

Cat's Eye Weekly

alias *The Ferret*

No. 137

19th Mar 2021

How memory works
and what to do
when it doesn't

MEMORY WISE



DR ANNE UNKENSTEIN

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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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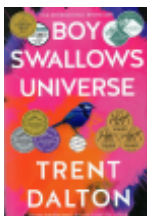
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The editor's desk

Those who aspire to utopian societies are usually to be found only living within a comfortable western society. You won't find people living in totalitarian or repressed societies having thoughts of utopia. Comfortable western societies breed people looking for grand visions, or perhaps we should state, sometimes grand delusions. Far left-wing politics breed the kind of people who yearn for utopia, who envisage a society free from hardships. On the other hand far-right politics may well breed fascism. When you investigate the two ideologies, you come up with the same formula for both — dictatorship!

Chinese people are lovely. I have a long history of appreciation and friendship with Chinese people and their culture. I have currently numerous Chinese friends and have known many in past decades, but the Communist Party of China (CCP) is entirely another ball game. Beijing has long considered that it is the headmaster and we Australians are the entirely uneducated pupils. In the light of recent speeches by the president of China, Xi Jinping, it is profoundly obvious that he is a hypocrite and a master bully of smaller nations. Of course, he would not accept that, merely considering that he and the CCP are enlightened persons who only have the good of the world at heart. The facts state otherwise and the Dragon is over-reaching itself and causing China and the world much harm.

With the demise of organised religion, giving thanks for what you have seems to have been thrown out of the window. Whether you are a spiritual person or not, the mere psychological benefit of giving thanks day and night for what you have, and not bemoaning supposed lack of goods and services, and what the other person has that you don't, is an uplifting psychological gift. At the same time it is an exercise in ethics and moral values.

No matter what colour your skin is wherever you go you will find racism seemingly inbuilt in certain cultures. But these days there is good evidence that certain groups are avidly looking for it where it does not exist or is very minimal. Young folk, having grown up with parents' or grand-parents' prejudices, have had the opportunity during the 20th century to learn from that and change their thinking processes. Why would modern 21st century folk deliberately seek for racism when research tells us it is diminishing world-wide? Stephen Pinker*, in his masterly book *The Better Angels of our Nature*, writes re. the majority of Americans: "... as late as the early 1960s almost half said they would move away if a black family moved in next door. By the 1980s the percentages with these attitudes were in single digits." The same with an earlier attitude that black and white students should go to separate schools — the sliding scale became less and less and less up to the 2000s. Regarding inter-racial marriage the same has occurred, By the late 1990s two-thirds approved of it, but by 2008 80 percent did. So why the sudden rise of those hell bent on finding racial intolerance anywhere they can? Is this an alliance with the current trend of victimhood?

**Canadian-American cognitive research psychologist*

Technology won't save the world, but commonsense might. Advances in technology often bring convenience and luxury to humans. But at the same time, innovations in technology sometimes create unforeseen problems. Software, ill-conceived, has the ability to warp the minds of millions of people. Before agreeing to accept certain software into our lives, we need to check it out to see if it applies to common sense. •

Happy autumn in Oz, NZ, SA, and Springtime in the northern hemisphere. Graham

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





Need some help with your memory?

This book has a page which states that it is dedicated to Delys Sargeant AM, whom I distinctly remember from my days with Melbourne University Press 1960s. Hopefully, I am not one for name dropping but Delys has remained in my memory as a dedicated, down to earth researcher ever since those days.

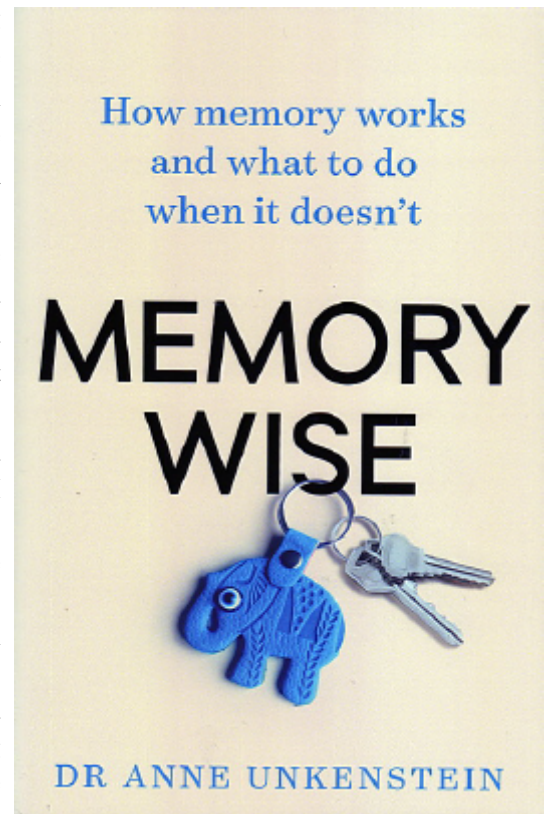
Working at Melbourne University was not the same as studying there. You saw things from a different perspective and you picked up the probable weaknesses and strengths of certain academics, which maybe even they were not aware of — some, but not all, lived almost totally within the invisible academic walls and were somewhat insulated from the public arena and the average Joe and Sheila of the suburban streets and the small towns of the countryside. Delys wasn't one of those. She struck me as the average Aussie who had dedicated her life to the help and advancement of health and the welfare of the public. Delys was a down-to-earth person, a mother and grandmother, who concentrated her research on memory and aging and went about it with knowledge and care of the fragility of the average person.

Therefore, I can understand why Anne Unkenstein has dedicated this recent book to Delys Sergeant. It's well over 50 years ago, but I remember Delys's nature as if it were yesterday. She was Head of the social Biology Resources Centre of Melbourne University and later Head of The Council of the Aging. Her book in association with Dr Anne Unkenstein, *Remember Well*, was dedicated to aging and published in 2001 and is still in circulation.

Memory Wise is an extension of the work that Delys Sergeant and Anne Unkenstein carried out in earlier days. It is a practical book, centering on how memory works and how it changes as we get older. There are considerable chapters to do with women's health, especially during the menopause, and leading on to risk factors for Alzheimer's. Unkenstein leads the reader through possible reasons for memory change, in particular looking at lifestyle. Chapters include strategies for everyday memory and what to do when a person who is close to you finds it difficult to memorise. Another chapter concentrates on "What if it is dementia?"

It's a beautifully written book, designed to help those of us who are finding that memory — particularly recent memory — is becoming a little more difficult to process.

Memory Wise by Dr Anne Unkenstein
Allen & Unwin large paperback
Dymocks and others SAUD29.99



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



A timely warning

It's happening in American universities, but don't be so smug because there are signs of it occurring in Australian universities and secondary colleges.

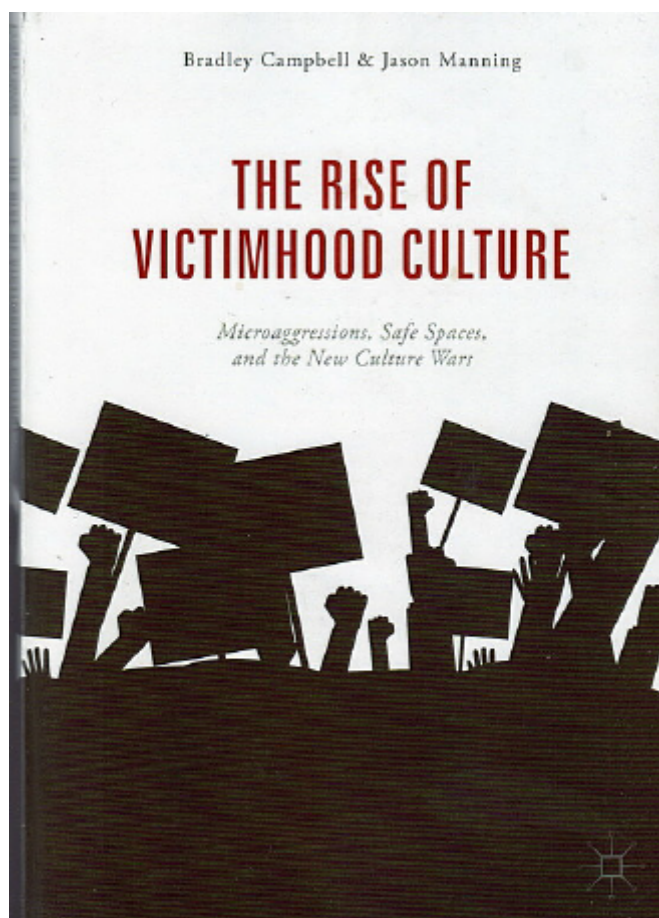
What we are seeing is what is exactly described in Campbell & Manning's book. The new culture wars are upon us where what went by in the past as a brush-off joke or possible throw away cartoon-like *meme* is now taken as a deep, deep hurt to the psyche of some individuals. Safe places are organised for those students who feel they are hurt, where they may isolate themselves, perhaps with others who feel the same way.

Discussion on campus is mooted — limited to what the new culture requires. You cannot say this, you cannot say that. Lecturers are now told they must not speak at certain campuses and rallies are organised to stop them if the new social theorist culture extremists disagree with what the lecturer is proposing. In certain cases, it is quite okay to use violence to stop the lecturer or the invited speaker from appearing. As strange as it seems, Adolf Hitler would have agreed with that.

Campbell and Manning hit out at modern sociology: p192 *The Rise of Victimhood Culture*: "Sociology and social justice each have potential only when operating within their limits. The promise that a science of social life could aid social justice efforts was reasonable, but when social justice becomes an ideology unmoored from empirical reality, *it needs no science*. [My italics]. And when sociology becomes nothing more than the pursuit of social justice, it is no longer science anyway; it no longer has any knowledge to provide reformers. The line between sociology and social justice has long been blurred, so as social justice has become identified with victimhood culture, so has sociology . . . At the extreme, some sociology is nothing more than political ideology, perhaps indistinguishable from that of the most strident campus activists."

Recent incidents regarding free speech have been occurring on Australian university campuses, notably certain of those in Queensland and New South Wales where lecturers and students have been blocked and ostracised for their point of view. Campbell & Manning write pp29-230; *The Rise of Victimhood culture*: "Threats to free speech on campus do not all come from victimhood culture. Sometimes administrators simply want to prevent people from criticizing them . . . Still, despite excesses like these, speech restrictions were supposed to be about intentional racial and ethnic slurs and the like. More recently, though, with the ascendance of a full blown campus victimhood culture, activists and administrators had dropped the pretence that they only want to interfere with the most offensive speech. The entire microaggression program is rooted in the notion that when members of victim groups interact with outgroups they are constantly wounded by inadvertent slights."

