficulty of measuring contributions on the ground. A school building program can easily be measured but if the teachers are left unpaid and the curriculum is inappropriate the educational impact will be minimal. If a government adopts the economic policies currently favoured by Australia and there is a change of government either in the recipient country or in Australia, what then? Even if the policies are adopted and the governments are stable, so many other factors are involved that determining the weight to be attributed to the causative factors, even if the desired result follows, is extremely difficult. The other difficulty relates to the use of the benchmark information. Was it intended to be used, as many in the aid community suspected, as a justification for decreasing the aid budget on the grounds that, since existing aid is not being used a hundred per cent effectively, more money should not be wasted on aid? What would the government regard as an acceptable level of failure for aid: 15% as previously? An international business leader trading in Mozambique throughout the civil war said that as long as not more

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than 20% of his endeavours failed that was acceptable – and his aim was making a profit, not helping the poor. Irrespective of the total size of the aid budget, are benchmarks to be used to justify the re-allocation of aid from country to country or from sector to sector? Globally, the experience is that the poorer the country the less the capability of the government to deliver services, whether funded by aid or by tiny local tax resources. The countries of the Pacific offer an almost perfect demonstration of this truth. PNG is a classic example of a country lacking educated human resources (less than half of the adult population is literate) and very weak in delivering services such as education and health, as its failure to reach its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) demonstrates. Yet even excluding the influence of the need to placate PNG over Manus Island and the asylum seekers dumped there by wealthy Australia, Minister Bishop clearly favours sizeable levels of aid to PNG, which could not be justified by efficiency in its deployment. There are also ethical issues relating to punishing the innocent poor for the sins of commission or omission of their governments. Should Australia cut off aid to slum-dwellers governed by corrupt dictators? Should Australia deny aid to improve farming returns for peasants whose governments are so ineffective that they are unable to raise enough taxes to finance basic policing, much less agricultural extension services. It is unclear where international non-government organisations (INGOs) are to fit into the benchmarks schema. Is the money to be shared among Australian INGOs according to the efficiency of their service delivery, without any recognition that some areas pose far more difficult logistical and cultural issues than others? The placement of a new well can be a highly political matter, still a well-digging program will be much easier to deliver than a program to combat female genital cutting. An aid program rewarding the achievement of benchmarks will almost certainly reward better off countries and better off regions whilst leaving the poorest of the poor and those outcast by society to one side. Australia prides itself on including people with disabilities in its aid program but separate benchmarks for this could be unhelpful. Interestingly, the INGO co-ordinating body, the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID 2014) has published its own *Benchmarks for an Effective and Accountable Australian Aid Program*.

### Recipients' Views

Although the trend is towards development assistance partnerships, the Abbott Government has demonstrated little interest in recipient governments' views. Recipient governments naturally prefer unallocated and unaudited cash. Apart from issues of potential personal benefit, politicians and bureaucrats understandably want aid which will benefit their constituencies and local power bases. They also dislike aid conditionality. This dislike ranges all the way from using sovereignty as a cover up

for corruption to a genuine concern that foreigners do not understand what is needed in their country. Minister Bishop appears little concerned with the sovereignty and right of recipient countries to choose their own policies. Actually, realistic recipient governments 'donor shop': they know which donors favour which forms and sectors of aid and they place their requests accordingly. A PIC wanting a blank cheque will ask the Taiwanese; for a high-tech naval patrol boat they will ask Australia. The full evaluation of the Pacific-Class Patrol Boat programme will be fascinating, if it is not withheld on the grounds of operational considerations (McCann 2013). Evaluations of military co-operation are especially delicate, but it is hardly diplomatic or in the national interest to publish Australia's view that a partner government is corrupt and/or incompetent, hence the popularity of the weasel words asking for 'good governance' covering a vast multitude of sins and weaknesses.

It is rare to see poor people asked about which forms of aid they prefer. One good feature of RAMSI was the social surveys seeking village views about its programs. Often there is the problem of the premises on which the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and many programs are based: that civil society somehow speaks with a single voice and is not divided by political, ethnic or other cleavages. Yet, just to take the case of gender, if men's groups and women's groups are consulted separately, they will often have quite different priorities, with men choosing the economic infrastructure of roads and bridges and women, health and education. Where donors have listened to women, men can react adversely and even with violence, as shown in examples from the Solomon Islands and Pakistan.

### Measuring Impact: Gender and Scholarships

Donors, including Australia, favour gender equity. Recipients, on the other hand, often actively oppose gender equity or put it to the bottom of their priority list. If Australia simply listened to the views of recipients as voiced by their governments, women would remain unheard and severely disadvantaged. To take a specific example, some years ago AusAID offered 50 post-graduate scholarships to Pakistan: 25 for females and 25 for males. Pakistan nominated 50 males to take up the scholarships and the AusAID desk officer responded saying that AusAID would take the 25 males with the best academic records and would look forward to seeing 25 female names put forward. For the first two years Pakistan persisted in putting forward 50 male names and therefore only 25 scholarships were provided. In the third year, 25 male and 23 female names appeared and so 48 scholarships were awarded (Unpublished AusAID Report 1998). This is a simple example where the immediate outcomes could readily be measured, but it is still difficult

to say how those outcomes should be evaluated. To know how many of these scholarship holders eventually went home with appropriate qualifications and contributed to the welfare of their country would take years, even decades to evaluate. There is also the near unmeasurable issue of how far the males, through their formal training and informal experiences in Australia, went home with a new view of gender equity. In general, how the contribution of scholarships to development assistance and diplomatic ties between countries should be evaluated has been a matter of controversy in the Australian aid community for over 50 years, and the question remains unresolved. As just one example, Australia usually does not provide aid to train physicians, but we did educate one Malawian doctor who went home and managed to persuade the Government of Malawi to acknowledge the presence of HIV/AIDS for the first time and set up a national program to combat its spread. Even in this classic case, we do not have the methods to evaluate the impact of such training and establish the counter-factual of – without that one doctor – how long would it have been before the Government of Malawi moved on HIV/AIDS?

Minister Bishop wants to use aid to expand the exports of Pacific Islands. Exports of fish, a major Pacific resource, largely depend on climate variations and so are outside Australian or Pacific Islander control. Exports of trained personnel, which are already a major resource for Fiji, Samoa and Tonga, depend on training that can be provided under the aid program, and immigration laws that the Australian Government controls. Policy changes related to development assistance should apply to Australia too. Training aged-care nurses across the Pacific would make a greater contribution to the welfare of Australia and the PICS than any number of small business start-ups.

### Youth Unemployment

In many poor countries (and in Australia) youth unemployment is the canary in the mine for the state of poverty. Indeed, in much of Africa, PNG and the Solomon Islands a reasonable case could be made that to solve the youth unemployment issue would be enough to prevent future civil wars. The Abbott Government is eager that aid should promote economic growth and trade, but achieving those goals will mean little if the mass of youths are left standing purposeless on street corners. French Polynesia has a well-measured unemployment rate for ages 15-24 of 33%, our neighbour Indonesia reports 22% – these are levels at which civil war becomes plausible. Minister Bishop assumes that economic growth is solution enough, yet simple arithmetic shows that a 2% per annum growth rate in per capita income could halve a 40% poverty rate within a decade in an egalitarian society, whilst in an unequal society this would take almost six decades or two generations (ODI 2010).

Does Australia have the expertise to help solve the unemployment problems of our neighbours, or will we hide behind the false claim that a growing economy will directly solve that problem?

### Cosmopolitanism and Reverse Aid: The New Colombo Plan

Whereas Foreign Minister Bishop has a genuine interest in the aid program, Prime Minister Abbott has a very different focus. Introducing his vision for a New Colombo Plan, he stressed: 'we are a far more cosmopolitan society than we were in the 1950s' when the original Colombo Plan was introduced. He also claimed we have a more 'humane immigration policy than we did in the 1950s' (DFAT 2014b). His inspiration was his discovery of 17,000 young Indonesians in Australia as compared to just 200 young Australians in Indonesia. So, while the original Colombo Plan provided scholarships for Asians to study in Australia, the new Plan provides scholarships for Australians to study in Asia. This is because the paternalistic 'Australian government wants to see study in the Indo-Pacific Region become a "rite of passage" for Australian students' (DFAT 2014b). For old aid hands the very use of the term Colombo Plan in this context represents a troubling reversal of the original humane vision of the 1950s. For the younger generation the name is simply meaningless.

### Conclusion

The continuation of starvation and extreme poverty whether in Africa, PNG or Indonesia is a moral issue for us all (Singer 2009; Nagel 2005). The idea of being good international citizens, once promoted by Prime Minister Rudd, appears to be out of fashion in an Australia determined to 'Stop the Boats'. Still, our Foreign Minister, who is more cosmopolitan than others in the Cabinet, wants to 'brand' Australia's aid work to 'project a positive image of Australia' which 'reinforces Australia's standing as a model international citizen and good neighbour, and strengthens the aid program's contribution to wider foreign policy objectives'. Indeed, since all Australians are diminished by our collective selfishness, we should support an aid program for the sustainable benefit of the poorest people and the poorest countries.

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#### Am I the Only Semaphore

One of us is roan,  
the other, safe.  
I lie between  
these icicles and crisp  
leaves. No one rakes  
dark dross, few  
endure harsh smoke.  
We speak across  
the barbecue.  
Are we  
a neighbourhood,  
collective lifetime come to seed?

