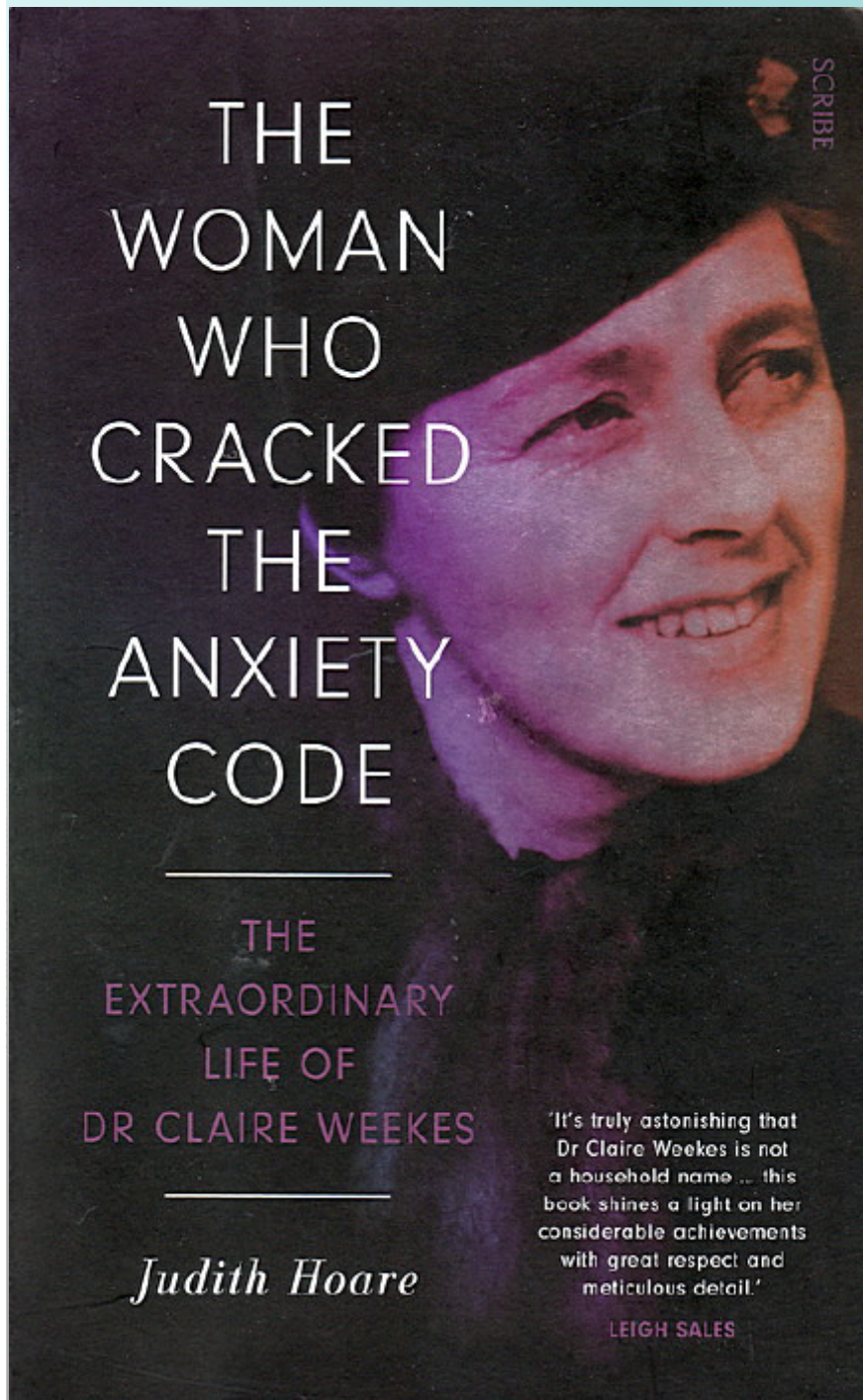


Cat's Eye Weekly

alias *The Ferret*

No. 136

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Can we learn from cats?

William Johnson's Silent Music

The Coddling of the American Mind

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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

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The editor's desk

If you find yourself saying "I'm sick of this . . . I'm fed up with . . . I'm tired of . . . STOP! Stop right there and change it to "This will pass." Because it will. That's a fact of life.

This edition was to be published on the 11th of the 11th of November, but due to the NBN being down and a few other factors, it had to be put off until now. During World War 1 and other engagements, our troops had to rely upon one another. There was always the knowledge that there was always back-up. Not so these days apparently. Technical know-how is fragile, doesn't have a solid back-up these days and can fail anytime. Banks have gone off-line, supermarkets as well. If this was applied to field operations during World War I and other, it would have led to devastating consequences. Yet, modern technological/communications companies don't seem to have that same ethical dedication or control. What's the answer?

The highlight this month is Dr. Claire Weekes, the medical practitioner and scientist who showed psychiatrists what they were missing, indeed, how blind many of them were to the obvious. This could not have come at a most sensitive time, when numerous folk are crowding psychologist's rooms due, it seems, to the Covid-19 crisis. See page 2.

In 1976 I purchased a book titled *Silent Music*, to be precise, on the 20th of August 1976. The pages are old and yellowed now and liable to tear if too much pressure is put upon them. The cover is somewhat speckled with age, as the owner also is. Alas, this tome has been lying on my bookshelves for decades — read numerous times in past years, but not recently. Some folk love to turn over books, throwing out for recycling, but perhaps that is not always the wise thing to do with books such as this, particularly if one writes. The wisdom that lies on the shelves has a way of boomeranging at us when needed. And perhaps *Silent Music* is needed in this day of severe Covid-19 restrictions. The big surprise is, that from the first publishing of *Silent Music* in 1974, and after 46 years, it is still in print and easily obtainable. See page 11.

How dare they? The Victorian Andrews' Labor Government set up a bill to pass parliament, relating to the blocking of rape and murder victims' names. Which meant, to put it bluntly, that victims and victims family would be forbidden by law from publicly mentioning their names and would have to apply for a court direction to do so. It was heart-rending to hear on Radio 3AW the mother of rapist and murderer Adrian John Bayley — the killer of Jill Meagher — stating how totally insensitive the government was in attempting to introduce that bill. Radio commentator, Neil Mitchell, had no idea of who the caller was until she revealed herself. That takes a very brave woman to do that. How dare they, she commented. How dare they. Recent events, including shut-downs due to the Covid-19 crisis, have revealed that this government is insensitive to the compassionate needs of residents — totally insensitive, going on their merry way thinking up obstructions and devices that fit with a more communist approach to life.

Continued p9

"Trouble is a tunnel through which we pass and not a brick wall against which we must break our head." Chinese proverb.

Feedback to Cat's Eye Weekly
is always welcome.
Click onto my purrfect nose!



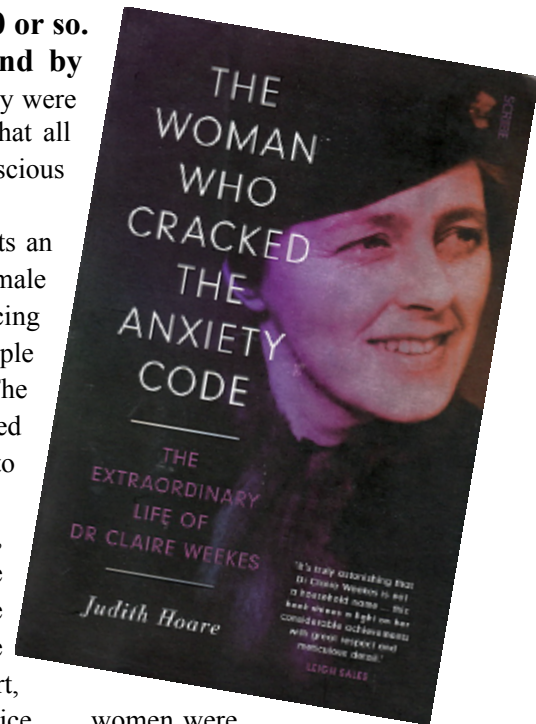


Claire Weekes: The Woman who made psychiatrists blush

Psychiatrists were God-like in the early days, even up to 2000 or so. Many assumed they had found the key to the human mind by following Freud's footsteps of the early 20th Century. But they were wrong, well, some of them at least. They were wrong in considering that all anxiety was the result of repressed sexual guilt or obsession with unconscious childhood experiences.

It took a little known doctor and scientist to show the specialists an easier way. But the path Claire Weekes trod was difficult, strewn with male attitudes during the early 1900s that women perhaps shouldn't be practicing medicine and should stick to nursing. An example was Dr Phoebe Chapple who wished to practice medicine with the army during World War I. The Australian army refused to sign her up on the basis of gender, so she travelled to England and enlisted in the Royal Army Medical Corps and from there to the front line where she tended to the wounded.

Claire Weekes had achieved her leaving certificate in Sydney, finishing with honours in English, botany, and geology with a place in the Faculty of Science at the University of Sydney. It was 1921. Judith Hoare writes "The university was still a male bastion. Not everyone welcomed the development . . . the Dean of Medicine, Professor Thomas Anderson Stuart, was courteous . . . but was, originally, frankly disapproving of the practice . . . women were failed repeatedly. Then when they graduated, there was a further set of hurdles: how to secure a job."



But Claire Weekes was strong, switched to Zoology and eventually gained her Doctor of Science degree. In 1929, at the age of 26, she had travelled to London, intending to work at London University. It was here that she began to experience strange bodily feelings: heart racing, palpitations. *The Woman who Cracked the Anxiety Code* p81: "She had already discovered that fear could not be extinguished by the rational brain. Thinking inevitably lost the battle to *feeling*. Weekes' substantial cognitive abilities, which delivered scholarships, awards, and opportunities, were sidelined by an all-consuming dread. It was this *feeling* she was desperate to extinguish, this *feeling* against which she fought so futilely, this *feeling* that was accompanied by racing panicked thoughts."

"The discovery that she had been frightened of fear itself was a profound revelation. Weekes was shocked that not one of the handful of doctors and specialists she had consulted had explained how fear could have such a deranging effect on the body."

This insight was profound. She needed to stop fighting the fear and to accept it. Later, Weekes would come to a further understanding of Darwin's work where, pp96-97: "Understanding nerves meant understanding what was common to all animals, the primal survival response, and what was different. However, she stuck to a biologist's view of the mind and body, uninterested in the psychic speculations of Freud. By looking at the mind-body connection through the nervous system, she was an inheritor of the work of the 19th century, work that had been sidelined . . . the lesson Weekes would learn for herself and pass on to others was how to manage anxiety, of which a racing heart was just one manifestation."

Eventually, Weekes returned to Sydney and went into private practice as a local GP. It was here, while counselling hundreds of patients, that the idea of a book began to form in Weekes' mind. Word of mouth concerning her treatment of nervous anxiety had spread throughout Australia and people were coming from almost every state in the country to see her. Simply because her methods worked. Some even stayed with her in her own home — often three or four at a time. It seemed that once you had found her, Claire Weekes wasn't going to let you go until you were cured.

The Woman who Cracked the Anxiety Code by Judith Hoare is a compelling biography of the life of Claire Weekes. It is 400 pages of fascinating reading. Hoare has the ability to bring Weekes to life — to work out the intriguing manifestations of her wider family life, to bring an understanding of what makes her tick. She has succeeded, but the main reason behind *The Woman who Cracked the Anxiety Code*, is in the title. It's all about someone who discovered what the experts of the time had not — a simpler way to treat anxiety and who then struggled to make this available to all. By 1962 Weekes had written her book, *Self Help for Your Nerves*, which was published by Angus & Robertson.



It was a bombshell — it skidded off the bookshelves as fast as it was supplied. Judith Hoare writes: “Weekes had no way of explaining that, as a senior physician, she had been consulted as an ‘expert’ by patients who had been referred to her by their doctors for years, nor that the point of her book was to meet the needs unmet by psychiatry.”

