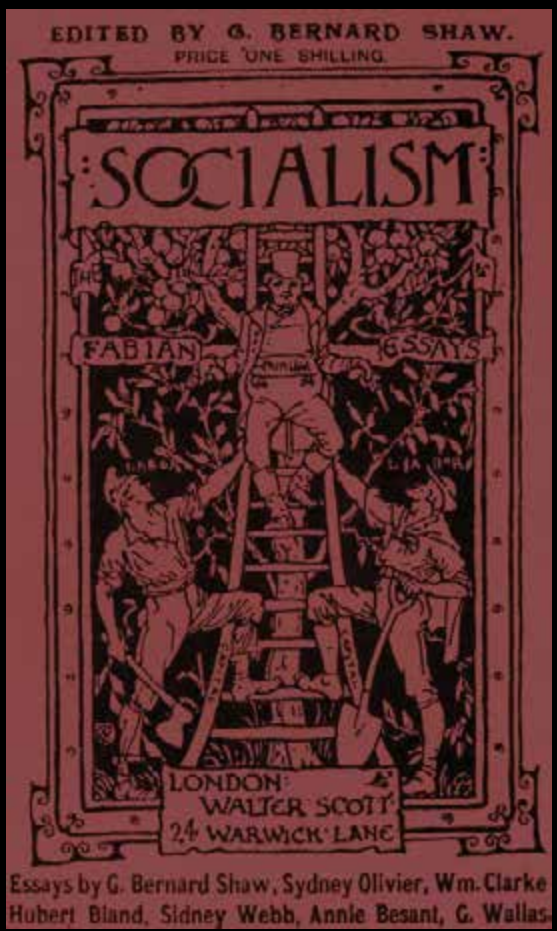
FABIAN

THE AUSTRALIAN FABIANS REVIEW

ISSUE 6

* Stop killing children



The Fabian Society, founded in 1884 in the United Kingdom, is a society of social democratic thinkers that brought together Nobel Prize winners and thought leaders like Emmaline Pankhurst, Annie Besant, Bertrand Russell, George Bernard Shaw and HG Wells. The Fabians founded the London School of Economics, which today works on the political economy of sustainability, equity, and human flourishing.

In the spirit of those progressive visionaries who preceded us, *The Australian Fabians Review* will be collating its leading articles into a high-quality, hard cover collector's edition for the 140th anniversary of the founding of the Fabians in January, 2024.

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SPECIAL THANKS
'*Fabian — The Australian Fabians Review*' would not be possible without the incredible contributions and support of the members of our movement.

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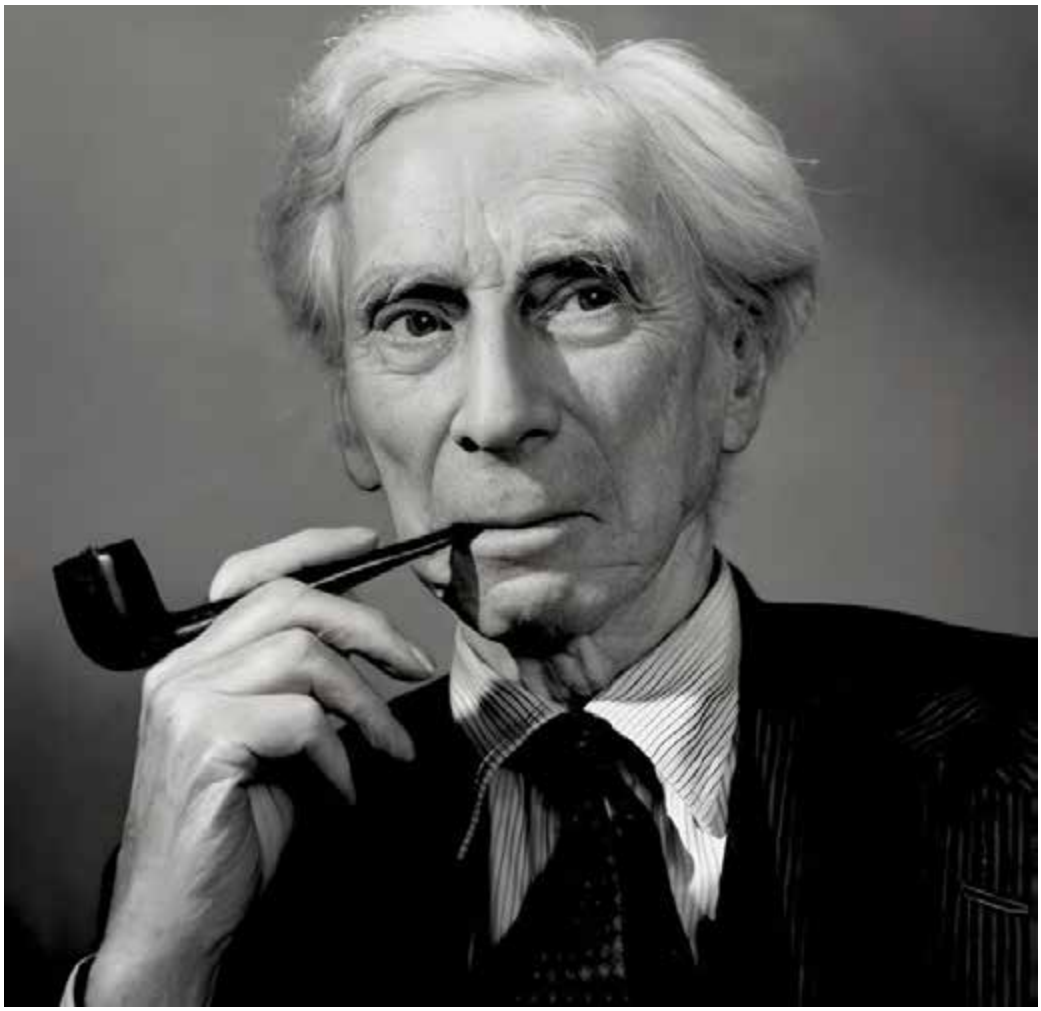
in this issue...



Bertrand Russell (1954)

"A prudent man imbued with the scientific spirit will not claim that his present beliefs are wholly true, though he may console himself with the thought that his earlier beliefs were perhaps not wholly false. I should regard an unchanging system of philosophical doctrines as proof of intellectual stagnation. Philosophical progress seems to me analogous to the gradually increasing clarity of outline of a mountain approached through mist, which is vaguely visible at first, but even at last remains in some degree indistinct."

— Bertrand Russell, *The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell* (1961), Preface, xiv

WELCOME

From the the Publications Committee

JEFF MCCRACKEN-HEWSON, CHAIR

Welcome to Issue 6 of the *Australian Fabians Review*.

This is the third Issue for this year, and the second created and published entirely under our recently established publications committee. We are also hoping to produce a "best of the best" print edition, which was planned at the end of the year but will likely emerge in early 2024. Even accounting for the sixth edition being slightly later than we had hoped this still represents an increase in the pace at which we are publishing Fabians content, and we aim to accelerate further, with a growing stream of material coming out in between Review editions.

We are also working hard to enhance the quality of our online presence. We have updated the layout of articles on our website and have increased the pace and professionalism with which we edit and deliver video of our events. We are also planning the release of a series of podcasts, and further updates to the appearance and usability of our website.

We are always looking for challenging and well thought out contributions from our members, so please get typing, or recording, if there is a big idea in there that wants to come out.

Once again, I would like to pay tribute to my fellow committee members for their enthusiasm, commitment and hard work:

Editors
Michael Aleisi — Fabians Ideas
Dr Paul Read — Fabians Review

Committee members
Bill Lodwick — Victorian branch member
Zann Maxwell — NSW branch executive and former editor, Fabians Review
Jason McKenzie — Queensland branch executive
Dr Amanda Rainey — WA branch executive
Dr Sarah Howe — Chair, Australian Fabians

WELCOME

Editorial

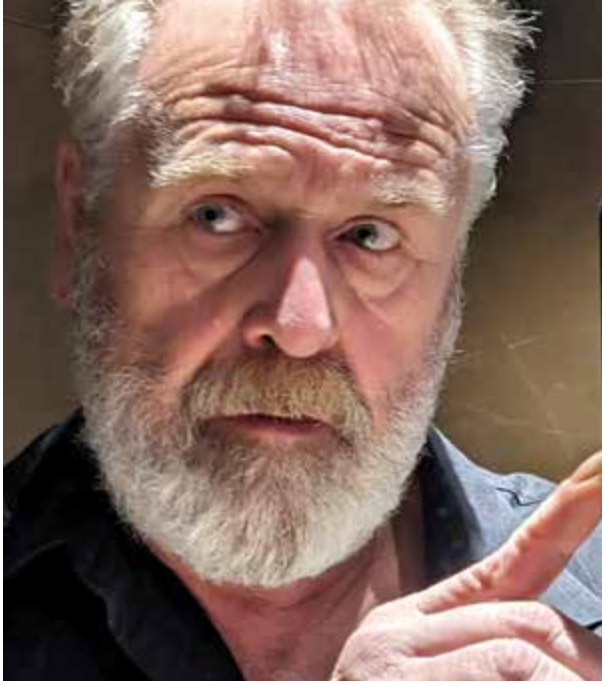
DR PAUL READ

The sixth edition of The Fabians Review is a huge mix of content fighting amongst itself for thematic supremacy, very much a microcosm of the year 2023. With grand hopes to have focused on the urgent theme of The Planet, especially as COP 28 finishes up, other issues have sadly consumed space and energy, not the least being the defeat of The Voice at a national level but also the continued war in the Ukraine and the breakout of new and savage conflict in Palestine. Whilst much of the world looks on in mounting horror the likelihood of being drawn into conflict rises against a backdrop of inhuman levels of inequality and related crises in cost of living and housing, not just in Australia but increasingly around the world. The rise of AI, too, seems increasingly to be more about lining the pockets of multinationals, pushing the relentless project of efficiency by cutting jobs, than signaling the dawn of a new era in which technology sets humanity free.

In this edition Dr John Tons, who is leading the development of the Fabians' Don Dunstan Foundation in Adelaide, writes a brief introductory piece that mourns the defeat of The Voice and introduces the full gamut of issues covered by this edition, including climate change, COVID and AI emerging as a consequence of deregulated capitalism and a broken social contract. Dr Tracy Westerman, WA's leading Indigenous psychologist and activist, takes up the theme of Indigenous health in a powerfully evidence-based missive burning with frustrated passion about child suicide and incarceration, a theme later expanded by John Kerr on the history of wrongful convictions in Australia.

This gives way to our lead article by Dr Tony Webb with equal ferocity focused on the war in Gaza, accompanied by the artistic exploration of Gaza and the role of Netanyahu by WA artist Carl Gopalkrishnan. Captain Paul Watson, in the spirit of Rousseau, adds to this theme from another direction, arguing that war is the direct outcome of religious anthropocentrism in which treating Nature as property leads to the obscenity of state-sanctioned infanticide. Which brings us to my own work with Charles Sturt student, Melanie Bligh, in which we reanalyse child and adult suicide rates in Australia since 1907 and find that our youth are killing themselves at close to four times the rate of Baby Boomers at the same age. The canary in the coalmine of national wellbeing, this Rawlsian test of Australia's most vulnerable is an indictment on what amounts to the doubling of wealth among the elderly whilst our youth are loaded with debt, casualisation and wage theft — yet another example of the broken social contract and a hint at an emerging theme which can only be described as infanticide.

The absurdity of state sanctioned infanticide is captured painfully by the spoken word poem we feature by Elena Duran, of Florida, entitled *I saw a dead baby today*, referencing Gaza and our dispassionate illusion of disconnection via social media. At the heart of sustainability as a concept is the imperative to satisfy the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations to meet their own needs, the original Brundtland definition. Prof Hans Baer soberly poses the question as to how the system that creates the



Fabians Review Editor, Dr Paul Read

problems of climate change, capitalism and war can be expected to solve it, outlining an alternative vision in the form of Ecosocialism.

Add to this, I give voice to a group of young students in two articles, one that argues in support of Watson's biocentrism and another that describes the Australian *ponzi* scheme that is the higher education sector exploiting overseas students, an insight into the Indian student experience by Lavanya Gautam and Anurag Mittal of Melbourne University. A topical theme as the Australian government allows 500,000 new citizens at the cost of Australian housing pressures to prop up the obscene wages of Vice Chancellors and university administrators. Of note, lately, it's been well covered in the quality media that publicly funded universities have been operating as if they are serving privatised stakeholders, the result being class actions by academics for wage theft and the erosion of education quality as it moves towards online micro-courses delivered by raw graduates, and the inevitable slipping of Australia's universities down the world rankings. This is promptly covered in detail by the head of the National Tertiary Education Union, including a follow-up analysis of the University Accord, by Dr Alison Barnes.

Finally, moving far away from topics of consternation and grief, and alongside original poetry and book reviews, we offer up as our Christmas gift to our members, a magnificently written original monograph by Dr Samual Alexander on the extraordinary life of poet, social activist and designer William Morris, the founder of the British Arts and Crafts movement. I'm especially proud of this contribution, grateful to Dr Alexander, for writing such an engaging and insightful piece about a man who lived and worked in the spirit of the Fabians, just as our society took hold of the world alongside other bold and selfless visionaries.

And in this we finally celebrate the extraordinary lives of two more recently fallen comrades who also captured the spirit of social democracy in all its singular confluence of compassion and determination, both of whom bravely, if not always successfully, strove for a compassionate world in spite of a broken and dispassionately cruel system, that of former leader Bill Hayden and Gerry Hand, former Left leader and Minister in the Hawke government.

No doubt we will revisit upcoming themes in future editions and make sure the best of the past six editions will be published in a hard copy print edition aiming to celebrate the founding of the Fabians Society worldwide. Hold that date for January 2024.

Pistols at dawn.

ESSAY

The Social Contract

DR JOHN TONS

Now that the dust has begun to settle, we can look at the referendum result with a little more clarity. Those of us who supported the Voice saw with some dismay how the initial widespread support in favour of a yes vote began to wither away. Yet we should not be fooled by the headlines that the referendum result was a resounding defeat — it was far from that.

The yes campaign mobilized some 80,000 volunteers — many of them were political virgins — they felt strongly about the importance of creating a more compassionate, caring nation. Even so many of the no voters also displayed a genuine concern about our history of failure in respecting and supporting the people whose history on this continent can be traced back to over 40,000 years.

Image from iStock

What the referendum exposed was a failure of our social contract. Few of us think in terms of a social contract — when things go awry, we blame our politicians. However, there is no shortage of organizations and individuals advocating for a rethink of the way society is organized. One of the reasons the Teal independents gained so much traction is because traditional Liberal voters felt that the Coalition lacked the imagination and fortitude to address the challenges that Australia faces.

But it is not just a problem for the conservative side of politics. We need to remember that since 1989, the world has been groomed to reject organizing society in any way other than that of deregulated capitalism. But increasingly we have become disillusioned with deregulated capitalism. We are beginning to acknowledge that market fundamentalism actively produces, and necessarily depends upon, the existence of social and spatial inequalities in wealth and income. Neoliberal philosophy promotes the view that it is both morally wrong and technically unnecessary for governments to intervene to remediate inequalities. The result is a damaging cycle of market 'liberalisation' followed by growing inequality, increased corruption and reduced competition, with the preferred policy 'panaceas' providing usually an even more aggressive neoliberalism!

For much of the last fifty years we have accepted that neoliberal narrative. We have largely agreed that the market can deliver the sort of society in which we would want to live. But that narrative had become frayed. However, the commentariat's metric of good governance continues to be framed in terms of growth in GDP. This in turn has resulted in a situation where politicians from both the left and right are trapped in the neoliberal policy strait jacket.

But Australians are not so easily fooled. The evidence is there for all to see. Traditionally we voted either for the Coalition or the ALP. Minor parties struggled on the fringe. In recent years independents and minor parties have not just won senate seats but they are making inroads in the house of representatives as well. The shift from the major parties has been gradual and can be attributed to a range of factors. The chief of these is that the neoliberal ideology no longer resonates. We are looking for a mode of governance that will enable communities to implement a sustainable and socially just future.

The Covid pandemic, the bushfires, floods, and the recent Optus outage are generating questions about the sort of society in which we want to live. Whilst few people will have any detailed knowledge of the content of a social contract, we do have an intuitive understanding of what we expect from a social contract. For example, when the British government reduced funding to LGAs the standard response was to reduce services but there was one exception: Wigan. There they created the Wigan deal. The Wigan deal is an informal agreement between the public sector, citizens, community groups and businesses to create a better community. Its main objectives are to eliminate waste from its budget and reduce demand for services while improving the lives of its citizens.

We too have become more sensitive to the need to create better communities. The bushfires and floods brought communities together; people realized that political boundaries make little sense when many communities straddle one or more jurisdictions. It became clear that there was enough expertise within communities to create resilient and sustainable communities. As regional Australia started reimagining how they could create sustainable and resilient communities, Covid hit. Covid challenged the role that government should play in our lives. Covid demonstrated that governments can provide us a basic income. It also highlighted that we need to rethink the world of work. Many people were not eligible for Jobkeeper, but these too have to live. Finally, the Optus outage demonstrated that there is a need to identify what are essential services.

In addition, we need to address questions associated with artificial intelligence, climate change and social justice. The natural inclination of politicians across the political spectrum is to bolt solutions onto the status quo. This is a recipe for failure — many of the problems we face have been generated by deregulated capitalism. For this reason alone, it is important that we have a national conversation about what sort of society we want not just for ourselves but for our grandchildren. We need to identify the contours of what a just society should look like. In short, we need a shared understanding of what the features and principles of Australia's social contract should be.

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INDIGENOUS

The Real Story

The Voice was a lifetime chance to finally 'Close the Gap' — now listen to this!

DR TRACY WESTERMAN

According to the United Nations, the 'gap' in life expectancy between Indigenous and white Australia is the biggest indigenous gap in the world, has been for some time. Hovering around 20-23 years of lost life it represents a national healthcare crisis. I am a psychologist with a 100% Indigenous client base. I can tell you with twenty-five years of authority and expertise that the failure of The Voice was a lost opportunity to get the real story on the table, to get the data right, to explain the gap, and finally close it. I work in the prevention of Indigenous suicide and violence, counseling for trauma and mental health treatment — and I've directly witnessed my clients regress in their therapy from this outcome. With regularity we are saturated with headlines of statistics upon statistics telling a seemingly endless trail of horror.

- Of Indigenous suicides double that of non-Aboriginal Australia.
- Of child suicides six times that of non-Indigenous children.
- Of child removals 11 times the rate.
- Incarceration of our youth at 24 times the rate.
- Adults at 19 times.

And on it goes

There is no dressing up these statistics. Frustratingly, the gaps are as evident and unacceptable as they are easily corrected and there are just too many lives being lost by this failure while governments continue to throw good money after bad.

The first thing that needs urgent attention is we need to get the data right. It is a literal mess across multiple fronts and is the sole cause of the unabated escalation and ongoing poor outcomes. The absence of critical data has made it impossible to appraise prevention efforts or to ensure targeted, needs-based funding allocation and accountability. We continue to track demographic data and trends only (on child removal numbers, suicide deaths, incarceration numbers), hoping it will provide some magical insight into how to solve these issues. But the simple reality is that we have yet to analyse data in a way that determines unique causal pathways. This would ensure focused, targeted treatments and interventions. We are also not tracking any outcome, but we are tracking output (bums on seats; services delivered). And in many instances, we do not have any baseline data against which to determine if critical gaps have actually been closed.

Instead, we just track demographic data, wring our hands over the latest headlines, and fail to explain how to address any of it. Explaining why Aboriginal people continue to be so overrepresented in these statistics has never been a focus and it needs to be. Answer that and treatment and intervention become focused on the actual causes, and this reduction becomes our sole focus and outcome metric against which accountability is king. Yet there is not one government-funded program in Indigenous suicide

prevention, justice and child protection that has demonstrated risk reduction. Staggeringly, funding does not require that programs demonstrate a measurable reduction in risk factors in the communities in which they are being delivered. You cannot find any national database on outcomes across any of these critical areas to justify the expenditure.

We have long known that programs that target established risk factors provide our best opportunity of preventing suicides, incarceration and child removals, rather than general awareness programs; but we fail to apply this basic scientific standard to our most vulnerable communities. Instead, the bulk of this critical funding continues to be diverted to 'reviews upon reviews', 'roundtables', 'conferences' or 'resource data bases' — nothing that focuses on targeted prevention programs despite these having shown evidence of reducing risk in our highest risk offenders, our highest risk suicidal individuals, highest risk families.

We have long known that programs that target established risk factors provide our best opportunity of preventing suicides, incarceration and child removals

In suicide prevention, as just one example, we have had $9.5 million in reviews since 2016. Reviews which have, failed to find one program in Australia that falls into the category of targeted intervention. I published on the first ones in 2020 which I have not been able to deliver in over ten years due to a complete absence of funding. This is politics. This is what happens when the funding mindset is subjective rather than data determined and objective. Indeed, accountability has never been central to decision-making; it is always unfairly blamed failure to close the gap at those at the coal face, those who have little to no influence on funding. Instead, too many people who sit on advisory committees are disconnected from the reality; with no pre-requisite training or track record in working clinically with at-risk Aboriginal clients or delivering outcome-based prevention programs into (usually remote) high-risk Aboriginal communities. When you are making zero traction on suicides, child removals, incarcerations and they are escalating each year and you have the same people at the helm continuing to quarantine all of the funding there is no reset, no questioning of the outcomes.

Ensuring access to our highest-risk, most vulnerable communities — like Alice Springs, Cherbourg, the Kimberley, and Walgett — has never been understood, which is why data geomapping is one area that is critical to closing the gap. These communities are so identifiable, the fact governments have failed to mobilise critical resources into them should be our constant accountability narrative. Instead, we see significant amounts of money for career consultants to rehash literature reviews, develop promotional pamphlets, videos or databases that ultimately recommend the same programs or recommend more reviews that tell us 'what the problem is' or how the problem should be 're-conceptualised' with another 'framework' or infographic. There is clearly comfort in talking to the same people and currency in jostling to be a key advisor and this has become entrenched. Governments do not engage in subject matter expertise beyond their selected 'advisors'. So, there are no answers beyond a closed ideology — an echo chamber of the same ideas confined to a handpicked selected group.

As someone who is all about prevention, as a psychologist from a remote region, as an Aboriginal person and tax-payer to boot, it's been extremely frustrating to watch a national 'groundhog day' on repeat every year, particularly when it is about people's lives. I don't expect politicians to be across an issue this complex, but I do expect they are concerned with applying the best possible science and insist on transparency from advisors around conflicts of interest. And yet, here we are. And we will remain here if we don't completely change focus towards the evidence and not towards the self-congratulatory opinions of the over-funded few.

So where are the gaps?

Despite horrifying statistics, we have no national Indigenous mental health prevalence data nor are we capturing this regularly. So, we do not know how much trauma there is in Aboriginal populations, how much depression or suicidal behaviours.

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The World Health Organisation has long advocated that the best method of reducing the burden of disease is to first, as in day one on the job, 'define the problem'. If you are not measuring a gap, how can you close a gap? The failure to have any information on the nature, extent and prevalence of mental ill health and suicidal behaviours has substantial implications including:

- We have no capacity to measure whether a gap is increasing or decreasing
- We have no ability to argue for a workforce commensurate with need by identifying our most disproportionally impacted communities, which are usually the most remote
- We have no capacity to measure program and treatment outcomes or develop robust data on what is working, and most critically
- We have zero opportunity to be proactive around early intervention and target early signs of distress (e.g. depression rather than suicide).

This is our most urgent priority; because, arguably every major gap target has mental health underlying all of it as causal — child removals, incarcerations and, of course, suicides. Yet millions funnelled into non-Indigenous led organisations who churn out reports that either completely exclude Aboriginal people from the study or make sweeping generalisations about the mental health of Aboriginal people based on 'sampling a few Aboriginal people'.

Suicide prevention gaps

When an Aboriginal child dies in this country 40% of them will do so by suicide. Child and suicide clearly do not belong in a sentence. I have looked into the eyes of too many parents who have lost children to suicide as a psychologist, gone to too many funerals. Its' something that never leaves you.

In 2019 we had a heartbreaking spate of suicides across the nation and the 13 deaths by suicide of Aboriginal young people in the Kimberley which has a rate estimated at seven times that of non-Indigenous Australia (around 70 times for Aboriginal men). It has for decades been a suicide hot spot. Yet there is nothing on the ground that meets the definition of suicide prevention; just four successive government inquiries, the most recent of which was the Fogliani Inquiry, all while suicides continue to escalate in that region every year. There is clearly significant currency in having government inquiries.

It also buys the government 'time' while they consider the latest inquiry — the WA Government took 13 months to respond to the Fogliani Inquiry after the inquiry itself took 18 months. During that time, six more young Indigenous people died by suicide.

I broke down the governments '$268M response' and it was clear that they did not fund anything that resembled suicide prevention. Yet, despite this national crisis, suicide was not even in the close the

gap targets until 2020. There was and remains no coherent strategy attached to getting us to the 'zero suicide' aspiration.

What it says to bereaved Indigenous families though is that 'suicide prevention is not a priority' for us nationally and reflects the lack of public attention to the fact that we have children as young as 10 in our own backyards who are choosing the option of death instead of life. Related to that has been the lack of any political will to make it a priority. In the 18 months of the Fogliani Inquiry there was not one question asked in the upper or lower house of the WA state parliament about that inquiry including what was to be done about it. Our children's lives deserve more than silence.

With incarceration the gaps get worse

First, we have no data on why Aboriginal kids are in prison. We know what they are being charged with police by but not what crimes they are being convicted of. So, there is danger in quoting 'youth crime statistics' because they 're not convictions; they are police charges 'proceeded'. We do know that around 86% of kids are in prison on remand (not charged with a crime) and ultimately 40% of those kids when they get in front of a magistrate are not convicted of a crime.

This is a significant human rights issue that fails to generate public concern because it is predominantly Aboriginal kids who are being held on remand and for an average of 71 days without conviction. Local police data is almost impossible to access and we do not break youth crime data down by Indigenous status. Rather, there is instead reliance on heavily compromised local police 'data' which seems replete with evidence of racial profiling and other race effects as factors driving the erroneous charging of Aboriginal and black people generally. Australia incarcerates 'black' people at the world's highest rates; six times more than during South African apartheid and 2.3 times the rate of African Americans. With black children it gets even worse, which means that these statistics will worsen for future generations.

Sadly, we simply do not have the type of research we need on the 'other race effect' in Australia and must rely on US findings, where they have robust data on the extent to which 'blackness' influences convictions. Simply looking 'more black' results in four times the death penalty likelihood for the same crime despite 41% of those on death row being exonerated from DNA evidence against the eye witness testimony of white people. Not having this data means that there remains this view that the system 'has it right'- there is no racism. But what this actually results in is a concretised narrative that Aboriginal people are somehow more predisposed to being criminals than white people. Called the 'racial empathy gap', we fail to relate at a human level that we are putting children in prison. In 2020. I wrote an opinion piece on raise the age and ended it with this:

A child at 10:

- *Loses 4 baby teeth a year*
- *Knows the complete date*
- *Can name the months of the year in order*
- *Can read and understand a paragraph of complex sentences*
- *Has developed skills in addition, subtraction*
- *Has some skills in multiplying and division,*

And, in Australia, can go to prison. I witnessed daily realities of children stealing food because they are hungry and being imprisoned for it during my years as a welfare worker — so called "criminal activity" was all too often about survival. We then have the reality of the 'other race effect' in which too many kids were pleading guilty to crimes they had no idea they had committed because 'the copper said I did it, so I must have'.

The 'punishment should fit the crime' but what is the crime?

Arguments against *RaiseTheAge* land at this idea that there are many serious crimes that require children being locked up despite having little information on what percentage of crimes are at the serious end. Although international evidence tells us these constitute 0.5% of all child crimes, there has never been a child under 13 commit homicide in Australia. But if you were to believe some commentators you would think that this is the standard. We do know, that in NSW, for example up to 37% of youth charges by police are the result of fare evasion and up to 30% of convictions for Aboriginal people are for 'good order' offences. The irrefutable science tells us the earlier you incarcerate a child, the greater the likelihood they will have a future path to criminality, with 94% of young people going back to prison before they turn 18 and 45% of adults returning to prison within 2 years of release. Given it costs $500,000 a year to keep a child in prison, if you diverted that significant sum to prevention rather than incarceration, you would only need a 6% success rate to justify the expenditure.

But without data, it makes it difficult to determine trends in youth crime, develop programs specific to these needs, geomap youth crime hot spots, track local police responses, court outcomes and harsh sentencing. None of this currently occurs in a way that holds systems accountable. Instead, it becomes an annual data reporting exercise used to argue for more policing and harsher responses. Australia now has the fifth most expensive prisons in the OECD; the seventh fastest prison spending growth rate, and more police per capita. Corrective services in WA for example has a $1.1 billion budget and $900 million is spent on prisons and taking care of prisons.

