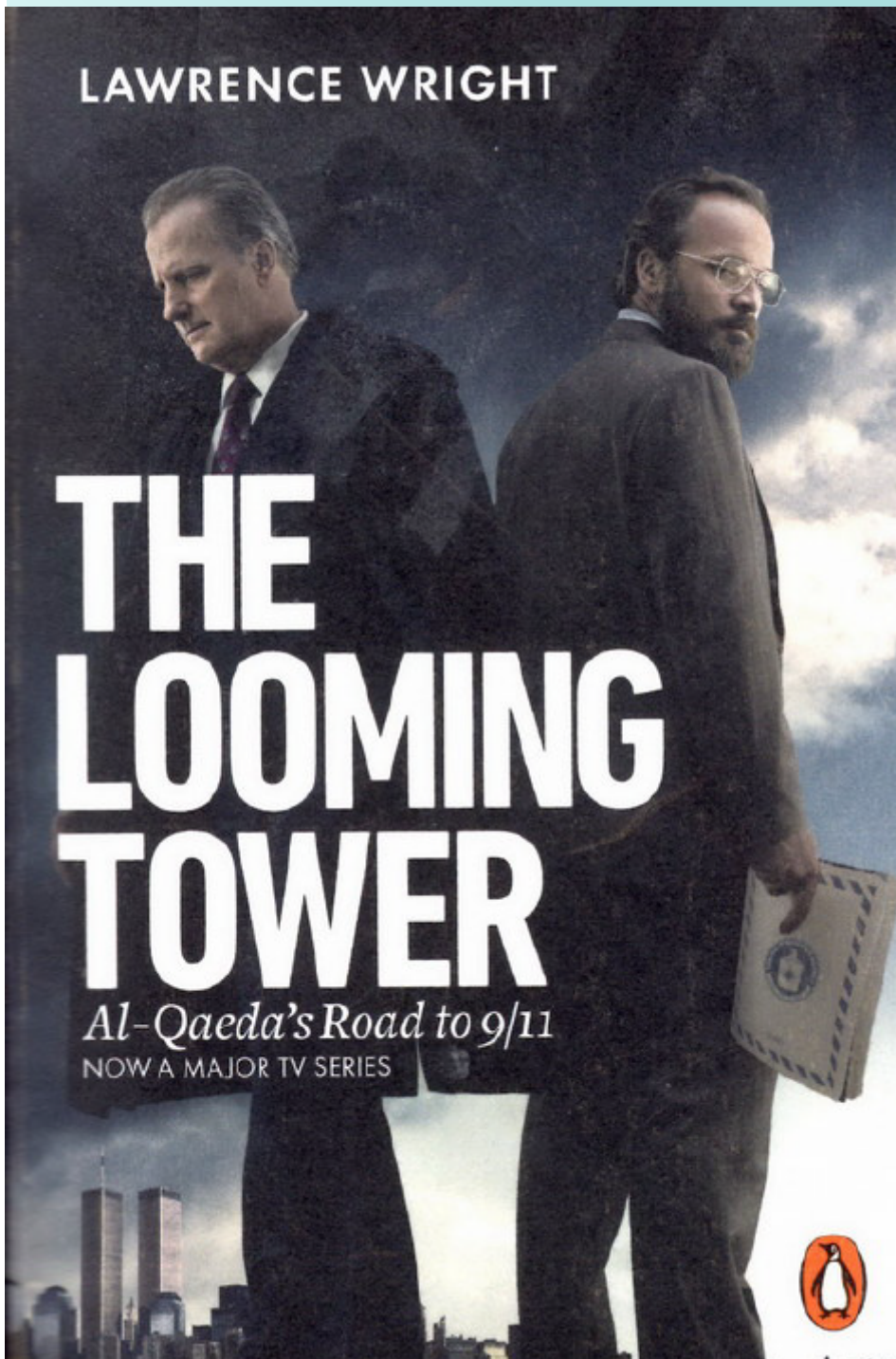


Cat's Eye Weekly

alias *The Ferret*

No. 131

12th Oct 2019



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The Animal Rehoming Service

Pet Medical Crisis

And more

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Any excuse for stirring up the universe

*Edited by
Graham Price*

Once was weekly now highly irregular in more ways than one

HIGHLIGHTS

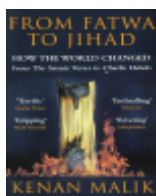
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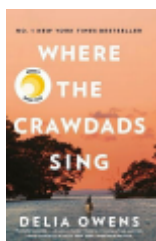
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The editor's desk

China under Communism. Much of the world agrees that this looming giant is first and foremost, a one party dictatorship. But what if it wasn't? What if China was a two party or three party political system? Do you think with that great population of 1.386 billion people (2017 figures), it could manage? What country in the Western or Eastern capitalist world could possibly handle such a population? The scenario barely requires thinking. For all the criticism of the one party system there is every likelihood that with a multiple party system, the country would be an utter shambles. Industry would be chaotic and in certain instances may grind to a halt.

The belligerence that is observed coming from China these days, especially in regard to military manoeuvres, certainly appears to us as expansionism, but underlining this is a certain amount of fear of being contained by other countries or forces. This is not to excuse China's expansionist policies and the crushing of certain democratic freedoms, but it does highlight reasons for the Chinese government's attitude toward other countries and the need for a certain control of the mainland population. Anyone who denies China's expansionist policies is living in dreamland. China added Tibet to its clawed heart a long time ago and is now pursuing a similar totalitarian embrace of islands in the Pacific. Notably, it is not only India and Pakistan which lord it over disputed sections of Kashmir — China has taken a large bite of Kashmir for itself, albeit a vast wasteland in the Hindu Kush. Vietnam's long term past enemy has been China, and in 1979 China attempted another invasion, which was repelled by the Vietnamese. Now, according to recent signs, China may be poised for another confrontation with Vietnam.

The President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping, has the power that Adolf Hitler once had, but unlike Hitler, Xi Jinping has a long-range nuclear ballistic missile armoury that Hitler could only wildly dream of. For further deliberations re. China go to pages 11 and 19.

It is probably fitting upon the 70th anniversary of China's Communist Party that Carl Jung's quote from earlier years is given space in CEW. The celebrated analyst put his finger right on the target when he said: "*People don't have ideas, ideas have people*". This is perfectly illustrated with the ideas of Marx and Lenin — the spread of their ideas throughout the world has enabled dictators to rule millions of people, and at the same time given them ultimate power to jail and murder further millions. So-called re-education camps are nothing but brainwashing, murderous prisons. As A.G. Grayling states in his book *Ideas that Matter*, regarding Communism: "Wherever it has been put into effect in the modern world, most of the experiments in this regard have failed in what, in historical terms, is the blink of an eye." The blink of an eye in the modern world may well be several decades or more, but when it is ended it is as if it were but yesterday. Perhaps the title of his book could have been better named, though ideas that matter can be both positive and negative.

But apart from Marx and Lenin, there are other dictatorships in progress throughout the modern world, and many of them are blind religious in their firm and unchangeable restrictions. This issue of CEW allows several of those to be brought into the light of day for consideration. *See pages 3 to 9.*

Elder folk might like to go to *The Quiet Corner* on page 21 and soak up some universal truths. Elder age is not a time to sit and simply watch TV, it can and often does, offer a time for rejuvenation of the mind, even if the body says 'Spare me the effort!' •

**Feedback to Cat's Eye Weekly
is always welcome.
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You've watched the series

Now read the book without the series embellishment

Never was such a such an incredibly well-timed attack by terrorists designed to cause so much death and destruction to the human race. The 9/11 carnage in September 2001 will live in our hearts and minds forever.

That it all began in 1948 seems an incredible statement to make, but the evidence is there in this remarkable book by Pulitzer winning prize author Lawrence Wright. And the fact that the CIA had warnings as far back as 1996, which were ignored, makes this tragedy for America and the rest of the world deeper than it should have been.

It begins with a stern bachelor from Alexandria, Egypt, visiting America in November of 1948. His name is Sayyid Qutb (pronounced *kuh-tub*), a writer and educator, born in a mud-walled village in Upper Egypt. Much of his popular writings — which disturbed many of the bureaucratic middle class — had been radicalised by the British occupation and the insipid rule of Egypt's King Farouk. Qutb's mind had become centred upon a division: Islam and the East on one side, and the Christian West on the other.

But there was another incident that caused bitter recriminations and shame throughout the Arab world. Even while Qutb was sailing out of Alexandria, "Egypt, along with five other Arab armies, was in the final stages of losing the war that established Israel as a Jewish state within the Arab world." And Qutb was to write: "I hate those Westerners and despise them. . . all of them, without any exception: the English, the French, the Dutch, and finally the Americans who have been trusted by many." He was referring to the US President Harry Truman who endorsed the transfer of a hundred thousand Jewish refugees into Palestine.

While Qutb was in America he considered there was a certain primitiveness about the people, with social gatherings of a superficial nature. He seemed to find most folk as being narcissistic and too informal. He wrote about the American woman: ". . . who knows full well the beauties of her body, her face, her exciting eyes, her full lips, her bulging breasts, her full buttocks and her smooth legs. She wears bright colors that awaken the primitive sexual instincts, hiding nothing, but adding to that the thrilling laugh and the bold look."

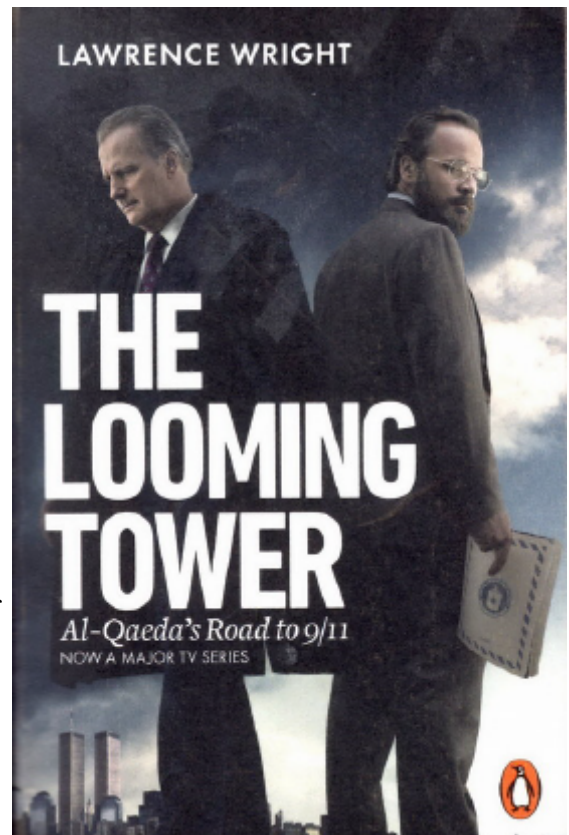
Wright's book is incredibly researched; the bibliography is crammed into 12 pages and over 550 people were interviewed — the majority being people who live or lived in the Middle East. Notes on attributed quotes take up 52 pages. As it moves on through the years it takes into account numerous activists who cross the paths of Qutb after he returns to the Middle East. Instead of bringing back certain democratic ideas from America, he embraces the very opposite. Wright *The*



„Sayyid Qutb, the educator and writer, whose book Milestones ignited the radical Islamist movement, shown here displaying one of his books to the president of Colorado State College of Education, Dr. William Ross.

Looming Tower pp27-28: 'He also brought home a new and abiding anger about race. "The white man in Europe or America is our number-one enemy. . . The white man crushes us underfoot while we teach our children about his civilization, his universal principles and noble objectives. . . We are endowing our children with amazement and respect for the master who tramples our honour and enslaves us. Let us instead plant the seeds of hatred, disgust, and revenge in the souls of these children. Let us teach these children from the time their nails are soft that the white man is the enemy of humanity, and that they should destroy him at the first opportunity."'