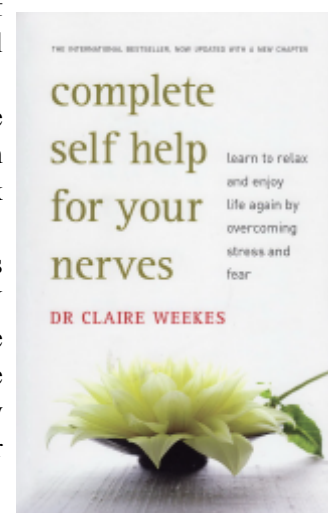
Naturally enough, psychiatrists had deep misgivings, until Weekes eventually found one who embraced her methods. She had given a talk in New York to which many had poooh-pooohed her work as populist, but “the New York psychiatrist Dr Manuel Zane” had been impressed and later invited Weekes to his clinic in New York. Zane “pressed upon his colleagues his view that Weekes had a special and unique understanding of anxiety, particularly panic disorder. Better still, she had an easily understood and demonstrably effective treatment protocol.”

Weekes had another important saviour, in the form of Dr. Robert DuPont, a psychiatrist who had graduated from Harvard University. DuPont was a specialist in drug addiction and at one time ran the American Narcotics Treatment Administration, but he had family problems that as a psychiatrist he could not solve. Daughter Caroline had developed an intense phobia of closed spaces. Zane introduced him to the work of Claire Weekes, to which DuPont at first laughed off. But then, by using Weekes’ approach to anxiety, Caroline was cured. It virtually blew the mind of DuPont, whose whole family became great friends with Weekes. Other psychiatrists climbed on board. Here was a simple treatment for anxiety and a self-help book that explained how a person could take control of their life again, not by using drugs, nor by expensive psychiatric sessions. Populist it may well have appeared at first, but it worked. The psychiatric profession finally came around.

What began with Weekes’ own suffering, had turned into a treatment for millions of people. *Self Help for Your Nerves*, first published in 1962, is still in print. Weekes wrote several other books, together with an updated version *Complete Self-help for Your Nerves*.

In the latter book, Weekes begins by putting the reader’s mind at ease: “If you are reading this book because you are having a nervous breakdown or because your nerves are ‘in a bad way’, you are the very person for whom it has been written and I shall therefore talk directly to you as if you were sitting beside me.

“I shall show clearly and simply, and yet with all necessary detail, just how a nervous breakdown begins and develops and how it can be cured. RECOVERY IS DEFINITELY ACHIEVABLE IF YOU FOLLOW THE ADVICE GIVEN HERE. This will take perseverance and some courage. You may notice that I have not asked for patience. Nervously sick people are rarely patient, because sick nerves are usually agitated nerves — that is one reason why they become bewildered by them. To wait patiently in a queue can be almost intolerable misery for such people. However, there is a substitute for patience and this I shall present to you later.”



The Woman who Cracked the anxiety Code

Scribe paperback

Dymocks \$AUD29.99

Complete Self Help for Your Nerves

Harper & Collins paperback

Various \$AUD24.99

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



OzChild foster and kinship carers are the backbone of our organisation, they play an enormous part in achieving better outcomes for children and young people, they are changing lives.

Working 24/7 to ensure children and young people are given the greatest chance at a brighter future, our carers are often supported themselves by a household of family members who care as much as they do.

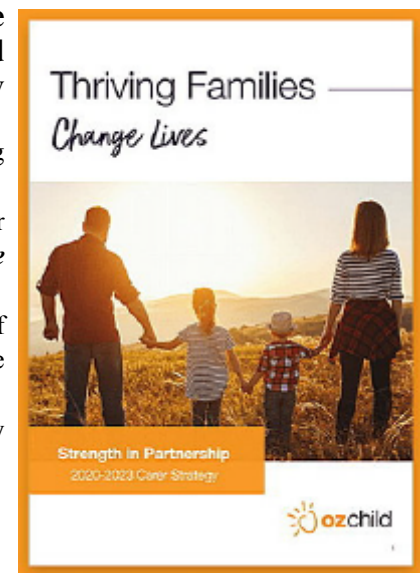
In 2019 our In-Home Care team began working on a strategy to improve the caring experience for OzChild carers.

We are more committed than ever to supporting our carers, and every member of the carer household, and in doing so, OzChild's very first carer strategy; ***Thriving Families Change Lives*** will shape the way in which we build a partnership with our carers.

Respect, support, communication and above all, relationship are the foundations of our **Thriving Families** carer strategy. Through this three-year strategy, we will demonstrate and lead real change in how the community and sector view the role of carers.

We will improve the day-to-day carer experience by embedding carers into our three key pillars:

1. **Organisation Culture;**
2. **Program Development; and**
3. **Community Building.**



It is our belief that thriving families enable everybody to reach their full potential. We can't do what we do without our carers. And we want to make sure they are not only fully supported but they **FEEL** supported.

For positive outcomes to be achieved we know carer experience must be improved. We must ensure the long-term wellbeing and happiness of every member of the carer household, and their ability to continue to make a difference in the lives of our most vulnerable. ***Thriving Families*** will ensure we are able to offer carers greater support, to achieve better outcomes, increase stability and build a community of carers that is rich with knowledge, friendship and support for each other.

Our staff will be guided by this strategy – through the delivery of this carer strategy we have clear focus on how we can ensure the success of our carers and improve the carer journey.

We are committed to **working in partnership with our carers**, because quite simply, we couldn't be prouder of the team of carers we have who are part of the OzChild family enabling us to do what we do. •



OzChild is now delivering a program in NSW to support families who have been affected by an adolescent behaving in an aggressive way within the home.

National Support Office

National Support Office

PO Box 1312
Level 3, 150 Albert Road
South Melbourne VIC 3205
T: (03) 9695 2200
F: (03) 9696 0507
E: hello@ozchild.org.au
After hours pager service (03) 9264 1628
Child Protection after hours 13 12 78

Marketing & Communications

Bianca Richards
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E: brichards@ozchild.org.au

Fundraising & Events

Sheryn Cooper
T: (03) 9695 2228
E: fundraise@ozchild.org.au



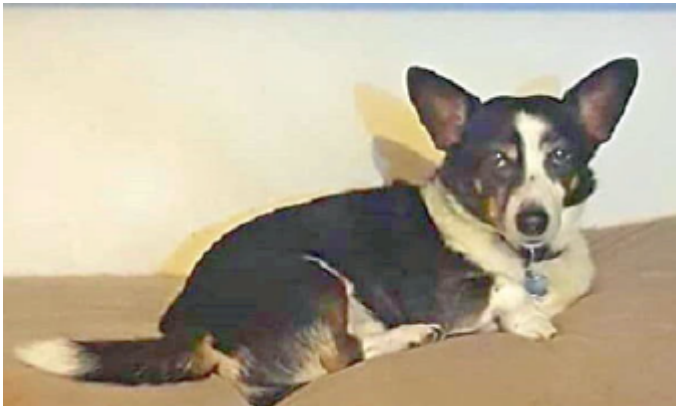
The Animal Rehoming Service

For further information, please log onto <http://www.tars.org.au/>. The Animal Rehoming Service Inc. is a registered charity. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible. (ABN: 51 275 837 567)



Barry is a 10 year old, desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped 7.5kg male Corgi x Dachshund, who's looking for a loving home.

He's a loving, happy and friendly little boy who's a total charmer. He's also very well trained and loves to please. He'd suit a home where he'll be treated as a loved member of the family and included in daily activities. He'd also suit an all-adult



home or one with older, dog savvy children.

Barry's great at the off leash park and enjoys his daily walks. He's occasionally dominant but by and large is very good with other dogs, though he dislikes cats (and possums). A home with another dog for company would be great.

Given his breed, to protect his spine and avoid any jarring he's lifted in and out of the car.

He has some arthritis in his back legs but MSM/ Chondroitin/ Glucosamine all-in-one powder and some Rapigel cream (both available at the chemist) work a treat. Barry enjoys an indoor/ outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors. He's also just had his teeth cleaned. Barry's adoption fee is \$450 Microchip Number: 956000001833560 Pet Exchange Register Source Number: RE100709

If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131 (Moorabbin and Aspendale Gardens based, but we go to you)



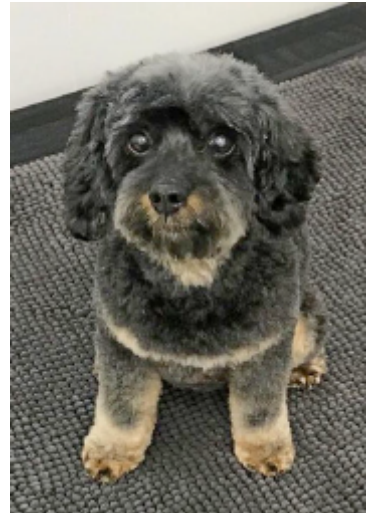
We are now much loved in our new home and very grateful to TARS Inc. Such a new lease of life!

A happy rehoming

Tao the tiny 12 year old King Charles Spaniel x Toy Poodle has found a lovely home with retiree Jane down on the Mornington Peninsula.

When not getting coiffed at the local salon, walking along the beach or enjoying the company of Jane, her friends and their dogs, she's happily cuddling up to Jane and being a good girl with Bella, Jane's Ragdoll cat.

Says Jane, 'Tao has settled in really well. She loves her comfy new bed and eats like a horse. It's like she's always been here with us.' Thanks Jane. We're so glad to hear!



Update: I'm still looking for a loving home!

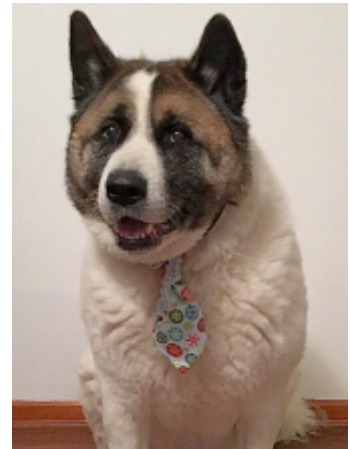
Hachi is a 9 year old desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped 55kg male Akita who's looking for a loving home.

He's a playful, lovable teddy bear who loves playing with his toys, running around in the backyard and having a cuddle. He's also great on lead and is keen to please.

Hachi would suit a calm, experienced, all-adult home or one with gentle, dog savvy teenagers. He's fine with other dogs when out and about on his walks, but is yet to live with one. He's not good with cats.

He enjoys an indoor/ outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors. Regular brushing would be required. Hachi's adoption fee is \$35. Microchip Number: 956000002691129 Pet Exchange Register Source Number: RE100709

If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131 (Melton & Cranbourne based, but we go to you).





Can we learn from Cats?

It takes a brave person to tackle a subject that numerous humans would shake off as rubbish. But, perhaps there is more truth in this book than in many other philosophical treatises.

Your editor, for instance, would agree that cats certainly do exhibit a calmness when any upset to their safety is over. Unless having been severely traumatised for a long period, cats do manage calmness with a surprising ability, to which humans come second. Cats are individual, but they share a common trait that when the excitement is all over they simply rest in peace. Humans, on the other hand, berate themselves, talk themselves into anxiety long after the event has passed.

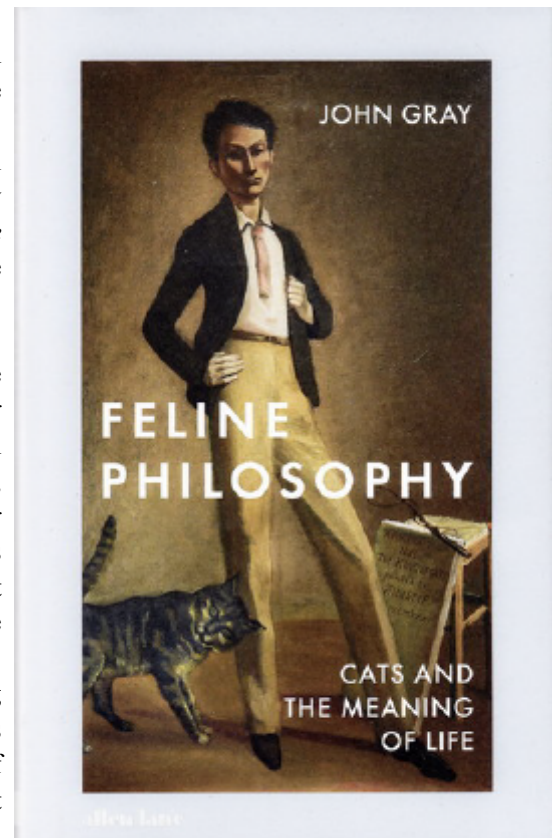
John Gray was, until his retirement in 2008, Professor of European Thought at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He is the author of numerous books such as *Churchill, Chance and the Black Dog*; *Greece and the Meaning of Folly*. He was previously lecturer in political theory at the University of Essex and lecturer and professor at the University of Oxford. He has had numerous cats as pets and in his book *Feline Philosophy: Cats and the Meaning of Life*, he is investigating their nature from the point of view of philosophy.