As an Indigenous psychologist who has dedicated decades to prevention efforts, the core of my argument is that locking children up is ineffective as a crime prevention measure. So, the 'tough on crime' approach is having the reverse effect. Far from being 'soft on crime' or a 'bleeding heart' I simply ask that the best available evidence should direct us when issues this emotional are at play. What is being lost in this debate is that RaiseTheAge will force governments to invest in real crime prevention rather than blame-shifting.

RaiseTheAge will force governments to invest in real crime prevention rather than blame-shifting

Geomapping those most in need

Based on the statistics alone; more than 80% of Aboriginal families are doing very well but this is never the story. Most of us will never come into contact with the justice system, with the child protection system, but for those who do, they carry the greatest burden. This has now become generational. If you go into any high-risk community there would be 10-15 families at most that are taking up all of the service provision and they make up the bulk of the statistics. If you work in the industry for long enough eventually one of your client's children will become your client. We are seeing this emerge as 'generationally incarcerated' cohorts of families in every district, every region, who make up the bulk of the child protection and crime statistics and we also know that this is often the trajectory to suicides and mental ill health.

The way we collect data and analyse it ensures it fits a politically convenient view of a problem that is 'unsolvable' and bigger than it really is.

Geomapping data would involve sharing national information across jurisdictions with data-linking technology. There are certainly good examples of this with the AIHW developing a national data set for child protection data and NSW study on data linking children across justice, mental health and child protection systems. However, if we did this nationally and across mental health, suicides, crime and child protection systems based on treatment outcome that coded families and regions, it would reveal the actual number of impacted families, individuals and communities.

When you dig a bit deeper; data from the NT shows of the 25,500 notifications of child abuse, 71% involved children already in the system (Territory Families Annual Report, 2019-2020; Territory Families, Housing and Communities, 2022). Moving to the NT, 92% of kids in care are Indigenous, which gives some much-needed perspective to the Jacinta Price and Peter Dutton argument that we need to 'remove more Aboriginal children'. Based on these statistics, it's impossible to remove more Aboriginal kids; it's literally been done to death but being lauded as 'innovative and practical'.

In child protection, removals are significantly higher in regions with the highest proportion of Aboriginal people per capita. In WA, for example, the Kimberley stands out again with 100% of children in out-of-home care identifying as Aboriginal; the Pilbara 96%; the Goldfields 87%; Murchison 86%. However, if we remove these four regions, which are the most remote and the most densely populated Aboriginal regions, (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022) out of the 17 child protection districts in the state, Aboriginal child removals fall from 57.18% to 39% (Department of Communities, 2021).

When it comes to youth crime, there are approximately 949 kids in prison on any given night across the whole of Australia with approximately 617 of those Indigenous. If they geomapped data they'd find this 617 are the same kids in around 80-90% of cases and I would hate to think how many of these are also in the child protection system.

It seems counterintuitive that when you are in the majority, you are more, not less, oppressed. Similarly, South Africa had apartheid when 80% of South Africans were black. It speaks to individual and

Photo by Raphael Brasileiro CC @ Pexels

group-based oppression when government-enacted legislation decrees 'initiatives' like cashless welfare cards and alcohol restrictions that cover whole communities based on the profiling of a smaller minority. The NT intervention engenders 'learned helplessness' in the face of statutory organisations who have historically wielded considerable power over remote Aboriginal communities. Since its inception, the NT has seen a 160% increase in suicides. If you paternalise people based on cultural identity this concretises learned helplessness which has been consistently shown to be one of the strongest predictors of poor behavioural outcome and particularly suicides. Geomapping data would enable us to determine the number of people involved across multiple systems and focus our prevention efforts on those most vulnerable in larger communities — those that are over-represented. The NT, for example has been calling for needs-based funding for some time.

Implicit bias feeds the racist narrative

Implicit bias, now measurable, creates differential activity in the amygdala — a brain region selectively responsive to perceived threat (Davis, 1992; Whalen, 1998) — in response to black, compared with white, people (Hart et al., 2000; Wheeler & Fiske, 2005). These differential patterns of activity in the amygdala are thought to reflect relatively automatic threat responses to black people. The other race effect makes it more likely that an extreme narrative about the broader Aboriginal community is readily believed as factual, despite evidence to the contrary. One distorted and factually incorrect idea is that child sexual abuse and child rape are normal and rife in all Aboriginal communities. This results in discussions also being extreme. By contrast we know that 7.3% of all abuse in Aboriginal communities is sexual abuse compared to around 10% in non-Indigenous communities (AIHW, 2022). Yet it becomes easy for the public to demonise whole communities –whole towns– because of the 'othering' that occurs when cases of sexual abuse in an Aboriginal community are reported as if normative (Westerman, 2022; Pedersen & Walker, 1997). Significantly, 79% of notifications of child abuse in Aboriginal populations are based on 'neglect and emotional abuse' (AIHW, 2022), warranting an intensive family support response rather than a removal rate 11 times higher. The racial profiling of Aboriginal families shows over 60% of notifications are ultimately found to be false (Yoorrook Justice Commission, 2023). Sexual abuse

disclosures in communities have then been found to be significantly lower than portrayed in the media and historically have found non-Indigenous perpetrators. Indeed, the federal police have never found a case of an organised paedophile ring orchestrated by Indigenous offenders like we have seen in the central coast of NSW by non-Indigenous offenders.

Hey government; this is what you do — a step by step guide!

STEP 1: Develop robust data to define the problem and identify our highest risk communities and families. We are doing this at Jilya and will continue this for the next three years via some philanthropic research funding.

STEP 2: Once identified and/or developed, I would then geomap the data in communities that make up the bulk of the statistics. For suicides, it has always been the Kimberley region for close to three decades. Other hot spots include Cherbourg and the top half of NT.

STEP 3: Determine unique causal pathways to inform unique intervention program development and best practice treatments. We have digitised a measurement tool, the WASCY/A, for tracking continuous, rather than categorical, risk reduction (by contrast, categorical data such as suicide deaths and child removal numbers does not allow continuous tracking).

STEP 4: Mobilise selected and targeted interventions into the highest risk communities using 'train the trainer' level.

STEP 5: The final piece of the puzzle is to continue to develop capacity in our highest risk communities through our practitioner scholarship program. We already have five coming from the Kimberley. This year we have announced three specifically for Alice Springs. We will then move to Cherbourg, then Walgett, and so forth. If we had 30 indigenous psychologists in Alice Springs, we wouldn't be talking about the 'issues in Alice Springs' for much longer.

STEP 6: Evaluate all of the above by tracking treatment outcomes

So to break it down into small chunks, this is where 'close the gap' will truly close. This is our focus at the Jilya Institute.

We will do this in the Jilya Institute through my donated programs — the only programs that have shown whole-of-community suicide and mental health risk reduction. They are donated so that we can develop them into 'train the trainer' level and upskill high-risk communities. I am proud that at Jilya we are getting it done without any government funding. It is self-determination in action. The fact that I am from a remote community myself means that becoming a psychologist becomes possible for those, like me, who come from no generational, educational or financial advantage. My students all represent our community and its potentiality. They show what is possible to every kid from their own remote communities, and all of their stories are absolutely compelling.

Getting it done!

Activism is hard, but black activism in Australia is even harder. It requires that you motivate whole populations on issues that impact just 3% of the population. Equality will always be a challenge when it remains the responsibility of the oppressed, those with the least power, the least privilege to fix a problem created by the oppressor. Leadership, to me, means that you take a stand for others more than for yourself. It is about integrity over self-interest and the talent that you nurture because of it. But ultimately bravery is the most important of all of the leadership virtues, for it enables all of the others. Changing systems requires bravery, doing what is right over what is popular requires bravery — being brave enough to take the personal hits so the next generation doesn't have to requires bravery.

I wish we had more leaders in this country, who were brave.

Peace from River to Sea

A choice of two paths

TONY WEBB

Supporters of Israel, Jews and gentiles, face a stark choice — challenging for all, galling and initially appearing unacceptable to many. Either there is a genuine two-state solution with Israelis and Palestinian citizens living with mutual respect in some form of peaceful co-existence or there will be a de-facto one-state similar in form to that condemned in South Africa as 'apartheid', the long-term consequences of which will see the end of Israel as a state run by and predominantly for people who identify as Jews. Whether it takes five, ten, twenty or fifty years this end will come because the rest of the world cannot and will not accept the violation of civil, human rights and dignity embodied in the status-quo that all people have a right to expect — be they Israelis or Palestinians, or professing faiths as Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, any other faith or none.

Criticism is not antisemitism

Before I continue, I have observed and experienced the condemnation of any who show any degree of support for the Palestinian cause. Anything less than wholehearted support for the Israeli government position, however unpalatable it may be and has been over time, gets attacked and labelled as antisemitic. This is a convenient and all too often blatantly dishonest tactic to dismiss not just the dissent but dissenters themselves. In my case any such accusation won't stick. My personal history and record on a wide range of human rights and social justice issues includes close personal relationships that have provided deep insight into the history of and sense of discrimination and ongoing fears felt by Jewish people. The relationships include two significant mentors in social change work, Richard and Hephzibah Hauser, with whom I worked at the Centre for Human Rights and Responsibilities in London in the 1970s.

Richard is an Austrian Jewish refugee from the Nazis and father of Australian social justice activist Eva Cox. Hephzibah is the sister of renowned violinist Yehudi Menuhin and a concert pianist in her own right. Our Jesuit colleague at the Centre, Ray Helmick, went on to work as a Vatican emissary to the Middle East[1] and was involved in the negotiations that saw PLO leader Arafat concede the right of Israel to exist as part of the efforts towards creating a 'two-state' solution to the conflict. Three of my more significant relationships have been with women who

1 R.G. Helmick 2004. *Negotiating Outside the Law: Why Camp David Failed* Pluto Press

Photo by Scott Webb CC @ Pexels

were and openly identified as Jews: Dina, a film-maker with a history of documenting the plight of non-European Jews; Elizabeth, an executive member of the Democratic Socialists of America who worked for both the California-based Mother Jones Magazine Foundation for National Progress and the Chicago-based *In These Times* weekly journal; and Leah, a health-education activist and academic in Australia. Each of these human rights and social justice activists has been critical of much that was undertaken in the name of the culture of Judaism by the state of Israel. The extent to which the state could do no wrong in the eyes of some was driven home by contact with Leah's father for whom any discussions on the subject were unwelcome.

These personal and shared experiences in Synagogue and Sadr give me at least a basic understanding of the strength of the culture and some of its history of oppression. It is a shame that, given this experience of humiliation, ethnic cleansing and outright genocide so many Jews are unable to muster a sense of empathy for what the Palestinian community must feel to be on the receiving end of oh-so-similar violation of human rights at the hands of the state they identify with.

Asymmetrical conflicts

Let me also address the other challenge to this situation as it is today — the labelling of much of the active resistance to it as 'terrorism'. I abhor acts of violence in any form in any situation — and where such acts against people identified as part of the opposing community are used to create fear/terror in that wider community the charge of terrorism is appropriate and needs to be condemned. But let us also appreciate that the struggle for liberation, where the capacity for use of violence by state actors far outweighs that available to the resistance, has all too often resulted in violent actions the state actors label as 'terrorist'. The French resistance to the Nazis, the Algerian resistance to the French, indeed anti-colonial struggles almost anywhere, the militant wing of the African National Congress opposing Apartheid in South Africa, elements of the Viet Cong struggle in Vietnam, to name but a few. Also not to be forgotten, the murderous actions of the Irgun, Stern Gang and other Jewish 'terrorist' groups in wresting power from the British forces exercising the UN mandate over Palestine in the late 1940s — and the extension of this reign of terror through the Nakba that resulted in some 700,000 Palestinians fleeing for their lives and several generations of these families living as refugees in neighbouring states denied the right of return to their homes in the Jewish state of Israel.

Yes, the Jews in Palestine had to fight to establish their right to a state with relatively 'secure' borders and have needed to maintain armed forces, including conscription of their young men and women and massive overseas financial aid and arms shipments to sustain this security. And had to fight another war in 1967 in defense of this Jewish 'homeland' state. And it has endured a series of 'intifada' — uprisings from within the Palestinian communities on lands they conquered and have occupied since that time. Particularly harrowing has been the suicide-bomb attacks — hard to prevent when the bombers have nothing to lose, their lives under oppression having so little value that martyrdom in the cause of freedom is seen as a noble (and religion-sanctioned) option.

The current 'war' against Hamas

The current conflict is resulting from horrendous, indiscriminate killing of some 1400 Israelis — made possible it seems as a result of lax security on the highly militarised Gaza-Israel borders that had maintained an effective blockade of this tiny territory despite the Hamas militant's attempted incursion. The Israeli retaliatory measures now threaten to unravel into a level of killing of Palestinian civilians that dwarfs the earlier inhumane death and destruction. It also dwarfs the cumulative death and destruction experienced throughout the Palestinian territories over the past 50-70 years.

The current demand that nearly half the 2.5 million population of already overcrowded Gaza Strip 'evacuate' to the south of the territory — as a thin pretext for avoiding war crimes charges that might result from civilian deaths from sustained bombardment and a ground invasion to 'eliminate' the armed Hamas militants — and then to continue bombing the south is as absurd as it is inhumane.

To block aid; food, medicine and other humanitarian relief supplies; to destroy essential infrastructure, water, power, communications, and render ineffective hospital services while causing wide-scale death and injury… sorry, the words fail me here. No matter the degree of humiliation and grief caused by the failure to maintain secure borders and loss of Israeli life, and no matter the degree of humiliation and grief on the Palestinian side that might explain but never justify the Hamas violence, in the name of the God you both sides claim to believe

in — please stop and stop now!

The politics of governing multicultural societies where both the established influence of the Pro-Israel Jewish lobby and the emergent popular electoral-demographic imperative of recognizing the concerns of the Palestinian community and its supporters require a delicate balancing act that isn't easy — but the humanitarian concerns above require more than token words — what is needed is a total ceasefire — not a brief, temporary one to allow humanitarian relief, hostage negotiations, some degree of breathing space before the war of attrition (possibly elimination) of Hamas as a fighting force and Gaza-governing body continues in the name of Israeli 'defense'.

Beyond the current conflict?

Step back a moment. The basis, the fundamental emotional-rationale for Hamas and much of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on both sides, is not found in the organisations be they Hamas, the PLO, Likud, Jewish Labor or some of the other extreme religious groups that currently wield political power. These are the formal representations of what is a breakdown of relationships at the human level — at the level of community where people live their lives. You may be able to kill leaders and destroy organisations but you can't kill ideas — particularly not ideas whose time has come and particularly when they are based on a profound sense of injustice.

I'm conscious in writing this that much will unfold before it gets into print. Even more will unfold later and render some of it 'out of date' in some future time. But against this longer time frame what the current conflict suggests is that, and perhaps this was in the minds of the Hamas leaders who planned the attack, the world emerging on the other side of this immediate conflict, however it ends, will not be the same.

There is no going back to the status quo that existed earlier. Several things have changed. The world is now more polarised around the Palestinian question and — regrettably for some, hopefully for others, the veil is being lifted on some of what has been evolving under the occupation — effectively creating a single state of Israel 'from the Jordan river to the Mediterranean Sea' — and as a result international support for Israel is, if not yet weakened, at least being more openly questioned.

A two-state solution?

Following the 1967 conflict, land between the then recognised Israel border and the West Bank of the Jordan river was captured from the state of Jordan, which argued for it to be the base for a Palestinian state — one where displaced Palestinians might find a homeland much as Jews regarded Israel. Various UN resolutions have supported this — particularly Resolution 242 requiring recognition of the pre-1967 borders. [2]

This 'de-jure' position has been the basis for protracted and frequently aborted discussions around the idea of a 'two-state solution' to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The hopes raised after the Camp David meetings under the US Clinton administration have since been dashed, many times. Reading Ray Helmick's book (see ref 1) that documents many of these breakdowns I was left with the distinct impression that, despite faults on both sides, many foundered on reluctance of Israel to accept the Internationally sanctioned position, and its systematic use of events and activities calculated to arouse the sense of humiliation among the Palestinians and hereby provoke a violent response which could be used to justify the breakdown in negotiations.

The reasons behind this reluctance to embrace the changes needed for an effective land-for-peace solution to come into being are many. The reality is that a two-state solution would require significant concessions by Israel among which are included:

- retreat to pre-existing borders, leaving some Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory, and relinquishing geographically strategic border territory, e.g. the Golan Heights to Syria;
- the ending of Israeli military occupation and control in the Palestinian state based on the West Bank and Gaza. Again, removing military support for militant settler activity that has been systematically displacing Palestinian communities;
- the right of return for Palestinian refugee families displaced by the Nakba and Israeli settler activity since 1948;
- and the vexed question of the status of Jerusalem, divided since the earlier wars that established Israel, with East Jerusalem occupied since 1967, with the city claimed as their 'capital' by both sides, and with conflicts over access to religious sites common to Jews Muslims and Christians.

Accepting each or any of these conditions as 'pre-requisites' for a peaceful solution to the ongoing conflict is a big ask for Israelis, indeed for many of their supporters outside the country. But in-principle acceptance is necessary as each reflects recognition of human rights of the Palestinian people and their need for a viable state. In return for which there would need to be the right of Israeli Jews to live in peace within secure borders of an essentially Jewish state.

In practice, once established in principle, there could be room for negotiations that recognise on-ground realities like existing settlements close to the agreed borders that could be ceded to Israel in return for equivalent land elsewhere ceded to Palestine — particularly important in providing viable geographic contiguity between the West Bank and Gaza strip. On right of return, again some negotiation of what this would mean in practice might be previously owned property in Israel (which some refugees might not wish for anyway), perhaps to equivalent quality land ceded by Israel to the newly created Palestine with appropriate compensatory measures that create modern, livable conditions. And on Jerusalem what seems the most viable solution would be the creation of an international city — owned by neither state but (perhaps under a UN mandate) available as the site for capitals and administrations of both and with open access to holy sites for adherents of all three monotheistic religions. Not easy — but possible if, and perhaps only if, the legal and human rights preconditions established in the longstanding UN resolutions are accepted as the basis for such a two-state peace agreement.

An Apartheid State?

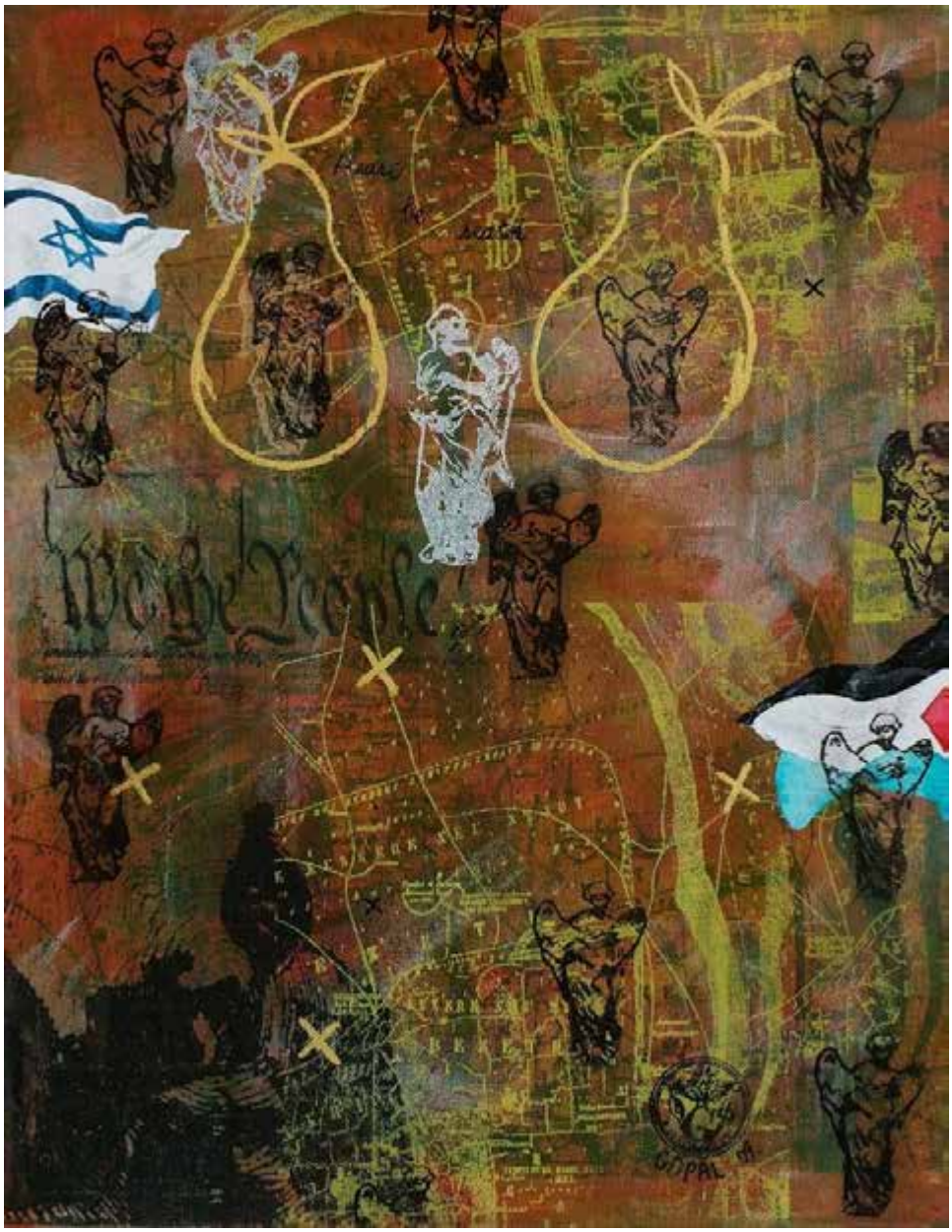
The alternative, based on the existing occupation and control by the Jewish-Israeli state is, in the long term, even less acceptable — perhaps as much, and even more so, to Jews than it is to the rest of the international community. The current situation based on Israeli military power and control, humiliation and the gradual displacement of Palestinians by Israeli settlers will not merely prolong the incipient conflicts. As with most asymmetrical power struggles it will inevitably lead to further acts of violent resistance that targets civilian settlers alongside the occupying military personnel and includes ongoing violent incursions affecting Israeli citizens.

It will also prolong and entrench what is objectively and increasingly recognised internationally as a single 'apartheid' state — one where one dominant cultural group exercises power and control to the detriment of civil and human rights of another. History teaches that, as with similar oppressive regimes world-wide, any such state's days are numbered. It may take years, even decades or more, but a single apartheid state of Israel will eventually fail — and with it the hopes and aspirations of the millions of Jews world-wide for a 'homeland' state as refuge from their legacy of fear from centuries of antisemitism.

Time to Face the Choice?

This is the stark choice facing not just Jewish citizens of Israel but their many supporters, jews and gentiles, around the globe. A genuine two-state solution where some hard concessions are needed to secure a lasting peace or an apartheid-like extension of control over Palestinians inside what is effectively a single theocratic state — destined to fail in the eyes of a world which has progressively embedded in consciousness the concept of human rights.

And a final word. I've avoided so far to use the term Zionism out of respect for the aspirations of those within the Jewish community who have sought and fought for a Jewish homeland as refuge from Pogrom, Holocaust and Shoah.[3] But the pattern of defense of Israel 'no matter what', the labelling of any criticism as 'antisemitic', the creation of an 'us versus them' culture requiring, and to an extent provoking, an external enemy as defense against dealing with internal contradictions, and other features, places this very close to what we understand as behaviour characteristic of a 'cult'. Time, perhaps now more than ever, for Jews and allies to abandon the cult of Zionism and return to work for a more inclusive sense of community within a human race.



'Angels and Pears' 2009 by Carl Gopalkrishnan first published in 2010 in Phati'tude Magazine NYC

ORIGINAL ART

by Carl Gopalkrishnan (aka Gopal)

'And Starring Benjamin Netanyahu as Norman Maine' 2009 by Carl Gopalkrishnan 1st published in *Literal Latte*, NYC, USA, 2009, then *The Palestine Chronicle* 2009, Palestine, *Tikkun Magazine*, USA, 2011 & with an article I wrote for *The Quoch*, USA.

After a tragic, painful month for both innocent Israeli victims of the Hamas attacks and innocent Palestinian civilian families suffering in Israel's bombings and water, electricity, medicine and food siege of Gaza, I reposted three paintings on my website which I painted around 2009/10 after the Gaza War of 2008-9. Many of my paintings are all about expanding the cultural metaphors we use in statecraft to find more creative choices to heal and grow our relationships and improve our decision-making.

In 'Angels and Pears'(2009), an acrylic and 22k gold leaf on canvas, I diagrammatically explored ancient museum-held maps of the City of Jerusalem and the role of angels in Jewish, Christian and Muslim faith as a lens to support the spirit of the two-state solution.

In 'And Starring Benjamin Netanyahu as Norman Maine'(2009) I used the 1954 Hollywood movie musical A Star is Born starring Judy Garland and James Mason as the doomed superstar couple Esther Blodget/Vicki Lester and Norman Maine, who suffer from a painful co-dependent trap fueled by love and alcohol.

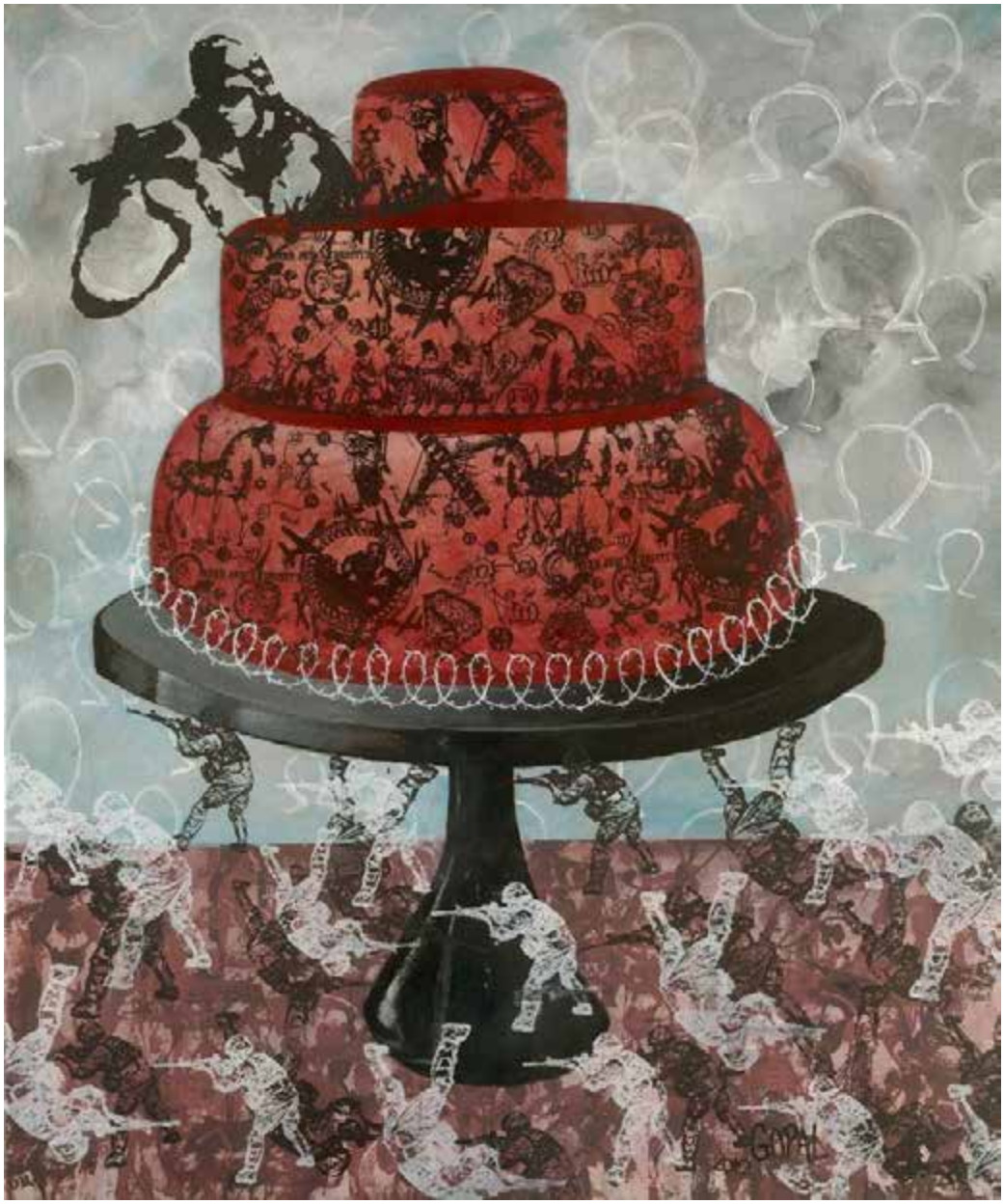
In 'Livni as the Sibyl of Cumae with Dancing Follies' (2010) I explored the 2009 Israeli election

'Livni as the Sibyl of Cumae with Dancing Follies' 2009 by Carl Gopalkrishnan, 1st published in *Tikkun Daily*, USA 2011 and then 2013 in *The Qouch*)

cliffhanger between the centrist Tzipi Livni-led Kadima party and Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party which has (arguably) shaped the provenance of our present conflict. It also looks at prophecy and the role of women in politics and war.