And so the seeds were planted through years to come, which infected hundreds of thousands of Muslims, if not millions, throughout the world. Wright *The Looming Tower* p28: "In Islam he [Qutb] believed divinity could not be diminished without being the final word. Muslims had forgotten this in their enchantment with the West. Only by restoring Islam to the center of their lives, their laws, and their government could Muslims hope to recapture their rightful place as the dominant culture in the world. This was their duty, not only to themselves but also to God." Through the years that followed via groups such as The Muslim Brothers/Muslim Brotherhood, government upheavals, prison sentences, there gradually built a fierce resistance to anything associated with the West. Many of the professors at King Abdul Aziz





University in Jeddah were members of the Brotherhood as Jihad had become the operative action against Western society. There were also certain Imams [Muslim religious leaders] who also favoured Jihad. By the time Osama bin Laden was 28 in 1986 he had already absorbed much of the Islamist philosophy of Qutb and his activist followers. Wright *The Looming Tower* p128: "Bin Laden was already thinking of the future of jihad, and the Jaji camp was his first step toward the creation of an Arab legion that could wage war anywhere. Until now, he had subordinated his dream to the goals of the older man [activist leader Jamal Khalifa], but he was beginning to feel the tug of destiny." Which would begin the rise of al-Qaeda during 1988.

Wright *The Looming Tower* pp162-163: "Al-Qaeda held its first recruitment meeting in the Farouk camp near Khost, Afghanistan, shortly after the debacle in Jalabad. . . New recruits filled out forms in triplicate, signed their oath of loyalty to bin Laden, and swore themselves to secrecy. In return, single members earned about \$1,000 a month; married members received \$1,500. [Question: Where did the money come from?] Everyone got a round-trip ticket home each year and a month of vacation. . . From the beginning al-Qaeda presented itself as an attractive employment opportunity for men whose education and careers had been curtailed by jihad. The leaders of al-Qaeda developed a constitution and by-laws which described the utopian goals of the organization in clear terms: 'To establish the truth, get rid of evil, and establish an Islamic nation.' This would be accomplished through education and military training, as well as coordinating and supporting jihad movements around the world."

Under the caption of *Return of the Hero*, Wright delineates bin Laden's return to his hometown of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia during the fall of 1989. This created a puzzle for the locals because humility was prized and "prestige is carefully pruned among non-royals. . . It is a country that forbids the public display of portraits, except for the faces of the omnipresent ruling princes. . . So when bin Laden returned. . . he presented a dilemma that was unique in modern Saudi history. Only thirty-one years of old, he commanded an international volunteer army of unknown dimensions. Because he actually believed the fable, promoted by the Saudi press, that his Arab legion had brought down the mighty superpower [Russia], he arrived with certain unprecedented expectations of his future. He was better known than all but a few princes and the upper tier of Wahhabi clergy — [he was] the Kingdom's first real celebrity."

Later, bin Laden gave a history lesson. Wright *The Looming Tower* p171: "America went to Vietnam, thousands of miles away, and began bombing them in planes. They Americans did not get out of Vietnam until after they suffered great losses. Over sixty thousand American soldiers were killed until there were demonstrations by the American people. **The Americans won't stop their support of Jews in Palestine until we give them a lot of blows. They won't stop until we do jihad against them.**"

And we know what that led to.



The World Trade Centre from New Jersey prior to 9/11



The chilling eyes of Osama bin Laden

After the catastrophic event of 9/11

The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda's road to 9/11 by Lawrence Wright, Penguin/Random House. Paperback \$AUD22.99, \$NZD24.60



The problem with Iran



The problem with Iran is that it is a religious dictatorship, therefore it may do anything it likes with its civilians together with any tourist or visitor who offends it. For women, this is particularly bad news. Islamic dress codes are not to be challenged any time in the present nor in the future — last year numerous women were arrested for removing their hijabs, while one particular female lawyer, Nasrin Soutoudeh, was sentenced to 38 years in jail together with 148 lashes.

Iran is a firmly male dominated country that will never see a female in high office within the next 25 years, such as a leader of the community. The all powerful male leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has supreme religious control of Iran and though they are somewhat different in ideology, North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un also manifests this odious attitude of control without freedom. Both are totalitarian states bent on total restriction of human rights. Where Iran differs is in its gross inhumane attitude toward the female sex. Western countries have police forces to uphold the laws of those countries, but many Middle Eastern countries including Iran have an extra police force — *the religious morality police force* that targets in the main, women: their behaviour, their dress, their actions, their voices. To allow oneself to come to the notice of the religious morality police is, more often than not, to find oneself transported into jail to await sentence which is usually 10 years behind bars regardless of innocence. It is noted that in Iran there are over 8000 morality police out and about, among them not only men, but also certain women of like mind who are especially selected for their rigid totalitarian views.

Iran is building up military expansionism, including nuclear technology, which without apology they intend to use against Israel in the coming years. No apology for that, in spite of the country being economically mismanaged over recent years so that water shortage is a real problem with lack of dams; while away from the main metropolis' there is much poverty — it's the old story, much of the country's wealth is concentrated in the hands of the religious leaders and their military partners.

The leadership of Iran is not all that much separated from al-Qaeda, except that Iran will carry out its hateful mission within the region of the Middle East, even though at the same time giving support to organisations such as al-Qaeda and the Taliban of Afghanistan. Why would we not believe that the recent missile and drone strikes onto the oil fields of Saudi Arabia were instigated by Iran as recent investigations have concluded? It was an opportunity for Iran to strike at the economy, not only of Saudi Arabia, but of the West which relies so much on that oil. Without adequate supplies of oil certain countries cannot maintain their military. Take Australia, for example, which apparently only has about 18 weeks of oil and petrol supplies in reserve at any one time. Cut that supply off and this country cannot defend itself. Where is the fuel for fighter planes, ships, tanks, and transport both military and civilian? Iran and other nations (such as Russia and China) are well aware of this and put it into their 'filing cabinets' for future consideration. America is well protected with its bountiful oil wells, but countries such as Australia and New Zealand, together with other South Pacific nations, are at an enormous risk and subject to a certain blackmail, both politically and physically, from Middle Eastern countries.

A number of Australians have recently objected to the sending of one of our naval ships to the Strait of Hormuz, together with British and American ships, so as to protect oil tankers from raiders whether they be of Iran origin or other. Why object when the alternative may well be no oil for your car, your domestic heater, the buses and trains you travel on, the transport that brings you fresh vegetables and fruit from country farms? Any considerable blockage of oil from the Middle East to this country would soon turn Australia into a wasteland that would make the 1890s and 1930s depressions almost look like paradise.



Some climate activists say it would be a blessing — back to a more simple lifestyle with less pollution, but the fact is that high-rise apartments and office blocks that rely upon oil and oil derivatives would shut down — the cause not only from the lack of supply to their buildings, but that to the electricity generators that also rely upon oil. Masses of workers would be stood down. Transport of essential supplies to and from country towns would cease. Police cars and helicopters would be grounded while crime rampages through the cities and country towns. Ambulances and fire trucks could no longer answer calls. Hospitals would be restricted and in some instances would close. All airlines would be totally grounded. Your car or utility would be a useless commodity sitting silent in your garage or outside your home. Local or distant travel — except by horse and cart — would cease. Farmers and producers would have no option but to mass slaughter their chickens, pigs, steers, goats, calves because they could not transport them. There would be nothing less than utter chaos throughout the land.

Meanwhile, the good citizens of Iran are stuck with a regime that wishes to figuratively bind a noose around their necks to restrict freedom of speech, to condemn freedom of dress for women, to destroy the writings of many Western and certain Eastern authors. It is unsurprising that Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses* (1988), was initially condemned by Iran in 1989 before that of any other Muslim country, to which the then supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, put out a fatwa — a licence to kill Rushdie by any Islamic jihadist who would take up the offer — which resulted in the author going into hiding under strict security. Even today, one walks on eggshells within the nation. Cartoonist Atena Farghadani was sentenced to 12 years in prison for apparently insulting the regime and spreading propaganda. He is not alone.

Big Brother is watching you. [Annika Hernroth-Rothstein](#), a journalist based in Sweden writes:

"It's 4:00 AM and I am standing in the arrival hall of Imam Khomeini International Airport [in Iran] with my two large suitcases, a meticulously tied hijab, and my heart beating frantically in my chest. The government media agency has sent a driver, and from the moment he picks me up and ushers me off with a homemade sign and wordless gestures I am no longer alone. My only time for solitude will be the few hours spent in the relative confinement of my Tehran hotel room.

"Working on my own was never an option. This was made clear before I even boarded the flight to Iran. Once your visa is approved, you are assigned a government-approved agent to handle your schedule, accompany you to your meetings, and drive you from door to door. There are no real private conversations and no real privacy. As a result, what I take from my interviews are not merely the words, but the silences—what is left unsaid or implied. The agent comes at a considerable cost, of course, as do the plethora of written and stamped authorizations needed to accommodate appointments and plans. Every day, I am asked to spend at least an hour in the office of a government agency to report my movements, and my translator is taken aside to give his independent report. They are then checked against each other, carefully scrutinized for discrepancies. Sitting there waiting for final approval reminds me of worlds I have only known through books like [George Orwell's] *1984* and Kafka's *The Trial*. . . The regime never spells out precisely what the rules are, so you are at constant risk of breaking them, trapping you in a never-ending loop of trying to figure out the impossible.

"On the third day of my visit, I have lunch with one of my handlers. We eat kebab at one of the city's kosher restaurants. Suddenly, the mood shifts. He puts his fork down and leans across the table.

"I've been reading your old articles, Annika, reading them very carefully," he says. . . I also saw you on the Temple Mount, on a YouTube video, and I saw that you place yourself in very dangerous positions."

"He's smiling now, but it doesn't feel like a smile. It looks oddly misplaced beneath his dark, inquisitive, and intense eyes. I can no longer feel my legs. I'm terrified he can see my heart beating in my throat. I wonder what will come next. What has he seen, read, or heard about me? He could not only take me down, but also hurt the ones I love and cherish. I try to go through everything I have written, every detail I may have missed. But the panic is creeping in, and all I can think is that I played this game and lost, and no one will ever know what happened to me.

"You have to understand, Annika, that I don't think that you are a spy, but many others could easily think so. With your history, with the things you write." . . . When I got back to my hotel that night I shut down my Facebook account and removed the apps containing messages that I did not want strangers to see. I sent emails to my friends to explain why I was going dark, but then deleted them, suddenly frightened that a faceless middleman would catch the loaded words. Sitting on my bed, erasing everything, I felt silly for this flash of paranoia and tried laughing at myself in order to snap back into reality. But the laugh got stuck in the back of my throat. This *was* my reality. Though I might have been a fool for worrying, the truth is that I just did not know.

"I hardly slept that night, and from that day on I maintained a higher level of vigilance. I changed my clothes in the shower every morning, because I was no longer comfortable walking around in my room undressed. I stopped calling home



and I no longer used my email or social media for anything other than posting neutral descriptions of my trip, weighing every word and every sentence”.

Annika had every right to feel watched — under strict surveillance, because she was. This was not Sweden, Norway, Britain or New Zealand, this was a controlling totalitarian state that was determined to suppress any danger to its strict religious order which was documented and upheld by phrases and paragraphs from the Koran and the Hadith.

Of recent times three Australians have been arrested within Iran. One, Australian/British academic Dr. Kylie Moore-Gilbert has been incarcerated in the notorious Tehran Evin prison on a charge of spying. Well, of course. That’s easy, Kim Jong-un or the totalitarian state of North Korea would do the same. If they look as if they might happen to mention words of freedom, then lock them up. Take away their odious Western freedom and show them who is in control here. Any visitors or tourists who are suspected of having links with Western governments are targeted. Put them in the infamous Evin prison where ex prisoners state that not only psychological torture is carried out, but also beatings. Blindfold them and lead them around on a rope, put them in front of a mock execution squad and then take the blindfold off. These are some of the psychological tortures that Iran uses. Jason Rezaian, an Iranian-American writer for the *Washington Post*, together with his wife, was incarcerated in that prison in 2014 and kept captive for 544 days. The charge: espionage, which is a blanket charge to be used against anyone who even looks like having an attitude of freedom. Rezaian stated that throughout the whole time of his imprisonment he only had contact with two other prisoners — foreigners are kept isolated. Sounds of gunfire within the prison and loud screams were not unusual. Prisoners may be taken blindfolded to an interrogation room where they are left alone for hours and even days.

Australians Mark Firkin and Jolie King, who were traveling through Middle Eastern countries, were arrested for apparently flying a drone near a military installation, but other sources simply state it was near Tehran. Held captive in Evin prison since early September, they have now been released due to an Australian and Iran diplomatic government swap of prisoners. Naturally, they are now very cautious about saying anything untoward about their time in prison.