“Obeying their nature, they are content with the life it gives them. In humans, on the other hand, discontent with their nature seems to be the natural. With predictably tragic and farcical results, the human animal never ceases striving to be something that it is not. Cats make no such effort. Much of human life is a struggle for happiness. Among cats, on the other hand, happiness is the state to which they default when practical threats to their well-being are removed . . . They possess as their birthright a felicity humans regularly fail to attain . . . The source of philosophy is anxiety, and cats do not suffer from anxiety unless they are threatened or find themselves in a strange place. For humans, the world itself is a threatening and strange place . . . Instead of being a sign of their inferiority, the lack of abstract thinking among cats is a mark of their freedom of mind. Thinking in generalities slides easily into a superstitious faith in language. Much of the history of philosophy consists of the worship of linguistic fictions. Relying upon what they can touch, smell and see, cats are not ruled by words.”

Gray mentions the case of Mèo, a kitten rescued from war-torn Vietnam by a newspaper correspondent, taken to America and later to Britain. Mèo had suffered much trauma. On all accounts Mèo should have been dead nine times. In one particular incident when Jack was away from home for an extended time, upon returning, Mèo simply ignored him. But Jack's wife observed that while Jack was sleeping, Mèo jumped onto the bed and sat for over half an hour watching Jack's face. Jack wrote: “I think we had come to respect each other's skills as survivors . . . also he seemed wise. He knew. We had become friends. Our long, angry, loving relationship had come to symbolize in some way the bond between our countries [America and Vietnam], drenched in each other's blood, locked in an unbreakable embrace of life, suffering and death.”

In chapter 2 of *Feline Philosophy*, Gray begins with a sentence that we should all agree with. “When people say their goal in life is to be happy they are telling you they are miserable.” He continues: “Thinking of happiness as a project, they look for fulfilment at some future time. The present slips by, and anxiety creeps in.” Gray goes on to show that cats are never bored and quite happy being themselves, and “we can learn from them why our nervous pursuit of happiness is bound to fail.”

Gray writes of that great English writer and chronicler, Samuel Johnson. “Though Johnson was a fervent Christian, his faith did not give him peace. Always prone to depression, he often feared losing his mind . . . yet Johnson's unease was only an exaggerated version of a disquiet common to all human beings. Much of human life is a succession of tics. Careers and love affairs, travels and shifting philosophies are twitches in minds that cannot settle down. As Pascal has put it, human beings do not know how to sit quietly in a room.” But Johnson had a type of cure; he had a cat named Hodge. *Feline Philosophy* p42: “[Cats] can grow fond of their human companions, and may treat the sick unease in them that humans themselves cannot remedy. Johnson appreciated this power in his cat, and described him as ‘a very fine cat, a very fine cat indeed’. Hodge gave him something human company could not supply; a glimpse of life before the Fall.” (Referring to the Garden of Eden). •



Feline Philosophy: Cats and the Meaning of Life by John Gray

Allen Lane hardback, also available in paperback

Our copy from The Avenue Bookshop

Stocked by Dymocks and Booktopia



Pet medical crisis

from Jennifer Hunt

‘Rufus’ — Little kitten hurt on his adventure like an All star.

Ceyda is a loving single mum with two beautiful kids. ‘Rufus’ the cat was purchased as a kitten for her six year old daughter who suffers anxiety. ‘Rufus’ has become a big part of the family and the indoor cat is adored by all.

‘Rufus’ is a curious kitten and he managed to get out the front door and when he returned he had badly broken his back leg. Ceyda rushed to the Lort Smith vets to get the kitten taken care of, but she knew the expense may be too great for her. After paying the 50% deposit requested the poor kitten would need another surgery at least to help him. PMC received the application and we were glad to manage and help this family.

“My pet is my 6 year old daughters first kitten, my daughter has been an ill child in and out of hospital it means everything to me because of the love my daughter had for him and he is now a very important member of my family I’m trying so hard to help him that I had to put 50 percent of deposit down which made me in arrears now in my rent.” Ceyda wrote in her application for assistance.

Thanks to the Lort Smith for helping ‘Rufus’. The six month old kitten is now slowly recovering and back at home. Please continue to support us as Christmas approaches PMC welcomes all donations and shares. If you would like to volunteer please contact at vegas@petmedicalcrisis.com.au



‘Choc’ — sore and itchy boy needs ongoing help.

‘Choc’ is owned by a loving person in John who is on a disability pension and caring for others. After noticing serious pain and skin conditions John knew it would be tough to cover the bills.

PetMedicalCrisis were contacted and we were able to help with consultation and medication to help. Thanks to the Lort Smith for all there assistance.

UPDATE! Here’s beautiful ‘Milly’ recovering from her awful foot injury —audio hard to her but we get the picture as she’s getting loved.



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/>

Also, a walking harness — ‘Dog-A-Long’ — is available to assist your dog to become more mobile — supports dogs with hind leg problems associated with ageing, arthritis, hip & spinal problems. For suitability check with your Vet.



You would think that the following article from CEW 72, September 2011, was written about the Trump administration by an insider. But you'd be wrong. Take a look. The similarity is mind boggling.

ARROGANCE ON STEROIDS

The current "Ruling Class" in the US is exhibiting a degree of "we are so much smarter than you," arrogance not seen since Franklin D Roosevelt's time. Of course, there has been ample evidence of this arrogance in many administrations, but nothing to remotely compare to the present one. As a former Federal bureaucrat, briefly, and son of a career bureaucrat, I am well aware of how the game is played.

As with tenured college professors, there is the "publish or perish" mentality. The dedicated bureaucrat must remain busy dreaming up schemes to propose to his bosses. Such proposals are oftentimes ridiculous and even downright dangerous. Witness the recent "Fast and Furious" program to supply weapons to Mexican criminals. This had to be one of the most hare-brained ideas to come from bureaucracy that I can recall. Yet, it appears to have been approved by people in the White House. Double-dealing behind closed doors. Favor peddling. Most glaringly pronounced by that champion of the Rule of Law, Nancy Pelosi, who advised the nation that we would learn what was in the 2000-page Obamacare law only after it was passed. The two most common words in his speeches are "I" and "me".

This President daily reminds us of how much smarter he and his Ivy League advisers are than the rest of us. They spend a great deal of time trying to convince us that their ideas have divine origins. Their agenda-driven job is to replace just a modicum of common sense with pure idiocy, and then claim superior intellect. If the President cannot sell an idea well enough to convince the Congress, he just orders regulations to accomplish what he deems is in keeping with his personal preferences. He evidently subscribes to the notion that our Constitution is an impediment to progressive government, and only Supreme Court orders [as with FDR] will override him. Government by Presidential Fiat! Arrogance bordering on despotism. Is it any wonder that the Jimmy Carter malaise is coming back? I claim no insight into the art of governance, but unless it is tempered with at least some common sense, then there is no art.

Charlie — The Wheeled Curmudgeon of North Carolina.
patchas@triad.rr.com

The Editor's Desk, from page 2 :

The shame is horrendous. What the authorities did in Qatar recently, marching a large body of women off a Qatar Airways flight at Doha airport — including 13 Australians — to be suddenly made to strip their underwear and then their body private parts inspected, cannot be forgiven. The authorities were searching for the mother of a recently born baby, apparently found in an airport bin. Their immediate reaction was to pick all females of child-bearing age from numerous flights and herd them into an airport building and/or ambulances for inspection. The terror that these females must have felt should not be underestimated. They had no knowledge of why they were taken off the plane. This is an absolute horror story and has been carelessly handled by both the Qatar government and the Australian government. Some travellers have stated that they will never fly via — or visit — a Middle East country again. Qatar authorities immediately jumped on the defensive and issued regrets but not an apology. The incident has done considerable damage to Qatar Airways, but their government has yet to address the situation in a compassionate manner. The women were terrified, not knowing what was happening. To be 'dragged' off a flight without being advised why by armed men, undoubtedly sent messages to their bodies that they were up for something so unknown and so frightening. Even men would have been shaking with fear at this happening to them. The best that can be hoped for is that travellers from Australia and other countries will totally boycott the airline. And that it should go into bankruptcy would be a welcoming move. Of course, that will never happen. Governments the world over will smooth the path for this rapacious Arabic 'jewel', but criminal clique of the Middle East. Oil money speaks louder than ethics.

Again, our justice system is failing women. The young man who dragged a woman into a Melbourne laneway in October 1918, has come to trial. The video evidence showing the attack, which has been made public, is horrifying to watch. Jackson Williams, then 19 years of age, is shown behaving like a vicious animal, much like a rabid pit bull terrier. Attack! Attack! The victim has been unable to return to work and in addition has left Victoria. The country court judge has now released the accused on bail, citing mental impairment and community outrage, including threats of murder against the accused, stating "The resulting death threats and attack on your grandparents' house are a form of extra-curial punishment to which you have been unfairly subjected." The assault victim, however, was more than unfairly subjected to a horrifying ordeal which has wrecked her life, far greater than the accused may ever have to suffer from others.

War is war and certainly not sitting down with your enemy for a cup of afternoon tea. It is a hell on earth and a struggle for survival. Atrocities occur in war, every war. 25 Australian SAS soldiers are under investigation for apparent war crimes! That's nothing new in the world. Other countries have had war crimes and civilian crimes by ruling governments killing untold millions of people: China, Russia, Cambodia, North Korea, Bosnia, certain European countries in past decades and centuries. It is nothing new. It occurs wherever humans become hyped up with vengeance. So, apparently 25 Australian soldiers gone amok out of 25,000 serving in Afghanistan. Needs to be put into perspective, but if true, never to be excused and to be brought to justice. The Taliban are making a stink out of this and they ought to be ashamed of their own actions over decades. The pot calling the kettle black. •



Mercury O'Proud Political correspondent

There is something extremely macabre about American politics when mediocre law students and peanut farmers can become presidents, film stars can become state governors and presidents, and reality TV presenters also can become presidents. And of course, if you are a millionaire or billionaire you also have a good chance at becoming president of the United States. But that is life in the good old U S of A, and it's not going to change. The selection of Joe Biden as the 46th president of the United States will be well watched by major European and Asian countries. Can he heal a divided nation? Well, we shall simply have to wait and see. Will he be a friend of Australia? Some say yes, some say 'not so fast'. It will all depend upon his approach to China, whether

he will succumb to China's current aggression, or become a mediator. Wait and see. It's early times.

The ABC Four Corners of recent days presented a programme concerning the sex activities of certain Coalition ministers in Canberra. My colleagues seem to think that this is rather hypocritical of the national broadcasting service not to include in their investigation both Labor and the Greens. Infidelities among staff and politicians have occurred for decades and will continue for decades to come. Nothing new in that. Well, so what? Liaisons happen, within politics and without, and if it does not impinge upon government policies, it's really none of our business. But muck-rackers will have their day, whatever shade of politics they adhere to. Surely, isn't there more important problems in the country to be focused upon than individual sexual liaisons? Is the ABC simply attempting to improve their dismal ratings?