SHEILA E. MURPHY,  
PHOENIX, ARIZONA. USA

# Explaining the Capture of the University

TIM BATTIN

*The original academy was committed to the cooperative search for truth alone, wherever that search might lead. The truth was held to produce upright lives, which in turn would produce a humane community. Universities from ancient and medieval times to the modern age were designed to create enlightenment and to enrich the culture of societies, along with necessary vocational training within an enlightened milieu. In Australia the universities shared these high-minded cosmopolitan ideals while their autonomy was supported by the state. As neoliberalism took hold, the reduction of state funding became a matter of self-congratulation for governments. Since the 1980s universities have been 'captured' by the forces which control most societies — forces of neoliberal market ideology and managerialism. The opportunities for independent thought, research, and expression have been greatly constricted, to the detriment of a humane and open society.*

'The University of ...' is a lingua franca suggesting a direct connection to cosmopolitanism. At once a local endeavour and part of a universal pursuit, the modern university takes its form from various sources: ancient Alexandria and the city-states of ancient Greece, cities of tenth-century Islam, eleventh- and twelfth-century northern Italian cities, twelfth-century Paris, thirteenth-century Oxford and Cambridge, and, of course, the cities of Europe and the New World in the nineteenth century. That the university is based on the city, and the city-state is the polis, is no coincidence. A long-run historical perspective 'demonstrates that human society settling in complex urban environments and the concomitant demand for sophisticated political organisation' (Quiddington 2010: 35-6, 39) are the twin building blocks in the founding of universities.

The nature of the relationship between the university and the state, interdependent and complex, has changed over time, and, at the present point, there is no shortage of writers attesting to the serious decline of the university. In Australia, Donald Meyers (2012) has given an account of the managerial, officious and 'educationalist' takeover of universities, while Richard Hil (2012) similarly argues that the bureaucratisation of universities, along with the presence of opportunistic types in the academy, has led to an atrophy that shows no obvious sign of reversal. In the UK, Roger Brown's critique (2013) of higher education policy over three decades examines how the marketisation and underfunding of the sector, together with quality assurance pretension, has had a detrimental impact on standards, while Andrew McGettigan (2013) is more specifically concerned with the forbidding implications of the funding changes since 2010. In the US, where the capture of universities began a little before the 1980s, writers such as Ellen Schrecker (2010) and Benjamin Ginsberg (2011) document the

(largely victorious) managerial incursion into academic autonomy and governance.

It is almost a given that the nature of the relationship between the university and the state at any particular point in history is central to explaining the health or otherwise of the academy. The prospects of the university wax and wane, and are partly dependent on the circumstances of its relationship with the state, and partly dependent on the role that knowledge plays, or is seen to play, in society at large (Quiddington 2010). Where universities were established, their quintessence spoke of the (emerging) sovereignty of the state — and, where legitimacy was sought by strengthening the state-society relationship, universities flourished.

This trend is identifiable over the long- and short-run. In Australia's brief history since European settlement, for example, there have been two periods in which the capacity of universities has been augmented. The period between 1850 and 1889 saw the establishment of universities in four of the six colonies, no doubt to lend legitimacy to the sovereignty of the colonies, but three out of four of them — Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide — took the name of the capital city. Later in this same general period of economic expansion and confident nation-building, in 1910 and 1911, the newly federated states of Queensland and Western Australia founded their universities after the same names, the latter becoming the first free university in the British Commonwealth. The second period of university augmentation followed post-war reconstruction. The issuing of scholarships to ex-servicemen and women, the inception of the Australian National University in 1946, and its progressive expansion in the 1950s and '60s, along with the contemporary expansion of the extant and new universities in general, served to legitimise other

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institutions of state capacity, to be sure. But universities at the time were founded just as much on a sense of social purpose, with adult educational outreach being the epitome of such endeavour. The claim of the Australian National University, to be specific, was 'first to learn the nature of things'.

In what is generally regarded as a reversal of fortune, from the late 1980s Australian universities were subjected to a reduction in effective funding, partly offset by the introduction of direct student contributions, on the basis that higher education (but apparently not education generally) is at least partly a private good. The binary system of universities and colleges of advanced education, within which specialist vocational institutions met a wide variety of educational needs, came to an end. The public discourse about higher education became imbued with concepts attached to the exchange value of education. Its intrinsic value, or use value, was said to be, at best, a bonus. More damagingly still, universities shifted from largely self-governing entities to managerialist institutions. Ever since, a system of increased power exercised by the federal government, in conjunction with the bureaucratic demands made by each university's management, has existed alongside reduced public funding. The changes commenced by the Hawke Government's minister for education, John Dawkins, eliminated statutory authorities, such as the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, that were seen as a hindrance of the political-economic agenda.

The current arrest of universities in Australia is not unique, but that hardly makes their confinement any less disconcerting. As observed above, universities in the UK and the US have undergone profound change — changes that appear to place in question the very future of universities in the English-speaking world. The question can be posed: how does one explain the capture of the university in the early twenty-first century?

If we are broadly accurate about the capture of the university, then such a momentous event is more likely to be explained by a wide range of factors. The remainder of this article sketches out what appear to be the main causes and manifestations of decline. It will suit our purposes to categorise these causes and effects into three spheres: economic, political, institutional. Arguably, some factors within these categories could be placed in others or make up separate categories altogether. Our categorisation, then, is somewhat arbitrary and necessarily tentative.

### **Economic**

It might be more useful than not to begin with the fundamental material conditions of early twenty-first century capitalism. After 2007, in the wake of the most severe global recession since the 1930s, which is itself

the outcome of thirty years of neoliberalism (Klein 2008; Wade 2009; Harvey 2010; Palley 2010; Stockhammer 2012), the supreme irony is that the neoliberal ascendancy is not in question (Quiggin 2010; Crouch 2011). David Harvey's account brings the focus of a so-called 'financial' crisis back to the economic sphere. His argument proceeds from observing the nature of the capitalist crisis of the 1970s, when falling profit margins threatened capital and, in turn, capital regrouped and began the long project of reshaping labour markets, shifting production, deregulating capital flows, and generally organising against trade unions and workers' interests.

However, a successful prosecution of this project presents other difficulties for capital. The more the incomes of workers in the west are depressed, the more capital needs to look elsewhere to generate a profit. The *sine qua non* of capitalism is its flow, and it is this fundamental reality that underpins both the so-called 'financial' crisis, which is properly conceived as a crisis of capital accumulation and private debt, and other, wider crises not apparent to society at large. For capitalism to survive, Harvey shows, it needs to function on the basis of an average 3% compound growth per annum. Yet there are limits to growth. The low income of workers, for instance, presents an economic limit; there are social, cultural, environmental and geographical limits. Even if a smooth and steady movement of capital could be imagined, these limits make the prospect impossible. Then there is the speed and chaos with which capital moves to make up for the limitations elsewhere placed upon it. The global evenness of the capital accumulation process is as probable as a uniform weather pattern (Harvey 2010: 153). It is this background that provides the proper framework with which to analyse large flows of capital.

What has all this to do with universities? Harvey's analysis — along with similar critiques — affords a conceptual basis to comprehend the commodification of education in its various guises. Before the last (say) five years, the open courseware movement, for example, could have been characterised as a public or near-public good, depending on specific cases. At universities such as Harvard and Princeton, the massive open online courses (MOOCs) were conceived in a context of public-spiritedness. Enlightened self-interest viewed them as a means by which a (wealthy) university could make a public contribution at the same time as enhance its standing. In the hands of vulgar aspirants, however, MOOCs can be used as the latest crisis where universities that are poorly resourced are placed under even greater stress. Headings such as 'The End of University Campus Life', 'Currency of Information Loses its Value' and 'Barber's Dream University in Cyberspace' are an all-too-accurate reflection of the associated articles. It is not merely that applications of this kind employ a narrow notion of knowledge, as concerning



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as that would be; the problem is that no distinction is made between knowledge and information. In this light, the capital accumulation process — capital is not a thing but a *process*: money is sent in search of more money (Harvey 2010: 40) — is a necessary condition for commodification of education. But how individual institutions and governments respond will determine whether the *sufficient* condition exists for credentialing to predominate over education (exchange value to predominate over use value), or, indeed, whether any democratic potential can be realised from the open courseware development (Rhoads et al. 2013).

Despite the constants of capitalism, the economic conditions of the early twenty-first century are considerably different from the 1970s or even the 1980s. The dominance of finance capital at the present point of history cannot be doubted (Krippner 2011; Piketty 2014), and it is this dominance that explains a great deal of the 'financial' crisis and so much else besides. The insatiable accumulation process of finance capital — capital needing somewhere to go — explains the founding of corporate consortia in order to exploit a de-publicly funded (and relatively uncolonised) higher education sector just as much as it explains the extension of housing finance into a US home-owner market of under-paid workers.<sup>1</sup> Even student debt is now in the process of being commodified.

### Political

The capture of the university owes itself to a wider explanation than the economic processes of contemporary capitalism. Since our central theme is the relationship between the university and the state, it will be convenient to focus the discussion of the political in terms of the state. As noted above, one of the causal factors leading to the founding of universities is the combination of the state looking to legitimise itself and recognising the need for complex political and administrative organisation. Further, where state actors hold a relatively positive view of the state, and where enlightened views are held about knowledge and what it can offer society at large, universities tend to flourish.

At 0.7% of GDP, Australia's public expenditure on universities is 30% lower than the OECD average. The universities' reliance on public funding makes them vulnerable not so much to the propensity of neoliberalism to shrink the state — for, despite the efforts of neoliberals, that is not what is occurring — but to a re-ordering of public spending in ways that show hostility towards universities, especially the humanities and social sciences. In Australia the fiscal problem owes itself not to expenditure (at least not according to the meaning that usually pertains to the term); the problem is an inadequate revenue base. The Commonwealth now collects around three percentage points less in tax than it did under the Howard Government. The Australia Institute has estimated that had the Rudd-Gillard

Governments left tax revenue at the level of the out-going Howard Government, an additional \$39 billion would have been collected in 2013. Having become trapped in the race to cut taxes, and therefore to cut expenditure, there were still other options available. A government wanting to avoid damaging cuts could reduce the more wasteful and inefficient of taxation expenditures, now at more than 20% of government spending, more than ten times what the government spends on universities.