Dr. Kylie Moore-Gilbert has been within Evin prison since 2018 and has recently been sentenced to 10 years jail for spying. Moore-Gilbert — a lecturer in Islamic Studies at Melbourne University — was in Iran studying and researching at Tehran on Iran’s religious Shia relationship with Bahrain. So, even a word or a phrase purported to be out of place can lead to an arrest in Iran.

Accusers of America being in other countries might take a note of what Iran is doing. Iran is in Lebanon, Yemen, and Syria, infiltrating and spreading its Shia influence. Iran is in Iraq attempting to turn that country into a model of its own sharia law and totalitarian religious rule. World leaders need to put pressure upon Iran to modify arrest procedures and release foreign and local prisoners whose only ‘crime’ is trumped up spying or espionage. But that’s not likely to happen in the near future unless Iran’s belligerent ruling class is replaced. •



Images courtesy of Annika Hernroth-Rothstein



From Fatwa to Jihad

How the world changed

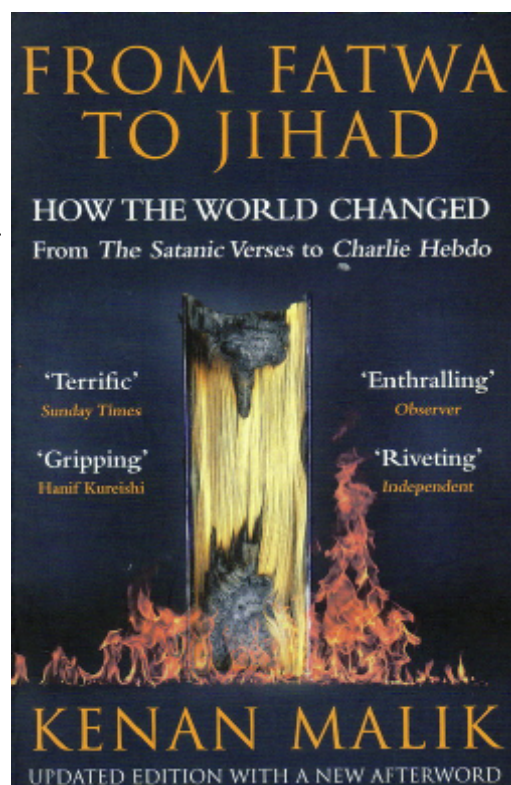
This book should be required reading for all politicians and made available throughout every university. From the frontispiece: “Kenan Malik is a writer, lecturer and broadcaster. He combines academic research with popular writing and broadcasting, and has played a prominent role in public debates on issues as varied as the meaning of human nature, the social role of science, the politics of multiculturalism, the nature of secularism and the limits of free speech. He has been a presenter of *Analysis* on BBC Radio 4 and a panelist on *The Moral Maze*, also on BBC Radio. He is a columnist for the *International New York Times*. His books include *Man, Beast and Zombie*, *Strange Fruit* and *A Quest for a Moral Compass*. *From Fatwa to Jihad* was shortlisted for the 2010 Orwell Prize.”

Salman Rushdie and his *Satanic Verses* novel has already been discussed within the previous article *The Problem with Iran*, but Malik explores much further concerning the explosive reaction of jihadists to Rushdie's book. Under the heading of Satanic Delusions, Malik pours numerous occurrences throughout 35 pages concerning the evil directed at Rushdie, and all because of other persons' ideology. The fatwa had been unleashed by Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, containing words such as 'sentenced to death. . . I call on all zealous Muslims to execute them quickly, wherever they may be found, so that no one else will dare to insult the Muslim sanctities. God willing whoever is killed [carrying out the sentence] on this path is a martyr.' *From Fatwa to Jihad* pp9-18: “By the following day [14th February 1989] there was not just a fatwa against Rushdie but a price on his head. Hossain San'ei, leader of the 15 Khordad, a Tehran-based charitable foundation set up to uphold Islamic principles in Iran, offered \$3 million for the murder of Rushdie (or \$1 million if the assassin happened to be non-Muslim). Rushdie was immediately given 'grade one' protection by Scotland Yard's Special Branch and removed to a safe house. . . For a decade Rushdie was compelled to live like a fugitive, constantly moving from house to house — he was supposed to have slept in fifty-seven beds during the first five months of hiding.

“Peter Mayer, Rushdie's publisher and CEO of Penguin was at the heart of the mayhem unleashed by the fatwa. . . As a liberal, Mayer says he 'accepted that Muslims needed protection from discrimination and hatred. But the idea that non-Muslims should be prevented from reading a novel never entered my head'. . . The day following the fatwa, armed police started patrolling outside Penguin offices. Special X-ray machines were installed to check for packages to employees. . . Letters written in blood [said Mayer] were pushed under the door of my house saying not just that they would kill me but that they would take my daughter and smash her head against a concrete wall. . . Despite the constant threat of violence Mayer never wavered in his commitment to *The Satanic Verses*. 'You have to take the long view. Any climbdown now will not only encourage future terrorist attacks by individuals or groups offended for whatever reason by other books that we or any publisher might publish. If we capitulate, there will be no publishing as we know it' ”.

“William Nygaard was Rushdie's publisher in Norway. He has never spoken publicly before about the day [in 1993] he was shot outside his house in Dagalveien in Oslo, but the memory is clearly etched into his mind: ‘. . . I opened the car door and reached in. . . Suddenly I got what felt like an electric shock in my back and arm. It's like nothing you can imagine’. He had been shot by an assailant hiding in some bushes on the other side of the road. A second shot hit him in the shoulder. ‘I started screaming. I threw myself down a little hill by the side of the road. That's when I got hit a third time, in the hip’. Two years earlier, in July 1991, Hitoshi Igarashi, a Japanese professor of literature and translator of *The Satanic Verses*, had been knifed to death on the campus of Tsukuba University. That same month another translator of Rushdie's novel, the Italian Ettore Capriolo, was beaten up and stabbed in his Milan apartment.

“The greatest tragedy of the Rushdie affair happened in Turkey. In July 1993 hundred of artists, writers and musicians had gathered in the town of Sivas, in the central Antolian region, to celebrate the life of Pir Sultan Abdal, a legendary sixteenth-century Alevi poet. . . One of the speakers at the Sivas gathering was Aziz Nesin, the Turkish translator





of *The Satanic Verses*. A mob of anti-Rushdie protesters fired up by local imams [religious leaders], surrounded the hotel in which the conference was taking place and demanded that Nesin be handed over for summary execution. They then razed the hotel to the ground. Thirty-seven people were killed, though Nezin himself escaped. In 1997, thirty-three people were sentenced to death — later commuted to life imprisonment — for their part in the massacre. . . The fatwa transformed the Rushdie affair from a dispute largely confined to Britain and the subcontinent (albeit with considerable Saudi involvement) into a global conflict with historic repercussions, from a quarrel about blasphemy and free speech into a matter of terror and geopolitics.”

Malik moves on. He comes to the *Charlie Hebdo* affair in 2015, which saw eleven people of the Parisian satire magazine killed by Islamic jihadists. *From Fatwa to Jihad* pp211, 212, 222, 230-237, 241: “The gunmen were two brothers — Cherif and Said Kouachi. When they left the scene, they were apparently shouting ‘We have avenged the Prophet Muhammad. We have killed *Charlie Hebdo*. . . Two days after the attack, the Kouachi brothers were cornered by police in an office on an industrial estate in Dammartin-en-Goele, to the north-east of Paris. After a nine-hour siege, the gunmen were shot in a firefight, and their two hostages released unharmed.

“On the same day as the siege . . . Amedy Coulibaly, a friend of the Kouachis and a self-declared supporter of the Islamic State, seized a Hypercacher kosher supermarket in the Port de Vincennes area of Paris. He killed four Jewish shoppers and held fifteen others hostage. Ten months later, there came a series of even more shocking attacks on Paris. . . [including one] evening in Paris, 130 people died and some 368 were injured.”

There has been much debate over the *Charlie Hebdo*’s cartoons — several of which have depicted Islam in a caricature light, for the staff at *Charlie Hebdo* were — and undoubtedly still are — fiercely anti-Islam. But sometime in the past, the magazine was also accused of anti-Semitism, which in the long term reveals *Charlie Hebdo*’s antagonism towards religion no matter what branch. It is pointed out as such, that many of the cartoons are anti-religious. There is no doubt about that, though this is not the same as writing pages of dispersions about religions or denying happenings such as the Holocaust. Malik himself, in referring to the magazine’s cartoons about Islam and its leader, points out that *Charlie Hebdo* “[is not] as obsessed with Islam as many of its critics suggest. The newspaper *Le Monde* scrutinized every *Charlie Hebdo* cover from January 2005 to January 2015. Of the 523 covers in a ten year period, just seven were linked specifically to Islam; three times as many targeted Catholicism.” Which brings up a question — why didn’t the Catholics invade *Charlie Hebdo*’s office, even simply to protest. Again, why was there no furious uproar when the Monty Python lads scripted and filmed *The Life of Brian*, which many saw as a parody of Jesus Christ? Why is it that in modern times Islam is virtually the only religion that spawns this unhealthy jihad? So, in the long term it came down to a judgment by many who were antagonised by the cartoon, that *Charlie Hebdo* was being racist, which is so far from the truth as to be farcical. Religion is not a race, never has been, never will be. It is interesting to note that certain movements in Australia and other post-modern Western countries, when faced with some criticism of a cultural kind will immediately call out ‘Racist’. Which is nothing of the sort.

Naturally, in a free world, *Charlie Hebdo*’s raison d’être was to mock almost anything and everything they could get their hands on, which was and still is a very French characteristic. “Let them eat cake.” said Marie Antoinette, after learning that the poor had no bread. It is said that French humour is a tad more mean than the British could ever be, that is, in a mocking sense, and that the French will seize upon morality issues that even the Americans would hesitate at. The French love to tell not so nice jokes about the Belgians and the Corsicans. Even Voltaire had a wicked sense of humour when he said “If God didn’t exist, he would have to be invented,” which is a phrase *Charlie Hebdo* would have been very accustomed to.

Malik signs off on *Charlie Hebdo* with “It’s real crime was not racism but its challenge to what has become an unbreakable commandment for many contemporary [left-wing] liberals : ‘Thou shalt not cause offence.’ ”

Malik tells of the writer Hanif Kureishi who wrote a short story *My Son the Fanatic*, which later was turned into a film, about “the fraught relationship between Parvez, a Bradford taxi driver who dreams of material riches and of ‘fitting in’ to British culture, and his son, Ali, who turns to Islamic fundamentalism to find a sense of moral order and belonging. ‘I love England,’ Parvez tells his son. ‘They let you do almost anything here.’ ‘That is the problem,’ Ali replies. •

***From Fatwa to Jihad* by Kenan Malik**

Atlantic Books

2009 revised 2017

Dymocks: \$AUD24.99 paperback, \$14.99 eBook .



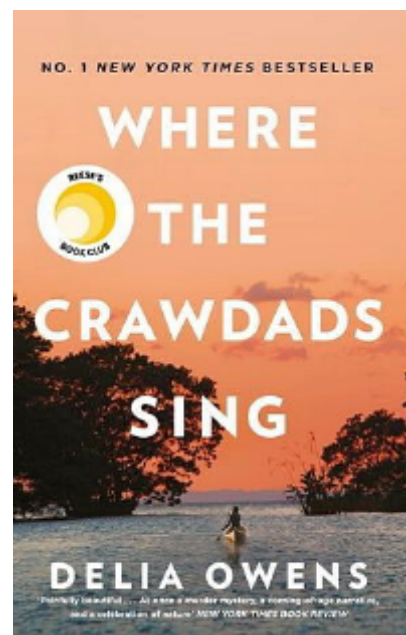


An exceptional read: *Where the Crawdads sing* Now in paperback

Without a doubt this has to be the most entertaining book I've read within recent years. It is a masterpiece of poetic prose enfolding around a young girl named Kya who lives near swamps in North Carolina from her age of six to twenty-five. Because she lives in a rambling shack on the edge of myriad lagoon-like swamps and is rarely seen by the townsfolk, she becomes known as Swamp Girl. She has a brother and an elder sister, but the only adult person in the home is her semi-illiterate father, who loves his booze — her mother having moved out long ago. In time as she grows up she is left alone when her father goes away one day and does not return, together with her siblings also leaving for a life of their own away from the swamps. Now by herself, Kya sells mussels and fish to a town store to enable her to feed and clothe herself. Even so, the welfare people come calling.