The book offers a framework for understanding and managing the new wave of microaggression culture that has begun in American universities and is spreading throughout Western culture like a tidal wave. It is a stark warning that sociology in certain hands is being twisted to suit ideology. •

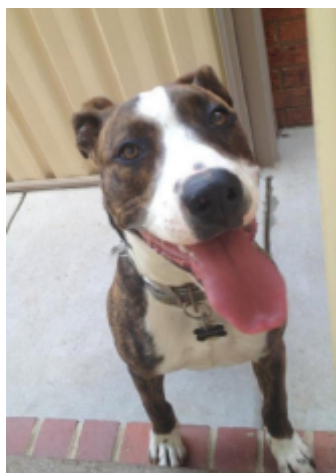


The Rise of Victimhood Culture
By Bradley Campbell & Jason Manning
Palgrave MacMillan paperback
Our copy from Booktopia
\$AUD39.54



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)



Jax is a 9 year old desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped 27kg male American Staffordshire Terrier, who's looking for a loving home.

He's a very loving, active, playful and cheeky natured boy who would suit an all-adult home or one with older, dog savvy teenagers. Despite his age he's still very fit.

Jax has happily lived with two female cavalier spaniels, but is otherwise not good with

dogs that he doesn't know and will occasionally lunge at other dogs when on lead. He therefore needs an experienced, calm, patient and physically strong owner who can help him to socialise. (This method is great for dogs that pull and he's started to use it with some success. https://youtu.be/E_oJoyaHr4)

He barks at very tall men with beards, so we suspect he may have been abused in a previous home. He spent a lot of his life as an outside dog, so now that he's allowed indoors, he likes to lay next to you and sometimes on you... yes, he thinks he's a lap dog!

Jax enjoys an indoor/ outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors. Jax' adoption fee is \$450. Microchip Number: 953010000124508. Pet Exchange Register Source Number: RE100709. If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131

Happy Adoption Tale!

Barry the Corgi x has found a loving home with retiree Pam. Her previous dog Beni had sadly passed away of old age (little Beni was adopted through TARS several years ago).

We just spoke to Pam for an update. She told us 'Barry has his own harem of little white fluffies down at the park. He trots around with them every day. He also sits on people's feet when they're talking to me. Barry acts like he's been here forever and his tail never stops wagging. He's sitting here looking at me on the phone right now... he always does that.'

Thanks Pam for being such a doting mum to this very loving little boy.



***A Special Needs Girl. Please only apply if you fit the criteria. Macy is a 7 year old desexed, vaccinated, wormed and microchipped 8kg female Miniature Fox Terrier x Jack Russell, who's looking for a loving home.**

She was born deaf but you wouldn't know it as she copes very well. She's an active girl who loves to play, but is also a real smooch who will happily cuddle up to you on the couch. She also loves to sleep.

Macy is great with other dogs and fine with cats. A home with another kind, gentle dog for company and support would be lovely.

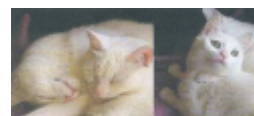
She would suit a calm, relaxed and experienced all-adult home or one with gentle, dog savvy children. A family with deaf dog experience would be great. She's not familiar with hand signals, but has got this far through intuition and her owner anticipating her needs.

She enjoys an indoor/outdoor lifestyle, sleeping indoors. Macy's adoption fee is \$500. Microchip Number: 900032000355375. Pet Exchange Register Source Number: RE100709. If interested, please call Michaela on 0409213131 (Pakenham based, but we go to you)



Happy Adoption Tale!

Monty the Schnauzer found a lovely home with retired couple Mary and Noel back in December. Here are some shots we received of him out and about, including on holidays with his adopted family and their grandchildren. **Who's a happy boy!**



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



Pet medical crisis

from Jennifer Hunt

When little 'Stella' had to have one hip operated on it was very tough, but even tougher when the second hip needed to be done also. Owners Mario and Camilla, who are aged pensioners, love the Miniature Fox Terrier who provides them with comfort and love that is immeasurable.

People understand that the aged pension is very low, so when an emergency such as this arises often the people that deserve the most help rarely get it. That's is when Pet Medical Crisis steps in to help. Thanks to the brilliance of one of our favourite vet teams at Peninsula Vetcare Rosebud, with Dr. Ben and Dr. Kate, the surgery to help little 'Stella' continue her life being pain-free and happy was performed. As you can see in the diagram this looks so straight forward but is a truly incredible procedure that has been performed perfectly.

"We dearly love our 'Stella' and she means everything to us," Camilla said PMC is wrapped to know that the older dog is now recovering very well and receiving all the love she deserves from her parents. Thanks so much to all of the wonderful vet staff that make our work so much easier. And thank you for following our mission.



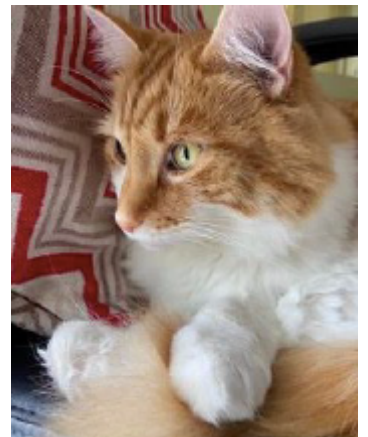
Indi has 3 very loved pets, all kindly rescued. Indi needs to live week to week due her circumstances, but she realises how important her adoring animals are to her families health and well being. Being in necessitous circumstances means that Indi would do what ever she could to care for her pets, just as she would for the other members of her family. 'Wallen' was adopted from the RSPCA along with his best friend 'Tilly' because Indi couldn't bear to separate the pair.

The two cats changed the family Dynamics for the better as soon as they moved into Indi's house. Indi and her kids have had a tough background and they have found it hard to trust or rely on humans in the past. Being a house filled with pets has meant that this beautiful family is complete and can feel love, safety and comfort.

Indi noticed that 'Wallen' was acting very out of character and seemed to be suffering pain. After doing some research Indi's son suggested that it could be a urinary tract infection and it will kill a cat if not treated. Indi was able to get 'Wallen' to the vet at Narre Warren Veterinary clinic where doctor Jon was there to help. Indi is on Jobseeker thanks to COVID-19, and she knew that the costs to save her cat would be beyond what she could afford. After doing some research Indi came across PMC and applied for help.

"I will be working for a future arrangement to help people who adopt pets, people who adopt pets are kind and often not rich, because they always give. It's wonderful to have something like your organisation (PMC) To seek support in difficult times and I am willing to support and promote." Said Indi

Dr. Jon and his team treated 'Wallen' for three days and gave him what he needed to recover from the infection in the bladder and kidneys. Thankfully 'Wallen' has made it back home where he belongs and will soon take up his spot in bed with his compassionate mum.



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.





The demeaning of Women

The 2016 census of Australia recognised 1260 gender diverse people out of a population of 23.4 million. Yet it is a minority group such as this, together with certain ‘woke’ sympathisers who are turning biology upside down. As Judith Hunter of The Junction, NSW, in a letter to *The Australian* recently wrote: “Why weren’t women, being 50 per cent of the population, considered?”

Judith has a point. How come virtually 0.005 per cent of the population is triggering changes to the meaning of biology in schools, universities, hospitals and possibly soon to be, parliament? The Gender Institute at the Australian National University has decreed in a handbook that ‘gestational’ and ‘non-gestational’ parent shall replace ‘mother’ and ‘father’. ‘Mother’s milk’ now becomes ‘human milk’, and ‘breast-feeding’ is replaced by ‘chest-feeding’.

Trans-gender language over-rules, where a Safer Sex Guide by an LGBTQIA organisation in the United States refers to ‘front holes’, and describes 50 per cent of the population as ‘vulva owners’. Two National Health hospitals in the UK have been instructed to refer to breast-feeding mothers as ‘chest-feeding’ (as noted above).

Biological identity is being wiped out. Women are being demeaned and humiliated by a tiny minority which is eagerly encouraged, especially by the artistic/media community. No one is denying trans-gender folk their right to change and full acceptance — that is not the argument. It is the dehumanising of approximately 50 percent of the population, where dignity and original biology is stripped away.

Claire Lehmann, of *Quillette*, recently wrote: “Most worryingly is the fact these ugly and dehumanising contortions of the English language are creeping into the mainstream medical profession. The Centre for Disease control and Prevention, the leading US health bureaucracy, uses the term ‘pregnant persons’ instead of pregnant women . . . The New England Journal of Medicine recently published an article that argued that sex should not be recorded at birth, as it was offensive to intersex people and those who may later grow up to be trans. As my colleague, evolutionary biologist Colin Wright, has argued in *Quillette*, these journals are betraying their scientific mission in an effort to conform to fashionable cultural standards . . . While we all can agree that transgender individuals who become pregnant and give birth should be treated with respectful and compassionate healthcare, women also have a right to be treated with dignity . . . Baroness Claire Fox recently said: ‘I am not a uterus holder, nor a person with a vagina nor a chest-feeder. These are linguistic abominations’ ”. She might well be a Baroness in the British parliament, but when she speaks, she speaks for the average woman. •



The release of Kylie Moore-Gilbert.

As expected, Kylie-Moore-Gilbert’s time in Iran’s jails, was horrendous. Detailing her 804 days locked up in mind-killing cells recently over *Sky News* and other, this Melbourne University academic needs time and space to recover from what could have totally destroyed others. As it is, she found herself mentally challenged and lost in a mind-blowing world of total control by others bent on one aim — to subject her to psychological torture, and at times also to physical torture. This is how dictatorships such as Iran operate. This is how the Chinese Communist Party operates these days. It is also how Myanmar military authorities operate, as also with North Korea. The list goes on. Wherever there are dictatorships throughout the world, there will be psychological and physical torture — there will be unexplained deaths and disappearances. China’s recent law thundering down on Hong Kong has seen people arrested and taken to mainland prisons, where some may linger for years, if not decades.

Prisons and so-called re-education camps in these countries are there for the ultimate purpose — to break the heart, mind and spirit of the inmates. At the age of 33, Kylie Moore-Gilbert has time on her side to recover from her abuse. It is something that she cannot forget. Yet, she has faith and compassion for the average Iranian people. Meanwhile the Revolutionary Guards, given total assent and decree by the highest in the land, the supreme religious leader of Iran — Ali Khamenei — may do what it likes in his name, while that particular religious leader dutifully reads and recalls to memory his special Koran readings and performs supplication and prays each day ‘in the name of the most Merciful and Compassionate God, Allah’. •



See page 17 for the review of James Clavell’s book on Iran — *Whirlwind*
Nothing has changed since the early days of revolution. The religious dictatorship rules.