The fiscal constraint is obviously a problem for public policy reasons, but the more fundamental problem in the reluctance of political parties to finance much needed expenditure by establishing an adequate tax base is that such reluctance reveals much about the state-society relationship (Weiss 1998). The unwillingness to tax finance current spending is a sign of weakness (Glyn 2001: 5), which betrays a broader incapacity to craft relations with social groups and classes in order to bring about beneficial change. In order to break the cycle of an ever-reducing fiscal capacity, a successful approach would turn to the policy autonomy that comes from a healthy social base. The solutions to the problems faced by the university are bound up with forging social and political alliances that would address broader problems of state capacity.

The prevailing policy regime pertaining to universities reveals much about the predominant view of the public realm (Marquand 2004). The period of hyper-globalisation theories or the lagged policy stances to which they gave rise, approximately from the early 1990s to the present — in which profound scepticism about the capacity of the state in achieving significant policy autonomy — has existed alongside a hostile approach of governments towards the universities. While one might not lead to the other, necessarily, the literature concerned with government capacity and the state-society relationship is suggestive of why universities are in decline, and, conversely, what a healthier environment might look like. (The fact that the hyper-globalisation thesis has long been replaced by a more nuanced reading of the capacity of the nation-state to effect a progressive policy regime (Baker et al. 1998) merely underlines the hegemony of neoliberal notions of globalisation.)

The confidence with which democratic governments collect tax according to the principle of ability to pay says much about the dominant political culture. In the alternative, as has been demonstrated in the neoliberal era, political actors sell down the net worth of the public sector in general, and choose to see universities in particular as temporary stores of wealth that can be raided periodically, or as institutions that must be shaped primarily to pursue predetermined national economic goals, or both.

Even on commercial terms, the fact that the higher education sector is Australia's largest export industry

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should suggest, all other things being equal, a positive stance by governments towards the sector. However, this merely points up the difference between governments — such as the Rudd Government — that are willing to reverse partially the defunding of universities in a recognition of their economic utility, and governments that are not even willing to do that. While the former approach is far less obtuse, it remains trapped in a frame that conceives of universities as part of, at best, a ‘clever country’, and, relatedly, as a means of productivity growth.

It is becoming clearer to more of the public, particularly after the global economic crisis, that neoliberals and plutocrats hold the public in deep contempt. The state is used to favour more plutocracy by using public funds to prop up private wealth by impoverishing the public with a debt it did not accrue. If such a development is a general indication of the rechanneling of public expenditure, the de-funding of universities might need no further explanation.

### **Institutional**

While the process above has taken place, a micro version of it has been unfolding at the level of the universities. If the central task of the vice-chancellors is to defend the sector, Australian vice-chancellors, through what was the Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee and the renamed ‘Universities Australia’ in 2007, have been a collective failure. At various critical points during the de-funding and increased control of the sector by successive governments, the vice-chancellors’ political response has been inadequate, inept, or treacherous. In 2003, when Brendan Nelson saw an opportunity to gain more control of the universities by offering badly needed income, he made the injection contingent on industrial relations changes that would have stripped away conditions, assembled over decades, which ensured some level of internal accountability. The experiment did not succeed, but the outcome owed nothing to the stance adopted by the vice-chancellors, who, apart from a few exceptions such as Ian Chubb at the ANU, made known their willingness to be co-opted into the Government’s designs. Although a failed experiment, predominantly due to the collective action of the National Tertiary Education Union, it served as a precursor to the next attempt in 2005-06, when the Howard Government gained control of the Senate. In that iteration the sector would be starved of public money unless working conditions and internal accountability measures were reduced. In addition, there were requirements imposed that would alter the membership of university governing bodies, aiming to make them less representative of staff views. The so-called Higher Education Workplace Reform Requirements, which preceded WorkChoices, were to represent in one step what the Howard Government had long designed. For a brief period between 2006 and 2008, the vice-chancellors and other senior managers in

the universities were able to hide behind the fabrication that they had only agreed to the associated changes in exchange for badly needed funding, and that once non-tied and real increased funding would flow from the Rudd Labor Government, the changes would be reversed — but the conduct of university managements in the collective bargaining round of 2008 to 2010 gave the lie to this claim.

In the circumstances described, a space is created for new class formations to arise — or, some would argue, these formations become clearer. A predator class takes form. Vice-Chancellors are not in the least embarrassed about collecting anywhere between half a million and 2 million dollars per annum; their deputies and other senior officers are typically paid between \$250 000 and \$500 000, while deans and heads of schools accept incomes well in excess of a professor’s salary. These class relations are sustained by a belief that managers are needed to attract money (because real public funding is reducing), to increase ‘market share’ (even though little evidence exists to demonstrate market share is so attributable), to spend money so as to obtain more money, and to exercise greater managerial prerogative — all in order to increase the financial viability of the institution. Key performance indicators and bonus payments are installed to induce decisions that may not otherwise be made. In arguing that they are now vital to the survival of individual institutions, members of the predator class are typically indifferent to or hostile towards the idea of increased public funding. Some even cannibalise their institutions by means of privatisation.

The ferocity and pace of change under neoliberalism has the purpose of keeping university communities reeling so as to prevent successful counter-attack. But the strategy may be running up against its own limits. If the rate at which senior or middle management is either sacked or leaves in a short period of time is any guide — at one university, of some 40 managers since 2010, only 12 remain in the same or promoted role, the remainder having left, been ‘let go’ or demoted — the managerial experiment has been a disaster. Threats of legal action by managers against staff and students are becoming more commonplace across universities, usually on the pretext that *the brand* has to be protected, but without the slightest regard paid to the esteem with which the institution is held, or was once held.

The bifurcation between the university community and much of the management has hardened. Among universities, differences exist in the selection processes for middle and senior management, the processes for decision-making, the degree of collegiality and to what quarters such collegiality is confined, the degree of infantilising, the level of cronyism and other corruption, and the overall culture; but in general the sector is headed in the wrong direction. Increasingly, executive

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managers of academics are not required to have attained any academic achievement; indeed, it is regarded as a liability. In a setting of this kind, the resentment managers carry is palpable. Here, the sociopathic traits of the typical executive manager are on display. Misconduct charges are pursued on the flimsiest of grounds or on no grounds at all. Being without authority in its proper meaning, the managerialist relies on brute power. Significant insight into how managerialists would behave, in a set of conditions of their own specifications, towards university staff can be gleaned from how they treat casual, probationary, and adjunct staff.

It has to be acknowledged that the takeover of the university is partly attributable, paradoxically, to the historical benevolence the sector once enjoyed. The fact that for the most part of the twentieth century universities did not have to fight for adequate funding, together with the political conservatism of a significant proportion of academics, is a sociological factor that requires at least acknowledgement before a concerted counter-strategy can be devised. The point extends beyond government funding of the sector to the internal governance of each institution. University councils were never composed in a way that guaranteed accountability from below, but the contemporary situation is much worse.

The lack of accountability in the internal structures of universities makes the monitoring of decisions about expenditure or other major decisions almost impossible. There is a concerted push to remove elected members of council, which, if successful, would raise a fundamental question about the essence of the university. Elected members of councils (particularly staff) are regularly admonished for a variety of alleged transgressions, a central one of which is not being able to follow the governing body's arbitrary interpretation of which matters are regarded as governance and which are to be seen as management. Essentially, the adjudication will be that anything the university community regards as requiring scrutiny will be ruled as falling within the realm of management, and outside the purview of governance.

The traditional view of the autonomy of the university vis à vis the state is that the government is obliged to make public funds available and remove itself as much as possible from the running of the universities and from stipulating the conditions on which the funding is made. More recently, the New Public Management (NPM) view is that public monies demand the highest level of accountability of various kinds. Whether you concede ground to the NPM advocates or not, the critical truth to cut through to is that the changes to the universities over the last quarter century — in legislation, in funding, in internal governance, and in the onset of a rampant managerialism — have *reduced* the level of accountability in the expenditure of public money — and so much else besides.

Apart from all the pressures from both outside and inside the academy, it must be conceded that there is also an epistemological factor at play in the decline of the university. If the very possibility of establishing truth is to be doubted, as the postmodernists claim, then a central function of the university no longer exists. If there is no scientific or philosophical truth which offers explanatory force, what claim can universities make as custodians of knowledge? The problem is not confined to this epistemological question, as fundamental as it is. The difficulty extends to the political realm. While neoliberals have no doubt about what they are doing, and have no compunction in carrying out their project, the postmodernist influence has somewhat weakened what might otherwise have been an effective, progressive counter-movement.

### Conclusion

The malaise of the universities is the broader malaise of present society. Knowledge is despised by certain societal groups in a way that would have been unthinkable for most of the past two centuries. The worst forms of populism, epitomised by climate change denialism in the media, are near-rampant. More concerning still is the so-called public broadcaster. Rather than maintaining independence, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, on a pretext of 'balanced' coverage, mirrors the decline in public discourse by giving credence to views that have no basis in fact or reason. Both inside and outside the university, a point has been reached where facts, evidence, and reason are of little consequence. The misuse of power is becoming more common from within and without the university.

The future of the university, then, is tied very closely to the future of other worthy pursuits of civil society, and the relationship between society and the state, perhaps as never before. The public realm is impoverished and less democratic. The capture of universities reflects the capture of the state by interests whose power was unimaginable just four decades ago. The two developments are bound up with one another, and so the liberation of the university will be secured when the public realm more generally is freed from the hold of neoliberalism. The university reaches its full height with its declaration that it can explain the working of the cosmos. Less grandiloquently, the university claims it exists to prepare a person for full citizenship and an enriched intellectual life rather than for employment or contributing to the economy. In the meantime the university must insist that, in leading the world on how to think, it is central in solving the problems of human existence, or, given the problems of the present, in avoiding global annihilation.