Delia Owens weaves a spellbinding story of a girl gradually growing into splendoured womanhood, looked down upon by the redneck townsfolk except for a store owner and his wife who are kind to her. Because of her intense beauty, Kya is a magnet for the wrong kind of youths who are approaching manhood, and attempts are made to seduce her. Eventually she falls in love with a quiet young man who is interested in science, but he too moves away for further education and returns rarely.

The swamps are a magical place and Kya draws comfort in catching and displaying the numerous insects. With the help of some botany and nature books she begins to draw and describe these magical beings until finally her work is published as a brilliant authority on the insects and animals of swampland. One of the young men she has been associated with is found dead at the bottom of a tower where Kya had been at one time or another. The redneck village points the finger and she is charged with his murder. This is an extremely sensitive point during the life of Kya, and Delia Owens magnificently captures the feelings of the townspeople and others for and against Kya's conviction. Owens draws the reader into the hearts and minds of all who come into contact with Kya — both those of good intent as well as evil intent. There is a certain undercurrent in the novel that reminds one of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. •



Where the Crawdads Sing, by Delia Owens — American wildlife scientist. Soon to be a film starring Reese Witherspoon. Penguin/Random House, hardback RRP \$AUD39.99, paperback RRP \$AUD29.99

The Big Issue



October brings some exciting news from *The Big Issue*. Not only is there an amazing article about *The Handmaid's Tale* and it's successor, *The Testaments*, but lots of invigorating and worthwhile articles, such as: "You don't believe the sky is falling in until a chunk of it falls on you," warns Aunt Lydia in *The Testaments* — Margaret Atwood's much-anticipated sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale*. It's been 34 years in the waiting, and *The Testaments* is already the biggest book of the year. It was nominated for a Booker Prize even before its official release and is topping bestseller lists around the world, with a hardback copy selling every four seconds in the UK. In this edition, we discover why *The Testaments* is a story of hope and defiance in the face of great evil. And we look at the legacy of the original *Handmaid's*, the top-rating TV show, and why the red-cloaked Handmaid has become a global symbol of resistance at a time when women's rights are being fiercely debated.

Also in this edition:

- Hairspray director **John Waters** talks trouble. Actually, he demands we all cause it, ahead of his local speaking tour.
- In **Letter to My Younger Self**, actor **Fiona Shaw** talks Fleabag, Killing Eve and working with current Hollywood darling **Phoebe Waller-Bridge**.
- We speak to **Ben Ferencz**, the last surviving prosecutor of the Nuremberg trials, who continues to campaign for a more peaceful world more than 70 years later.
- We head to Australia's heavy metal capital — Perth — to rock out with some of the scene's leading bands.
- **Vendor Tour Guide** takes us to Athens, as we tour the ancient sites with **Shedia vendor Michael**.
- In **Tastes Like Home**, TV presenter **Sally Obermeder** and her sister **Maha** share a healthy family recipe for **Middle Eastern Lamb Chops with Pearl Couscous Tabouli**. Credit *The Big Issue*. \$9.00 from your street vendor. •



China: When the Tiger had its paws burnt

Vietnam had the colonial French to deal with, then the Americans, and suddenly out of the blue the Chinese mainland government got its paws caught up in something that was none of its business. Today's Western generations probably know nothing of this aggressive venture by China into Vietnam in 1979. To the Vietnamese it was the old story of China interfering once more in its administration. Not again! Past centuries had seen China carrying out numerous invasion techniques against Vietnam, which were mostly repelled by the sturdy Vietnamese fighters.

During the 1970s the Pol Pot communist regime in Cambodia had massacred intellectuals, professors and doctors of universities, and almost anyone of middle class education. Strange coincidence as it was, there was a similarity with the 1800s revolution in France with the peasant population taking over, only this time it wasn't *madame le guillotine* that dispensed with lives considered to be elite, it was the machine gun. It was the utmost horror unleashed upon any country since the Nazi extermination of Jewish populations throughout Europe during the 1940s. Within the years 1975-1979 the Pol Pot regime had massacred between 1.671 to 1.871 million Cambodian people. Vietnam could not stand by and allow this to continue, so sent an army over the border on a rescue mission. China was already angry that Vietnam in 1978 had turned its favour toward Russia rather than China and was in a severe petulant mood. Let's crush Vietnam and move through that land to free Cambodia, they thought. But the Tiger of China, rampant and militarily well equipped at the time was no match for the poorer equipped Vietnamese, who having sharpened their military techniques against the French and then against the Americans, knew they could win this battle.

The 2019 40th anniversary of China's war against Vietnam in 1979 has gone totally unnoticed in China. No mention in any newspaper, no interviews with politburo personnel. . . nothing! This is China's curtailment and repression of the news. You only get one side of it. Something we all need to remember. •

The Confucius Institute in universities Mind bending by another name

What better control can a foreign power have than to infiltrate universities and other public schools with a supposed cultural programme? This is what China has done to Australia and other countries throughout the world in the name of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative. Universities have financially gained by allowing the Confucius Institute into their hallowed halls — many receive between \$148,000-\$200,000 AUD from the beginning, as well as free educational resources and annual payments.

China researcher, Professor Clive Hamilton, warned recently that if a New south Wales review of the Confucius Institute was taken seriously, all universities would close down the Confucius Institute — asserting that there was no freedom within the institute to discuss controversial topics. What Confucius has to do with the institute is anyone's guess. China rejects the review and states that the situation has simply become politicised. On the other hand, after studying the review, the NSW government is taking steps to shut down the Confucius Institute in universities and schools, but will Victoria follow suit? The answer to that is probably no, because the socialist Labor government is very much in bed with Red China. •

China moving against Vietnam — again

The possibilities of this occurring are considerable, considering China's belligerent expansion into atolls within the South China Sea. See page 19 for further news. •

The Devouring Dragon

Chinese diplomat Chen Yonglin who defected in Sydney in 2005, said China had more than 1000 agents operating in Australia. Their main activity is collecting unclassified data of interest that is not in the public domain — such as scientific papers, and commercial and government documents. CEW will be reviewing a most important book about China in the December issue — *The Devouring Dragon*, by Craig Simons, which gives a staggering account of China's rising power and what it means for planet earth •





Ideas for the 21st Century

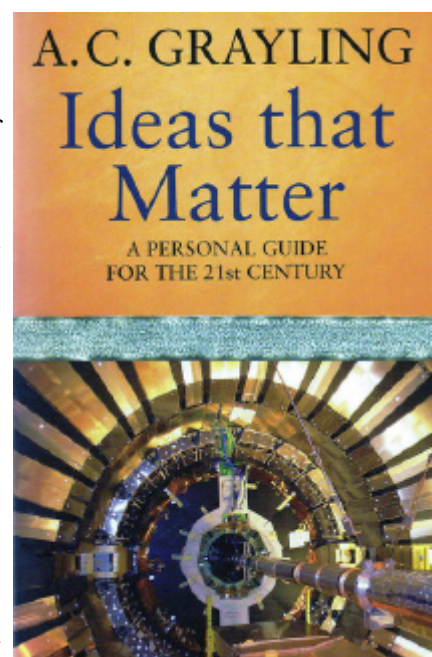
A. C. Grayling's compendium of ideas for the 21st Century is all-embracing in its coverage of concepts that matter.

Acknowledged as today's Thinking Man, Grayling offers a way out for the culturally confused. As Professor of Philosophy at Birbeck College, University of London, he sets out this book as a kind of dictionary from Absolutism to Zeitgeist, covering a vast array of necessary ideas.

The book is more or less a dictionary of personal ideas, gleaned through a lifetime of research. Grayling — unlike some social scientists who seek the limelight without detailing accreditation — gives a fairly reasonable bibliography as an appendix, together with a well-arranged index. His section about Islam is well presented, looking at the religion from a neutral point of view. He also has chapters on other religions, such as Judaism and Christianity. *Ideas that Matter* p274: "It will be gathered from the tenor of remarks about Christianity elsewhere in these pages that the writer does not hold any brief for religion in general, and this applies here [with Islam] too. Much might be said, not the least about the associated texts and traditions, which comes as quite a surprise and profound disappointment to a first-time examiner. But this simplistic and infantilizing faith is not good at taking criticism or satire, usually a symptom of lack of self-confidence or of unquestionable iron conviction, or — which is worse — both; and it is the faith which at present anyway has an extremely violent fringe from which murder has come, continues to come, and can all too readily come in response to perceived insult or threat." So far, in the recent history of the world, there is no other faith with such drawbacks. But there is a ton of secular totalitarianism moving throughout the world, not only in Middle Eastern, Eastern and South American countries, but also rising in certain Western countries.

Again, with Creationism, he stands back from taking sides. His analysis is simply that of an onlooker. The facts come first, rather than any sympathy for ideology. The same with his chapter on Communism, which is fairly short. There's not all that much to write about that ideology, considering that it simply follows on from similarities with long forgotten theocracies. A conclusion, which cannot be doubted is written "In this it is a paradigmatic of what communism has been whenever it has been put into effect in the modern world, most of the experiments in this regard have failed in what, in historical terms, is the blink of an eye."

**A.C. Grayling *Ideas that Matter* Weidenfeld & Nicholson, paperback 610 pages
Dymocks \$AUD24.99, Booktopia \$22.40 plus postage.**



The lie about cannabis

The Australian Capital Territory in Canberra recently passed a law that will allow cannabis, weed, dope, pot, whatever you wish to call it, to be legal for use by the public. We're not talking about medical cannabis, which has been given the go-ahead by most states in Australia for use with strict medical supervision. We are concentrating on the weed that is home-grown, dried, and used in smoking or in bongs. Harmless stuff, no doubt.

Wrong. Science has shown that in certain people, perhaps those with a disposition toward even mild mental problems, cannabis can be dangerous. Numerous instances are detailed of long term users having psychotic episodes. Your editor can back up this finding by having witnessed people he has known in the past who were cannabis smokers, and who at various times during their life did go into psychotic episodes. The following day they had no idea of what had happened to them. It's a bit like picking up a few beers then losing your head. You are still responsible.

Combined with other soft drugs, cannabis can be the devil's most dangerous weapon. Scientific research has shown that it can lead to full blown schizophrenia in those with borderline mental problems. So, the advice from CEW is: if you are a long term cannabis smoker, try to limit your use to weekly or monthly. And if you are a driver, be aware that cannabis can stay in your system for weeks at a time and be easily detected by police patrol equipment.

As far as Canberra is concerned, it stands out like a lamp post that numerous bureaucrats who live and work there would be in favour of legitimising cannabis use, not only for the territory, but for the whole of Australia. No need to delineate their political persuasion. It stands out very well among the gum trees and the snow that sometimes hits that city. Perhaps the eucalyptus aroma has gone to their heads? Lawmakers on pot and doing their best to legitimise it? Probably so. This ubiquitous law should be repealed by the Commonwealth ASAP. •



In praise of gentle men

from the editor

My father was one. He had a high level of tolerance, unless you touched his children. For a man who had been through the horrors of World War I within the bloody fields of Gallipoli, the deserts of the Sinai Peninsular and Palestine for almost five years, it was remarkable that he had such empathy toward his family.

He had survived watching his Light Horse trooper mates fall around him on Gallipoli. He lost his two best friends within the first week of climbing up those Turkish cliffs to face the enemy. It was no picnic moving through Palestine forcing the Turks and their German compatriots back, where more men were lost in skirmishes and sometimes outright charges. One Company of the 6th Light Horse Regiment lost all but one of its 70 troopers in one of those charges. The eventual return to Australia would see numerous soldiers with what we now know as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The nightmares would be frequent and those who had been civilians during that war would find it difficult to understand what was happening to their husband, relative or friend. To raise a family with kindness under those circumstances would seem an impossible task, but that is how he saw his obligation and respectful care.

These days we are saturated with a rising movement that claims to blame most, if not all men, for hateful attacks upon women. Masculinity, which has nothing to do with evil, is condemned and some groups attempt to re-make men more like women. Nothing could be further from nature. The philosopher, A.C. Grayling, while aware that blame is endemic within broken relationships has perhaps, a solution: "When we cease laying blame we either take responsibility for our own contributions, or become free to recognise that blame is irrelevant: for such things happen as part of the whirligig of life, and laying blame is a waste of energy which could be better directed at repairing damage or starting afresh."