Why would the Victorian Labor Government fiddle around with laws that would make it difficult — if not almost impossible — for victims and their relatives of rape and murder to be free to mention their names in public? The act, if passed, would have required victims or their relatives to apply to a court for permission. To which one lawyer stated would be so difficult to obtain, requiring the re-uniting of victim and aggressor, more lawyers, and the difficulty of finding a judge. Victorian government trying to fix that which is not broken. •

William Johnston's *Silent Music*

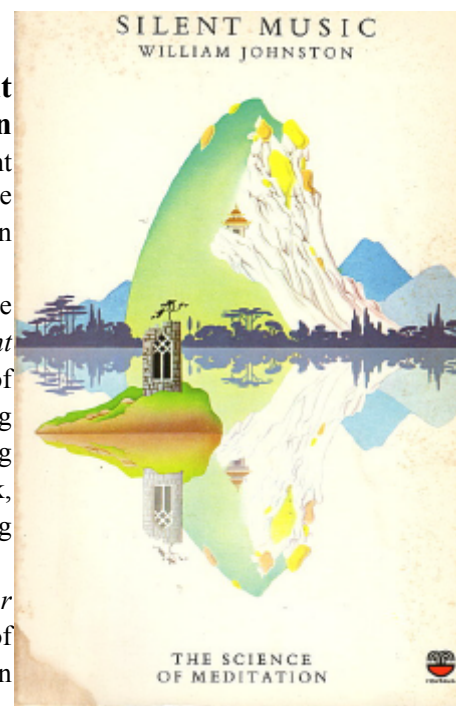
is a treatise on meditation. Johnston a contemplative Christian, went to Japan in 1951 and stayed. In 1968 he received a doctorate in Mystical Theology from Sophia University, Tokyo. His most important study has been about Buddhism and as a translator from Japanese to English. The original version of *Silent Music* was published by William Collins in 1974, then re-published as a Fontana paperback in 1976.

In a time of stress, such as the world has been experiencing during the Covid-19 crisis, it is imperative for humans to bring calmness into their lives. *Silent Music* is a guide to stilling the beast within, and though written during the time of Transcendental Meditation and bio-feedback, which was a fairly new science during the 1970s, the book carries a message fit for 2020. *Silent Music* contains a blending of Christian theology and Buddhist practice. It is not a do it yourself kind of book, but more an explanation of a journey through contemplative inner growth — being an adjunct perhaps for practices such as mindfulness.

Johnston studies Jung and Victor Frankl, the author of *Man's Search for Meaning*, (*Silent Music* p77): "Deprived of food and clothing and human comfort of every kind, he [Frankl] had the most beautiful experiences of mystical communion with his deeply loved wife . . . he does not indicate that he feared death at all . . .

Frankl himself draws the conclusion that the most important thing for human survival in such circumstances [suffering in concentration camps] is motivation or faith (hence his logotherapy) . . . Viktor Frankl's experience is not unique. A Buddhist monk once told me that he had his most beautiful interior experiences when he was cold and tired and hungry in time of *sesshin* [a kind of monastic retreat — usually seven days]."

Silent Music is not for everyone, but it points the way to techniques of quietening the mind that are most in need during this day and age of rampant technology. Perhaps one may look upon it as a senior guide book to the inner self, focusing upon difficulties strewn along the path of life. •



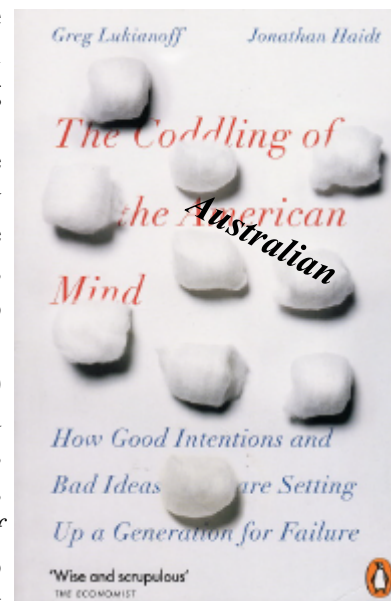


Wrap us all in cotton wool!

For years, if not decades, certain American academics have been aware of the tidal wave of negative feelings taking over from serious debate in American universities, so that students are encompassed in a self-pitying formula that spreads like wildfire.

And that, dear friends, has also contaminated some Australian universities. We can point to Sydney University even though this malaise is, so far, not broadly represented in Australian universities, but the signs of it similar to a creeping bacteria are already in place. We inherit many things from America and Europe which as far as science is concerned, is to be welcomed. But we also inherit much culture from these two megaliths that is doubtful and possibly injurious to our Australian way of life.

Academics Greg Lukianoff and Johnathan Haidt (author of *The Righteous Mind*) show how good intentions can set up a generation for failure. They use the word 'generation', but we would use 'generations' because what flows from one generation has a qualifying effect upon the next and so on. The authors, both totally aware of what is happening on American college and university campuses, have written *The Coddling of the American Mind* as a manifest for our times, with enormous references and notes to solidify their assertion that we are wrapping students in cotton wool, therefore minimising their exposure to the realities of the world — the real world. And Australia is also in the firing line.



Life begins as a struggle. The new-born child is aware of that. It is not easy for a baby to become aware of what it should do when surrounded by all the new images and abundant noises around it. But it copes. It copes because there is no other way — there is no other way than up if one is to survive, and the child in it's infancy does not question the struggle because that is the way nature has endowed it. The child has no interest in any other nuances but survival, which encompasses some feeling of self, or selfishness. The child is the centre of the universe and the child has abundant feelings — it has feelings of being hurt, being loved, being laughed at. Feelings are at the utmost top of the child's panorama of life. In time, these feelings are incorporated into a growing intellect, but the feelings do not always remain in the background. Sometimes, during the child's life, feelings seem to take control, rather than the intellect, and the child which has then become an adult, is often led into other directions.

Feelings cannot, and never will, take the place of serious debate. But sadly, feelings are being coached and promulgated in this new age of post modernism. If your feelings are hurt, then you **MUST** take action against the person or corporation that apparently caused it.

Sadly, what has blown out of recent times is that an attack upon feelings is now termed microaggression. This term is used in numerous American colleges and universities to designate a slight hurt to feelings, which has also seeped into certain Australian universities. And, it *must* be acted upon almost immediately.

There are numerous descriptions of this throughout *The Coddling of the American Mind*, which would fit perfectly into some of Australia's universities. "Imagine that you are in charge of new-student orientation at an American university that is very diverse—there are students from a wide variety of racial groups, ethnic groups, religions, and socioeconomic backgrounds. There are international students from Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America, some of whom don't speak English well; many who don't understand the nuances of English words and American customs, and as a result, they often choose the wrong word to express themselves. There are also students on the autism spectrum who have difficulty picking up on subtle social cues."

Lukianoff and Haidt offer a thought that this would be a fertile field for microaggressions to appear, with hundreds of misunderstandings each day. But for someone to come along and encourage any of these cultural groups to feel self-pity and complain to the administration of what may, or may not be, some slight of intent, is to surely blow things totally out of proportion. Yet, that is what is occurring on campus within American colleges and universities today. Feelings seem more important than facts, and Australian university administrators should be on the ball in this regard. Feelings do not have one iota of essence in scientific research. Feelings belong to the field of personal psychology and ought not interfere further than that.

Lukianoff and Haidt depict accounts of students who, after viewing websites, decided to kill themselves. "[In 2015] we had just begun to hear the first alarms being raised by college mental health professionals, who said they were being overwhelmed by rising demand. We suggested that perhaps some of the very things colleges were doing to protect students



from words and ideas ended up increasing the demand for mental health services by inadvertently increasing the use of cognitive distortions. By 2017, however, it was clear we had misunderstood what was going on. Colleges were not the primary cause of the wave of mental illnesses among their students; rather, the students seeking help were part of a much larger national wave of adolescent anxiety and depression unlike anything seen in modern times. Colleges were struggling to cope with rising numbers of students who were suffering from mental illness — primarily mood disorders. The new culture of safe-teyism can be understood, in part, as an effort by some students, faculty, and administrators to remake the campus in response to this new trend. If more students say they feel threatened by certain kinds of speech, then more protections should be offered. Our basic message in this book is that this way of thinking may be wrong; college students are anti-fragile, not fragile.”

“Another problem surfaced in 2007. The iPhone was introduced, and American teens tumbled aboard (just as Australian teens have). All of a sudden you had Tumblr, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, and a variety of other websites, not forgetting Tiktok which came later. Even Sean Parker, the first president of Facebook, stated ‘God knows what it’s doing to our children’s brains.’” Then there is WeChat, the Chinese website which has recently come under fire for its possible spying.

So, really, what could possibly go wrong? “Studies of mental illness have long shown that girls have higher rates of depression and anxiety than boys do.” So, forget your modern gender terms, for this is far serious than changing language. We do need to divide the sexes into groups for scientific research. Roughly, one out of every five girls reported symptoms that met with the criteria for having “experienced a major depressive episode in the previous year [though] boys went up more slowly.” Details/figures are shown in pp148-149. *The Coddling of the American Mind* continues with sufficient data of proven reality that the suicide rate for teenage girls is rising.

Enter Dr. Jean Twenge, social psychologist at San Diego State University — an expert on how generations psychologically differ and why. Twenge wrote concerning deep analysis into generational changes, and concluded that teens were centred less than involving or interacting with people-face-to-face, but were more interacting with screens. With the combination of ‘helicopter’ parenting, fears for children’s safety, and the teens spending more time alone though also interacting with ‘friends’ online, what ultimately endures is a mental viewpoint that is far from natural.

But why were girls mostly suffering during this period? Ultimately it comes down to nature and science — one cannot deny the fact of biology. Why is it mostly girls who suffer? This is the heading of a chapter in *The Coddling of the American Mind*. Twenge reports: “Girls use social media more often, giving them additional opportunities to feel excluded. And lonely when they feel their friends or classmates getting together without them . . . the evidence available today suggests that girls’ mental health has suffered as a result.” So, if you wish to equate all persons as equal sex, or gender, or whatever, have a thought for these young girls who have suffered increasingly in self-injury and suicides. Lukianoff and Haidt state “something was changing in the lives and minds of adolescents before they reached college, and when members of depressed and anxious students began arriving on campus, beginning around 2013, with the change that ‘one in every seven women at US universities now thinks of herself as having a psychological disorder, up from just eighteen women in the last years of the millennials.’”

Social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Tiktok, is notorious for spreading false messages and images pertaining to gender. Were these girls already absorbing negative thoughts prior to attending college or university? Was there a social climate already out there for them to absorb? The answer is YES. Lukianoff and Haidt are aware of this but do not push it assertively in their book. There is no doubt that certain students come to college and university with programmed mind-sets and awareness of microaggressions. It’s all on social media. And it’s harmful.

Under the heading of WHY IS IT MOSTLY GIRLS WHO SUFFER? (p154) Lukianoff and Haidt surmise “There are at least two possible reasons The first is that social media presents ‘curated’ versions of lives, and girls may be more adversely affected than boys by the gap between appearance and reality. Many have observed that for girls, more than boys, social life revolves around inclusion and exclusion. Social media vastly increases the frequency with which teenagers see people they know having fun and doing things together—including things to which they themselves were not invited . . . [there are numerous paragraphs explaining this]. The second reason that social media may be harder on girls is that girls and boys are aggressive in different ways. Research by psychologist Nicki Crick shows that boys are more physically aggressive—more likely to shove and hit one another, and they show a greater interest in stories and movies about physical aggression. Girls, in contrast, are more ‘relationally’ aggressive; they try to hurt their rival’s relationships, reputations, and social status—for example, by using social media to make sure other girls know who is intentionally being left out . . . On social media, girls can never escape.”

Put this into a college or university scenario and you then have the potential for wildfires. And you have great potential for microaggressions, the thought or feeling that one has been victimised. *The Coddling of the American Mind* pp157-158: “You can see why it was hard for us to make a strong case that universities were causing students to *become* anxious and depressed by teaching them disordered ways of thinking. Anxiety and depression rates were already rising for all teenagers before they arrived at college, and for those who never attended college at all. Clearly universities were not causing



a national health crisis; they were *responding* to one, and this may explain why the practices and beliefs of safetyism spread so quickly after 2013. But safetyism does not help students who suffer from anxiety and depression. In fact, as we argue throughout this book, safetyism is likely to make things even worse for students who already struggle with mood disorders. Safetyism also inflicts collateral damage on the university's culture of free inquiry, because it teaches students to see words as violence and to interpret ideas and speakers as safe versus dangerous, rather than merely true versus false."