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# Transition Townspeople: We need to think about transition

## (Just Doing Stuff is Far From Enough!)

TED TRAINER

*The Transition Towns movement is taking the first steps that must be taken if we are to solve global sustainability and justice problems. However, unless the Transitioners (eventually) undertake significant change in their focus and goals the movement will fail to make a significant contribution to achieving a just and sustainable world. The movement needs to develop a sound theoretical analysis of radical transition and viable practical strategies for dealing with global problems rather than just addressing the local level. Such a strategy will require drastic, rapid and unprecedented structural change, away from some of the most fundamental ideas, practices and values in Western culture, especially from the commitment to economic growth, freedom for market forces, corporate power, competitive individualism and, most problematic of all, affluent lifestyles.*

### Introduction

As little as ten years ago the Transition Towns movement burst onto the scene, led by towns in the UK such as Totnes, inspired by and reporting on the accounts of Rob Hopkins (see Hopkins 2009, 2011 and 2013). A glance at websites associated with this movement will reveal a remarkable amount of activity, projects and enthusiasm, focused on building local economies, community gardens, cooperative agencies, community recycling, skill banks, firms and working bees (for instance, see [www.transitionus.org](http://www.transitionus.org), [www.transitiontowns.org.nz](http://www.transitiontowns.org.nz), [www.transitiontowntotnes.org](http://www.transitiontowntotnes.org), [www.transitiontownw.nl](http://www.transitiontownw.nl)). The underlying worldview of this movement and its activities stresses the unsustainability of the globalised, energy-intensive, supermarket-dominated consumer way. 'Resilience' is a cornerstone of the Transition Towns movement, referring to 'the ability of a system, whether an individual, an economy, a town or city, to withstand shock from the outside' (What is resilience? n.d.).

Before the Transition Towns movement emerged I had argued that if the planet is to be saved then it can only be via a movement of this kind (for instance, see *Abandon Affluence* 1985). It has therefore been immensely encouraging and important that over the last decade or so the Transition Towns movement has taken off so remarkably. However, I want to elaborate on a discussion I circulated about three years ago, arguing that unless the movement reshapes its present goals it will end up having had little or no global significance. To date, there has been little response to issues I raised. I raise these important issues again here for the consideration of those already involved in the Transition Towns movement, and also to encourage more radically minded activists to join

this movement; this is the core strategy argued in my recent book on transition (Trainer 2010, and summarised in Trainer 2014a).

I will begin with some lesser issues and then raise the main one.

### The Insufficiency of Resilience

In my view even most Greens and the Left fail to grasp the seriousness and the implications of the global situation. They fail to sufficiently recognise that rich countries have an utterly unsustainable rate of resource use and adverse ecological impacts, and that this unsustainable 'development' strategy cannot be the development model for the rest of the world. They fail to sufficiently understand that if a sustainable and just world is to be achieved these rates of resource use and adverse ecological impacts must be cut by something like 90%. This cannot be achieved unless we scrap a growth economy, reduce GDP to a small fraction of present levels, stop market forces from determining our fate, radically restructure the geography of settlements, replace or at least heavily control the market system, switch almost entirely from representative democracy to participatory democracy, and, above all, abandon affluence. The biggest change required is not the scrapping of capitalism, astronomically difficult as that would be. It is the cultural revolution whereby the competitive, acquisitive, individualism that has driven Western culture for 250 years has to be contradicted. In *The Transition to a Sustainable and Just World* (Trainer 2010), I detail reasons why these changes are non-negotiable. The degree of overshoot evident in consumer society is so grotesque that it is not possible to conceive

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of sustainable and just societies other than in terms of some kind of a radically 'Simpler Way'.

The 'limits to growth' analysis, now heavily documented by decades of hard science, demonstrates the unsustainability of affluent society. However, few so far in the Transition Towns movement have faced up to what it means. From this 'limits' perspective, making your own town 'more resilient' is far from a sufficient goal. Its achievement could involve little more than building a haven of safety in a world of petroleum scarcity ... a haven within a wider society that remains obsessed with growth, markets, exploiting the developing world – such as using mobile phones made with tantalum from the Congo. Furthermore, for every job you create by producing locally you may be reducing jobs outside your locality. Clearly the goal of the movement has to be changed from just resilience and new personal lifestyles to the development of a socio-economic system that achieves sustainability and justice for all people.

Furthermore, the movement at present appears to have little awareness of, or concern about, the developing world. Its concerns are primarily to do with the *local* environment, energy, community and lifestyle. These local concerns could be addressed in ways that do not challenge the overarching grossly unjust global system. For instance, an 'idyllic' Transition Town could continue to benefit from the massive, routine and easily ignored flows of resources, energy and labour from developing world mines, plantations and sweat shops. At present no Transition Town could survive without these flows because so much of what they consume is delivered to us by the 'normal' operation of the global market system. So, local resilience is not enough; the goals of the movement must include arriving at a world in which such unsustainable and unjust systems have been swept away.

### **The Failure to Focus on Simplicity**

By far the most important implication of this failure to grasp what the limits analysis means is that a sustainable and just way of life that all the world's people could have would involve lifestyles and levels of (non-renewable) resource consumption that are only a minute fraction of present rich world levels. There is almost no recognition of this in current Transition Town literature. There are references to the desirability of avoiding the wastefulness of consumer society but the projects being undertaken, and the discussion amongst Transition Towns participants on their websites, makes almost no reference to the need to focus on 'radical simplicity'. People are proceeding as if something like their present lifestyles is compatible with sustainability.

The fundamental concerns in 'radical simplicity' of the The Simpler Way Project (TSW 2011) are firstly to

demonstrate that the big global problems now threatening our survival cannot be solved unless, among other things, present levels of rich-world production and consumption are dramatically reduced, and to show that there is an alternative whereby this could easily be done ... while raising the 'quality' of life. The key to cutting present rates of resource use and ecological impacts need not be primarily an effort to reduce personal consumption. It lies firstly in designing local settlements to provide for us from local resources as much as is reasonably possible. For instance, leisure and entertainment needs could be met mainly by comparatively low-resource intensive activities such as community concerts, dances, discussion groups, talks, art and craft groups, dinner parties, and events such as mystery adventure tours.

These frugal, local, cooperative systems cannot come into existence unless communities take control of their collective fate via participatory town government focused on the meeting of community needs. That is utterly incompatible with control by market forces or distant government (although a place might be retained for both in a different form). However, the present movement is not giving much if any attention to the need for such a huge systemic change. It is proceeding as if something like modest rich world ways are acceptable, so long as they involve local production.

### **The Lack of Guidance**

One of the main concerns in my initial critique of the movement was about the surprising lack of guidance about the actual structures, systems and projects we should be trying to initiate if our town is to achieve transition or resilience. The Transition Towns movement literature, websites and newsletters tell us almost nothing about what to do to make a town resilient. There is a great deal of advice, manuals and training focused on how to form and run a Transition Group, but almost nothing on what should follow. For instance, the original 12 Steps document spells out the procedure for organising a Transition Towns group, including steps such as 'Awareness raising', 'Form subgroups', and 'Build a bridge to local government' (Hopkins 2011, 79). However, any group setting out to make its town more resilient cannot sensibly begin without firstly being clear about: the meaning of 'resilience', having specific goals, the steps likely to lead to achievement of the goals, and what has been found to work best and what has been found to be too difficult.

Three years later from the expression of my initial concerns, this situation has not changed. The now much larger Transition Towns movement literature, websites, publications and chat exchanges are made up almost entirely of reports on things being done and suggestions



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and advice on procedures for forming a group. There are now courses and trainers of trainees organised to assist with group formation.

A recent example is found on p. 77 of *The Transition Companion* (Hopkins 2011) where seven principles of transition are given. These are: positive visioning, helping people access more information and trusting them to make good decisions, enabling inclusion openness, sharing and openness, building resilience, inner and outer transition subsidiarity and self-organisation and decision making at the appropriate level. The book continues with these kinds of discussions for 300 pages. However it gives no ideas or suggestions or guidance to what this now well-oiled machinery might be applied despite the back cover stating: 'These examples show how much can be achieved when people harness energy and imagination to create projects that will make their communities more resilient'. In this publication, when reference is made to specific goals, such as setting up schemes for food gardens, community supported agriculture, education and health we are told little more than that we should establish committees to look into what might be done, for instance, 'Create an energy descent plan'.

The lack of guidance is most evident in *The Kinsale Energy Descent Plan* (Hopkins 2005). It does little more than repeat the group forming process ideas from the 12 steps documents and contains virtually no information or projects regarding energy technology or strategies. It lists some possibilities, such as exploring insulation, the scope for local energy generation, and reducing the need for transport. However, there is no advice as to what precisely can or might be set up to achieve these goals.

While the many people now rushing into Transition Towns initiatives all around the world will do all sorts of good things, I worry that their efforts will turn out to not have made much difference to the crucial global issues. It is not surprising therefore to hear about groups that have folded apparently because of confusion over what to do. A group in Portugal formed, then said '...but now we don't know what to do' (Hopkins 2013). If people become disenchanted, the movement could be set back seriously, which is very worrying. As I see our situation, this movement is undoubtedly our only hope for global salvation so it is extremely important that it is seen to be achieving important things. If it fizzles we will have immense difficulty getting something like it off the ground again.

### **'Just Doing Stuff' is Far From Enough**

I now want to take up what seems to me to be the major and fatal fault within the movement. The lack of guidance noted above derives from a fundamental although largely

implicit and unrecognised theory of transition/revolution, which in my view is utterly mistaken. We could label it 'the theory of automatic revolution'.

The basic procedural or strategic idea underlying the movement is that if we just do more projects like develop community gardens, skill banks and commons – that is, build more of the things we want to see in a sustainable society – then in time we will have built such a society. We do not have to become involved in 'distasteful' political action, fighting the system, or talk in terms like 'capitalism', 'radicalism' or 'revolution'.

This is quite mistaken because the kinds of things being done now in the movement are far from sufficient. The society we want cannot come into existence unless changes of a very different kind are also made, including changing from an economy driven by market forces and profit and growth to one in which we can ensure scarce resources are devoted to meeting needs. That means changing to a society that collectively makes the majority of basic investment and distribution decisions rather than leaving them to private corporations competing to maximise their wealth. In addition, the severe scarcity of resources means that a satisfactory world cannot be achieved unless rich countries not only abandon growth but radically decrease our consumption to that of our global fair share. This means phasing out most industry, and rationally organising the allocation of scarce resources and productive capacity to meeting real needs.