During my mid-twenties and later, I was privileged to know a gentle male whose name was **Frank Newberry**. Frank was often described as "one of nature's gentlemen." I knew him for many years and never once did I see him lose composure. He lived his life with a philosophy of helping others and presenting a nature that many would wish to follow. He was responsible for certain changes within his district, once becoming Shire President, the equivalent of Lord Mayor.

Mr. Gee. In the 'dark days' of the 1940s this primary schoolteacher was a welcoming introduction to fourth grade. The other male teachers were viewed as being very stern creatures who used the strap more than necessary — one had even been dubbed with the name Hitler. Mr. Gee had these wondrous jars and bottles of botany and insect species all along the window-stills of the classroom and encouraged children to study them. Mr. Gee never raised his voice and never used the strap. He had no need to for he was a gentle man to whom the students gave their unqualified attention.

A.R. Johnston. The local newsagent and office supplier was run by a brother and sister, both of whom were probably in their mid forties when we children attended to buy our school supplies. They had not married, so the agency was their baby, to which they poured their hearts into. As A.R. was in charge of accounts and the attached post office, he often dealt with children. He asked one of my mates to help out behind the counter during holidays and looked at me with encouragement — giving me the very important job of collecting newspaper accounts from residents. My first real job and it was thrilling to have been given such a trusting position out and about on my first bicycle in all weathers. Numerous children at the Johnstons received freebies now and then. A.R. never had a strong word for anyone and would go out of his way to help.

Neil Murray was an elder and choirmaster of the local Presbyterian Church. He had a managerial position with the local International Harvester works in Geelong, where under his watch fairness was a natural quality. Staff simply loved working for him and the Harvester. In my association with him I found him to be wise beyond his years and eager to embrace people of all creeds and races. He was married with two grown up daughters, both of whom had inherited their father's sense of fairness.

John Elliot, a padre with the Royal Australian Air Force, who eventually rose in rank to become the Principal Air Chaplain was an amazingly relaxed person, who simply loved having people around him. With his wife, Hazel, he set out to make airmen on RAAF bases away from home, less lonely than they otherwise would have been. He counseled those seeking to marry with great sensitiveness and tenderness, especially those on overseas postings. He also was to the front in talking with airmen who had received 'dear John' letters and on rare occasions steering the odd suicidal person toward fulfillment of life.



Even in retirement, John welcomed ex airmen to his home in Coburg, Melbourne. A gentle man, with wise insights into human nature. He is gone now and is missed so much. The world is better for him to have been here and trod the path of an enlightened one.

Ernie Laming, Warrant Officer Disciplinary, equivalent to the army Sergeant Major. Generally, military folk of this rank were feared somewhat. Not so W.O. Laming, who like Padre John Elliot, had an endearing nature and who invited airmen to his home on occasions. Because of his nature and wisdom in handling tricky situations on air force bases, he had earned the respect of men and women under his command. Another gentle man, he handled situations not with gruff discipline, but with understanding. Many an airmen, after their time of duty was up, left with a greater appreciation of humanity — all due to Ernie Laming.

These are but a few of the gentle men I have met throughout my life. There are many more, and they vastly outnumber those, who for some reason or another, go off the rails. I raise my glass to all those good men, most who have now passed on, but who have left a legacy of peace, kindness, and wisdom behind them. •

Entertainment gone whacko



It's Hollywood, it's prime time television, and it's entertainment downloads to iPhones. And it has become sick and dangerous. This was brought to a head the other week by Universal Pictures preparing to market a move titled *The Hunt*.

It's violent satire, but it raises a question of whom it may influence: teenagers with access to guns? Adults with a grudge against the coloured or white population of certain countries — white supremacists acting out their visionary nightmares and ideologists on the far left doing much the same. *The Hunt* is a dangerous movie. It depicts a group of people trapped in a manor, while out in the woods there is a group of wild life hunters. Things take a dangerous move when those inside the manor become the hunted in lieu of wild life. One by one they are targeted.

Standards on television have fallen dramatically during the past ten years. All TV programmes have much influence, particularly when we are laughing at something a person has been caught out at or shamed for. Reality TV — it has far reaching subconscious effects. Our guard is down. Laughter, generally good for the body and soul, leaves us vulnerable at the time. Cults use it for their own means, knowing the easy way of getting into the subconscious mind. Oh, go on, you say, it's all harmless. *Married at First Sight*, *The Bachelor*, *My Kitchen Rules*, *Bride and Prejudice*, even *The Block* may be entertaining but they are not harmless to minds still in the development stage. Putting people down seems to have become a regular part of entertainment these days — a national sport. But what it does is to desensitise people, much the same as children being surrounded by violence.

Producers and directors are intensely aware of the entertainment value and strive to influence no matter the age of the viewer. If they can get away with it, they will. Why should they care when the cash comes flooding in? Hence a certain minority of media and artistic folks decide how the greater population is influenced. Changes in sociological attitudes and even the passing of certain laws by postmodern elite governments are greatly influenced by this particular celebrity minority who must have their way, even to the extent of slamming shut any debate. This is what is occurring in American universities and various other platforms at this time. If the United States gets a cold, Australia will shortly catch it. That is our past history which is very evident at present within certain universities in New South Wales and Victoria. And it is no joke. *The Hunt* is but one example of media influence gone wrong. So far Universal have held *The Hunt* back from being released, possibly due to the sudden outrage against it, but there is no guarantee that it will not be released some time in the future, for that is Universal's right to do so within a democracy. •

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Mercury O'Proud

Political correspondent

Around the parties. The dirty business of politics.

All parties play games with the electorate and indeed with themselves. When it comes to sly manoeuvres, no Australian political party is immune. Whether it be Liberals (Conservatives), Labor, Greens, Nationals, each of these at times display infighting among their ranks, and often with bitter recriminations.

Strange things are occurring within the Liberal/National Coalition with one of their prime members, Gladys Liu, being caught up in a Communist Chinese scandal that caused the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation to take a look at her supposed connections to Communist China. After apparently being cleared for the time being of deliberately being involved, but possibly accidentally involved, Liu went on to celebrate China's 75 year anniversary of Communist rule, seen pictured at Box Hill, Melbourne, with a Victorian Labor MP in the cutting of a cake that had a Communist Chinese flag on it. If they have any sense, Liberal party leaders may well be in the process of dumping Ms Liu. And while they're at it, check out a few other non-compliant members.

Tony Abbott, ex prime minister of Australia, has come out and confessed that he made mistakes. Well, Tony, everyone is human, but some of the gaffs you made were almost unforgivable. Even though you seem to reckon you might have more time in parliament, if asked so, surely it is time you simply forgot about that and sat down to write your memoirs?

Bill Shorten, who had dreams of being prime minister, has also come out and confessed some of his amazing sins of neglect, simply blaming himself for not looking at Queensland and Western Australia with a microscopic eye. Well, that's one kind of eye he never had, and it's no use putting the blame on the neglect of ascertaining the political scene of simply two states, when in effect the whole country turned against him for his policies that never had a chance of appeasing the working class or middle Australia. Sorry, Bill, now you reckon you intend to hang around for another 20 years in parliament, but does that mean with a knife still sharp and hidden inside your suit jacket? Go away and rejoin the union movement. You might be able to get that union thug and woman basher, John Setka, to resign. That would be some reward to the Australian community for you messing up the last election almost by yourself.

And then there's the Victorian state Greens leader, Samantha Shanti Ratnam, who was so evasive in her recent interview with Neil Mitchell on Radio 3AW, as to almost fall off her cockatoo's perch. Neil continually asked her what the cost was for all the public servants, etc. leaving their jobs to take part in the Climate Change protest day, and even though he continually asked throughout the long interview, she repeatedly changed the subject. That's not how you do politics in this country, Samantha. You should know better. Perhaps it is time the Victorian Greens changed leadership, or invited Bob Brown from Tasmania to come across and take charge? Something seems to have been lost in Greens politics since his days. But isn't that how much of the world is going in these post-modern times?

There is so much concentration upon China these days, that one would almost think it was the largest ogre in the world. Not so, for instance there is Russia with the not so gentlemanly Vladimir Putin in charge. One of the most dangerous men in the world who, after taking hold of certain Black Sea countries when piddling weak NATO did nothing to stop him, is looking at further expansion. He is vastly saddened by the end of the Cold War when various satellites of Russia, such as Georgia, the Ukraine and the Slovakian countries found their independence from the iron Communist grip. He has an overwhelming urge, like Xi Jinping of China, to expand his empire. Things are on a razor's edge in Russia these days. Recent voting has seen Putin's leadership vastly challenged, but then in a Communist country this doesn't mean much. His days as a leader may be numbered, but that will take time — ten years or more, perhaps. After all, it is not the people who run Russia, it is the secret police, the KGB, not all that much different from the days when the killer Beria was chief of police.

Back home in Victoria, Australia, in the illustrious quiet village of Elwood, Big Brother is taking shape. The Melbourne Cricket Club with the approval of the now socialist Victorian Education Department, has signed off on and launched a design for a hockey field to be built on grassy lands associated with the Elwood College. The problem is — which nobody in local or state government appears to be overly concerned with — environmental damage. Stark, blinding overhead spotlights that will intrude into close residential properties, noise at night in the form of loud whistles, loud sirens etc, intrusion of numerous vehicles from other suburbs in the evening where little extra parking is available. Not to mention the massive water runoff into a noted flood plain because these courts need to be continuously washed down with thousands of litres. Such waste. Yes, local residents are up in arms. But the elite post-modern socialist government of Victoria, with links to mainland China, doesn't give a damn. For further info, go to Facebook at: No MCC For Elwood.

Happy Springtime! M. O'Proud.



Pet medical crisis

from Jennifer Hunt

Shepparton resident Michael Hoyer was given Riggy, a White Shepherd, almost 12 months ago but he was initially hesitant to accept the puppy because he knew dogs came with a lot of responsibility.

However, the pair instantly bonded and have been inseparable ever since. "Everywhere I go, he comes with me, he's my baby boy," Mr Hoyer said. Unfortunately, their special bond was nearly torn apart when Riggy was hit by a car in the early hours of last Saturday morning. A distraught Mr Hoyer rushed Riggy to the vet and discovered he had a haemorrhaged lung, dislocated hip, and a fractured shoulder blade.

Being in between work and on a Newstart pension, Mr Hoyer didn't know how he would afford his best friend's life-saving surgery. However, the charity Pet Medical Crisis heard about his dilemma and stepped in to give Riggy a lifeline. Pet Medical Crisis is a registered not-for-profit charity which helps pensioners with the cost of unexpected vet bills. It raises money through fundraisers but also has a generous Facebook community which regularly donates to heart-breaking stories. Charity founder and director Jennifer Hunt said Riggy and Mr Hoyer's story was felt hard by her community and had since raised nearly \$7000 to help fund the vet bill.

"We help people whose animals are integral to individuals' mental health," Ms Hunt said.

She said the charity was founded for people like Mr Hoyer who relied on the mental, physical and social benefits that came with pet ownership. Mr Hoyer said he was shocked to hear the amount of money people had donated. "It made me cry, people are so kind," he said.

Although the accident has been devastating for Mr Hoyer, it has given him a new outlook on the way he sees people, communities and his own life. "I wouldn't have thought there were so many giving people out there," he said. "It inspires me to go out and help the community and do more good for other people."

Riggy has been supported through Pet Medical Crisis donations through 2 major surgeries. He is expected to make a full recovery. *Rest and heal sweetheart... Love from all your friends at PMC xxxxxxxxxx* Pet Medical Crisis relies on public donations to assist pensioners and disadvantaged owners who cannot afford life-saving veterinary care.



Molly's rescue: Mum Rachel said: *"I'm a single Mum with 12 and 14 year old daughters. I feel I've tried everything that's available to me. I first noticed the lump back in December and have been trying since then to source the funds. It's grown 10 times as big in 6 months and is at risk of claiming her life."* Molly was the last of her litter, and unwanted due to her small size. We fell in love with her at sight. She came into our lives after my marriage breakdown.

My children were 1 and 4 at the time. She is my third child.

Both my children suffer anxiety and she is like a companion dog for them. She helps calm my daughter down when she is not coping.