In 'Gaza Wedding', as Laura Beckman writes below in her engaging review of my art in America's Tikkun Magazine in 2011: "Gopal's intricately layered piece Gaza Wedding also draws a parallel between the emotional investment attached to decades of warfare and a tumultuous romance. Painted in 2009, it reflects a deep disappointment with some of Israel's actions in Gaza."

Sometimes art, in seeking to understand the present, unconsciously documents the 'provenance' of future conflicts. In that spirit, and a sad spirit it is, I take a look in my rearview mirror into the past and share it. These paintings were published by Tikkun Daily in 2011 when I was their featured artist that year. They did a really nice interview and were very open and curious and totally able to deal with the concepts in my paintings without any trouble at all. Tikkun Magazine is one of America's leading Jewish interfaith political magazines. 13 years years later and they are now an online only magazine. You can still read Laura Beckman's interview/review with me



Gaza Wedding, Acrylic paint on canvas using both brushwork and silkscreens on stretched canvas, 2009 by Carl Gopalkrishnan. published in Tikkun Daily, USA 2011.

in Tikkun's archives here or the full 2011 interview reposted on my Studio Blog (Note: Copyright is shared by Laura Beckman and Tikkun Magazine).

On the 4th January 2010 my 'Norman Maine' painting was published in The Palestine Chronicle. Again, the editors totally got it in one reading. Peace-striving people on both sides of an ugly conflict seeking help, ideas, different perspectives and friends striving to help them achieve that. They are still there and still waiting for our help. They do not need for us to make things worse. It is a principle drilled into me by late father Ramanathan Gopalkrishnan, a doctor who survived bombings and starvation as an 8 year old child in Penang, Malaysia during World War 2.

I am grateful for the work of *Medicine sans Frontier* (Doctors Without Borders) and appreciate that there are many different charities that seek to help. Charitable organisations are not necessarily without their own position on the causes of conflict. It is ok to disagree, but we need to agree to never refuse medical or basic living needs to any person of any race, gender, age, creed, faith, sexuality or income. To do so would have horrified my late father who only saw 'the patient'. We are all being challenged to resist de-humanising any person in any conflict by committing to medical care for all civilians.

Photo by Daisy Laparra CC @ Pexels

WAR

Stop Killing Children!

Anthropocentrism as the primary cause of war

CAPTAIN PAUL WATSON

This month my thoughts have been directed towards the most egregious and perverse aspects of war — the murder of children. It began with the horrific attack by Hamas against Israeli citizens and the murder of hundreds of men, women, and children. This monstrous assault was immediately followed by the revenge attacks of the Israeli military against Hamas with the collateral murder of thousands of innocent children.

The suffering on both sides is unimaginable.

Regarding this conflict, I do take sides and my sympathies, and my support goes to the children on both sides of this never-ending conflict of religion and territory,

Israel for a moment held the sympathy of the world in response to the murderous attack by Hamas but within days that sympathy has turned to horror for many as images of wounded, suffering, traumatized and slain children have emerged in numbers never seen before in this conflict. Hospitals and escape routes bombed, images of slain and wounded children. As a result, Israel is now experiencing a backlash of worldwide condemnation.

There is nothing more disgraceful than the murder of children for any reason, by anyone, anyplace, at any time.

I care deeply about children being murdered. Israeli children and Palestinian children both, also Ukrainian and Russian children both. No matter what the reason, there can be no justification for killing innocent people and especially children and all children without exception are innocent.

I also believe that every Israeli killed provokes intense hatred from relatives and friends and every Palestinian killed provokes intense hatred from relatives and friends and it this constant ignition of hatred and vengeance that keeps these horrific fires burning and that is why this horrible conflict is still raging after seven decades. Each bullet triggers hate, every murdered child inflicts an incurable festering wound in the minds, hearts, bodies and soul of every grieving parent, a wound so viciously raw and painful that it never heals.

Lethal attacks inspire retaliation, retaliation means infliction of more death and destruction which circles around to more lethal attacks in a vicious cycle of hate and death.

I feel sorry for those people who can justify the killing of children and such justification can only originate from an intense irrational hatred that perpetuates the seemingly endless cycle of violence.

War is a sickness that will only be cured through the elimination of the reasons for war. This means letting go of owning land, letting go of intolerance for other cultures and other religions, letting go of the greed for material resources and most importantly letting go of the anthropocentric paradigm.

Unrealistic, yes, impossible, seemingly so, but the answer to an impossible problem is to find and embrace an impossible solution and that can be achieved through imagination and the courage to view the world and reality in a completely different way and that way is the acceptance of the equality and interdependence of life.

The first step is the elimination of our anthropocentric worldview. The second is to adopt the biocentric alternative.

Anthropocentrism is the view that all of nature, all of reality, is all about the human species, that it was all created for humans for exclusive human usage and all other species are subservient and inferior to the human species. Every major religion is anthropocentric which means that humans are the center and all important. Towards this end, we fabricate gods to further human dominance, patriarchy and hierarchy, this idea that one gender is dominant, that one group of people are superior.

And as each tribe or nation invented their own humanoid god, these gods began to be a reason for conflict. It became all about one person's god becoming superior to the other person's god. One person's god becomes the true god, and all other gods are false. As a result, the false gods must be destroyed and those who worship the false gods must be punished. And no matter what side, a god is always on that side. Even the Wehrmacht soldiers sported the motto *Gott Mit Uns* on their belt buckles.

Anthropocentric religions are a form of collective mass psychosis, and this psychosis allows for the promotion of differences. politically, racially, culturally, and religiously. Each anthropocentric religion holds the position that their religion is dominant and superior. Each political party believes they are superior to all other political parties, that the political right is superior to the political left or that the political left is superior to the political right.

The divisions become complex and chaotic. The divisions are divided and divided again. For example, Christianity is divided into Catholic, Russian, and Greek Orthodox, Protestant and its many divisions. The Muslims are divided into Shiite and Sunni and smaller factions, the Jews are divided into reformists, Orthodox, Zionists, etc. Add to that Mormonism, Scientology, etc, the many kinds of Hindus and Buddhists and it becomes quite clear why there is so much chaos, confusion and conflict. Even people who believe in essentially the same thing can't agree on what they believe in.

Biocentrism offers an alternative way viewing reality. Instead of creating a worldview that unnaturally puts humans front and center, a biocentric view is that we are part of all the living world of plants and animals, a world where diversity and interdependence is strength through the harmony of natural cooperation. Biocentrism is not a faith, it is not a belief, it is not a religion. It is simply a worldview based on the acceptance and understanding of the natural laws of ecology.

Biocentrism has three important basic laws.

1. The Ecological law of Diversity — that the strength of an eco-system is dependent upon the diversity within it.
2. The Ecological Law of Interdependence — that all species within an eco-system are interdependent.
3. The Law of Finite Resources — that there is a limit to carrying capacity because of the limitation of resources.

Each of these principles respect boundaries whereas one of the things that has been consistent in the anthropocentric world is war. Just as we must live harmoniously with nature, we must live harmoniously with each other. If we are to survive, the very idea of war must be eliminated, it must become unacceptable and viewed for what it is — the most deviant form of human insanity.

War is a perversion of basic decency, a deviant abomination, and obscenity. There is nothing to be admired or respected about war.

Murder is murder and cannot be justified by religious beliefs, politics, nationalism, resources, or territoriality. War is an insidious mental illness, a form of collective mass psychosis that has slain hundreds of millions of people since the dawn of civilization. To survive we must evolve away from warfare. The trillions of dollars spent on military power worldwide could instead be used to eliminate poverty, famine, disease, and ignorance. If resources were directed towards a world of peace and prosperity for all, there would be no excuse for war. War does nothing to benefit life. Most wars lead to more wars. The solution is to voluntarily end the conflict. This may be unrealistic from the anthropocentric viewpoint, but it makes rational sense from the biocentric viewpoint.

War is a perversion of basic decency, a deviant abomination, and obscenity. There is nothing to be admired or respected about war.

"Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities" — Voltaire.

By contrast, war and hate cannot exist in a biocentric world. The destruction of nature and the abuse and mass slaughter of animals, including humans, cannot exist in a biocentric world where all life on the planet is intimately connected and equally respected. This is my hope for humanity.

ORIGINAL POETRY

Unseen and Unheard

DEVIKA BRENDON

Is it anthropology, inbuilt into
the intricate systems of our minds
That makes us compete
And turns every action into a transaction?
This is a pivot, if you could but see it.
Survival? Or Fulfillment?

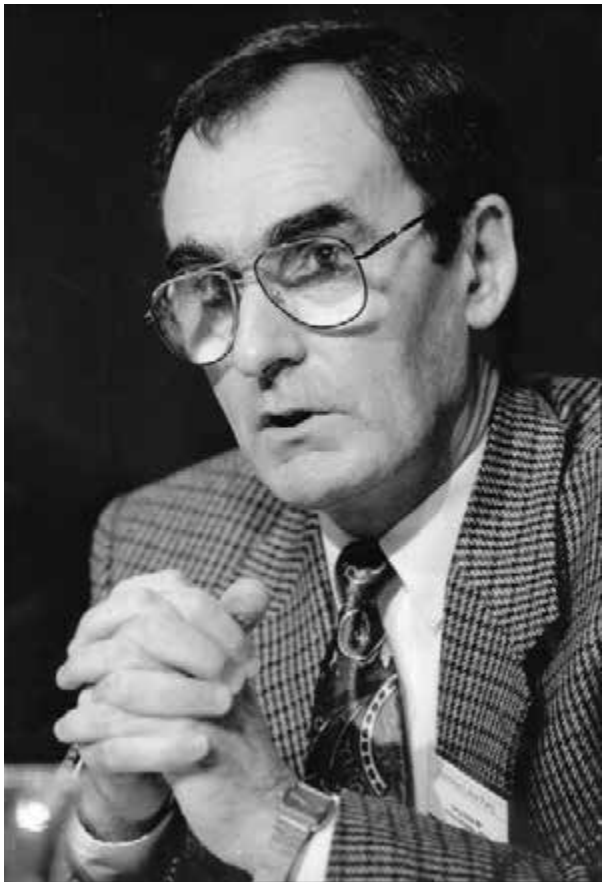
If the mob gain some ground
Does it signify our loss?
Can we reflect on how our
compulsive self assertion
Comes at the expense of another's voice?
Myths do not explode, or erode
Myths implode, along the fault lines.
When sovereignty is continually
Shouted down.

Isn't it marvellous how people show
What they feel, in the way they act?
The form of their expressions
Body language and gestures
Themselves are eloquent
And registered in all those opinion polls
Tracing the 21st C pulse of the nation.

And so much ugliness in the denial
Can we see through the dimness
caused by the gaslighting
Navigate the god awful smog
That has supplanted The Dreaming
Can we hear through the continual cacophony of the caucus?

Anglo-Celtic values under threat!
And commentators educated by the Internet.

Aren't we tired of the proclamations?
And the performances?
Who decides today, who lives where
And how they live?
At gunpoint, the smug red faced
Good old boys and girls decide
Not based on song lines
But on where the monetary value lies:
Location location location
And land owned or rented
And real nationhood
White anted



Gerry Hand

VALE

Vale Gerard Leslie Hand

(30 June 1942 — 15 November 2023)

ALAN AUSTIN

The greatest accomplishment since federation by any parliament, state or national, on behalf of Australia's Indigenous people eventually became one of the nation's most profound failures.

In mid-1987, prime minister Bob Hawke and his cabinet decided it was time to undertake a bold reform with far-reaching potential benefits. They determined to fulfill the long-held and passionately-expressed aspirations of the First Australians for self-determination by enacting an elected national council. This would immediately replace the Aboriginal Development Commission and eventually take over many responsibilities of state and federal Indigenous affairs departments.

The man Hawke chose for this daunting project was Gerry Hand, a parliamentarian reckoned — correctly as was soon proven — capable of bringing together disparate Aboriginal groups, of formulating the complex structure required, and able to work with the conservative Howard-led Opposition.

The 45-year old minister, who had been in Parliament just four years, worked tirelessly for the next three years and got the job done. The Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander Commission (ATSIC) began operation in 1990. This followed decades of Aboriginal affairs ministers on both sides of politics who had promised much but delivered little.

Throughout that challenge, Gerry Hand gained and maintained the respect of virtually everyone with whom he worked across the 60-plus Aboriginal regions, including opposition shadow ministers Chris Miles and Warwick Smith.

It was always understood ATSIC would take a couple of generations to settle in, possibly more. (One equivalent elected council in Canada took eighty years to become operational, according to Inuit elders.) That this did not eventuate was no fault of Gerry Hand.

ATSIC's rocky first six years were overseen by chairwoman Lowitja O'Donoghue who passed leadership to Wangurri man Gatjil Djerrkura. Gatjil struggled valiantly against Howard government hostility from 1996 to 2000 before handing the reins to the controversial Geoff Clark. Four years later, in April 2004, Howard announced the council's abolition declaring "the experiment in elected representation for Indigenous people has been a failure".

ATSIC's closure in 2005 was one of the most shameful acts of the craven Howard government, supported unfortunately by failed Labor leader Mark Latham. What should have been one of multicultural Australia's greatest achievements became a tragic failure — an outcome no less appalling for having been repeated several times by Coalition regimes since.

Gerry Hand as minister for Aboriginal affairs will be remembered by the Indigenous communities and their supporters as a passionate and courageous defender of the rights of the disadvantaged, a visionary and hard-working architect of vital reform, a patient but determined negotiator and a kind and decent man.

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

‘Waithood’

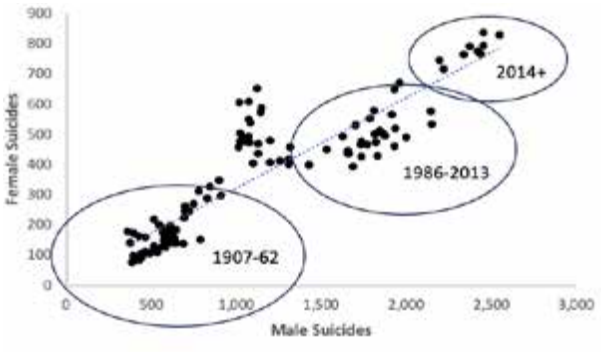
Australia’s suicide crisis in younger generations

MELANIE BLIGH AND DR PAUL READ

In 2010, being interviewed by ABC News on the rise of megafires and climate change, Paul was later attacked by right-wing commentators for citing a study in which 30% of Australian primary school children believed the world would end before they had a chance to grow old (Goddard et al., 2006). Ten years later, the future confronting children is worse than ever and COP 28 shows little signs of making things any better. It's way past time to phase out fossil fuels — any further delay makes the slope of adaptation steeper for younger generations. To this, we now have to report on the rise of child suicides and we place the responsibility for this squarely on the shoulders of one generation — Boomers — who now own 61% of Australia's wealth (Onselen, 2023) despite representing only 16% of the population. In 1995, their predecessors owned less than half this at 28%.

The latest AIHW update includes data on child suicides. In the decade to 2010, suicides from birth to age 14 amounted to 96 children. In the decade to 2020, it had doubled to 200. In 2021 alone, it reached 35 children killing themselves, which is on track to break yet more records by 2030. Put another way, the year 2000 saw suicide accounting for 1 in 200 child deaths from ages birth to 14; by 2020 suicide caused 1 in 50 child deaths. A much bigger statistic, should you think the numbers are trivial, is that suicide accounts for 1 in 3 deaths for ages 15-24 years, making it the number one killer of young Australian adults. Later it will be demonstrated that suicide rates, far from being a public health issue affecting small numbers, are actually a potent marker of generational and national welfare.

Figure 1 Historical correlations between male and female suicide numbers, 1907-2021



It should be noted that suicide itself is not an isolated public health issue but rather serves as a red flag — a marker for broader social flourishing and the health of the economy alongside metrics like gross domestic product, life expectancy and subjective wellbeing. Whereas other metrics take a more utilitarian perspective, suicide is an ethically Rawlsian metric because it tracks the conditions of our most vulnerable. It's the canary in the coalmine for intergenerational inequity and the withdrawal of resources from younger, economically active (non-rent-seeking) generations, resulting in violence turned inwardly or else outwardly. Without policy intervention to give back to younger generations there will be deep stagnation of Australia's economic and social development and the rise of a new and dangerous phenomenon called 'waithood'. This condition, first observed in developing nations by Diane Singerman (2007), enforces prolonged adolescent dependency on young adults of both genders and has been linked to rising violence and protest, especially against state-sanctioned policies that wilfully ignore issues like climate, race and gender. Waithood has been linked to protest movements including BLM, MeToo and the Strike4Climate. It is the flip side of suicide and helplessness.

The analysis that follows will focus on all Australian suicides from ages 15 upwards, covering deaths since 1907 across six generations and it will show that older generations avoided the worst of suicide in every part of their developmental trajectory.

Suicide was first defined by Durkheim as self-homicide and explained by him in terms of four subtypes, of which the most common is anomic suicide, where there is a breakdown in the social contract that exceeds the adaptive capacity of individuals. The social contract has been thoroughly smashed, the evidence being rising suicide, falling life expectancies, collapsing wellbeing, poverty and homelessness among the young. The social contract, first described by John Stuart Mill, is the idea

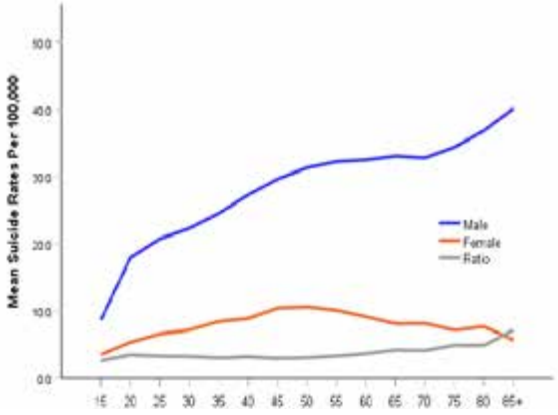
that people harmoniously live together in society because of implicit agreement on standards of moral, economic and political behaviour.

From 1907 to 2022, there were 173,298 Australian suicides recorded, of which 24% were women. The male:female ratio has ranged from 1.7 in 1966 to 5.6 in 1930, averaging 3.5 men to every woman (ffl.94 SD). The preponderance of men is common across cultures and both sexes steadily rise together with time, suggesting sociocultural conditions are mostly shared (r^2 = .90, p < .001). As can be seen in Figure 1, however, there is gender inequity from 1962 until 1986, where women diverged from the curve. This was not just due to the introduction and widespread prescription of barbituates such as Valium but was also related to the sexual revolution and the pressure put upon them relating to gender roles. The wave of suicides that followed trickled through every generation at the time.

Once converted to suicide rates per 100,000 population, males average 20.51 and women 6.13, which again confirms the ratio (3.34). As further shown in Figure 2, women are relatively stable at around 5 per 100,000 outside of the rise that

Figure 2 Historical differences between male and female suicide rates per 100,000, 1907-2021

Figure 3 Lifespan differences between male and female suicides, plus ratio



begins in 1947 and ends in 1992, peaking in 1967. As can be seen, this peak also occurs for males, as does a milder peak affecting both genders that starts in 2005, partly related to social media. Apart from these two periods there is no correlation between the sexes, suggesting the peaks for men in 1913, 1930, 1987 and 1997 are gender-specific.

To find out further which age groups were being affected across time first requires an understanding of background shifts in suicide rates across the life-course, which also changes for each gender. As can be seen in Figure 3 it rises consistently for men but peaks for women at ages 45-50.

The male curve is described by a logarithmic function and the female curve by a polynomial function. These functions are used to calculate what each generational cohort should be tracking at across time. Before this, however, a hidden change in male suicide rates was shown by carefully tracking 15-year cohorts across time (not shown here). What emerged was a hidden trend before and after 1960, where the greater burden of suicide shifted from older to younger males, whereas women followed the same life-course trajectory (Figure 4).

Now shifting to the last 25 years of data, the life-course trends can be applied to each generational cohort to see whether there are excess suicides in different generations. This was done by splitting all 173,298 suicides into generational cohorts and then subtracting their observed suicide rates from age-matched estimates derived from the male and female life-course formulae. The result is a measure of excess suicide rates per generational cohort per year, the number of suicides that exceed what would be predicted by age and gender.

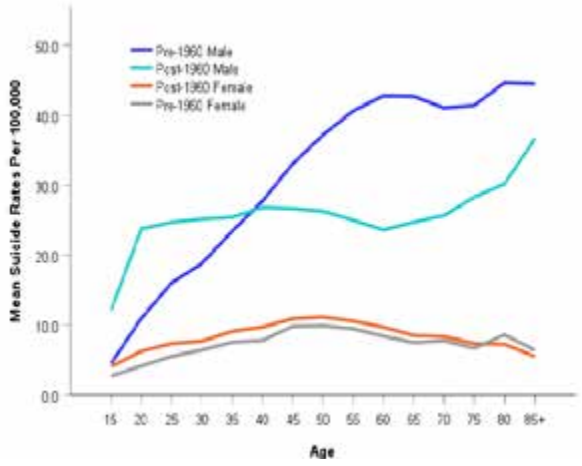
For both males and females a significant generational effect was found for generations X, Y and Z for men, and Y and Z for women. What this means for young men of Gen Z is that their suicide rates are 3.7 times those of Boomers at the same age; for young women the value is 2.43. It should be noted first that suicide rates in the Great Generation, arguably the most resilient of all over the past 115 years, were, at the same age, more likely to kill themselves than Boomers by a factor of 1.2 for boys and 1.5 for girls. This means the trends are less about resilience and more about social conditions favouring the Silent and Boomer generations. Moreover, the excess suicides for men and women correlate across generations, suggesting the sociological conditions are shared by both genders.

Theoretically, suicide can be seen as the extreme negative end of a bell-curve that rises from abject

despair, through mental illness, towards social functioning, beyond which emerge subjective wellbeing and life satisfaction. All these metrics are used as measures of country-level performance by the Sustainable Development Goals, suicide being the 15th leading cause of death globally. Its theoretical relationship to the other measures can be demonstrated with reference to the actual suicide figures in Australia, as will be done next.

First it should be noted that subjective wellbeing and suicide rates are inversely correlated across nations, so they are related. Whereas subjective wellbeing as a utilitarian measure of social flourishing is gathered across nations using a self-reported survey that is averaged on a 10-point scale, suicide is a proper ratio scale based on actual deaths recorded and collated by countries, measured as the number of deaths per 100,000 population and adjusted by age. Whilst suicide doesn't capture the overall flourishing of the nation it does capture the conditions faced by the most vulnerable, and arguably using a more objective metric than wellbeing.

Figure 4 Lifespan differences between male and female suicides pre- and post-1960

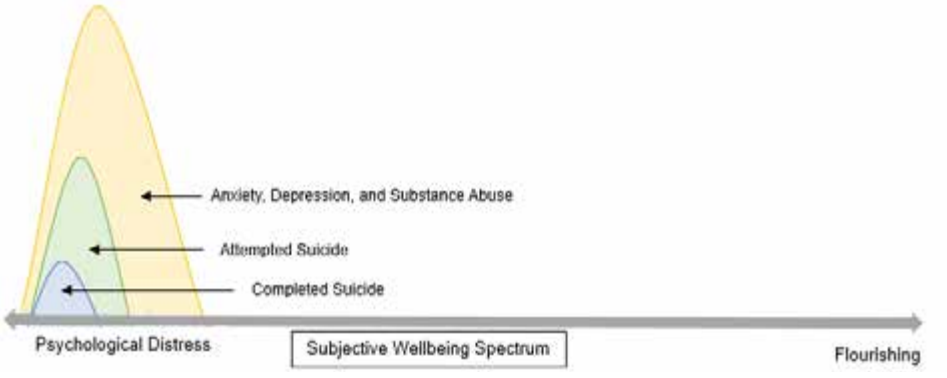


Suicide is an extreme act, so can serve to reflect the extreme tails on a bell-curve that encapsulate related risks on one end of a spectrum representing social flourishing, as displayed in Figure 6. Completed suicide, affecting 18 Australian men and 6 women per 100,000, is an extreme subset of attempted suicide, 79 men and 152 women per 100,000 (AIHW, 2023b), which itself is an extreme subset of people suffering from anxiety, depression, and substance abuse, affecting 18% of men and 25% of women (ABS, 2021). These figures are for the 12 months preceding 2021 but the same patterns emerge for lifetime prevalence; for example, self-harm affects 6.2% of men and 11.4% of women but rises for suicidal ideation to 14.5% of men and 18.7% of women (ABS, 2021).

If psychological distress is then seen as the lower part of the broader spectrum of subjective wellbeing, rising from mental distress to flourishing as displayed in Figure 6, then population-level shifts in suicide rates should follow more global shifts in population wellbeing. A recent study found that this association emerges robustly for the composite Happy Planet Index regardless of gender (Rajkumar, 2023). Economic inequality was associated with suicide in men, and loss of social capital was associated with suicide in women. As expected, it is known that subjective wellbeing and suicide rates do have an inverse relationship across countries and also within countries at local government levels (Hsu et al., 2019). As to causality it is known, using instrumental variables, that the sudden increase in wealth in East Germany following the fall of the Berlin Wall, had a causal increase in societal wellbeing (Frijters et al., 2004), and suicide rates followed the inverse pattern (Hegerl, & Heinz, 2019). This demonstrates causality because it is one instance in which wellbeing could only rise via a third variable.

As stated earlier, anomic suicide rises when abrupt changes to ordinary regulators in life and periods

Figure 5 Subsets of Suicide, Attempts, and Distress Within the Wellbeing Spectrum



of major social change push boundaries of adaptive tolerance (Durkheim, 2002). Transgenerational trauma and higher rates of suicide are, for example, both seen among descendants of Holocaust survivors (Cohn & Morrison, 2018; Ralph et al., 2018). If such changes emerge at critical periods in the developmental lifespan, then it is likely that certain generations might have been exposed to multiple challenges leading to increases in anomic suicide. Informed by the economic multiplier effect, many studies suggest disruption early in life cause compounding effects to education, behaviour, health, and economic security later in life (Crosnoe & Johnson, 2011; Liefbroer & Zoutewelle-Terovan, 2021).

All of this suggests that suicide is causally impacted by social conditions, which differ vastly for different generational cohorts. As can be seen in Table 1, the social conditions under which each generation has lived in Australia ranged from world war to sustained economic growth. The Great Generation suffered two world wars and the Great Depression, thereafter driving post-war reconstruction efforts focusing on social welfare from their mid-30s onwards. By contrast, the Boomer generation grew up in better times with free education, growing welfare, housing and job security (Berger-Thomson et al., 2018; Carlson, 2008). By the time they reached their mid-30s, however, their own project shifted from welfare reform to economic efficiency, profit, deregulation and privatisation, where many of the hard-won benefits accorded them were deconstructed. They enjoyed sustained economic growth for the next 30 years, leveraged further wealth as leaders of the digital revolution, became landlords through capital housing appreciation, generally voted in policies that served their own generational wealth. Whilst Gen X arguably enjoyed some of the spoils left over, they were not effectively granted hand-over when they themselves reached their mid-30s — the Boomers still maintain control to this day and have actively passed over Gen X by awarding jobs and opportunities to their own children, Gen Y (the Millennials). Despite this Generations Y and Z have since emerged in an era most characterised by the Global Financial Crisis, the rise of social media, existential threats from climate change, AI and historic levels of inequality, COVID and war. This, in effect, is the legacy of the Boomers to their children, and the reason for rising intergenerational conflict.

In the wellbeing literature, the Easterlin Paradox points out that although wellbeing rises with national income across countries in any one year, wellbeing across years remains relatively stable despite 300-fold increases in national wealth since 1950 (Easterlin, 1974; Easterlin & O'Connor, 2022). This is explained by Easterlin with reference to the Duesenberry hypothesis, which states that wellbeing only rises when income is higher relative to either peers or past expectations. The fact that men's suicide rates are especially related to income inequality supports the idea that domains of personal success relative to others or relative to past expectations will have profound effects on younger generations subjected to falling levels of material and social equity. It is even more painful to younger generations when it is considered that any given loss is twice as potent at the affective level than commensurate gains (Tversky & Kahneman, 1992). The Duesenberry hypothesis also explains why the Silent Generation and Baby Boomers are relatively unaware of the levels of intergenerational inequity suffered by younger people, precisely because they compare their own material and social wealth to other people like themselves. In other words, they can be extraordinarily wealthy compared to younger cohorts and yet feel themselves deprived because they compare themselves to wealthier peers from their own generation, their frame of reference being skewed upwards (Easterlin & O'Connor, 2022).