These things cannot possibly be done without the most massive commitment at national and regional levels to rationalise collective planning and implementation along with economic restructuring. For instance, as decisions are made to phase out various industries, there would have to be coordinated action to assist huge numbers of people into socially desirable industries located in all regions. This would enable all to earn the small amount of export income they need to fund imports from outside their own region. Vast numbers of new towns would need to be established as the bloated resource-wasting cities are phased down. Nothing we do currently in our town economies can make these changes occur (apart from increasing the demand for them to be made).

This means that a satisfactory society cannot be achieved without the biggest revolution in 500 years, scrapping some of the most fundamental principles, institutions and procedures of present society. It cannot be achieved without the total abandonment of the neoliberal doctrine that it is best to leave as much as possible to market forces, but it will require far more than that. The point is that these goals and changes are at a level way above that of the localist focus of Transition Towns today.

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Obviously nothing remotely like this can ever take place unless there is overwhelming demand for it among people in general. The rich and powerful will resist strenuously. Whether you like the language or not, this is about the 'mother of all' class wars (I proceed on the possibly naive assumption that nevertheless it can be a non-violent transition). The restructuring cannot occur unless people in general come to be very discontented with present macro systems and fiercely determined to be rid of them, and unless they strongly believe that there is a satisfactory alternative in the form of localism, self-sufficiency, collectivism and frugality.

The lack of comment on these issues which I raised three years ago indicates Transition Towns people on the whole do not want to discuss them, although I know there are people within the movement who share these ultimate goals for gigantic structural changes. At present the movement is not informed by any strategic vision that deals with the broader socio-economic.

Large numbers of people on the Left believe the movement cannot make a significant difference to the global situation and that it is little more than a self-indulgent 'feel-good' waste of time to consider it. That is not my view, but I do not think people within the Transition Towns movement are in a good position to argue that the Left is wrong. At least Transitioners should be concerned to be working from a transition theory that includes causal connections between what they are doing now and the eventual achievement of a satisfactory world.

Even the best transition town or eco-village can achieve only a very low level of self-sufficiency or resilience. It still needs to import many items it uses. They still may need wire netting, polypipe, boots, radios and phones, and these have to come from distant factories, and from a bad economic system that keeps most of the world's people in unacceptable conditions. If the price of oil escalates and the global economy deflates, the Totnes economy will deflate too. A satisfactory society is not possible unless and until the distant systems that provide these things are satisfactory. Just building more compost heaps or LET Systems (see LETS n.d.) or skill banks in your town will do nothing to make those systems satisfactory.

The activities within the Transition Towns and related movements are no threat to the grossly unsatisfactory national and global economic and political systems we have to replace. They are easily accommodated within those systems. I argue at length that it is crucial that these activities continue, because they are starting to build some of the elements of the desirable new society, they are the beginning of the revolution, and they provide the most effective arenas and mechanisms for spreading

awareness and enthusiasm. However it is also crucial that thought should be given to how these things can lead to concern with the eventual achievement of global level goals.

There is a strong and understandable antipathy among many people concerned with sustainability to become involved in political issues, let alone with anything that sounds radical. Many regard politics as sordid, conflict-ridden and ineffective anyway, and prefer to avoid it and just get on with good green works. It is tempting and comforting for them to believe that these efforts will all somehow eventually automatically add up to having built a good society.

I do not know how or when it would be best to put the global level issues on the agenda. It is possible that they should remain a minor concern for a long time yet, while these movements attract people who would be put off by any reference to radical system change. But it would seem important that we should at least be thinking about how to put them onto the agenda for discussion as soon as we can.

The implicit 'automatic revolution' theory is evident all through the Transition Towns literature, web activity and projects on the ground. The title of the recent publication *The Power of Just Doing Stuff* (Hopkins 2013) says it all. Some time ago Will Steffan put it well:

...just go ahead and do something, anything ...  
All over the world, groups of people with graduate degrees, affluence, decades of work experience, varieties of advanced training and technological capacities beyond the imagining of our great-grandparents are coming together, looking into the face of apocalypse ... and deciding to start a seed exchange or a kids clothing swap (2009).

Unless we (eventually) move on from this beginning point to explicitly embrace the extremely big, difficult and unpleasant level two goals as long-term objectives, and start thinking about how to achieve them, these movements will make no significant contribution to saving the planet. They will remain as fringe preoccupations of those who like gardening, swapping, planting commons and so forth, in a society in which most people are not interested in these things and either wish to or are forced to go on working and consuming voraciously.

### **What Then Is To Be Done?**

Following is a brief indication of the approach I am hoping to persuade Transitioners to adopt. It actually does not involve a big or disruptive change from present activities; it is mainly about gearing towards a hitherto neglected goal.

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The absolutely crucial element in the required transition, the one thing that constitutes the first step down a completely different and genuinely revolutionary path, is taken when communities begin to take collective control of their own community affairs and fate. At present, towns and suburbs have almost no say in their fate and do not demand any. The government, corporations and 'market forces' rule them and determine what happens to them. If corporate head office decides to shut the branch plant, too bad and you are all unemployed. The turning point is when a few people, not officials, come together and say: 'We have a problem here. There are many unemployed (or old or young) people around here with nothing to do, deteriorating day by day. Let us get together to apply what resources we have to solving the problem'. This is almost never done; it is taken for granted that government, officials, police or social workers are there to identify and deal with problems. It is not our job. If we are troubled by a problem then at most we ask the government to deal with it.

In many cases there will be severe limits to what we can do, but a great deal can be done to solve or significantly reduce the most urgent problems such as unemployment, depression, homelessness, aged care, loneliness, struggling single parents, alienated youth, drug addiction, petty crime, domestic violence, alcoholism, neglected physically and mentally unwell people, and ugly landscapes. There are vast resources in every neighbourhood often totally unharnessed, such as the twenty hours a week the average person watches TV or a computer screen. The most abundant and the most important resource we have is not land or capital, it is unused 'labour', that is, time, skills, willingness, empathy, care. These resources need to be geared to the vision of us running our own town. Chapter 13 in *The Transition* details the central role that a cooperative community garden and workshop can play in initiating the move towards this outcome (see for instance *Homeless Garden Project* 2014).

It must be stressed that this kind of initiative is revolutionary in the extreme. It flatly contradicts and spurns some of the basic principles of the mainstream economy, political system and culture:

- What determines what is done are local needs, not business profit maximisation, or government action.
- Communities collectively take action; the situation is not left to individuals seeking to maximise their self-interest.
- The goals have nothing to do with making money or maximising wealth; they are to do with maximising

moral, justice, ecological and social values, with maximising the public good and the collective quality of life. The conventional economy rules out all considerations but monetary costs and benefits to individuals and corporations.

- In other words market forces are not allowed to determine what happens.
- We make sure that the collective welfare, the public good, equity, social justice, the situation of the most disadvantaged, are the things that drive policy, development and action. We reject the vicious myth that things work out best for all if individuals are freed to maximise their wealth.
- Communities are making decisions through procedures that include everyone affected. We are replacing representative democracy with participatory democracy. People are doing it, not officials. We are governing ourselves; we are not being governed. That is, we are scrapping centralised, authoritarian and repressive systems of government, and replacing them with participatory and cooperative systems.
- We are replacing an economy and culture driven by getting with one driven by giving, care and the desire to see all flourish.
- The myth of efficiency is dumped. What matters is effectiveness; whether we can meet the need, not how 'efficiently' we do it. If we can make our own money-less entertainment and provide money-less company for old people who cares if some corporation could do it more 'efficiently'? (Trainer 2014b)

Now back to that missing connection between 'just doing stuff' and the enormous revolution that must eventually be achieved at the national and global levels. If towns begin to take their own fate into their hands in recognition that the welfare of all depends on how well the town functions, then when global conditions deteriorate people will see that their national systems must be reorganised to provide towns with the basic things they need to import. They will see the unacceptability of allowing the nation's productive capacity to continue producing whatever corporations profit most from and meet the demand for restructuring national economies to meet the basic needs of local economies. Meanwhile, it is most important that we try to encourage more people to work on Transition Town initiatives and to see that at this point in the revolution the focus will have shifted from building community gardens to massively restructuring the national economic, political and cultural systems.

All this is discussed in *The Transition*, beginning with the development of an economy plan B within or under the



conventional mainstream economy, whereby we gradually build up our capacity to deal with problems and needs through collective, non-market action. This also must be seen as our major 'educational' strategy regarding the way we can best increase among local people awareness of the need to build alternative ways, and of the fact that these can have remarkable outcomes by harnessing available local resources.

So, it is not enough to have towns and suburbs where we are producing a lot of the food eaten. There are locally-owned businesses as distinct from corporate owned franchises, there are local windmills and commons and skill banks, as examples. The extremely important first step is evident when a group says to itself: 'There are people around here who are poor because they cannot get a job in the conventional economy ... that is outrageous and easily prevented. Let us simply set up co-operatives in which they can work to produce for themselves and the rest of us many basic things like carrots, services, repairs and entertainment, and being paid via our own local currency. At first we will not be able to fully employ them or meet all their basic needs, but we can quickly make a big difference'. Then there is also identifying the needs of aged people, young people, carers, single mothers, the homeless, mentally ill people and the ecosystems of the region, and simply forming the committees, cooperatives, and working bees to deal with these needs, as best we can. Why haven't charities, churches – and Transition Towns – done this long ago?

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#### Author

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#### Sonet #7

Through the previous eighty years of coming last  
in the corner, leaning into its past  
of being rubbed, ochred, and rubbed again  
to remind of when the earth admired men.  
The faded yellow bands, the marks, the grooves  
that run its length. Used where nothing moves;  
those that felt its edge, or blackened its tip  
or raised it in ceremony or kinship.  
A silent 'L', and yet, above the noise  
I stroke its curve, listening for a voice.  
You can have it for eighty he says  
sure of a sale. Its story greys.  
Across the shelves and ornaments something drips  
as I wipe the dust from my fingertips.

