

HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

This book has been published on behalf of the Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS): www.chass.org.au.

CHASS promotes and supports the humanities, arts and social sciences (HASS) in Australia, and represents an important networking forum for teachers, researchers, professionals, practitioners and policy makers across the sector. With more than 70 member organisations, CHASS helps to contribute to public debate through programmes for knowledge exchange and media awareness. CHASS membership reflects the increasing focus and importance of trans-disciplinary research and collaboration, with member organisations engaged in initiatives tackling the major challenges that face Australia, and working in partnership with traditional science areas and industry bodies. In producing this pocket book, featuring a range of essays by prominent Australian and international researchers, CHASS's goal is to illustrate the diverse ways in which, as Robyn Archer points out in the Foreword, the humanities, arts and social sciences provide essential services to all citizens in all walks of life.

Joseph M. Siracusa is Professor of Human Security and International Diplomacy at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University, and President of Australia's Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS). He is also a veteran political affairs commentator in the Australian media, including ABC Radio and Television. Professor Siracusa has authored and co-authored numerous books, including: *Diplomacy* (Oxford University Press, 2010); *Nuclear Weapons* (rev. ed., Oxford University Press, 2015); *The Language of Terror: How Neuroscience Influences Political Speech in the United States* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015); and *Presidential Doctrines: U. S. National Security from George Washington to Barack Obama* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

It's everyone's business

Edited by Joseph M. Siracusa

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CONTRIBUTORS

Robyn Archer AO FAHA is a singer, writer, artistic director and public advocate for the arts. She is currently Strategic Advisor for Gold Coast Arts and Culture, Artistic Director of *The Light in Winter* (Federation Square), Deputy Chair of the Australia Council for the Arts, Member of the Council for Australia Latin America Relations (COALAR), and Chair of NIDA's MFA in Cultural Leadership. Her concerts in 2016 include Canberra, Adelaide, Melbourne and Oxford (UK). Formerly the Artistic Director of the Adelaide and Melbourne Festivals and Ten Days on the Island, Robyn is Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (France), Officer of the Order of the Crown (Belgium), holds honorary degrees from Griffith and Flinders Universities, and the Universities of Canberra, Sydney and Adelaide, and is an honorary fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

Jason C. Flanagan is Assistant Professor of International Studies at the University of Canberra. He was formerly manager of the Human Security Program of the Global Cities Research Institute at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University. Dr Flanagan's published works include *Imagining the Enemy: American Presidential War Rhetoric from Woodrow Wilson to George W. Bush* (2009) and (co-author) *American Foreign Relations since Independence* (2013).

Farrin Foster is a journalist by trade, writer by ambition, an occasional film maker by necessity. She is also the founding editor of an independent

magazine, *CityMag*, an Adelaide-based, state-wide free publication. Specializing in telling stories that reflect larger truths, Ms Foster has worked on projects as far afield as Los Angeles, but is dedicated to the conversation in her hometown, Adelaide.

Frank Furedi is a sociologist and social commentator. He was formerly Professor of Sociology at the University of Kent in Canterbury. He is the author of 17 books, including: *Where Have All the Intellectuals Gone?: Confronting 21st Century Philistinism* (2005); *Invitation to Terror: The Expanding Empire of the Unknown* (2007); and *First World War: Still No End in Sight* (2014). Professor Furedi's latest book, *Power of Reading: From Socrates to Twitter*, is published by Bloomsbury Press.

Paul Gough RWA is Pro Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University, based in Melbourne, Australia. A painter, broadcaster and writer, he has exhibited internationally and is represented in the permanent collection of the Imperial War Museum, London, the Canadian War Museum, Ottawa, and the National War Memorial, New Zealand. In addition to roles in national and international higher education, his research into the imagery of war and peace has been presented to audiences throughout the world. In addition to an exhibiting record he has published a monograph on Stanley Spencer: *Journey to Burghclere*, in 2006; *A Terrible Beauty: British Artists in the First World War* in 2010, and *Your Loving Friend*, the edited correspondence between Stanley Spencer and Desmond Chute, in 2011, and books on the street artist Banksy in 2012, and on painters John and Paul Nash, *Brothers in Arms* in 2014.

Ann Moyal AM FAHA is a leading historian of Australian science and telecommunications, a biographer and auto-biographer. Formerly Director of the Science Policy Research Centre at Griffith University, she has held research posts at a number of Australian universities, including the Australian National University and the University of Sydney. She founded the Independent Scholars Association of Australia in 1995. Dr Moyal is the author of *Platypus*, *Clear across Australia*, and *A Woman of Influence*.

Joseph M. Siracusa is Professor of Human Security and International Diplomacy at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University, and President of Australia's Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences. He is also a veteran political affairs commentator in the Australian media,

including ABC Radio and Television. He has worked as an account executive at Merrill Lynch, in Boston and New York; at the University of Queensland, and Griffith University where he served as a senior visiting fellow in the Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance. Professor Siracusa has authored and co-authored numerous books, including: *Diplomacy: A Very Short Introduction* (2010); *A Global History of the Nuclear Arms Race* (2013); and *Language of Terror: How Neuroscience Influences Political Speech in the United States* (2015).

FOREWORD

The European House of Culture held a meeting in Brussels in the lead up to the May 2014 European Union elections. The purpose of the meeting was to plan an approach to lobbying prospective candidates on the matter of a cultural policy. While the European Union allocates huge funds for cultural projects (by which they mean arts, rather than our broader definition of culture), there is no cultural policy. This came about because in the very first steps towards a European Union, the founders were at pains to ensure that no-one would ever have the power to tread on the particular cultural values of any member state. But the feeling at the meeting was that if the Union now had the power to tell Greece how it should handle the economic futures of its citizens (calling into question the status of democracy in its fabled country of origin) surely the Union might have a policy whereby a country's decision to, for instance, withdraw all support for arts and culture, or, for instance, persecute dissident artists, might be subject to formal advice.

During the meeting, the suggestion was made that, in addition to a Ministry for the Arts and the development of its policy, there should really be a desk for arts and culture in every ministry. While there are constant appeals for the humanities to be given status equal to the sciences, how much further-reaching is that proposal? There is no part of our society that does not already use arts and culture in some way and the portfolios of education, health, welfare, community services, innovation, cities and the

built environment, policing, environment and defence would all benefit from the inclusion of a desk for arts and culture.

Recently there were announcements about increased spending on Australian Defence. Amidst the itemised lists of more submarines, more vehicles, better computer hardware and systems, it would sound absurd to many to suggest that there might have been some small acknowledgement and budget item for what artists do in the realm of Defence. But why? The commemoration, begun in 2014 and stretching to 2018, of the Centenary of Anzac, should surely be evidence enough of the role that the arts play in recording the role of Defence. While there are ample dry archival records, it is only through artists that the 'real' story is told; through arts, and only through the arts, do we understand that part of our history and our present. Film, photography, painting, sculpture, writing, theatre, music, new media and even dance have all been deployed to tell the story of defence forces, war and its aftermath. Why would there not be a budget, within the portfolio of Defence, to allow for this vital activity?

I believe you could say the same of any portfolio. It also accords with the conversation I once had with a fellow Ambassador of the Adelaide Crows (there's culture for you). Dr David David is an eminent cranio-facial surgeon. He believes that you can be at the highest standing in any profession, but that it is only the arts which give you an overview of life. It is only through books, films, theatre, visual arts, music, dance, food, that you have the opportunity to place yourself in other scenarios, other places, other cultures. The only guaranteed way to explore the real extent of our vast humanity is to do it through the arts. How else can you be everywhere and feel everything? There is simply not enough time physically to be everywhere and experience everything in real life and real time. But through the arts, you are free to explore, to test your moral courage, to understand and therefore develop tolerance and a broad view of the way the world is. This is about becoming human in the most complete way anyone can.

There are no special claims for art and artists as more creative than those in other professions, but we must insist that the humanities provide essential services to all citizens in all walks of life, and as such demand pivotal and high profile leadership on a national scale.

Robyn Archer
Adelaide

PREFACE

Some time ago, a colleague, a veteran scholar, engaged me in the usual small talk around the photocopier, generally shooting the breeze, politely asking if I had any news. I replied that as a matter of fact I had recently been elected president of CHASS. “Congratulations,” he instinctively responded, quickly adding, “What is CHASS?” Indeed! I thought about it for a bit, conceded that he might have a point, and determined to do something about it. This collection of essays is a result of that photocopier moment, a modest attempt at awareness creation.

CHASS, simply, is an acronym or abbreviation for Australia’s Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, a peak body whose main objective is to promote the interests of the humanities, arts and social sciences. Put another way, the specific aims of CHASS are: to represent the interests of the sector; promote the contribution of the sector to government, industry and the public; provide a forum for discussion between the sectors in Australia; and build up the innovative capacity of the nation, through better linkages between this sector, and science, engineering and industry. That said, this little book is aimed squarely at the public (broadly defined), not only to promote CHASS’s aims but also to show how the humanities, arts and social sciences – conventionally referred to as HASS – are everybody’s business. And, by “everybody,” I mean the political establishment whose policies and funding directly impact the HASS sector; the media, which provide the electronic and print space for our national dialogue; and, the

everyday person whose curiosity and patronage support the various endeavours of the HASS community.

The essays that follow strongly suggest that the matters of deep interest to HASS practitioners are, in fact, the same interests that matter deeply to everyday people. The essays in this volume are dedicated to them.

The first half of the collection begins with Paul Gough's brilliant analysis of Banksy, arguably, the world's greatest unknown artist. Gough, a critic and renowned artist whose original work, "Dialogue," is featured on the cover of this book, assesses both the impact and global reputation of Banksy, concluding that Banksy, together with his accomplices, has not only thrown down a challenge to the mainstream in its new "public streets" but also created a genuinely democratic form of urban communication. The next cab off the rank is Frank Furedi, a sociologist and social commentator, who engages with the history of reading, which since its inception has been perceived as an unnatural and even dangerous activity. In a virtual tour de force, Furedi assesses the veritable moral panic associated with the reading of novels in England in the 18th century, through to the debate about the health benefits and de-medicalization of reading facing society in the 21st century. For my part, I have provided an historical interpretation of the events surrounding the end of Moscow-dominated communism, especially, the period between November 9, 1989, when the Berlin Wall came down, and December 25, 1991, when the Soviet Union was abolished. I believe that we have a collective obligation to remember and learn why events played out the way they did, particularly as they are likely to shape current and future political discourse in our increasingly dangerous and uncertain world.

The second half of the book begins with an insightful, personal essay on festivals by Adelaide-based writer and journalist Farrin Foster. Based on her attendance at ten major Art Festivals in Adelaide, Foster reflects on how festivals help an ancient species understand a modern world, while at the same time helping us be human. Our penultimate contributor is Jason Flanagan, one of Australia's leading experts on political rhetoric. Comparing Anzac rhetoric in the Australian context with myths surrounding World War II rhetoric in the United States, Flanagan makes the case that rhetorical leadership in Canberra and Washington, in recent years, has been deeply ahistorical and potentially dangerous. Last, but not least, Ann Moyal makes the case for the Government appointment of an academically qualified Chief Social Scientist, along the lines of the current Chief Scientist. Highlighting the continuing danger of the division between science and the humanities that took root in the West since the end of World War II, Moyal argues that the

appointment of a Chief Social Scientist would bring to the highest levels of government a knowledge broker, capable of ongoing research across disciplines that brings vital ways of understanding to such key national issues such as natural resources, the impact of technology and computerization on employment, the nature of innovation in organizations, the environment, anthropogenic climate change, and health and education – core to strategic thinking about values, human behaviour and cultural attitudes. It is a powerful call for action and, like the essays that precede it, compelling reading.

Joseph M. Siracusa
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University
Melbourne

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BANKSY

What's the fuss and why does it matter?

Paul Gough

Prankster, polemicist, painter, Banksy is arguably the world's most famous unknown street artist. To the press and public, the question of Banksy's identity is more intriguing than the legitimacy of his work and the price that celebrities, dealers and other wealthy patrons are prepared to pay for it. His greatest triumph has been his ability to keep that identity swathed in mystery, even though the artist's name is said to be in the public domain beyond all reasonable doubt, readily available on *Wikipedia* and subject to myriad press revelations in the past five years. Anonymity is less important than the impact of his art, which is more than likely created, fabricated and situated by a group of collaborators. For this reason alone Banksy might best be understood as a 'he', 'she' or even 'they', but for all intents and purposes Banksy is widely held to be a white male, now in his early to mid-forties, born in Bristol, western England and brought up in a stable middle class family, a pupil from a private cathedral school and a one-time goalkeeper in the infamous Sunday soccer team *The Easton Cowboys*. At least that is what we think we know. These are the known unknowns.

Notoriously cryptic, darkly humorous, Banksy is a global phenomenon, a personality without a persona, a criminal without a record, and a paradox within the world of art. *The New Yorker* described how Banksy tries to flip 'off the art world ... [and begs] it to notice him at the same time.' For his part he has described that same world as 'the biggest joke going ... a rest home for the overprivileged, the pretentious, and the weak'.

Banksy has amassed a remarkable reputation for his provocative, wittily politicized interventions, what one critic has termed his 'red nose rebellion': he has radicalized the art of stenciling, painted peace motifs on the West Bank barrier in Israel, secretly located an inflatable figure of a Guantanamo Bay prisoner in Disneyland's *Rocky Mountain Railroad Roller-coaster Ride* and hung hoax artifacts in the greatest museums in the world. He is 'both a lefty and a tweaker of lefty pieties', he is a champion of just causes and in the same breath a caustic lampooner of those very same causes. His art appears to take sides, but he rarely does. At a London anti-war demonstration in 2003, he distributed stencilled signs that read 'I Don't Believe In Anything. I'm Just Here for the Violence.' He has that disarming habit of 'satirising his own sanctimony', or to put it in his words: 'I have no interest in ever coming out, I figure there are enough self-opinionated assholes trying to get their ugly little faces in front of you as it is.'

Contrary by instinct and with a love-hate *rapport* with his home city in England, it was no surprise that he chose an adversarial title for his 2009 blockbuster retrospective show: 'Banksy *versus* Bristol Museum'. 'This is the first show I've ever done', he is said to have commented, 'where taxpayers' money is being used to hang my pictures up rather than scrape them off.' Few of the hundreds of thousands of visitors who attended were put off by the provocative title. Indeed its anti-cultural message may have aroused and encouraged them to queue patiently to enter, possibly for the first time, the marble halls and civic grandeur of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery. Greeted by a burnt-out ice cream van, which doubled as an information booth and anchor-piece for the show, the artist's work was secreted throughout the labyrinth of rooms, corridors and galleries, hidden amongst the fossils, the stuffed animals and the museum's notable collection of Chinese pottery. Few visitors were disappointed; indeed, most were delighted and invigorated. Not only had Banksy radically re-mixed the permanent art collection but he, and his team of fabricators, scene painters and animatronic engineers, had mastered the art of surprising and irreverent juxtaposition, mixing wit with outright vulgarity. In addition to his trademark stenciled paintings there were walls of wittily modified canvases and a menagerie of life-sized stuffed and animated beasts: a muzzled lamb, a rabbit applying lip-stick, a cheetah transformed into a fur coat, Classical plaster cast statues laden with Gucci shopping bags, aquaria full of wriggling fish fingers, a full-size policeman clad in riot-gear gently bobbing on a child's rocking horse, and hotdog sausages that writhed disturbingly inside their buns.

Nearly 309,000 people flocked to the six-week-long event in Bristol. Most had queued for an average of just under three hours. Popular reviews

were ecstatic. Visitors from all over the UK, from Europe and beyond spoke enthusiastically of the wit and the subterfuge, the caustic edge, the colourful cynicism. How, wrote one commentator, could you not like someone who said about his own exhibition:

The people of Bristol have always been very good to me – I decided the best way to show my appreciation was by putting a bunch of old toilets and some live chicken nuggets in their museum. I could have taken the show to a lot of places, but they do a very nice cup of tea in the museum.

Banksy as ever was notoriously elusive. Apparently, one of his staff told a journalist trying to get an interview, that 'Mr. Banks is away polishing one of his yachts'. Elusive perhaps but always in full control, Banksy and his team laid down strict guidelines about opening times, sales of related merchandise, and the fulfilment of a carefully drawn up legal contract between the museum, the city council and his office. As one rather disgruntled former collaborator told me during an interview for my research: 'The one thing you have to remember about working with Banksy: everything gets done by his rules. Never forget that.'

Through such exhibitions and interventions Banksy cocks a snook at 'high' culture whilst acknowledging its impact on his own formation. Many critics feel otherwise, regarding his exploits as merely the interventions of that fondly regarded folklore character, the harmless renegade. A significant segment of the city's elders have little time for cocky graffiti artists with their mindless scribble, their unreadable 'tags' and their wanton vandalism of 'innocent' property. To many citizens Banksy and his posturing are far from cosy; his work is held to be offensive by some, criminal damage by many. Banksy's art is predicated on the tension between these two positions; he thrives on gross dichotomizing, on wilful polarization, what has been termed the modern 'versus' habit. One thing must always be opposed to the other not in the Hegelian hope of achieving synthesis, or a negotiated peace, but with a determination that neither side should concede, that total submission of one side or the other is the only resolution.

Banksy's street art: Does it matter?

