Vale Bruce Beaver

The poet Bruce Beaver died on February 17, something we couldn’t note in the March issue of ABR, as we had just gone to print. Since then, the tributes have been many, and utterly deserved. We publish Beaver’s poem ‘October 1999’ in this issue, along with a tribute from Tom Shapcott. UQP informs us that it will release the poet’s posthumous collection, The Long Game and Other Poems, on 17 February 2005.

Baking in Adelaide

‘Advances’ spent a couple of days in Adelaide during Writers’ Week, fortunately not when the temperature nudged forty degrees. The sessions were varied and entertaining, the audiences large and enthusiastic, but the atmosphere was already oppressive. Surely it’s time Writers’ Week found a way to accommodate the vast audiences and to alleviate the discomfort. Is the Pioneer Women’s Memorial Gardens really the most suitable venue? What about a third tent to alleviate the stampede? What about bigger tents, more shade, and cooling within the tents? Nothing seems to change at Writers’ Week — just the price of the water. It’s one of its charms, and one of its limitations. Just up the road are the immense, cloistered grounds of Government House. New South Wales has done something about these ludicrous vice-regal arrangements: when will South Australia and the other states follow? Perhaps Writers’ Week could invade Government House for a week — not so much a Velvet Revolution as a Linen Revolution.

John Iremonger Award

At the start of Writers’ Week, Allen & Unwin announced that it is instituting the annual John Iremonger Award for Writing on Public Issues, both to perpetuate his memory and to foster the sort of ideas that he was so good at cultivating. John Iremonger, who died in August 2002, wrote books himself, established Hale & Iremonger, was director of Melbourne University Press, and worked as a publisher at Allen & Unwin for many years. He is fondly remembered and greatly missed by his many authors and friends in the industry. The recipient of the new award will receive $10,000 and a guarantee of publication. Entries close on July 30; Anne Manne and Shirley Hazzard, to name just a few. Hardie Grant Books will publish the anthology in time for the festival. Guests will include Jordie Albiston, Luke Davies and Robert Gray. ABR will again take part in this absorbing festival. Helen Healy is the new organiser: (03) 5021 5100 or info@helenhealy.com.

Miles Franklin Award

Kerryn Goldsworthy, a former editor of and frequent contributor to ABR (she reviews Sophie Cunningham’s first novel, Geography, in this issue) has joined the judging panel of the Miles Franklin Award. Her timing is impeccable, for 2003 was a notable year for fiction, with new novels from Peter Carey, J.M. Coetzee, Peter Goldsworthy and Shirley Hazzard, to name just a few likely contenders. The short list for the 2004 Miles Franklin Award (worth $28,000) will be announced in late April; the winner on June 17. Kerryn Goldsworthy’s fellow judges are David Marr, Mark Rubbo, Dagmar Schmidmaier and Elizabeth Webby.

Journals galore

As ever, it’s hard to keep up with the new literary journals and magazines. Two new ones have crossed our desk recently: Space: New Writing and the arresting title Splatter (subtitled ‘a literary magazine, sort of’). Harold Mally and Edwyn Garland, co-editors of the latter, state in their editorial (you guessed it, ‘Splatter Chatter’): ‘We believe that Splatter will soon transform itself from having a cult following (that’s industry talk for “no readership”) to a position of complete world domination.’ We wish them luck. Contributors to the first issue include Thomas Keneally and Richard Neville. For details, write to PO Box W275, Warringah Mall, Brookvale, NSW 2100, or go to: Harold@splattermagazine.info. Anthony Lynch is the Editor of Space; David McCooy is his Associate Editor. The first issue is impressive, with contributions from writers such as Kevin Brophy, Lucy Dougan, Brendan Ryan and Chris Wallace-Crabb. Space is available from book shops or direct from Whitmore Press, PO Box 833, Geelong, Vic. 3220. Meanwhile, Salt-lick Quarterly, that excellent poetry journal, has just appeared for the fourth time. Poets include M.T.C. Cronin, Cameron Lowe and John Mateer. To subscribe, write to 104 Rennie Street, Coburg East, Vic. 3058.

Overland turns fifty

With its new issue, Overland celebrates its fiftieth year, a milestone for any publication. Overland, founded by Stephen Murray-Smith and owner of the best motto in town (‘temper democratic, bias Australian’), has published just about every one of note and hundreds of new writers since 1954, and seems to be in fine shape with Nathan Hollier and Katherine Wilson as co-editors. Overland is available from bookshops or contact PO Box 14428, Melbourne, Vic. 8001.