Pebbles in the Stream

An Australian saga in several episodes

By Graham Price

Chapter One

The day was as bleak as the gravestone he was looking at. It was a small Victorian country cemetery, not used all that much due to the bustling city close by with its crematorium, but generations of the little town still held plots and wished to be buried in harmony with each other. It was surrounded by numerous pine trees, in which magpies took their nest. He stood before the granite slab, his great dark blue woollen coat of another age blocking out the biting wind that whistled down from the high mountain plains. He wore a thick white and light blue striped woollen scarf, also from another age. His trousers were slightly frayed at the edges, but his shoes were well kept and blessed with a brilliant polish that reflected the pine trees.

His parents had christened him Thomas Alistair Marshall in 1935. Well, that was 84 years ago and a lot of water under the bridge since then, he reckoned. That was in the same wooden Presbyterian church of the quiet town he had just driven through, thinking of himself as somewhat of a stranger. He'd not been back to Penifeld Creek in over 50 years. When his school pals found out about his second Christian name, he copped it well and truly — his initials spelt it out, TAM, Tammy! A girl's name. These days he probably would have copped Tim Tam.

Why they use grey and black granite for tombstones, he thought, I'm damned if I know. It's so cheerless . . . and why they picked it for her, I'll never know. She was never cheerless, never sad. And now she's gone, this bright young angel who meant so much for so many. If I'd had my way, he thought. I would have changed the colour to pink, or even a light blue. She would have been happy with that. It would reflect her sunny nature and the sheen of her once golden hair. I'm sure she is not content with what they've done for her, obviously not knowing much about her inner core, her depth of feeling, her talent for plumbing the depths of the exotic universe.

There was a rose coloured vase at the foot of the grave . . . empty, except with some smelly stagnant water and long gone remains of some flower stems in it. He reached for it, tipped the putrid water out and went looking for a fresh supply. He found a tap near the cemetery entrance. Returning to the grave he placed the fresh bunch of red roses into the vase and replaced it into its position. He was not a praying man, but as he knelt there the words of the 23rd Psalm came easily to him, and he silently acknowledged every word down to 'And in God's house for evermore, my dwelling-place shall be.'

When he had finished he looked around for some loose earth near the head of the gravestone. There wasn't much choice, there was a ton of surrounding concrete, but at the top right-hand corner some loose earth caught his sight. Slowly, he took from a pocket in the heavy coat, two white pebbles. One had a T carved into it and the other a C. He took out a pocket knife, opened it, and began to dig. A magpie flew across, paused, swung back towards him and hovered for a moment, then flew off. He looked up and watched it settle into one of the blue gums outside the cemetery. It looked down at him. He looked up at it. It began to coral, singing loudly into the quiet grey afternoon air. "I know you!" he laughed, "I know you!" and dug further down into the earth. He slipped the two white pebbles into the hole and covered it up. For a moment he was lost with no thought. He knelt there as if frozen in time. Then, as the magpie flapped its wings and flew off out of sight, he said: "I've come home, Caroline. I've come home." The gravestone's gold etchings reflected back at him — 'In memory of Caroline Louisa Blake 1936-2019, dearly beloved wife of Maxwell Charles Blake. At rest. At peace with her Lord.'

She had smooth skin as white as the pebbles in the stream — the clear water rippling and bubbling around them and over time bleaching their surfaces. He laughed as he ran his fingers up and down her arm.

"You should get more sunshine, Caroline," he said, shaking his unruly blonde hair and looking up at the cloudless blue sky. The magpies were carolling in the blue gums above them. One had dived at Tom earlier that morning, taking his school cap from him and dropping it into the river where it snagged on some tree roots.



He could have jumped in to retrieve it, but was more interested in what Caroline was drawing in her artbook. When he eventually thought that he should look for his cap, it had disappeared. He'd get into trouble for that, he figured. His dad would not be amused — school caps cost money and there was little of that to go around during the war, what with rationing and all. His mum would probably box his ears and then later give him a hug. She was a softie. He reckoned his dad was an okay sort of a bloke, but there were times when the mood changed and it was better to steer clear of him. Jack Thomas Marshall had been in the First World War as a medic and has sustained injuries during the Battle of the Somme and again at Bullecourt. He wanted to sign up again for this Second World War, but was declared medically unfit. Rose Marshall had breathed a thousand sighs of relief at that.

On that Saturday afternoon, Tom and Caroline were sitting on the edge of the river bank where the earth came down almost like a sandy beach. Further down the narrow river, particularly where his cap had been snagged, the banks were deep, but here he could reach down and pull some of the pebbles out of the water. Tom had always been intrigued by the colour of Caroline's hair, almost white — certainly blonder than blonde and far lighter than his. Sometimes, while walking through the town's streets, other kids shouted out. "Here comes the town's blonde bombshells, Tammy and Cammy!" He'd got into a couple of fights over that, but later on no one cared much and everyone had become good friends. After all, small towns people had to stick together. The nearby city was beginning to take away skilled labour. Tom's parents owned, or rather leased, the town's grocery store, and Tom was obliged to do his share of work when he wasn't at school. That was where he had met Caroline's parents, Samuel and Daisy Allsworth, who owned the town's grain silos, the local pub, and a number of houses. It took him some months to realise that these were Caroline's parents.

She doesn't seem the type, he thought. Her parents were pretty snooty, filthy rich, and always grizzling about a half-penny so-called discrepancy on the grocery bill. He didn't like them much. Sure, his arithmetic wasn't all that good but he could add, subtract, multiply, and all that without any problem. It was the fractions that had him tossed, and that new algebra totally confused him. But he liked geography, history, and English, in fact the English teacher Miss Julie Adams, had commented on his compositions and told the class she wanted more of that. But no, Caroline wasn't snooty, and Caroline preferred his company to any of the other boys in class. Caroline was his first love.

Then there was Caroline's elder brother by three years, Harcourt. There was something really mean about him, thought Tom. He was the sort of kid who would shoot rabbits with his .22 and simply leave them there to die, rotting in the fields, and stick pins into butterflies and moths simply for the joy of it. "Mad bugger," thought Tom, when he saw Harcourt shoot a magpie one day. That ratbag'll kill some person one day, for sure.

He scooped up a couple of pebbles from the water. "Look at these," he said to Caroline. "They're sort of like you and me, light and bright. What if you keep one and me the other, sort of like something for us to remember each other for the rest of our lives?"

She stopped drawing in her art book. "Just because I kissed you this morning, doesn't mean to say we are going to be with each other for ever."

Tom blushed. "Well, I thought . . . you and me . . . we kind of hit it off, don't we? C'mon, Caroline, I really love you."

"Sure, Tom. But we're just kids. I love you too, but you know . . . people grow up . . . people change."

"But, you'll always love me, even if you do change?"

Yes, Tom. I'll always love you, whatever happens." She leant forward and their lips met. It was 1945 and they were both 10 and 9 years respectively.

Tom took out his pocket knife. "I think I can cut our initials into two of these pebbles. I can carve a T which I will give to you, and a C which I will keep, forever. How's that? Brilliant, aye?"

"Crazy! Everywhere I go Tom, I'll take it with me. Forever! Yes, love you."

"Forever," he said. "Our love, forever!" And they touched lips again.

The Reverend Miles Robert McLean strode speedily from the vestry into the tiny St. Andrew's church as the crowded congregation stood. He entered the pulpit with a flourish of his black robes and said without as much of a breath: "Let us worship God. The hymn is number 562, O God of Bethel by whose hand, Thy people still are fed." Miles was a bachelor, not yet 30 and much admired by the teenage female congregation for his dark good looks. Mothers found that it wasn't much trouble to get their daughters into church after the Reverend McLean came to town. Many of them knew why, but chose not to mention that in public. They found in their new preacher, a man with a very good tenor voice who



led the congregation smoothly, along with Miss Jennifer Higginson who played the pipe organ donated by the Allsworth family. The new preacher was a man with strong views about the war, strong views about teenage morality, and strong views about bringing new ideas into worship. So many items in Penifeld were new these days, which seemed rather incongruous considering the war that was still going on, but the clever Presbyterians of Penifeld knew that their God was a wise God and a progressive God. Old Reverend Stuart McDonald had served them well, now buried out in their tiny cemetery, but surely he didn't have the power of God behind him that this new minister exuded from the very depths of his being. But, McDonald's widow, Catherine, said little, helped out with the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union and the Country Women's Association, with her slightly disabled daughter, Gladys. She'd held back on commenting when other mother's asked her opinion of the new preacher, somewhat enthused as they were. Some fathers were not so sure.

At their favourite spot by the river after lunch, Caroline and Tom lay back upon the grass, relishing the warmth of the sun. Caroline had her art book with her and Tom his harmonica. He'd been playing *You are my Sunshine, my only Sunshine* with Caroline tapping her hand on the grass in accompaniment. She laughed. "A bit off note there, Tom. Have to get Miss Higginson to give you some lessons, ha ha."

"Well, I try. Anyway, you *are* my sunshine, Caroline." And he began to sing "*When skies are grey . . .*"

She let him finish the song. "You know, Tom. You have a beautiful voice. I over-heard the choirmaster, Mr. Jones, talking to your mother the other day. He said something about you joining the choir when your voice broke. Don't know how you'd go with a broken voice, though."

"Ha ha. It's to do with puberty, or something like that. Dad told me that when we become men our voice changes from soprano to perhaps tenor, or whatever."

"Tenor sounds fine. I don't think you could be bass, you're too skinny for that."

"Watch it, I'll chuck this mouth organ at you!"

"Yeh? You'll get a handful of sand in your face!"

He rolled over onto his stomach, rested his head on his arms, turned his face toward her. "You're even more beautiful when you're annoyed . . . so, what are you drawing today?"

"Not you, that's for sure."

"C'mon, don't keep it a secret!"

"I'm waiting for the Rosella's to come by."

"Should've got 'em yesterday. There were about six of them here."

"I'm hoping there will be more today. So far, nothing but magpies, starlings."

Tom rested his chin on an elbow. "You know that hymn in church this morning, O God of Bethel?"

"Sure, what about it?"

"Well, I was thinking, there's something wrong with it."

"Don't know what you mean."

He raised himself a little higher off the grass. "Well it goes, sort of near the end 'And Thou shalt be our chosen God.'"

She shrugged. "So?"

"Well, if you can choose your God, there must be more of them."

"Better not let the Reverend McLean hear you say that!"