An explanation of safetyism is required. *The Coddling of the American Mind* pp24-25: "Safety is good, of course, and keeping others safe from harm is virtuous, but virtues can become vices when carried to extremes. 'Safetyism' refers to a culture or belief system in which safety has become a sacred value, which means the people become unwilling to make trade-offs demanded by other practical and moral concerns. 'Safety' trumps everything else, no matter how unlikely or trivial the potential danger. When children are raised in a culture of safetyism, which teaches them to stay 'emotionally safe' while protecting them from every imaginable danger, I may set up a feedback loop: kids become more fragile and less resilient, which signals to adults that they need more protection, which then makes them even more fragile and less resilient. The end result may be similar to what happened when we tried to keep kids safe from exposure to peanuts: a widespread backfiring effect in which the 'cure' turns out to be a primary cause of the disease."

A complete chapter is spent on Anxiety and Depression, citing the generation known as iGen — those born between 1995-2012, which in conclusion centres upon different parenting styles to the previous Millennials. In a nutshell, iGen's parents keep a tighter reign with more supervision while allowing less autonomy, with the exception of screen time and the use of smart phones. The researcher on generational differences, Jean Twenge, considers that iGen is growing up more slowly, with higher rates of anxiety and depression than the Millennials. Twenge states that the primary cause is the frequent use of smartphones and other electronic devices. pp160: "Less than two hours a day seems to have no deleterious effects, but adolescents who spent several hours a day interacting with screens, particularly if they start in their early teen years or younger, have worse mental health outcomes than do adolescents who use these services less and who spend more time in face-to-face social interaction . . . iGen's arrival at college [and university] coincides exactly with the arrival and intensification of the culture of safetyism from 2013-2017 [and] may be especially attracted to the overprotection offered by the culture of safetyism on many campuses because of students' higher levels of anxiety and depression . . . including a tendency to see the world as more dangerous and hostile than it really is."

Other chapters deal with The Decline of Play, Paranoid Parenting, The Quest for Justice, but *The Coddling of the American Mind* concludes with positive chapters such as The Quest for Justice, Wiser Kids, and Wiser Societies.

"Putting this all together: we predict that things will improve, and the change may happen quite suddenly at some point in the next few years. As far as we can tell from private conversations, most university presidents reject the culture of safetyism . . . from our conversations with students, we believe that most high school and college students despise call-out culture and would prefer to be at a school that had little of it . . . so if a small group of universities is able to develop a different sort of academic culture—one that finds ways to make students from all identity groups feel welcome without using the divisive methods that seem to be backfiring on so many campuses—we think that market forces will take care of the rest."

Recommended reading for parents with burgeoning college and university teenagers

The Coddling of the American Mind

Penguin Education Society paperback

Our copy from *The Avenue Bookshop* SAUD24.99

Also available from Dymocks, Booktopia.

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Saigon Sunset

A saga in several episodes by Graham Price
Chapter 5

The story continues: Following on from several dinner engagements at James McKinnon's French mansion in Saigon, further developments arise. Claude Bastein, the Inspector of the French secret police — the Sûreté — still attached to the Saigon secret police, and James's housekeeper and governess Charmaine Curtain, have wined and danced the night away at The Continental Hotel. At the same time the engagement of James to Phuong Duval is celebrated. Meanwhile, the Bishop of Saigon, Jean-Baptiste Lacroix, has had an interesting audience with his old friend Ngo Dinh Diem, the president of South Vietnam, and dinner with numerous others is about to commence at the Presidential Palace.

There were ten at dinner, seated at the long table; at the head of which was the president, Ngo Dinh Diem, while at the opposite end was his brother-in-law Ngo Dinh Nhu, with Nhu's wife, Madame Nhu by his side. Next to her was General Dao Hu Loc and his wife Trinh. Opposite sat Air Marshal Vuong Kha and his wife Phung. Further up the table closer to Diem sat General Chu Lo Duc and his wife Huyen, then next to the president sat the Bishop of Saigon, Jean-Baptiste Laicrox.

As the first course was being served, it was the president's brother, who opened the conversation.

"It is most gracious, my Lord Bishop, to welcome you again this evening. My brother and I have a great affection for you and our church. So far, you have alluded to our government that you support the sanctions of the Geneva convention for free elections to come, when both North and South will join in deciding the ultimate future of our country. Even so, I feel there are some within our midst who would not be so kind or generous."

Bishop Jean-Baptiste Lacroix acknowledged Nhu's opening remarks with a lift of his glass of white wine. Within the small gathering he felt secure, if not supreme. After all, his God was with him, which was little he could say of the president's brother and sister-in-law. He was aware of the tension that exuded around the table. Here were generals and an air marshal in competition with each other, all vying for the very important positions within Ngo Dinh Diem's cabinet. The knives were out. Being so close and yet so far from the intricacies of government, he could see what was going on. He smiled down the table, lifted his glass again . . . made sure that his chin was well forward . . . and said: "The Catholic congregation of Saigon is well aware of the good that this government is doing to unite all against the infiltration of the North, but at the same time, your Excellency, there is dissatisfaction among the Buddhist community, which your government, may I say, has not addressed."

The murmur that ran through the room startled Madame Nhu, whose eyes flamed and widened. "My Lord Bishop, we are doing what we can! Look at the hundreds of thousands of refugees pouring down from the North. Escaping from the heartless Communist regime! We are having trouble where to put them all, and the Buddhists do not seem to accept our position. With all respect, my Lord, why are you speaking out for them?"

Her husband, Ngo Dinh Nhu, interrupted. "My Lord Bishop, with great respect . . . great respect . . . the people you talk to may not be dedicated Buddhists, but part and parcel of the revolutionary movement hiding under the umbrella of the Buddhist movement."

"That is so," said General Chu. "There are many within the Buddhist movement who would be traitors to our cause."

Air Marshal Vuong spoke up. "All depends upon the sect. There is the average Buddhist community . . . and then there are the hard-liners . . . the ones who adhere to . . . well, you need to be careful about putting them all into the same basket. Though I would agree with my Lord Bishop in that the majority are somewhat concerned about the way this administration is moving."

"Stop this idiocy!" The dark brown eyes of Madame Nhu blazed out across the table. "You are all misled. I, myself with my family, have gone through the punishments of the North. Do you not remember my family's struggles against the Viet Minh? Do you forget that I was imprisoned? I suffered. And did the Buddhists care about that?"



General Dao turned his moon face toward the end of the table. “But you yourself practiced Buddhism before your marriage — before you converted to Catholicism. You, of all people, should know how the Buddhists care for people.”

The fire in her eyes grew bright. “Not all . . . not all dear General. There are many who profess to follow the Buddha, yet deep in their hearts they are Communists.”

General Dao tapped the table with his fork. “That is stretching things a little, I think.”

“Our police have evidence.” said Ngo Dinh Nhu.

“And what evidence might that be?” remarked General Dao, “which is not arranged, or concocted. The police raid the temples and what do they find? Nothing!”

“There are reams of evidence, piles of it.”

General Dao laughed. “Evidence! What evidence? Your police, if I may say so, are corrupt!”

Jean-Baptiste Lacroix, Bishop of Saigon, smiled to himself. He had got them talking, which was what he wished. That he might be in favour with his God for that, he knew not. He only knew that these people were so far off guidance as to be so close to hell. He watched their faces as they continued the discussion throughout the numerous dishes and wines both red and white until the final closure of the night came around 9.00 p.m. What had changed, if anything? Give it time, he considered as Duy, his chauffeur, ushered him into the stately black Packard. It had been an interesting evening, though he was unsure of its outcome. He had sown some seeds, so let’s see if they germinate.

The dawn of a new day, thought James McKinnon, as the sun savaged the brilliant white facade of his French colonial mansion. A hot one, indeed. He finished shaving, combed his shock of dark curly hair back, and went down for breakfast. The breakfast room was off the kitchen and abutted the parlour where he entertained visitors, preferring it for its small area compared to the drawing room. Both rooms looked out onto the rear lawn and lush garden beyond. Everyone’s still asleep, he mused, as Ngan, the elderly Vietnamese cook, laid out a Continental breakfast for him. She laughed when he said she was a very beautiful woman and disappeared to the kitchen cackling away in a voice that had spoken with 37 years of residents coming and going. So long had she attended to their needs and she had cared for them all, loved them all. The previous French owners had been kind to her when she was suddenly widowed, kept her on and gave her an increase in salary, but they had been of the military and the family had gone back to France after the massive defeat at Dien Bien Phu. In the interim before the McKinnons, there was a German family, an attache at the German embassy and his wife, but they had only stayed for a few years. She thought they were somewhat reserved. She couldn’t help pick sides, but she had come to love the McKinnons the best — the children were so lovely, and that governess and overseer, Charmaine, had such a kind heart, unlike some of the other French neighbours who had departed in recent years. She should find herself a good husband. Ngan cackled again as she thought of it, and she had seen the way that inspector of the secret police looked at Charmaine. Any fool could see there was something bursting out loud and clear there. Why, she wondered, was that man so gentle and easy to get on with? Surely, he could not be the same kind of person at his secret work, no doubt the continuous interrogating of prisoners? Wouldn’t that turn one into stone? Very strange, she thought. She shrugged her shoulders and turned to the combustion stove. Work to be done here before the children are awake. She smiled to herself. She couldn’t help it, but she loved Samantha best of all. Sweet child. She hoped they would all stay forever.

James opened the *Saigon Presse International* newspaper, looking to see how rubber shares were going. He nodded to himself as he scanned the financial section. Things were up. The Korean war had long seen to that, he thought, and shares were stable at the moment. Some downside in Malaya, which was to be expected due to the insurgency, but overall, quite okay. Malaya would recover now that they had the Chinese terrorists on the run. Malayanisation troubled him a little, if and when he returned. How to convince the Malayan Federation Government that he was needed? He wondered about his superior Justin with his Vietnamese wife, Nguyet. Though perhaps they would remain in Vietnam no matter what the politics were. He turned back to the front page, knowing that his French was only just adequate in translation. It amused him, somewhat. Most of the French were gone, yet here was a daily newspaper in French language still flourishing. But then, much of Saigon even though being Vietnamese could read and write in French — so long a colony under the influence of the French. His eyes alighted upon a slim column on the front page and he attempted to translate. It was disturbing, written by a correspondent who alleged that the Viet Minh from North Vietnam had infiltrated the neighbouring countries of Laos and Cambodia in an attempt to bring their army down the border areas into



South Vietnam. James re-read the article, attempting to ensure that his woeful French had got it correct. Yes, it certainly seemed so. He drew a deep breath. Well, that makes a rather comical set-up with Geneva, doesn't it! Useless talks. So damned useless. The North won't keep their part of the bargain. Should have brought a United Nations force in long ago. Too damn late now, by the looks of it.

There was an official looking envelope beside his plate. He slit it open using his bread and butter knife. It was a short letter from Claude Bastein, proposing a trip up to the Marchand rubber plantation this coming week. Could he call tomorrow at James's office to discuss a plan? The last line was "I'm rather keen, James, to know who this fellow is and to bring him to justice, if necessary." Fine by me, thought James. Never liked the man anyway. If he is the collaborator then he surely needs to be extradited to France to stand trial.

"My, you're up early!" said a voice. It was Charmaine. "May I join you?"

"My pleasure. Late night?"

She blushed. "It was rather wonderful, James." She flourished her ring finger with the diamond ring glittering in the early morning light.

He chuckled. "As expected. I don't know why you two waited so long. Should have happened weeks ago, or even months for that matter. I'll call for champagne."

"A little early, is it not?"

"Never too early to celebrate love and passion, my dear."