Michael Brennan

Michael Brennan’s efforts on behalf of other poets and critics are as well known and admired as his own poetry, so ‘Advances’ was pleased to learn that he has won this year’s poetry category for the 2004 Marten Bequest Travelling Scholarships, each of which is worth $18,000. David McCooy reviewed his first book, The Imageless World, in the February issue of ABR, and described it as ‘one of the most important debuts of this generation of poets’. We publish his poem ‘After the Circus’ in this issue.
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Letters

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

Clive James’s Cypriot
Dear Editor,
It was irritating to read Clive James’s poem ‘William Dobell’s Cypriot’ in the *Spectator*, but surprising in *ABR* (March 2004). Doesn’t anyone there know that Dobell’s painting *The Cypriot* was worked up, after Dobell had returned to Sydney in 1940, from sketches made in London? James Gleeson’s *William Dobell* (Thames & Hudson, 1964) names *The Cypriot* as Aegus Gabriell Ides, a waiter in a restaurant in Bayswater Road.

Why does James assume that personal, rather than intellectual, engagement motivates the work? The *Sleeping Greek*, another painting of Ides to which the poem refers, is fully clothed: a friend rather than lover perhaps, if indeed it matters. The fashionable assumption of sexual engagement here translates into condescension. It tells us no more about matters. The fashionable assumption of sexual engagement here translates into condescension. It tells us no more about matters. The fashionable assumption of sexual engagement here translates into condescension. It tells us no more about matters. The fashionable assumption of sexual engagement here translates into condescension. It tells us no more about matters.

*ABR*’s coverage of journals at last shows some welcome signs of change in the February 2004 issue, but there is room for improvement. Under present and previous editorships, a lack of rotation of journals reviewed means that this section does not achieve the representativeness of other sections.

At least one deserving newcomer to the magazine scene, the *Griffith Review*, now in its second issue, is allowed in; *Heat*, the leading journal devoted to creative writing, stays in; *Meanjin*, on *ABR*’s doorstep, is always in. But what about others not granted a look-in for quite some time — say, *Southerly* and *Overland*? Both have been revitalised under new editorships, the first by David Brooks and Noel Rowe, the second by Ian Syson, who recently signed off. This is not to mention other journals. *Quadrant*, though widely read, seems beyond the pale.

What is going on in the magazines is of interest to *ABR* readers, including librarians and teachers, who rely on its coverage. Since *ABR*, to its credit, remains the only outlet occasionally noticing journals, all the more important that it casts its net wider.

Laurie Hergenhan, Brisbane, Qld

A tax on knowledge
Dear Editor,
Many students and their families do not realise that the Educational Textbook Subsidy Scheme will finish at the end of this financial year. This means that students will pay eight per cent more for their textbooks. On top of HECS hikes, an increase in full-fee paying places, and other fees and charges for education, this will have a significant impact on students’ ability to access education. Booksellers have made changes to their software to facilitate the scheme, yet few have been informed of the government’s decision not to continue it. I have introduced legislation to the Senate to extend the scheme, but have not received government support.

A tax on books is a tax on knowledge. The removal of this subsidy will hurt students.

Judith Pugh, Mount Macedon, Victoria

Room for improvement
Dear Editor,
*ABR*’s coverage of journals at last shows some welcome signs of change in the February 2004 issue, but there is room for improvement. Under present and previous editorships, a lack of rotation of journals reviewed means that this section does not achieve the representativeness of other sections.

Paul Ritter, Kalamunda, WA
Fluid hybridity
Dear Editor,
I write in response to Hsu Ming Teo’s review (ABR, February 2004) of Australia’s Ambivalence Towards Asia, by J.V. D’Cruz and William Steele. Ms Teo’s review regards Ambivalence as a product of Asian nationalists, cultural essentialists and those who are doomed to inevitable disappearance in the near future. But if this is the case, I would like to suggest an alternative interpretation. I consider this book as a far-seeing, courageous and truly analytical voice for future generations, a voice that echoes into far more embracing and universal domains than the narrow interests of the presumably ‘universal Western freedom and democracy’, or of those serving such interests. And I wonder when the voices of ‘hope’, such as those of D’Cruz and Steele, will be finally recognised and acknowledged for what they are.

While her criticism of ‘alliance against compradors’ has its valid points, Teo’s position runs the risk of putting these supposed ‘oppressors’ or ‘religious fanatics’ or ‘the poor’ into a too-familiar binary category of the ‘inferior’, ‘uncultivated’ and ‘unenlightened’ to the superior West.