"Yeh, but, it definitely says you can choose your God, so there must be more than one, otherwise why would we sing it?"

"You're mad . . . you're bonkers, Tommy," and she broke out into laughter.

He blew a couple of notes in his harmonica. "All the same, I'm serious. I'll ask mum, she'll know."

"S'pose so, but I think you're a bit bonkers."

He smiled, taking in her long golden hair, full of admiration for the vision of loveliness that was before him. How lucky he was. Of all the boys in the town, she had chosen him for her regular companion. And yes, they were similar in looks, two peas in a pod, he thought. Will she stay with me forever? She had given him that indication, taken the pebble he had carved with a T, and he in his pocket had the one carved with C.

"Have you got your pebble with you?"

Her face softened. She blinked several times. "Of course, Tom. It will never leave me."

"Promise?"



"I promise."

A flock of Rosella's swept through the blue sky and nestled in the branches of the blue gums above them. Their chattering turned the young boy and girl's thinking away from themselves.

"I knew they'd come," said Caroline. "Just knew it." She opened her art book and took out her coloured pencils.

"Beautiful, so many of them," said Tom, looking up with his hand across his brow to block out the sun. "Wouldn't mind one for a pet."

Caroline shook her head. She glared at him "They're free birds, Tom. They don't wish to be caged up."

"Neither do I," he said. "Hey, will you do a portrait of me, Caroline, so that wherever I might wander I can take it with me . . . or perhaps, you could keep it to remember me if I have to go away anywhere for a time."

She stopped pencilling-in the outline of the tree. "None of us have to leave Penifeld, Tom, besides where would you go?"

"Oh, you know . . . one day the army might come along and grab me."

"But the war's almost over. There will be peace, lots of it. There won't be any more wars."

"But will you . . . will you . . . you're so good at drawing and painting. One day you'll be famous and probably leave us all for the big cities, and who knows . . . London, Paris!"

"Don't be daft!" she said as she began to apply colour to the blue gums. "I'm not going anywhere, and neither are you."

He knelt there, at the edge of the granite tombstone for some time. The magpie had come back and settled in one of the pine trees close to the edge of the cemetery. It began to carol again, warbling strongly into the grey of the day. Blessed bird, he thought. I hope she is now as free as you are, if any of us can ever be free. Perhaps her spirit now lives in you, beautiful bird. Yes, she would have liked that . . . to be as free as a bird . . . to be given wings to soar so far into the heavens. He stared up at the bird. She painted you, you know. She painted you and your like and some of those paintings, so life-like, now bless some of the most prestigious private galleries in the world. Some of your ancestors, my lovely bird, are there for all eternity. Such a destiny fulfilled.

He fished inside the deep pocket of his coat and withdrew the small pocket tape recorder. It was a recording from long ago, and on it he'd recorded several magpies bursting into song. He set it down on the granite surface and thought to himself. My deep regret, my darling, was not to be here for your laying to rest . . . but then, would I have wanted to be . . . with all those people around, some I knew who would be old and perhaps miserable, though many not. What would it have served if I'd been there with such a crowd? Now, it is only the two of us, as it was once upon a time.

The carolling of the magpies on the tape had attracted the attention of the lone magpie in the pine tree. It swooped down and rested on the railings of a nearby grave, its sharp eyes turned to him. Tom nodded to it. "You know, don't you? Of course you know."

The tape wound on. The carolling ceased and in its place began, what Tom could only have reasoned as a fitting remembrance to Caroline, his Caroline. It was an old recording of Handel's Largo, which he had sung as a solo in their church some time after his voice broke. She had been correct, he had become a tenor, and he did join the choir of that small Presbyterian Church. *Ombra mai fu* . . . and as the richness of his solo voice pierced the air, he was thankful that he was so far from the town . . . that it was only between him and Caroline, a sacred time of parting, and all other bodies, spirits, ghosts or whatever, were far, far away. Other men had possessed her body, but only he had possessed her soul, only he had merged with the beauty within her, had taken her to the heights. And no one could take that away from him. His voice ended the refrain *cara ed amabile, soave pie* — dearer and more lovely, or more sweet. And so, he had arranged it — his personal tribute to Caroline. And the recording he had taken at her 21st birthday party, now finally dubbed into the tape, was almost as clear as the day it was sung, continued in her contralto voice. "*My love is like a red, red rose* . . ." At which she had looked at him with a smile to overrule all the smiles on the face of the earth. Pebbles in the stream, he mused. Pebbles as a commitment, so . . . so long ago. Pebbles which they both had kept. He looked at the bunch of red roses, sitting upright in the rose tinted vase, and nodded. Pebbles, red roses, deep remembrance. Yes, it was a deep remembrance, more than he had ever felt before. And where was the perfect eulogy for her? They could have done that for her . . . at the very least they could have engraved some words worth remembering. After all, she had lived an extraordinary life. He felt the tears swell in his eyes and drop on the red roses. He gave a sob, then another, the nuances of which choked in his throat. But it was fitting, he thought, that his tears should mingle with the velvet leaves of the red roses, as if falling deeply into her bosom. The tears came again, so unlike him, something so long ago to be



unburdened . . . decades of his unconscious dedication to a love so precious. His teeth savaged his upper lip. I would have given her a decent eulogy. Came too late . . . too damn late.

And it was late there in the cemetery. The sun was falling towards the horizon and he knew he must move, but how could he leave? If I die here, he thought, it will be a blessing. It will be a complete denouement of a life well lived. He picked up the tape recorder and returned it to his pocket. It was beginning to get cold; wouldn't do his arthritis much good to be out here so late. A light wind had sprung up, ruffling the edges of the roses and he was aware of the magpie up in the pines caroling again. He turned and looked up. The lone bird had been joined by another and it seemed that they were calling to each other.

So free, he thought. Free from all the worries of the world. He took one last look at where his beloved lay, gripped his walking stick, and slowly walked away to the Mercedes Benz. It was showing its age, much like him, but he wasn't interested in something modern with all those gadgets and GPS direction finders. They're not invulnerable, he thought. You add all the extras, the more to break down.

The small motel where he had booked a night was of recent years, only there because of the main highway. In his day there had been Allsworth's hotel where sometimes commercial travellers stayed and the odd itinerant farm worker. The young motel manager had asked for his iPhone . . . just scan along here, Covid regs, you know . . . he shook his head, didn't even have a mobile. The world was rushing by too bloody fast, he'd said. The man just smiled, said nothing, asked for his driving licence. Tom could see the hint in the pale blue eyes, should you be driving at your age? He'd laughed at that. Come out on the race track some time, young fellow. I could teach you a few lessons, even with old Betsy out there.

He lugged his small suitcase into the room. It was an en-suite, with a small bar refrigerator and a wide-screen TV. Twin beds. Faded green curtains, an off-pink sickly wall colour. He wondered how long it had been here since the pub closed down about ten years ago. And the church? Not used anymore, but still standing just off the main road . . . everyone gone to worship at the Uniting Church in the city close by, that is, what was left of them in the town. All gone to the new style happy clappy services, almost Pentecostal. What does that achieve, he wondered. The long droughts had knocked the living daylights out of the town. Sure, there were some families still farming, scratching a living, but the halcyon days were gone. Religion was gone, the Saturday night dances were gone, mothers and daughters baking scones and cakes for stalls were gone. He lifted the case onto one of the beds and a pain shot through his chest like a serrated knife blade. Better sit, he thought, and lowered himself beside the case. The pain gradually decreased. Doesn't matter if I go now, he thought, I've made my peace. He pushed the suitcase aside and lay back on the bed. Need to rest; it's been a long day. And tomorrow, he'd need to get back Melbourne . . . a long drive ahead of him and a meeting with his publisher. He'd finalised his novel *On the Raven's Wing* last week and Jerome wanted it for his editorial staff this coming week. Needling old bugger, thought Tom, he'd pushed me for a revision, almost had me delete a whole chapter. Is it him, or is it me? Have I lost my touch? Nah, it was all about a gender problem . . . these publishers are getting scared; you can't say this, you can't write that. Bloody wimps. The world's gone weak. What are they teaching in the schools and universities these days . . . perhaps I should go and find out.

He'd slept badly, struggling with the strange bed. The sheets seemed too stiff and the pillow too soft. He'd taken the pillow from the other bed and propped it up behind. But nothing seemed to work. A greyish morning light eventually seeped through the window curtains, barely illuminating the room. Better get on with it, he thought, switching on the bed lamp. He'd showered, shaved and dressed when there was a knock on the door. "Breakfast!"

The tray contained a pot of hot tea, milk, with sugar, salt and pepper in tiny packets; a small packet of Corn Flakes, some toast with jam and butter in plastic containers and when he lifted the lid on the plate, were two poached eggs, sausages and a slice of bacon. He smiled. Not much has changed! Some sunshine cracked into the room as he began to tuck into the food. Well, might be a brighter day, after all. When he had re-packed his suitcase he made for the door, turned for a last look at the room and wondered how many people had been there before him. How much sex had taken place on those beds and perhaps some young people had been conceived there. Such is the way of the world . . . opportunity and survival. Hotels, motels, guest houses the world over had been, and still would be, the breeding grounds for much of humanity. Don't forget the tents and caravans, he mused, as he closed the door. The bright young manager welcomed him with a smile. Sleep well? No, he didn't. He flashed his Visa card across a terminal, nodded to the young man and headed for the car. "Your receipt!" He kept on walking.



Betsy turned over instantly. Engine's still in good shape, he thought, even though she's seen better days. Can't beat good old fashioned German technology. The 1991 330E swung out of the motel grounds, whispering pale fumes behind it. 24 valve, 6-cyl auto, he'd bought it with the proceeds of his sixth novel *Ice Terror*. Wouldn't get much for it these days, he thought, even though some were still bringing good prices. He was thinking about the Chinese rubbish now on the roads — they won't last. They don't have that pure steel for their bodies, for a start. They're only here for a short time. Quick buy, short life, quick sell. Turnover, that's what it's all about . . . nothing made to last. He switched the radio on. Just past 9.00 a.m., 3AW Melbourne. The familiar voice of Neil Mitchell came over, seemed to be conversing with a caller about Covid-19 and not getting much headway. Conspiracy, all of it, said the caller . . . and those vaccination needles are the world government's way of injecting another disease that will kill off much of the population. It's all cleverly designed to keep populations down. Tom laughed. Conspiracies! Where would we be without them? No good books, that's for sure. No best sellers without all the conspiracies!