Phuong Duval observed an unusual nervousness among her students at the Nguyen Académie. Some kind of 'bush telegraph' as they called it in Australia, was occurring. She was explaining hyphens by chalking on the blackboard 'a colour-blind man . . . the man is colour-blind,' when one of the students burst into tears and laid her head upon crossed arms upon her desk. The girl beside her also began to sob. Then, another at the back of the class began to cry. The whole class erupted in murmurs and whispers.

Oh, my Lord, thought Phuong. What is going on here? She cried out "Girls! Girls! This is nonsense, stop this!" And gradually the sobs and cries diminished.

"Oh dear ones, what is the problem? You don't have to keep it to yourselves. Please . . . please . . . communicate! I've taught you all this year about communication, be it the English language, and now you must . . . you must communicate with me as to what is concerning you, otherwise . . . otherwise . . . all that I have taught has been a waste."

One of the tallest girls who seemed to have been unaffected by the hysteria of the class, stood up. "Miss Duval, it is because of some parents."

"There is talk of the Communists coming down to invade Saigon, Miss. Some parents have read this in the daily newspaper. Vy's father and some others said that the soldiers would come and rape all the daughters of Saigon."

A great chill came over Phuong. She felt herself succumbing to the feelings of her students. Be strong, she thought . . . be strong . . . they depend upon you so much . . . be strong. She felt faint and reached for the desk beside her, allowing it to steady her. How could they possibly believe that? How on earth could a parent say that out loud in the presence of a daughter? How stupid! She regained some control and sought to break the nervous feeling that had swept into the classroom.

"You are soon to be women," she said. "You will take your place in society as adults in a few years, and you will need to know truth from fiction. What has been spread among you this morning is fiction, total fiction. Look at the blackboard! See what I have written! It is about colour-blindness, but colour-blindness doesn't mean only that incurred by sight, it also means that which is incurred by the mind, and how there are differences of opinion amongst all humanity. News often comes in black and white, without proper interpretation, and if I have taught you all these years about proper communication, I have taught you to be discerning, to pick right from wrong, to choose fact from hearsay. Is that not true, girls? *Is that not true?*"

The class of teenagers slowly rose as one and then began to clap; then they began to stamp their feet in unison. And their voices rang out: "Miss Duval, Miss Duval, Miss Duval! Cheers for Miss Duval! Cheers for Miss Duval!"

And the French headmistress in her office above, thought some kind of revolution was taking place and rang for the police.



Claude Bastein arrived at James Mckinnon's office on Tuesday morning; white flannel trousers, light fawn jacket, open necked red silk shirt, light tan Alberto Fasciani shoes. James's eyebrows lifted. Here was a different person again, another version of the inspector of police! He chuckled. Was Claude a Chameleon?

"Magnifique, supreme inspector! You look so cool!"

Claude laughed. "So, I'm unofficially off duty, but here to talk serious business about Monsieur Marchand. Are we likely to be interrupted?"

James shrugged. "My secretary is away sick, and the others are out on business."

"And your office would not be wire-tapped, I presume?"

James chuckled. "What! Surely, only you would know about that?"

Claude laughed and sat down on the leather upholstered seat in front of James's desk "Things change. It won't be long before I am back to France. What used to be the police is no longer the police. It has all become political and the police now follow the ruling government's policies, which are not amenable to my old style of policing. I'm afraid, my friend, that the country no longer has much to offer for people such as me. There is corruption everywhere."

James felt a tremor pass through him. "Are you saying that the government cannot be trusted?"

"The government is not the government one would wish to serve. I've had some very deep conversations with Charmaine, and sad as it may be for your family, James, we are out of here as soon as we can make proper arrangements."

"But we rely upon her so much . . . my children rely upon her . . . she is such a part of the family!"

Claude bowed his head slightly. "I understand that, but you should look again at what is occurring here. We have a country divided. It is a division that cannot, will not work. Look how long these negotiations have been taking place in Paris? It is years of very little being given on either side. I have come to love this country as my own, but I cannot bring up a family in this atmosphere. There is no longer any security. And you should also think about that before it is too late."

James sank back in his chair, the leather giving way to the blades of his shoulders. This was not what he wanted to hear. Claude had come for another reason, and here he was opening up to his real feelings — inviting James into a realisation of insecurity, when all had seemed so fair, so new and bright. Don't want to think about it. Change the subject. He shovelled it out of his mind and said to Claude: "Okay, but for the time being it's Marchand we are concerned about, is it not?"

The inspector breathed deeply, and realising that the subject had changed, ran his tongue across his lips and said: "The problem, of course, was how to go about it . . . how to get back up there without anyone knowing of our quest. I do not need that man to be forewarned. Paris has telexed me back with enough information beyond doubt that it is the same man, the same collaborator with the Japanese who caused the deaths of several French military prisoners." He slapped his right hand on his thigh. "I will have this man, James. I will have him!" He waved a piece of paper. "I can hold him for 48 hours for questioning, and then . . ."

"So, the plan is?"

"How are you at flying?"

"What?"

"Well, we don't wish to come into contact with any of those Cong friends of yours, do we? So driving is out of the question. I've secured, through an old friend of mine — Air Marshall Vuong — a helicopter courtesy of our French friends to the AVRN, to take us up from Saigon to the plantation."

"A military helicopter? Won't that put Marchand on the alert?"

"We'll put down a kilometre or so away and go the rest on foot. He'll be used to copters going overhead on their way back and forth to the demarcation zone. Be like bees buzzing around him almost all day long. Something he'd surely sleep through."

James winced. "Not so sure about that."

"It'll be fine, *mon amie*, we'll have two armed Saigon police with us, compliments of Major Do Dinh Thanh whom I can trust. They can remain well in the background while we talk to your friend Marchand."

"Damned if he's my friend! The last person I'd want for a friend. If he's as guilty as it seems, then yes, we do need to bring him to justice. How we do it, of course, can't be that easy — he has some back-up, you know."

Claude frowned. "Leave that to me. I only have to carry out a cough three times and my men, hiding in the background, will be on top of it."



"I suppose . . . if you really think so . . ."

To James, the Sikorsky H-19 helicopter looked like a bloated frog, its bulbous nose and tiny legs sitting on the roof of the Adventia building. Its rotor blades were idling around, swishing in the afternoon air, making enough noise to drown out normal conversation. The two armed Vietnamese police had already scrambled aboard and Claude Bastein was pushing James forward, giving him encouragement.

"You sure this thing is safe?" yelled James. "There's a few dents in it."

"No problem *mon amie*, safer than your Citroen," said Claude, pushing James from behind. The pilot made a beckoning signal and the two men climbed aboard. "Time to shove off," said Claude."

The rotors gathered speed and the Sikorsky lifted off, whirling away into the heat of the afternoon sky. James felt sick. He put his head down between his legs and prayed for guidance. This was stupidity. Surely, what was to be gained by flying up the country in the blazing heat within a machine that could send you half way to deafness? He wished he had not agreed to the journey. What if Marchand was innocent, after all? What if it was another who was the culprit, and this Pierre Marchand was simply duplicated by Parisian police's faulty investigation? After all, the name was not all that uncommon. He didn't like the man, but to have been accused of the collaboration which caused the execution of a number of French soldiers, well . . . that was not something that was proven. And so many years past. Surely, if the man was guilty, he would have been caught up with long ago? It didn't make sense.

They were above Tan Uyen and dropping in elevation, preparing to roll into the area where the Loy plantation was situated when there was fire from below, bullets and tracers were coming up at them from a patch of jungle close to a river.

"Shit!" said the Vietnamese pilot. "Communists!" He shoved the copter into a left bank, growled up more power, and hoped he'd done the right thing.

"Need to get out of here!" screamed his Eurasian co-pilot. "Take it up!"

The copter shuddered as several bullets hit the hull. The pilot fought with the controls and managed to bring the copter around and higher, up and away from the firing zone.

"Holy, holy Moses!" said Claude Bastein. "I never thought they were so damn close! How could they have got so far down South without us knowing?"

"Wooo," said James. "What the hell have you got me into!"

The Sikorsky droned on. Then, within minutes. "All clear . . . all clear," said the Vietnamese pilot. "Taking her down behind the plantation. Prepare for landing."

They skidded out of the Sikorsky, keeping their heads low from the spinning rotors, Claude Bastein, James McKinnon and two South Vietnamese police armed with M1 Garand semi-automatic rifles. The copter shut down.

"I have a map here," said Claude Bastein, "We are within one half a kilometre of the plantation. It's no problem."

James shook his head. "So glad someone knows what we are doing!"

"Now, now, you need to get some control of yourself, James. I know the chopper ride has probably shaken you up somewhat, but what the hell, that's life out here in the country, eh? Look upon it as an amazing experience that otherwise you would never have had. You can tell your grandchildren about it"

James stretched himself. "You're full of fun, Claude. Just hope we get out of this all in one piece."

"Or pieces, ha ha," laughed Claude. "If so, they can bury us all mixed up together."

The co-pilot engineer was out, checking the helicopter for damage, removing inspection panels, feeling around, then closing them. Checking the rotor blades. "Lucky," he said, turning to Claude with a wide grin on his face. "Very lucky."

Claude laughed. "Must be the lucky rabbit's foot I keep around my neck."

James looked and shook his head. "You don't have anything hanging about your neck!"

"You have no imagination, James; it's there if you think hard enough. How do you think I got this far in life without believing in luck?"

"Interesting thought," said James. "Well, shall we go?"

It was long after the rubber tappers had completed their morning work and most were resting in their shacks. The group of four newcomers padded up the winding driveway toward the home office of Pierre Marchand. Claude Bastein raised



his hand for all to stop. He looked around but could see no movement. Difficult to believe that this could be the same place as it would have been early morning when a hive of activity was presenting. Nothing stirred. There was not even a dog chained up. No birds in cages where some could give out a warning. The silence was incredible. He whispered to the constables to stay back, hide behind some palms that were lining the gravelled driveway, then motioned to James for the two of them to move forward. They were armed, Claude had belted on a Smith and Wesson .45 calibre pistol, and James wore a Webley revolver — a relic from his Malaya days.

Claude moved up the steps, followed by James. He opened the fly-wire door and walked inside — his eyes scanning the semi-darkened office for movement. There was none, but there was a man reclining on a tattered sofa in one corner of the room. He was asleep with his right hand hanging down, still managing to hold an almost empty whisky bottle around which some flies nestled. Easier than I thought it would be, considered Claude as he moved forward to shake the man who could only be Pierre Marchand. James stood back in the doorway, now and then casting a look over his shoulder for any signs of activity outside.

The blue eyes opened, closed, opened again, then the Frenchman made as if to rise.

“Just stay there for a moment, Monsieur Marchand. I am Inspector Bastein of the Saigon police.” He withdrew his identity card and poked it into the face of the man.

Marchand rested his head back on a Chinese embroidered cushion. “What? What do you want? My plantation is well run . . . all is in order.”

Claude rested his right hand on the butt of the Smith and Wesson. “It’s not about the plantation. It’s about things that occurred some years ago here in Vietnam. We wish you to come to Saigon for some talks. As a witness, you may very well be of much use to us.”

Marchand raised his head a little. “Witness! Witness to what?”

“Some details to do with the Japanese occupation.”

“What’s . . . what’s that to do with me?” He sat up, dropping the whisky bottle on the floor. Claude stepped back.

Marchand went on: “Who’s that over there by the door? I can’t see his face because of the shade.”

“James McKinnon, Mr. Marchand. You remember, I came with Asia Barr some weeks back to perhaps make you an offer for the plantation, since you wish to return to France.”

Marchand looked from one to the other. His lips tightened, his eyes stared hard and long. “I’ve withdrawn from sale. I’m not returning to France. I’ll spend out my days here in Vietnam with my Chinese and Vietnamese friends.”

“What seems to have changed your mind?” queried Claude.

“Well . . . er . . . it’s all been too much trouble . . . too much trouble, and I still have fits of malaria.”

Claude made a quick look to ensure that there were no weapons near the sofa, then pulled up a chair. He sat and crossed his legs. “Mind if I smoke, Pierre?”