Speaking personally, I grew up in a conservative part of rural Japan, a traditional Mahayana Buddhist family, a petty working-class household and an environment where the mainstream Japanese establishments of schools, governments, television stars, sports and fascinations about the royal family were regarded as natural. Not only has that experience given me the opportunity to experience what Ms Teo assumes is a more ‘authentic Asia-ness’, but it has not hindered me from learning Western mathematics, sciences, histories, languages, politics, economics, philosophies, cultures, mannerisms or the Internet. After both consciously and unconsciously learning about these Western ways within Japan and in the West itself, I have come to acknowledge a preference for supposedly ‘traditional’ Eastern attitudes to life, for I personally believe that they are just as useful and practical as some aspects of ‘Western’ values that I have also come to appreciate.

Some of the values I now cherish include the acceptance of human imperfections and the world itself, interconnectedness and reciprocities of the universe, notions of accumulations of good and bad karmas, inner spirituality and recognition of the universe, non-violence, an ideal state of ‘genuine trust’ to higher authorities and ‘genuine efforts’ of the higher authorities to help their followers, recognition and acceptance of instincts and intuition as well as reason and language, the recognition of fate, and respect for all living things. Unfortunately, it would appear, these values have not been adequately discussed in a Western society such as Australia; rather, such a viewpoint is often exoticised, commercialised or dismissed as somewhat ambiguous, primitive, tribal, mysterious sets of ‘wisdom’ or just exotically un-modern or un-postmodern.

And though these values sit in some tension with some of the mainstream values of my Western learning, I am able to find commonality with some of the ‘other’, non-mainstream Western voices in Australian society, e.g. those of Aboriginal land rights activists and refugee advocates, social environmentalists and the like. My own hybridity — and the notion of hybridity is actually discussed in D’Cruz and Steele’s book, especially in relation to Asian-Australians — is fluid. I would ask for an understanding in Australia, where I do not have to be patronised out of, or be shamed into giving up, those aspects I have come to appreciate of the culture into which I was born. I would be interested to find out what aspects of the culture she was born into or grew up in that Hsu Ming Teo still regards as worth preserving?

Hideki Kizaki, Toorak, Vic.

History of a Book
Dear Editor,
Jill Jolliffe, in her review of James Dunn’s East Timor: A Rough Passage to Independence (ABR, March 2004), seems uncertain whether to give praise to Dunn for what has been an extraordinary achievement in record-keeping, to emphasise Gough Whitlam’s (and his followers’) failings, or to cast aspersions at the editors involved.

In many ways, Jolliffe has been deeply involved with the Timor tragedy; Dunn acknowledges this and thanks her in his preface. There is so much to say about Dunn (a very special figure), but space is limited. East Timor: A Rough Passage is the third edition of a book first published by Jacaranda Press as Timor: A People Betrayed in 1983. If it had not been for a chance conversation between Dunn and an ANU professor of geography on the beach at Bateman’s Bay, the manuscript would never have gone to Jacaranda. I am glad it did, even though it is Jacaranda’s editor that will have to shoulder some of Jolliffe’s criticism. Editors can’t exactly lighten the style!

Gough Whitlam certainly didn’t want the book published, and said so in no uncertain terms, even to the extent of giving me a lecture on Fretilin, via biro on a Windsor Hotel tablecloth, before he spoke to the Publishers’ Association Annual Dinner gathering in 1983. It will certainly be interesting to read the cabinet papers of 1974 when they are released next year.

A very few parliamentarians of the Labor variety, plus Ken Davidson from The Age and the indomitable Shirley Shackleton, came to the launch in Canberra, but, as you might guess, sales were slow, although we did our best to hawk copies around to many a meeting of sympathisers, including the Independent company, which had fought there in World War II.

Dunn retained the rights, and a new edition was published by ABC Books in 1996 (not 1986, as Jolliffe claims, compounding an error made by Longueville). With some additions, including a foreword by Xanana Gusmao and a rewritten preface, a third edition has now been published by Longueville Books. The East Timor Association regards Dunn’s words with almost biblical reverence. I suspect that Jolliffe wouldn’t go that far, but I might have expected something a little stronger than she managed in her very mixed and cautious review.

John Collins, Balaclava, Vic.
Judith Armstrong’s most recent book was *The French Tutor* (2003). Before leaving to write full-time, she was Reader in Russian Studies at the University of Melbourne.

Christopher Bantick is a Melbourne reviewer.

Rod Beecham is a freelance reviewer.