CHRIS PALMER,  
EVATT, ACT

# I'm in that book

IAN C. SMITH

The blurb after that annual shortlist carry-on didn't mention any daughter, although the truncated description of his colourful past is sort of fair dinkum, even if it did make him seem as pure as a Gregorian chant. All that blah blah about him still living on a housing estate because he wants to be close to his roots is only half-right, like so many things we are told. I felt like stopping browsers in bookshops and telling them that aspects of different stories' characters were me.

I had tried to defeat time by revisiting the places of my father who fled from the travails of his life when I was still a kid. I think I wanted to walk through his biography because nobody would ever write it. Now I'm not so sure.

Very old, I thought at his boyhood address, like most of haunted England. A man with a Persian cat slouched around his shoulders seemed so nervous I spoke to his cat to avoid making eye contact, something I had already learned travelling by Tube. Slums had made the transition from lower working-class to trendy. There wasn't a parking space in sight. All his neighbours were young now, cat man said, trembling as if youth was treacherous. I hurried on, sniffing coal smoke, aiming for the school I thought my father had attended. I pictured him, grubby knees, asphalt soccer, that sort of thing. The day was dimming, burning out, when a jet roar louder than most, stopped me. Concorde, lights blinking assertively against that suffocating sky, returning from wherever it had ventured, swooping low to that bright, welcoming runway at Heathrow. I gawped like the out-of-her-depth-foreigner I was.

I worked part-time in Richmond cleaning for a wealthy couple who lived in a two-storey house with an attic, like a movie setting. David Attenborough, who, I suppose, approximated my fantasy of an ideal father, was a neighbour. I heard he commuted to London by tube so I kept a sharp lookout, imagining a breathless impression of his voice as we screeched through the dark under the city.

British behaviour tends towards that which is furtive, private. See that one – yes, the young male of the species – observe how, as if extracting a guilty pleasure from this meagre life, he slides a sly glance from his paperback at the young woman with the rucksack who remembers playing Monopoly on her own when

she reads the names of stations. Facial blemishes stud his pale skin, skin starved of sunlight. Now he nibbles a chocolate bar as the train stops between stations. Minutes pass. Still we make no eye contact. Instead, we peer out the windows into the black tunnel as if we might discover what has gone wrong. Notice our anxious reflections.

I wasn't all that interested in ogling squat taxis and tall red buses circumnavigating famous London landmarks but when Henry VIII galloped past, ducking under an oak's vast branches in pursuit of a wild hart, I dragged myself back to present-day Richmond Park. Sitting on a bench, I re-read my mother's letter even though I could memorise it. I had written pleading for any extra thing she could remember although she always had a way of discouraging questions almost before they were asked, a kind of aura that daunted me from invading her secrets. Because I read murder mysteries and daydreamed of fat old kings in their youth (and yet couldn't see my parents together in the past, not for one longed-for frozen moment of time) I thought small details might prove significant. Before I left Australia, my mother, a person who does her best, who had travelled by ocean liner to England when she was young and married what she thought was the man of her dreams, who was deserted and divorced, who eventually remarried for safety and hasn't gambled since, would flinch from my restlessness and suggest a holiday on one of the island resorts off the Queensland coast.

*I can't remember the date we married. 1958, I think. (You liar, I thought.) I was sorry to read about the vandals damaging the church. It was startlingly beautiful then. He was a drummer who worked wherever he could. 'Freelancing' he called it. I think 'freelancing' and 'freedom' were interchangeable in his scheme of things. I was young and stupid enough to believe he was glamorous. He belonged to a professional musicians' club when we lived in Melbourne. It was just a glorified pub for him and his pals, and was known as 'the musos' club'. He claimed it was handy for making contacts. His band was called 'Oscar Jack and The Sidekicks', but they weren't very good. They broke up, too.*

'Of course!' I hissed, scattering pigeons. 'They must have a musos' club in London. Why didn't you think of that before?' At that stage I had no idea he had turned into a writer.

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They had more than one musicians' club. At the first I knocked back an opportunity for what I believe would have led to sex and regrets. I was slimmer back then. My hopes were still high. At the next club I got mildly lucky. Someone remembered him working for a magician, providing eerie background drumming tattoos when a bored lady acting scared was about to be sawn in half, or rabbits jiggered from a top hat. I wanted to be that lady, or at least half of her, my head protruding from a flimsy box, peering down at gorgeous legs in sequined stockings, God knows whose.

After this I checked Deaths, concentrating on breathing evenly while single-minded searchers elbowed and muttered, until I was satisfied nobody of his uncommon full name was listed. I felt disproportionately buoyant when I edged through the revolving door out into a rare burst of sunshine blessing the living streets.

I finally found him through a professional association of magicians just when I felt I would have to pluck success from my sleeve or beat it back home like a tired and disillusioned daughter. The high-rise estate, miles from where he grew up, was enough to make anyone drink sweet sherry during the day so I didn't blame him. It was probably my damned job that made me notice dust everywhere. Above the water-stained ceiling, shuffling footsteps and a radio. In the distance, coughing, on and on. The toilet smelled something terrible. There were no tricks left up his only sleeve. Almost none. He had lost an arm in an accident which, since reading – studying – his books, I now believe was a botched attempt to defraud an insurance company. I never heard of a one-armed drummer, but, using matches to light his cigarettes, he managed to impress me. Before I left that day I cut his waxy fingernails which were, but for their dirt and length, replicas of my own. When I finished our eyes brimmed with gratitude. By then he had told me, hesitantly, about his new career.

When we travelled together by train he observed everybody, just as I did. He moved past and around people as if invisible. On the platform when he heard the train's rumble I remember him saying the swelling sound suggested danger. He once made an extensive note about the blast of hot air showering waiting commuters with unseen filth and lifting their hair in brief, wild dances semaphoring the commencement of journeys. That's in the almost prize-winning book. He always moved quickly to claim a window seat where he could look out through the veil of his imagination, as he also later wrote, at the grime-grey factories and back to those sad faces.

When asked by unimaginative types what work he did, I tried to explain but the pathos of a one-armed former drummer becoming an unpublished writer embarrassed both them and me, so I made up a story.

I wanted desperately to give him something. I

knew he had a cigarette lighter so I gave him binoculars for his birthday, to open up his outlook.

What am I supposed to do with these? he said. And how could you afford them?

I don't know. Look at things. You're always watching people, aren't you?

Those binoculars helped to fill in the nights when he couldn't settle. He had a battered Portagas heater, trundling it from room to room, its tiny castors squeaking jerkily as it veered on an erratic course like a supermarket trolley. He said the heater accentuated the loneliness of poverty. You had to press a plunger until the gas ignited. If I stayed late with him, confiding my innermost thoughts, he would switch off the light and sit in an armchair in front of the window overlooking the street, the only window he kept spotless. Then he would open a bottle of cheap champagne, muffling the cork's pop, and place the bottle on the heater after pouring our drinks. He regarded the champagne as his only extravagance and somehow believed it helped him to control his drinking.

While he watched passers-by – what he termed 'the market' – the occasional reflection of a car's headlights gleaming across those expensive binoculars, he invented his own dialogue which he claimed to 'see' in their puffs of foggy breath, as if in cartoon balloon captions. If the magnified strangers appeared to be animated this might trigger a comic scene, especially if the story in his head didn't match the silent action. Because he couldn't hold the binoculars and his glass at the same time he sipped his champagne quickly and this seemed to amplify his already impressive vocabulary, spurring him to ever wittier vulgarity.

My father sometimes roamed the streets carrying an airways bag over his shoulder, often ending up at the docks where his late father, a conservative tyrant by reputation, had worked. He had extended the binoculars' strap which he wore around his neck and they rested inside the half-zipped bag. If he was using them and somebody surprised him his plan was to simply drop them into the bag, out of sight. But he said in a weary voice that nobody surprised him. Eventually he lost interest in the binoculars.

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I became sick of endless cleaning. One fateful day my employer opened an elegant door, the sound deadened by the superior carpet, as I was going right off – practising one-handed drumming. Rat-a-tat-tat on the dining-table which sat sixteen to dress-up dinner, then a fancy swivel and boom-boom-boom against the shining leather side of a single-seater chesterfield. Just as I picked up the silver spoon and tap-tap-tapped it



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on its mate, the tureen, the lady of the house arrived, standing immaculate in the doorway, regarding me as if I might be insane.

It was time to quit. This happens in life. I wanted to ring my father and tell him he could still do it, he could assist a magician performing wondrous sleights of hand, or be a drummer in a rock band, like an old Rolling Stone. He didn't have to keep trying to be a writer. But he had no telephone. I couldn't stay in England forever and risk shrinking hollow and cold, the spirit seeping from me, and he couldn't, or wouldn't come back home with me. I felt guilty about my obsessive character, my odd personality, and reasoned that I must search with determination for a bloke, a partner, perhaps an amiable Aussie with a crotch-sniffing kelpie. Somebody completely different from my father. A clean break. Then I might feel normal, leave my parental dramas tumbling through the space of time and begin my own banal life. Go to barbecues. Smile when listening to repetitive bullshit. Eat too much. Dream of the past.

On my last day at work I finally spotted David Attenborough. He was getting out of a taxi. This was a day of minor triumph. Earlier, I had struck a match one-handed, not using any other part of my body, maintaining a steady flame. I had kept trying although I had been burned and burned. I thought of writing to my father and describing this but words are never enough and I might as well have cast messages into the ocean in bottles. When he had promised to keep in touch he was already making excuses about not being very good at that sort of thing, and I knew enough about English body language by then not to expect too much. Who ever heard of an almost prize-winning writer who can't write a letter, not that he had even looked like being on any shortlists back then. I could tell he wouldn't write to me by the way he avoided eye contact when he promised. He was probably already turning me into a character. Perhaps a former petty thief who long ago had an abortion and sometimes weeps at inexplicable times. Maybe a difficult child growing up without a father and living a life of solitary fantasy? Or even a larrikin feminist nobody understands, who now lives a faux-respectable life in a boring Melbourne suburb recreated with detailed accuracy and irony, and dreads a familiar feeling of loneliness that rises from her heart like a strain of ancient music? Who knows?