As a painter and polemicist Banksy's work appears to matter to a wide range of constituencies. It matters to those who seek access to an art form that is relevant and risky; it matters to those who regard the very idea of cultural

regeneration through popular street art as threadbare. In another dimension, it matters to those who want to take a commission from the sales of original works or multiple impressions that are occasionally released into the market. It also matters to the underworld of street artists, 'writers', and graffitists who recoil against the middle-class appropriation of one of their kind but also enjoy his frequent patronage, and it matters to those who have striven to revive and promote the iconography of the stencil. Above all, and perhaps most unquantifiably, Banksy's work matters to Banksy as a creative individual, an urban interventionist who is constantly pushing at the limitations of his, her or their own capability to be disruptive and meaningful.

'Wall and piece': The impact on the street scene

'Street art' connects with contemporary and urgent themes through activism, reclamation, and edgy subversion. Pitted against the combined weight of civic authority, communities and public property, its multiple formats have allowed artists and street writers a transgressive platform to reach a broader and more diverse audience than many traditional art forms. As a vernacular cultural form, street art has branched out from the clandestine self-naming celebration of 'I am here' and 'here I draw' to a didactic and highly polemical display achieved largely through pasting and stencils. Banksy has largely achieved this with little more than the innovative use of a stencil, a simple graphic design format once intended entirely for utilitarian and military use.

Contemporary graffiti artists, or 'writers' as they are known, work within a strict hierarchy that self-ranks ambition, daring and calligraphic innovation. At the apex are those writers who create the imposing *wildstyle* exhibition pieces, large-scale vivid inscriptions that call for a high degree of graphic invention and daring. At the other extreme are the wheatpasters (bill stickers) and stencil-cutters, who are regarded within the subculture's peer community as lesser writers, an underclass who rely on craft skills that are held to be quaint, even fraudulent. Their work is often dismissed as being mass-produced and reprographic rather than singular and autographic.

Inevitably, the arena of graffiti is a highly contested and fragmented one. Like many other street 'writers' who have gained commercial and reputational standing, Banksy's position is regarded by current practitioners as heavily, and irreversibly, compromised. Not only because he earns considerable sums from the sale of his work but because he has built a reputation around a very limited creative format – the stencil – and relies increasingly on the

contribution of a more talented and creatively gifted group of collaborators. In Banksy we can see evidence of the continuing post-industrial feud between the authorial voice and the machine-run, mass-produced, standardized art run.

A common refrain amongst his peer group is that 'Banksy is ruining graffiti'. His work in stencil has given rise to a flood of uninitiated neophytes saturating the public realm with weak imitations. As Luke Muyskens (2012) argues:

Not only is their work generally shoddy and uninspired, but their etiquette is practically blasphemous in most graffiti circles. These Banksy emulators are doing nothing more than mimicking the work and stylings of another artist – which, in a culture built on originality, is missing the point entirely.

Bemoaning the 'Banksy cult', Muyskens vents his frustration with the 'wannabes' who lack respect for the 'established' graffiti scene. Fellow writer Eros AKB endorsed this irritation, stating, '[s]ome seem to not have any respect for those that obtained the space prior to them. I think that in the future there will be a fight for the space between the wheatpaste/stencil artists and the graffiti artists'. There is of course a profound irony about all this: the stencil is essentially an egalitarian format, an artistic practice that is firmly rooted in the notion of community. Furthermore, it is a practice that can be readily, if not expertly, 'mastered' by all, constituting what commentators such as Emily Truman (2010) have described as an 'informal document of citizenship' which links the originator with the wider community through the act of 'think[ing] up an idea, put[ting] it on a piece of paper or plastic, cut[ting] it out and paint[ing] it somewhere'.

Street art thrives on rivalry and competition; it also embraces the ephemeral. Writers outcompete each other to create their works in the most outlandish locations and in the most inaccessible sites in the urban environment. Writers also compete to create the most elaborate and baroque iconography. *Wildstyle* is perhaps the most extreme form of highly-stylized competitive calligraphy: a matrix of interwoven and overlapping forms (intricately drawn as arrows, curves, flares, or letters) with a volumetric appearance, as opposed to the lineal signature of the plainer 'tag'. So radically transformed is the visual language that – to the eye of non-graffiti practitioners – the 'piece' is rendered quite arcane, indecipherable as language, and impenetrable. Larger set-piece wall drawings and paintings are known as a *production* and are invariably drawn by a 'crew' (a gang of accomplices). Yet even these extraordinarily ornate wall works have a short lifespan.

Many are painted out by rivals or fellow ‘writers’ within days, sometimes hours, despite the efforts that have gone into their creation:

On the other side of [Leake] street is a lone artist with about a dozen cans of paint at his feet. He is wearing goggles and full breathing apparatus to protect himself from the paint fumes, so he looks more like a welder than an artist [...] he has been here since ten this morning, painting a piece which suits his name, planes exploding like darts out of everywhere. He is not using stencils, but it is not traditional graffiti, rather it is freehand graffiti without a letter in sight; he is using the spray can to paint what he wants without following any of the rules.

(Ellsworth-Jones 2013: 44–45)

To watch a group of practised street artists at work on a large *exhibition* piece, is to witness draughtsmen (the scene is highly gendered), their notebooks and preparatory sketches in hand, the vast ‘canvas’ of a large wall, prepared for a lengthy (invariably illegal) engagement, armed with little more than plastic carrier bags crammed with aerosol paint-cans. What matters most to such artists is the very act of marking the wall, and of passing on the innate knowledge accrued through the very illicit act of doing. ‘Kids’, concludes one artist, ‘will only aspire to what they can see. And that’s why you do your best work, so that kids can look and aspire to master the craft’.

The challenge – of the wall, of the law, of each other’s talent – is what also really matters. Either through envy, turf war, or base rivalry Banksy has had a running battle, now nearly a decade long, with a fellow crew. The bitter competitiveness with ‘Team Robbo’ has been wilfully lost in the mythologies of the graffiti fraternity, but it inevitably results in any new piece of public artwork by Banksy being damaged, overpainted or defaced by his rivals. Quite how this merits press coverage as ‘vandalism’ is to stretch the tautologies of illegal wall painting too far, but it has added immeasurably to the mystique that surrounds both sets of perpetrators.

Beyond the wall: The impact on the market

How does Banksy make a living? Indeed, how does any artist whose canvas is the urban realm make his or her money? In 2004 Banksy established his first company in the form of his own gallery in London. ‘Pictures on Walls’, or POW as it is known, is a ‘front of house’ salesroom for his own work and a highly select cadre of fellow-artists. It was an attempt to bring some

order to the haphazard selling, circulation and recirculation of editions of prints with unknown print runs, numerous signed and unsigned proofs and uncatalogued extras. Indeed, Banksy's first ever print run, *Rude Copper* – a stencil of a British police constable 'giving the finger' in an offensive gesture – had a print run of 250, of which fifty were 'signed'. Sold then, in 2002, at £40 a piece, today they each may fetch £8,000, possibly even £13,000 for the select few that have a hand-sprayed background. POW corralled Banksy's creative works within a recognisable commercial organisation, tapping into his innate business acumen, but by 2008 his value (and standing) as a serious artist was being compromised by theft, fraud and plain incompetence. His stencilled work, after all, was easy to forge and fake; a sequence of unauthorised exhibitions of one-off paintings, multiple copies of the same image, and unnumbered editions of prints was causing mayhem in the art and auction market. Forgers were facing prison sentences for selling fakes through elaborate on-line scams. In January 2008 a new Banksy company was formed, fully owned and commanded by POW. *Pest Control Office Limited* took over control of Banksy's work and tried to bring order to the flood of fakes, forgeries, and unauthorised fine art prints and 'original' artworks that had been circulating from London to New York, but mostly via eBay where fake receipts, trumped-up email exchanges and other ruses had been contrived to prove a trail of false provenance.

Pest Control put a stop to this illicit trade. For £65 anyone could have their Banksy print authenticated. If it was a genuine artwork the office would issue a certificate of authenticity which had stapled to it one half of the 'Di face Tenner', a £10 note faked by Banksy with Lady Diana Windsor's face on it. The 'banknote' had a handwritten ID number which could be matched to the number on the other half which was held by *Pest Control*. It is, as journalist Will Ellsworth-Jones cheekily notes, 'A fake to prove that you do indeed have the genuine article – what could be more Banksy than that?'

Pest Control's rigorous process of verification cleaned up the market and regained some control over Banksy's intellectual property and commercial rights, but there were unforeseen consequences. There are many buyers who possess what are without doubt genuine prints or canvases by Banksy but which his office refuses to authenticate as genuine.

There are those, on the other hand, who queue for many hours for limited edition prints or unique artworks and then advertise them often within minutes for higher prices on eBay or other internet sites. Indeed there are many who believe that the Banksy sales phenomenon would not

have happened had it not been for eBay. Commentating on how the painter's notoriety seemed to coincide with the advent of online shopping, one dealer said:

No one flipped art before then. It just hadn't happened. But with Banksy people queued for four or five hours for a print and by the time they were out of the queue it would be on eBay.

It was, said Banksy's first manager Steve Lazarides, 'a new gold rush':

You could go out and buy a Banksy print at 250 quid. The next day you could sell it for two and half grand. What other investment is going to make ten times your money overnight? And the next owner, if they were lucky, could sell it on again for five grand ... so it was a no-brainer in those days of easy credit.

Fascinated by the dark humour and edgy irreverence of Banksy's art the public have become equally obsessed by the sale prices of his work. Single items bought in minor group exhibitions in the late 1990s for a few hundred pounds have since fetched tens of thousands of pounds, but only where they have been vouched for by the Lady Di Tenner. In 2002 it is estimated that he needed to sell fifteen different prints to make just under £500,000; four years later in 2006 a run of six prints first shown in Los Angeles raised over £1 million. In 2009 he could make the same sum by selling just a few of the same print. During his 'artist's residency' in New York City in 2013 a pop-up market stall was stacked high with images stencilled on canvas selling for sixty dollars a piece. Few sold on the day. Those that did can now command a price of up to 200,000 US dollars. It is not only auction rooms that have done extraordinarily well out of Banksy, canny buyers who are willing to face daunting queues and laborious gallery hunts can track down original artwork or multiples with guaranteed provenance as 'originals'.

Although it is not easy to access exact figures, Banksy has been estimated (in a *Forbes* Lifestyle article) to have a net worth upwards of US\$20 million. True or not, that figure (and the interest shown in it) clearly irks the artist. In the hardcore street art fraternity commercial success has long been regarded as a mark of failure for a graffiti artist. To many of his former allies his subversiveness does rather diminish as his prices rise. But that is changing as the art market adjusts to the street art phenomenon. 'I'm kind of old fashioned' Banksy has put on record, 'in that I like to eat so it's always good

to earn money'. There is little doubt that he does make significant sums from his work, but it is also clear that he could make more than he does. In an authorized 'interview' he told *The New Yorker* magazine:

I have been called a sell-out but I give away thousands of paintings for free, how many more do you want? I think it was easier when I was the underdog, and I had a lot of practice in it. The money that my work fetches these days makes me a bit uncomfortable, but that's an easy problem to solve – you just stop whingeing and give it all away. I don't think it's possible to make art about world poverty and then trouser all the cash, that's an irony too far, even for me. ... I love the way capitalism finds a place – even for its enemies.

To compensate for his nervousness at becoming too estranged from his street roots Banksy frequently donates work to political causes. In 2011 he gave £200,000 from the multiple sales of a single print to the Russian art collective *Voina*, a group that performs public protest happenings in the face of oppressive Soviet authorities. The funds helped secure the release of two of its members from Russian prison in 2011. The same year he created a limited edition souvenir print of a *Tesco Value* petrol bomb only days after the high street convenience chainstore had been torched in a Bristol street riot. Proceeds were given to local charities to pay legal fees for local squatters and those arrested during the disturbances. Long regarded as a tolerated, sometimes favoured, son of the city, the Leader of the Council warned the artist that this act of defiance was provocative and unhelpful. Her admonishment that 'Banksy will lose a lot of friends' will have lost the artist little sleep.

What does cause Banksy and his office, managed by the estimable Holly Cushing, more concern, however, is the trade in his work over which they have no control. Banksy's extraordinary street value has not only led to a glut of copying but also a cult of robbery, most notably of the wall paintings. Two of the wall stencils painted in Bethlehem, 'Stop and Search' (which depicted a young girl frisking an armed soldier) and 'Wet Dog' (a white silhouette of a dog shaking itself dry) were hacked from their moorings on the wall and transported to the US as part of an illicit show of seven stolen walls in 2011. Apparently 'Wet Dog' nearly crumbled to dust at one checkpoint, but it was eventually conserved and displayed in a sturdy metal frame at ART Miami.

Banksy's office will not authenticate street works. They consider their removal an outrage. 'I think it's morally wrong to take these pieces off the

streets', said his former dealer Steve Lazarides. 'They were put there for the general public, not for one person to take away. I think London is the poorer for the loss of all these pieces. As for the argument that they're being removed to protect them, that's just bullshit.' Banksy has been equally dismissive:

Graffiti art has a hard enough life as it is, before you add hedge-fund managers wanting to chop it out and hang it over the fireplace. For the sake of keeping all street art where it belongs, I'd encourage people not to buy anything by anybody, unless it was created for sale in the first place.

Such imprecations have had little impact. In the UK, in the Middle East, the USA and Europe his wall works have been relentlessly destroyed, vandalized, ripped off, and removed only to re-appear in auction rooms or in backstreet sales lots, invariably at extravagant prices. Ironically and despite the hugely expensive efforts required to retrieve such wall works from their original site, sales are rarely guaranteed. Without the necessary authentication by Pest Control, sellers are lambasted by the street press and ridiculed by artists. However, this has not prevented the practice.

In October 2013 Banksy launched a self-proclaimed month-long residency in New York City, posting one unique 'exhibit' a day in an unannounced location, and sparking a thirty-one day 'scavenger hunt' both online and on the streets for his work. Chris Moukarbel's subsequent film of the extraordinary scenes that unfolded during that month 'Banksy Does New York' tells us less about the artist, the locations, or the artwork and much more about the local graffiti artists who tagged or defaced the works, or the property owners who promptly removed or hid the piece in the hope of a quick sale, or even the streetwise locals charging the hordes of Banksy fans to simply photograph one of the pieces. The closing scenes of the crowd-sourced, multi-platform film replay the moment where a string of bubble-shaped balloon letters (which spell out the word 'Banksy') are displayed near 5 Pointz, the soon-to-be-demolished graffiti landmark in Queens. The film shows that as a crowd formed below the work a group of men attempt to remove it, prompting an outcry and scuffles captured by videos promptly posted to Facebook and YouTube. 'It's like the Internet's almost the graffiti wall,' said one New Yorker. Others have argued that the residency could only be seen in person, it was a performative and a participatory activity, 'You can't re-blog this. You have to experience it.' The truth is that both

positions are valid: Banksy needed social media during the month in New York City just as social media needed Banksy. The laconic audio guide on Banksy's website noted, rather grandly:

The outside is where art should live, amongst us, where it can act as a public service, promote debate, voice concerns and forge identities. Don't we want to live in a world made of art, not just decorated by it?

The shambolic scenes at 5 Pointz mark a memorable end to a curious movie, a documentary without an on-film lead character, a collage of impressions gathered from multiple anonymous sources, its key narrative made manifest by the hundreds, possibly thousands, of aficionados, addicts and the merely curious scouring the city for their daily helping of the artist's work. Not far behind the genuine fans are the robbers, the police, the city officials, and on the odd occasion a sceptical art dealer sniffily casting doubt on the long-term quality of the artist's work.

'Ringmaster': The impact on other artists

Banksy's global reputation has become ever more burnished by his ability to create city-wide spectacle and engagement in places as far flung as New York, Gaza or in the migrant camps near Calais. These spectacular interventions require panache and participation. His ability to muster the energies and creativity of a loyal band of supporters to create his 'own' work has frequently been extended to the wider street art community. Ever keen to retain an edge of credibility, to remain urban rather than merely urbane, Banksy has been acting as champion of other street artists, acting as a canny choreographer of global talent. Through adventurous collaborative events he has gained a reputation as organiser and promoter of artistic events often on an epic scale. In 2007 he organised 'Santa's Ghetto Bethlehem' which brought together the work of a number of esteemed contemporary artists intent on revitalising tourism to the beleaguered town on the West Bank. Offering 'the ink-stained hand of friendship to ordinary people in an extraordinary situation' the exhibition raised a significant sum for charitable causes. A string of other group events followed. In late 2015 Banksy staged perhaps his largest-scale extravaganza *Dismaland*, in the West Country seaside resort of Weston Super Mare, which featured over 58 artists from 17 countries. A satire on theme parks, *Dismaland* attracted some 150,000 paying customers, amongst them many A-list celebrities, to wander the installations, effigies

and mock-spectacle of a 'family theme park unsuitable for children'. In addition to such renowned artists as Damien Hirst, Jenny Holzer and Jimmy Cauty, artists from Australia, North America and the Middle East were invited to participate. Banksy's reputation as a ring-master, 'mad, bad and dangerous to know' was further endorsed by the queuing public and the frenzied press attention, though critical acclaim appeared to have dried up. A visit to *Dismaland*, wrote one critic, offered a sustained opportunity to assess Banksy as an artist. He concluded that '[h]is one-dimensional jokes and polemics lack any poetic feeling. Devoid of ambiguity or mystery, everything he has created here is inert and unengaging.' In the face of such withering criticism Banksy – and his entourage – are regarded as little more than 'media-savvy cultural entrepreneurs'.