In Australia, younger generations from the 1980s onwards, that is Generations X, Y, and Z, were not equally rewarded for university study, were loaded with student debt, and offered increasingly casualised work as their Silent and Boomer employers, often running digital startups, capitalised on neoliberal policies that relaxed the worker protections of the welfare state they themselves grew up under. As another example, the introduction of superannuation in 1991 was rapidly followed by increased casualisation as employers sought ways of avoiding the new cost (Gilfillan, 2021), actively recommended by accountants to SME owners because it also avoided holiday pay and owners began to realise younger workers would accept less wages as unions began to fail. Simultaneously, econometricians in globalising corporates realised they could lend sub-par mortgages to people who, by and large, would move heaven and earth to pay their debts. The world was awash with credit as wages and conditions were dismantled. Meanwhile, Boomers could also exploit negative gearing to build their own wealth in property and launch themselves into the rent-seekers class (O'Loughlin et al., 2020). Decades of profiteering by older generations now means younger generations face having to work multiple jobs (ABS, 2023b), being

Table 1 Age Ranges in Years when Socioeconomic Events Occurred Per Generation

Socioeconomic Events	*Great Gen*	*Silent Gen*	*Baby Boomer*	*Gen X*	*Gen Y*	*Gen Z*
World wars and the great depression 1914-1945	1 — 32	0 — 9				
Post war reconstruction of welfare state 1945-1972	32 — 59	9 — 36	0 — 17			
Economic rationalism 1983+ » *Efficiency* » *Profit* » *Privatisation*	70+	47+	28+	10+	0+	0+
Digital revolution 1989 — 2004	76 — 91	53 — 68	34 — 49	16 — 31	1 — 16	0 — 1
Sustained economic growth 1990 — 2020	77 — 107	54 — 84	35 — 65	17 — 47	2 — 32	0 — 17
Social media 2005 — present	92+	69+	50+	32+	17+	2+
Global financial crisis 2007 — 2009	94 — 96	71 — 73	51 — 53	34 — 36	19 — 21	4 — 6
COVID-19 recession 2020 — present	107+	84+	65+	47+	32+	17+

locked out of home ownership (Ong Viforj & Phelps, 2023), the rise of the side hustle (including the invidious rise of OnlyFans), delayed independence, and, in effect, delaying their own families. One major impact of this is to continuously expand the economic dependency ratio, in which younger workers continue to support a growing number of ageing welfare recipients, despite those recipients having vastly greater assets (Australian Government, 2021).

As well as rising intergenerational inequity, suicide is also impacted by social media and climate change. Numerous studies from around the world and Australia have reported that increases in self-harm, suicidal thoughts, and behaviours have been associated with rises in social media use, smartphone addiction, and cyberbullying in adolescents and emerging adults, particularly in females (Macrynikola et al., 2021; Twenge, 2020; Webb et al., 2022). Research also suggests associations between media reports of celebrity suicides and increased suicide rates across Australia and the world (Niederkrotenthaler et al., 2012). Meanwhile, climate change through extreme weather events such as floods or fires disrupts physical, social, and economic systems, threatening the mental health of those within its path. Research has shown a substantial correlation between psychological stresses connected to climate change and mental health (Ogunbode et al., 2023). Direct impacts on mental health from experiencing intense events such as floods or bushfires may include post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety. Differentially, gradual changes in drought, air pollution, and global warming have been shown, across the past 1000 years, to cause direct impacts including aggression directed either internally as suicide or externally as violence or homicide to others (Mach et al., 2019). Non-direct impacts include the perceived risk associated with climate change leads to climate anxiety (Clayton, 2021).

The rise of existential crises such as climate change engenders the perception of unavoidable devastation that exceeds adaptive responses within generations, termed generational learned helplessness (Nagel, 2005; Seligman, 1972). Learned helplessness is deeply related to depression (Abramson et al., 1989; Friedman & Anderson, 2014) and thus suicide (Friedman & Anderson, 2014). The social and economic costs of climate anxiety are rapidly evolving, particularly in relation to younger generational cohorts where learned helplessness is evident (Nagel, 2005). Economic costs of the suicide burden

associated with global warming have been estimated between two and three billion dollars in the US economy alone (Belova et al., 2022). Generational learned helplessness is not just a response to existential threats but also a rational reaction to periods of social disruption, and broken expectations where 'playing by the rules' and working hard is not rewarded. The future looks bleak, if it even exists, raising the question, how does a generation fund a retirement when they don't think they will exist? This question might appear extreme, but it resonates with the Australian study where one third of primary school children thought the world would end before they had a chance to grow old (Goddard et al., 2006).

What most studies of suicide fail to recognise is that the underlying motivations for suicide might be more specific to generational cohorts than to age ranges because each cohort has idiosyncratic socioeconomic challenges to deal with. This study finds that the Boomer generation has, as predicted, suffered less than every other generation.

It is long past time to empower younger generations with policy to protect their interests and their future, to reinstate wage regulations, to push for redistributive taxation that enables them to build homes and families of their own. In one of the world's wealthiest nations, it is a national disgrace to see the rise of tent cities on urban fringes, families who can't afford food or shelter, police forcing them to move on, whilst airports, restaurants, hotels, cruises and concerts are awash in a sea of gray hair enjoying the discretionary largesse of the past 30 years of unearned rent-seeking profiteering, largely borrowed, via climate change, from their own grandchildren's future survival.

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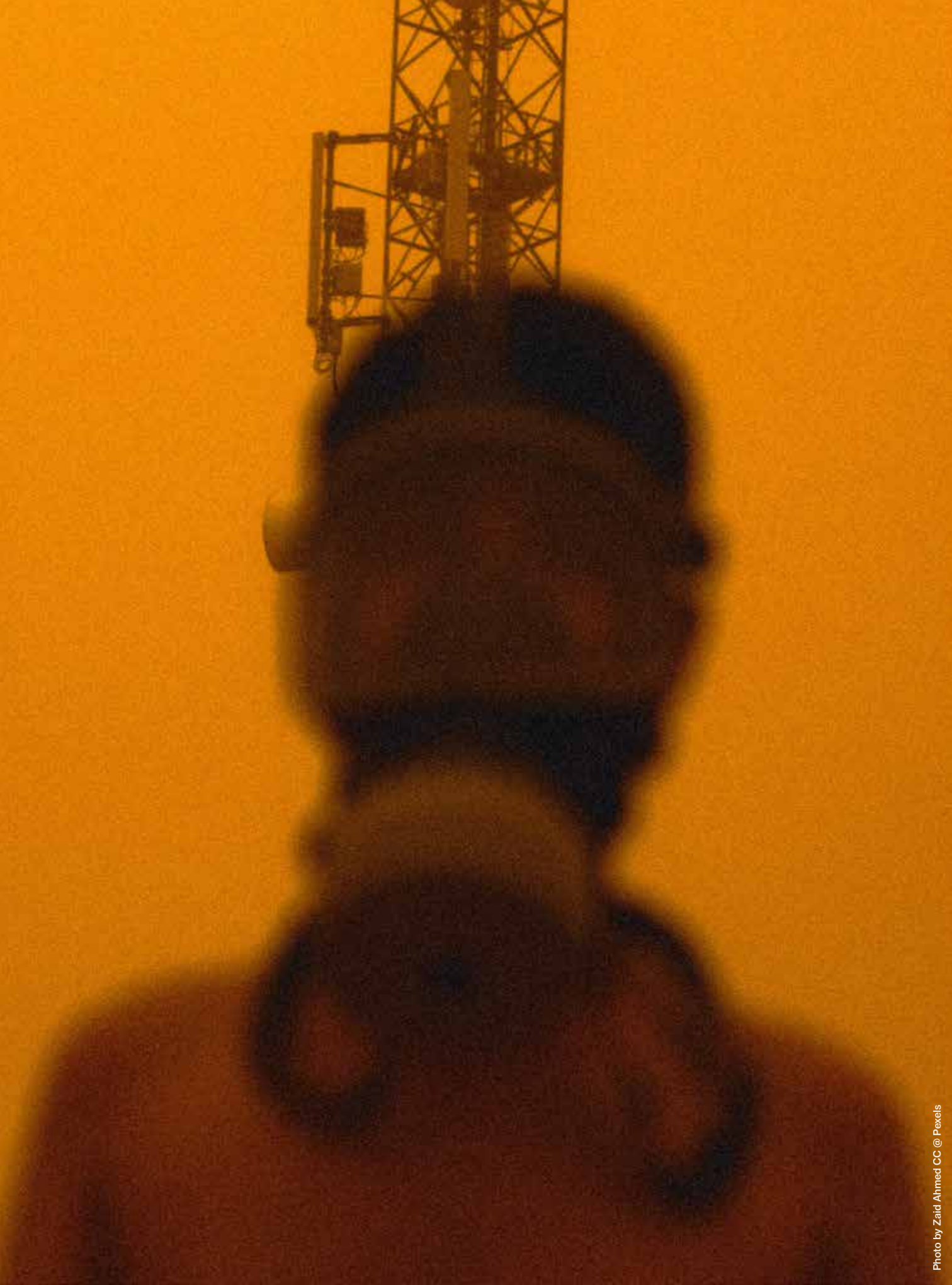

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CLIMATE

Mitigating Climate Change

The need for eco-socialism

PROF HANS A BAER

There is much debate on how to mitigate climate change. Proposed solutions range from shifting from fossil fuels to alternative energy sources (such as wind, solar, geothermal, biofuel, and even nuclear sources), planting trees, developing more environmentally sustainable technologies, developing and using energy-saving devices, retrofitting buildings with such devices, improving public transport and inducing transitions away from private vehicles, and geoengineering. Many of the specific proposals, albeit not all of them, would be modest steps toward climate change mitigation. Capitalism has a capacity to turn tragedies of all sorts into profit-making opportunities, thus prompting the development of disaster capitalism, and, in the case of climate change, climate capitalism. Although government officials, politicians, and climate scientists tend to be publicly visible in the climate change mitigation discourse under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), private corporations tend to be less so. Whereas corporations such as the now-defunct Global Climate Coalition were part and parcel of climate denialism, more and more corporations have come to assert that they are striving to achieve environmental sustainability and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in their business practices. Corporate environmentalism tends to build on the notion of ecological modernisation that stresses the ability to come up with technological innovations that are environmentally friendly. Ecological modernisation, which entails a shift to renewable energy sources, increased energy efficiency, and a numerous array of other techno-fixes, constitutes the overarching agenda of climate capitalism.

Existing climate regimes, ranging from the UNFCCC to the European Union's Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), to various national emissions trading schemes, have proven ineffective in significantly cutting back on greenhouse gas emissions. In contrast to the Conference of the Parties 15 (COP15) in Copenhagen in 2009, many political pundits, and even some environmentally focused nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), celebrated the Paris Agreement at Conference of the Parties 21 (COP21) in Paris in late 2015. In this effort, the United States and China joined hands with virtually all other nations in agreeing to limit emissions with the parameters of a 2-degree, even a 1.5-degree, world. However, given the fact that the emission targets that nations have voluntarily pledged would only achieve a 2.7- to 3.5-degree world, the Paris Agreement still operates within the parameters of the existing capitalist world system. Thus, large numbers of both social scientists and climate activists are skeptical of the excitement expressed by the UNFCCC delegates and politicians by the outcomes of the Paris assemblage. In early

2017 Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the Paris Agreement, but Joe Biden reinstated the United States into the accord in early 2021. The international climate movement has had an uphill struggle given that many of its actors are opposed to emissions-trading schemes, along with offset schemes such as the UN Clean Development Mechanism and the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) program. They favor carbon taxes on the polluters and compensation for the victims of climate change, particularly in the Global South. Climate regimes at international, regional, and national levels have tended to accept the emissions-trading schemes and market mechanisms as axiomatic. For instance, REDD conflicts with the subsistence needs of forest dwellers around the world.

As a critical anthropologist and historical social scientist, I ask: 'How can you expect the system that created the problem to solve the problem?' This question is especially relevant because the problem in this instance—anthropogenic climate change—is not a peripheral feature or unfortunate economic externality of global capitalism. It cannot be easily expunged; rather, it is a significant byproduct of continual expansion of production and the promotion of growing levels of consumption. The effort to critically examine and respond to the adverse impacts of climate change on humanity and the global ecosystem must be a multidisciplinary effort. It entails collaboration between climate scientists, Earth system scientists, energy analysts, and physical geographers, on the one hand, and social scientists, including anthropologists, archaeologists, sociologists, political scientists, and human geographers, on the other hand. The reality is that natural scientists and mainstream economists tend to dominate much of the discourse on climate change, as is evidenced by the composition of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Collaboration serves to bring the strengths from various disciplines to what is a monumental but undeniably vital task: understanding and effectively responding to climate change. Climate change research needs to move beyond research centers and universities. It needs to collaborate with communities, particularly those that are being adversely impacted by climate change, as well as NGOs, progressive political parties, women's groups, Indigenous communities, and climate action groups that are pushing for effective climate change mitigation strategies informed by a strong sense of social and climate justice. While getting people to come to terms particularly with the reality of anthropogenic climate change, prompting them to take radical climate action to address it is a much more difficult process. This is because it would require drastic alterations of existing political-economic structures and lifestyles, particularly those of the rich and powerful.

Ultimately, while people may be able to adapt to climate change in the short run, any community has a limited amount of resilience. Thus, mitigation or drastically reducing greenhouse gas emissions is the more significant imperative, which raises the question of how much mitigation is possible within the parameters of global capitalism. Ongoing global warming and associated climatic and other anthropogenic environmental changes raise the question of how long humanity can thrive into and beyond 2100. While a large section of the international elite has come to recognize the seriousness of climate change, the solutions they propose under the guise of ecological modernisation, green capitalism, and existing climate regimes are insufficient to contain catastrophic climate change. As a result, perhaps more than any other environmental crisis, anthropogenic climate change forces us to examine whether global capitalism needs to be transcended and humanity needs to develop a new approach, as some would see it, along eco-socialist lines.

Perhaps more than any other environmental crisis, anthropogenic climate change forces us to examine whether global capitalism needs to be transcended.

Eco-socialism still remains a vision, but one in this age of climate change that merits thoughtful consideration. It entails the following dimensions or desired goals: (1) a global economy oriented to meeting basic social needs, namely adequate food, clothing, shelter, and healthful conditions and resources; (2) a high degree of social equality and social fairness; (3) public or socialized ownership of productive forces at national, provincial, and

local levels; (4) representative and participatory democracy; (5) environmental sustainability; and a (6) commitment to a safe climate Ultimately, the shift to eco-socialism in any country would have to be part of a global process that no one can fully envision. Anti-systemic movements will have to play an instrumental role in bringing about the political will that will enable the world to shift to eco-socialism. Any revolutionary upheaval aiming to create a global ecological society will have to dwarf mobilizations humanity has seen to date by linking up many of the struggles seeking to achieve social, economic, and environmental justice. The transition toward an eco-socialist world system is not guaranteed and will require a tedious, even convoluted path. Nevertheless, while awaiting the 'revolution', so to speak, progressive people can work on various system-challenging transitional or radical reforms that open the door to wider socio-ecological revolution. These include: (1) the creation of new anti-capitalist left parties designed to capture the state; (2) the implementation of emissions taxes at sites of production that include eff orts to protect low-income people; (3) public ownership of the means of production; (4) increasing social equality, including gender, ethnic, class, and racial equality, within nation-states and between nation-states, and achieving a sustainable global population; (5) the implementation of socialist planning and workers' democracy; (6) meaningful work and shortening of the working week; (7) development of a net steady-state world economy, entailing de-growth for much of the Global North and growth or development for the poorer sectors of the Global South; (8) the adoption of renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, appropriate technology, and the creation of green jobs; (9) sustainable public transport and travel; (10) sustainable food production and forestry; (11) resistance to the capitalist culture of consumption; (12) sustainable trade; (13) sustainable settlement patterns and local communities; and (14) demilitarization and denuclearisation.

These transitional steps constitute loose guidelines for shifting human societies or countries toward eco-socialism and a safe climate, but it is important to note that these steps would entail global efforts, including the creation of a progressive climate governance regime. Constructing an alternative to global capitalism is the ultimate climate mitigation strategy, even though it will not be achieved anytime soon, if indeed ever. There is the distinct danger that humanity will continue to overheat the planet rather than cool it down. Anti-systemic social movements will have to play an instrumental role in bringing about the political actions that will enable the world to shift to eco-socialism.

Given the failure to date of established international and national climate regimes to adequately contain the climate crisis, efforts to create a radical climate governance process will have to come from below. Ultimately, the climate justice movement, one that remains quite disparate, will have to form strong alliances with other anti-systemic movements, perhaps particularly the anti-corporate globalization or social justice. Labor, peace, and Indigenous movements. A viable anti-capitalist movement will have to address the material impoverishment of much of the world's population. Many parties, ranging from the World Bank to entertainment celebrities, make appeals to 'eradicate extreme poverty' or 'make poverty history." However, "make wealth, particularly extreme wealth, history', and the eradication of poverty will follow. Personally, I hope that the eco-socialist vision will serve as an integrative focus for anti-systemic movements, including the climate justice movement, within nation-states and transnationally, although I recognise how daunting this task will be. Much of the climate movement is focused on moving beyond fossil fuels, a worthwhile endeavor. However, just as capitalism operated on other forms of energy prior to the Industrial Revolution, capitalism could theoretically operate on renewable sources of energy, a form of green neoliberalism, which will require enormous sources to develop and maintain. For example, the Koch brothers have become major investors in wind farm, solar energy, and biofuel projects. Subalterns around the world are increasingly having their land and labor expropriated by mining companies, including ones that are providing resources for renewable energy operations and supposedly green technologies, such as electric cars and autonomous vehicles. Even though some variant of green capitalism might bring down greenhouse gas emissions to some degree, it would not address the social inequities, limited democracy, militarism, threat of nuclear warfare, and global pandemics such as COVID-19 that are byproducts of global capitalism.

Climate justice and social activists face an incredibly daunting task. The next two or three decades, if not the immediate next one, will bring great hardship for much of humanity, exacerbated by the rise of authoritarianism, accompanied by the nexus between corporations and governments constituting surveillance capitalism. As climate change increasingly affects humans and nonhuman

beings, the powers that be will be inclined to construct a Fortress World to protect their privileges, borders, and market system. There are no easy fixes to these grim realities, but it is imperative that climate activists become climate justice activists as part of a meta-movement to challenge and transcend global capitalism.

Airplanes, climate change, and COVID-19

While a growing number of critical scholars acknowledge that global capitalism constitutes the overarching driver of anthropogenic climate change, one of the smaller elephants in the room has been the aviation industry. The number of airplane flights worldwide has been growing, at least prior to COVID-19, which forced reluctant governments around the world to temporarily restrict the number of flights. Air travel, along with cruise ships, played a key role in turning a local epidemic in Wuhan in China into a global pandemic. Prior to this unfortunate event, aircraft flights were contributing 5 to 6 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, not only in the form of carbon dioxide but also nitrous oxide, methane, and ozone Despite repeated claims by airline companies that they were gradually turning to more fuel-efficient and aerodynamic aircraft, these technological innovations were offset by a rise of roughly 5 percent per annum (in keeping with the Jevons paradox, or rebound effect, where the economical use of energy results not in diminished consumption but an overall increase). This rise was even higher for affluent people in China, India, and other developing countries, who started to emulate the habits of their counterparts in developed countries.

Airplanes of many sorts (commercial, military, and private) have become sources of tremendous profit and integral components of modernity and the capitalist world system. Furthermore, aviation companies are an excellent example of how corporate profitmaking is subsidized by public funds. Airplanes serve to transport both human actors and commodities to keep the world system operating and overheating. However, they do so with dire environmental, climatic, and health consequences. The human actors who rely on air travel include businesspeople, politicians, diplomats, the super-rich who own multiple homes in far-flung locations, sports teams, tourists, academics, international university students, other students studying abroad for short-term stints, and even UN climate change conference delegates and observers, environmentalists, and climate activists. The list seems almost endless but, with some exceptions such as low-paid migrant workers, refugees, and rank-and-file military personnel, it consists of relatively affluent people. Furthermore, air cargo constitutes the underbelly of the airline industry. Its operations occur at night and at secure inaccessible facilities, bonded warehouses, and multimodal logistics centers, often located some distance from passenger terminals. Corporate globalisation has resulted in a growing reliance on air cargo to quickly transport manufacturing components and products. The extractive industry around the world, including in the Atacama Desert of Chile and in Australia, has contributed to air travel by transporting their workers to mining sites. However, both extractive industries, such as iron ore and coal, and the petroleum industry are highly dependent upon marine shipping. Sea shipping functions as a circulatory system of the global economy in which about 90 percent of the world trade products are carried at some point. Last but not least, militarism is highly dependent on aircraft, whether it is in the form of propelling jet fighters and drones or transporting military cargo and personnel around the world to engage in imperialist ventures. Historically, there has been a powerful nexus between the aviation industry—whether aircraft manufacturing or the airlines—and airport construction. This nexus has been strong around the world because of the military significance of aviation, particularly for the United States, but also Britain, Germany, the former Soviet Union and Russia today, and most recently China.

While infectious diseases can be transmitted vis-à-vis ship and train travel, airplane flights have elevated the spread of diseases to a new level. The internal environment of the airplane is an unhealthy one, with little oxygen, germs carried by both crew and passenger, and low-level electromagnetic radiation from flight equipment and x-rays encountered at high altitudes. The outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in late November 2002 and lasting to July 2002, which according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention infected more than 8,000 people and killed 774 people as it spread from China to at least twenty other countries, illustrates how air transportation can serve as a rapid transmitter of infectious disease. Tragically, by comparison to SARS, the role of airplanes, as well as cruise ships, in spreading COVID-19 has been exponentially more profound, turning a local epidemic starting out in Wuhan, China, into a global pandemic. Despite the role of airplanes in

disseminating SARS and COVID-19, the European Union permitted airlines to fly with all seats full, thus violating social distancing practices in other walks of life. Developed capitalist societies are the most reliant on air travel, both domestically and internationally. In contrast to the developing capitalist countries, which are quite mixed in terms of the quality of their health infrastructures, the impact upon the former could be devastating in ways that still are presently difficult to ascertain. Ironically, the coronavirus pandemic forced governments around the world, in an effort to stem even further spread of COVID-19, to ground the vast majority of international flights as well as many domestic flights. Since late 2021, the capitalist world system, along with the airlines, has sought to return to business-as-usual relying on COVID-19 vaccines, which continue to be unevenly distributed.

While academics are not generally ranked among the global elites, many in full-time positions, particularly those at elite institutions and higher administrative levels, fall into the ranks of frequent flyers. Much of this behavior has been driven by the dictates of the corporate university structure, which seeks to internationalise itself in a competitive bidding war for student numbers, including overseas students, and research funds. This has occurred as governments have reduced funding for particularly public universities. While undoubtedly the vast majority of academics around the world accept climate science, climate change has already adversely affected many of the subjects of their research and will continue to do so as humanity plunges further into the twenty-first century. They often seem to be unaware—or perhaps they compartmentalise their awareness—that their flying may be contributing to a four-degree or more world by the year 2100 if emissions from many sources are not quickly abated in the next few decades.

Social systems don't last forever: the need for an alternative the world system

Anthropogenic climate change has been inducing and will continue to induce severe economic, political, military, sociocultural, and health consequences as the twenty-first century unfolds. Ongoing global warming and associated climate and other anthropogenic environmental changes raise the question of how long humanity can thrive, at least in its present numbers and occupying much of its present places of habitation, into and beyond 2100. Various climate scientists and meteorologists project 2023 that will be the hottest year on record. Temperature records have been broken left and right during this summer in the northern hemisphere in places such as eastern Canada, western United States, Greece, and China. The Arctic, Greenland, and Antarctica icepacks continue to retreat.

Such a system would be committed to social justice, democracy, and environmental sustainability.

The critical anthropology of climate change, the perspective from which I operate, posits that global capitalism has been around for about five hundred years. It has come to manifest so many contradictions, including ecological and climatic crises, that it needs to be transcended to ensure the survival of humanity and animal and plant life on a sustained basis. This points to the need for a critical anthropology of the future that calls for a cooling down of the planet and is informed by an environmental and social need for an alternative world system. Such a system would be committed to social justice, democracy, and environmental sustainability, one that in certain circles is referred to as eco-socialism. However, a robust eco-socialism needs to grapple with and draw upon other anti-capitalist discourses, including eco-anarchism and ecological economics. As anthropologists know from their ethnographic research on Indigenous and peasant peoples around the world, without romanticizing them, they have been purveyors of a Simpler Way for eons. We should be addressing to right to not work and ways to overcome the current 'work ethic'. For the majority of people on the planet, personhood, or the right to personhood, depends enormously on work, on what we do (let alone la distinction). Emissions will not change if we keep working/producing as we do and as much as we do. We should also be addressing debt (or the emission of money/debt) in general, and sovereign debate in particular, and therefore the economic growth paradigm.

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ORIGINAL POETRY

Unfixed Whole

ALLAN LAKE

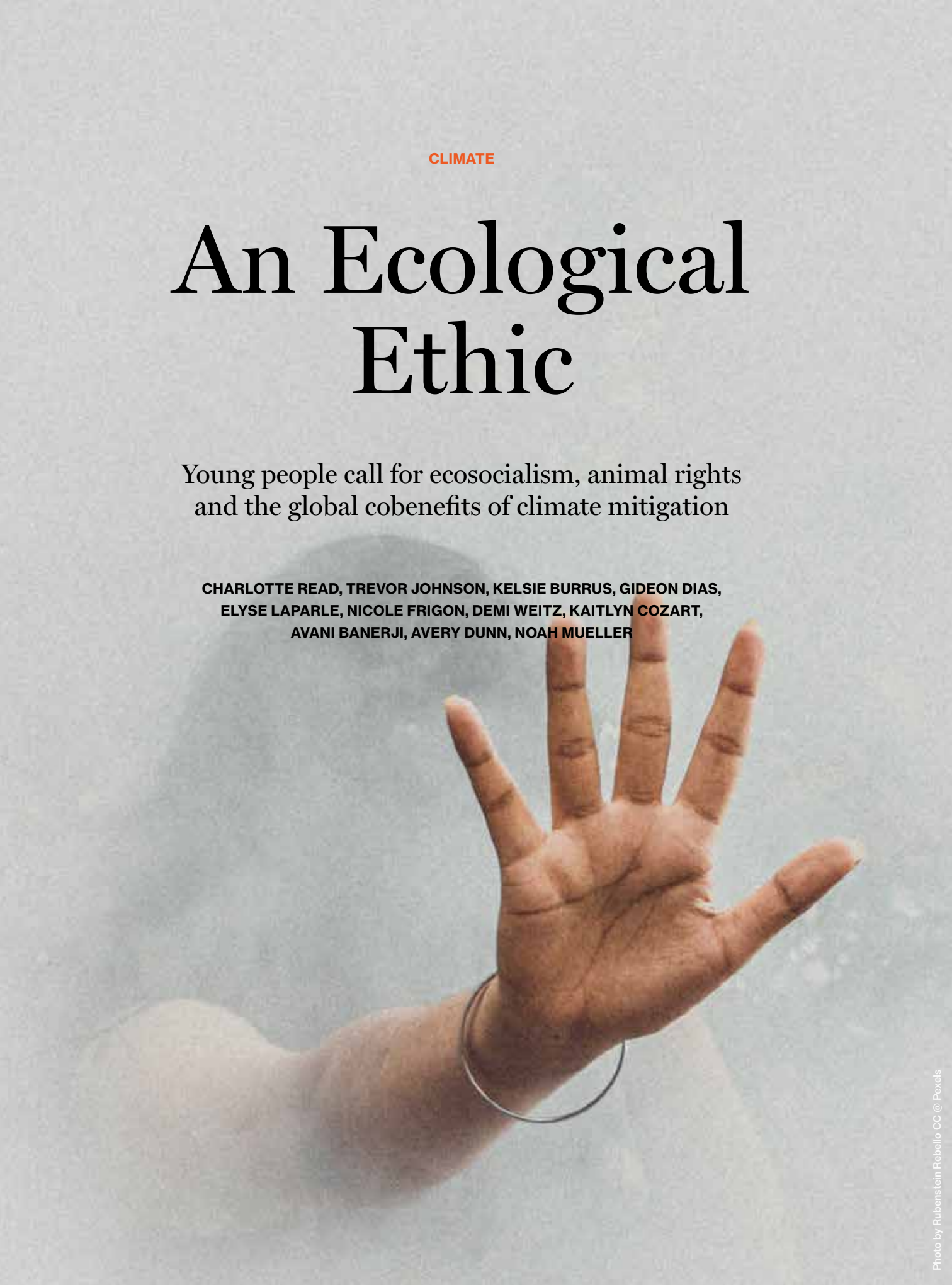
Everything hangs by a spidery thread,
not just spiders that collide with
the meteor of my face while colonising
space. We stroll in an altered Eden that
we rent but think of as our own.
When does a heart stop, a muse depart,
a road become a river, a sinkhole?
War may erupt, property market collapse
followed by entire, manhandled web
of life. Sleep eludes me as I wonder.
Sleep lost, sleep required. Breathed
long enough to know required breath
can't last, despite appearances on summer
days when I gaze at forever above calm
surface of some steadily rising ocean.