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## BOOK REVIEW

**Kristina Johansson, Göran Lassbo, Eddy Nehls (eds) 2013, *Inside the New University – Prerequisites for a Contemporary Knowledge Production: Bussum, The Netherlands: Bentham Science Publishers.***

*Inside the New University – Prerequisites for a Contemporary Knowledge Production*, presents important insights on contemporary issues and trends impacting higher education across a range of contexts. The edited book highlights the implications of globalisation, neoliberalism, McDonaldisation and commodification/marketisation of education and the roles of the state, academics and students in reproducing the current state of play.

An exploration of structural resources required to transcend instrumental and goal oriented learning within universities permeates the chapters. The work conducts a thorough investigation of the intersection of market forces feeding into the surveillance and regulation of teaching and learning. The authors clearly reveal that under this regime, education becomes a technician, containable activity that reproduces State interests.

Individualistic learning is associated with this marketisation of education, where the learner becomes the consumer of compartmentalised information packages predetermined by the educator. This book highlights how current university practices aim to meet the needs of the market rather than critical thinking and the analysis of knowledge. A number of the authors explicate the importance of practice wisdom and artistry in teaching ingrained in a "complex epistemology" (Fransson 2014:100) that challenges the current marketisation of higher education which is problematised throughout the chapters. These arguments are an important resistance to the current 'conveyer belt' production of higher education knowledge.

#### Thoughts on Power and its operations

We assert that central to an understanding of how the classroom can be a site for replicating dominant social power relations is to first acknowledge that there are no neutral spaces. Advancing this, it is essential that the role of the educator is to make visible the operation of power for self and to facilitate this unearthing process with the student from their own world view. If critical thinking and the ability to evaluate knowledge in the new university is the agenda of this text, a power analysis should be an initial starting position of all chapters contained in this collection. Unfortunately this did not happen until chapter seven where Anna Johansson and Annika Theodorsson offer an analysis of how learning is linked to power and the oppressive practices that occur in both the classroom and society. The authors support advancement toward Freire's structural application to include a postmodern analysis

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of power and its implications for unsettling, resisting and challenging identity and knowledge construction.

A highlight of the text is that there is some positioning (see Matthews and Garlick on the Ecoverity; Giri on creativity) about the current forces impacting on higher education that can be challenged and subverted. Readers are also provided with a learning platform that engages deep critical thinking about what possibilities for a new university might be (see Nehls; Johansson; also van Geffen, Niewczas and Bukowska). Readers are also extended flexibility to respond to localised practices of resistance in their own learning and teaching contexts (see: Kjellén; Rystedt and Gustafsson; also Norström and Bernhardsson).

On reading the material, there appears to be significant assumed knowledge of theorists and content areas and this would be appropriate given the book's target audience would include academics, and students of higher learning. Once again, it is clear that the authors were encouraging readers to engage in their own investigation into these knowledge areas. However, it is only in chapter 10 (Nehls and Bussey) that this was made transparent. It would have been ideal to have this agenda in a prologue that states the critical pedagogical processes underpinning the book.

Chapter 10, 'Let's have a Conversation About the New University' by Nehls and Bussey, in its format of conversational style, demonstrates a deep praxis around what might be necessary to imagine a different future for higher education globally. This chapter both demonstrates critical processes and critiques the banking method of teaching, and itself is a resistance to the current forces impacting upon universities. The dialogue is stimulating and invigorating for the reader as a creative space to visualise and dream "what might be" for transformative teaching and learning.

We believe that chapter 10 should have been the crescendo conversation that tied the threads of the other material presented in the book and would have transitioned to the epilogue in a more cohesive way than the current format allows.

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## BOOK REVIEW

**Julian Croft 2014, *Out of Print: A Cold War Romance: (A Serial in Sixteen Episodes)* : Puncher & Wattmann Fiction. ISBN 978 1 922186 48 5**

How, today, to write a novel about Australia in the early 1950s? And how to do this in a way that doesn't mean losing Australia to the bigger picture, the bigger world, from which it emerged, in whose wars it volunteered to fight, and from whose countries new immigrants were flooding in? How to be true to this Australia, how to show this Australia, in a way faithful to its uniqueness, its edge of empire provincial singularity, its prides and conflicts, and its all too felt transitoriness?

Julian Croft, poet, novelist, critic, and literary biographer of Joseph Furphy (*Such is Life*), has a superb answer that, once the surprise wears off, seems both perfect and obvious. Write a romance, a serial romance, and write a damn fine one. Write a story about Australia and about being Australian in virtuoso fashion in a minor, often derided, genre. And have, as the female half of the story, a writer of serial romances herself. Have her be the "Emily Loveworthy" who, for the *Woman's Hour*, new competitor for the *Woman's Fortnightly*, pens a weekly 600 words concerning a reclusive Doctor in Bullamakanka and his mousy nurse's unrequited longings, and have, as the male half, a Geelong Grammar schoolboy, now a war damaged RAF bomber pilot and Newdigate Prize winning poet, working under Brigadier Allert, head of the newly formed Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation. Have them meet in the context of the young Queen's impending Antipodean visit, with rumours of an "Irish" plot – Catholic? Protestant? Unionist? Communist? – swirling beneath a surface of sweaty hats, chicory coffee, corned meat, soap shortages, tea rooms and hotels, police cells and union headquarters, newspaper offices and variously denominated churches. And, with the Constitutional Monarch of the Empire herself under threat, have them fall in love, save Australia, do all this in 16 five thousand word episodes, then, at the end, subvert the genre itself:

They looked at each other, kissed, half as lovers, half as old acquaintances, and broke apart. Their gaze was held for some seconds, then broken, and both walked away, and neither looked back. They never saw each other again.

Use the genre, subvert the genre, and have a lot of fun too, for all this is ideally suited to farce and its slower cousin, tragedy. Blend all this together, as the novel suggests they are so blended in 1950's Australia, in the context of underlying scatological profanity no Australian can escape or persuasively deny. Thus "Emily Loveworthy", whose real name is Gladys Fawcett, falls in love with Randy Knickers – or Randolph Nicholas Hawes – and does so

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under the influence of Spinoza's conception of *Conatus* (I leave the anagrams to the reader), interpreted through Gladys's reading of John Anderson's reflections on Freud as they arrive with each issue of *The Australian Journal of Psychology and Philosophy*.

The romance genre not only allows Croft to escape the distorting hubris imposed by the desire to write "The Great Australian Novel" – an impossible ideal, for the aspiration for "greatness" demands a cosmopolitan universality that has never been part of Australia – its essential focus on the romantic relations of two ordinary, but distinctive, individuals, lets emerge a deep truth about 1950s Australia. For while that Australia was a hotbed of solidarities – religious, social, industrial, political – this was a solidarity of oppositional pluralism, an essentially sectarian nationalism that many survivors of the Second World War found troubling, even distasteful. For these people – Gladys and Nick among them – what mattered were not sectarian solidarities, but the self, its needs, demands and integrity. What was called for, and what was being called into being, was an ethical individualism of self-concern and self-realisation; an ethic that, over time, would come to dominate, until today the very idea (let alone ideal) of a national community founded in oppositional solidarity makes no sense except as a threat to the aspirational self and the thin community of homogeneous monads it both demands and implies.

Here Knickers (Nick Hawse) is a prime instance – a privileged Australian (Geelong Grammar, University of Melbourne) – who, like so many similarly situated, aspirational and privileged boys, left its shores for Balliol and Oxford, there became a prize winning poet, before, in his single sincere act of solidarity joining the RAF (not the RAAF, a significant displacement of identity and identification), later to drift – for no discernible reason or conviction except his rather lazy and affected romantic individualism – back to Australia and intelligence work, all the time wearing his self-conscious post-war(rior) sensitivity like a chip on his shoulder, legitimating it through brittle poems of affected longing that trouble Gladys from the start.

Gladys too is an individualist whose concern for her late adolescent son Colin is perfunctory (she shows no interest in his aversive fear of upcoming National Service), and whose longing for Nick is as much self-indulgence as real need, a fact signalled on the very first page when, stepping out into the rain after lunch at a Newcastle café, she daydreams:

If she'd been writing her 600 word serial for the company's new magazine, *Woman's hour* ... she knew what would have to come next. A hand under her elbow, an offer of a shared umbrella in a soft, low, kindly voice and...

But what she really desires – and what she achieves – is not a career as a romantic serialist for lovelorn and lovelorn female readers, but one with a higher, more respected status, a career in a major genre, not a minor one, and so a career in the male dominated world of journalism. Gladys is a feminist of the Julie Bishop kind: one who would never demean her own achievements by standing up for, or with, her "sisters", let alone contemplate the possibility that her success is simply "tokenism." For some – like Nick – this is "strength" and "character", for others, like her son, the various policemen and union organisers she meets and badgers, it is a mark of her coldness and bewildering otherness.

Gladys and Nick are harbingers of a future that will move from their own, minority, elitist, repudiation of the solidarities available in the sectarian "civil society" of labour and the Church, to the dominant and dominating paradigm of an Australianness whose only fellowship lies in the cheap brand(ing) "Team Australia", and the mindless and extraordinarily irritating chant, "Aussie! Aussie! Aussie! Oy! Oy! Oy!" Gladys and Nick, on the cutting edge of the new Australia, are moving from the thickly local and pluralistically sectarian to the thin universalism of the romantic self and formulaic nationalism; she to the mores and cultural practices of the social and political elite as editor of the "Focus" section of the *Sydney Morning Times*, he to the ethereal cultural heights of "lyric poetry" and the thin political paternalism of "national intelligence work".