This may be a little harsh, even sour, but it has become a refrain in critical quarters. Yet it is important to remember what Banksy (a mere stenciller) has achieved; he has been lauded as the standard bearer for a new movement in contemporary art; he has positioned himself in the vanguard of a global population of practitioners which now extends from street graffiti writers, stencil artists and wheatpasters, to yambombers who crochet their own 'knittiti' and adorn our cities' street furniture and urban trees. From a movement of disenfranchised hooded renegades spraying and scrawling on downtown surfaces, the movement has crashed through the wall, off the streets and into a much wider (and readily embracing) public consciousness. In academic circles his work and that of his fraternity arouses the analytic interest of many disciplines across the humanities and social sciences. No longer 'needing, discontented and detached', street art dictates its own terms and has created a near-mainstream following. It is easy to see why Banksy cares little for sniffy critics.

It is tempting to mourn the passing of an era of innovative and engaging graffiti or tough street art that has been so dominated by a single artist. But perhaps we should more readily embrace the 21st century opportunities for counterculture commentary, to applaud an art form that remains energetic and didactic but which now adopts filmic or performative conventions to convey its mixed ideologies. As Banksy's team demonstrated in New York a third of the 'residency' output took non-graphic forms – advertising iconography was followed by dramatic performance, an actor cleaned the shoes of a fibreglass po-faced Ronald McDonald, installations travelled the city in trucks, cinderblock debris was recycled in a poignant sphinx-head tribute to the Middle East, and messages and images were conveyed by Instagram, Twitter, and a *faux* audio guide. Three year earlier, his Oscar-nominated film *Exit*

through the Gift Shop: A Banksy Film even coined a new subgenre, what the *New York Times* described as a 'prankumentary'.

This radical shift to film and installation, and the ready absorption of his contemporaries into the gallery system, offer compelling evidence of the counterculture becoming a further part of the mainstream but also seeming capable (at times) of remaining revolting as well as stylish. 'Street art' is now mutating into (and shaping) the expanded field of contemporary fine art practice. By moving into film Banksy's work has shifted from the temporary towards the temporal. This trend towards non-graphic art forms is in one respect an attempt to create works that cannot be easily ripped off, copied, or repeated *ad nauseam*. Furthermore, it could be argued that Banksy, and his accomplices, are throwing down a challenge to the mainstream in its new 'public streets' with a generation of 'weaponry' – cheap video, demotic photography, social media – that assures an instant global reach. Borne of dissent and rage, street art has clearly come of age. The jagged diction of 'low' art has been internationally embraced and extended by a diverse body of artists, blending the distinctions between street and gallery, and creating a genuinely democratic form of urban communication.

References and further reading

Portions of this chapter have been adapted from my study of the artist in Paul Gough (ed.), *Banksy: the Bristol Legacy*, Bristol: Sansom and Company, 2012. The artist's own words and images are best located in Banksy, *Banging your Head against a Brick Wall*, London: Weapons of Mass Distraction, 2001; and Banksy, *Wall and Piece*, London: Century, Random House Group, 2005. Important insights into the street art milieu are to be found in Alison Young, *Street Art: Public City, Law, Crime and the Urban Imagination*, Taylor and Francis, London, 2014; and Will Ellsworth-Jones, *Banksy: The Man Behind the Wall*, London: St. Martin's Press, 2013. See also Luke Muyskens, 'How Banksy is Ruining Graffiti', *Above Ground Magazine*, June 13, 2012. Briefer accounts of street activism can be found in Emily J. Truman, 'The (In)Visible Artist: Stencil Graffiti, Activist Art, and the Value of Visual Public Space', *Shift: Queen's Journal of Visual and Material Culture*, 2010, and Luke Dickens, 'Placing post-graffiti: the journey of the Peckham Rock', *Cultural Geographies*, 15:4, 2008. Extensive coverage of Banksy's work can be found on blogsites and in popular journalism, often with such novel headlines as 'Something to Spray', 'Keeping it Real' and 'Breaking the Banksy'.

2

THE POWER OF READING

From Socrates to Twitter

Frank Furedi

Reports about the precarious status of reading have become a recurrent feature of our times. Such sentiments are not confined to self-designated deep readers and patrons of high culture. The dramatisation of reading problems has acquired a particularly intense quality in relation to the teaching of literacy in schools. The promotion of literacy projects has become a veritable industry. Reviewing the experience of the past two or three centuries it appears that with the passing of time the teaching and the learning of reading has become an increasingly more arduous accomplishment.

Since its inception reading has always been perceived as an unnatural and even dangerous activity. However there has been one significant shift in the way the problem of reading has been diagnosed. Until the early part of the 20th century health warnings tended to emphasise the problem of binge reading. The implication of the message they conveyed was that reading was potentially an addictive practice that was far too easily embraced by irresponsible readers. In recent decades reading is rarely represented as addictive. On the contrary in the current era the main focus of anxiety directed toward literacy is the difficulty that people have in learning how to read and adopting the habit of reading.

Poison or cure

Since the invention of writing there has been a constant debate about the benefits and risks associated with reading. Such calculations are often

influenced by the perception that reading is an unnatural and potentially risky activity. Indeed it appears that the more humanity engages with the world through the medium of texts the more reading is diagnosed as a risk to health. In recent times the claim that reading is unnatural and therefore a risk to human health inevitably relies on the legitimacy of science and particularly that of neuroscience. ‘We were never born to read’ proclaims a study of the ‘science of the reading brain’, raising the unanswered question of what we were born to do. Maryanne Wolf (2010), the author of this study, claims that to ‘acquire this unnatural process, children need instructional environments that support all the circuit parts that need bolting for the brain to read’. One can only wonder how millions of children in candlelit rooms and overcrowded classes managed to deal with this highly ‘unnatural process’ throughout history.

The premise that reading is unnatural had a significant influence on the perennial debate that dominates the pedagogy of reading. During the so-called Reading Wars the unnatural qualities of literacy served as an argument for the adoption of a particular brand of reading pedagogy. Today this sentiment continues to be widely echoed by experts. The title of one essay published in *Psychology Today*, ‘The reading wars: Why natural learning fails in classrooms’ conveys the belief that reading is ‘unnatural and difficult’ (Gray, 2013). It is frequently asserted that whereas speaking is natural, writing and reading are not. Critics of the allegedly unnatural qualities of the fixed text sometimes hail the Internet and digital technology as a more natural positive alternative to the rigid confines of linear reading. Others have argued the opposite sentiment. They warn that on-line reading is bereft of intellectual and cultural depth, that the shift from reading to power browsing diminishes the quality of the experience, and that reading on-screen constitutes a potential health risk.

It was Plato, writing through the mouth of Socrates, who first drew attention to the unnatural and potentially hazardous qualities of reading. Among Socrates’ concerns about the effects of the written word on readers was that this activity would encourage dependence on external resources for recollection. He was troubled by the spread of literacy, in part because he believed that it would weaken individuals’ memory, and remove from them the responsibility of remembering.

Socrates used the Greek word *pharmakon* – ‘drug’ – as a metaphor for writing, conveying the paradox that reading could be a cure or a poison. In the centuries to come, this paradox would provide the focus for public debate and even panic, indicating that reading was always perceived as

something far more significant than merely a technical accomplishment. Though Socrates' claim that writing weakened the reader's mind may strike members of modern society as odd, many serious thinkers shared this sentiment in the centuries to follow. In the 18th century, the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (2015) took it upon himself to warn the public about the danger that books represented to the healthy development of children, insisting, in *Emile*, that the 'child who reads ceases to think'. Even in the early part of the 20th century reading was sometimes condemned as a drug that would stimulate people to forget the realities of everyday life. The author and editor of the *Church Times*, Sidney Dark, wrote in 1922 that 'reading is regarded by a large number of persons as a mere narcotic, something calculated to make one forget' (Dark 1922, p. 17). He took the view that some books were 'as destructive of real life and real living as cocaine'.

Socrates' use of the term *pharmakon* captured the ambiguous status of literacy. Like all drugs, writing had the potential to be poisonous but it also had a capacity of offering a cure. The French philosopher, Jacques Derrida (1981) argues that Plato was convinced that 'there is no such thing as a harmless remedy' and therefore the '*pharmakon* can never be simply beneficial'. Through the use of the metaphor of a drug Plato laid the foundation for the association of reading and writing with artificial or unnatural characteristics. The implication conveyed through the linking of writing with artificiality was to underline its unnatural, fabricated, contrived and even fake attributes.

The term unnatural invariably conveyed the assumption that as an activity that potentially violated nature reading was morally suspect. Consequently throughout history concerns raised about the risks of reading were expressed not just through the idiom of medicine but also of morality. By the 18th century it often appeared that the growth of a mass readership constituted both a public health problem and a threat to the moral order. The reading of novels became a focus for a veritable moral panic in England in the 18th century. Novels were condemned for their insidious corrupting impact on the reader. According to one account:

Broadly, one could divide the reproaches into those ascribing to novels the dangerous psychological affects, triggering imitation and inoculating wrong ideas of love and life; and into those referring to the mere habit of novel-reading as a physically harmful waste of time, damaging not only the mind and the morale of readers, but also their eyesight and posture.

(Vogrincić 2008, p. 109)

The reading of novels was both morally condemned and medicalised. Novel readers were both assigned a diagnosis and held responsible for undermining the authority of conventional morality.

Anxiety about what reading could do to people was even widely expressed by liberal secular thinkers, even those who professed the values of education and supported the philosophy of the Enlightenment. Despite their optimistic attitude towards the power of education they did not trust the public to gain enlightenment through their own individual efforts, assuming that most readers lacked the moral and intellectual resources necessary to avoid being led astray by confusing and at times dangerous ideas. These sentiments were frequently expressed in a language that suggested that books could not only disorient readers, but also make them ill. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries such distractions were often depicted in the language of addiction, and the main target was the novel. It was alleged that these tales of romance and adventure provided no benefit to the reader; indeed, they encouraged people to read 'excessively'. Reading 'for its own sake' was presented as not only a purposeless but also as a potentially corrupting activity.

Today, when advocates of literature frequently lament the decline of the readership for literature, it may seem odd that not so long ago apprehensions were directed at the perils of indiscriminate reading. Yet from its inception reading was perceived as a risky activity that could compromise wellbeing. Seneca offered a paradigmatic account of the health risk posed by reading, advising readers to take care and focus their attention on a small number of texts. 'Be careful,' he warned, 'lest this reading of many authors and books of every sort may tend to make you discursive and unsteady'.

Until the late 19th century, the pathologisation of reading was expressed through an explicitly self-consciously moralistic tone. Romantic fiction was described in such terms as 'moral poisons' and critics stressed its debauching and corrupting effects. Such sentiments were still widely voiced in the first half of the 20th century: indicting readers who were addicted to the consumption of 'light reading', the literary critic Q.D. Leavis (1968, p. 50) suggested that the term 'dissipation' was a most useful way of describing this 'vice'.

The imperative of medicalization

Moralising about people's reading habits and problems tended to be increasingly expressed in the language of health, through what we might call a narrative of medicalization. The narrative of medicalization was often

expressed through conditions like ‘reading-mania’, the ‘reading-bug’, ‘book-addiction’ or ‘reading-fatigue’. The contemporary disorder of ‘Internet addiction’ is in many ways the latest version of the centuries-old tendency to stigmatise apparently disturbing reading behaviour through the diagnosis of a psychological illness.

The narrative of medicalization can also account for problems that are the very opposite of compulsive reading. Whereas in the past anxieties were frequently directed at the ease of availability of books and their impact on readers, in more recent times concern is focused on the difficulty that educational institutions have in teaching people how to read. It is frequently claimed that reading is unnatural and even alien to the human temperament. In recent times the resources of neuroscience have been drawn upon to validate the health warnings issued by Socrates and other historical figures in the past. Maggie Jackson (2008) in her book *Distracted* suggested that 18th century writers concerned with the ‘sheer physicality’ of reading anticipated the recent ‘discoveries’ of neuroscience. ‘They may have intuitively understood what our technology permits us to newly discover, that reading is a demanding activity that shapes you in mind and body’, she observes.

Neuroscience, psychology, and a variety of other disciplines have contributed to the medicalisation of reading to the point that its very acquisition is regarded as a complex and challenging accomplishment. Such expectations turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy when reading difficulty is normalised as a natural condition. Back in 1887, when the German physician Rudolf Berlin came up with the diagnosis of dyslexia to describe the difficulty that some people had in interpreting written symbols, he would have been surprised and shocked to discover that a little over a century later tens of millions of children would be diagnosed with that condition. Today dyslexia is sometimes presented as the natural and even normal symptom of the functioning of the human brain. ‘Dyslexia is our best, most visible evidence that the brain was never wired to read,’ argues Wolf.

The aetiology of reading problems remains a subject of controversy. It is far from evident how the interaction between social and cultural expectations interrelates with the way that human beings decode text. But the veritable epidemic of dyslexia and other reading-related disorders is likely to be linked to the lowering of educational and cultural expectations, the tendency to re-interpret the learning problems facing children in medical terms, and the expansion of the definition of medical diagnosis. In their recent study, Professor Julian Elliott of Durham University and Dr Elena Grigornko of the Yale School of Medicine have concluded that as a

diagnostic category, dyslexia is far too imprecise to capture the different challenges facing people. They rightly assert that more emphasis should be placed on helping children to read rather than focusing on finding a label to account for their difficulties.

Teaching children is unnatural

The evolution of the pedagogy of reading was always permeated by the conviction that this activity was inherently alien to children's nature. The emerging pedagogic discourse on reading tended to represent this activity as an unnatural and complicated activity. In the 19th and 20th centuries texts devoted to teaching children how to read often reminded their consumers that reading is an unnatural accomplishment. At the turn of the 20th century, the pioneering educator and first President of the American Psychological Association, Granville Stanley Hall (1901) adopted this approach in his influential text, *How to Teach Reading: and What to Read in School*. He warned that teaching the unnatural art of reading may well be a mixed blessing. He concluded that 'we sometimes find a habit of passionate reading in children that not only interferes with the physical development, but destroys mental and moral independence, and may be called as morbid'. Hall, who was the founder of the child-study movement, never tired of warning that academic studies of any kind were dangerous to children's health.

It is important to recall that Hall was not a marginal figure but a leading educator who exercised great influence on the pedagogy of teaching reading to children in the early part of the 20th century. A decade after Hall's publication Edmund Burke Huey, a central figure in early 20th century reading pedagogy, advocated a child-centred approach that postponed the teaching of reading till relatively late on the grounds that children needed protection from its unnatural and harmful effects. Echoing Plato/Socrates he argued against the 'premature reverence for books' which he believed led to neglecting one's own thinking and to the 'atrophied' 'naïve originality of the children' who become 'slaves to "what is written"' (Huey, 1910).

Huey's studies had as their premise the belief that reading is a habit that is 'unnatural' and 'intensely artificial in many respects'. He claimed the authority of medical science to warn that the 'careless exercise' of this unnatural activity 'causes fatigue and, in very many cases, certain dangerous forms of degeneration' – which he characterised as 'race degeneration'. His advice was to postpone the age when children are instructed in this unnatural

enterprise. It is worth noting that at the time the progressive education movement adopted Huey's approach and argued that children should not be taught to read before the age of 8 'to avoid undue stress on the child's nervous system'. They also opposed the teaching of phonetics on the ground that it was unnatural. Paradoxically, their opponents today insist that precisely because this accomplishment is not natural the systematic teaching of phonetics is essential.

In one sense Huey, Hall and their colleagues were right to depict reading as a technical accomplishment rather than a natural activity. Written texts do not grow in nature and learning to read, unlike learning to walk, is a historically determined and culturally mediated acquisition of a technical skill. But just because reading is not the product of nature does not mean that it is an unnatural practice. One of the consequences of the attribution of unnaturalness to reading was to legitimize the claim that the acquisition of the habit of reading threatens to compromise the health of readers.

The growing prevalence and influence of the medicalization of reading has played a significant role in strengthening the belief that the teaching of literacy is a complicated and unnatural task. The constant expansion of the diagnosis of reading disorders is an inexorable consequence of the medicalization of this practice. One of the rare attempts to challenge the medicalization of reading failure was the publication of Rudolf Flesch's 1955 best-seller, *Why Johnny Can't Read*. He noted that for educators:

failure in reading is *never* caused by poor teaching. Lord no, perish the thought. Reading failure is due to poor eyesight, or a nervous stomach, or poor posture, or heredity, or a broken home, or undernourishment, or a wicked stepmother, or an Oedipus complex, or sibling rivalry, or God knows what.

Though in some respects a flawed book, *Why Johnny Can't Read* drew attention to the growing tendency to complicate the teaching of reading and to attribute problems to medical causes.

The conviction that reading is a far from a natural activity that may have damaging consequences on children's health has if anything acquired a more dramatic form in the 21st century. 'How many children are becoming Socrates' nightmare?' asked an author in *The New York Times* before informing her 21st century readership that 'we know' that no human being was born to read. Although the concern of this author was the perils of children consuming texts on-line, the allusion to Socrates indicated that

even in an age of mass literacy some still consider reading to be not quite a natural form of human activity.