She provides us so much love, safety and friendship beyond any measurable words.

She hogs my bed for sleeping on, pushes the kids off the couch and can clear the room with her farts. She is a big sook when it comes to thunder and lightning, hiding behind me until it passes. Molly means the world to us.

Pet Medical Crisis were pleased to donate \$550 to enable Molly to have her lump excised at Ferntree Gully Vet and she has made a wonderful recovery.



Pet Medical Crisis

A not for profit fund to save pets whose owners cannot afford their emergency care.

www.petmedicalcrisis.com.au

Email: petmedicalcrisis@gmail.com

PMC is now on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PetMedicalCrisis/>

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837 567)

Great adoption story

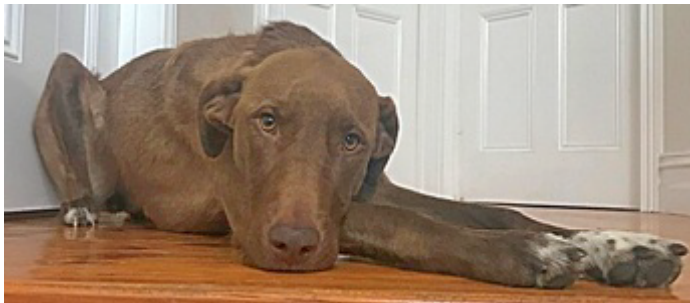
My name's Monica and I've had Ashleah now for over two years. Ashleah was six at the time I adopted her. Her previous owners decided that Ashleah would be better off in a single cat household, as she kept fighting the other cats in their home.



The first two weeks for any new owner are a roller coaster of emotions. Ashleah wouldn't have anything to do with me during this period and stayed hidden under the bed in the spare room. Once she decided that she was "home", we started to build up a great relationship.

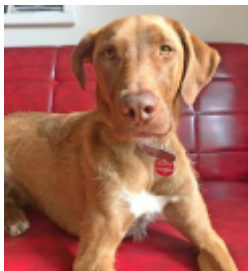


Now, when I come home from work, I can't wait to see her. She's brought down my stress levels enormously, as being with her allows me to focus on her so my working day is forgotten. I'm now as devoted to her and she is to me! **Monica**



Billie is an 18 month old desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped 25kg female Hungarian Vizsla x Staghound, who's looking for a loving home.

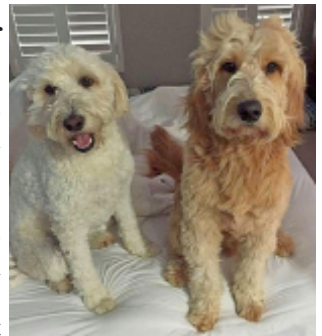
She's a gentle, sweet-natured and affectionate girl who loves cuddling up to her favourite people and would love being an integral part of the family. She would suit an all-adult home or one with older, dog-friendly children.



An active family would also suit, as she's a playful girl who enjoys her daily walks and time at the park. Billie loves socialising with other dogs and would suit a home with another dog for company. (She's not been tested with cats or other animals.)

She enjoys an indoor/outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors. Billie's adoption fee is \$650 Microchip Number: 956000010236520 Pet Exchange Register Source Number: EE100709 If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131 (Carlton North based, but we go to you).

Buddy (white, 6 years of age) and Cooper (cream, 5 years of age) are desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped male Golden Retriever x Standard Poodles, who are looking for a loving home together. They adore each other, so can't be separated. They even weigh the same amount, 30kg



They both have the most beautiful, affectionate natures and would suit an all-adult home or one with gentle, dog loving, older children. They would thrive being an integral part of the family, cuddling up to you on the couch or on your bed (if you let them!)

Extrovert Buddy is the dominant one, while sensitive soul Cooper is happy to play second fiddle.

Buddy had a hip replacement on his right side, due to severe hip dysplasia however it's healed exceptionally well and he doesn't appear to be in pain. He slows up if walked too far though, so shouldn't be overexerted. Short or medium walks are fine, just not long ones.



Cooper is quite an athletic boy who loves a run. He's shy around strangers and other dog's he doesn't yet know, but is great once he's been introduced.

They enjoy an indoor/ outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors. Regular grooming would also be required.

Buddy and Cooper's combined adoption fee is \$120 Buddy's Microchip Number: 900003200035382 Cooper's Microchip Number: 956000003642434 Pet Exchange Register Source Number: EE100709 If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131 (Mount Martha based, but we go to you).

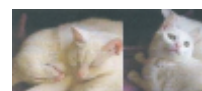
Re-advertised: I'm still looking for a loving home!

Lola is a 9 year old, 24kg desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped female Staffordshire Terrier x, who's looking for a loving home. She's a very dainty pup who loves her daily walks, as well as cuddles and being with her favourite people. She would suit an all-adult home or one with older, dogs savvy children.

Lola is great with other dogs. She'd enjoy a home with a relaxed, desexed male dog for company or as the sole pet, with retired people or someone working from home.

She's had two ACL knee reconstructions of her back legs. They were performed at Southpaws Moorabbin and come with a lifetime warranty.

She enjoys an indoor/ outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors. Lola's adoption fee is \$280 If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131 (Carrum Downs based, but we go to you)



**We are now much loved in our new home and very grateful to TARS Inc.
Such a new lease of life!**



Jett is a 20 month old desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped 25kg male English Springer Spaniel who's looking for a loving home.

He's a very smoochy and cuddly boy who loves human company and would suit a family happy to make him an integral part of their lives. When on lead he sometimes lunges at passing dogs, so would suit an experienced owner who can continue with his training.



He loves to please, which certainly helps. An active family who will happily walk him daily, is just what he needs.

He has some anxiety, but we find that stops (sometimes within hours, but usually within days, or a week or so) once the right home has been found.

Jett's lived with another dog but unfortunately, they don't get along. He would either suit a home with a desexed female dog or someone who's retired or working from home. He's not good with cats. He enjoys an indoor/ outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors. Regular grooming would also be required

Jett's adoption fee is \$700 Microchip Number: 956000005687371 Pet Exchange Register Source Number: EE100709 If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131 (Glenroy based, but we go to you).

Re-advertised: I'm still looking for a loving home! Bundy is an 8 year old, 20kg desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped male Blue Heeler x, who's looking for a loving home.

He's a very affectionate and playful boy (he loves playing fetch) who's looking for a home where he'll be a cherished member of the family. He loves to please, knows basic commands and is even known to 'speak' ••

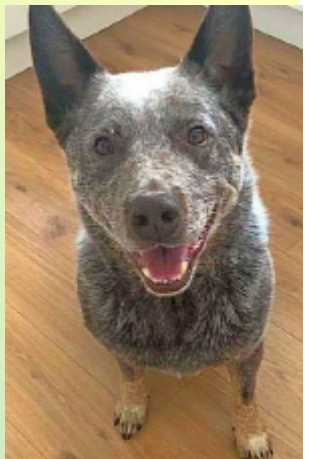
Bundy would suit a relaxed all adult home or one with dog savvy, older children. A home with a desexed female dog for company, would also be great.

He enjoys an indoor/ outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors. Bundy's adoption fee is \$300

Microchip

Number:

900012000809213 Pet Exchange Register Source Number: EE100709 If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131 (Clifton Hill based, but we go to you).



Happy Adoption Tale!

From Penny and Col, who have adopted lovely little Timpy, the Kelpie x Corgi.



'It seems our luck was in when we found Timpy on the SavourLife website (we advertise on their Adopt-A-Dog website as well [TARS]). Her ad mentioned that a quiet home would suit her best. As we're a retired couple, Timpy seemed a perfect fit and this she is proving to be.

Initially quite timid and shy, she's now gaining more confidence and beginning to show her playful side which is quite heartwarming for us. She has finally been brave

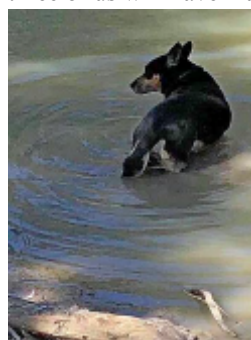
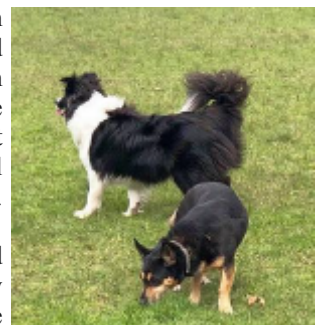
enough to hop up on the couch for a cuddle!

Timpy loves her walks in the off leash park and is super good with other dogs. Right now she's on the farm with us and loving the freedom. Her favourite daytime spot is under the house, in the sandy soil after having a paddle in the river. Typical kelpie behaviour!!

Timpy has so many good points and we can't believe how lucky we are to have found her. The three of us will have many happy years together, that's for sure!

Thanks Penny and Col! Timpy's certainly a very lucky girl! She gets to express both her active kelpie side, running around on the family's country property and her regal corgi side, swanning around in the leafy eastern suburbs during the week.

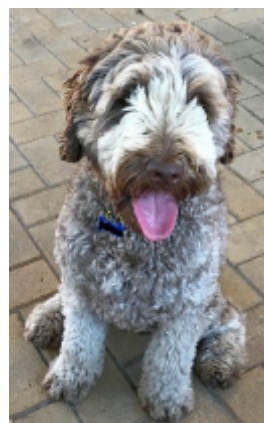
Best of all, she has two humans who love her. •



Teddy is an 18 month old desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped 20kg male Labrador x Miniature Poodle who's looking for a loving home.

He loves people, enjoys giving and receiving lots of cuddles and would suit being an integral part of the family, ideally in an all-adult home or one with older, dog savvy children.

Teddy's an active boy who enjoys his daily walks and time at the off leash park, especially playing fetch. An active family would therefore suit.



He's great with other dogs and has lived with one. He'd love a home with another dog for company, ideally a medium to large dog. Teddy's isn't 100% hypoallergenic, so he may trigger allergies with those who are particularly sensitive. He also sheds, but only a tiny bit. He's lived mainly outdoors but when allowed inside, he doesn't have accidents. He would love an indoor/ outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors. Regular grooming would also be required. Teddy's adoption fee is \$800 Microchip Number: 953010002286417 Pet Exchange Register Source Number: EE100709 If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131 (Narre Warren based, but we go to you)

Wire

Women's Information Referral Exchange

One in three calls WIRE receives from women are related to family violence. Wire: 372 Spencer Street, West Melbourne 3003. Telephone Support Service Line 1300 134 130 Mon-Fri 9.00-5.00. <http://www.wire.org.au/>



What next for China?

Part 2



Apart from sneaking into the South Pacific and offering loans and other goodies to poor countries including Papua New Guinea and Timor — other than China's reach into diamond rich African countries — supposedly as part of their amazing Belt and Road Initiative, China is deliberating what it should do about Vietnam. But, naturally enough, this

is not for public delineation. There will be no news of this extreme watchful decision by the Chinese government in its local newspapers, because they are controlled by the Communist Party of China in a most restrictive manner. CPC keeps sprouting throughout the South Pacific “We are the nice guys, come to help you.” Underneath all of this is China's expansion programme. It is no secret anymore that China may well seek to either warn Vietnam off via military power with warships, or in an extreme highly likely case, actually invade the smaller country to shut it up. Which is

what they did in previous centuries under Emperor governments, and what they attempted to do in 1979 when the lesser military power of Vietnam surprised them with their ferocity and pushed Chinese troops way across the border back into China. It's our land, not yours.

And so it is with certain islands and atolls in the South China Sea. — the Spratleys and others, which have been taken over by China's military as forward bases, simply for armed reconnaissance and forward leaping pads for fighters and bombers to control the Pacific, also with docks for destroyers and aircraft carriers. Vietnam has long claimed ownership of some of these islands and atolls, which China has taken as their own, and Vietnam has an historical right. Hence the earlier century map shown here with the pink and yellow islands and atolls to the right, firmly under control of the Siamese/Annamese (Vietnamese) races. Definitely not in control by China.



Times have changed. Fast forward to the 21st Century. Vietnam may well have the willingness and strength to push Chinese forces back from its northern border, but China now has superior air and ballistic missile power that no other country in the region has, with perhaps the exception of North Korea. It will take considerable diplomatic manoeuvres by Vietnam and its neighbours to convince the Communist Party of China not to continue with this aggression.