Michael Brennan’s first collection of poetry, *The Imageless World*, was reviewed in the February issue of *ABR*. He is founding director of Vagabond Press, a small literary publisher.

Rachel Buchanan writes a column on film and television for Fairfax’s *Good Weekend* magazine.

Simon Caterson is a Melbourne-based writer.

Philip Clark is a Sydney broadcaster and journalist and currently presents the Drive Show on 2GB 873.

Christen Cornell is a writer and reviewer based in Sydney.

Kate Darian-Smith is the Director of the Australian Centre at the University of Melbourne.

Oliver Dennis is a Melbourne reviewer.

Martin Duwell teaches at the University of Queensland and recently edited *The Best Australian Poetry 2003*.

Morag Fraser is an adjunct professor in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at La Trobe University.

Kerryn Goldsworthy is an Adelaide writer and critic who has made her own contribution to the First Book of Fiction genre and thus knows its conventions from personal experience.

Bridget Griffen-Foley’s most recent book is *Party Games: Australian Politicians and the Media from War to Dismissal* (2003). She is now writing a history of commercial radio in Australia.

Allan Gyngell is Executive Director of the Lowy Institute for International Policy and co-author with Michael Wesley of *Making Australian Foreign Policy* (2003).

Nathan Hollier is co-editor of *Overland* magazine and a PhD student at Victoria University.


Michael Kirby is a Justice of the High Court of Australia. He was first appointed a judge in 1974 and joined the High Court in 1996.

James Ley reviews regularly for *ABR*.

Chris McConville is Lecturer in Australian Studies at the University of the Sunshine Coast and has written widely on the history of Melbourne.

Simon Marginson is an Australian Professorial Fellow in the Faculty of Education at Monash University. He is director of the Monash Centre for Research in International Education, editor of the *Australian Journal of Education* and a scholar in the social sciences who writes mainly about educational policy and sociology. His current research is on international and higher education in the context of globalisation.

John Mulvaney was Professor of Prehistory at the Australian National University.

John Nieuwenhuysen is currently Director of the Monash Institute for the Study of Global Movements; Deputy Chancellor of RMIT University; Chair of the Board of VITS Language Link; a member of the Board of the Australian Multicultural Foundation, and of the Australian Research Council Expert Advisory Committee on the Social, Behavioural and Economic Sciences.

Tamas Pataki is a senior fellow at the Department of Philosophy, University of Melbourne, and a fellow of Deakin University. He is co-editor, with Michael Levine, of *Racism in Mind* (Cornell University Press, 2004).

Ros Pesman is Challis Professor of History at the University of Sydney.

Peter Porter’s latest work of poetry is *Max Is Missing* (2001). In 2002 he won the Queen’s Medal for Poetry.

Owen Richardson is a Melbourne-based reviewer.

Peter Ryan is the author of *Fear Drive My Feet* (1959). In the New Guinea campaigns of 1942 and 1943, he won the Military Medal. He was Director of Melbourne University Press from 1962 to 1988.

Tom Shapcott is a poet, author and Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Adelaide.

Tony Smith is a reviewer who lives near Bathurst, New South Wales.

Ceridwen Spark is a research associate in the School of Political and Social Inquiry at Monash University and a writer and reviewer.

Peter Steele’s most recent book is *Plenty: Art into Poetry* (2003), which was reviewed in *ABR* last month.

Carolyn Tétaz is a Melbourne-based reviewer.

Nicola Walker worked for the *TLS* in London for many years and is now a freelance writer living in Sydney.

Richard Walsh is the former CEO of a public company and the author of *Executive Material: Nine of Australia’s Top CEOs in Conversation* (2003).
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Our cover this month shows Stephen Smith’s photograph of children during their first Holy Communion at St Patrick’s Church in Fremantle, Western Australia. The photograph is one of fifty images by Smith held by the National Library of Australia, and comes from the series Blessing the Fleet, Fremantle, 1979. Other series by Smith include Land Rights Camp at Heirisson Island (1978), Aboriginal Dance Company at Festival d’Automne, Paris (1983), Greek Easter (1994) and Christmas Island (1996).

Stephen Smith was born in England, and arrived in Australia in 1968. He began taking photographs in the late 1970s, and has a particular interest in photographing dance and ritual.

Stephen Smith (b.1954)
Children during their first Holy Communion, St Patrick’s Church, Fremantle, 1979
gelatin silver photograph: 27.7 x 18.6 cm
Pictures Collection, an24142929
National Library of Australia

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