The pervasive influence of the culture of medicalization is demonstrated by the fact that even the attempts to uphold and celebrate reading often resort to counter-arguments that are framed through the language of health. Instead of celebrating a love of reading on aesthetic or cultural grounds advocates of literacy often promote the health benefits of literacy. From this perspective it is the failure to pick up a book that serves as a marker for a health problem. According to Andrew Solomon (2004), the rising rates of depression and escalating levels of Alzheimer's disease can be attributed to the decline of reading, and he contends that the crisis in reading in the United States is a crisis in national health.

Advocates of literacy have reframed the narrative of medicalization so that instead of serving as a problem, reading has been transformed into a promoter of good health. They insist that it improves your mind-reading skills; that it can help reduce stress – according to some researchers you only need to read silently for six minutes 'to slow down the heart rate and ease tension in muscles'; and it provides an antidote to Alzheimer's and depression. They claim that people with poor reading skills are likely to be less healthy than those who read easily. 'Some people don't seem to obtain necessary health information because they're not good readers,' says associate professor Kjersti Lundetræ (2013) at the University of Stavanger's Reading Centre; and it is argued that a general improvement in reading skills might accordingly give more people better health and, in the longer term, have a beneficial effect on the cost of health services.

It is unlikely that arguments about the health benefits of reading are going to succeed in diminishing the influence of a pedagogy devoted to the complication and medicalization of reading. As long as children are told that reading is the functional equivalent of healthy eating or brushing their teeth it is unlikely to capture their imagination. Only a language that can give meaning to the love of reading can resonate with the natural inclinations of children. The de-medicalisation of reading is a key challenge facing society in the 21st century.

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3

WHO WON THE COLD WAR, AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Joseph M. Siracusa

Perceptions of who “won” or “lost” the Cold War will mightily inform the approaches Washington and Moscow take towards each other in the years ahead. For while the U.S. establishment can claim to have won the Cold War, they do not appear, to this observer, to have grasped the lessons of that struggle or, for that matter, the fundamentals of foreign policy realism that is found in historical experience. Realist philosophy has long been grounded on a forthright calculation of the necessities, possibilities, and boundaries of a foreign action related to peace and war, since the miscalculation could become exorbitant. Questions that should have been asked were not asked: Were Cold War objectives clearly defined and did they include precise, generally recognized national interests or dangers? Did the ambitions and abilities of the Kremlin endanger vital economic or security issues? Would the use or threat of the use of nuclear weapon, the maintenance of which constituted the third highest expenditure in the national budget since the late 1940s, have enhanced or destabilized the equilibrium of the international order? Most realists of the Cold War era supported the idea of using diplomacy, international persuasion and economic resources to promote democracy abroad, fully recognizing the limits to national power and the willingness of public sacrifice. They were never as enamored, as were Cold Warriors, with the notion of America as an international policeman, establishing moral global standards while employing its overwhelming military power to persuade others to live up to the benchmark.

Equally important, perhaps, politicians and policymakers have an obligation to remember and learn, as agreed upon conclusions, why events played out as they did, particularly as they are likely to shape current public discourse, as well as future foreign policy, both in Washington and Moscow. In this sense it absolutely crucial that scholars of international behavior, no less than the successors of Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, develop these conclusions with far more care than was characteristic of the pre-nuclear past.

Throughout the last years of the Cold War, the Soviet–American conflict rested on the assumption that it remained the supreme phenomenon of international life, dwarfing all other regional and national causes. Washington’s view of the world discerned in the U.S.S.R. a huge country towering over the Eurasian continent, backed by a massive military machine and driven by a crusading ideology, determined to dominate much of the world. Secretary of the Army John O. Marsh described the danger in precisely such terms in April 1984: “This century has seen the birth of a new colossus, one driven by an alien ideology. It draws its strength from the force of arms. It has waged ruthless aggression on its neighbor states. From its Eurasian power base, the Soviet Union now leapfrogs its power to the four corners of the globe, and threatens the peace of an insecure world.”

What sustained this presumption of imminent danger was the dual conviction that the U.S.S.R. continued to dominate some areas of U.S.–Soviet military competition, and was in large measure responsible for the specific pressures that threatened the stability of Africa, the Middle East, and Central America. In this global confrontation the United States provided the non-Soviet world its essential defense against the expansion of Soviet power and influence. For the political right, as well as leading American intelligence and defense officials who opposed reducing the arsenals of missiles and nuclear weapons that had been at the heart of the nation’s military strategy throughout the Cold War, the Soviet–American antagonism remained a zero sum game.

Such depictions of global confrontation scarcely reflected the realities of the existing international order. The fundamental supposition that the military might of the United States carried the essential responsibility for the limitation of Soviet ambition sustained, over time, the country’s multi-trillion-dollar defense expenditures, but it ignored the role of other nations, whether acting independently or in combination, as factors in international stability. Every country, large and small, defended its interests against predators. Nowhere did the dominoes fall in accordance with the predictions

of Communist expansion. Long after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, Moscow was not in the Persian Gulf or in possession of Middle Eastern oil but, predictably, was seeking a graceful escape from its torment. The real world of sovereign nations was tougher, more resilient and more resistant to unwanted change than one portrayed by the image of a world endangered by a bipolar antagonism between two superpowers. Indeed, in that world every fundamental trend warred against the concept of bipolarity. The very assumption that two countries dominated world politics was scarcely reassuring to most peoples and governments.

The chasm between power and purpose

The broadening chasm between national power and national purpose exposed the essential nature of the Soviet–American Cold War. Unlike major international conflicts of the past, that between the United States and the U.S.S.R. revealed no areas where the two powers were mutually and unmistakably in open conflict, rendering war predictable. Through more than forty years of Cold War, Washington officials insisted that the Soviet–American rivalry flowed from the nature of the Moscow regime and its global ambitions, demanding ever-increasing military preparedness. Yet despite the fears that sustained their ponderous rivalry, the Soviet danger remained so imprecise that no one could define it. Rhetorically, the Soviet threat was global, but nowhere – not in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Africa, or Latin America – did the Soviets reveal any ambition or interest of sufficient importance to merit a resort to military force or a showdown with the United States. Nowhere did the Kremlin threaten direct military aggression against any region regarded vital to the security of the United States and its Western allies. George Kennan reminded a Washington audience, in November 1983, of the absence of specific dangers in the Soviet–American conflict. “There are no considerations of policy – no aspirations, no ambitions, no anxieties, no defensive impulses,” he said, “that could justify the continuation of this dreadful situation.”

For some analysts the world of the 1980s was similar to that of 1914, with the leading powers arming for a war that nobody wanted and over issues that few considered critical. “We are trapped,” wrote Thomas Powers in the January 1984 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*, “in a tightening spiral of fear and hostility. We don’t know why we have got into this situation, we don’t know how to get out of it, and we have not found the humility to admit we don’t know. In desperation, we simply try to manage our enmity from day to day.”

During the Reagan years, the Soviet–American rivalry in the Third World carried the chief burden of national insecurity and superpower conflict. There subversion and revolution seemed to offer the Kremlin untold opportunities to extend its influence at the expense of the West. Revolutions, invariably indigenous and historic, permit little gain to those who support them. The very nationalistic impulses and objectives that unleashed the postwar upheavals across the Afro-Asian world erected formidable barriers against external influences, whether they emanated from the United States or the Soviet Union. Confronted with such determined resistance, Washington and Moscow could not establish any control over Asian or African affairs commensurate with their efforts. Thus Washington’s counterrevolutionary program, aimed at the containment of Soviet expansionism, never engaged the U.S.S.R. because the success or failure of Third World revolutions never constituted any interest, Soviet or American, whose pursuit was worth the risk of war. The Kremlin’s reluctance to expose its troops to death and destruction in regions beyond the Soviet Union’s periphery measured its limited interests in the Third World.

Soviet challenges to American will in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean had little relevance to Soviet strategic capabilities; the Kremlin, in practice, limited its ambitions to what its exports of weapons and advisers could achieve. For Gorbachev, even this Soviet investment had become excessive and counterproductive. Too often it supported Marxist governments that lacked legitimacy, faced persistent and costly guerrilla insurrections, drained the Soviet economy, and appeared incapable of resolving acute economic and political problems. Such aid, in prolonging unwanted revolutionary activity, antagonized neighbors and diminished Soviet influence in key non-Marxist developing countries that offered far greater commercial, diplomatic, and geostrategic rewards. Gorbachev, moreover, regarded the U.S.–Soviet rivalry in the Third World as unnecessarily damaging to desired superpower cooperation.

With each passing year, the United States and the U.S.S.R. faced a growing diffusion of international resistance, marked by the determination of nations to define and defend their interests and to stand against the pretensions of others. Whatever its comparative power, no country can long exert its will against a world of sovereign states without coming up against the preferences of nations that, even under the threat of violence, will concede very little. Countries can exert their will only against the insecure; the world in general had no reason to fear either the United States or the Soviet Union. Soviet dominance never extended beyond the reach of

Soviet armies; similarly the United States controlled its own territory and little else. Outside that limited realm, Washington could argue; it could not compel.

Facing profound disagreements on basic definitions of national interest, Washington less and less sought or received European support for its global decisions, though none could doubt the salutary effect NATO had on Moscow in Europe in the early Cold War era and beyond. Throughout the Third World states behaved no less independently. Even where the United States stationed large armies over long periods of time, as in South Korea and the Philippines, it gained little influence. High levels of economic and military aid brought few concessions from Israel, Egypt, and Chile. Countries inside and outside Europe dealt with the United States and each other largely on their own terms. For them the Soviet–American conflict was generally irrelevant.

In only one respect did the United States and the Soviet Union maintain their global predominance, and that was in the area of nuclear and conventional military power. It was their capacity to destroy the world, not manage it, that sustained the illusion of a globe overshadowed by the Cold War. In every other respect the international activity and competition that mattered was not between them at all. In world trade and investment the leading players were the United States, the countries of Western Europe, and Japan, with the U.S.S.R. lagging far behind. In the UN General Assembly, Third World blocs almost eliminated both the United States and the U.S.S.R. as dominant forces in the organization. Long before the 1980s, Washington and Moscow faced a solid nonaligned bloc of more than one hundred countries that neither could control. Jeane Kirkpatrick, while chief U.S. delegate to the United Nations, characterized the American position in the world body as “essentially impotent, without influence, heavily outvoted, and isolated.” On some important issues, the United States, deserted even by its European allies, was reduced to a minority of one. If the votes in the General Assembly did not reflect the actual distribution of military and economic power in the world, they did reveal the almost total absence of Soviet and American ideological influence among the world’s nations.

The Cold War’s perennial failure to dominate the behavior, outlook, and material progress of international society limited its impact on world politics. Common interests in trade, investment and other forms of international activity governed international life far more than did the fears of Soviet aggression and war. The flourishing of world commerce after mid-century was totally without precedent. By most standards of human progress, the

forty years of Cold War comprised the most pervading, most prosperous, golden age for modern societies in history.

The prodigious investment in human and physical resources assumed a fundamental international security that, despite the recurrence of limited crises, permitted the evolution of the complex, technology-driven Western civilization that emerged during the age of the Cold War. The forces underwriting international stability seemed dominant enough to sustain the material gains of the age, symbolized graphically by the changing skyline of every major city in the Western world. Even as the perennial Cold War rhetoric warned insistently that the country and the world were in danger of global Communist conquest, every modern nation built with the confidence that its civilization was secure, and none more so than the United States itself.

What prompted the end of the Cold War?

Political scientists and historians have long questioned – after more than forty-five years of Cold War rivalry – what was responsible for its end? Among the causes most often put forward has been that of the technical and economic challenges posed by the Reagan administration’s extensive arms buildup. It was, and is, argued that the Soviet Union’s economic malaise, caused by its efforts to match the U.S. military spending, prompted Kremlin leaders to surrender.

An undercurrent of thinking during the Reagan presidency, especially during the first term, held that expanding America’s defense spending and exploiting its technological advantages, especially the Strategic Defense Initiative, would cause the competitive Soviet economy to falter and bring the Cold War to an end. This view gained brief support in the immediate afterglow of the Soviet Union’s collapse when Tom Wicker, a critic of the administration, agreed that Reagan’s SDI program and the extensive military buildup had forced the Soviets to reexamine their international and domestic policies.

For English author Paul Johnson the vulnerability of the Soviet Union demonstrated the magnitude of the Reagan triumph. The Reagan rearmament program had demoralized the Soviet elite and forced it to embark on the “risky and potentially disastrous road to reform.” For Reagan’s secretary of defense, Caspar Weinberger, what produced the U.S.S.R.’s collapse was, simply, the capacity and willingness of the administration to outspend the Soviets and thereby exhaust their resources and capabilities.

Peter Schweizer, another Reagan bureaucrat, averred that the Pentagon's buildup convinced the Kremlin that it lacked the financial resources to sustain its global Cold War with the United States. "Reagan's policies," he concluded, "were absolutely critical to the demise of their system." Unfortunately for former Cold War hawks and neoconservatives, this view is not sustained by available data.

Senior Soviet scientists Yevgeny Velikhov and Andrei Kokoshin, around the same time, provided a very different point of view. Calling the SDI an improbable venture, they contributed significantly to strategic debates in the mid-1980s by choosing to ignore the demand for weapons parity and emphasizing the idea of an "asymmetric response." This policy involved a realistic appraisal of SDI's limits and the relative ease of introducing inexpensive countermeasures to defeat it. Gorbachev agreed and ceased his concern.

The Soviet Union's economic malaise, while undoubtedly deepened by 25 percent of GNP continuously being set aside for the military-industrial complex, has been more properly attributed to the rigid "command economy" system established in the 1930s. Production and investment decisions were in the hands of a centralized bureaucracy that could ignore market factors, competition, and individual or collective initiatives. Contemporary Western observers, moreover, underestimated the Soviet military-industrial complex's dominant role in controlling Soviet expenditures and its ability to resist Soviet leaders' efforts at reform. "Soviet defense spending under Brezhnev and Gorbachev was primarily a response to internal imperatives [and was] not correlated with American defense spending," according to Lebow and Stein. "Nor is there any observable relationship between the defense spending and changes in the political relationship between the superpowers." This was because the Kremlin had no reason to fear the United States. The Reagan buildup never conveyed a threat of war; it dangled in a policy vacuum. If anything, the expanded defense program enabled the Soviet military establishment to sustain its pressures on the Kremlin.

The persistent claim of the Cold War hawks and neoconservatives that America's foreign policy – grounded on the pursuit of military superiority – achieved victory in the Cold War is, in Robert English's considered assessment, "greatly oversimplified." He suggests the Reagan military buildup, coupled with the administration's aggressive rhetoric, actually "made the accession of genuine reformist leadership much more difficult. The effort to tilt the military balance, sharply in the West's favor, certainly heightened Soviet perceptions of deepening problems and a need for a change." The contention, however, that the military buildup and the Star Wars program

caused the Soviet system to collapse, English argues, reflects “a lapse in basic counterfactual reasoning, if not an even more deterministic triumphalism.”

Who ended the Cold War: Reagan or Gorbachev?

Leaving Washington hours after George H.W. Bush was inaugurated, Reagan declared flatly, “The Cold War is over.” Weeks ahead of most policymakers, the American public grasped that the Cold War was over after hearing Gorbachev’s December 1988 speech at the United Nations. Public opinion polls revealed that 54 percent of Americans now considered the Soviets to be either “no threat” or “only a minor threat”, while 60 odd percent believed the Soviets now were essentially focused on their own security, and only 28 percent thought they were still seeking world domination. Frances Fitzgerald summed it up best: “Gorbachev launched a political revolution in the Soviet Union. Few in Washington understood what he was doing or where he was going, and the Cold War was over before the American policy establishment knew it.”

Ambassador Jack F. Matlock, Jr., Reagan’s former expert on Soviet affairs, has argued that individuals who give the American president full credit for ending the Cold War do so “out of a sense of partisanship”. And those who extend total credit to Gorbachev fall into the same trap. How to apportion the credit is still in the hands of the historical jury, yet it is possible to reach an interim judgment.

Reagan’s contribution

Not until the middle of 1946, when he became president of the Screen Actors Guild during a strike against producers, had Reagan become concerned about communism, especially Hollywood’s communists. He was deeply affected reading Whittaker Chamber’s account *Witness* where he apparently picked up the notion of the Kremlin being the focus of evil in the world – and later wound it up in his “Evil Empire” speech. After he stood against communism during the House Un-American Activities Committee hearing the following year, Reagan became convinced that he was one of the truly blacklisted victims because his roles virtually disappeared. “There is no question,” he told Cannon, “my career suffered from [my] anticommunism.”

“I know of no leader of the Soviet Union ... including the present leadership,” President Reagan declared in his initial press conference on January 29, 1981, “[who denied that] their goal must be the promotion of world

revolution and a one-world Socialist or Communist state. [And since these leaders] have openly and publicly declared that the only morality they recognize is what will further their cause ... [and] reserve unto themselves the right to commit any crime, to lie, to cheat ... [to gain that goal; thus, when you] do business with them ... keep that in mind.”