CLIMATE

An Ecological Ethic

Young people call for ecosocialism, animal rights and the global cobenefits of climate mitigation

CHARLOTTE READ, TREVOR JOHNSON, KELSIE BURRUS, GIDEON DIAS, ELYSE LAPARLE, NICOLE FRIGON, DEMI WEITZ, KAITLYN COZART, AVANI BANERJI, AVERY DUNN, NOAH MUELLER



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The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023) estimates that the United States spent 17.4% of its GDP on its healthcare system compared to Australia spending 10.6% in 2021. Yet, Australia outperforms the US on every measure of human wellbeing — life expectancy, disability-adjusted life years, quality adjusted life years, subjective wellbeing, life satisfaction, and happy life years, even before looking at maternal and child mortality, suicide rates, cardiovascular disease, cancer and all the cascade of miseries caused by tobacco and alcohol. Much of this is due to Universal Healthcare developed and adopted from the work of Fabians Society luminary Sir William Beveridge in 1948, from which emerged Medicare as an alternative to the more privatised Bismarck model from 1883. You can read the call for a new Beveridge model in response to COVID by the UK Fabians at A new Beveridge | Fabian Society.

However, our professor, Dr Read, demonstrates, that despite the excellent work of Australian treasurer Jim Chalmers to institute a wellbeing budget, Australia falls way behind on two main metrics — the indigenous life expectancy gap is the worst in the world, hovering around 20-23 years of lost life, and its carbon emissions per capita have been second only to Qatar for decades. This means the life expectancy of future generations is being harmed by Australia's reliance on fossil fuels and it's not living up to its global agreements in the spirit of the Brundtland definition of sustainable development.

As shown in class, countries achieving world's best practice in terms of wellbeing, life expectancy and sustainability tend to be situated in Northern Europe, Japan, Pacific Islands, and some communist states like Vietnam and Cuba (Read et al., 2013). The characteristics of these nations tend towards strong renewables or nuclear power, progressive policy, means-tested fines, and public health systems that move away from treatment after the development of disease towards prevention, education and lifestyle that directly tackles the social determinants, or those factors once described by Dr Clive Hamilton of the Australia Institute as 'affluenza'. In this essay we talk about how wellbeing and equality are central to sustainability and we further urge a move towards an environmental ethic similar to that espoused by Capt Paul Watson and Roger Hallam, one that integrates the wellbeing of humans and the ecosystems they rely on. Granting legal 'personhood' and health to other species should be adopted to mitigate the triple existential threats of species extinction, pollution and climate change.

Our message to the Fabians

The insanity of global greed has gone too far and it's destroying our future. The engine of growth over the past 250 years has been fossil fuels, from which we have the dual attack of climate change and plastics pollution, which, when combined with the fact that 97% of annual biospheric production is now given over to human consumption, is pushing all other species to the limits of survival. Many experts agree that the planet is experiencing a sixth major extinction event at a rate 70 times faster than the fifth mass extinction 65 million years ago. To paraphrase Paul Watson, if the planet dies, we die. As to climate, the ideological wars of the early 2000s have meant almost two decades of wasted action, during which global inequality within and across nations has soared. When both Beijing and New York are ranked in the top eight cities for billionnaires, and those billionaires account for 250 times the carbon emissions of the average person, it would appear both capitalism and communism may have permanently failed humanity.

We are the generation that will have to clean up the mess we inherited. Short of resource wars or complete annihilation, the only hope is brave action on ecosocialism, animal rights and an equitable focus on redistributing resources to all people and across generations, extending careful and respectful curation of rights and resources to other species as well as humans. Our governments are too weak to take on the supersized corporations, their owners, gray minions, and ageing superannuated shareholders that are leaching our planet to death.

Fossil fuels & climate change

The invention of the internal combustion engine was a Frankenstein moment that unleashed two manmade monsters — carbon emissions and plastics pollution. Yes, it allowed humans to harness extra-somatic energy beyond our wildest dreams, but it no longer serves its purpose when renewables are readily at hand. Governments must stop subsidising fossil fuels and pour resources into adaptation for developing countries, renewables, and carbon sequestration technologies.

Climate scientists have compiled a continuous, high-fidelity record of variations in Earth's climate extending 66 million years into the past. Notice in Figure 2 that current temperatures match those around 5-10 million years ago. And then recall that much of human evolution has been over the past seven million years with the suspected sixth major extinction, termed the 'Anthropocene', flourishing beginning at the nadir of the Icehouse period. We evolved in a cool climate, and we have metabolic limits to human survival that affects planetary liveability (Figure 3).

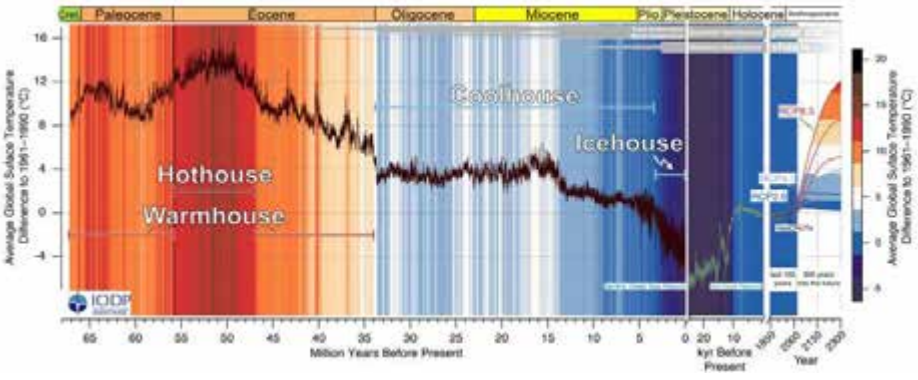
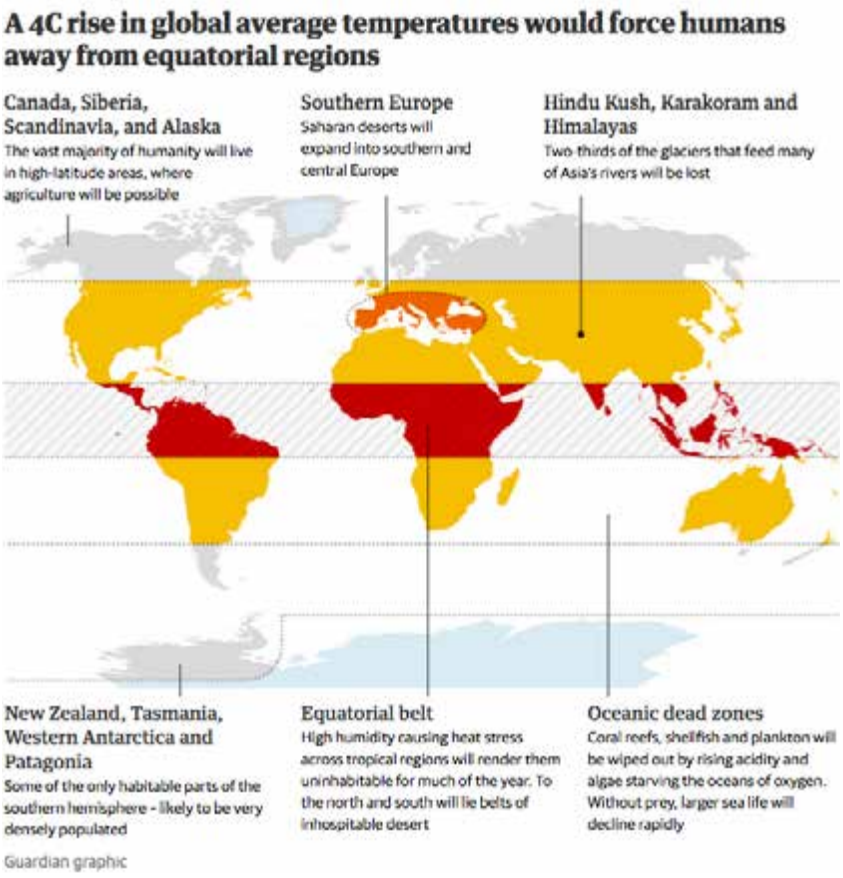


FIGURE 1 (Source: Phys Org, 2020)



(FIGURE 2 Source: Spratt, 2019)

Analyses of temperature records from surface temperature measurements, satellite data, ice cores, tree rings and ocean heat content measurements, reveal a clear and persistent warming trend. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) synthesizes data from all these sources to show the last four decades have been successively warmer with the period from 1981 to 2010 being the warmest in the last 1,400 years. Statistical analysis of temperature data from weather stations worldwide confirms a global average temperature increase of approximately 1.2 degrees Celsius since the late 19th century.

Researchers also use attribution studies, employing statistical methods to attribute observed climate changes to specific causes, such as greenhouse gas emissions. These studies consistently demonstrate the influence of human-induced greenhouse gas emissions, particularly from burning fossil fuels, on the observed temperature rise. Statistical analyses of the isotopic composition of atmospheric carbon dioxide further confirm that the increased concentrations are due to human activities. On top of climate modelling and attribution studies, further evidence resides in extreme weather events. Studies analyzing the frequency and intensity of heatwaves, hurricanes, droughts, and heavy rainfall events show an increasing trend, all aligning with climate model projections. The global attribution study in 2021 showed 30% of Australia's Black Summer was confirmed as caused by climate change. For more information you can listen to Is arson really the main source of bushfires? (cosmosmagazine.com)

With the addition of tipping points, global warming is expected to reach an extra 4 degrees as early as 2060 — in our lifetimes. If 4 degrees eventuates, much of the planet becomes unliveable, as seen in Figure 3. Tipping points affect the planet's natural defences against the sun's radiation and global warming, which will cause global warming to increase at a devastating pace. Although others exist (up to 25), there are nine main examples of tipping points according to Carbon Brief (2022). These include the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation breakdown, Amazon rainforest dieback, Boreal Forest Shift, coral reef die-off, Greenland ice sheet disintegration, Indian monsoon shift, permafrost loss, West Antarctic ice sheet disintegration, and the West African monsoon shift (Carbon Brief, 2022) Tipping points are critical points or peaks that if reached or surpassed it will cause irreversible changes in climate change.

Plastics & pollution

The whole idea of using single use plastics is unsustainable. Why design a product to be used only momentarily with such durability that it lasts in the environment for 1000 years? Plastics are a byproduct of the oil industry and so pollution by plastics has grown in parallel with carbon emissions.

Such is the reach of plastics that the North Pacific has been plagued by the Great Pacific garbage patch for the past half century, a floating island of detritus roughly the size of Queensland, and one that reaches as deeply as the Mariana Trench. We as humans are part of the biosphere so it's not surprising that 80% of people now have microplastics in their blood, which can leach synthetic estrogens from phthalates, reduce sperm count in men and cause early menstruation in women (Francis, 2022). Wildlife is affected on land and sea. Gentoo penguins will accidentally consume microplastics when feeding, causing internal injuries, digestion problems, and disruptions to reproduction (Bessa et al., 2019). Turtles will often mistake plastic bags for jellyfish, which creates internal blockages, inflammation, disruption of hormone regulation, and oxidative stress (Schuyler et al., 2015). Plastic also covers the substrate where stingrays feed (Nelms et al., 2019).

China and Japan are the largest contributors to pollution in the Great Pacific garbage patch, producing an astounding two-thirds of the total pollution, followed by the Korean Peninsula with 10 percent, the US with 6.5 percent, Taiwan with 5.6 percent, and Canada with 4.7 percent (Casella, 2022). These are joined by Philippines, India, Malaysia, and Indonesia (Gembarska, 2023). While these countries don't produce the most plastic, they have large coastlines, lots of rain and poor waste management. The top five polluting companies in the world are Coca Cola, PepsiCo, Nestle, Danone, Mondelez International, Unilever, Proctor & Gamble (Schleeter, 2018). In 2022, in response to the plastic pollution crisis, the United Nations achieved a global treaty across 175 nations to reduce single-use plastic production and promote recycling, analyse the life cycle of plastics and tax producers, aiming to take effect in 2024 (UNEP, 2022).

The health cobenefits of climate change mitigation

Tackling the dual horrors of oil in the form of plastics pollution and carbon emissions isn't just about protecting the environment; it also yields numerous health co-benefits that positively impact individuals and communities worldwide.

Firstly, reducing greenhouse gas emissions through cleaner energy sources such as wind, solar, and hydroelectric power significantly improves air quality. Fossil fuel combustion releases pollutants like particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, and sulfur dioxide, contributing to respiratory ailments like asthma, bronchitis, and cardiovascular diseases. By transitioning to cleaner energy sources, we decrease these harmful emissions, leading to decreased rates of respiratory illnesses and related hospitalizations.

Additionally, active transportation modes such as walking and cycling, encouraged by policies promoting less reliance on cars and more efficient public transportation systems, not only decrease carbon emissions but also encourage physical activity. This active lifestyle reduces the risk of chronic conditions like obesity, diabetes, and heart disease while improving overall fitness and mental health.

Agricultural changes can also play a significant role. Sustainable farming practices and a shift towards plant-based diets can reduce methane emissions from livestock and decrease deforestation, preserving biodiversity and promoting healthier diets. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains not only reduces the risk of chronic diseases but also ensures better nutrition and overall health.

Moreover, mitigating climate change involves adapting to extreme weather events and building resilient communities. Investments in infrastructure to withstand climate-related disasters, like floods and heatwaves, not only protect lives but also prevent injuries and diseases that often result from such events. Improved access to clean water and sanitation systems is crucial in preventing waterborne diseases, particularly in regions vulnerable to climate change impacts.

Tackling climate change also involves addressing environmental degradation. Preserving natural habitats and green spaces helps mitigate the spread of infectious diseases by preserving ecosystems and preventing the encroachment of humans into wildlife habitats, reducing the risk of zoonotic diseases like COVID-19.

Furthermore, prioritizing renewable energy sources over fossil fuels reduces the health risks associated with fossil fuel extraction, transportation, and accidents. Communities near oil refineries, coal mines, or pipelines — usually Indigenous and the poor — often face increased risks of respiratory issues, cancers, and other health problems due to exposure to pollutants and accidents. Shifting away from these hazardous industries protects the health of these communities.

On top of all this, numerous studies warn against links between hot weather and violence, with studies examining thousands of years of data suggesting heightened rates of homicide, domestic violence, and civil war. In a hotter world with greater pressures on water and food production, plus growing inequality worldwide, the likelihood of resource wars is vastly increased. Australia's former head of defence, Admiral Chris Barrie says climate change is a greater threat than China (smh.com.au)

The health co-benefits of climate change mitigation are significant and far-reaching. They encompass not only physical health but also mental well-being and social resilience. By addressing this global challenge, we have the opportunity not only to safeguard our planet but also to improve the health and well-being of current and future generations.

An ecological ethic

A major source of health co-benefits is the elimination of some, if not all meat production for human consumption. Taken together, from water and land requirements to transport and consumption, the meat industry accounts for 30% of global carbon emissions (Read, 2017). Although arguably important for child growth, beyond adulthood red meat is a major cause of cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes. During this production process, the treatment of animals should also be of significant concern.

If we can begin to build wellbeing economies that sustainably satisfy human needs without destroying the planet, then we can also begin to explore extending human rights to other species, both sentient and perhaps even not. In an article by Jeff Sebo on the topic of utilitarianism, he discusses how utilitarianism and animals go hand in hand because even though animals aren't humans, they are still able to feel and experience the same things that humans go through, and in this case, it's experiencing pain (Sebo, 2023). By establishing that animals can feel and experience pain just like humans, it allows us to bring in the conversation about utilitarianism which focuses on the best interests of everyone

around us, including animals. By eliminating our anthropocentric bias, one that favours humans over non-humans, we can begin focusing on ways to improve the overall health and well-being of the planet as a whole (Sebo, 2023). This satisfies multiple ethical stances, ranging from basic utilitarianism, through the Rawlsian focus on the most vulnerable, to embrace even traditional ethical accounts like the Kantian categorical imperative supporting the cross-cultural 'golden rule' to 'do unto others as you would have done to you'.

In the realm of environmental ethics, biocentrism and ecofeminism both offer a unique and compelling viewpoint regarding the treatment of animals, noting, like Rousseau, that neither land or water, nor women and children, nor animals, should be treated as property.

Ecofeminism is a philosophical and activist movement that posits the interconnectedness of the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature (Gaard & Green, 1993). When applied to the issue of animal rights, ecofeminism underscores the parallel between the subjugation of women and animals, viewing both as victims of patriarchal and anthropocentric systems. This perspective challenges traditional ethical paradigms that often overlook the interests and rights of non-human creatures. Modern-day ecofeminism follows the prominent footsteps of Australian ecofeminist Judith Wright and shares a kinship with Peter Singer's notion of 'speciesism' (DW Documentary, 2023). Echoing this, biocentrism and ecofeminism emphasize that the ethical treatment of animals should transcend species boundaries and instead focus on the capacity for suffering and sentience. By doing so, we acknowledge that animals, like humans, experience pain and deserve moral consideration. In a Western society where laws often interpret animal protection as an exercise of property rights, ecofeminism questions these interpretations, advocating for the intrinsic value of animals beyond their utility to humans. Ecofeminist ethics of responsibility resonates with Singer's notion of 'gratuitous suffering' and the belief that humans should not inflict unnecessary harm on animals.

When looking at ecofeminism's holistic approach to environmental ethics it compels us to consider the intersection of women's rights, animal rights, and ecological sustainability. It challenges us to see the web of interconnected oppressions that have persisted in patriarchal and anthropocentric societies. More broadly, biocentrism directly challenges anthropocentric ideas and allows a wider perspective towards the intrinsic value of nature regardless of its value to the human race. Through these lenses we can begin to appreciate the ethical imperative of promoting a more compassionate, equitable, and sustainable world for all living beings.

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EDUCATION

‘It’s time’ to Fix Higher Education

DR ALISON BARNES

> “We are all diminished when any of us are denied proper education. The nation is the poorer — a poorer economy, a poorer civilisation, because of this human and national waste.”
> — Gough Whitlam, 1969 policy speech

Equality of opportunity is one of the great Australian values, one that the Australian Labor Party has advocated for all Australians. Now is the time for Labor to make it a reality.

The importance of higher education

Access to higher education has become a major determinant of one’s opportunity and success in life. The federal Department of Education has reported that, in 2020, higher education graduates earned 65 percent more than persons without post-school qualifications and 23 per cent more than those with certificate III or IV qualifications. For the individual, over a lifetime the difference adds up. But, of course, what is not measured is the broader social impact of the presence or absence of a well educated citizenry and a highly skilled workforce.

In his July address to the National Press Club to launch the Interim Report of the Universities Accord, Minister Jason Clare correctly said that almost every new job that’s created in the years ahead will require a TAFE qualification or a university degree. The number of students studying in Commonwealth-supported university places will double from today’s 900,000 to 1.8 million by 2050, i.e., our existing system will double in size. This poses the question — how can we upsize our currently stretched system while maintaining the quality of teaching and the value of Australian university degrees?

Quality of education in the current system

At present the higher education system produces about 200,000 bachelor level graduates each year, 30 per cent of whom are international students. The completion rate, however, for our domestic students is falling: 67 per cent of Australian students who began a bachelor degree in 2005 completed their degree within six years of commencing; but for those students who commenced in 2016 the figure has dropped to 63.6 per cent.[1]

At the same time, student satisfaction with the quality of the education they have received has also declined. In 2015, 80 per cent of students said they were generally happy with the quality of their educational experience; seven years later, in 2022, the figure was 75.9%.[2] These trends are not surprising given that university class sizes are growing while the front-line staff that universities deploy to teach and support students are increasingly likely to be casuals, who generally are not well resourced nor provided

1 Department of Education, Selected Higher Education Statistics – 2021 Student data, Cohort analysis completion rates, https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/student-data/selected-higher-education-statistics-2021-student-data
2 Quality of Learning and Teaching Student Experience Survey Results, https://www.qilt.edu.au/surveys/student-experience-survey-(ses)

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with professional support and development by their employers. In 2006 there were 20.4 equivalent full-time students per equivalent full time teaching staff member. By 2020 this ratio had worsened to 24.3, a 19 per cent increase.[3] These trends are symptomatic of a system that, in the pursuit of growth, has de-valued teaching and the research and scholarship that underpin it.

The rise of the high-volume, low-cost model

Over the last 15 years, universities have adopted a low-cost, high-volume student strategy. The harsh reality is that higher education workers are among the most likely in the economy to be insecurely employed, with just a third of the workforce in public universities employed on a continuing basis.

The higher education academic workforce is becoming increasingly specialised with growth seen in roles that are either teaching or research focused, but these more concentrated roles are also highly insecure. Around half of the workers in the sector are employed on casual contracts, and the remainder on fixed-term contracts.[4] The latter abound in research and are usually deployed back-to-back over many consecutive contracts. The systemic insecurity of research careers in Australia was identified by the recent review of the Australian Research Council as a serious barrier to attracting skilled workers into research.

Earlier this year NTEU published a report into wage theft in Australian universities. The total figure of confirmed underpayments in Australian universities uncovered since 2020 now stands at well over $100 million. But this figure merely scratches the surface because it covers only clear, explicit breaches of employment law that have so far been proven or admitted to. It does not cover the routine, unpaid work staff know so well.

Data from NTEU's surveys of university staff indicate that casual teaching staff are on average paid for 60 per cent of the work they perform. The unpaid 40 per cent includes responding to student emails, supporting students who need extra help outside of the classroom, and providing drop-in office hours for students. These support functions are not guaranteed services provided by Australian universities but are supplied on an ad hoc basis by low-income casual staff out of a sense of duty to their students and a (legitimate) fear that, if they fail to provide them, they won't be employed the following semester.

Universities have systematically taken advantage of this donated time to salvage the student experience

3 In 2006 there were 691,000 EFTSL of student load across 33,800 FTE of teaching and research or teaching only staff in causal, fixed term, or ongoing positions. In 2020 there were 1.135m EFTSL students and 44,500 FTE of relevant staff in the same categories. This number would be significantly higher using headcounts. Sources: https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/resources/2006-all-student-load; https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/resources/selected-higher-education-statistics-staff-2007-report-and-tables appendix 1.6; https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/resources/2020-section-4-all-student-load
Selected Higher Education Statistics – 2021 Staff data, https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/staff-data/selected-higher-education-statistics-2021-staff-data Appendix 1.11

4 Headcount estimate is based on departmental staffing data (as cited above)

while at the same time diverting resources away from teaching into research and their own savings accounts.

The cynicism of sector leaders has been particularly confronting in the international student sector — it is now considered good industry practice to charge an international student around three times the cost of teaching their program to generate a surplus that can be used to fund research, infrastructure, and retained institutional equity (which is ballooning into the billions in funding in the big international student meccas). Infrastructure and improved research rankings are in turn used in aggressive marketing campaigns to attract more high-paying international students into low-cost courses. It is not unusual for an international student to pay $200,000-$300,000 for a four-year degree mostly taught by underpaid casual staff.

Notwithstanding the ethical and quality concerns this raises, COVID-19 starkly demonstrated that our universities are relying on a risky business model. It is time to take a serious look at this run-away train and ask whether the model that has emerged is in the public interest.

A vision for the future

Universities need to be restored to serving their communities. We can start by using mission-based compacts — agreements that outline what a university should be achieving in the public interest. Just as important, as Jason Clare has said, is the need for our universities to be 'exemplary employers' — for the benefit of staff, students, and all Australians. Casual arrangements are clearly not suitable for the bulk of ongoing teaching work in our public universities, just as they are not suitable in our public schools.

A straightforward way to improve practices would be more transparency — students should be able to readily discover, before they apply, what percentage of teaching an institution conducts using casual staff. If transparency and casualisation are not able to be resolved using State legislation (as proposed in the Universities Accord Interim Report), the federal government needs to use its powers to ensure that public funding supports quality jobs and quality education.

The government also needs to address the poor institutional governance that has beset our universities: excessive executive remuneration, the removal of staff and student voices in institutional governance, lack of transparency and accountability in institutional decision-making and processes, poor workforce planning, and issues of safety on our campuses. Our institutions need an urgent overhaul if they are to be 'exemplary employers.' NTEU is not alone in saying this — the Fair Work Ombudsman was scathing in its submission to the Universities Accord review, citing a lack of workforce planning, structural inefficiencies, and poor management that had resulted from poor governance.

It is also in the national interest for research to be properly supported. The vast majority of Australia's research and development (R&D) is undertaken by researchers working in higher education, yet the highly competitive but limited funding covers only part of university research activities. The Universities Accord Interim report called for universities to be fully funded for research, which must include the infrastructure needed to carry out research grants. This will help solve the problem of public money being redirected away from teaching and will have the added benefit of reducing the sector's over-reliance on uncapped international student fees.

We caution, however, against shrinking the pool of research-active institutions as an alternative solution to increased research funding. While specialisation of the higher education sector into research-active and teaching-only institutions may sound appealing to those looking for ways to expand the sector to meet future needs, it will create a multi-tiered system — with the richest, best resourced, research-supported institutions reserved for the usual elites. If research is redirected away from institutions in the outer metropolitan and regional areas, the impacts on their communities will be profound, lessening not only the quality of education and research training opportunities, but also access to expertise and infrastructure.

When Bob Hawke introduced the Higher Education Contributions Scheme in 1989 as a way to fund a much larger and more accessible system, he did not dream of a system where cost cutting and poor employment practices would be seen as the only path to institutional success. Our current government has shown great initiative in undertaking a monumental review into the sector. Now it's time to act.

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EDUCATION

Australia's Education Mirage

The story of student immigration's dual toll

LAVANYA GAUTAM & ANURAG MITTAL

Imagine stepping onto a sun-kissed campus, where kangaroos occasionally hop by as you rush to your next lecture. Envision lively discussions with classmates from every corner of the globe, against a backdrop of stunning landscapes that range from lush rainforests to bustling city skylines. This is the captivating world of student immigrants in Australia — a fusion of academic pursuit and life-changing adventure that beckons thousands each year. Beyond the glossy brochures and picturesque postcards, however, lies a story that intertwines dreams with challenges and aspirations with adaptability. Even the glistening campuses and vibrant cultural mosaic are undoubtedly alluring, but they cast shadows that stretch far beyond the picturesque landscapes. For every success story, there's a cautionary tale of unsuspecting students falling victim to immigration scams, unscrupulous agents, and fraudulent institutions. As aspirations soar, nefarious individuals capitalize on the vulnerability of hopeful minds, preying on their eagerness to study abroad.

The influx of international students contributes significantly to Australia's economy, but the prioritization of financial gains has sometimes led to lowered educational standards and a focus on quantity over quality. This can leave students in a quagmire of subpar education, thwarting their dreams and putting their futures at risk. As we delve into the underbelly of student immigration in Australia, it becomes evident that this landscape is not just painted with the rosy hues of opportunity but also daubed with shades of deception and vulnerability. Our journey through these dual narratives will expose the complexities of pursuing education abroad, serving as both a cautionary tale and a call for greater awareness and advocacy.

Students hailing from countries like India and China, which collectively account for over 40% of international student immigration in 2022, are increasingly finding themselves drawn to the allure of Australia. The significant influx of students to Australia, is largely attributed to the formidable challenges posed by competitive exams like China's Gaokao and India's JEE, NEET, CUET, and CAT. These exams are not only grueling tests of academic prowess but also gatekeepers to prestigious institutions. Even after going through this rigorous process, there are limited seats in these domestic universities and on top of that these universities often fall far short of the global top 150 ranking. Fueled by intense societal pressure, relentless competition, and a scarcity of esteemed educational organizations, a growing number of Indian and Chinese students are opting to pursue mainstream degrees like medical sciences, engineering and management courses in Australia, seeking an escape from the confines of these demanding systems. The predicament of pursuing education in innovative domains such as biotechnology, public policy, agriculture science, international relations etc. becomes daunting in their native lands. Universities there seldom offer these cutting-edge programs, and when they do, they often lack the necessary resources and facilities to foster skill development. Moreover, the job markets in these countries prove intricate, providing limited opportunities across diverse academic pursuits. Furthermore, in both China and India, a paradoxical scenario has emerged where despite completing degrees and acquiring skills in their home countries, many Chinese and Indian students find themselves struggling to secure desirable job opportunities due to the saturation of the job market, intense competition, and an evolving economic landscape. In India the unemployment remains over 7.0 percent under which youth employment is around 3.6 per cent at the primary level, 8.0 percent at the graduate level and 9.3 per cent at post-grad. In China the current youth unemployment rate is 19.9 percent which is astoundingly high. These rates of unemployment imply that even after acquiring top-notch degrees, individuals tend to be unemployed.

Even though both these countries boast a vast pool of skilled graduates but lack of job opportunities which commensurate with their qualifications from prestigious universities remains a pressing issue. Moreover, the one child policy, once implemented to control population growth, has inadvertently shaped a generation's aspirations and the pursuit of better opportunities beyond China's borders. The singular child allowed by the one-child policy has led to heightened expectations from parents who invest heavily in order for their children to excel academically and secure high-paying jobs. Moreover, the quest for societal clout plays a significant role. In a culture that highly values prestige and success, studying abroad, particularly in countries with reputable education systems, enhances one's societal standing. The experience of studying overseas not only symbolizes personal achievement but also

elevates the student's family within their community. This pursuit of prestige further incentivizes Chinese students to seek educational and career opportunities beyond China's borders. This dilemma has fueled a significant migration of talent to Australia in search of better employment prospects and a chance to leverage their education and skills effectively.