The old St. Andrew's Church came into view and the hall at the rear where he and Caroline had danced the nights away in younger days. He was going to drive past, when he saw the front entrance door to the church was ajar. Might take a peek, just for old times' sake. The Merc came to a halt and he slowly climbed out, took his walking stick from the back seat. How long was it? He couldn't remember. It all seemed so long ago. There had been marriages here, almost his at one time, but that was another story.

The door creaked, and he stopped. He knew the face that stared down at him from near the pulpit. The woman was dusting, making it her business it seemed, to keep alive that which was long dead. Unless of course, there was the invisible world still here . . . the long gone spirits of Penifeld, and perhaps an angel or two still watching over the last remnants of a worshipful place. Her eyebrows rose at the sight of him. An aged woman, perhaps much the same vintage as himself. He struggled with a name as he walked with his stick toward her. All the furnishings were still in place as they had been that Saturday as he sat in the rear pew watching a wedding take place, which he thought should not be. A forbidding day, with storm clouds on the horizon. The day he left the town for good.

"Fran . . . Frances . . . Franny!"

"Oh my Lord . . . surely, it can't be? Tom . . . Oh Tom!"

She dropped the duster. She beamed as he walked towards her. "Oh Tom, where have you been? What have you been doing? It's been so long."

They embraced. He held her for some time, as she nestled her head into his neck. He smelt a perfume from decades ago . . . what was it now? Hartnells? She kissed him on his cheek. "Tom, you're a bad lad. You never wrote. Come, sit and talk with me."

They sat on the front pew directly forward to the pulpit, a place he had never sat, never wanted to sit. She placed her hand on his thigh and looked at him. "The world's bashed you around a bit, hey, Tom Marshall. But I've read some of your books. They're good, but you put too much of yourself in them. I can read between the lines." He stared at her with a half smile on his face. He could see the early beauty still there behind some wrinkles and the grey of what was once an auburn shock of hair. She'd aged well. Figure still curvaceous. Good pair of legs. Her lustrous brown eyes were still the same, and the lightly curved eyebrows. How many times had he kissed those delicate ears? They'd had their time, but it was always in fun. He'd had no serious thoughts about Frances and nor she, and then one day, he was gone.

"You know," she said, running her hand down his cheek. "I've still got that book you gave me for my 19th." Surprised, he said "Oh, Franny and Zooey!"

"I think Salinger influenced you in your own writing, did he not? You know, *Catcher in the Rye* and all that. There was something about you that was Holden Caulfield."

He laughed. "That stirrer! Not sure," he said. "Tell me, what are you doing here in this deserted building? It's all gone, Frances. Hymns, prayers, sermons, all gone."

"Is it? For all your worldly knowledge, Tom, you're still missing something. This is where I still find my strength, and I have to give something back. That's why I am here dusting, cleaning, keeping things together. You, perhaps, only see a vacant old building, but I see these aged timbers impregnated with all the good that was ever created here. There is another world, you should know that. Nothing is ever lost, and the time will return when wonderful things will occur."



"Huh, you sound like some ancient seer of old testament days. But you're probably right. Without a belief in the infinite we are all lost. I have struggled with that in my novels, struggled to make the people in it, though human, at the same time aware that they are part of something so vast, so stimulating, so . . . so unpredictable."

She had the smile that all the young lads would have killed for back in the old days, and the way she pulled a beer in that pub was kind of sexy in itself. "So, you're not such an old atheist, after all, eh? I suppose you've been out there, to see where she is?"

His breathing was rapid. "Yes. Had a little ceremony all by myself."

Frances's eyes were moist. "She would have liked that. You buggered it all up, didn't you! What did you do? She was yours for the keeping!"

He grunted. "Old age together, sitting by the TV? That's not what she would have had. We weren't made for that."

"But you were so well matched. You were so in love. Was it because you were too bloody selfish to give up a part of your career for her?"

"There was more to it than that, you know it."

Her lips were tight. Her brown eyes wide.

"So," he continued. "What does the ex-barmaid of Allworth's do with the remainder of her life now that Harcourt is no longer around?"

"You remember Gemma, the youngest?"

He nodded.

"She married somewhat late, to a lovely feller from Ararat, a career air force officer. Smart devil, too. Managed a diplomatic posting to London, then Berlin. They made some good investments over the years and bought a hobby farm down by Warragul, semi-retired now. I'm grandmother to three lovely little girls. Well, not so little now, all in their early twenties, waiting for some mongrel lads to come along and pounce. I go down often. Still drive my little Corolla."

"Long drive."

"Sure, but I take my dog Chrissy with me for company. Poodle."

"Lonely?"

"No more than usual. What about you?"

"My work keeps that well away from me. Another book almost finished."

"I heard about Stephanie. London, wasn't it? If I'd known where to send it, I would have sent a card."

"Sorry. Steph was the correspondent, not me. I thought she would have had your address, and vice versa."

Frances shook her head. Her eyes were still moist. He knew she was trying to hold it back and he wrapped his arm around her shoulders. "They caught the bastard who ran her down, but he only got two years inside. Drugs."

He could feel her shaking. "It's all right," he said. "We had a good marriage, we were close, but not all that close. More or less a pleasant convenience, wouldn't you say? Much like yours."

She looked up at him. "Harcourt! There were times when I could've wished him to hell, but what's the point? No use keeping grudges."

"Is he buried here?"

She stared at the timber floor. "No. He wasn't wanted here, never here . . . not after what he did." •

To be continued.

MS Australia

Multiple Sclerosis

needs your help

Log in for the latest news at:

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Wire

Women's Information Referral Exchange

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



Mercury O'Proud

Political correspondent



The news that filled the tabloids and screens during February and early March was the purported rape of a young woman in 1988 by a now senior minister in the Australian parliament.

Why has it taken so long for this to be made public, and is it now trial by media or perhaps more to the point, trial by social media? That certain men rape, there is no doubt. That certain women lie about rape, there is also no doubt. Who are we to believe? Why do certain women wait so many decades before reporting their purported rape to police? Trauma perhaps? And over such long periods of time it has been proven in past cases that memories can be false, even to the extent of mixing up the wrong person or it not happening at all. Who are we to believe? There is no denying that certain men have it within their power, whether teachers, academics, lawyers, politicians or whatever, to enable them to wield seductive influences upon young and inexperienced females. That this occurs in modern days is extremely abhorrent and must be stamped out wherever it shows itself. Young women — or any women for that matter — must be free to feel safe in any corridor of school, university or parliament, or any

other workplace in the land. This is a first and prime responsibility of all who oversee such institutions and departments and moves must be made to ensure better outcomes for the safety of young women in these places.

But there is gaping evidence in this current story, given information by the woman's parents that her mental state was not coherent. 33 years have gone by and perhaps we shall never know what was in the mind of the 'accuser' when she contacted NSW police to say that she did not wish the investigation to continue. Even so, regardless of a person's mental state at the time of making an original statement to police, investigations should continue until found otherwise to be fruitless. Who are we to believe? It is the friends of the women who are now making the accusations. Are we to believe them? A young female has recently written in *The Age* concerning a male teacher: "He told me he would never hurt me. Until he did. I lost my virginity to a 58-year-old paedophile and spent the next six months being raped by him at school nearly every day". Now this does boggle the mind — that an intelligent female let it go on almost every day for six months without complaint to authorities or her parents! Why?

In regard to minister Christian Porter, the most balanced media commentary on his situation seems to have been by Jaqueline Maley in *The Age* newspaper, Thursday 4th March 2021, when she described the situation as personal on both sides, finalising with: "Those making a judgement on the allegations have to decide between the sincere denials of the Attorney-General, and the allegations of a woman who is now dead. No trial can take place but that doesn't mean people watching this extraordinary, historical press conference didn't make up their own minds." Will we ever know? Trial by media and social media will no doubt continue for some time, with resultant untold bloody damage to *both* sides. Do they need this? •

IRAN: THE SAGA THAT FITS EVEN TODAY

Written 1985, appropriate for 2021

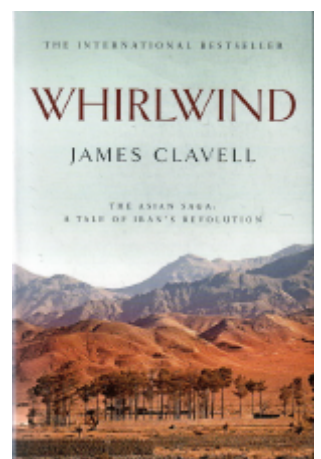
The theocracy — religious dictatorship — that is Iran has barely changed in attitude since James Clavell wrote *Whirlwind*. The book's feature is the 1979 revolution in which the Shar was deposed and replaced by the religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini.

Clavell, famous for his Asian dramas, centres his story on the multi-national helicopter pilots and mechanics who are servicing oil rigs and other infrastructure. Without the pilots and the private helicopters, there is no oil for export. The new regime of 1979 knows this, but considers it may find a way around not using international pilots. There is also the threat to nationalise the helicopter company.

But the country is in one hell of a mess, with those in the armed forces still faithful to the Shar and who are seen by the new regime as traitors. There are other groups fighting and spying for their own cause — fedayeen Marxist guerrillas, Savak the secret police, including outsiders from the CIA, MI6 and KGB.

The fact is no one knows where they stand. Anyone can be hauled up before a komitech (revolutionary committee) 'court' and questioned or even tortured. Executions are common.

Among all this turmoil, Clavell magically weaves numerous intermingling stories about the multi-national pilots, their wives, and several men with female partners of Iran nationality, whose allegiances — naturally enough — are mixed. A spine-tingling novel of 1231 pages that keeps the reader guessing, with numerous twists and turns and unexpected events. Clavell is a master story teller with numerous gifts at his disposal.



***Whirlwind* by James Clavell
Dymocks \$AUD19.99**



Saigon Sunset

A saga in several episodes by Graham Price
Chapter 6

The story continues: The Bishop of Saigon — Jean Baptiste Lacroix — leaves the Presidential Palace after dinner, wondering how his seeds would germinate. He viewed the evening as a partial success, but of course one could not truly foresee how the Nhu's would react. Meanwhile, Phuong Duval has had to calm her students down, while James McKinnon and the inspector, Claude Bastein have arrived by helicopter near the Loyer plantation, arrested the owner but have fallen foul of a National Liberation Front cadre waiting for them at the helicopter landing site.