Reagan’s strong conviction that communism was inherently immoral and evil was matched by his fascination with the dramatic biblical story of Armageddon – the world’s final struggle between good and evil. As he apparently understood the account, “Russia would be defeated by an acclaimed leader of the West who would be revealed as the Antichrist. He, too, would fall, and Jesus Christ would triumph in the creation of ‘a new heaven and a new earth.’” The Armageddon story that Reagan envisioned as a nuclear holocaust never reconciled him to the possibility of nuclear war; indeed, he declared often, “A nuclear war can never be won, and must never be fought.” It was prudent, Reagan believed, to seek means to avert or mitigate such a possibility by the elimination of nuclear weaponry, which he eventually came to believe could be accomplished by missile defenses designed to provide a nationwide shield.

The president did shift away from his initial diplomatically inconsiderate and provocative anti-Soviet rhetoric during his second term, especially after meeting Gorbachev. In his final years in the White House, Reagan came to think of Mikhail Gorbachev as a friend and proclaimed a “new era” in American-Soviet relations. Reagan had changed, according to his biographer Lou Cannon, “even though he did not recognize any ideological odyssey.”

“The purpose of a negotiation is to get an agreement,” the president once declared, yet he found it difficult to even marginally compromise the Star Wars program that was, at best, very far in the future. This rigidity, together with his administration’s rigid adherence to the institutionalized precepts of the Cold War, prevented the formulation of realistic policies to substantially reduce nuclear weapons. “It became a cruel irony of fate that President Reagan’s desire to banish the nuclear specter on the one hand opened up the prospect for nuclear disarmament,” Raymond Garthoff has rightly observed, “while foreclosing it with the other through stubborn dedication to the quixotic pursuit of his SDI illusion.”

Nevertheless, former Pentagon official Richard Perle attributed the passing of the Cold War to U.S. nuclear and conventional military superiority that compelled the Soviet leadership “to choose a less bellicose, less menacing approach to international politics,” saying, “We’re witnessing the rewards of

the Reagan policy of firmness.” To Harvard historian Richard Pipes, Ronald Reagan was the champion of those who believed the Soviet Union “a totalitarian state driven by a militant ideology and hence intrinsically expansionist.” For Pipes, no less than for hard-liners generally, it was the “policy of containment, reinforced by a technological arms race, economic denial, and psychological warfare, that brought down the Soviet Union and communism.” Pipes himself was convinced that the hard-liners had emerged triumphant.

But Pipes’ consequent assault on those who favored a more modest response to Soviet behavior ignored the close relationship between official public condemnation and silence in the absence of affordable policy choices. Hard-line official rhetoric committed the United States to nothing – and for good reason. Library shelves were replete with writings of leading Soviet experts, both American and European, who described and analyzed the continuing internal weaknesses of the U.S.S.R., without reference to the United States or the Reagan administration. The president acknowledged the internal Soviet decline as early as 1982 and was wise enough to avoid a consequently unnecessary war, with the dreadful prospect of countless casualties. Except for Grenada, he never committed U.S. military forces in response to his countless portrayals of Soviet expansionism – and readily accepted détente when Gorbachev offered it.

Reagan clung to his conviction, much to the dismay of skeptical neo-conservatives, that the Soviet leader’s efforts at domestic reform and international cooperation were genuine. Moreover, he willingly met and negotiated with the Soviet leader. By continuing to negotiate with Gorbachev in spite of the abusive criticism of so many supporters, one must place Reagan in the pantheon of courageous presidents.

Gorbachev’s contribution

The Soviet leader provided a charismatic, imaginative leadership during the “crisis” of the mid-1980s that redirected Moscow’s relations with the West. But there is something that is almost missed: if the crisis within the Soviet Union created an opportunity for domestic and foreign policy reform, for a liberalization of policies, it should also be recognized that the crisis also provided an opening for powerful reactionary forces. These reactionaries could have instituted repressive policies to deal with dissent at home and heightened confrontational ones abroad. Unquestionably, with the hard-liners in charge the Cold War could have been prolonged for at least a few

more decades. Although often not recognized in America, Gorbachev's selection as General Secretary in March 1985 was a close run affair. While making no secret of his desire for reforms, he withheld his more radical ideas and was elected by an unorganized majority of conservatives.

Gorbachev, none the less, represented a new generation, especially the intellectuals who espoused a "new thinking" regarding foreign affairs. Since he was not burdened by the horrific experiences of World War II, it was easier for him to put aside the "old thinking" steeped in the Stalinist concept of a hostile capitalist encirclement and the prospect of a final, apocalyptic conflict with the imperialist nations. He could thus greatly expand on Nikita Khrushchev's program of "peaceful coexistence". During 1986, Gorbachev frequently met foreign leaders and their representatives seeking to deflate their fears of the Soviet Union and through these discussions he came to understand "the other world" and to formulate his bold foreign initiatives. The impact of the Chernobyl tragedy – when a deadly nuclear reactor explosion and fire resulted in thousands of deaths and devastated the surrounding countryside – also greatly affected the new leadership's policies. Not only did this event reveal the inefficiency and corruption of the Stalinist system and the hard-liners' efforts to cover up such events, it graphically demonstrated the nuclear dangers and pressed the urgency of arms control.

Preparing for the October 1986 Reykjavik meeting with Reagan, Gorbachev unveiled a policy that dealt with strategic weaponry grounded on "reasonable sufficiency". Surprising many observers and angering his own military officials, he offered substantive concessions in an attempt to eliminate all nuclear weapons. While Reagan's refusal to accept even minor restrictions on the SDI program prevented an agreement, the American president did recognize that the Russian leader was sincere and someone intent on restructuring Soviet policies. Indeed, according to a close observer, Gorbachev had "already decided, come what may, to end the arms race." He was willing to take this gamble because he was convinced, to quote his words, "Nobody is going to attack us even if we disarm completely." The hard-liners would continue to protest his proposals and concessions because they wanted to maintain a strictly numerical parity, but he stuck to his objective and succeeded in halting the arms race.

The subsequent unraveling of the Soviet empire was an *unintended* side effect of Gorbachev's reforms; termination of the Cold War was not. Reagan deserves full credit for recognizing Gorbachev's sincerity and his determination to greatly alter earlier Soviet policies. And for this, Reagan felt the wrath of anticommunist hawks for "doing business" with a communist

leader. But it was Gorbachev himself who concluded the superpowers had become “mesmerized by ideological myths” which ruled out any meaningful discussions of a possible accommodation of political issues for more than four decades. Even the long-time Soviet ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin, acknowledged in his memoirs that Moscow’s Cold War policies were “unreasonably dominated by ideology, and [that] this produced continued confrontation.”

Mikhail Gorbachev broke the Cold War’s ideological straitjacket that had paralyzed Moscow and Washington’s ability to resolve their differences. Though politically weakened, Gorbachev conceded nothing to U.S. military superiority. Never did he negotiate from a position of weakness. In doing so, he faced greater political, even physical, risks. After considering all of this, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that without Gorbachev, the end of the Cold War could have played out very differently and very dangerously.

Conclusion

If the world had avoided a major conflict since 1945, in part it was due to the fact that the unresolved basic questions between the East and the West came to be ignored by both sides. The stability of Europe, especially, reflected the realization among Western and Soviet leaders alike that the issues of the Cold War were better left unresolved than disposed of through war. The balance of power in Europe had after all succeeded in establishing and perpetuating a stable division of the continent. There had been innumerable incidents and provocation, even some minor conflicts, but no nation possessing nuclear striking power has passed – or perhaps approached – the point of no return. Most lines of demarcation had been well established through tradition and practice, if not by diplomatic agreement; few, if any, could be tampered with without setting off a war.

What characterized world politics in the post-World War II era, therefore, was a remarkable stability, produced partially by the dangers of thermo-nuclear war but especially by the relative absence of conflicting interests whose resolution would have been worth the risk of general destruction. There was no apparent problem which lay outside the power of astute diplomacy to compromise, permitted that governments were allowed freedom of maneuver. The forces that lead to war are varied and elusive, and the ultimate decision to fight – and fight totally – is more often the product of fears and emotions than of clear and measured judgments of national

interest. In the long-run, therefore, peace rests on the ability of nations to distinguish with considerable accuracy their essential rights, upon which hinge their security and welfare, from demands of secondary importance that are always proper questions for negotiation and compromise. At the end of the day, Reagan and Gorbachev got it right.

References and further reading

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4

BEING HUMAN AMONG OTHERS

The unquantifiable value of festivals

Farrin Foster

When I was first asked to attend a year's worth of festivals in Adelaide and write about the experience, the thing that I didn't grasp was that a year's worth of festivals is also a year's worth of life.

I began the assignment as the Cabaret Festival was drawing to a close. Aware that the delivery date wouldn't allow for another season of sultry and shimmering performers to pass through Adelaide before I sat in on a show, I went along. For company I took with me a flu – the severity of which had me bedridden for almost two weeks prior – and a friend who was unable to talk thanks to recent vocal cord surgery.

The weekend I attended the Adelaide International Guitar Festival was the same weekend that my Grandad – an endlessly kind and intelligent man who raised me in place of my useless father – was admitted to hospital after a stroke. By the time the SALA Festival opening rolled around Grandad was dead, and I was in the grips of my first proper spell of grief, complete with gut-wrenching sobbing sessions that came upon me with barely any warning.

OzAsia coincided with the breaking of my foot. Only the second bone I have ever snapped, I found that fracturing a third metatarsal at the age of 27 was quite a lot more challenging than breaking a collarbone when I was 12. The main problem was that walking is a skill I rely upon but which I didn't possess for this time period, and of course there were issues because being an adult is more demanding than being a child.

The Adelaide Film Festival occupies that barren space just before Adelaide hits summer. Nothing particularly life-changing happened in this period, but for reference when I attended the event previously it coincided with the launch of *CityMag* – the first publication for which I had ever performed the role of founding editor.

My stress levels at that time matched my exhilaration, and the Adelaide Film Festival's opening night seemed like the perfect place to balance both with a giant quantity of wine. All that remains of the night are flashes of memory, but my memory of the hangover that arrived the following day is surprisingly clear. Of course, if this world-class event was made annual instead of biennial – as it should be – I would be more readily able to tie its meaningful artistic contribution with meaningful, non-alcoholic moments in my life.

After the Film Festival there's a brief drought, which breaks about the same time the year's rains well and truly dry up. The Feast Festival arrived in early November just as I was finishing up one of the biggest freelance projects I'd ever worked on.

Festival high season blows in with force in mid-February, signalled by the start of Fringe and the opening of its most iconic venue – The Garden of Unearthly Delights. It was at this event that the cracks in my six-year-long relationship turned into what seemed more like chasms, and by the time Adelaide Festival opened a few weeks later the chasms had gotten large enough that we'd both fallen in and climbed out on separate sides.

WOMAdelaide, then, was one of the first events I attended in almost seven years as a single person, and the universal joy that festival inspires in its audiences served as both a painful contrast and soothing antidote to the second round of grief I entered into that year.

The tearing confusion and high frequency pain had dulled to an ache before Come Out Children's Festival launched with a more-than-usually spectacular event on Adelaide's still reasonably new Torrens footbridge.

It was a dramatic year of life, and one that is very unlikely to have been mirrored exactly in the lives of those thousands of fellow audience members I sat, stood, walked or danced amongst at each festival.

Despite the differences in our lives and circumstance – which of course ran far deeper than current personal events – I'm almost certain our perceptions aligned for a few fleeting moments during even the most average of performances and events.

It is a strange sensation – the awareness that you’re having the same thought or feeling as people around you. Intellectually it’s something you can’t confirm, but intuition tells you it’s a truth.

What I realised as I lived through a year of festivals and a year of life was that while life can push us further from those around us, festivals tie us together and drag us in the same direction, and it’s as we inch toward communal thought that we experience something very rare – unity.

I felt this cohesion all the more keenly in contrast to the emotional ties in my daily life. Being lifted above and out of them and brushing up against something bigger than my own preoccupations was not always welcome, but it was consistently transformative.

My experience showed me that while these moments may be small, their potential is untold. It is perhaps only in these seconds of mutual thought that we have the chance to escape all the ties that bind us to ourselves – for a few moments we think outside the structures of our own mind and understand what it is like to be someone else.

It is also at these moments that we are at our most suggestible – thrown into the air through the medium of common understanding, we are at the mercy of those who know how to direct our landing.

This phenomenon is at once dangerous and filled with possibility. The negative extreme can be seen in cult of personality architects like Hitler and Mao, who used communal gatherings and performance to cynically engineer mass agreement.

On the much more cheerful end of the spectrum, sports teams and their marketing machines also use this technique, creating drama and narrative and providing theme songs and chants to bring together their fans in single-minded aspiration.

But while creating mutual experience is a powerful tool, festivals don’t seek to use it for power over our thoughts. It’s an intrinsic part of what these events do, but almost an unconscious one – and that is why it is so important.

Festivals create a series of these transcendent moments, but never seek to use them for a particular aim. Instead of being manufactured, the moments are organic – their effect is specific to a time, place and space. Most of them might not achieve anything except a warm feeling glowing in the middle of a crowd of strangers, but some of them are much more – they are the start of something. They are the start of connection, and a start of an evolved identity.

At their best moments, festivals remind us of what we often forget – that we are human, and that our future is communal.

Festivals, connection and society

How festivals help an ancient species understand a modern world

There is no modern condition. The essential parts of us are the same as they ever were. Marginal changes through evolution are yet to rewire the forces that tell us to be the way we are.

There is less traditional mass warfare, but the hatred and ambition that sat at the root of historic hostility burst forth in other insidious ways. Equally, people were happy even before it was conceptualised as something you might hope to be, but today – for all the talk of happiness and how to achieve it – we continue to stumble across joy obliviously – often failing to recognise it yet feeling it deeply.

While our lizard brains might, basically, function the same as they ever did – ruled by an instinct to protect those who are part of our family and a fear of death that gives rise to a mistrust of otherness – society has undeniably changed.

In Western communities particularly we are physically isolated from each other. We sleep in separate rooms, gravitate toward private modes of transport, are walled away from colleagues at work by dint of grey cubicles.

Our politics is driven by a public conversation that panders to self-interest as each news item is distilled into a summation of the impact it will have on your household budget.

Social interaction is increasingly antisocial. People converse through the medium of screens, not faces, which is not of itself a sin but can stall development of the ability to read subtle cues. Even when we're with others we have half a mind on what is happening elsewhere via the thing that buzzes in our pocket, or worse, on the table.

Amid this physical restructuring of society, our eternal need to connect endures. But now, instead of forming communities around common geography we're forming them around common thought.

At its most romantic this is a wonderful thing – allowing those who might otherwise have been marginalised to be embraced, and offering the knowledge that being who they are is no crime. However, that's only one end of the spectrum of possibility. At its most dangerous this fragmentation of society into ideological groups fosters extremism. Cocooned only amongst those who agree, people have the opportunity to affirm and develop the most wrongheaded of ideas.

This latter result of geographical fragmentation is why connecting with people who think differently remains an essential element of successful society. But once we're beyond school age, experiencing these connections at a genuine and deep level becomes optional.

There are few places in Australian life where these true moments of community continue to exist. Local sport clubs are one outpost that carries the tradition, and festivals are another. Both examples bring people together not through ideology, but through an interest that is uncoloured by schools of thought. By their participation, this hugely varied group of people become part of a collective experience. And while the arts industry may well be dominated by the left, arts audiences are diverse – making the communality of festivals all the more valuable.

Adelaide Festival Centre director Douglas Gautier told *CityMag* that 60 per cent of people attending shows at his institution also attended sports events at the Adelaide Oval. What figures like this reveal is that far from being the exclusive realm of well-heeled Dunstan-era progressives, the arts in Adelaide belong to everyone from AFL tragics to Liberal party stalwarts to *Green Left Weekly* toting teens.

Sam Wright – an emerging festival programmer responsible for events like *Bus to Big Trees* – says he invests his energy in creating festivals because they give rise to moments where “the potential of how good we could be is fulfilled”. There is a profound effect when two people who might otherwise have little in common together experience a moment like those Sam describes. For example, when the entire audience in the Dunstan Playhouse leant forward, enthralled in the house-of-cards structure built by calligrapher Hiroko Watanabe as she performed alongside band Above the Clouds during *OzAsia*, it was revealed that all of us in the audience felt the hold of beauty in the same way.

The universal deflation of theatre-goers when the tiny robot protagonist of Adelaide Festival's *Nufonia Must Fall* ruined his chances for love exposed our common approach to sympathy. As the crowd roared a cheer of approval, waited for the beat to re-emerge from amid twanging guitars and – as one – fell into an energetic dance encore during *Fanfare Ciocarlia's* set at WOMADelaide, we felt the happiness of the stranger dancing alongside us and it added to our own.

In each of these moments hundreds of people were unified in feeling. They connected to one another and, unconsciously, were reminded that even though we may disagree on politics, finance and hairstyles there are some core parts of us that are the same. Such a reminder is the antidote to society's

physical and ideological fragmentation, and is essential for us to continue to function in co-operation with one another despite our differences.

These reminders are all the more important for a city like Adelaide, which struggles to create enough connection to keep people here. Director of the Adelaide Film Festival, Amanda Duthie, visits festivals around the world as she looks for work with which to fill her program. Yet, her experience of Adelaide at festival time is unique. “In other cities, there is so much white noise but Adelaide is different,” she says. “Even if you don’t go to a festival event or venue the feeling of being part of something is there – it permeates everything and creates a more wide-reaching collective experience.”