Meanwhile China continues to persecute the Uygurs, a minority Turkish ethnic group settled in the north-west of 'China' since the 16th Century. China does not recognise them as an indigenous group and considers the Uygurs a threat to Communism — much as China brutally assaulted and subdued Tibet in past years. China has a lot to learn. •

The Council to Homeless Persons

Established in 1972, the Council to Homeless Persons is the peak Victorian body representing individuals and organisations with a stake or interest in homelessness. Our mission is to work towards ending homelessness through leadership in policy, advocacy and sector development.

<http://www.chp.org.au/>

See our Consumer Participation Resource Kit at:

http://www.chp.org.au/public_library/cpkit/index.shtml



Motoring Memoirs

1970 Mercedes-Benz 280SL Roadster



The original design was the 230SL of 1963. The 280SL followed with 180 horsepower from a 2.8 litre six-cylinder engine from 1968 to 1971.

Fun to drive, it was also comfortable enough to be almost luxurious. Not a large car, it was zippy to handle in traffic and gave an exciting drive out in the country.

This particular model was delivered by York Motors Ltd in Sydney. It has undergone a complete bare metal restoration and has since become a multiple prize winner at the Mercedes Benz car club Concourse de Elegance.

Credit: Owner, Colin Pavier, Templestowe, Melbourne, Victoria.





The Quiet Corner

Robert Frost, the American poet summed up living, dying, being or not being with the last stanza of his poem *Stopping by woods on a snowy evening*:

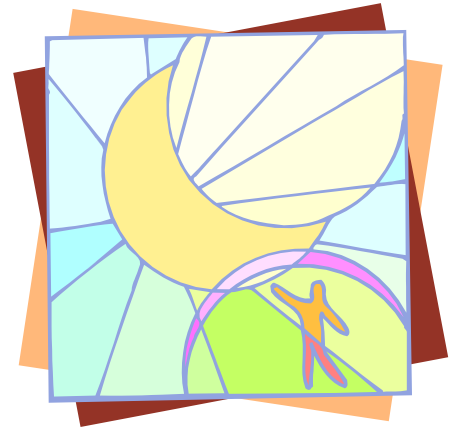
*The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.*

Dylan Thomas was less subtle:

*Do not go gentle into the night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.*

And Winston Churchill said:

If you're going through hell, keep going.



Mahatma Gandhi:

*Live as if you were going to die tomorrow,
Learn as if you were going to live forever.*

Clive James:

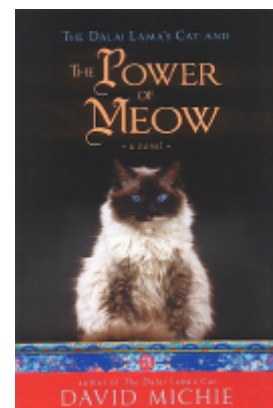
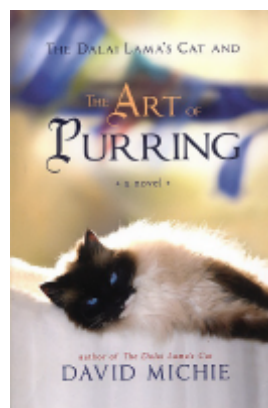
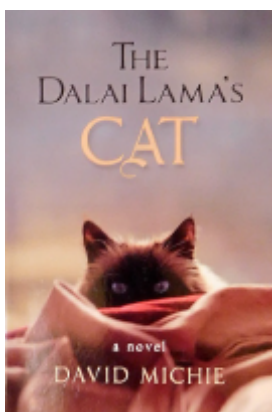
When the maple leaves outside my Cambridge window turn to red this year, I will be gone. . . In the meanwhile one can read. He's still reading.

In the twilight of our lives some folks look back and wonder where they have been, what it was all about, and what of the short future they may have left. Others stay focused on the present time, giving what they can to the community, their family, or in some cases to the wider world. Just because one is of an age that society sometimes looks upon as heading for the “roll up yonder”, there’s no need to dwell upon it. Twilight years can be satisfying: finding new friends among those much younger, taking up a hobby that one perhaps yearned for in earlier days when there was not the time. The body may creak and protest at times and the morning and evening pills become a bit of a nuisance, but while there is life there can be joy in many things. You may not be able to continue with gardening, but you can enjoy other gardens. The simple sight of roses in bloom produces a much needed flow of delight to the brain, while inhaling that perfume doubles the delight.

Those with grandchildren and great-grandchildren can see what their own endeavours over the years have brought forth — individual bodies and minds that already make a contribution to the social network of the world. That little man or little woman you so carefully helped to mould with your wisdom, has somehow surprisingly turned out to be a real treasure. And in the thought of this, there is a pleasure worth more than gold.

*Not what we have, but what we enjoy, constitutes our abundance.
Epicurus 341-270 BC.*

For those who have not already taken the opportunity: The Dalai Lama exquisite cat series by David Michie are still available at bookstores





Saigon sunset

A saga in several episodes by Graham Price

Chapter one

Phuong was born in old Saigon in 1938 during the French colonial period — her mother, Tran Thi Mai, was a Vietnamese mathematics school teacher at the elite Nguyen Académie for girls situated off Rue de la Grandiere. Her father — Pierre Duval a French government official, had been transferred down from Hué in 1936 to the lesser administration at Saigon in Cochin China. They had met at a diplomatic party arranged by the American Legation — Mai being from one of Saigon's wealthy families, with her father deeply involved in rubber and its exports.

Pierre and Mai were married in 1937 at the Roman Catholic cathedral in Saigon and efforts to produce a family resulted in one still birth—a boy, and eleven months later in 1938, Phuong was born. Her name in Vietnamese folklore means phoenix rising. Destiny had been fulfilled, thought Mia — the gods had looked kindly upon her after the first misfortune and had given her a child of the heavens in compensation. The child grew in strength and in time came to be accepted by both families Tran and Duval as a gift from the celestial realms. There were no further children from Mai's womb, no matter how hard she and Pierre tried. For some years it vexed Mai that she could not produce further children, but by 1945 at the end of the Japanese invasion of Vietnam, she finally acquiesced and accepted that her family's destiny rested in Phuong.

Both parents noted how the child learnt quickly, much faster than her cousins, when by the age of seven she had already mastered Vietnamese, French, and even English. Mai was amazed that on the child's eighth birthday she showed a knowledge of the French language and Vietnamese culture which far surpassed that of her mother and her numerous French speaking neighbours.

Phuong Duval, having been sent by her parents for her finishing education at Paris and London, had in 1958 at the age of twenty become the English teacher at the Nguyen Académie for girls shortly before her parents were deceased. Both had died early, leaving the daughter with a grand mansion home and a reasonable inheritance. But the académie was a position that she had poured herself into regardless of her sudden wealth. She had such a love for the mostly Vietnamese girls from wealthy families together with certain daughters of French officials, that it almost broke her heart if she found some who were failing in their education. The girls from ruling class families were not all entirely interested in education, and were being groomed by their parents for covert marriages with males of Saigon's upper class. Which is how in 1959, Phuong came to meet James McKinnon, widower, and father to three children.

James McKinnon was with the British company of Asia Barr, which owned rubber plantations and tin mines throughout the region of South-East Asia. He had recently been transferred from Malaya to Cochin China for the purpose of ascertaining further rubber plantation investment and mineral ore deposits that possibly could be developed for export. That the country and its northern provinces was under French colonial rule never phased Asia Barr. They were into South East Asia with a vengeance, though some of their employees secretly wished that the French and the Dutch would somehow be kicked out of Asia by local uprisings, so that Asia Barr would then have a foothold for the negotiation of further mineral treaties. Britannia still ruled the waves with her massive naval fleet and her supportive commonwealth countries, so it was said, but not all the lands East of Suez were under their thumb. The French and the Dutch were such an annoyance, as had been the previous Portuguese. As for the Spanish, except for the Philippines they seemed to be more interested in the South Americas and thus were no real commercial threat.

James had come across from residing many years at Kuala Lumpur with his two daughters and one son and they had settled in a an old French colonial mansion on the outskirts of Saigon city. He'd not wished to leave Malaya, as it was so welcoming and peaceful for British colonials. To be *tuan* in any of the Malayan princely states was to be regarded as one of superior ability and talents compared to any of the local officials. When anyone on board ship questioned him about British colonialism, he always smiled, nodded, and said: "We've improved the land beyond anyone's desire."

"Oh," said Michelle, his eldest daughter recently turned sixteen, "How beautiful Saigon is. It leaves KL in the dumps. Oh, papa, why could we not have come here years ago? It's so Parisian, so elegant. I am going to stay here forever. I shall marry a rich Vietnamese and produce twelve children who will go on to luxuriate in the life that we have here. It is so, so romantic."



Samantha, waving a Chinese fan in front of her and who was thirteen, simply smirked and said: “You will have to get daddy’s permission you silly mong. Anyway, not all Vietnamese are rich.”

“But,” said Michelle. “Don’t you not think that a Vietnamese noble or prince would fancy me?”

The much younger red-haired Jules, at eleven years, laughed. “This place is going Marxist you silly girl. Where on earth are you going to find anyone of your dreams? You’ll probably be married to a peasant commissar of the communist party.”

James had heard the last of the conversation and interrupted his children. “There will be no talk of Marxism in this house. If you wish to learn about that, then I will be pleased to ship you off to China where the Marxist revolution is taking place at this very moment. There are Marxist ideas spread everywhere these days, which lead to unholy revolution with hundreds of thousands — if not millions — being slaughtered, and the sooner you learn that, the better.”

“Such a bore,” said Michelle, softly enough so that her father would not hear.

The thirty-year-old sleep-in French and English speaking governess, Charmaine Curtaine, shook her head slightly, indicating to Michelle that it was not ladylike to carry on like that. She pulled Michelle to one side. “I have taken you as far as I can. It is now up to your father to seek further schooling, perhaps in Paris, perhaps here in Saigon. I know of an académie to be recommended here in Saigon and not that far from our house. It would mean that your wish to stay in Saigon would be granted, though I know your father wishes you to be sent to France or England for your finishing. I also know that you are not happy with that and I may be of help in persuading him to let you stay here in Saigon. What do you think?”

“You’re such a gem, dear Charmaine. Oh, goody goody, please squeeze papa as much as you can. I want to stay here in Saigon for the rest of my life. It is so exhilarating, so atmospheric, sooooo French.”

And Jules, sitting at a small table in the drawing room, couldn’t help but overhear. “Piffle! If I had my way I’d ship you off to the Caribbean where you would become a slave in the sugar plantations.”

“I heard that, you slug!” It was Samantha, sliding in on the polished floorboards like a ballet dancer from Paris. “Anyway, the way things are going in this country, we might as well be in the Caribbean. At least the English have things in their colonies under some sort of control. This Saigon administration is going to be kicked out of here sooner or later. It’s just a lackey of the French.”

“You know too much for your own good,” said Jules. “Been reading propaganda again, have we?”

“Which one? They’re all deadbeats, losers, couldn’t hold onto an empire of their own making without messing it up. Their insincerity really poo’s me off.”

“What would you know, weasel!”

“Ha, you’re the weasel. I have friends who know about things here, stupid. They get information from their parents’ Viet maids and gardeners. That president Ngo Dinh Diem won’t last much longer. He’s being paid by the Americans who have their spies all over the place. Don’t you know that the revolutionist Ho Chi Minh up in Hanoi has his spies here too? So, there is a neutral pact at the moment, but I know that the communists from the north will win out and we’ll all be thrown out of here.”

Charmaine was out of earshot, having wandered down to the kitchen to see what the cook was preparing for lunch. She had recently turned 35, caught a glimpse of herself in a hall mirror as she passed by — shook her dark curly hair and smiled at her reflected dark brown eyes. Still quite good looking, she considered. Having come down from Hué after her father died, and securing through the agency this position as governess with the McKinnon family, she was aware that she held some feelings for James and perhaps it was mutual, but she was not willing to be landed with an instant family as a step-mother. As governess, the situation was a happy one so why change anything? Besides, she was considering returning to France in a few years, being somewhat unsure about the political situation here in Cochin China.