In this context, Australia emerges as a beacon of promise, offering a holistic pathway to a brighter future. Its prestigious universities, diverse society, and exceptional working conditions together form an irresistible package, compelling students to transcend geographical boundaries in pursuit of a more enriched and fulfilling life.

As we discussed the major reasons for students to immigrate to Australia was often rooted in genuine aspirations for better education, improved career prospects, and the opportunity to provide for their families back home. However, this pursuit of a brighter future can inadvertently render them vulnerable to scams, fraudsters, and crimes in their new host country. The following section will expand on the dark side of student immigration.

Amid the allure of studying in Australia, student immigrants often fall victim to fake visa agents. Exploiting newcomers' vulnerability, these agents promise easy visas and seamless transitions. However, their deceitful practices lead to financial losses, visa complications, and shattered dreams. Such scams jeopardize students' academic plans, legal status, and emotional well-being. Pre-pandemic data showed the Department of Home Affairs received an average of around 500 visa scam reports per year.

"Gurpreet Singh who came to Australia from Punjab, India for better living got tangled into extension of work rights and ended up losing $25000 which was duped by a fake visa assistant agent in Brisbane"

Addressing this issue demands collaborative efforts from educational institutions, regulatory bodies, and law enforcement. Promoting awareness, offering clear visa application information, and cracking down on fraudulent agents are crucial steps to safeguarding student aspirations and ensuring a legitimate path to education in Australia.

For student immigrants seeking to balance their studies with financial stability, the unfortunate reality of wage theft has cast a shadow on their aspirations. Many are employed in part-time jobs, often in low-wage sectors, making them vulnerable to exploitative practices. Unscrupulous employers may underpay, withhold wages, or manipulate working hours, leaving students with diminished earnings that fail to meet even basic living expenses. The fear of losing employment or jeopardizing their visa status can keep students silent about such injustices.

For student immigrants seeking to balance their studies with financial stability, the unfortunate reality of wage theft has cast a shadow on their aspirations.

"Pranay a part-time worker at the popular convenience store chain of seven-eleven was a victim of wage theft and was paid pennies on dollars, way below the minimum legal wage and was often threatened by the store manager to get deported if he spoke against him"

Addressing wage theft necessitates robust legal protections, accessible avenues for reporting, and increased awareness campaigns. By ensuring fair treatment, Australia can uphold its reputation as a welcoming destination for student immigrants and champion their rights in pursuit of a better future. Amid the pursuit of education, some student immigrants and visa holders find themselves drawn into criminal activities due to financial pressures and isolation. Balancing academic pursuits with the high costs of living, individuals can become vulnerable to criminal networks offering quick income through fraud, identity theft, or even drug trafficking. The allure of financial gain may overshadow potential consequences, endangering legal status and personal well-being. Additionally, the isolation experienced by some newcomers intensifies susceptibility to manipulation.

"Australia's student immigration policy has opened a gate for criminals to operate across borders. Over the years Australian Police have caught and seized Chinese human traffickers and sex rackets. Moreover, it was found that student visas were being used to traffic people across borders. "

Addressing this issue requires comprehensive efforts, including improved access to legal employment options, mental health support, and

proactive outreach from educational and community entities. By providing necessary resources and fostering a secure environment, Australia can deter student immigrants from criminal involvement and facilitate their educational journey.

The dreams of student immigrants can turn into nightmares when they fall victim to fraudsters operating through fake educational institutions. Exploiting the enticing wish of studying abroad, these fraudulent entities lure unsuspecting students with promises of quality education and guaranteed employment opportunities. However, the reality often involves non-existent or subpar courses, leaving students deceived and financially drained. Moreover, the illegal immigration of migrants under the guise of education compounds the issue. Unscrupulous individuals exploit the student visa system by enrolling migrants in sham courses while actually integrating them into the workforce. This circumvents immigration regulations and robs genuine students of their rightful educational experience.

"Baljit 'Bobby' Singh, Rakesh Kumar and Mukesh Sharma faced charges of defrauding and falsifying documents including police checks and student records, in relation to using two training colleges to illegally immigrate migrants into work force in the name of education. They also used the institute to dupe $2 million from the government in the name of research."

These practices not only defraud students but also undermine the integrity of the education system and the broader immigration framework. To combat this, heightened regulatory scrutiny, transparent information dissemination, and stringent enforcement mechanisms are essential. By doing so, Australia can protect the aspirations of genuine student immigrants and uphold the reputation of its education sector.

Australia's immigration policy exhibits certain vulnerabilities that are being exploited by immigrants and students to gain entry into the workforce. These individuals are leveraging avenues such as enrolling in short-term VET (Vocational Education and Training) courses, particularly in fields like medical sciences. While these courses may not substantially enhance skill levels, they offer extended work visa privileges. Regrettably, this phenomenon runs counter to Australia's policy objectives of importing high-quality talent. It's observed that students frequently opt for these brief courses even when lacking genuine interest and the requisite skills, resulting in a misalignment with the intended goals of the policy.

In recent years, the Chinese government has put in place a number of restrictions on the amount of money that Chinese citizens can send overseas. This has made it more difficult for Chinese students studying in Australia to send money back home to support themselves and their families. Moreover, the cost of living in Australia is relatively high, especially in major cities like Sydney and Melbourne leading to Chinese students finding ways to supplement their income in order to make ends meet. International students in Australia are only allowed to work up to 20 hours per week during term time and unlimited hours during semester breaks. This means that they need to find casual jobs that fit around their studies. As a result of these factors, many Chinese students in Australia are compelled to work casual jobs in order to make ends meet. These jobs are often low-paying and require long hours, but they can provide students with the income they need to support themselves and their studies. In addition to the financial reasons, Chinese students may also feel compelled to work casual jobs in order to gain work experience and improve their English language skills. The Chinese government's remittance restrictions have had a significant impact on Chinese students studying in Australia. These constraints have resulted to be more challenging for students to support themselves and their families and work longer hours in low-paying occupations. This has had a negative impact on the students' mental and physical health, and it has also made it more difficult for them to focus on their studies. The Australian government has expressed concern about the impact of the Chinese government's remittance restrictions on Chinese students in Australia. The government has urged the Chinese government to relax these restrictions in order to make it easier for students to support themselves and their studies.

Economic repercussions on Australia due to student immigration

The mass influx of student immigrants to Australia has inadvertently exacerbated the housing crisis in many regions. The appeal of quality education and a welcoming environment has attracted a significant number of international students, placing additional strain on housing availability and affordability. The demand for accommodations, particularly in urban centers with prominent universities, often outpaces supply. As a result, rental prices surge, making housing unaffordable for both students and local

The COVID-19 pandemic has cast a revealing light on the delicate balance Australian universities maintain between financial stability and educational quality.

residents. Additionally, the pressure on housing resources can lead to overcrowding, substandard living conditions, and exploitation by unscrupulous landlords. This crisis not only affects students but also impacts local communities, as they grapple with limited affordable housing options. To address this issue, a comprehensive approach involving increased investment in housing infrastructure, stricter regulations on rental practices, and collaborative efforts between universities and local authorities is crucial. Balancing the benefits of student immigration with the need for affordable and accessible housing is pivotal for fostering a harmonious and sustainable environment for all residents.

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a surge in inflation, impacting students and the economy alike. Students are confronted with higher living expenses, particularly concerning essentials like food, accommodation, and healthcare. This inflation exacerbates the financial challenges many students already face, making it harder to manage their education-related costs. For international students, the impact is compounded, as currency devaluation against the Australian dollar can further inflate their expenses. Students may need to allocate more of their budget to everyday necessities, potentially limiting their ability to invest in educational resources and experiences. Additionally, students who rely on part-time work to sustain themselves might face difficulties securing employment in a labor market strained by economic uncertainty, this has forced many to work in poor conditions and at wages below legal minimum wage — to mitigate these effects, targeted financial support and resources for students, along with mechanisms to control inflation, are necessary. By alleviating the economic burden on students, Australia can help maintain their well-being, support the broader economy, and sustain its reputation as a welcoming destination for education and international talent.

The COVID-19 pandemic has cast a revealing light on the delicate balance Australian universities maintain between financial stability and educational quality. Heavily reliant on international student fees, these institutions have faced a significant funding challenge due to travel restrictions and decreased enrollments. To bridge the financial gap, some universities have been compelled to make compromises that could impact educational standards. The reduction in revenue has led to difficult decisions, including staff cuts, reduced research funding, and streamlined resources. On top of that introduction of new and attractive courses in order to charm and entice the students without sufficient resources and educational structures have added fuel to the fire. These measures, while essential for financial survival, can inadvertently affect the student experience. Overcrowded classrooms, decreased support services, and strained faculty-student interactions are potential consequences that may compromise the overall quality of education. While these compromises are a response to extraordinary circumstances, they raise concerns about the long-term impact on Australia's reputation as an educational hub.

Striking a balance between financial sustainability and maintaining educational excellence is crucial. Government support, innovative revenue streams, and strategic planning are essential to ensure that Australian universities continue to offer high-quality education, attract international students, and remain globally competitive in a post-pandemic world.

Our analysis thus far has illuminated the considerable impact of student immigration on Australia. Addressing the issues of visa fraud and declining educational standards necessitates a shift in the approach to international education policy. The focus should pivot from merely maximizing student enrollments to prioritizing educational quality.

Achieving this transformation requires several key strategies:

- *Elevating Entry Standards*: Particular emphasis should be placed on raising the benchmarks for entry, especially with regard to English-language proficiency.
- *Strengthening Financial Requirements*: Increasing the financial prerequisites for entry into Australia can serve as a deterrent to subpar intentions and ensure that genuine students are prioritized.
- *Severing the Link between Study, Work Rights, and Residency*: Disassociating the privileges of studying, work rights, and permanent residency will contribute to a more genuine pursuit of education and career goals.

To navigate the challenge of balancing work and academic commitments, a tailored approach is essential. By adjusting work hour limits based on course types and academic levels, such as distinguishing between undergraduates and students in fields like arts versus those in rigorous disciplines like engineering, students can better manage their academic pursuits without compromising their employment opportunities. Furthermore, liberalizing post-graduation work visa rights tied to specific courses can serve to export authentic talent. Encouraging students to pursue their fields of interest post-graduation will likely result in a more dedicated and productive workforce.

To combat visa fraud both domestically and internationally, the establishment of a task force and the implementation of stringent policies are imperative. Integrating biometric security measures, akin to those utilized by the United States, can substantially curtail human trafficking, and mitigate financial losses attributed to fraudulent agents. This proactive approach will safeguard the integrity of Australia's immigration system while preserving the interests of both students and the nation at large.

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ORIGINAL POETRY

The ever present uncertainty of Spring

CAROLYN VAN LANGENBERG

Every morning i hoist the blinds to scan the back garden
deep in shadow on the ground where moisture smudges earth
under trees stretching upward, grey limbs celebrate
sunlight striking warm on upper branches
where plump buds hesitate, their pause awkward
when the tree is meant to be blossoming.
my great hope lingers, my gaze on specks of cotton pink,
the gloss of green, that cooling shade, to dance when spring recovers.
will the splendour of the tree in the natural world
be desiccated by the summer sun's hot blasts?

VALE

Vale William George Hayden AC

(23 January 1933 — 21 October 2023)

PAUL READ

A truly good man has left our fold. Bill Hayden, luminary, party leader and governor-general, left us aged 90 on 21 October, 2023. Honoured by a state funeral at St Mary's Church at Ipswich, Bill was mourned by his wife of 63 years, Dallas, and three of their four children, Georgina, Kirk and Ingrid, alongside the nation.

Georgina Hayden led mourners in a touching tribute, saying the family had proudly shared their father with the entire nation their whole lives.

"Like our father, we don't feel constrained to do the expected thing. Like our father, we question why. Like our father, we wish we could do better, be better," she said.

"Like our father was proud of us, we are proud of him. Like our father, we adore our mother, we cherish our family. Like our father loved us — loves us — we love him."

Former governors-general Quentin Bryce and Peter Cosgrove were among those to farewell Mr Hayden, along with Annastacia Palaszczuk, Jim Chalmers and Wayne Swan, among many others. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, former prime minister Paul Keating and Sister Angela Mary Doyle AO were some who spoke at the service.

Bill Hayden, a towering figure in Australian politics, dedicated his life to public service, leaving an indelible mark on the nation's history. Born on January 23, 1933, in Brisbane, Queensland, he grew up in humble circumstances, shaped by the challenges of the Great Depression and World War II. These formative experiences instilled in him a deep sense of empathy and a commitment to social justice that would define his political career.

Mr Hayden's journey into politics began in the early 1960s when he joined the Australian Labor Party (ALP). His charisma, intelligence, and tireless work ethic quickly propelled him through the party ranks. In 1961, he won the seat of Oxley in the House of Representatives, marking the beginning of an illustrious parliamentary career spanning over two decades.

His tenure in various ministerial positions showcased his progressive ideals and unwavering dedication to advancing social welfare. As Minister for Social Security, Hayden championed reforms that aimed to alleviate poverty and improve the lives of ordinary Australians. His efforts in restructuring the social security system earned widespread acclaim for their compassion and effectiveness.

However, it was Mr Hayden's leadership as the Leader of the Opposition from 1977 to 1983 that showcased his resilience and political acumen. Despite facing formidable opponents, his determination and ability to connect with Australians from diverse backgrounds garnered respect across

party lines. His vision for a fairer, more egalitarian society resonated deeply with the electorate.

In 1983, following a landslide victory for the Australian Labor Party, Bill Hayden assumed the role of Foreign Minister in the government of Prime Minister Bob Hawke. His diplomatic skills and commitment to global cooperation helped shape Australia's foreign policy during a critical period. Hayden played a pivotal role in strengthening ties with neighbouring countries in the Asia-Pacific region and enhancing Australia's standing on the world stage.

In a surprising turn of events, Mr Hayden was elected as the Governor-General of Australia in 1989, a role that transcended politics and demanded impartiality and statesmanship. His tenure as Governor-General was characterized by grace, dignity, and an unwavering commitment to representing all Australians, regardless of their political affiliations. His dedication to ceremonial duties and community engagements earned him admiration and respect across the nation.

Beyond his political achievements, Bill Hayden was known for his personal integrity and humility. His modest upbringing shaped his worldview, emphasizing the importance of compassion, fairness, and the pursuit of equality. His commitment to social justice issues extended far beyond his time in office, as he continued to advocate for causes close to his heart even after retiring from public life.

Bill Hayden leaves behind a legacy that continues to inspire generations of Australians to strive for a better, more equitable future.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said Mr Hayden's leadership of the Labor party from 1977 to 1983 gave it the chance of a future. "He made it possible for labour to return to its core mission of governing in the national interest and lifting the lives of his fellow Australians," he said. "Some giants cast a shadow, but Bill Hayden was not one of them. With his quiet strength of character, this legend of the Labor movement shone the light that let us see the road ahead. We can be grateful that this child of the Depression turned police officer joined the Australian Labor Party to advance his values."

The service for Mr Hayden was held at St Mary's Church in Ipswich, the church where Mr Hayden was baptised as a Catholic in 2018 after walking away from his staunch atheism later in life. Sister Doyle, who Mr Hayden once credited as being pivotal in him finding faith later in life, also delivered words of remembrance at the service. She said Mr Hayden was "determined to work for the betterment of society",

Bill Hayden, 1977

and had many strengths, including "humility and compassion".

During the service, Acting Commissioner Tracy Linford awarded Mr Hayden with a Queensland Police Service medal, in acknowledgement of his service to the community. The service concluded with a guard of honour by Australia's Federation Guard, soldiers and aviators from the Royal Australian Air Force Base Amberley and students at St Mary's College and St Edmund's College. A fly-past by the Royal Australian Air Force marked the end of the procession.

Bill Hayden's legacy endures in the hearts and minds of Australians, remembered not only for his contributions to politics but also for his unwavering commitment to serving the people. His life stands as a testament to the power of dedication, empathy, and the pursuit of a more just society for all.

ORIGINAL MONOGRAPH

Democratising the Poet

William Morris and the art of everyday life

SAMUEL ALEXANDER

Samuel Alexander's fascinating article on William Morris takes us back into the world of 19th century utopian socialism. How has Morris' vision stood the test of time? How valid is it for us today — and how achievable might it be?

Born in 1834, William Morris was a poet, novelist, designer, printer, philosopher, activist, utopian theorist, pioneering environmentalist, romantic, medievalist, father, and husband. When he died in 1898 at sixty-two years of age, his doctor stated that the cause of death was 'simply being William Morris, and having done more work than most ten men.'[1] E.P. Thompson, in his prominent biography, described Morris' life as reflecting an evolution 'from romantic to revolutionary',[2] but it is probably fairer to say that Morris always remained something of a romantic, albeit one with a growing political sensibility. Despite coming to identify as a socialist, even a Marxist, it befits this complex and original thinker to acknowledge that he is, in a sense, beyond easy or clear classification. This is why, as one commentator notes, everyone seems to want William Morris on their side.[3] He is claimed by socialists, anarchists, environmentalists, and artists — a testament to his social and political relevance, both then and now. At the same time, he has paradoxically become a neglected thinker today, unfairly dismissed by some as a nostalgic sentimentalist. But his aesthetic and political ideas point toward missing ingredients in most contemporary analyses of our troubled age. They offer critical insight into how to understand, and perhaps resolve, aspects of the ever-deepening human-ecological predicament.

Before all else, Morris is remembered today as the leading figure — both arch-theorist and practitioner — in what became known as the Arts and Crafts Movement, which emerged in the late nineteenth century as a subclass of British aestheticism. This was a counter-movement against the trends of mechanisation in production and the intensifying division of labour within industrial capitalism, both of which Morris considered regressive shifts in the productive relations of British society. He feared that 'modern civilization [was] on the road to trample out all the beauty in life,'[4] dehumanising people by treating them as replaceable cogs in a profit-centred machine, all the while degrading the natural environment. Far from being crudely anti-technology, however, Morris was in favour of what today would be called 'appropriate technology'. He never rejected the role of machines in minimising hard, unpleasant labour — a point to which I will return. Rather, he celebrated the role of self-governed creative activity in everyday life, through which humans skilfully produced things by hand that were necessary for a good life.

Indeed, Morris' conception of the good life involved people realising themselves through the pleasurable expression of creative labour — what he broadly called 'art' — and he passionately explored this view both in theory and practice. He conceived of himself 'not as an artist or poet in the High Romantic image, but rather as a craftsman engaged in the "lesser arts"[5], and he believed that, in a well-ordered society, '[a]rt rather than religion, was to become the centrepiece of people's daily lives, directing their hearts and minds to lofty affairs.'[6] This was the aesthetic premise upon which he built his critique of industrial capitalism, arguing that the arts were 'necessary to the life of [human beings]'[7], that there was 'some unthinking craving for [art], some restless feeling in [our] minds of something lacking somewhere'.[8] I interpret this craving as a manifestation of the Will to Art, and the restless feeling he diagnosed as being a result of an aesthetic deficit in society.

In that spirit, this essay offers a reconstructive reading of Morris's views on art, labour, and politics.

Morris' conception of the good life involved people realising themselves through the pleasurable expression of creative labour.

1 See Clive Wilmer, 'Introduction' to William Morris, *News from Nowhere and Other Writings* (London: Penguin, 2004) p. ix.
2 E.P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (London: Merlin Press, 1976).
3 See, e.g., Mark Bevir, 'William Morris: The Modern Self, Art, and Politics' (1998) *History of European Ideas* 24(3): pp. 175-194.
4 William Morris, 'The Beauty of Life' in William Morris, *Hopes and Fears for Art: Five Lectures by William Morris*. Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1882/hopes/chapters/index.htm (accessed 10 May 2023), para. 11.
5 See Bevir, 'William Morris', note 3, p. 179.
6 Ibid.
7 William Morris, 'The Art of the People' in Morris, *Hopes and Fears for Art*, note 4, para. 8.
8 William Morris, 'Making the Best of It' in Morris, *Hopes and Fears for Art*, note 4, para. 109

I begin by examining his broad definition of art, then review his utopian vision of an artful society as sketched in his novel *News from Nowhere* (1890).[9] This provides a foundation for evaluating Morris's theoretical views on labour, which were powerfully and eloquently presented in, among other places, his essay 'Useful Work v. Useless Toil'. This will lead to an engagement with his analysis of the so-called 'lesser arts' of craft, the importance of which he felt were being unduly diminished in an industrial and increasingly consumerist age. I conclude by exploring the political significance of Morris's aesthetic views, which will allow me to outline some of the societal implications of his vision.

Morris's definition of art

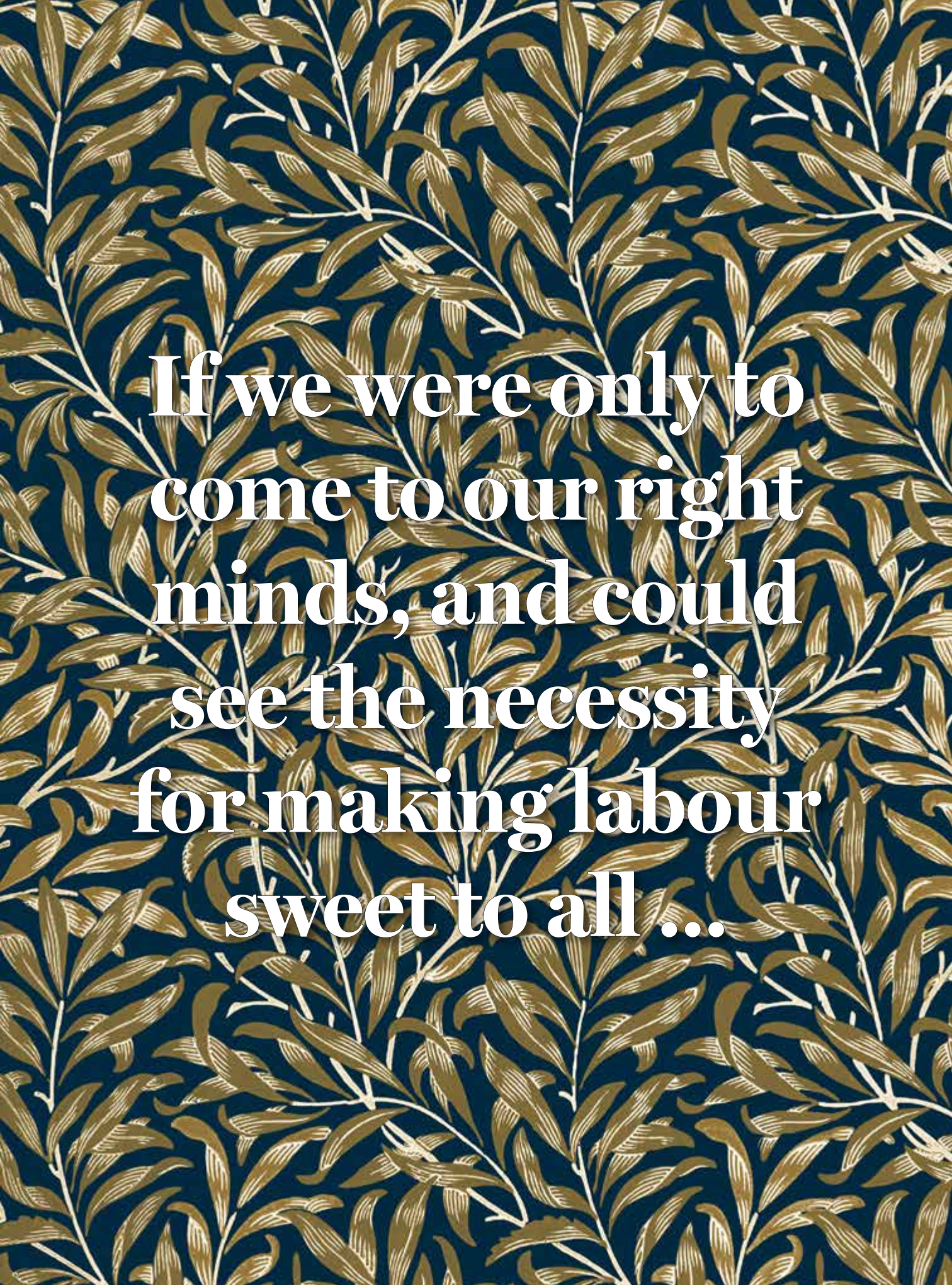
To understand Morris's aesthetic views, it is necessary to grasp the inclusive way in which he defined art. In his most prominent definition (influenced by John Ruskin),[10] he declared that 'the thing I understand by real art is the expression by [human beings] of [their] pleasure in labour.'[11] This is meant to include not just the 'fine arts' — music, sculpture, painting, poetry, and architecture – but also what Morris would ironically call the 'lesser' arts and crafts. These lesser or decorative arts include the making of useful and beautiful things needed for practical affairs in everyday life, whether these be items of furniture, clothing, tools, household items, wallpaper, or even houses. He condemned the alienation of the artist from the craftsperson, of the poet from the people, and his overarching mission was to help create a society in which art would be part of everyday living.[12] In defining art as the 'beauty of life',[13] he explained:

> I must ask you to understand that by the word art, I mean something wider than is usually meant by it. I do not mean only pretty ornament though that is part of it; I do not mean only pictures and sculptures, though they are the highest manifestation of it; I do not mean only splendid and beautiful architecture, through that includes a great deal of all that deserves to be called art: but I mean all these things and a great many more, music, the drama, poetry, imaginative fiction, and above all and especially the kind of feeling which enables us to see beauty in the world and stimulates us to reproduce it, to increase it, to understand it, and to sympathise with those who specially deal with it. In short, by art I mean the… pleasure [which] is produced by the labour of [human beings], either manual or mental or both.[14]

Morris believed that creativity was an ahistorical 'need of a [human being's] soul',[15] and he wanted everyone to feel the same pleasure and meaning in labour that artists, as conventionally defined, feel when they are at work. '[D]elight in skill lies at the root of all art'[16], and he insisted that 'that which most breeds art is art.'[17] He felt art was the highest expression of the human spirit, a 'very serious thing',[18] and something as necessary to human beings as 'the bread we eat, the air we breathe'.[19] Indeed, he claimed that '[i]t is the province of art to set the true ideal of a full and reasonable life… a life to which the perception and creation of beauty… shall be felt to be as necessary to man as his daily bread.'[20] Art is 'above all the token of what chiefly makes life good and not evil, of joy in labour',[21] and in this light it can be understood why Morris believed that it was impossible to disassociate art from morality and politics.

In contrast to high romanticism, Morris rejected the narrow conception of 'the artist' as a rare and inspired genius, instead maintaining that every person had the capacity to create and appreciate art. Creative expression should be part of everyday life, uniting the two elements of 'use and beauty',[22] bringing us into a harmonious relationship with self, society, and nature. In short, Morris wanted to democratise the poet and the artist. Over the course of his prolific life, he developed a social and political

9 William Morris, *News from Nowhere*, in William Morris, *News from Nowhere and Other Writings* (London, Penguin, 2004), pp. 41-228.
10 See William Morris, 'Preface to the Nature of Gothic' in Morris, *News from Nowhere and Other Writings,* note 9, p. 367 ('the lesson which Ruskin here teaches us is that art is the expression of man's pleasure in labour').
11 Morris, 'Art of the People,' note 7, para. 38.
12 Paragraphing from Jessie Kocmanova and J.E. Purkyne, 'The Aesthetic Opinions of William Morris' (1967) *Comparative Literature Studies* 4(4): p. 418.
13 See Morris, 'Beauty of Life', note 4.
14 William Morris, 'Introduction to Art to Labour'. Available at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1884/artintro.htm (accessed 10 May 2023), para. 1.
15 William Morris 'Art and Socialism'. Available at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1884/as/as.htm (accessed 10 May 2023), para. 51.
16 William Morris, 'Some Hints on Pattern-Designing' in William Morris, *News from Nowhere and Other Writings* (London, Penguin, 2004), p. 263.
17 Morris, 'Beauty of Life' note 4, para. 102.
18 Morris, 'Art of the people', note 7, para. 2.
19 See Bevir, note 3, 'William Morris' p. 178,
20 William Morris, *The Collected Works of William Morris* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1910-1915), Vol. 23, p. 279.
21 William Morris, *The Unpublished Lectures of William Morris* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1969), p 52.
22 William Morris, 'Art and the Beauty of the Earth'. Available at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1881/earth.htm (accessed 10 May 2023), para. 1.