As well as connecting us to each other, festivals connect us to a place. Our surroundings are as much a part of the transcendent moments we experience as our fellow audience members. When people emerged from *Puddles Pity Party* at The Garden of Unearthly Delights, they stepped foot into Adelaide’s Parklands. Embracing Puddles after his show as the sun set over this urban stretch of green, they created an image in their minds of a singular, deep experience which is tangled up with the place in which it happened. If they had left the venue and entered an impersonal theatre foyer instead of the fairy-light strewn park, perhaps their encounter would have felt different – more awkward, less genuinely heartfelt. As it was, the Adelaide geography that gave rise to something special will remain in their consciousness as a place to return to again and again.

As these people move out onto the streets, they carry a feeling of goodwill with them and it creates an atmosphere of conviviality. From Rundle Street to Hindley Street, people step lighter and stay out longer when festivals are on. They are buoyed by a sense of being part of something that infects those around them. The truth of the moments people experience in this environment is a strong connector to Adelaide as a city – it is moments where we bond, understand and believe we belong that make us feel at home.

With their ability to connect us, festivals create goodwill for one another and for a place. In doing so, they make us better members of society and more ardent advocates of Adelaide – two things that can never be measured, but have an enormous value nonetheless.

Festivals, identity and the future

How festivals help us make tomorrow better than yesterday

As well as telling us what we are – humans living in a community of other humans – festivals have the power to tell us what we are going to be.

Australia suffers from a notorious identity crisis. A country with a contemporary history of being a follower, first of Mother Britain and then beguiled by the power of the USA, much of the national mythology that we use to define ourselves is confusing and outdated.

The ANZAC legend, while important still and undeniably influential in shaping the country's psyche in the latter half of the 20th century, has little to tell us about where Australia fits in a globalised world. Washed up on the shores of Gallipoli is the notion of Aussies as self-effacing larrikins with a mind of our own and little respect for authority – a reputation that does nearly nothing to inform our actions as one of the world's richest nations attempting to negotiate our position in a region filled with emerging financial and political powers.

Visions of ourselves as fit, strong and resilient can-do pioneers date back to colonisation and are somewhat undermined by our status as one of the most obese populations in the world. More importantly, this myth is inherently tied up with a perception of Australians as white and totally ignores the Indigenous culture that is so central to our history. Our other enduring story of self, the one that tells of us as a hard-drinking party country, may well be true, but in being told over and over again it only perpetuates a part of our culture that might be better left behind.

A population without an identity struggles to rally behind leaders as they make difficult decisions. Australia's vacillating and often backward policy positions speak of a government stuck between outdated, irrelevant cultural touchstones and a future where what we want to be is so vague as to not even have a form. So, as we approach the problems of our time, Australia fails again and again to provide a solution that pleases anybody. The idea of creating enough cohesion to please everybody is so foreign we have forgotten that it's a possibility. A country that doesn't know if it is compassionate has a hard time working out what to do with refugees – something not helped by the fact that our lack of self-knowledge bolsters our fear of others. A democracy that is unsure whether it is traditional or progressive cannot hope to have a productive conversation on gay marriage.

Our zealous approach to terrorism both domestically and abroad is not explained by our national character and a consequent plan of action, but instead seems to result from force of habit or reactionary cynicism. And the swinging and inconsistent policy positions we take on climate change, which is perhaps the concern most capable of destroying all we hold dear in the 21st century, is so unbearably immature that the rest of the world can do little other than stare incredulously in our direction.

Beyond the cultural, social and environmental, our identity crisis even extends to affecting the lucky country's financial fortunes. Long a nation of primary producers, Australians have been slow to adapt to the globalised economy that is threatening to encroach upon our customer base. We don't know what we're good at beyond pulling things out of the ground or off the sheep's back, and it is becoming clearer and clearer that this is no longer enough to support the lifestyle to which we have become accustomed.

As much as these kinds of issues also cripple other countries, there is a cohesion in their popular reactions that cannot be found in Australia. Parisians, for example, march in solidarity when they're under attack, and protest when they disagree with their government's decisions. Meanwhile, in Australia, we squabble among ourselves.

Forging a stronger identity to rally around, then, is important. But for something so important, identity remains unfortunately intangible – it cannot be imposed or constructed because to work it must be recognised and embraced by a huge diversity of people.

The media has long been key in shaping how we perceive ourselves. Its power is seen in the swings in beauty trends as body ideals evolve and the parroting of popular commentators in comments sections on news websites or, more worryingly – at the polling booth. The problem with relying on media to shape a nation in the grips of an identity crisis is that its business model keeps the conversation static.

New ideas and ways of thinking will always be met with resistance, but that doesn't mean they aren't worthy of consideration. However, the mainstream media's job is not to challenge its audience. Instead these papers, websites, radio and TV programmes must entice and flatter their readers and watchers in the hopes of amassing numbers large enough to sell advertising space. The result is a media that affirms what we already know and rejects change as scary and unnecessary.

Given that, if Australia wants to rebuild itself and create a new understanding of who we are and what we mean to the world, we need to look elsewhere for a depiction of what we could be. Festivals are the flipside of the media. They have the same capacity to enter and influence our psyche, but none of the pressure to perpetuate existing, palatable beliefs. It is in a festival environment that we can examine new versions of what it means to be Australian.

Artistic director of Soundstream – a contemporary classical music collective – Gabriella Smart, says this is the very reason she engages in the arts. "I'm thinking of a composer from the Netherlands who said to me 'you need the

avant-garde, because that's where the boundaries are stretched," she says. Of course, this is true of almost all art forms. The importance of festivals, though, is their ability to be inclusive and draw people who might usually only engage with art briefly or occasionally into a context where deep thinking becomes not only possible but also likely.

With their all-encompassing atmospheric reach, our city's festivals capture a wide audience and give them permission to try something new. The Adelaide Festival's experiments in creating art clubs – first Barrio and then Lola's Pergola – were excellent examples of this in action. Both of these venues attracted long lines through on-point marketing campaigns and the promise of non-threatening indulgence in food and wine, and then engaged punters in immersive art experiences that had powerful effect. In their own way, both Barrio and Lola's discussed issues as diverse as sexuality, racism and animal rights – successfully sparking conversations that challenged what these things mean to Australians by using humour, fun and participation.

By entirely different means but with just as much effectiveness, shows like Guthrie Govan's Adelaide International Guitar Festival appearance tell us something about what we could begin to admire in our idols. Guthrie is an unlikely hero – with his long hair and shy manner – but his technical prowess and thoughtful inter-song banter inspired intense love in his audience. Of course this feeling occurred amid the guitar trags, but it was also evident in those who had come along for support – partners and friends found themselves spellbound by someone they would have ignored or even joked about had they passed him on the street.

These experiences, with their direct relevance to shaping identity, are only the start of how festivals can help us redefine ourselves. In every festival, there are far less obvious or instructive moments that can still resonate deeply enough to help us see ourselves differently.

Not too many years ago, Adelaide Fringe's *Fake It 'Til You Make It* was a standout hit. It took mental illness as its subject matter, but there were no powerful messages bundled up neatly and handed out by those on stage. Instead, a well told story with highly relatable characters offered an emotional catharsis strong enough to shift views. As people cried and then laughed and then cried again they weren't thinking intellectually about depression, but they were feeling the weight of consequence that results from our inability to openly discuss feelings in this country.

Encounters like this cut so deep emotionally that they can have the same effect as knowing someone who is experiencing trauma in real life – they allow us briefly to see a different world and understand a different way of

thinking, and it's in understanding that we can see how we might need to change. If this happens enough times to enough people our collective thinking evolves. And sometimes, the mere existence of a festival or show within a festival is enough to start the process of changing thinking.

Festivals like Feast, The Spirit Festival and OzAsia aren't important necessarily for what they can teach the majority about the minority (though they do that too), but are vital for their ability to empower the marginal. Isolation and feeling outcast are defining factors of Australian life for almost everyone who isn't white, middle class and male. Reflecting and normalising the diversity of our national makeup is essential for creating confidence in varied groups so their voices can become part of our public conversation.

Feast's Picnic in the Park and opening night Pride March are rare moments where LGBTIQ love is celebrated publicly and en masse in Adelaide. The effect these events have, especially on younger people, who bubble over with joy as they feel – sometimes for the first time – like it's ok to be themselves in front of others, cannot be underestimated.

These moments that festivals provide us allow a glimpse at how we could change our future just by thinking differently about ourselves. Festivals seed ideas – the realisation that we can have confidence in ourselves, an empathy for something we didn't understand before or a new way of approaching an issue – that could evolve into a new way of being Australian. There are few other forums that do this so effectively, without bias and while drawing in people from across a range of cultures and sub-cultures. Festivals are a unique opportunity to discuss, at an elementary and emotional level, who we are and how we could transform to more properly meet the challenges of our time and the future, and because of that they are invaluable.

In the end

How festivals help us be human

Festivals are almost entirely unique in their ability to redress two problems in our cultural life. Through their ability to connect us in rare moments of community and communality, they remind us that we are part of something bigger than ourselves and reinforce our responsibility and respect for each other. And by providing a forum for new ideas, diverse voices and different thinking festivals give us the opportunity to evolve our identity – something that is sorely needed if Australia is going to find more effective solutions to the global problems we face.

Festivals make us laugh, they make us cry, they make us dance, they help us fall in and out of love, they create lifelong friendships and momentary thought bubbles. In doing all that they tell us who we are and who we could be, and bring much more to our city than just visitors and dollars.

Festivals reflect us and shape us, and there are few other forces in our society that are at once so powerful and so accessible.

Note

Festivals Adelaide is the alliance of ten major arts festivals in South Australia: The Adelaide Festival, Adelaide Fringe, WOMADelaide, Cabaret Festival, Come Out Children's Festival, South Australian Living Artists Festival, Adelaide Film Festival, OzAsia, Feast Festival – Celebrating Diversity, and the Guitar Festival.

Christie Anthony, CEO of Festivals Australia and a member of the CHASS Board, commissioned local writer and journalist, Farrin Foster, to attend the ten festivals, to provide her own insights into their value.

5

CLIO AND MARS IN IRAQ

History, memory, myth and the rhetoric of war

Jason Flanagan

Studies of the “usefulness” of history are voluminous, and the discipline is often one of the foci in the perennial debate about the future of the humanities. Defending the value of undergraduate history degrees can be challenging in an environment where the production of “job ready” graduates has led to a preoccupation with applied knowledge and related pedagogical strategies around industry engagement and work integrated learning. In an atmosphere where all degrees must equip students with generic intellectual skills applicable to contemporary and imagined future workplaces, the study of history is often defended as a kind of intellectual gymnasium. It is argued, in this vein, that the discipline provides students with the ability to locate and interpret a wide variety of research materials, undertake an analysis of the information contained therein, construct an evidence-based argument, and communicate that argument in a variety of formats. Such skills, it is rightly argued, can be applied to any number of endeavours beyond the study of the past, and thus equip students with valuable vocational skills. As Peter Stearns has put it in his essay “Why study history” on the American Historical Association website: “History is useful for work. Its study helps create good businesspeople, professionals, and political leaders.”¹

In addition to assuring students, and perhaps their parents, that history produces “work ready” graduates, the discipline is inevitably defended on a number of other fronts. Oftentimes the writing of history is defended simply on the grounds of the pleasure it provides to readers. History is also

promoted as teaching us about both ourselves and others, and its connection to national identity and “good citizenship” often accounts for its promotion in schools. Such outcomes, however, can seem amorphous against those of other disciplines. As Stearns acknowledges: “Historians do not perform heart transplants, improve highway design, or arrest criminals. In a society that quite correctly expects education to serve useful purposes, the functions of history can seem more difficult to define than those of engineering or medicine.” Producing good and informed citizens can seem to pale next to the life or death impacts of medicine and engineering. Though for all our preoccupation with “real world” outcomes, the reality of history’s significance seems to be curiously overlooked. If we needed a lesson as to the life and death importance of history, the so-called War on Terror, and the associated conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, provide such a lesson. That war is a stark reminder not only of the vital importance of understanding the past in all its complexity, but also of the dangers of setting aside such complexity to luxuriate in more comforting and inspiring national myths. Just as we were talked into that war via our own myths and collective memories, so our ignorance of Afghan and Iraqi history seemed to doom our endeavours to failure.

In his 1966 *Arrogance of Power*, J. William Fulbright observed that the United States was “severely, if not uniquely afflicted with a habit of policy-making by analogy,” and argued that the “treatment of slight and superficial resemblances as if they were full-blooded analogies – as instances, as it were, of history ‘repeating itself’ – is a substitute for thinking and a misuse of history.”² Such a misuse of history, if indeed it is a misuse, has neither diminished in the 50 years since Fulbright’s statement, nor has it been confined to the United States. The ongoing centrality of historical analogies and “lessons” to foreign policy in the United States and elsewhere was dramatically revealed by the September 11, 2001, attacks.

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 were widely interpreted as a kind of temporal rupture. Many agreed with President George W. Bush’s notion, expressed in his September 20 address to a joint session of Congress, that in the wake of those devastating attacks “night fell on a different world.”³ This widespread belief that 9/11 “changed everything” naturally led to questions about the relevance and applicability of history. Prime Minister Tony Blair, for example, remarked in 2003 that there had never been a time when “a study of history provides so little instruction for our present day.”⁴

While Blair’s questioning of history’s utility is often quoted, our own Prime Minister John Howard expressed such views both more often and

more vehemently. In his October 2001 address to the Australian Defence Association, in which he laid out his reasons for committing Australia to the international coalition against terrorism, he said of the war on terror: “There can be no valid comparison with Vietnam ... or other wars of the past.”⁵ While the rejection of the troublesome Vietnam analogy is hardly surprising, the larger rejection of historical comparison is more so. Howard reiterated this point in March 2003, arguing that we should not “assume that what happened in the past is automatically relevant to what is now occurring,” before going on to declare:

You don't seek parallels with history when you make decisions about contemporary events. What you have to do is to deal with a situation as you find it. It's very hard to find any parallels to this situation because the world was different before we had international terrorism operating in a borderless environment. ... And I think people who are constantly searching for historical comparisons tend to forget that.⁶

Once again, the suggestion here is that the uniqueness of the post-9/11 era negated the possibility of applying lessons from history. What we know of analogical reasoning, however, would suggest quite a different conclusion.

As scholars such as Ernest May, Yuen Foong Khong and Christopher Hemmer have explored, humans have limited cognitive capacities, and when presented with the overwhelming amounts of complex and ambiguous information and intense pressures that characterise foreign policy crises, they will necessarily adopt cognitive shortcuts to facilitate decision-making.⁷ Historical analogies represent one such shortcut, allowing the transfer of lessons from a known event to a new situation. Analogies provide comforting guidance in assessing the nature and stakes involved in novel foreign policy situations, providing guidance in developing policy responses.

While Bush spoke of night falling on a new world in his September 20 address, he quickly moved to define that new world in terms of an older and more familiar one, saying of the nation's new foes:

We have seen their kind before. They are the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century. By sacrificing human life to serve their radical visions, by abandoning every value except the will to power, they follow in the path of fascism and nazism and totalitarianism. And they will follow that path all the way, to where it ends, in history's unmarked grave of discarded lies.⁸

America's current foes were thus not only cast as the heirs of the villains of World War II, but audiences were reassured that they would share the same fate. This was a rhetorical tactic that Bush would return to time and again. It was, however, but part of a larger strategy of defining the war on terror not merely as *similar* to World War II, but as an *extension* of that conflict. As a component of that strategy, the lessons of Munich, which assert the vital necessity of opposing aggression early and forcefully lest enemies grow bolder and more threatening, were reinterpreted and broadened. Bush declared in his November 2001 speech to the UN General Assembly:

In a second world war, we learned there is no isolation from evil. We affirmed that some crimes are so terrible they offend humanity itself. And we resolved that the aggressions and ambitions of the wicked must be opposed early, decisively, and collectively, before they threaten us all. That evil has returned, and that cause is renewed.⁹

This reinterpretation of Munich as establishing the necessity of confronting the “aggressions and *ambitions* of the wicked” was ready-made for the justification of preventive war in Iraq. As Bush put the case on March 17, 2003, while “some chose to appease murderous dictators” in the 20th century, in this new century “when evil men plot chemical, biological and nuclear terror, a policy of appeasement could bring destruction of a kind never before seen on this earth.”¹⁰

Contrary to Fulbright's reasoning, such analogical reasoning was not limited to the United States. Despite his explicit rejection of analogical reasoning, Prime Minister Howard, like President Bush, repeatedly drew upon the Munich analogy in his justifications for Australian involvement in the War on Terror. In an interview with Ray Martin just five days after the 9/11 attacks, the Prime Minister was asked if he was conscious of past world wars and the mistaken belief that they would be over quickly. The Prime Minister countered: “We've seen world wars start when people don't retaliate earlier, when they should. If the world had done something earlier in the 1930s, we wouldn't have had World War II.”¹¹ Howard fleshed out this analogy in the months that followed. In a speech in Sydney on October 13, Howard again spoke of the unique nature of the terrorist threat before going on to declare:

But one thing we can be certain about and that is this, that history tells us if we turn away from threats in the vain hope that they will

disappear of their own volition, we will be sadly mistaken. ... It was the refusal of free peoples and free men and women to recognise the nature of the challenge in the 1930s that brought about the terrible events with such awful consequences of World War II.