James had been out for a walk, but now had come in and heard the voices of his children. He stopped at the entrance to the drawing room and listened. What he heard made him wonder about the astuteness of his children, particularly Samantha, who appeared to have a grasp of politics even for her youthful age. Well, he thought, perhaps a trip to Cholon over the week-end — the Chinese quarter just out of Saigon — might give his children some insight into a different culture not exclusively dominated by the French or the Vietnamese. In his civilian role, James considered himself to be a certain historian. He had followed the French colonial ‘invasion’ of Viet Nam closely. He had also delved into the ancient history of these Annamese people from earlier centuries — particularly concentrating on the colonisation and then the repelling of emperors and warlords from China. He was aware that the country was split into three divisions under French colonial rule: the lower or southern area being known as Cochin China, the middle known as Annam with Hué as the capital, and the northern



protectorate was Tongking. It was a fascinating history, with much of the land under Confucian ideology with worship of ancestors a prime reason for being. The ceremonies of worship, especially at the Tet lunar new year, were so colourful and magnificent. But Cholon would be different, as it was predominantly Chinese and, no doubt, somewhat noisier.

James had traded his Citroen light 15 for the entirely new manufactured model — the Citroen Goddess. He was intrigued with its hydraulic transmission and the suspension that hissed softly as the car came to rest, lowering itself gently toward the pavement. It had wide wings and wrap around good looks with large glass areas. Too late he realised that it was an attention seeker, with people crowding around, wanting to touch it. Several weeks went by with local Vietnamese children surrounding the car whenever he parked and James, somewhat fearful of the sudden popularity, managed a deal with the garage owner to trade back to a Light 15, but this time with the more powerful six-cylinder engine. Michelle was heartbroken. “Oh, how could you do that, papa? It was such a beautiful thing, and now we’re stuck with another ugly duckling.” Jules had piped up: “Well, you don’t know what you’re talking about. The fifteen has a more powerful engine, so we’ll be able to race away from any Viet Minh attacks.”

“Dreaming again are you? It’s almost as if you want to be involved with the Minh. You read too many of those jungle and pirate books. The country’s at peace since they kicked the French army out, so don’t try and scare us, Julie-Jules. It’s not on.”

Jules looked up from his drawing of a British battleship, “One day, Michelle, you will have to eat those words.”

The road to Cholon was crowded with pedicabs, trishaws, bicycles, bullock carts and humans on foot, with cars attempting to squeeze through. The noise of car horns sometimes obliterated conversation. The wide expanses of rice fields on each side of the road caused Samantha to comment: “Look at all those poor people in the water and mud. What are they planting?”

“Rice seedlings,” said Charmaine. “The villagers have their own plots of land.”

“And those tall towers. What are they for?”

Charmaine looked at James, waiting for him to reply, because she really did not wish to talk about those high timber-structured towers, placed every now and then along the road to Cholon. James was silent for a moment, then spoke.

“They are for soldiers to keep a watch on things — to keep us safe.”

Michelle piped up: “Safe from whom, papa?”

“Safe from the Commies, silly chook,” said Jules, looking up from a British picture story book for boys.

James was still silent. Better let this one go, he thought. There are enough problems on this day without adding to them. He blew the Citroen’s horn hard, as a bullock cart laden with Vietnamese swayed too close to the car. Jules waved to several children on the back of the cart and they waved back. He laughed and bobbed his head up and down making the children smile and chatter to each other in their own language.

Finally the fields gave way to town buildings and James eased the car through the streets of Cholon, the smell of dried fish and spices giving instant knowledge that they were now in Chinatown. It could have been anywhere in Asia where the Chinese had settled, bringing their unique style to buildings — especially to ancestral temples with their dragon motifs and curved roofs. But the entrance to Cholon market — the *Binh Tay*. — was distinctly colonial French with a Vietnamese or Chinese touch. James parked the car, giving a small Chinese boy some *piastres* to guard it while the family moved off into the bazaars located under massive roofs surrounding a square. They wandered through numerous stalls, with Charmaine informing the children not to touch, but simply look. It was a wonderland of silks and other materials, clothes and shoes of all description, exotic foods sizzling on hotplates. Jules went to run his hand along a line of roasted and glazed ducks hanging in front of a small eatery when his father saw him. “Don’t do that, Jules, or you’ll be spending a week inside locked up.”

Michelle laughed: “Bad Jules, don’t do that. . . don’t be a silly goose.”

With Samantha pouting: “Silly goose, goosey goosey, silly old goose.”

“Hush Children,” said Charmaine, giving Samantha a playful box on her left ear. “Have some manners for goodness sakes. . . Oh look, there’s Miss Duval, the English teacher at the Nguyen Académie, with her chauffeur!”

James swung his attention away from Jules and took in the slim woman in the lemon coloured national dress, the *ao dai*, which clung to her figure in the light breeze that wafted through the market stalls. The wide silk pantaloons were wrapped by the breeze around her shapely legs and she turned as if she had heard her name. Charmaine waved to her and moved forward. James was struck by the golden beauty of this English teacher, who certainly wasn’t French, but might have been a person of mixed heritage. He felt his heart beat faster as he watched a smile of recognition appear on her face when



Charmaine greeted her. The two women talked for a moment while James and the children looked on, then taking the teacher by the arm, Charmaine introduced her to the others.

The children were somewhat speechless as they gazed at the vision before them, and James, completely embarrassed by the silence, managed to doff his hat, bow slightly, and utter some words in his rusty French.

“Enchanté Mademoiselle.”

“Merci, C’est un plaisir, Monsieur.”

Her soft voice had a determined sound about it, and he realised immediately that this was a strong woman, regardless of her delicate beauty. She was slightly taller than the average Vietnamese female and he quickly glanced at her feet, but saw only flat sandals there. She was almost shoulder to shoulder with him. Her Vietnamese chauffeur was staring at him with a quizzical look. No doubt sizing me up, thought James, to see if I am a threat to this beautiful woman. The chauffeur was short but wiry and looked strong, and James didn’t care to get on the wrong side of him. He nodded to him and gave a small smile, to which the chauffeur returned rather slowly.

The children were ecstatic, especially Michelle. Charmaine had introduced them one by one, then half turning to James, said to Phuong Duval “It might be possible for Michelle to attend your académie this year, that is, if my employer Mr. McKinnon, would grant his permission.”

James knew this was a setup. “Well, I . . . I had hoped to send Michelle to London, or Paris. . . .”

“I’m sure your Michelle would be very welcome at our académie, Monsieur McKinnon. We have extremely good reviews from parents in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. Our syllabus is one of the most appreciated in the world.”

Michelle gave a little jump and clapped her hands. “Oh goody. . . please papa. . . please. . . I would love it instead of going somewhere overseas, which would be such a bore. After all, our life is here now. . . please papa.”

James laughed. “Let me think about it. . . and perhaps Miss Duval would come to dinner one evening with us and Charmaine. . . er. . . to tell us more about her académie?” The words were out of his mouth before he knew it and he was surprised at his own forwardness. “Would next Friday evening be suitable?”

Phuong didn’t betray any shock or apprehension from this sudden invitation. She simply nodded toward her chauffeur: “I shall need to check my diary. If you give me your address, Kam will contact you later this evening or tomorrow. It has been so pleasurable meeting with you Monsieur McKinnon. I do hope you will consider allowing your daughter, Michelle, to attend our Nguyen Académie. We do have an extremely good reputation.”

When they had practically tired themselves out checking all the stalls at Binh Tay market, James, Charmaine and the children retired to a small bar-restaurant opposite where another surprise awaited them. Charmaine recognised a man sitting at the bar, who was seated so that he could watch everyone who entered. He saw her looking at him and he nodded.

“That man over there,” she said to James, “is police. . . an inspector of the Sûreté. He is from Hué. . . I wonder what he is doing here?”

James looked up from the menu and glanced across at the large man in an immaculate white suit. “How do you know him?”

“My brother was in trouble with gambling and owed a lot of money to some Viet Nam gangsters. It was before my father died when we were living in Hué. Father knew this man and asked him to act as an intermediary if father could provide the money. Inspector Bastein somehow managed to smooth things over without anyone being hurt or arrested, and father then packed off my brother to France to live with his uncle.”

James stared at the man, noting his deeply tanned face, somewhat pock-marked with the hint of a moustache, but with clean shaven cheeks and neck. His head was large and somewhat square, but then, thought James, he is a big man — probably at least six feet tall when he stands. It was then that the inspector slapped something on the counter of the bar and rose steadily.

He’s coming over here, thought James, already taking a dislike to the man. He watched as the inspector walked with large confident strides across the lacquered hardwood floor and James wondered if the slight bulge to the right side of the man’s jacket was a pistol. Charmaine had a tentative smile on her face, and James considered that although the policeman presented a formidable presence, she was pleased to see him.

“Ah, Mademoiselle Curtaine, what a coincidence!” “I was only thinking of your father the other day. . . very sad that he passed on so early in life. . . and here you are looking so young and pretty. Saigon must be good for you? Would you introduce me to your companions?”



Charmaine made the formal introductions and the inspector shook James firmly by the hand, winked at Samantha and tousled Jules' hair. "May I join you, Mr. McKinnon? If you are ordering, then please be my guest."

James stared at the man. "We have already ordered Monsieur Bastein, but *merci bien*."

"Then allow me to foot the bill. You have not been long in Saigon, nor here in Cholon, so I welcome you to my old city."

"But I thought you were from Hué?"

"Of course, but before that twelve years here in Saigon. I requested this new transfer, because there are certain influences down here that require watching."

Jules was fascinated by the inspector, who sat beside him. "You mean the Commies, don't you, sir?"

"Well, yes and no, not exactly *petit garçon*. There are other people who would cause our country trouble, criminals, so-called nationalists, and sometimes interfering foreigners."

"At my school, some of the boys say the president is a wicked man. They hear that from their gardeners and maids. And my sister hears the same."

James started. "Jules, that's enough!"

Inspector Bastein laughed. "Oh, that's quite alright, Mr. McKinnon. It is a complicated situation. . . even the Buddhists and the Catholics are at each others throats and the president is a firm Catholic. Then there are the Cao Dai's, a very large religious group with their own army. They are a mixture of Catholicism, Buddhism and Confucianism. They even have their own pope. For the moment they are with us, but who knows what the future may bring. Then again, there is the Hoa Hao, a religious sect which I consider are nothing but gangsters. They have people in high places and are very influential."

James gave a sigh. "Inspector, your French army left some years back, didn't they, not long after they lost that battle of Dien Bien Phu? Why are people such as yourself still here now that Geneva has divided the country into North and South? We have found Saigon, and here in Cholon, to be very peaceful and welcoming."

Inspector Bastein smiled. "Please, call me Claude. There is an agreement with your son's so-called wicked president Diem for many of us to stay for a time to train the local Annamese people. We have much experience in rooting out traitors, and the president appreciates that. Even he does not trust some of his generals, who may be plotting against him. Ah, James, it may well be peaceful here in the city, but in the countryside it is another story. I trust you will be traveling back to Saigon before dark?"

"Why, of course. These Cao Dai people, are they dangerous?"

"Probably not. There was a defection some years ago by one of their officers, a Colonel Thé-he, who took with him into the jungle a few thousand troops and made himself up to General, but mainly as a force against the north. We don't see them as a threat, but. . ." He paused, glancing away to where a Vietnamese policeman was standing near the doorway. "You seem very interested in all of this, James, are you Catholic?"

"No, I'm Protestant."

"Ah, yes. The English are mainly that."

"We Scots," corrected James.

"Of course, said Inspector Bastein. . . forgive me. Yes, the people who with the Irish and the Welsh run England's empires for them, and very well at that, though they didn't do so well in India. I expect it was the English who made those debilitating errors, much the same — dare I say, as we French did in earlier days here in Viet Nam?"

James chuckled. "The British Isles certainly are a mixture, many good some bad. Of course we got rid of some of the more adventurous devils, shipping them in chains to America and Australia, where culture is not what it should be."

Bastein raised an eyebrow. "You are not in favour of those countries?"

"Oh no, no. I was simply comparing the culture of those countries with France and Britain, where we both have long centuries of developed arts."

"Hmm. . . give them time and they will find their own unique culture. I am sure of that."

In spite of his first appraisal of Claude Bastein, James found himself warming toward the man. There was something behind that large exterior and initially threatening posture, that James considered was, after all, a person with the human touch. And there and then he made up his mind to be more sociable to the inspector of Sûreté — the secret French police of Viet Nam. •

To be continued.