Inspector Claude Bastein, James McKinnon, together with the two Saigon police constables knew immediately that they didn't stand a chance. What appeared to be a North Vietnam cadre was four to five times their strength. As they came into the clearing and headed for the helicopter they suddenly found themselves surrounded. Claude Bastein had a tight grip on the arm of Pierre Marchand, determined to get him into the chopper as fast as possible. He didn't need this sudden interruption to his plan. He scanned the group, looking for a leader. There were two women among the men, both holding AK47's, faces smeared with mud, and not looking pretty at all. He'd seen it all before in earlier years around Hanoi, and knew if he didn't think fast, he was in one hell of a mess. What would they want, he thought — our arms, the helicopter perhaps? He didn't like the chances of his two Saigon police. He figured that he and James just might . . . just might, escape with their lives intact, but the others?

James could feel the energy draining out of him. He unbuckled his Webley revolver and let it fall to the ground. The inspector did the same with his Smith and Wesson. The two Saigon police had already lowered their rifles to the ground and raised their hands. The rubber plantation owner had gone pale. Claude still held him by the arm and squeezed a little. He whispered: "Don't do anything foolish. These people mean business." It was then that a solid looking Vietnamese stepped forward.

"You!" he said, pointing to Claude. "You appear to be in charge. What is happening here? I am Commissar Chu Long of the National Liberation Front." He smiled then. "You have all become my prisoners. It appears that you are preparing to leave, but what has been your purpose here, eh? Why did you come here? And who is that man you are holding?"

Claude felt his pulse racing. Tight spot, this one, but he'd been in worse. Need some way to talk us out of it . . . just take it easy . . . slow down . . . keep calm . . . try not to let him get the upper-hand, and hang onto Marchand as tight as you can.

"Greetings Commissar Chu. We mean no harm to you or your party. I am an inspector of police, and I have arrested this man for collaboration with the Japanese, which resulted in the executions of many of my fellow countrymen. I know it was some time ago, but I need to bring this man to justice."

Chu Lam Long narrowed his eyes. "And this other man, who is he?"

But before Claude could speak, Linh had moved forward and touched Long by the arm. "I know that other man. I gave him a free pass some weeks ago. He was with his family in a Citroen, I believe."

Cuc, who had been watching and waiting, also moved forward. "That inspector must be one of the police who tortured and caused the death of my Kim. He should die. They all should die!" She raised the barrel of her AK47 and turned her head towards Long for approval.

Commissar Long raised his hand. "Wait! You, the fair one, what is your name?"

"James McKinnon, Commissar. And yes, it is true; I do have a free pass given by your comrade."

"Lies!" spat Cuc. "Lies!"

"We shall see," said Long. "Linh, go to him and see if he still has your paper."

James went to retrieve his wallet from the pocket of his safari jacket, but Linh said "Don't do that. I'll take it out."

She moved up to him. "Oh yes, I do recognise you. There were your three children in the car and you had a French woman with you. She was somewhat rude, but I forgave her that. Let me see." And she slid her fingers into his



breast pocket and pulled out his wallet. She searched through the leather dividers, and then, pulled out a piece of folded paper. Checked it, and then held it up for Long to see. "This is it! This is the free pass I granted to this man and his family."

Cuc shouted out. "They have to die. They all have to die! They must be punished."

"That will be up to me," said Long. "Take yourself to the rear, now!"

Cuc growled, spat on the ground, turned and went back into the undergrowth where she sat cross-legged and watched. She was rubbing the AK47 . . . itching to spray a host of bullets at the enemy.

The Commissar stared hard at Claude Bastein and the seconds ticked by. He seemed to be struggling with some decision. Finally, he said: "I have to honour the free pass. That is our code and it must not be broken. I would have liked to have taken this fine looking helicopter back to Hanoi, but another time . . . another time. You are free to go, but the rubber plantation man stays with us."

"But he's my prisoner!" said Claude.

Long rubbed his chin and stared again at the inspector. "That is my decision . . . go before I change my mind!"

And Claude knew what the Commissar meant. He released his grip on Marchand. The Frenchman laughed. "Seems I have new friends, Inspector."

Claude nodded. "For the moment, but I will return *mon aime*."

Marchand rubbed his arm and moved in the direction of the Commissar. "And good luck to you with that. Look for me in China."

The Sikorsky rose from the ground, its blades swishing loudly. James looked down at the dwindling group below. "Seems Marchand will get away with what he has done. I can't believe we've wasted all this time."

Claude clapped him on the shoulder. "I don't think he will get away with anything, dear friend, not when that Commissar Chu Long and his people check out the tappers. If what you told me about some of them being beaten and abused, then I wouldn't want to be in our dear Pierre's shoes. No, James, I don't think I shall ever have to return to bring him to justice. He won't get to China, and I think the Loyer plantation will be looking for a new owner cum manager some time soon."

Phuong Duval relaxed on the divan in her drawing room, reading Tolstoy's *War and Peace* once again. The ceiling fan fluttered quietly above her, while the little house lizards chick-chacked along the tiny cracks on the walls. She looked up at them, scurrying around after each other. She wondered how they formed liaisons, made love, produced offspring. What kept them alive . . . what did they eat apart from the odd mosquito and perhaps tiny spiders? The cracks didn't bother her. The house was old, but solid — the French knew how to build these old colonial villas. It had stood the test of time and she was grateful for her home, not that it would be for too much longer, she thought. The North was becoming a bother and the latest news of infiltrations down South worried her. She put the book down, stretched her arms and yawned softly. Saturday afternoon, no school and no hysterical children to be concerned about. She pondered over the distress in her classroom the other day when the outburst about the Viet Minh soldiers coming down to rape all the daughters, was so strong. Teenage girls in hysteria! How she had managed to calm them down, she was unsure. Her mind wandered over her comments to the girls, but she could not recall all that she had said. In the end, she managed to calm them, and that was all that mattered. She yawned again. Oh, why is that? I slept well last night, or did I? She glanced at the diamond engagement ring on her finger . . . perhaps I didn't, remembering that she had gone to bed thinking about her fiancée James McKinnon and his strong, well-muscled body. He was so slim, but stripped off turned into a rippling body of splendour. She smiled, gave a little chuckle and put the book down on a small rosewood side table. It was good to reminiscence . . . oh, they had become so close; it was as if they were one body and one mind. He simply purred gentleness out of the depths of his being. She'd not met a man like him, ever. She did think he was similar to her own father . . . Pierre Duval, who taught her well and guarded over her for so many years. A good administrator, she thought, in what used to be the French colonial government, unlike some that she knew of. James, James . . . where had he gone? Up north with that inspector, Claude Bastein, to a rubber plantation. He hadn't told her what it was all about, but she figured it had something to do with a police investigation. Her long slim fingers picked the book up again, but she couldn't concentrate. She book-marked at the page where her father's namesake, Pierre, was talking to Hélène and she was replying: "So you never noticed before how beautiful I am?"



Silly woman, thought Phuong. Vain like many of them here in Saigon; women who considered they had power over men, but in the end became the losers. And what was his reply? He seemed embarrassed by her words. Yes, she was beautiful, but shallow. Her type would have that power of beauty for a while, but then they would lose their grip on that and their days would be long and weary. Such beauty was no apology for lack of morals. She laughed, placed the heavy hardback onto the table and sighed. She'd never be like that with James.

Her adopted daughter, Mia, called from the hall. "Mr. McKinnon coming. His car in drive. Is he going to be my bapa?" Phuong ran to Mia and wrapped her arms around the girl, "Yes, my darling, he's going to be your bapa."

Charmaine stood in the living room of the McKinnon household, recalling that James wished to invite the chef Victor Moulineaux and his Vietnamese writer wife, Isabelle Tran, for dinner. She was staring at Isabelle's latest book recently published in Paris, *La Belle Officielle* — a best seller in Europe and doing all right so far in Saigon, a mixed race novel of French and Vietnamese, much like Isabelle's own marriage and the coming one of James and Phuong. What an interesting evening that would be! I'd better start making the arrangements, perhaps just the six of us this time . . . might not be advisable for any of the military or diplomatic people to be here, considering that Isabelle's book is somewhat controversial. Charmaine had only begun to read it earlier in the week and was fascinated by its sensitiveness and what she considered to be, accuracy. It didn't do the current government much good, she thought, and wondered if it would end up being banned.

Samantha came through the door and tugged at Charmaine's dress.

"Whoops, you gave me a fright!" laughed Charmaine. "Hmm, you look somewhat tired, did you not sleep well last night, little dove?"

Samantha shook her head. "Oh yes, I did, but you will be leaving us soon, is that not correct? What are we going to do without you?"

It had to come, sooner rather than later. What was she going to tell the child? That she was deserting the family for the man she loved? There was pain in the child's eyes and the beginning of tears. Charmaine had been putting off telling the children, but here was this sweet love wanting to know so desperately, how she would cope once Charmaine was gone. A cold fear crept across her heart. And Jules too, no doubt, would be worried. Michelle would cope, she was certain of that, but the other two . . . ? It all tore at her . . . she was desperately in love with a man who would take her away from this family that she had come to love so dearly, and she knew she could not be a martyr. Her destiny was with Claude . . . there was no escape from decisions, and yet looking at the child in front of her . . . a child who seemed to want her so desperately, what could she do? Hearts had to break, children had to learn and grow, but why oh why had this come to her? If she could have, she would have left it to James to tell the children, but it was all out in the open now and she could see no way out of the tunnel. The beating of her heart thumped in her chest. Caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. I don't have the answers, she thought. I just do not have the answers for this child whom I love so dearly. And as she held Samantha tightly to her, the tears formed and ran down her face like a flood.

Commissar Chu Lam Long and his cadre of men and two women came upon the Loyer rubber plantation. The owner, Pierre Marchand, had been walking side by side with Long, and seemed to stagger at times. Long was becoming impatient with this Frenchman. If such a man had survived the Japanese occupation of Vietnam, surely he would be strong enough to walk but a mere couple of kilometres? These French, he mused, is it no wonder that we defeated them at Dien Bien Phu! They don't have the strength or the vitality to carry on when times are tough. And he thought about the Americans, whom he knew were coming into his birth land in the hundreds. They won't stand a chance. They are weak. They are not used to the jungle and all the necessities that go with it. They won't wish to start anything with us. He knew there was already a firm liaison between the South Vietnamese government and the United States, and that America considered Ho Chi Minh a threat to the South. We'll see how it plays out, he thought. Early days yet, but we cannot accept that corrupt government in the South. Only a matter of time before it is crushed. Capitalist! Corrupt! Evil!

He noted the Vietnamese and Chinese rubber tappers who stood around the office, as if they were waiting for some sign that everything was fine, that some sense of normality would reign now that their boss was back again. They were jabbering amongst themselves and looking wild-eyed as the party of NLF troops came up the winding track, rifles and carbines held high. Several turned and ran away through the trees, but the majority stood and waited.