If we were only to
come to our right
minds, and could
see the necessity
for making labour
sweet to all ...

vision based on this egalitarian vision that there is genius, poetry, and art in all human beings, as the following passage makes clear:

> what I mean by an art is some creation of man which appeals to his emotions and his intellect by means of his senses. All the greater arts appeal directly to that intricate combination of intuitive perceptions, feelings, experience, and memory which is called imagination. All artists, who deal with those arts, have these qualities superabundantly, and have them balanced in such exquisite order that they can use them for purposes of creation. But we must never forget that all men who are not naturally deficient, or who have not been spoiled by defective or perverse education, have imagination in some measure, and also have some of the order which guides it; so that they also are partakers of the greater arts, and the masters of them have not to speak under their breath to half-a-dozen chosen men, but rather their due audience is the whole race of man properly and healthily developed.[23]

On that basis, Morris argued that society should be structured and organised to enable this aesthetic conception of flourishing. His vision of socialist society was one in which art fulfilled people during their everyday activities, offering meaning and pleasure in the exercise of their skills and creative capacities. 'That cause is the Democracy of Art,' he declared, 'the ennobling of daily and common work, which will one day put hope and pleasure in the place of fear and pain, as the forces which move [humankind] to labour and keep the world a-going.'[24] And again, art included all meaningful and creative labour, not merely the practice of the so-called fine arts. The act of creation was less about producing a particular product and more about feeling a particular way about the product one created; about feeling connected to the process from beginning to end. It was Morris' view that the 'aim of art is to increase the happiness of [human beings], by giving them beauty and interest of incident to amuse their leisure, and prevent them wearying even of rest, and by giving them hope and bodily pleasure in their work; or, shortly, to make [a person's] work happy and [their] rest fruitful.'[25] In a celebrated line from his essay 'Art for the People', Morris summarised his vision of aesthetic socialism by describing a society where art 'is to be made by the people and for the people, as a happiness to the maker and the user.'[26]

By contrast, in a society without art, Morris maintained, 'the progress of civilisation' would be 'as causeless as the turning of a wheel that makes nothing',[27] such that 'loss of peace and good life… must follow from the lack of it.'[28] Commenting critically on his own age, he suggested that people have 'degraded themselves into something less than [human beings]… because they have ceased to have their due share of art.'[29] Without this due share he believed true education and civilisation was impossible. His own diverse life as an artist and artisan instilled in him the insight that creative work is incredibly fulfilling, but it also highlighted how mundane and meaningless working life was for most people in the existing conditions of British society in the late nineteenth century. In *The Necessity of Art* (1963), Marxist philosopher Ernest Fischer wrote that 'the sincere humanist artist could no longer affirm such a world. He could no longer believe that the victory of the bourgeoisie meant the triumph of humanity.'[30] Morris had anticipated this view when he wrote: 'The Death of Art was too high a price to pay for the material prosperity of the middle classes.'[31]

But in this very Death of Art, Morris was to find a source of hope. People would eventually realise that their toil under industrial capitalism was diminishing their inherent creative capacities and desires, thereby reducing them to something less than fully human. At such a point of realisation, whether it arrived sooner or later, people would 'cry out to be made [human] again.'[32] Morris believed that 'only art can do it, [only art can] redeem them from this slavery; and I say… that this is her [i.e. art's] highest and most glorious end and aim; and it is in her struggle to attain to it that she will most surely purify herself, and quicken her own aspirations towards perfection.'[33]

This vision of aesthetic flourishing required people to develop a *taste* for art, to realise their innate

23 William Morris, 'The Lesser Arts of Life' (lecture, 1882) Available at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1882/life1.htm (14 July 2023).
24 Morris, 'Beauty of Life', note 4, para. 104.
25 William Morris, 'The Aims of Art'. Available at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1886/aims.htm (accessed 10 May 2023), para. 8.
26 Morris, 'Art of the People' note 7, para. 46.
27 Ibid, para. 8.
28 William Morris, 'The Lesser Arts', Morris, *Hopes and Fears for Art*, note 4, para. 27.
29 Morris, 'Beauty of Life' note 7, para. 34.
30 Ernest Fischer, *The Necessity of Art* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), p. 52.
31 Morris, 'Art and Socialism' note 15, para. 49.
32 Morris, 'Beauty of Life' note 7, para. 54.
33 Ibid.

craving for it, as a source of resistance, hope, and vision:

> it is hard indeed as things go to give most [people] that share [in art]; for they do not miss it, or ask for it, and it is impossible as things are that they should either miss or ask for it. Nevertheless everything has a beginning, and many great things have had very small ones; and since… these ideas are already abroad in more than one form, we must not be too much discouraged at the seemingly boundless weight we have to lift.'[34]

Art would flourish when people 'begin to long for it'[35], so he asked his audience: 'what finally can we do, each of us, to cherish some germ of art, so that it may meet with others, and spread and grow little by little into the thing that we need?'[36] Here we see that art, for Morris, as for Friedrich Schiller,[37] is both the *end goal* of a good society and also the *means* by which such a society could be produced. As noted above, 'that which most breeds art is art,'[38] a statement in which a theory of change is implied.

News from Nowhere

In order to understand how Morris saw his aesthetic ideas coming to fruition in society, I will now consider his most developed expression of that vision, in his work of utopian fiction, *News from Nowhere*. One way to clarify this literary engagement is to begin with an earlier work of fiction against which Morris was by and large reacting, namely, Edward Bellamy's

34 Ibid, para. 41.
35 Ibid, para. 56.
36 Ibid.
37 See Samuel Alexander, 'The Politics of Beauty: Schiller on Freedom and Aesthetic Education' in this collection of essays. The full set will be posted here: http://samuelalexander.info/s-m-p-l-c-t-y-ecological-civilisation-and-the-will-to-art/ (accessed 10 May 2023).
38 Morris, 'Beauty of Life' para. 102.

Looking Backward: 2000-1887,[39] published in 1888, two years before *News from Nowhere*.

Bellamy's novel is told from the perspective of Julian West, who falls asleep in Boston, Massachusetts, only to wake 113 years later, in the year 2000, in a radically changed world. In its bare essentials, Bellamy presents a picture of a socialist society where technology and machines, as well as an efficient, centralised state bureaucracy, have essentially relieved human beings of menial labour. This automation of production allows everyone to work very few hours and retire early to live a life of affluence and leisure.

Even from this summary, a few central themes can be highlighted with which Morris would take issue in his own novel. Most importantly, Bellamy's vision was based on an assumption that labour was fundamentally a 'curse' that had to be lifted in a well-ordered society. In contrast, Morris believed that autonomous and creative labour was not a curse but a blessing, and that human beings would flourish when they were free to employ their skills in the production of useful and beautiful artefacts for themselves and their community. From this perspective, which did not depend on sophisticated technology or much machinery, labour was not something to be escaped in order to live a life of leisure, but something in which human beings would find meaning in everyday life. Morris believed that the good life consists of pleasurable creative work — that is, art.

Furthermore, Bellamy celebrated a centralised state as the main political tool for an egalitarian distribution of wealth and for administering technology and production. Morris' vision, however, was of a decentralised society whereby the state had 'withered away' (to use Marxist terminology), leaving local communities to govern themselves. In short, if Bellamy's socialist vision was one of affluence, technology, leisure, and centralised politics, Morris' was one of simplicity, handcraft, creative, pleasurable labour, and decentralised politics. The further element Morris added to his utopian society was a strong environmentalist perspective, taking many opportunities to highlight the dire ecological impacts of industrial production and the contrasting ethic of (re)connecting with, and taking care of, nature. Both novels presented socialist visions, but they took very different forms because of these differing assumptions and priorities. Morris's utopia will now be considered in more detail, after which some of the theoretical foundations can be examined.

News from Nowhere is told from the perspective of William Guest. Like Julian West, he also falls asleep, albeit in London not Boston, only to wake up in a new society. This literary technique of mysteriously 'awakening' in a radically changed, post-revolutionary world is an obvious reference to Bellamy's novel. While the precise date of the setting is unclear,[40] it can be inferred from various passages that it is early in the twenty-first century, well over a century after the time when Morris was writing.

The narrator, Guest, wakes up from his long, deep slumber, taking it for granted that he is in his own society, in his own home, on the banks of the Thames. After getting dressed, he goes outside and notices a boatman at a landing-stage on the riverbank, who greets him cordially. It being a hot day, Guest decides to go for a swim in the river. The water is so clean that he comments on it to the boatman, who seems rather surprised by the observation, not noticing anything unusual. Here we see the first hint of our narrator being in a different world, one in which nature is in a good state of health, unlike England of the early industrial era (or today). The boatman, who seems to be dressed in simple but finely made fourteenth-century attire, offers to take Guest down the river, and as they begin their journey Guest is surprised to see salmon-nets spreading out from the riverbank. Again, this points to the theme of environmental regeneration that will distinguish this new world from the old. Indeed, it is fair to describe *News from Nowhere* as one of the first visionary statements of an ecological utopia.[41]

As conversation between the two men continues, Guest eventually discovers that he is in England, but

39 Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward: 1887-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

40 Morris wasn't merely unclear about when the novel was set; the dates upon which to base a timeframe are seemingly contradictory or inconsistent. In Chapter 2, the boatman describes a bridge, built in 2003, as 'not very old'. From this it can be inferred that the book is set soon after 2003. Readers also discover that the revolution occurred in 1952 (which I discuss later in this essay), and the character old Hammond, who is around 105 years old, was present during the revolution, seemingly as a young man, not a child. These timestamps considered together suggest the era of the book could be in the first or second decade of the twenty-first century (allowing old Hammond to be a young adult during the revolution). Given that Bellamy's novel was set 113 years in the future, we might imagine that Morris also reflected that timeline in his own book, which would be 2003. Nevertheless, in Chapter 12, it is stated that people had been living in the new society for at least 150 years, and given that the revolution was 1952, a reader might infer that the setting is early in the twenty-second century. But if that is so, old Hammond cannot have been alive during the revolution 150 years earlier, given that we are told he is 105. These inconsistencies cannot be resolved, but doing so is not critical to understanding the novel. It may have been that Morris introduced these inconsistencies as he revised the original serialised publication of the text into the book version, where some key dates were changed (e.g., the date of the revolution was changed from 1910 to 1952, no doubt reflecting Morris' pessimism about the likelihood of revolution during his own lifetime).

41 See generally, Marius de Geus, *Ecological Utopias: Envisioning the Sustainable Society* (Utrecht: International Books, 1999), especially Ch 6.

well into the future, although he attempts to hide the shock of this realisation from the boatman. Instead, he pretends that his confused state is due to having recently returned from many years travelling abroad. The boatman offers to be Guest's guide for the day, establishing a central relationship through which the new society is described and explored through conversation.

Guest accepts the kind offer and reaches into his pocket to discuss terms of payment. The reader is here introduced to a radically new form of economy, for the boatman is puzzled and even humoured by the suggestion that he might need to be paid for what he describes as his business. 'I would do [it] for anybody', says the boat-man, 'so to take gifts in connection with it would look very queer.'[42] Later in the novel a similar awkwardness arises when Guest offers to pay for some tobacco and an especially well-made pipe. The reader learns that this world is one in which people give what they are able, and receive what they need, such that monetary transactions have become a relic of bygone times — a reflection of an 'extinct commercial morality'.[43]

As the novel proceeds, Guest is shown various places and is introduced to many people. It is through these interactions that elements of the new society are conveyed to readers. England has come to resemble a 'garden',[44] characterised not by large industrial cities but by a pastoral and agrarian way of life. The landscapes are scattered with small, elegantly built villages, and each house has its own garden, 'carefully cultivated, and overflowing with flowers.'[45] The streets, such that they are, are lined with fruit trees. People seem to live humble, simple, and yet happy lives in harmony with nature, free from 'sham wants'[46] and the 'horrible burden of unnecessary production'.[47]

Continuing his journey, Guest sees that the citizens of this strange, post-industrial world have found freedom, pleasure, and meaning in joyful labour, producing useful and beautiful wares of the highest quality.[48] Production is undertaken based on what the community needs and what the worker enjoys, not what the profit-centred market dictates. Given that the people of Nowhere have 'found out what [they] want',[49] they are 'not driven to make a vast quantity of useless things.'[50] What things they do choose to make, they 'have time and resources enough to consider [the] pleasure in making them.'[51] Machines are employed when necessary, but in the main, the technologies of handcraft provide for most of society's needs:[52] All work which it is a pleasure to do by hand machinery is happily done without more advanced technologies.[53]

Work-as-art is presented as the free and harmonious expression of human creative capacity, as a central feature of what it means to live well

Furthermore, there is no longer a severe division of labour, such that people now have diverse working lives and interests. Unlike the alienated labour of capitalism, workers in Nowhere can see *themselves* in what they create. One character, a weaver, tells Guest that besides weaving, he enjoys printing, composing, and studying mathematics, and that he is currently writing a book.[54] Labour is so enjoyable under these non-exploitative conditions that there is even a vague anxiety in society about a scarcity or shortage of work. Work-as-art is presented as the free and harmonious expression of human creative capacity, as a central feature of what it means to live well. There is certainly no problem providing an 'incentive to work', which was historically given as an objection to socialism. We

42 Morris, *News from Nowhere*, note 9, p. 50.
43 Ibid, p. 74.
44 Ibid, p. 105.
45 Ibid, p. 81.
46 Ibid, p. 111.
47 Ibid, p. 124, See also, p. 127.
48 Ibid, p. 76, p. 81, pp. 121-3.
49 Ibid, p. 127.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid, p. 125.
53 Ibid, p. 127.
54 Ibid, p. 58.

learn that 'the reward of labour is *life*'.[55] On this point, the contrast with Bellamy's 'utopia of leisure' could not be sharper.

One point of criticism that can be levelled at Morris' utopian vision concerns relations between the sexes. In one sense, Morris was clearly a social progressive in this regard, highly critical of patriarchal society. He attempted to present a society with radically different relations between the sexes, celebrating the fact that 'the men have no longer any opportunity of tyranny over the women'.[56] Nevertheless, in his utopia there remains a relatively traditional division of labour, although women are certainly not confined to domestic work. Still, we are told that '[i]t is a great pleasure to a clever woman to manage a house skilfully, and to do so that all housemates about her look pleased and are grateful to her. And then, you know, everybody likes to be ordered about by a pretty woman…'.[57] Lines like this have not aged well, but a sympathetic reading can suggest that Morris's main goal was to highlight the honour and pleasure that can be derived from keeping a home, a point which Aristotle made long ago by defending the household as the foundation of the *polis*. That may be true, but to the contemporary reader it is not clear why the art of housekeeping, noble though it is under non-coercive conditions, needs to remain gendered. As contemporary eco-anarchist Ted Trainer sometimes quips: 'A woman's place is in the kitchen… right next to the man.'

In further exposition of how social relations have evolved in the new society, Guest learns that systematised education is no more, with schools for children having been replaced with a more organic and less structured process of learning by doing. He is told that children 'often make up parties, and come to play in the woods for weeks together in the summer-time, living in tents, as you see. We rather encourage them to do it; they learn to do things for themselves, and get to know the wild creatures; and you see the less they stew inside houses the better for them.'[58] As well as formal institutions of schooling having faded away, the institution of private property has also been abolished. Because that property system created the conditions for poverty and crime, we are told that there is no longer any need for prisons either.

55 Ibid, p. 122.
56 Ibid, p. 93.
57 Ibid, p. 94.
58 Ibid, p. 65.

So how did all this come about? In discussion with an elderly character known as old Hammond, Guest discovers that a revolution occurred in 1952, causing a rupture that gave birth to this new socialist order beyond the 'systematized robbery'[59] and 'organized misery'[60] of industrial capitalism. There is no longer a centralised government, and in fact there is no government at all that resembles anything like political societies in history. Indeed, the Houses of Parliament at Westminster have been turned into a dung-market. 'Dung is not the worst kind of corruption,' says Hammond, 'fertility may come of that, whereas mere dearth came from the other kind, of which those walls once held the great supporters.'[61]

The historic state is described, with a clear nod to Marx, as merely a 'committee' that served the interests of the upper classes and which deluded the masses into thinking that they have some share in the management of their own affairs.[62] In the place of top-down parliamentary rule, communities now govern themselves through participatory democracy, aiming for consensus. 'The whole people is our parliament,'[63] Hammond advises. A model of social discourse is outlined in which any disagreements are addressed through various stages of discussion and debate.[64] This resembles anarchist processes of governance, and helps to explain why Morris has drawn sympathies from diverse political affiliations beyond socialism.

A brief but sophisticated explanation is given for how the revolution occurred, prompted by Guest's inquiry into whether the transition took place peacefully. 'Peacefully?' old Hammond responds, somewhat aghast: 'What peace was there amongst those poor confused wretches of the nineteenth century? It was war from beginning to end: bitter war, till hope and pleasure put an end to it.'[65] We learn that the transition from commercial slavery to freedom was a 'terrible period'[66], involving strikes, lock-outs, starvation, and violent rioting and fighting. The working classes became increasingly organised and powerful, slowly squeezing more power and wealth from the upper classes, such that there came a time when 'the mere threat of a "strike" was enough to gain any minor point.'[67] Minimum wages were secured, coupled with a maximum price on the necessities of life.

Eventually, however, the upper classes fought back aggressively, in the hope of reclaiming their lost power. By order of the executive, thousands of unarmed workers were murdered in a gathering at Trafalgar Square. But this massacre merely provoked the 'great crash' of 1952, inducing an extreme state of hunger and disorder. This did not end the revolutionary period but genuinely ignited it, leading to a General Strike. The trains stopped running, the newspapers stopped printing, food stopped being distributed, and all at once the upper classes realised that the economy depended on the workers. Eventually this clash of interests led to two years of civil war, after which so much of the economy had been destroyed that a centralised state was no longer an affordable luxury. Thus, communities were forced to build the new world from the ground up, in their new conditions of precarious freedom.

Looking back on those times, old Hammond states that the 'motive-power of the change was a longing for freedom and equality.'[68] At first the socialist agents for change seemed to aim for little more than greater distribution of wealth, as if the same industrial mode of production, albeit under the governance of a socialist state, could be used to lift the poorest out of destitution and satisfy the masses. But Hammond dismissed this goal as merely 'improved slave-rations.'[69] After the civil war, what emerged could be described not as *more of the same* but rather, as outlined above, *less, different, and better*.

Trying to expand the political imagination, Morris's utopia wasn't about providing workers with a greater share of industrially produced wealth and maximising leisure using technology and machinery. In contrast to Bellamy, he was attempting to explore a radically new conception of wealth and a new means of producing it — through the pleasurable and meaningful expression of creative labour, that is, through art. Indeed, it is notable that art as conventionally defined (painting, music, poetry, etc), is barely mentioned in *News from Nowhere*. The insinuation is that life itself had become art, through the everyday satisfactions of creative activity

59 Ibid, p. 97.
60 Ibid, p. 126.
61 Ibid, p. 107.
62 Ibid, p. 108.
63 Ibid, p. 107.
64 Ibid, p. 119.
65 Ibid, p. 133.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid, p. 136.
68 Ibid, p. 134.
69 Ibid, p. 135.

and aesthetic experience. As Hammond says, what used to be called art 'has no name amongst us now, because it has become a necessary part of the labour of every [individual] who produces.'[70] In an important passage, the old man continues:

> The art or work-pleasure, as one ought to call it, of which I am now speaking, sprung up almost spontaneously, it seems, *from a kind of instinct amongst people*, no longer driven desperately to painful and terrible over-work, to do the best they could with the work in hand — to make it excellent of its kind; and when that had gone on for a little, *a craving for beauty seemed to awaken* in men's minds, and they began rudely and awkwardly to ornament the wares which they made; and when they had once set to work at that, *it soon began to grow*. All this was much helped by the abolition of the squalor which our immediate ancestors put up with so coolly... Thus at last and by slow degrees we got pleasure into our work; then we became conscious of that pleasure, and cultivated it, and took care that we had our fill of it; and then all was gained, and we were happy. So may it be for ages and ages![71]

Of course, the word utopia derives from the Greek word meaning 'nowhere' (hence *News from Nowhere*, which was subtitled 'A Utopian Romance'). Like Thomas More, Morris was using the term in full knowledge that the world he described did not exist and might never exist. This sometimes invites the accusation that Morris was being escapist, merely presenting a dreamworld or romantic fantasy that lacked any critical relationship to reality. But if such a critique is justified in relation to some utopians, it is unwarranted when levelled at Morris. By presenting a compelling vision of a better, richer, more meaningful and sustainable world, he was trying to expose the flaws in the industrial society of his time. He was seeking to induce discontent in the reader, and therefore have a political effect by agitating and energising his readers by provoking outrage, hope, and alternative visions of the future.

Philosopher Gary Zabel, in his book *Art and Society* (1993), defends Morris's utopian project, arguing that he understood:

> people are not puppets operated by anonymous historical forces, that they do not struggle, at least not effectively, for goals they cannot plausibly envision. Moreover, as an artist he knew that an image of the future capable of motivating action, and even eliciting sacrifices, had to have more than a purely intellectual appeal, that it had to be anchored in the most fundamental texture of people's sensuous and emotional experience. Socialists must deploy the utopian imagination in a struggle for what Antonio Gramsci was later to call 'hegemony', in which their emancipatory vision becomes a deeply rooted schema through which people interpret the details of their everyday lives.[72]

In this sense, Morris's novel can be considered a success, not *in spite of* it being based on a 'dream' but *because* of it. Scholar Clive Wilmer writes in his introduction to *News from Nowhere*: 'The image of dreaming could hardly be more significant. No longer a form of escape, it becomes the means whereby a different order is conceived and then becomes possible in the process of awakening.'[73] So *News from Nowhere* is neither a blueprint nor a prediction. It is an expression of discontent and a personal vision. As Wilmer concludes: 'It asserts the possibility of a different world. We are not expected to swallow Morris's dream whole. On the contrary, we are encouraged to dream for ourselves.'[74]

'Useful Work v. Useless Toil': an aesthetic analysis of labour

In my review of Morris's novel, I highlighted how meaningful and pleasurable labour lay at the heart of his utopian vision, noting how this sat in direct contrast with Bellamy's hopes for a society of leisure. According to Morris, creative work was not something to be escaped but to be sought out and embraced — for the reward was *life* itself. Just as Nietzsche revalued the place of suffering in a well-lived life,[75] Morris argued that labour need not be a curse if it is creative and self-directed. The social and political challenge was to maximise opportunities for the expression of pleasure in labour, that is, for what Morris called art. This led him to develop a unique form of anarcho-socialism, or what he sometimes

70 Ibid, p. 160.
71 Ibid (emphasis added).
72 Gary Zabel, 'The Radical Aesthetics of William Morris' in Gary Zabel, *Art and Society: Lectures and Essays by William Morris* (Boston: George's Hill, 1993).
73 Wilmer, 'Introduction' note 1, p. xxix.
74 Ibid, p. xxxv.
75 See Samuel Alexander, 'Pessimism without Despair: Suffering, Desire, and the Affirmation of Life' and Samuel Alexander, 'An Aesthetic Justification of Existence: The Redemptive Function of Art' in this collection of essays. See link in note 37.

called a 'Democracy of Art'.[76] These ideas regarding labour and art were presented powerfully in his essay 'Useful Work v. Useless Toil', published two years before *News from Nowhere*, and which certainly influenced the thematic content of the novel. Given the centrality of these themes to Morris's worldview, his arguments in the said essay, as well as in his collection of lectures published as *Hopes and Fears for Art*, deserve some attention.

Morris begins by acknowledging that nature does not provide everything for humankind (or any animal) without the requirement of labour. We must either labour or perish. This raises the questions: 'what shall our necessary hours of labour bring forth?'[77] And how can we gain hope of pleasure in our daily creative skill, hope of pleasure in using what it makes, and hope of pleasure in rest?[78] These are questions which we all ought to ask, Morris argued, for the answers fundamentally shape our lives and society, for better or for worse. Examining the nature of labour in productive relations can inform a critique of existing society as well as guide the vision of an alternative, freer one. What is being produced? In what conditions? And why?

Morris objected to the industrial economy of his own age on the grounds that productive relations were harmful both to the worker (harsh and demeaning toil) and the consumer (purchasing what were often meaningless, unnecessary commodities). One of his leading motivations in the essay 'Useful Work v. Useless Toil' was to meditate on the issue of why English society had developed in such a way that most people were working in horrible conditions, producing what were often superfluous things, only in demand by a leisured aristocracy. In one of his more acidic moments, Morris commented, in words that could have been penned by Henry Thoreau, that:

> I have never been in any rich man's house which would not have looked the better for having a bonfire made outside of it of nine-tenths of all that it held. Indeed, our sacrifice on the side of luxury will, it seems to me, be little or nothing: for, as far as I can make out, what people usually mean by it, is either a gathering of possessions which are sheer vexations to the owner, or a chain of pompous circumstance, which checks and annoys the rich man at every step. Yes, luxury cannot exist without slavery of some kind or other, and its abolition will be blessed, like the abolition of other slaveries, by the freeing both of the slaves and of their masters.[79]

This is a polemical statement, of course, but if we distil these lines down to their core thesis it becomes clear that Morris is highlighting the critical connection between, on the one hand, what a society needs and desires to consume, and, on the other, the nature and extent of labour required to meet those needs and desires. The more a society or an individual desires in terms of material wealth, the more labour is required for production of that wealth, and Morris calls on us to remain cognisant of the trade-off here. Production is inextricably related to consumption, and both are value-laden categories that require people to answer: what is an economy *for*?

In other words, superfluous consumption in culture can require more labour than is socially optimal; that is, it can be uneconomic, with costs that exceed the benefits. Even more importantly, the production of luxuries can require *forms* of labour that are neither meaningful nor pleasurable. If, however, a society attains 'simplicity of life' by moderating its material needs and desires, then Morris argued that the labour required to produce necessary and desirable things will not be a curse but a pleasure. Indeed, this position isn't merely about pleasure but also about justice. 'For if our wants are few,' Morris maintains, 'we shall have but little chance of being driven by our wants into injustice; and if we are fixed in the principle of giving every [person their] due, how can our self-respect bear that we should give too much to ourselves?[80] Accordingly,

'For if our wants are few,' Morris maintains, 'we shall have but little chance of being driven by our wants into injustice'.

76 Morris, 'Beauty of Life', note 4, para. 104.
77 Morris, 'Art of the people', note 7, para. 15.
78 William Morris, *Useful Work v. Useless Toil* (London: Penguin, 2008), p. 2.
79 Morris, 'Art of the people', note 7, para. 54.
80 Ibid, para. 52.

if 'we attain also to the love of justice, then will all things be ready for the new springtime of the arts.'[81]

On this normative basis, Morris built his social and political vision of a Democracy of Art. 'The chief duty of the civilised world today,' he argued, 'is to set about making labour happy for all.'[82] And his premise was that people would and do enjoy labour if they are free to produce beautiful and useful things. If there was labour that was inherently unpleasant, then Morris had two main responses: either, in these limited circumstances, use appropriate technology and machinery to do the work; or, to consider whether the costs of the unpleasant labour were really worth the expected rewards, and if not, then forgo such labour and what it would have produced.

Thus, Morris believed that politics was fundamentally about organising labour to provide for worthwhile needs — an orientation that is obviously and inescapably value-laden. It demands an answer to the questions: what 'needs' and 'desires' are worthwhile? And what should a society be producing, why, and for whom? Morris did not believe the market under capitalism was able to answer these questions properly. This is because markets are designed to incentivise the production of things that people are most able to pay for. But in a deeply unequal society like England (then and now), the market thus becomes directed toward the production of what the richest members want, not what a society more generally needs. Furthermore, in a culture that overvalues material wealth through a confusion of desire, the market is again distorted, making the workforce meet what are really artificial needs and 'sham wants'.[83]

All this will have, and is having, demonstrable ecological consequences too, given that superfluous production and consumption will tend to make excessive demands on natural resources and ecosystems, just as the waste-streams of such a consumerist-industrial society will degrade nature in dangerous ways. In *News from Nowhere*, Guest is told that the industrial era was a 'mistaken' way of living, because people tried 'to make "nature" their slave… [as if] "nature" was something outside of them.'[84] This type of mistake was problematic from an eco-centric perspective, purely on the grounds that ecosystems and wildlife are of inherent worth and ought not to be destroyed to meet the dubious needs of consumerist cultures. But even with respect to specifically human wellbeing, Morris was disturbed by how industrial society was making life ugly, turning rivers into filthy sewers, clearing ancient forests, polluting the air with sulphurous smoke, and generally making the increasingly urban environment unpleasant and unhealthy to be in. In a line that establishes his place as a pioneer of environmentalism, he asked his audience: 'What kind of account shall we be able to give to those who come after us of our dealings with the earth?'[85]

In sum, Morris contended that:

> If we were only to come to our right minds, and could see the necessity for making labour sweet to all [people]… then indeed I believe we should sow the seeds of a happiness which the world has not yet known… and with that seed would be sown also the seed of real art, the expression of [individuals'] happiness in [their] labour — an art made by the people, and for the people, as a happiness to the maker and the user.[86]

Beautifying labour through the 'lesser arts'

The above was framed as an aesthetic analysis of labour. Morris argued that labour is beautiful if the worker takes pleasure in self-directed creative activity in pleasant conditions; labour is ugly if the worker is forced to produce luxuries for an overclass in conditions of squalor. Thus the *sensual experience* of work was central to Morris's worldview — both critically and in terms of his vision of an alternative society. This aesthetic of labour was also the soil in which his politics was seeded.