Croft, it is clear, has more time for Gladys than Nick, perhaps because she has a vigour and spontaneity the reactive, sensitivity proud Nick entirely lacks. But in the end – and this, I think, is at the heart of Croft's presentation of Australia at the time – theirs is "A Cold War Romance". It is a romance between people with no real or deep internal connections with anyone else, and so, as they come, inevitably to find, as each is offered a better "career path" to each other. And so the truth – perhaps the single truth – in all Nick Hawse's prize winning poetry:

On earth the leafless trees beseech  
The Gods and Goddesses who have fled  
To leave the cities of the dead  
And rob us of the powers of speech;  
And so I cannot say to you,  
Who walks away into the ruined night,  
"Turn round, look up and find the light,"  
For she has gone, and so have you.

TONY LYNCH,  
SENIOR LECTURER IN PHILOSOPHY & POLITICS,  
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES,  
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND.



## WE SO NEED NO MORE NEWS TODAY

The world is so disturbed  
we all now feel so perturbed  
by these headlines in our way  
We so need no more news today.

All the presses and feeds can stop  
and every media mogul drop  
dead or shut up and hideaway.  
We so need no more news today.

All the horrors overexposed  
about all who have decomposed  
during 24/7 satellite relay.  
We so need no more news today.

Humanity's crisis-to-crisis  
on every issue, such as ISIS,  
Ebola, Palestine, or power play.  
We so need no more news today.

None of this is really for us.  
It's all become a cruel circus  
where brutes waterboard their way.  
We so need no more news today.

Everybody reels from all the shocks  
except the paparazzi and the jocks  
who hack on tragedy for their pay.  
We so need no more news today.

Cancel all your media subscriptions.  
Delete all the online proscriptions.  
Disconnect the lot and throw it away.  
We so need no more news today.

Wars will continue, as will accidents,  
crimes, rich and powerful flatulence,  
terror and corruption all on display.  
We so need no more news today.

We so need no more news today  
Our news is our love, even in dismay.

*HAMISH DANKS BROWN,  
NOOSA HEADS, QLD*

## Parochial

The city can be whatever you want it to be 24/7  
Full-moon, animated faces brimful of what-is-to-come  
shoulder through the maddening crowd  
Three piece suits clash  
against body piercing in extremis  
- homeless per block ratio high

Canyons of buildings whistle the wind  
dwarf or soar spirits to the scraped-sky  
there's no need for sunglasses here in the midday shadows  
where it is so dirty  
There's flaky paint for every spanking new façade  
Outside the store with four floors of shoes  
a man in a baseball cap is grabbing life by the balls  
in a red Mazda MX-5

*There's choice on every corner  
Starbucks or Gloria Jeans or McDonalds  
Options jump off the sandwich boards:  
it's all you can want it to be*

And all you want is for it to let you go home

*JANE DOWNING,  
ALBURY, NSW*

'The graphic designer's social responsibility is based on the wish to take part in the creation of a better world' (Bernard in Social Design Notes 2009). Graphic designers can contribute to their own communities and to the broader world through communicating with people and informing them about social, cultural and environmental issues. The clarity of the message conveyed by the design is important to its educative role in alerting people to these issues and to helping them develop informed views and understandings.

The University of the Sunshine Coast 3rd year graphic design students embraced the opportunity to design a poster for the "World Health Day" Poster for Tomorrow' international design competition (see 4Tomorrow n.d.). The aim of the competition was to address the issue of the universal right to healthcare in

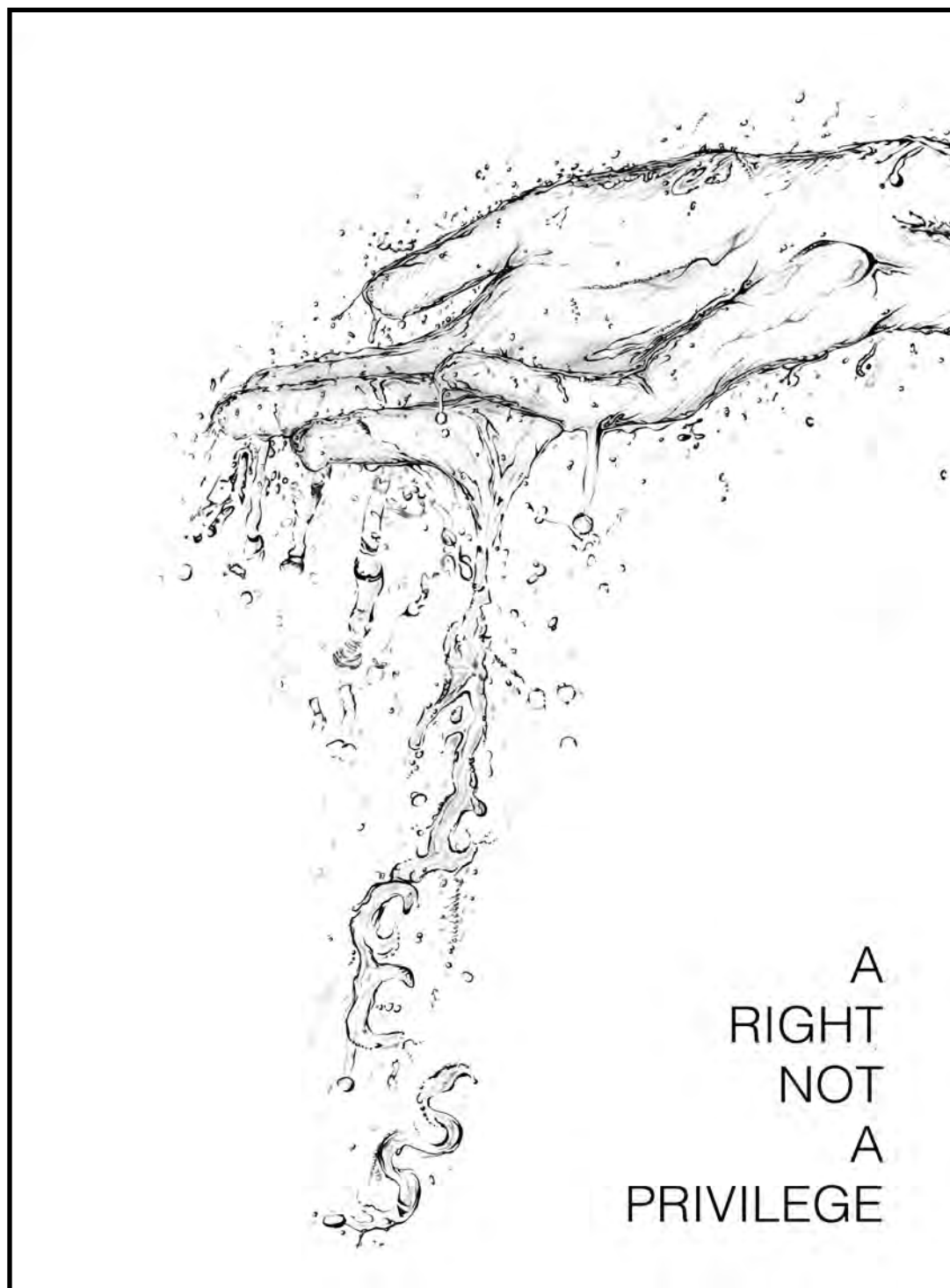
relation to one of the following categories: a) universal access to healthcare, b) eradication of preventable diseases and c) access to clean water.

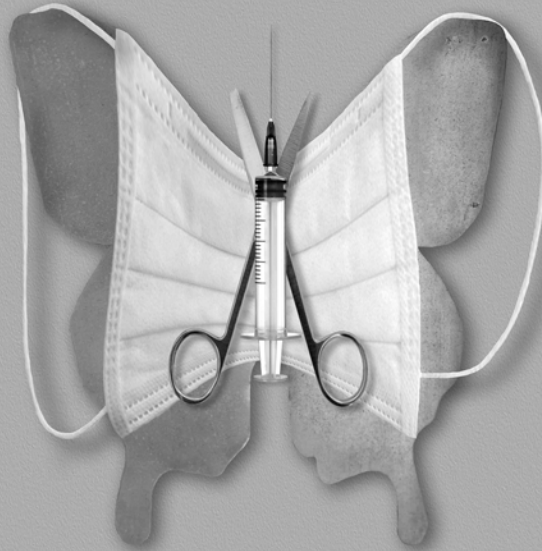
Showcased here are three posters designed by the University of the Sunshine Coast students, one from each category.

References:

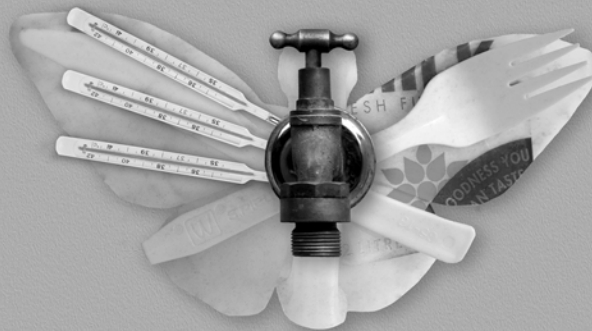
Social Design Notes 2009 The Social Role of the Graphic Designer [lecture delivered by Pierre Bernard in Minneapolis in 1991] <http://backspace.com/notes/2009/09/the-social-role-of-the-graphic-designer.php> (accessed 10/4/2015).

4Tomorrow Association n.d. Open Up, Universal Right to Healthcare <http://www.posterfortomorrow.org/en/projects/right-to-healthcare> (accessed 21/3/2015).





Disease prevention



Clean water



Medical supplies

Change today, transforms tomorrow.





**IT SHOULDN'T TAKE AN  
EPIDEMIC TO BRING  
HEALTHCARE TO THOSE WHO  
NEED IT MOST**

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