In his address to the Australian Defence Association a couple of weeks later, Howard deployed the Munich analogy even more forcefully, declaring:

Even a cursory reflection on history must lead you to the irrefutable conclusion that passive indifference in the face of evil achieves absolutely nothing. The threat will remain, growing more ambitious and more powerful and feeding on the unwillingness of decent nations to decisively confront and defeat it. There is a saying that for evil to triumph, it requires only good men to do nothing. The lesson of history tells us that it is equally true for nations. We would be foolish indeed, in the very first years of the twenty-first century, to forget the most hard learned lesson of the twentieth century, that evil cannot be appeased.¹²

Like Bush, Howard thus broadened the Munich analogy to warn of the dangerous of ignoring the threat posed by “evil,” rather than territorial aggressors specifically.

In one sense the use of the Munich analogy is unsurprising. In the last sixty years every American president, with the exception of Jimmy Carter, has routinely invoked the Munich analogy in foreign policy crises. As Jeffrey Record has argued, however, such invocations have distorted the meaning of appeasement, warped national security decision-making, and falsified history.¹³ Critics have repeatedly levelled such criticisms at presidential uses of the analogy, from Harry S. Truman’s use during the Korean War, through Lyndon Johnson’s use during Vietnam, to George H.W. Bush’s employment of the analogy during the first Gulf War. The use of Munich to justify the 2003 invasion of Iraq, however, seemed to stretch the analogy to breaking point. To argue that the analogy didn’t “fit,” however, is in some sense to miss the point of its use. It seems quite clear that Munich was utilized less as a diagnostic tool and more as a post-hoc justification for policy choices. As one commentator remarked, Munich served less as a historical reference point and more as a moral syllogism and a rhetorical bludgeon, enabling the administration to assert the vital necessity of the Iraq War while at the same time branding critics “appeasers” that invited destruction upon the United States and the world.¹⁴

The sense that Munich was used more as a rhetorical device than a diagnostic tool is only reinforced by the fact that it was merely one element in a much wider dependence upon World War II analogies by the Bush administration, one that pre-dated the events of 9/11. This use came in many forms. The successful post-war reconstruction and democratization of Germany and Japan were repeatedly deployed as evidence that such an outcome was possible in Iraq. As the bloody and protracted nature of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan became undeniable, this analogy was used to both emphasize the necessity of staying the course and reassure audiences of the ultimate outcome. In 2008 Bush spoke of America's "special obligation" to help Afghanistan and Iraq build free and just societies, before again reassuring audiences as to the ultimate outcome:

We've assumed this obligation before. After World War II, we helped Germany and Japan build free societies and strong economies. These efforts took time and patience, and as a result, Germany and Japan grew in freedom and prosperity. Germany and Japan, once mortal enemies, are now allies of the United States. And people across the world have reaped the benefits from that alliance. Today, we must do the same in Afghanistan and Iraq. By helping these young democracies grow in freedom and prosperity, we will lay the foundation of peace for generations to come.¹⁵

Condoleezza Rice and Donald Rumsfeld repeatedly compared insurgents in Iraq to the so-called *Wenwolf* guerrilla movement in Germany. In an address to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in August 2003, Rumsfeld outlined how these "werewolves" had targeted Allied soldiers, assassinated mayors, destroyed government buildings, and plotted the sabotage of factories, rail lines and power plants. Teasing out the moral of the story, he argued: "Like the death squads in Iraq they failed to stop the liberation of Germany and they failed in rousing the population of Germany to widespread revolt. ... The vast majority of the German people like the vast majority of the Iraqi people were glad to be rid of the tyrannical dictatorship."¹⁶ Suggestions that we should withdraw from Iraq were denounced as "the modern equivalent of handing post-war Germany back to the Nazis."¹⁷ Similarly, Bush said of suggestions that we should negotiate with extremists:

We have heard this foolish delusion before. As Nazi tanks crossed into Poland in 1939, an American senator declared: "Lord, if I could only

have talked to Hitler, all this might have been avoided.” We have an obligation to call this what it is – the false comfort of appeasement, which has been repeatedly discredited by history.¹⁸

Such varied uses of World War II analogies were challenged by scholars and pundits alike. Many such critics challenged one analogy only to suggest their own, the Vietnam War.

Marilyn Young has observed that there “seems to be only two kinds of war the United States can fight: World War II or Vietnam,” and the debate surrounding the invasion of Iraq seemed to validate this view.¹⁹ Andrew Nagorski observed in the pages of *Newsweek* in April 2003:

If President Bush manages to convince the world that the war was necessary to avoid even worse consequences, a repeat of the disastrous appeasement policies of the 1930s that only encouraged Hitler, then he can emerge morally vindicated. But if the critics can keep much of the world convinced that this is a case, like Vietnam, of American imperial overreach, it will be a public-relations nightmare. A lot – an awful lot – depends on which historical analogy gains popular acceptance.²⁰

If Munich recommends the quick and decisive use of force, Vietnam warns of the dangers of foreign military adventures and wars of choice. If we scratch the surface, however, the analogy quickly gets complicated. While the imperative to avoid “another Vietnam” is clear, the precise lessons that can be drawn are numerous, varied and oftentimes contradictory. Suggestions that the United States failed to learn the lessons of Vietnam are ubiquitous, but in reality it took *too many* lessons from that conflict. For some the central lesson is to never again get involved in an ill-defined conflict far from American shores, which has questionable relevance to American national interest. For others, Vietnam teaches the vital necessity of not allowing international legal and moral norms to inhibit the full application of America’s superior military power. Between these two ends of the spectrum – staying out or going “all in” – there are a myriad of more nuanced lessons, operating at different levels. Most often, however, the Vietnam analogy was used more crudely as a counterweight to World War II analogies. If invocations of World War II promised a glorious and decisive “good war,” Vietnam raised the spectre of a “quagmire” in which the expenditure of vast amounts of blood and treasure would ultimately only

buy humiliation and ignominious withdrawal. “Vietnam” was, and remains, shorthand for “failure.”

Once again, however, the debate surrounding the applicability of the Bush administration’s analogies in some sense missed the point, so far as we are judging them in terms of how well they work as lenses through which to understand the complex challenges faced in the War on Terror. As David Noon has argued, however, the World War II analogy worked for the Bush administration “precisely *because* it avoids serious intellectual engagement with a phenomenon as complex as international terrorism.” As he argued, the analogy was used “not so much to describe and classify international threats such as al-Qaeda or Iraq, but more powerfully to enliven the public and to legitimate its leadership, to rearticulate familiar icons of national identity.”²¹ World War II was used not to understand the enemy, but rather to put forward a certain vision of the American self, one that came with a set of obligations in support of the administration’s foreign policy. To put it differently, the Bush administration was not invoking those historical analogies that most closely aligned with the situation upon the ground in Iraq, but rather those that most closely aligned with their political agenda. Moreover, its invocations of the past were not grounded in the complex history of World War II, but rather in the collective memory and myth that had grown up around those events.

In any discussion of the Bush administration’s use of World War II analogies it is important to note that Bush’s invocations of the “Good War” began prior to the events of September 11. Popular interest in World War II and the generation that fought it – the so-called “greatest generation” – exploded in the 1990s, and Bush’s presidential campaign tapped into the cresting wave of nostalgia. Associating himself with his father’s proud military record, in September 1999 Bush waxed lyrical at the Citadel:

My generation is fortunate. In the world of our fathers, we have seen how America should conduct itself. We have seen leaders who fought a world war and organized the peace. We have seen power exercised without swagger and influence displayed without bluster ... We have seen American power tempered by American character. And I have seen all of this personally and closely and clearly.²²

In a presidential campaign aimed more at Bill Clinton than Al Gore, such rhetoric was part of an ultimately successful campaign to characterize the Clinton years as a period of drift and uncertainty, during which time the

United States “appeased” Saddam Hussein and lost its sense of moral clarity at home and national greatness abroad.

In the wake of the 9/11 attacks the legacy of the greatest generation was used to instil a sense of obligation to fight the war on terror. At the National Cathedral on September 14, 2001, Bush declared: “In every generation, the world has produced enemies of human freedom. They have attacked America, because we are freedom’s home and defender. And the commitment of our fathers is now the calling of our time.”²³ Similarly, in December of that year he spoke to the crew of the *USS Enterprise*, saying: “Many of you in today’s Navy are the children and grandchildren of the generation that fought and won the Second World War. Now your calling has come. Each one of you is commissioned by history to face freedom’s enemies.”²⁴ Bush thus urged younger Americans to uphold the faith of the World War II generation and to recommit themselves to the nation by supporting the war on terrorism.

Despite his explicit rejection of analogical reasoning, Prime Minister Howard put Australia’s military mythos and its own “greatest generation” – Gallipoli and the Anzacs – to work in ways remarkably similar to Bush. Of course the mythology surrounding Gallipoli is very different to that surrounding World War II. As Howard himself put it in late 2003, while Gallipoli is “the ultimate symbol of our military tradition,” it was “not a glorious victory but a bloody stalemate and then a forced withdrawal.”²⁵ Bloody stalemate and forced withdrawal was of course *not* the outcome Howard was publicly anticipating for Iraq; indeed, it was the very outcome he was looking to deny. Equally problematically, one can easily read the lessons of Gallipoli as recommending against Australian involvement in the invasion of territory of debatable strategic relevance to the overarching struggle as part of a campaign designed and led by great and powerful friends. Rather than standing in stark contrast to the Vietnam War, many saw Gallipoli and Vietnam, and for that matter Iraq, all as examples of Australia fruitlessly fighting “other people’s wars.”

While Bush could advocate the invasion Iraq by broadly assuring audiences that it would resemble World War II, at least as it was collectively recalled, it was impossible for Howard to advocate Australian participation on the basis that such involvement would resemble the experience at Gallipoli. Historical lessons, however, were only half the picture. While Howard could not employ the lessons of Gallipoli in making his case for joining the so-called “Coalition of the Willing,” he could and did employ the *mythology* of Gallipoli and Anzac in making that case.

Under Howard, then, the Anzac legend became a hegemonic myth of Australian identity, defining the nation's birth and encapsulating its core values. At Anzac Day and other similar ceremonial speeches, Howard held up the "Anzac spirit" and the "diggers" themselves as embodying a list of interconnected values and virtues. When presenting medals to World War I vets in 1999, Howard declared:

And I don't think that the ANZAC tradition has been better described than in the words of that great World War I historian Charles Bean who wrote of the ANZAC spirit as follows: "In the end ANZAC stood and still stands for reckless valour in a good cause, for enterprise, resourcefulness, fidelity, comradeship and endurance that will never admit defeat."²⁶

Of all the values embodied by the diggers, it was "mateship" that Howard held up as the most important and uniquely Australian. Here he was in line with the larger legend, of which Graham Seal has observed, "it is the notion of undying loyalty to one's mates that both distinguishes the digger's Australian-ness and his ability as a warrior."²⁷ Just as they were central to the Anzac legend, so too were notions of mateship central to Howard's rhetoric surrounding the War on Terror.

In Howard's rhetoric, Australia and the United States were "mates." In his address to the joint meeting of the US Congress in June 2002 he said of Australia: "Most of all, we value loyalty given and loyalty gained. The concept of mateship runs deeply through the Australian character." He continued: "Australian and American forces fought together for the first time in the Battle of Hamel, in France, in World War I. ... From that moment to this, we've been able to count on each other when it has mattered most." Howard went on to document how "Successive generations of Australians and Americans have fought side by side in every major conflict of the twentieth century," and how when America came under attack "Australia was immediately there to help."²⁸ Great Britain was defined in similar terms. In November 2003, for example, after describing a complex world defined by asymmetrical threats and international terrorism, Howard continued: "In facing such challenges, it is reassuring for Australia, to find ourselves once more in the company of old and trusted friends. For although the character of the threat has changed from that of 1914 or 1939, the essential nature of the values that Australia and Great Britain still seek to defend has not."²⁹ Daniel Nourry has gone so far as to argue that given the

nature and significance of the Anzac myth, Australia was all but compelled to join the coalition of the willing and fight alongside its “mates” in Iraq.³⁰

If there was no greater Australian virtue than mateship, then there was no greater sin than letting down your mates. Once again, the centrality of mateship and the obligations it entails can be traced back to the foundations of the Anzac myth. C.E.W. Bean famously posed the question as to what motives sustained the Anzacs amid the horrors of war. His answer was not a love of fighting, or hatred of the Turk, or even patriotism or love of Empire, but rather:

It lay in the mettle of the men themselves. To be the sort of man who would give way when his mates were trusting to his firmness; to be the sort of man who would fail when the line, the whole force, and the allied cause required his endurance; to have made it necessary for another unit to do his own work; to live the rest of his life haunted by the knowledge that he had set his hand to a soldier's task and had lacked the grit to carry it through – that was the prospect which these men could not face.³¹

Such ideas permeated Howard's Iraq war rhetoric. They were perhaps most clearly articulated in his May 2004 address to the Institute of Public Affairs in Melbourne. That year had seen the deadly Madrid train bombings and Spain's subsequent withdrawal from Iraq, as well as the brutal attack on four American private contractors in the city of Fallujah, all of which had led to growing questions as to the wisdom of Australia's open-ended commitment in Iraq. Having repeatedly declared that Australia would not “cut and run” before the job was finished, Howard's warned his Melbourne audience:

If we lose heart, if we abandon our friends, if we choose to give the wrong signal to the terrorists, that will not only make the world a less safe place but also damage the reputation of this country around the world. We must remember it is in times of adversity that the value of friendship is most keenly felt and it is in times of adversity and challenge that that friendship is tested.

Repeatedly describing coalition partners in Iraq as “proven friends and allies” and “close friends and partners,” Howard characterized the conflict as “a test of character” and reminded the audience that Australia had “made a commitment to our long-term friends and allies to stand with them in the

fight against proliferation and terrorism.”³² Having made a commitment to stand with its American and British mates, Australia could not fail in that commitment and stay true to its heritage and national identity. Significantly, this argument for involvement in Iraq was quite unconnected to those arguments surrounding Iraqi possession of weapons of mass destruction and supposed links to Al-Qaeda, and thus was not affected when those arguments unravelled. In November 2003, after describing mateship as a “particularly Australian virtue,” Howard said of Australian involvement in the two World Wars: “Sticking by your mates was sometimes the only reason for continuing when all else seemed hopeless.” Such thinking was depressingly applicable to Iraq.

In Howard’s telling, to fail or lose our nerve in Iraq would not only mean abandoning our mates, but would mean failing in the very endeavour for which the diggers sacrificed so much at Gallipoli. Time and again Howard defined all of Australia’s military history in terms of the defence of shared values, particularly those of freedom and liberty. At the 2001 commemoration of Australian federation, for example, he recalled the “sacrifices of the thousands of young Australians who died defending the liberty of this country, and defending the cause of freedom around the world.”³³ At Anzac Day that same year, Howard described Australia’s military history as a demonstration of the willingness of Australians “to fight, and if need be die, for the cause of freedom.”³⁴ Such an interpretation of history made connecting the War on Terror to the Anzac legend straightforward. From the outset Howard, like Bush, defined the 9/11 attacks as an attack on freedom worldwide. In October 2001 Howard declared: “We must and we will stand with our American allies and our American friends in defence of the things that we hold so dear and we hold in common.”³⁵ A year later he told the RSL National Congress that Australia already had a “reputation for doing the right thing in difficult circumstances, and its citizens risking their lives in defence of the values they hold in common with others.”³⁶ Just as Bush urged younger Americans to uphold the faith of the World War II generation, so too did Howard ask Australians to uphold the faith of the Anzacs.

In his analysis of the “Good War” myth of World War II, Michael Adams has argued that rather than assisting analysis, the myth has become a substitute for it, demanding “unquestioning faith in a past golden age,” with proponents at times coming close to “ancestor worship.”³⁷ It was in a sense this kind of “ancestor worship” that informed our foreign policy, and we somehow remained woefully ignorant of the ways history would come back to determine our ultimate success. As Mats Berdal has discussed, despite

superficial acknowledgements that “history matters,” the deliberations of Western governments contemplating intervention in conflict and post-conflict settings have consistently betrayed a profound ignorance of the complex historical legacies they will encounter and the grave significance such history would have for the success of the mission.³⁸

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6

THE NEED FOR A CHIEF SOCIAL SCIENTIST IN AUSTRALIA

Ann Moyal

The concept of ‘the two cultures’, has long been in our language. In 1959, in his seminal book of that title, the eminent British novelist and physicist, C.P. Snow, highlighted the danger of the division that had grown up in the Western world since World War II between science and the humanities: ‘Without connection across the disciplines’, he affirmed, ‘we cannot think with wisdom’.¹

In Europe, ‘science’ is used as an encompassing term that gathers the ‘enabling sciences’ of physics, astronomy, chemistry, mathematics and biology together with the social sciences and humanities into one form that marks an interconnection of knowledge across the scholarly disciplines. In Australia there has been a clear tendency to differentiate these cultures and to reserve the concept of ‘science’ specifically for the hard or enabling sciences, and to consign the humanities and social sciences to a very different place. There has also been an advancing tendency to endow ‘science’ with a growing authority within national policy and to frame mechanisms that enhance the central role of science in shaping Australia’s future. But opinion is growing that if we are to harness our rich and variegated resources of knowledge for the challenges of the 21st century, the time for reassessment is at hand.