Long smiled. It was good . . . it was how it should be that they should fear him and his party. But he was here on a mission. The inspector of police had said there was trouble here, and if there was, Long was determined to discover it. What was Marchand hiding?



The crowd parted to reveal a Chinese resting on a swing seat, his right arm in a sling with a slight patch of dark blood seeping through the cotton. Long walked up to the man. "You are Monsieur Marchand's manager, Chun Li?"

The big Chinese stared at Chu Lam Long. His face was pasty and his breathing laboured. He took some time to answer. "So, what is it to you?"

Long spat into the ground. "It is to me whatever I think it is. You were wounded by one of the police, no?"

Li nodded, his breathing still laboured. "It was because of that French policeman."

"Yes," said Long, "Because he was taking away your boss man for questioning!"

Pierre Marchand came up close to Long and attempted to speak, but Long pushed him back. "You will be quiet. I am talking to your manager! Stay back!"

Cuc grabbed the Frenchman by the arm and pulled him back. She held her hand into his face and pushed at his nose. "No speak, understand? No speak."

"We know," continued Long, smiling at Chun Li, "There is reason behind questioning of your boss man in Japanese times." He paused, kicking at the pebbles in front of the office. "And we know something not correct here this plantation."

Chun Li was struggling with his words. "What . . . what business of yours? This . . . this plantation is economic sound for future of Vietnam. You be grateful for our management and control . . . control those who otherwise be destitute."

Long laughed. "You are clever man, Chun Li. But you are not Vietnamese and perhaps should not be managing plantation like this. Only Vietnamese can oversee Vietnamese. Is that not so?"

Chun Li coughed. He lowered his head and coughed again. He appeared to struggle for breath and heaved several times. "So . . . so, why you here, anyway?"

Long pointed his finger. "For inspection, big man. Make sure everything okay. No problem with tappers conditions. You agree with that, eh?"

Chun Li sagged back onto the canvas seat, his right hand caressing the patched wound. "Do what you wish."

It took only fifteen minutes for Commissar Long to find the evidence he needed. He burst his way into some of the shacks and saw at first hand the bruises and cuts on the backs of some of the Vietnamese rubber tappers. But the men would not talk, would not give anything away that might finger Chun Li or his second-in-charge. Long and several members of the cadre came to where Pierre Marchand was standing beside Chun Li.

Long stared at the two of them. He was thinking that the country would be better off without these types. Cuc was watching him carefully, hoping against all hope that a firing squad would be called for. She had no love for any Chinese who made their living off the backs of her countrymen. As for the French, the sooner all of them were out of her country the better. She wondered how it would be if she 'accidentally' shot off a burst! Would Long be all that concerned? No, better not, she'd already incurred his anger back at the helicopter field. There would be another time, even if Long didn't take any action here and now. The Frenchman was speaking. He leaned back from inspecting Chun Li's wound where a doctor had removed the bullet.

"It is sometimes difficult to maintain order and the men fight when they are drunk. The country depends upon the economic viability of rubber. You of all people should understand that. If the North is eventually to be the government here, people like your Ho Chi Minh would recognise the need for plantations to be well managed so that Vietnam can retain economic superiority."

Cuc could see the validity of the argument the man was putting forward. Nothing was perfect, but she would still like to put a bullet through his neck. When we are victorious we will dispense of him and his like — send them back to France and replace all Chinese managers with Vietnamese. She could see that Long was wavering in his decision and thought that perhaps she should speak up, but Linh looked at her as if knowing what was on her mind, and shook her head slightly.

The commissar's young brother, Lung, was tapping his left foot on the ground. He was thinking that we should exterminate these people. His sullen look and impatience had not gone unnoticed by Long, so the commissar concluded that he needed to wrap this up swiftly before the situation got out of control. The atmosphere was unhealthy and he could feel the hate that many of his cadre had for the Frenchman and his manager. He had to make a judgement, and fast. He walked up to Marchand and grasped him by his shirt collar. He stared deep into the man's faded blue eyes and blew his breath into the Frenchman's face.



“We are leaving, since there is no real evidence of cruelty or mismanagement here. It is on your conscience, Monsieur Marchand, that truth will be discovered if ever any reports come to me in future. I have spoken to several of your tappers and have given them contacts if anything bad happens here. Messages will be sent to me, so I am telling you now, do not make me return. For if you make me return, I will destroy you and your hirelings. You understand me, eh? I will burn your home down and I will execute anyone I consider responsible!”

Cuc could not restrain herself. “Do it now! These pigs are lying!”

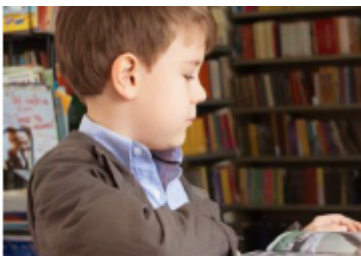
Lung stepped forward, pushing the muzzle of his carbine into Marchand’s stomach. “As it should be. There is evidence that these men are abusing their employees. Our fellow countrymen are being ground into the earth by these people. We have the right to try them for their crimes!”

There was a murmur of assent from some of the cadre members, but Long pushed his brother’s carbine away and turned to his group. “We are not animals! There is some evidence here, but it is not enough. It is not foolproof, therefore we must leave them with grave warnings . . . warnings that we will return if necessary. You see this man here?” he pointed to Marchand. “You see him quivering, afraid that we shall return? And if we return, it will be as if the very demons of hell have fallen upon him. Our leader, Ho Chi Minh, would want it this way. There is to be fairness in our revolution. You must trust me that this is the correct decision at this time. Now, we shall go! All go!”

Cuc reluctantly lowered her AK47, but her eyes still blazed with hate upon the Frenchman and his manager — the large Chinese. I will wait, she thought. I will wait until I have reached commissar ranks and then it will be my decisions that matter. I will flatter and get close to Linh, the commissar’s deputy . . . she already likes me, and we shall be deep friends, and I will use her influence to enable me to rise in the ranks. As for Commissar Long, he is weak and there will come a time when he too shall be dispensed with. •

TO BE CONTINUED

OzChild—Children Australia



Stepping Stones to Schools is an early intervention school-readiness program which supports at-risk families.



What is Stepping Stones to School?

Stepping Stones to School is a collaborative, early childhood transition project which enhances relationships and connections between families and providers. The project improves outcomes for children and supports provider capacity, so that more children in the region have a positive transition to school experience.

The program works in partnership with **Beyond The Bell** school retention network across the region.

Who are we supporting with Stepping Stones to School?

The project supports families with children transitioning to kindergarten and primary school and who live in the shires of Glenelg, Southern Grampians, Corangamite or Moyne.

Discover how you can help by contacting:

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

Marketing & Communications

Bianca Richards
T: (03) 9695 2274
E: brichards@ozchild.org.au

Fundraising & Events

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



Motoring Memoirs

1931 Alfa Romeo 2300 HC

Pre-war classic



Alfa Romeo engineer Vittorio Jano designed the original engine of 1925 which subsequently won 14 Grand Prix awards. The 8C engine eventually won four consecutive wins at Le Mans, three consecutive wins at the Miglia and Targa Florio.

The 8C was an inline eight-cylinder engine with two alloy four-cylinder blocks that incorporated the cylinder heads twin overhead cams and supercharger. The capacity was 2,300 cc.

This exceptionally rare car was re-created by Pur Sang in Argentina in 2009 for the current owner.

It has been restored to exact specifications as the original and has been active in classic rallies and historical competition events in Australia.





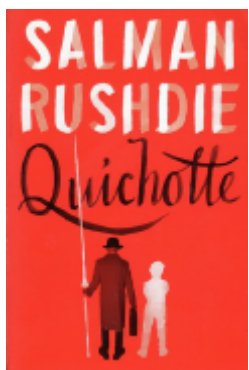
The Bookshelf

Recent readings



Absolutely superb! A young Palestinian Muslim goes to Paris to become a doctor. He boards with a nominal Christian family and falls in love with the daughter of the house. This is Isabella Hammad's first novel and it is a game changer. The time span is from 1914 to after the 1936 Palestinian uprising during the British mandate. This is a time of veils, arranged marriages, revolution. The book is rich in the history of Palestine and Hammad's prose flows so well that one wants to keep turning the pages. The conversations between characters are real and vastly entertaining. P163: "We are all *Syrians*," said Yusef. "None of this Palestinian, mish Palestinian." We are united, we will be one nation." "Enough," said Omar. "I'm starving. I can't think anymore." "See?" said Yusef to Farug. "How could we break your chairs. Look at Omar's stomach. He doesn't even have one."

The Parisian, 549 pages
Vintage paperback, SAUD19.00
Dymocks



Unlike *The Parisian*, *Quichotte* is boring, which seems strange as both authors are of similar race and write about similar themes. It's somewhat like ingesting a rather uncooked heavy pudding. Out of almost 400 pages we couldn't get past 60 or so before the big yawns came on. Perhaps it's a book that only seasoned walled-up 'progressive' academics might like. *The Times* reckons it is 'Intelligent and darkly funny,' but there seemed nothing much to laugh about in the first 60 pages. Perhaps there was, later on in the book. Darkly might be a more superlative adverb of the literary condition of some pages.

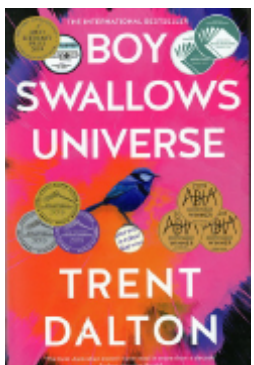
The *New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Independent UK*, all panned the book, labelling it as tiresome, junk, and so on. *The Evening Standard* was kinder, simply branding the novel as "a familiar mish-mash of postmodernist-reflexive preening." Still, if you're game enough to struggle with it, it's a large Johnathan Cape Vintage paperback or Penguin paperback.

Quichotte
SAUD17.99—SAUD19.45
Dymocks and other bookshops



This is it! An amazing journey through northern Australia, by the author of *Boy Swallows Universe*. Trent Dalton is exquisite in depicting Australian characters, who surprise you virtually on every page. This is a book you just cannot put down. Give me more! Young Molly Hook is the gravedigger's daughter in Darwin prior and during the Japanese bombing of the city. The writing is scintillating, and one critic puts it like this: "Australia has a new literary hero. Molly Hook — part Cordelia, part Jo March, part Pippi Longstocking — pulls us into a story and a landscape that is mythic, beguiling and almost hallucinatory in its beauty. And instantly recognisable as our own." Kristina Olson. Dalton pulls out all stops in his writing.