“No problem, but what is this really all about? What could I possibly have been a witness to that would require you to come all this way?”

Claude took out his pipe, filled it with tobacco, and lit it. “We can talk about that in Saigon. Surely you need a rest from the plantation, Pierre? How long is it since you saw the city lights and enjoyed some of its pleasures? You could do us a favour and also indulge in some of life’s pleasures. An opportunity for you to kill two birds with the one stone, so to speak.”

“The plantation and my friends here give me all the pleasure I need. I’ve no wish to go to your stinking Saigon.”

“But you must have liked it once . . . perhaps when you were young?”

“If you’re alluding to young women, I’m not interested. Beside, I have the plantation to run.”

Claude took a deep puff on his pipe. “I understand you have a manager who is very capable of standing in for you for a few weeks.”

“What’d you mean, weeks? Yes, I have Chun Li, he’s very capable, but I’m not leaving and that is all about it.”

Claude knocked out his pipe on the heel of his boot. “Well, I’m sorry it has to be this way. I was hoping that you would co-operate.” He pulled out a folded sheet of paper from his pocket, opened it up and poked it towards the man’s face.

“This is a warrant for your arrest, Pierre Marchand, on a charge of collaborating with Japanese soldiers, which led to the deaths of several French soldiers. I will now read you your rights.”



When the inspector had finished, James spoke. “There’s someone coming through the plantation, inspector. But it looks like more than one. Too far away at present — can’t quite see who it is. I think we have only minutes to get the hell out of here.”

Claude took the Frenchman by the elbow. “Come along *monsieur*. No need for handcuffs . . . you do seem rather frail.”

Suddenly there was no resistance. The man bit his lower lip and moved beside the inspector down the steps, with James following and watching to see who it was that might come through from the plantation. The group of three had negotiated a bend in the gravel driveway and had almost reached the palms, when a voice broke out savagely: “HALTE!”

“Who is that who speaks French?” hissed the inspector to Marchand.

“My manager, Chun Li. Thank goodness. You can leave now, inspector Bastein . . . otherwise!”

The large Chinese was standing at the entrance to the plantation with a carbine pointed at them. James felt a shiver run down his spine. Behind the Chinese was a smaller Vietnamese male, unarmed except for a heavy bamboo rod resting over his shoulder and a wicked looking knife tucked into his belt.

Claude held onto Marchand with his left hand, while his right strayed to the butt of his pistol. Time seemed to stand still. “You’re not leaving me, Marchand. Tell your idiot *garçon* to back off.”

Marchand laughed. “I’ll tell him nothing, inspector. Look’s as if you’re in a bit of a jam. May I go now?”

Claude’s grip on Marchand’s arm tightened. He squeezed a little harder, feeling the muscles in his own arm contract. The man gasped “Uuuh!”

The big Chinese stepped forward, followed by the Vietnamese. Both had faces that looked as if they could tear a tiger apart. Evil pair of bastards, thought James, as he recovered his senses. Then he heard the click and slap of the bolt as the Chinese primed the carbine. He was thinking, whatever you do, Claude, do not go for your pistol. But Claude had kept his hand clear of the pistol butt, as a signal to the Chinese that he wasn’t going to do anything stupid. He squeezed Marchand’s arm even more tightly. “Call your *garçon* off, Marchand, or I will break your arm. I can do it with one hand; you know very well that I can do it, you bloody imbecile!

It was probably only a few seconds, but James thought it was minutes — time packed discreetly into a waiting game, when Marchand laughed again. “Break it then, what use will I be to you even if I die! Take me to your cells and I will hang myself. You can’t win, inspector of the *Sûreté*. Yes, I know who you are, and I know your filthy methods to obtain confessions. You and your French inquisition chambers down in Saigon. I’m not the first and I won’t be the last, so go on then, do what you have to do. I hear your Vietnamese friends in Saigon have brought the *guillotine* into use again. So what? Use it. But you’ll never win.”

What are the chances, thought James? Looks as if Chun Li was preparing to put a bullet through Claude’s chest any second now. He had turned slightly so that the Chinese could not see his Webley revolver and wondered how fast he could manage two or three shots at that range? He’d had some practice in Malaya, but this was a different situation. If he missed, then both of them — Claude and himself — were dead cert goners.

Claude turned to look at Marchand. “I’ll break your bloody arm, all right. But not here *mon amie*.” And with that he covered his mouth with his free hand and coughed three times

The response was dramatic. The two Saigon police appeared from behind the palm trees, their M1 Garand semi-automatic rifles at their shoulders. Both flicked the safety catches off and one of them fired into the shoulder of the big Chinese. The man was blown backwards, his carbine hitting the ground and firing off a shot into the air. The Vietnamese raised his hands and shook his head violently. “No shoot. No shoot!”

The fracas had brought out numerous Vietnamese and Chinese rubber tappers and they stood around watching the events play out.

Claude called out: “Get that man to a *daktar*! Medic! Understand?”

Several in front nodded and made their way to the wounded Chinese, lying on the ground moaning and writhing in the dust. Claude turned to his small party, still holding Marchand firmly by the arm: “Let’s go, back to the chopper.”

Commissar Chu Lam Long, his men and two women, had heard the helicopter settle down north of Tan Uyen. They’d earlier heard rapid gunfire, probably coming from another cadre and thought that it may well have been directed at the flying bird. Had it been forced down? Was it on some mission? He was curious; it would pay to investigate and he had ordered his cadre to march in the direction of where the helicopter went down. Eventually, they



had come to a clearing where the bulbous metallic bird was sitting in silence. Long spotted the military markings — enemy! He signalled to his comrades to spread out in the undergrowth while he watched and waited. He observed the AVRN pilot and co-pilot sitting in the shade of the copter, eating from provisions. No weapons. Strange, he thought, most strange. Then it occurred to him that perhaps they had brought a party up to this area, but where was that party now? The more he considered it, the more he thought it was most likely. The pilots were waiting for someone to return. But why? Whatever, this helicopter would be a prize for the National Liberation Front. He could arrange for it to be flown to Hanoi. Good to have them shot down, but here was a live one. Seemed in good condition and the pilots were so relaxed, so there cannot have been any engine failure or other. No, they were waiting for someone to return. He was convinced of that. Now, should he capture them immediately, or should he wait to see what develops? If there was a party of soldiers or other, there cannot have been many. The helicopter was not designed for a large group. Six, eight, maybe? Hmm, that would be rather crammed. Four, perhaps five. We'll wait, then. See what the situation brings.

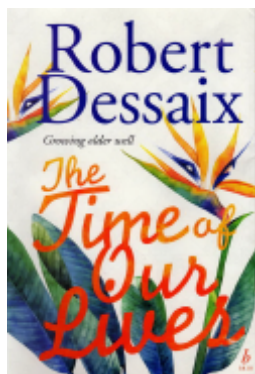
Cuc cradled the AK47 in her arms. She was lying spread out, watching the two pilots licking their lips from the food they had gorged. One of them belched loudly, his face partially shadowed by the hulk of the machine. She smiled. So, here she was at long last . . . a chance to vindicate the death of her loved one, Kim. She'd not seen a helicopter up close before and she marvelled at its shiny exterior and those massive blades that lifted it. How could that be? How could such fragile things like that lift a heavy body? Mystery. She looked across at Linh, not too far from her, and grinned. Linh grinned back. After their little fight, they had become firm friends; two women in search of the same goal, the freeing of Vietnam. Linh had a boy-friend, the Commissar's brother, Lung. Cuc felt happy for her, but considered that she would never fall in love again. It was too much of a heartbreak to lose those so close to you. The cause, the NLF, was her great love now. She would sacrifice herself to its fulfillment and leave men to their own devices. But the memory of Kim would stay with her forever and she knew that his dedication to her would last as long as life would, and one day — at a time of complete destiny — they would meet above the clouds, for it had been — and still was — an eternal love which neither torture nor death could destroy.

She heard voices. She looked to where her leader, Long, was. He was signalling for quiet. Her breathing became rapid and she could hear the thump of her heart as it began to race. This was her first real confrontation. It would go well, she thought . . . it would go very well, and her hands firmed along the cool steel of the AK47, safety off, with a finger curled around the trigger guard. •

to be continued

Book review: **The Time of Our Lives.**

Robert Dessaix has written a book for the 70 and 80-year-olds. It's all about growing older well.



There are a number of reviews of this book, which are of interest. Ann Skea for *The Newtown Review of Books (Sydney)* writes "Robert Dessaix is 76 years old. Not quite spry enough to join the middle-aged hotel guests dancing to boom-box music by the lotus pool of his Indonesian hotel – 'I know my limits' – but alert enough to admire the 25-year-old wellness instructor in his clinging T-shirt and shorts. At the same time, he finds the scene disturbing. Much of this book reflects Dessaix's musings on this as he discusses it with various ageing friends living in different countries around the world and sees how they live their lives." Skea neither likes or dislikes the book. She leaves that up to the reader of her review, having depicted numerous scenes from various pages.

Kevin John Brophy writing in the Adelaide Independent News *InDaily*, states that it is not a book to churn through in one sitting. He writes: "Dessaix's special skill is to be able to ask the deepest and most complex questions while appearing to be chatting amiably with you, all the while performing for you the literary equivalent of an enchanting dance. By the end you don't really want such a book to end, which I guess is the sign of a thoroughly well-judged work . . . It can be enjoyed on several levels at once, and though it reads easily, it's not a book to churn through in one sitting because in its pages you will come across Epicurus, Lucretius, Prokofiev, Hafiz, Sarah Day, Diana Athill, Giotto, the Indonesian language, Javanese anthropology, Bertrand Russell and many others you might want to Google as you go, testing Dessaix's references and losing or finding yourself in the fun of these digressions."

Personally, I would join with Helen Elliott of *The Monthly*, who writes: "Dessaix loves philosophy and is learned about Nietzsche, but unbidden emotions that cannot be intellectualised confound him. He is a significant and valued figure in the Australian cultural landscape, but this latest reiteration of his self-search called up impatience from me. The narrow road to high culture is unforgiving." I also found that I was becoming impatient with his philosophising, and to be reading about death on almost every second page seems not a healthy thing to be doing. All praise for Robert's previous writings, but . . . !

**The Time of Our Lives, Brio hardback
Dymocks \$AUD32.99**



Lest We Forget

A short selection from the fiction series

Nearer am I to Home

By Graham Price



*6th Light Horse Regiment
colour patch*

Palestine April 1917:

Recent events: The Americans have at last come into the war, and arrangements are being made to ship their troops to France. Meanwhile in Palestine, General Allenby is impressed with the Australian Light Horse troopers who have taken the town of Beersheba, thus helping to open the way toward Jerusalem.

The Australian and New Zealand Light Horse troopers were ecstatic — Beersheba the ‘impregnable’ had been taken by less than 800 riders of their own — the 4th Light Horse Regiment from Victoria with the 12th, then with General Allenby's British infantry storming in from the West to consolidate the victory. By nightfall the precious water wells had been secured by the Australians, several being saved from German and Turkish officers attempted demolitions just in the nick of time. Allenby was also ecstatic and full of praise for the Australian troopers — some considerable decorations for bravery would be handed out, and he intended to pin these to the chests of the men with his own hand. Things were on the move. This victory had opened the way to the gates of Jerusalem and he now considered that he could satisfy Prime Minister David Lloyd George's determination to have the sacred city in the hands of British troops by Christmas. He thought that the infantry would be able to accomplish this feat, but he wanted Australian Light Horse with him when he entered Jerusalem, because without them Beersheba would still be an unconquerable blight.

The 6th Light Horse Regiment had been on the West flank of Beersheba and not directly involved in that victory charge. Will Price and his mates had captured more Turkish soldiers and some cavalry. These were being sent back behind the lines where infantry would mainly take care of their transportation and imprisonment. Will could not but help notice the fear in the eyes of the Turks whenever there appeared a bunch of Arab horsemen. Strict instructions had been given to the regiment that on no account were Turkish prisoners' lives to be put at risk when the Bedouin were around. In September the regiment had taken the surrender of almost 1000 Turks, and allowed them to keep their arms and ammunition to protect themselves from the Arabs, who were known to take bloody and swift revenge. The atmosphere around Bedouin horsemen, amassed on the hills, fully armed with rifles, swords and daggers, and silently watching while prisoners were shepherded to the South, was chilling.