Scholarly voices have long been raised to underline the high value of the humanities and the social sciences in contributing to our national goals. As Professor Margaret Manion emphasized in her keynote address to the Australian Academy of the Humanities in 1990, ‘The scholarly and

interpretative role of the Humanities and the arts, is essential to ensure that we implement policies with both hindsight and wisdom and that we direct concerted energies to this task ... There is hope that Australia will play a special role in the world response to the environment through its people's awareness of and alertness to the variegated web of values to be protected'.²

At the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia in 2002, President Professor Leon Mann strongly contested the assumption that the Commonwealth Government's 'Big Question of National Priorities' belonged only to science, engineering and technology. As Mann argued, 'truly national research priorities involve in most cases a combination of nature and society, environment and people, and the physical and the social ... Social science knowledge and insight must partner natural sciences and technology concepts in the identification and implementation of our most compelling national research priorities'.³

Similarly in 2003, Professor of Environmental History at the ANU, Tom Griffiths, addressing the topic of 'The Humanities and an Environmentally Sustainable Australia', asserted that problems in the relationship between nature and culture, once seen as purely scientific or environmental, were currently perceived as fundamentally 'social and humanist'. In his view, an environmentally sustainable Australia would depend both on our knowledge of ecosystems and resources, 'but even more on our ability to initiate, advocate and absorb radical shifts in desired life style, values and technology'. In more recent years, following research visits to both Antarctica and the Arctic, Griffiths was more emphatic: 'While the public tends to define climate as the domain of the natural and physical sciences', he wrote, 'we have to draw on physics, astronomy, oceanography, chemistry, geology, biology, medicine, geography, meteorology, archaeology, anthropology, history, law, literature, languages, art and politics ... It is not just scientists and science we will defer to'.⁴ Echoing Leon Mann's concerns in recent times, Professor Graeme Turner from the Academy of the Humanities, again publicly underlined the fact that all the national research priorities nominated by the Commonwealth Science Council in 2015 such as food, soil and water, transport, energy, resources, manufacturing and health have their roots in social structure and human behaviour.⁵

Across the last four decades, however, the growth of governmental structures has strengthened the perception of the centrality of science in Australia's national policy. The first separate Department of Science was established under the Whitlam Government in 1974. The Prime Minister's Science Council was created in 1989 as 'the principal source of independent

advice to government on issues in science and technology’ and the first Chief Scientist, charged with the carriage of the business of the Council and its Reports to Government, was appointed that year. Renamed the Prime Minister’s Science, Engineering and Innovation Council (PMSEIC) in 1997, the Council was refashioned as the Commonwealth Science Council by the Abbott Government in April 2014.

Hitherto, under PMSEIC, three individually invited members from the Academies of the Social Sciences and the Humanities had sat variously with Ministers and leading scientists to offer perspectives on a number of national matters. But reconstituted as the Commonwealth Science Council, this major policy-making body is made up of five representatives of the STEM enabling sciences and five leading representatives from the business community. There is no invited member from the HASS cultures. The divergence evoked a firm protest from the then President of the Academy of the Humanities, Professor Lesley Johnson who declared: ‘There is now no forum in which the Government can assess the expertise of the humanities, arts and social sciences. [Yet] It is the HASS sector that will deliver the vital cultures, linguistic and social perspectives required for our future economic, political and cultural engagement in a global era’.⁶ Despite the eminence of the new Council’s scientific and business representatives, Johnson contended, it was essential to have ‘a whole-of-system view to advise the Government on areas of national research strength and capability’. It was, indeed, ‘counter-productive to introduce measures which divide the research system’.

Perspectives on the national knowledge base had in fact been shifting. Four years earlier in February 2010, Labor’s Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator Kim Carr, had issued his ‘Inspiring Australia. A national strategy for engagement with the sciences’, ‘the sciences’ in his terms embracing both science and the humanities and the social sciences as a ‘systematic accrual of knowledge’ critical to the interface between science and society.⁷

In the last few years, the Academies of the Humanities and the Social Sciences have made conspicuous disciplinary and interdisciplinary contributions to this ‘accrual’. Their collaborative *Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia*, published in October 2014, provided a far-reaching survey of the HASS disciplines in research, teaching and training in our universities and institutions and revealed the wide knowledge and social understanding these disciplines generate. The Foreword to *Mapping the Humanities*, written by Ian Chubb as Chief Scientist, paid overt tribute to

their role. While, as he indicated, ‘the disciplines now grouped as STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) are critical infrastructure ... the humanities, arts and social science (HASS) disciplines provide vital knowledge and understanding of our world’.

Other developments of an interdisciplinary nature sustained the picture. Carr’s legacy passed through his successor in office, Minister Chris Evans, in June 2012, to endow ten million dollars of government funding, administered through the ARC, to the creation of ACOLA, the Australian Council of Learned Academies, made up of the four academies – the Australian Academy of the Humanities, the Australian Academy of Science, the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering. ACOLA’s purpose was to report through the Office of the Chief Scientist to the Prime Minister’s Science, Engineering and Innovation Council (and subsequently to the Commonwealth Science Council) and provide evidence-based, interdisciplinary research to underpin policy development.

ACOLA would also encourage research and scholarship across the disciplines. Its flagship project, ‘Securing Australia’s Future’, was directed by a Program Steering Committee with equal representation from the four academies to ensure the quality of the programme, and an interdisciplinary Expert Working Group was appointed for each of its reports.

By 2016 eight substantial reports, their titles at times given to evolving change, had been completed: ‘Australia’s Comparative Advantage’, ‘STEM Country Comparisons’, ‘Australia’s Agricultural Future’, ‘Smart Engagement with Asia: Levering language, research and culture’, ‘The Role of Science, Research and Technology in Lifting Australian Productivity’, ‘Technology and Australia’s Future’, ‘Engineering Energy: Unconventional Gas Production’, and ‘Delivering Sustainable Urban Mobility’. The presence of the STEM and HASS disciplinary influences variously bind the subjects while Executive Summaries illuminate both the innovation and the integration. For example, ‘Smart Engagement with Asia’ concludes that ‘smart’ engagement means making more use of the bridging role of both ‘Asian diasporas in Australia and Australian diasporas in Asia’, an approach not formerly evident in Australian policy, and stresses breaking ‘the vicious circle of monolingualism’.⁸ In the challenged arena of ‘Australia’s Agricultural Future’, over and above the need for new data and new technologies, the Report advises that with the increasing complexity of the farming system, ‘different players need more than ever to form networks to enable knowledge aggregation, analysis and exchange between peoples and societies’.⁹ In

'Technology and Australia's Future', the Executive Summary warns that meanings associated with technology are 'deeply tied to values, beliefs, experiences and cultural settings', hence the meanings people ascribe to technology substantially influence its adoption and use, and 'cannot be ignored in any technological intervention'.¹⁰ ACOLA's most recent Report, 'Delivering Sustainable Urban Mobility', draws heavily on the HASS disciplines where its hard-hitting evaluation numbers a skein of fundamental weaknesses in current institutional and governance arrangements that include 'planning and democratic deficits, politicisation of infrastructure investment, erosion of planning's range and strength under neoliberalism, and the relative power of road agencies'. For pertinent insights it recommends looking at urban-governance in Vancouver and Zurich. Significantly ACOLA No 1 Report, 'Australia's Comparative Advantage', records concerns that the Australian education system may not be fully importing the skills required for a competitive knowledge economy and stresses the need for a multi-dimensional approach where STEM skills are properly complemented by capability in areas such as humanities and social science (HASS) in order to understand the culture and society in which Australia seeks to operate and engage.

In their wide stretch, their multidimensional evidence and their diverse contributions from the STEM and HASS disciplines, these far-seeing Reports lay the foundations for key transitions in our national policy and recognise the relevance and significance of the 'two cultures'. Nonetheless, despite evident progress, it is conspicuous that the 'Securing Australia's Future' Reports, with their rich interdisciplinary contributions and analysis, remain for their final responsibility and despatch under the aegis of the Chief Scientist and his Office. Despite a collaboration of equals at the research edge, the HASS disciplines have, as yet, no '*right of place*' within the framework of the government advisory system. The disparity marks the question. How can social science and the humanities gain a more direct presence in the shaping of national policy? How might they form a designated part of the infrastructure of forward looking national decision making?

Here overseas experience is instructive. A Chief Social Scientist or 'Chief Social Researcher' served for several years as a bureaucrat in the Scottish Parliament. In Canada a Chief Social Scientist is positioned at Parks Canada with responsibility for providing national direction for social science research in respect of health care, social welfare programmes, citizen behaviour, children's issues, gun control and environmental challenges. The United Kingdom appointed its first 'Chief Government Social Researcher' in 2002 with an Office in Treasury and responsibility for promoting evidence-based

policy. The appointee, Susan Duncan, an eminent civil servant with connections to academia and commercial and public sectors, interviewed at the end of her tenure in 2008, offered a positive verdict. There had been substantial gains in creative review between policy makers and social scientists, and ‘qualitative research had become an important part of policy evaluation widely used to inform governmental policy design’. Her conclusion stressed that the Chief Social Researcher should be an integrated part of the process of government, and ‘not just the provider of data’.¹¹

Duncan’s successor, Professor Paul Wiles, an eminent criminologist, retired in 2010 after two years, his departure evoking strong representations from the House of Lords Sub-Committee on Science and Technology on the importance of restoring the post and ensuring the ability of social scientists to influence governance ‘at the heart of government.’

The matter of a Chief Social Scientist now lies at the centre of the national Campaign for the Social Sciences launched in April 2013 by the British Academy of the Social Sciences. While an array of chief scientists from the physical and biological sciences were engaged across government, they note, Professor Wiles’ unfilled place had deprived government of key scientific tools and insights to bring to social issues. The Campaign’s pre-election publication, *The Business of People*, authored by Cary Cooper and Stephen Anderson,¹² landscaping the diverse, people-oriented scene of the social sciences in society, with its insistent message, ‘Social science is central to science’, has been endorsed by some eighty universities in Britain. Yet it has not been accepted by the U.K. government. ‘Whether compiled by government horizon scanners, corporate strategists or consultants scoping sales and investment,’ the publication urges, ‘no theme can be addressed through a single body of knowledge or discipline, certainly not just by science’. ‘The Prime Minister, the Cabinet Secretary, and the Government Chief Scientific Adviser need a chief social scientist to supply wide social science perspectives on institutions, behaviour and data’.¹³

Certainly the most striking government initiative on the social science policy front taken on the international stage has come from the United States in President Obama’s Presidential Directive, ‘Behavioural Science Insights Policy Directive’ of 15 September, 2015. Based on a growing body of evidence that demonstrates how behavioural science insights concerning how people make decisions and act on them can be used to design better government policies to serve the American people, the President has directed all his executive departments and agencies to identify policies, programmes and strategies that embrace knowledge and insights from the behavioural

sciences that may yield substantial improvements in public welfare, programme outcomes, and cost effectiveness. Such insights, he indicates, will help workers find better jobs, enable Americans to lead longer lives, improve access to educational opportunities and accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy. This landmark directive, to be administered by the President's Social and Behavioural Science Team within the National Science and Technology Council, affords a key social science input into a governmental environment richly reflective of the culture of science.

The idea of a Chief Social Scientist has been variously ventilated in Australia. Emeritus Professor Meredith Edwards, Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, experienced in governance and academia, first advanced the notion of a 'knowledge broker' in 2009 in the form of an academically qualified social scientist within government to link academic and government sectors and broker across disciplines, sectors and policy boundaries. One possibility, she recorded, which could be tried in Australia, 'is the appointment of a Chief Social Scientist to work alongside its Chief Scientist with the aim of leading whole of government and social and natural science perspectives on key policy priority issues'.¹⁴ CHASS director, Emeritus Professor Steven Schwartz, in his first Newsletter to the Association, also prominently supported the concept of a Chief Social Scientist sharing equal status with the Chief Scientist in Australia and serving as 'a bridge between the social sciences, academic community and the government'.¹⁵ My own address, in the 2012 Fenner Lectures at the Academy of Science, 'Cross disciplinary approaches in a complex scientific age',¹⁶ extended the discourse.

It is of interest that late in 2012 the Labor Government under Prime Minister Julia Gillard, spurred by the visit of the United Kingdom Chief Scientist, Sir John Beddington, to Australia, went so far as to announce the appointment of a new 'Chief Scientist position' within the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) 'to increase the role of social science research and evidence in future policy development'. However, the post, proposed for the joint carriage of the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and the Minister for the Department of Education and designed to foster links between public servants and the social science research community, became a victim of the political turmoil of 2013 and failed to take shape.¹⁷

How then can we affect change in Australia? The opinion of Catherine Livingstone, President of the Business Council and a member of the Commonwealth Science Council, is timely. Faced as we are with turbulence and global and domestic disruption from many sources, she noted, it is vital to

undertake structural change. ‘Many of our policy settings no longer fit’, she told the National Press Gallery in April 2015. ‘Our policy frameworks have to change. There must be respect for process. We need (and leaders must frame) a transition path which resonates the concerns people have, given the rapidly changing environment confronting us today, with our hopes for the future’.

What, then, are the mechanisms and processes available? How can we adjust our policy frameworks to yield the most fruitful interaction between evidence-based social research and government policy? Professor Chubb’s five-year term as full time Chief Scientist serviced by the Office of the Chief Scientist offers one model. His role, defined at the formation of the Commonwealth Science Council, is to hold the position of Executive Officer of the Commonwealth Science Council and ‘identify challenges and opportunities for Australia that can be addressed in part through science’. As Chief Scientist, he was empowered ‘to give the highest independent and authoritative scientific advice to be used to help inform the best course of action for Australia’. Acting as a knowledge broker across the STEM disciplines, Professor Chubb’s focus on the ‘enabling sciences’, on science education and training in the STEM arena, and on a national strategy for science has been conspicuous.

Speaking at the CHASS National Forum in October 2015 on the panel addressing the question ‘Does Australia Need a Chief Social Scientist?’, he declared, ‘We have had to connect people to ensure the right canon of knowledge is pressed into the policy process’. While prioritising the interests of science, Chubb allowed, ‘I am not dismissing the idea of a Chief Social Scientist’. The key component, as political scientist and panel member, Professor Brian Head from the Institute of Social Science Research, University of Queensland, affirmed, ‘was the knowledge broker which would provide the networking ability to call on the best experts’.¹⁸

Essentially the appointment of an academically qualified Chief Social Scientist would bring a knowledge broker capable of assessing ongoing research across disciplines that bring vital ways of understanding to such key national issues as: natural resources, the impact of new technologies and computerization on employment, the nature of innovation in organizations, the environment, anthropogenic climate change, health and education, older people and ageing, urbanization, ethics, education, and even such problems as shark attacks, and, at core, to strategic thinking about values, human behaviour and cultural attitudes.

The process of placement of such an officer within the policy framework invites careful consideration. A ‘Chief Social Scientist’ provides one title.

Yet as the appointee would represent the interests of both the social sciences and the humanities, a ‘Chief Social Researcher’ is a relevant other. Centrally where would the post best serve within the policy framework? In a department of government; as an independent officer of equal status to the Chief Scientist giving (as he is required) ‘the highest independent and authoritative advice to help inform the best course of action for Australia’; or in an equal distribution of power and services through two research commissions, a Science Research Commission and a Research Commission of Humanities and Social Science, overseen by the ARC?

There is a present call for change. The ACOLA project has been successful in providing important cross-disciplinary, evidence-based data and analysis to government across a span of major national issues, and the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA)’s concept of ‘interdisciplinarity’ is well grounded. But there is a need for watchfulness on the primacy of STEM. Contemporary criticism has, for example, addressed the neglect of skilling in the vocational and educational sectors of innovation in the National Innovation and Science Agenda. There is also broad concern for the future of ACOLA’s ‘Securing Australia’s Future’ programme whose funding, due to end in June 2016, does not form part of the government’s economic projections. Its termination would raise critical issues on the advisory role of collaborative scholarship. The appointment of Dr Alan Finkel as Chief Scientist from January 2016 has brought a scientist with wide research, university and industry experience, and a recognised multidisciplinary interest to the science policy portfolio. His view of cross-disciplinary approaches will be important. On his departure from office, the outgoing Chief Scientist Professor Chubb voiced a singular, if controversial, advocacy for science. ‘There is no other path to the future that I believe Australians want’, he asserted, ‘than to put science at the core of everything we do’.

The proposal for a Chief Social Scientist invites innovative boldness. In our early Federation days, Australia’s history was marked by a legislative boldness that won us international acclaim. In 2016 we have a government that emphasises imagination, creativity and innovation and a 21st century of new ideas. It is time for serious discussion.

References and further reading

This essay is an extension of my paper delivered at the CHASS National Forum, 15 October 2015, ‘Does Australia Need a Chief Social Scientist’, see also Ann Moyal, ‘A Necessary Marriage. Cross-disciplinary Approaches

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My study has also drawn on discussions with Professor Glenn Withers, President, Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia; Jacques de Vos Malan, Australian Council of Learned Societies (AGOLA) Secretariat, and Christina Parolin and Kylie Brass of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

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