All Our Shimmering Skies
Large paperback by 4th Estate
Differing prices from various bookshops
SAUD16.00—SAUD32.00



A stunning first novel by Trent Dalton. If books were diamonds, this certainly would be one of exceptional carats. You have to hand it to Trent Dalton for his clever plotting, the picking of so believable characters — especially two young brothers who seem a little odd at times, but who represent each and every young school-kid of modern day in Queensland.

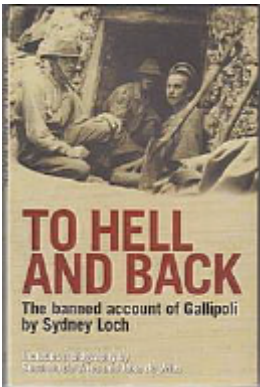
This book keeps you excitedly turning through its 500 odd pages and will make you late for that appointment if you don't set the alarm clock. There are pages of frivolity and hilarity — laughs galore. The depiction of adults in the novel is spot on — you will recognise these people everywhere and anywhere. The only criticism, if it be that, which we can find is that there seems to be an over-reliance upon the popular four-letter word. But, that is possibly due to the times we are living in.

Boy Swallows Universe
4th Estate paperback
Dymocks SAUD22.99



Like some philosophy wrapped up in Pooh Bear's adventures? Benjamin Hoff is inspired by the principles of Taoism as shown by the activities of Winnie-the-Pooh. There are two 'stories' here — *The Tao of Pooh* was published in 1982 by Methuen Children's Books, but it seems this is reading for adults more than children. *The Te of Piglet* was written in 1992, also published by Methuen. Those who loved the shenanigans of Pooh and his friends and who seek a little understanding of how humans act and react, will be fascinated by these publications. The two were combined into one edition in 1994 — the latest edition being published in 2019. The book is full of A.A. Milne's drawings of Pooh Bear, Piglet, Owl, Eeyore, Tigger and others. There are morals and lessons to be learned from this rendition of A.A. Milne's original children's books. Hoff takes an amazing liberty by imagining Milne's characters around him as he writes. It works. Folks who also take an interest in Taoism and Buddhism will enjoy this book.

The Tao of Pooh and The Te of Piglet
Egmont paperback
Dymocks AUD\$29.99

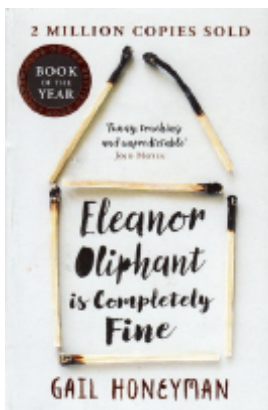


Reading this publication one considers that maybe it is fiction being portrayed as fact. Almost half-way through, the main 'character' an artillery trooper from Melbourne, seems to be following his colonel around the slopes of Gallipoli and not doing anything much. We don't even see him engaged in munitions! Not even a rifle is mentioned in his hands. The interesting thing about this book, is that it was first published as fiction to escape notice of the Australian military censors in July 1916. This edition is an edited version of the original book by Sydney Loch, titled *The Straits Impregnable*. Loch's book is not fiction, it is fact, and when the second edition was published near the end of 1916 it carried a note facing the first page, which read 'This book written in Australia, Egypt and Gallipoli, is true. True it was, and it then attracted the fury of the military censors. But a compromise was made, for Loch had published the book under the pseudonym of 'Sydney de Loghe'. Sydney was spared prosecution by writing a series of newspaper articles about the danger Britain faced and how those of British extraction should help to defend it. The second half of the book becomes quite hairy with shells flying around, artillery missing their targets, rifle and machine gun

emplacements being blown up, and of course the open beach where men swam at their peril. Loch went on to marry and he and his wife, Joice NanKivall, joined a Quaker organisation helping victims of war in Poland, Greece and other countries. During World War II Loch planned a snatch of over 1000 Jews and Poles from the hands of the Nazis and risked his life to lead a group of Polish refugees to British-mandated Palestine.

To Hell and Back contains *The Straits Impregnable* and a biography of the Lochs by Susanna de Vries and Jake de Vries. A graphic insight into conditions on Gallipoli and how censorship could be sidelined.

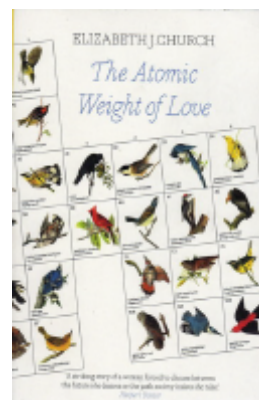
To Hell and Back
HarperCollins paperback
\$AUD34.95



Crazy! Absolutely crazy and delightful at the same time. If you put this book down at anytime there is something not quite right with you! Reese Witherspoon has optioned this book for a film and rightly so — it would be hilarious. Eleanor Oliphant just doesn't seem to fit in, whether in childhood or in adulthood, but she works on this in her own inimitable manner and eventually makes a success of her life — sometimes to the

detriment of others around her. Anyway, they are either snobs, stuck up little pieces of snot, or whatever. She has various love affairs that don't seem to go right. All in all, her life is one hilarious route. This book is hard to put down — you simply want to read and read and read.

Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine
Harper Collins paperback by Gail Honeyman
Dymocks and others \$AUD22.99



Unusual to say the least. A marriage that has its problems near the end of WWII. A wife taken out of her comfortable orbit. A husband involved in a totally secret government project. Both are swept up into this different world of rules, secrecy and at times boredom. The marriage is stretched to the limit while Meridian, the lady of the home, seeks refuge in her study of ornithology and what is possibly a hidden romance.

The book takes the reader into the world of instability and excitement at Los Alamos, New Mexico, where a woman who chooses to go it alone in ornithology clashes with her husband's scientific research that will soon dramatically change the world in which they live.

The Atomic Weight of Love by Elizabeth J. Church
Fourth Estate paperback
Dymocks and others \$AUD22.99



LEARNING FOR THE FUTURE OR SIMPLY INGESTING IDEOLOGY?

It's a book for our times, but certainly not an easy read. It concentrates on activist scholarship and the damage this may doing to our universities and the young minds that go with them. You will need to be brave and put your ideologies on hold to read this book all the way through.

What we consider is a must concerning social and historical books is adequate notes and adequate bibliography, and this book has a ton of both. The authors back up their data with immense coverage.

So, who are these people that are upsetting the status quo? Helen Pluckrose is a writer on cultural and political issues and the author of numerous essays concerning feminism, secularism, postmodernism and critical theory. James Lindsay is a mathematician with a background in physics and the author of several books, which include *How to Have Impossible Conversations* and *Everybody is Wrong about God*. He is also a contributor to *Time*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *Scientific American*. Both are married persons with families.

The major theme within the book is postmodernism and how Theory has taken over from historical content. History is no longer to be trusted as oppressive power structures constrain humanity and have done so for millennia. These [historical events] are to be deplored, regardless of any values they may contain.

Language is to be changed to suit the current postmodern ideology, and historical language is to be searched and changed or eliminated where possible. Culture has to be revised according to the new Theory or Theories, and any criticism of that change is to be howled down and strictly labelled.

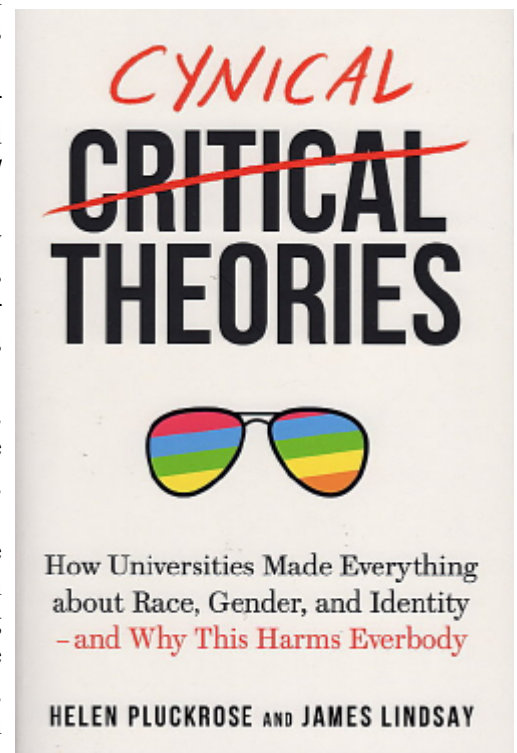
So, where did this postmodernism come from? According to the authors — and certainly no surprise to the editor of CEW — it commenced in the late 1960s and as the authors state “became wildly fashionable among leftist and left-leaning academics.” (*Cynical Critical Theories* pp45-46.) “The old religions—in the *broadest* sense of the word—had to be torn down. Thus, the ideas that we can come to know objective reality and that we call ‘truth’ in some way corresponds to it, were placed on the chopping block, together with the assumptions that modernity had been built upon.”

It appears that the authors were pointing to the fact that dismantling, or deconstruction, can only end in consuming itself. By the 1990's postmodernism seems to have died, having consumed itself. But it did not die. Like a virus, it morphed into a new version of itself and this change of Theory exploded into “a handful of Theories—postcolonial, queer, and critical race—that were put to work in the world to deconstruct social injustice.

“Theory, in this sense (*Cynical Critical Theories* p47) has not gone away, but neither has it stayed the same. Between the late 1980s and roughly 2010, it developed the applicability of its underlying concepts and came to form the basis of entirely new fields of scholarship, which have since become profoundly influential. These new disciplines, which have come to be known loosely as ‘Social Justice scholarship,’ co-opted the notion of social justice from the civil rights movements and other liberal and progressive theories. Not coincidentally, this all began in earnest just as legal equality had largely been achieved and antiracist, feminist, and LGBT activism began to produce diminishing returns. . . Theory, with its focus on systems of power and privilege perpetuated through discourses, might have been an ideal tool—except that, as it was wholly deconstructive, indiscriminately radically skeptical, and unpalatably nihilistic, it was not really fit for any productive purpose.”

Thus, having stated the foundations on which their book is based, the authors go on to reveal considerably more in the chapters that follow: *Postcolonial Theory*; *Queer Theory*; *Critical Race Theory & Intersectionality*; *Feminisms & Gender Studies*; *Disability & Fat Studies*; *Social Justice Scholarship & Thought*; *Social Justice in Action*; *An Alternative to the Ideology of Social Justice*.

The book, as previously stated, is not an easy read. It requires considerable time to ingest its philosophy. It has no argument with LGBTQ but does investigate the nuances of same and explains certain aspects. •



Cynical Critical Theories
Swift paperback, \$AUD29.99
Our copy from *The Avenue Bookshop*