Will's squadron had been assigned a small party of Turks to move to rear positions. On this march the Turks had again been allowed to keep their guns and some ammunition and the Australian troopers shared what food and cigarettes they had with the half-starved Turkish soldiers.

Fritz reined up close to Will as they were moving their squadron's share of the prisoners back. His horse was nervously tossing its mane around and snorting loudly.

"Look at them, those bloody mounted *Bedu* vultures up on the hill . . . just waiting for us to move aside."

Will nodded, looking up the sloping plain at the horde of Bedouins crowding the low ridges. "Yes, they can hardly hold their impatience, can they? Let's hope they don't try anything now . . . one squadron of us against that lot not very good odds."



*A squadron of the 6th Light Horse regiment with Turkish cavalry prisoners.
Source: W.H. Price collection.*



The Sergeant galloped by, shouting: "Keep an eye on those 'Rabs. Got to get these prisoners down in good condition. No funny business, you blokes."

Terry rode up. "Funny business! What's he on about?" Fritz laughed. "Oh, he's just a little nervous, old son. Doesn't want us to make any rude gestures to those murderous swines up there. Hey! Look at that!" He pointed slightly to his left. Several of the Bedouin horsemen had advanced down the slopes. One drew a sword from the scabbard on his horse and slowly passed it across his throat.

"Means business, that bloke, don't you reckon?" said Terry.

"Perhaps I ought to put a bullet between his eyebrows!" ventured Fritz.

Will chipped in "Hey, go easy. Remember what the Sarge said. We've got to get these blokes in safely. Don't stir anything up."

"Hmm, wouldn't mind though, after all the things those swines have done to us, pack of thieves. Hit the leader and they'll probably all run like chickens." said Fritz.

"Or swoop down on us like a ton of bricks!" said Will. "Too many of them. If we had the full regiment, okay, I'd go along with you . . . but look at us, spread a bit thin, mate. Not worth the risk. And old Jacko would probably run like the blazes trying to get away, what a slaughter that would be! They wouldn't spare any of them. How would you explain that to HQ?"

Fritz shrugged his shoulders. "I guess you're right Will; pity though, I could line that beggar up in me sights no problem. Say a prayer old Sheik of Arabee!"

"Well, if they're still here when we come back, after having got rid of old Jacko, we can have a go, eh?" said Terry.

"I'll be in that," said Fritz, taking his right hand off the butt of his rifle and putting it back onto the reins.

"Hey! What's that?" shouted Terry, swinging in his saddle.

"Aircraft." said Will, looking up.

"British, perhaps." said Fritz, hopefully.

"Dunno," replied Terry, "Don't look too friendly to me."

The prisoners began to mutter among themselves in their mother tongue, and Will held the reins firm on Widgery.

"Shouldn't matter if it is, they won't fire on us with all these Jacko's here."

"I wouldn't take a bet on that, soldier," said the Captain, cantering up beside them.

"Nor me either," said Fritz.

"They're peeling off!" yelled Terry. "Blimey, red noses . . . German Fokkers!"

"Two, no three of them," said the Captain, "Better spread out, just in case." He raced off on his horse to where the Sergeant machine gunner was already setting up his Hotchkiss. "Need to move on that fast, Sergeant!"

"In hand, sir."

The troopers dismounted, withdrew their rifles from the scabbards and knelt in firing position.

"Blimey, they're really coming in!" said Terry.

The Captain gave the order. "Fokkers it is. Line up your sights, men. Fire as they come over."

"Hey! look at old Jacko!" said Fritz. They glanced for a moment at the prisoners who were also kneeling with rifles in firing order.

"Well, well," said Will, "not so one sided after all. Who would have believed it!"

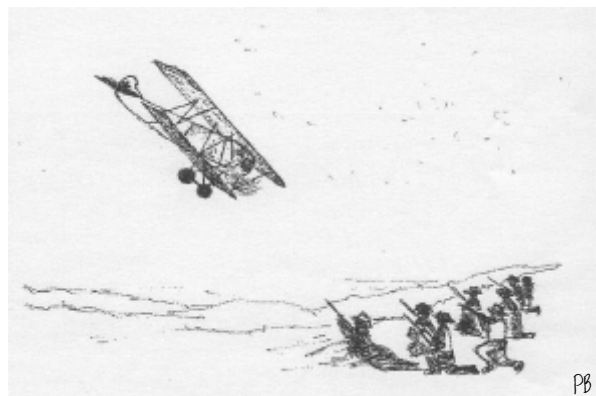
The sergeant had manoeuvred his machine gun into position as the lead plane came into range. "Time for afternoon tea, laddies!" he laughed, and pulled the trigger.

The Hotchkiss chattered away, spitting bullets into the blue sky almost at the same time as bullets from the lead plane punched into the sand around them. "Let 'em have it, you blokes!" shouted Fritz. A massive cracking of rifle fire broke out from the ground as the troopers and Turks alike fired into the air.

"If the 'Rabs are going to have a piece of us, then now's their chance," said Will. "Watch them!"

"Don't think so," shouted Fritz above the roar of rifle and machine gun fire, "See, they're starting to disperse already."

"Well, that's some good news," shouted Terry. "Hey, ripper. there goes old Klaus. Got one, well, someone did anyway!"





The second Fokker bi-plane banked away, smoke pouring from its fuselage, and headed for the ridges where the Bedouin were breaking up.

"God help him if he comes down among that lot," said Fritz. "They'll have his head! We'll have to go in and rescue him."

"Not on your bloomin' life, mate," said Terry.

"Here comes number three!" The last aircraft flew almost directly above them. **CRUMP!**

"Bloody bomb! " shouted Fritz, "Get down!"

CRUMP! Smoke and debris rose and fell among them. Several of the horses galloped off, taken with fright.

"Horses! " yelled Terry, scrambling to his feet.

"Could do with some ack ack here, damn it," said Will, grabbing Widgery's reins. He sheathed his rifle, mounted, and took off after the horses. Lying low over his horse's mane, he talked softly to him, "Come on mate, let's go! After them, boy, after them!" The thought crossed his mind that going out on his own like this would make him an excellent target for the Fokkers, but what the heck! Someone had to do it. Four riderless horses were ahead of him, swinging toward the west, galloping in a flanking direction to where the Bedouin's were. *Not a good idea, this*, thought Will, *not good at all*. He glanced behind him, and saw three other troopers coming up fast. One of them was Terry. *Thank goodness for that!*

By the time the four horsemen had headed off and reined in the frightened horses, they realized that they had covered a fair amount of ground and were now almost half way between their squadron and the mounted Bedouin.

"C'mon, you blokes, let's get the hell out of here!" said Wally Green, a burly trooper from Parramatta in Sydney. Will certainly didn't need convincing, because already a bunch of about thirty Bedouin horsemen were breaking away from their main group and heading towards them.

"They're trying to cut us off. Swing to the south-east!" shouted Wally.

"Come on, Widge, let's see what you can do, boy!" whispered Will. The small group of four men and eight horses thundered across the desert toward their squadron . . . the riders lying flat and low, digging in their heels and talking to their mounts in low voices, urging them on, trying to get the last ounce of strength out of them.

A troopers hat was lost, and Will soon found out why as a bullet whistled over his shoulder. "Go for it, Widge, go for it boy . . . come on . . . come on boy!"

They were spread out now, with the four recovered horses running with them. Will wasn't sure they were going to make it. The Bedouins were coming in from the left very fast, some firing their rifles wildly, and others with swords out and slicing through the air, glinting dangerously in the afternoon sun. He was not worried about their marksmanship because firing from a galloping horse was pretty crazy anyway, but those swords wouldn't be the happiest of things to face if they came close enough. *Oh well, looks like the bayonet out again.*

Little puffs of dust arose almost in front and to the left of him and the other seven horses. Then he heard one of the Fokkers above him, firing into the ground. *Pilot lost his marbles maybe*, he thought, but no, the puffs of dust appeared again and again further to the left and directly in the path of the racing Bedouin horsemen. Then he could hear the rattling, stuttering noise coming from the aircraft as it swooped down upon the Arab party, raking up the desert sand with round after round of German bullets.

Wally turned to Will and grinned, took his left hand off the reins for a second and gave the thumbs up!

"They don't like the rotten devils, either!" he shouted.

The Bedouins began to scatter, wheeling their horses away further to the west, heading for the ridges.

"Looks like the end of that, thank goodness," said Will, easing up on Widgery.

Wally waved to the sky. "Thanks Heinrich, or whatever your name is. I'll never forget this! See you after the war, mate!"

Fritz came into the make-shift tent. "You look a bit downcast. Had some bad news?" he said, sitting down on a kit-bag.

Will looked up. "Ah no, just thinking about how we seem to be very different people these days, that's all. Wonder if our folk will recognise us when we get back home?"

Fritz grinned. "Shouldn't think so, Will. We were boys then, old men now, eh?"

"Not that bad, Fritzzy, surely?"

Fritz was untying the laces of his boots, pulling pieces of dried mud off at the same time. "Well, look at it this way. We'd be about two stone lighter, blackened and sun-burnt to hell, have muscles where we never thought we'd have them, been wounded, both of us . . . look like scarecrows . . . even our own mothers wouldn't recognise us."



Will chuckled. "S'pose not. But, you know, it's not only a physical change. Our minds have changed as well . . . attitudes . . . likes, dislikes, awareness . . . most things don't look the same these days. It's a bit scary Fritzzy old clobber. I'm not sure I'm ready to return to my old life back home, even if the war was over tomorrow."

Fritz was breaking open a can of bully beef. "Know what you mean, mate. Can't see how I can face the quiet life back home after all of this. I mean, this has been hell, and I'd be first to jump on any ship heading for home if it was offered to me, though I know it isn't ever going to be the same again, can't be, that's impossible. I just don't know what I'll do when I get back there . . . probably be better to go off droving with you."

"Maybe that's the only answer," said Will.

"And what about your girl back home?" Will shrugged. "Don't know. How can you feel anything in this dump of a place for all these years of wandering around being bombed, shelled, shot at, flooded out, blinded and blown over by desert storms. And now freezing to death in this mud-hole."

Terry came in. "Cheer up you two. Sar-major says we'll be back to Wady Hanein soon — remember all those oranges and those nice Jewish people, especially the young dark-eyed maidens!"

"The ones I remember had blue eyes," broke in Fritz. "Anyway, now that we have Jerusalem in our hands, you don't think we're going to stop there, do you? We'll be pushing up into the mountains before long and into that Jordan Valley."

"Nope." said Terry, Sar-major says too much water and mud . . . horses would be bogged down. We're being withdrawn for the time being. Wady Hanein and all those luscious girls, here we come!" •



*6th Light Horse flooded out during winter in Palestine.
Source: W.H. Price collection.*

The 6th Light Horse Regiment, which saw action on Gallipoli, Sinai Peninsular, and Palestine 1915-1918, lost 93 officers & men killed in action or died of wounds, with 327 wounded, the total of which is more than the size of the average regiment. Will Price, though wounded, survived to return to Australia in 1919 to marry. He lost two of his best mates — Sam O'Dell and William John Harris — to Turkish sniper fire within a week of being on Gallipoli, August 1915.

LEST WE FORGET

In the light of recent allegations against Australia SAS troops in Afghanistan, it is essential that we keep a sense of perspective. No person is above the law or above the judgment of their creator. And all will have to live with whatever they may have carried out, perhaps not in the name of their government, but perhaps in the name of their own vengeance. Difficult to understand, but never acceptable. Time will tell. Let us not pre-judge.



Compassion: Australian 6th Light Horse soldiers WWI, unarmed, watching while Turkish red crescent medics attend to their wounded in Palestine. Credit W.H. Price collection.



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