To deepen this analysis, I now return to his distinction between the 'fine arts' (of music, sculpture, painting, poetry, and architecture) and what he called the 'lesser arts' or 'decorative arts' (such as carpentry, pottery, glassware, sewing, cobbling, embroidery, printing, etc). One of Morris's central theoretical contributions to aesthetics was his critique of how the lesser arts had been driven apart, in the industrial era, from what became the conventional understanding of art (as something limited to the fine arts). When a society comes to make this distinction, Morris believed that 'it is ill for the Arts altogether: the lesser ones become trivial, mechanical, unintelligent,

81 Ibid, para. 55.
82 Ibid, para. 41.
83 Morris, *News from Nowhere*, note 9, p. 111.
84 Ibid, p. 200.
85 Morris, *Collected Works*, note 20, Vol. 23, p. 165.
86 Morris, 'Art of the people', note 7, para. 46.

incapable of resisting the changes pressed upon them by fashion and dishonesty,'[87] and the fine arts 'become nothing but dull adjuncts to unmeaning pomp, or ingenious toys for a few rich and idle men.'[88] Morris sought to dignify the lesser arts and crafts by once again elevating them to the status of art proper, given that it was through these lesser arts that human beings 'have at all times more or less striven to beautify the familiar matters of everyday life.'[89]

As noted above, human beings, like all animals, must labour or perish. In labouring for those material things that humanity needs to flourish, Morris aspired for an artful labour that expressed the innate creativity of the human spirit: 'this is at the root of the whole matter, everything made by man's hands has a *form*, which must be either beautiful or ugly; beautiful if it is in accord with Nature, and helps her; ugly if it is discordant with Nature, and thwarts her; it cannot be indifferent.'[90] Accordingly, if humanity *must* labour in order to survive and flourish, and all labour must be either beautiful or ugly, then the lesser arts ought to be celebrated as the domain where human beings can 'beautify labour,'[91] by finding meaning and pleasure in the production and use of necessary artefacts. Morris wrote: 'to give people pleasure in things, they must perforce *use*, that is one great office of decoration; to give people pleasure in things they must perforce *make*, that is the other use of it.'[92]

This reinforces Morris's egalitarian ethos, which I've framed in terms of democratising the poet. This is a view that pushes against the romantic ideal of the poet as a rare and specially gifted 'genius'. Morris maintained that 'I do not want art for a few, any more than education for a few, or freedom for a few.'[93] His aim was to make art truly popular, not merely something held in the houses of the rich or practiced only by an elite class of creatives. Like Marx, Morris did not conceive of self-expression or self-actualisation as an individual affair, but as something fundamentally social and ultimately political: the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all. The vision was of an aestheticised society in which everyone was enabled to be an artist in everyday life, through the meaningful expression of creative labour, and to enjoy art (including the beautiful products of the lesser arts) in leisure. In a lecture on this topic, Morris impressed this vision upon his audience: 'I am bidding you learn to be artists, if art is not to come to an end amongst us; and what is an artist but a workman who is determined that, whatever else happens, his work be excellent? or, to put it in another way: the decoration of workmanship, what is it but the expression of man's pleasure in successful labour?'[94]

On these issues Morris looked back to medieval times — the 'Middle Ages' — and found aspects of economic life far superior to the productive relations of the industrial society in which he was embedded. 'In those days all handicraftsmen were ARTISTS, as we should now call them.'[95] This positive view of history can surprise readers, and lead to accusations of naïve romantism or deluded nostalgia, but Morris was prepared for this counterattack and had a response. He was, of course, perfectly aware of the profound flaws of feudal society:

> Once men sat under grinding tyrannies, amidst violence and fear so great, that nowadays we wonder how they lived through twenty-four hours of it, till we remember that then, as now, their daily labour was the main part of their lives, and that that daily labour was sweetened by the daily creation of art; and shall we who are delivered from the evils they bore, live drearier days than they did? Shall men, who have come forth from so many tyrannies, bind themselves to yet another one, and become the slaves of nature, piling day upon day of hopeless, useless toil?'[96]

It is important to recognise that Morris was not crudely calling for a return to the feudal society of the Middle Ages. Rather, he was seeking to highlight how 'industrial progress' had been regressive in some regards, specifically with respect to opportunities in working life for pleasure in the exercise of skill. In his essay 'The Relations of Art to Labour', Morris noted that medieval craftsmen owned their own tools and materials, and by and large directed their own working day. Morris maintained that:

> … the more the question is studied, both through the existing remains of mediaeval art and through

87 Morris, 'The Lesser Arts', note 28, para. 2.
88 Ibid.
89 Ibid, para. 3.
90 Ibid, para. 4 (my emphasis).
91 Ibid, para. 8.
92 Ibid, para. 5.
93 Ibid, para. 65.
94 Ibid, para. 58.
95 Ibid, para. 15.
96 Morris, 'Art of the People', note 7, para. 17.

> the records left us of the condition of the people at the time, the clearer it is seen that it is no exaggeration to say that during the middle ages nothing that was made was otherwise than beautiful; that beauty formed as essential a part of man's handiwork then as it does of nature's handiwork always. And further, that this essential beauty of handiwork was, amongst a vigorous and healthy people, the inevitable result of the workman working freely, and for no master; having, as I have said before, full control over his material, tools, and time.[97]

It may be that Morris is glossing, to some extent, the nature of working life in the Middle Ages, but resolving that historical question is not my interest and, in the end, it wasn't Morris's primary concern either. He was looking to the past to better understand his industrialising present, so that we could all move toward a better, freer, and more dignified future in which all people can have a share in art. The following passage makes his prospective mission clear: 'It is a dream, you may say, of what has never been and what will never be; true, it has never been and therefore, since the world is alive and moving yet, my hope is the greater that it one day will be true.' Hopelessness, he reminded his listeners and readers, would have locked his mouth shut, not opened it.[98]

The politics of everyday aesthetics

As we have seen, Morris felt that productive relations of industrial capitalism were draining everyday existence of its aesthetic value, its beauty, emptying life of its art and recklessly degrading nature along the way. Beauty was not something he hoped would be restored merely to artists, narrowly defined. He was calling for a wholesale aesthetic rebellion in the name of humankind, all of whom deserve to realise pleasure and meaning in creative labour — in art. As Gary Zabel notes, leaving aside a few scattered comments on aesthetics in Marx and Engels, Morris was the first socialist writer 'to frame a theory that locate[d] art squarely within the general life process of society.'[99]

That was the foundation of Morris's worldview, upon which he built his eco-aesthetic politics. His political activity was an education for hope, an attempt to refine social and political aspirations and imbue them with greater ambitions. Like Friedrich Schiller,[100] Morris was of the conviction that a new type of human being had to precede any successful structural transformation of society, for without the former the latter would eventually degenerate into what it was trying to leave behind. Art was necessary to that transformation of character. Like Marx, Morris took the dignity of self-expression as something that could not remain 'individual' but ultimately required social and political expression. As Terry Eagleton explains:

> The aesthete… possesses more truth than the left generally imagines. The point is not to substitute art for life, but to convert life into art. Living like a work of art means fully realising one's capacities — this is Marx's ethics. It is also the basis of his politics: socialism is whatever set of institutional arrangements would allow this to happen to the greatest extent.[101]

Morris would have agreed, albeit colouring his own conception of aesthetic socialism with a far deeper shade of green than Marx ever employed.[102] In 'The Society of the Future', Morris upheld a vision of a 'society conscious of a wish to keep life simple, to forgo some of the power over nature won by past ages in order to be more human and less mechanical, and willing to sacrifice something to this end.'[103] If he were alive today, Morris would surely be an advocate for degrowth, for he believed, as the contemporary phrase goes, 'less could be more' — but not just less of the same, but less and different. He did not merely want the working classes to receive a greater share of industrially produced material wealth. He demanded a new conception of wealth and freedom. He wanted human life and society to become so infused with art that the very distinction became obsolete.

Nevertheless, Morris was certainly not blind to 'what stupendous difficulties, social and economical, there

97 Morris, 'The Relations of Art to Labour',
98 Morris, 'Art of the People', note 7.
99 Zabel, 'Radical Aesthetics', note 72, p. 1.
100 See note 37.
101 Terry Eagleton, 'Be Like the Silkworm' (29 June 2023) *London Review of Books* 45(13).
102 That said, see the growing body of literature on Marxism and ecology, especially the work by John Bellamy Foster that is plausibly reconstructing Marx as an environmentalist.
103 William Morris, 'The Society of the Future' (1889). Available at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1887/societyfuture.htm (accessed 15 July 2023).

are in the way of this.'[104] Industrial capitalism wasn't going to lie down like a lamb at the mere request of left-leaning environmentalists or political radicals. He was also aware that both his lines of critique, and his vision of an alternative society, would seem strange or even out of place in an industrial era. 'How can I ask working-men passing up and down these hideous streets day by day to care about beauty?'[105] As to be expected, he had an answer. Part of his theory of change was based on what he saw as the natural, emerging consequence of people becoming ever more alienated from their own creative natures. To his listeners he insisted that 'you will become so discontented with what is bad, that you will determine to bear no longer that short-sighted reckless brutality of squalor that so disgraces our intricate civilisation.'[106]

We see here that even his vision of aesthetic rebellion was grounded in affect as much as reason. It would be a *felt need* that would emerge and drive the transformation of society, as much as a new understanding. Indeed, the relationship here is dialectical: a new sensibility could create fertile conditions for a new understanding, just as a new understanding of things could affect sensuous experience. Sensuality and understanding develop in fruitful collision, each shaping, as it is shaped by, the other.

Looking back from the twenty-first century, it is clear that Morris was premature in anticipating these affective drivers for revolt, but this error in timing implies no necessary error in approach or strategy. Even a glance at the world today suggests that simmering discontent with the status quo is everywhere beginning to boil, and thus the task of political organisers and activists is to ensure, via aesthetic interventions in culture, that this powerful social energy is directed towards considered action for justice, sustainability, and wellbeing, not used to fuel further polarisation and violence. Both pathways remain live options, even as it is almost certain that what results will fall somewhere between these extremes. Morris would remind us, however, that where along that spectrum society eventually falls is, in large measure, up to us. And in that spirit, he would urge us to see that our primary task is to 'kindle the desire for beauty, and better still, for the development of the faculty that creates beauty.'[107]

With a nod to Schiller, Morris believed in the critical importance of aesthetic education, encapsulating his theory of change in his maxim: 'that which most breeds art is art.'[108]

Although Morris was arguably a better critical and visionary theorist than he was political strategist, he was not so naïve as to think that beauty could be restored to any human society merely by art and artists (narrowly conceived). As the long passages in *News from Nowhere* make abundantly clear, he knew full well that his vision of an aestheticised society needed to join forces with social and political agitators fighting the existing order, and with prefigurative activists trying to build the new world within the shell of the old. He knew that any transition to a radically new society was only going to transpire by way of crisis, hardship, and suffering. But it is no good having an effective means of realising one's political vision if the vision itself is misconceived, and that is the enduring value of Morris's radical aesthetics. He presented a compelling vision worth fighting for — an Ecological Democracy of Art. And even if you have 'built castles in the air,' as Henry Thoreau once wrote, 'your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.'[109]

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104 Morris, 'The Lesser Arts' note 28, para. 35.
105 Ibid, para. 40.
106 Ibid.
107 Ibid, para. 29.
108 See note 17.
109 Henry Thoreau, *Walden*, in Carl Bode (ed.) *The Portable Thoreau* (New York: Penguin, 1982), p. 562.

BOOK REVIEW

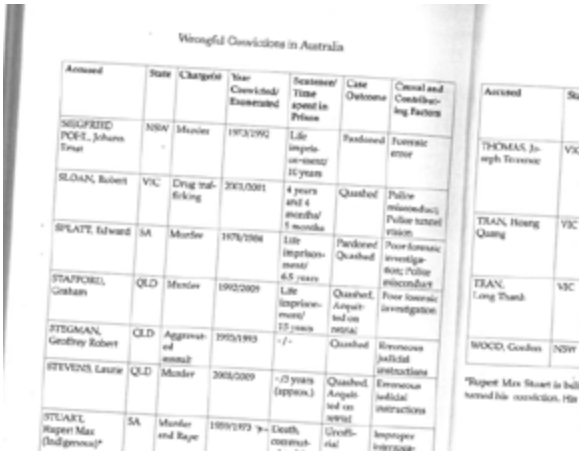
Stephen Corner & Kerry Breen (2023), *Wrongful Convictions in Australia: addressing issues in the criminal justice system.*

Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne,
ISBN 978 1 923068 26

BY JOHN KERR

Any reader who thinks the criminal justice system in Australia is OK or working well enough to allow for a bit of collateral damage hasn't been or contemplated life behind the razor wire. Cordner and Breen's book is sober, analytic, seeks reforms and is relentlessly rational and well-argued. But the passion for justice, the moral goad to correct hideous legal error, to make Australia a better place, the devotion to a fair go for all, underpins this effort for radical change as soon as possible.

In the back of this 124-page book, the authors reproduce R Dioso-Villa's repository of 'Known wrongful convictions in Australia', over 70 of them, stretching over 90 years. Example:



Wrongful Convictions in Australia

Accused	State	Charge(s)	Year Convicted/ Exonerated	Sentence/ Time spent in Prison	Case Outcome	Causal and Contributing Factors
SIEGFRIED POET, Johann Ernst	NSW	Murder	1923/1992	Life imprisonment/ 70 years	Pardoned	Forensic error
SLOAN, Robert	VIC	Drug trafficking	2003/2005	4 years and 4 months/ 9 months	Quashed	Police misconduct; Police tunnel vision
SPLATT, Edward	SA	Murder	1978/1986	Life imprisonment/ 6.5 years	Pardoned/ Quashed	Poor forensic investigation; Police misconduct
STAFFORD, Graham	QLD	Murder	1962/2009	Life imprisonment/ 15 years	Quashed, Acquitted on retrial	Poor forensic investigation
STIGMAN, Geoffrey Robert	QLD	Aggravated assault	1993/1993	-/-	Quashed	Erroneous judicial instructions
STEVENS, Laurie	QLD	Murder	2003/2009	-/3 years (approx.)	Quashed, Acquitted on retrial	Erroneous judicial instructions
STUART, Rupert Max (Indigenous)*	SA	Murder and Rape	1959/1973	Death, commuted	Quashed	Improper interrogation

FACSIMILE, p102

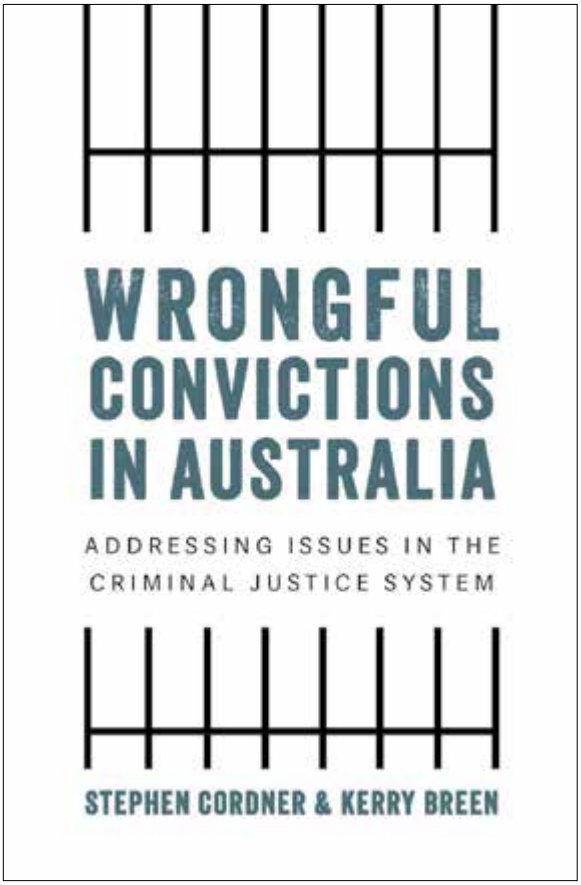
The authors, both forensic pathologists, have teamed up before. Their *Good Medical Practice: Professionalism, Law and Ethics* is in its fourth edition since it was first published in 2016. In Australian academic and professional book trade circles, that makes it an 'established backlist staple': readers/users/buyers trust or want or need it. Cordner was the inaugural Director of the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine and a veteran expert witness in criminal and appeal courts and various inquiry proceedings. Breen, a gastroenterologist, has been chair of medical tribunals, tribunals where a doctor's medical registration, right to practice, may be cancelled.

They begin to address issues in the Australian criminal justice system, as the sub-title promises, with this opening line: 'We see a criminal justice system that does not take the reality of wrongful convictions seriously enough'. They point to how, after a fatal plane crash, a meticulous aviation safety investigation follows, the 'lessons learned then published and officials assigned to implement recommended remedies'. But when criminal justice crashes, nothing happens.

The strength of the book lies in the wide net it throws over the players in the criminal justice system, and the rigor of its arguments, including the central one: the need for reform. The saddest sentence in the book is 'Little has actually changed since the Chamberlain case in the 1980s'. The arguments clearly sit on a bedrock of historical wrongful convictions, and where a case is used as an example, the case is at least footnoted and the footnote is as informative as it needs to be, beyond the duty of reference.

They start with the flaws in their own tribe: forensic scientists and expert witnesses. They outline the unconscious mischief tunnel vision and confirmation bias plays, but what will surprise readers is how flawed the old reliables, like fingerprint and ballistic evidence, have proven to be when, belatedly, subjected to scientific scrutiny, analysis and review. The authors suggest a well-funded stand-alone forensic science institution independent of the police and, inferred, independent of departments of justice and attorneys general, with well-trained competent ethical staff, and with accountability, would see a fairer, better Australia.

The book moves on to problems with police investigators and prosecutors. From the list they list among problems provide tunnel vision; closed minds; a propensity for corruption or incompetence or misconduct:; excessive zeal; and a reliance on informants with dubious motives making their evidence unreliable. Too often, the Big Blue Gang will start with the 'truth' that a person of interest is guilty as sin, so they seek help to nail the 'obvious'



A wide, cool, hard look at wrongful convictions in Australia

criminal — noble-cause corruption, a term the authors don't use, but as a writer and publisher on crime subjects since the late 1980s, one I cannot do without. They briefly cover the difficulties inherent in the system that the defence often faces. Funding a defence from the accused's personal resources or through an under-funded legal-aid body is acknowledged, as is the tough task of getting on top of the brief in circumstantial cases with complex expert evidence in a relatively short time. And, like the other players, how competent are they when it comes countering the words, often contained in written reports, of an alleged expert?

Judges and juries next. The former, the authors conclude, need the support of someone other than adversarial counsel, access to some expert who is non-aligned with the prosecution or the defence, when deciding to allow the expert's evidence be heard or not. This is particularly acute when experts differ. Appellate judges may engage a Gordian-knot cutter, the expert to give advice on a clash of experts, but seldom do so in practice. Case judges do not have that support available to them. The authors support the jury system, according it the same 'pivotal importance' as the legal milieu do. What they do support is research into the jury system, an idea new to me, although the Australian Law Reform Commission has apparently pressed for that for nearly 20 years. How juries reach their verdicts is a black hole. They quote Justice Geoff Eames: '**ín** the absence of such research, it is a field in which anecdote, self-assurance and self-delusion abound within the ranks of the legal profession and the judiciary.' Outside Victoria, Tasmania and the Northern Territory, there is provision for a judge-only trial in certain circumstances, so nearly 30 per cent of Australians have no option but the jury. When the gravity of the verdicts is so great, the acceptance of ignorance as to how they got there is extraordinary.

A chapter on the media makes the point that legal constraints, for example suppression orders, on what could or could not be reported may have worked when media interest was mainly within the jurisdiction and when today's newspaper would be tomorrow's fish-and-chip wrapper, it is now definitely no longer fit for purpose. The legal constraints are geographical and the world-wide web is not. News video, audio and type are archived and available 24/7/356 and counting.

Of particular interest to this reviewer was Cordner and Breen's treatment of 'The difficulties with appeals and petitions'. Until 2013 a convicted person had the right to launch one appeal in all Australian jurisdictions. Even so, the barriers to the appeal being heard, being allowed to precede, were formidable. Appellate judges have to be convinced that the appeal has 'a real prospect of success' or that 'fresh and compelling evidence' has emerged since trial. Together with the extraordinary veneration the judiciary holds for jury verdicts, these conditions have proved to be tough climbs. In NSW, Queensland and the Northern Territory this essentially colonial legacy still stands, and although first South Australia, then Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia have loosened up a bit, they have not loosened up much. Other common law countries, those saddled with the adversarial system of Britain, its Empire and the US, as this book tells, have undergone modestly radical reforms. Australian jurisdictions are now outliers.

The convicted felon can perhaps try the High Court, but that court's record of overturning criminal court's verdict is not encouraging to put it mildly. She or he can petition the state governor — the vice-regal copy of the royal prerogative of mercy. This leaves the decision in the hands of an elected state attorney general. The delays are horrendous. It is not working.

In England and Wales in 1995 an Act created the CCRC, the Criminal Cases Review Commission, an independent body with teeth to investigate, analysts with access to specialized expertise, and the power to order appeal courts to consider the case as a wrongful conviction. By 2013 CCRC work had overturned 380 convictions. The US Innocence Project has on DNA evidence alone seen over 350 acquittals, 18 of them from death row addresses. Scotland followed. Norway. New Zealand. North Carolina. Soon, Canada.

Where we came in, R v. Siegfried Pohl. Ziggy Pohl was a jobbing carpenter in Queanbean, NSW. He left home and his wife in March 1973 and got on the tools when he realised he needed one he didn't have there. He went home tenish that morning, got it, didn't see his wife, and went back to his work site. By habit and custom he went to his home for lunch, to find his wife's battered dead body. A jar of 50 cent coins and a watch were gone. He was convicted by a jury of murdering her. After serving 10 years, he was released on license. In September 1990 a man walked into Queanbean Police Station, said he had panicked when disturbed by Pohl's wife during a burglary and had beaten her to death. Like Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*, his conscience was giving him hell, even 17 years later. Pohl was pardoned and granted $200,000. Without this Raskolnikov-like nightmare, Ziggy Pohl would never have made Dioso-Villa's *Known* wrongful conviction list.

How many more wrongfully convicted people are there in Australia? It has be lots.

BOOK REVIEW

Karen Manton (2021), *The Curlew's Eye*.

Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest NSW,
ISBN 978 1 7608795 18

BY JEREMY KRUSE

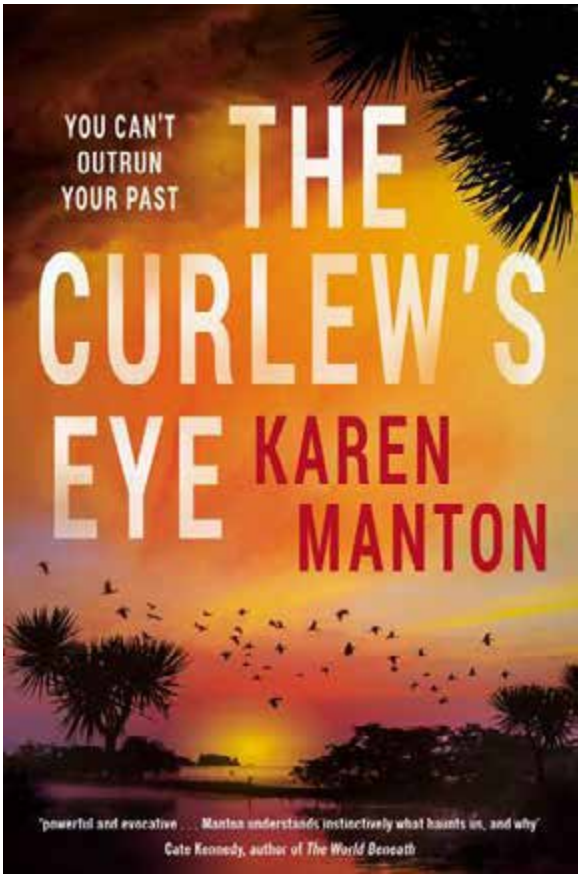
This is an astonishing debut novel by Karen Manton, a writer who's made a life in the Northern Territory.

It opens with a disoriented dingo leaping out from a road-side fire as our main character, Greta, is driving her young family to make a temporary home at a run-down property where her partner Joel grew up. The dingo sniffs the air, 'snout raised to the gliding birds and strips of airborne ash.' then suddenly disappears through the flames to the darkness behind.

This is a portent of things to come. The story takes place in a tough but alluring landscape, populated with strange creatures — animal and human — which appear fleetingly, and point us to the secrets this place, and its inhabitants, hold within.

We are in the hands of a gifted storyteller. Manton gradually introduces us to her cast of characters: a mysterious girl, a menacing neighbour, earthy but kind-hearted locals and unpredictable siblings. As in a good film, each of these encounters carries meaning. Through them, we build a picture of the community and its history, and we're offered snippets or clues about what's happened, and what's to come.

The book will appeal to those who enjoy a puzzle. Readers will need to stay focused to track the characters, their relationships, and the insights they share. And the author toys with her reader. Her narrator throws out a chaff of false leads as Greta seeks to uncover the taciturn Joel's secrets. The story builds to a series of revelations which, although they make sense of much of what's come before, still land a shocking blow. It's only at the very end that we learn Greta's own dark secret.



Manton is in complete control of the language, including its outback idioms. Her description of the landscape — its flora, fauna, and atmosphere — is masterful. And it's a deeply Australian story, but without resort to tired tropes. It presents a picture of alternative types, living on the edge, and on little. There are references to 'thylacines', 'kangaroo lasagne' and even to Lindy Chamberlain, who was sensationally tried for infanticide, but all along maintained a dingo took her baby from a campsite at Uluru.

The book has a strong progressive sensibility, but it delivers with a light touch. It acknowledges the dispossession of First Nations people tangentially, from the perspective of children. And, also, in the voice of a minor character, Aunty Hazel, who's a regular on the verandah at the town shop. After warning Greta about the toxic lake near Joel's place, an old mine site, Aunty Hazel recalls: 'There was poison water where my mother grew up…Not like that one where you are. I'm talking different water.' Her hand waved through the air to change the place. 'To get rid of us, you know?'

What's also striking is the choice of a mother of three boys as the protagonist. There's tenderness and humour in the way Manton represents Greta's relationships with each of her sons. Toby is the older, defiant one, but who's also learnt the trick of holding the door open for his mother. Griffin is 'the child who must be followed.' And Raffy's windowsill nick-nack collection is the 'louvre museum.'

Interesting too is the treatment of the relationship between Greta and Joel. They've been partners for years when we first encounter them, so there's no girl-meets-boy storyline here, except in Greta's retelling of how they first met to their kids. The story focuses as much on the distance between the couple as it does on their intimacy. Their lovemaking, snatched in moments of privacy, is presented from her perspective not his.

A blurb on the back cover styles the novel as a 'gothic mystery,' and it certainly fits that description. It evokes feelings of dread and unease. We can't be sure if some of the appearances are real, apparitions or the delusions of a person with psychological issues. There's a spookiness about Manton's description of the landscape which recalls another great Australian gothic mystery, Joan Lindsay's *Picnic at Hanging Rock*.

Manton's also plays with religious imagery. Angels and devils appear in different guises. There's Joel's illustration of a boy with a feathered arm to go with a tape recording of his mother reading Grimm's The Six Swans. The creepy neighbour Trapper warns Greta against snooping: 'wouldn't go in there if I was you. Might run into the devil!' And a friend's furious mother curses Greta when she's a child 'That kid's a devil!' Then there's Devil himself, a truly loathsome character. And even Greta's atheist mother quotes the bible when her husband builds their house on sand: 'The wise man builds his house upon the rock.'

This reviewer recommends reading — and re-reading — this beautifully constructed and powerful novel. It's solid rock.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Samuel Alexander

Dr Samuel Alexander is Director of the Simplicity Institute and previously served as a Research Fellow with the Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute. Sam's interdisciplinary research focuses on post-growth economics, voluntary simplicity, 'grassroots' theories of transition, and the relationship between culture and political economy. His recent books include *Degrowth in the Suburbs* (2018), and *Carbon Civilisation and the Energy Descent Future* (2018).

Alan Austin

Alan Austin is an Independent Australia columnist and freelance journalist. He made multiple visits to more than 80 remote Indigenous communities as a print and radio reporter between 1975 and 2004.

Hans Baer

An ecological and health anthropologist, Prof Hans A Baer is an honorary fellow in the School of Social and Political Sciences at The University of Melbourne.

Allison Barnes

Dr Alison Barnesis president of the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU).

Melanie Bligh

Melanie is a fifth year masters student at Charles Sturt University and proud mum of adoring children.

Devika Brendon

Consultant Editor of the South East Asia Leadership Academy (SEALA), and Content Editor for the New Ceylon Writing literary journal, Devika Brendon is a child of Sri Lankan immigrants. Devika studied English Literature at The University of Sydney. She is winner of the Henry Lawson Memorial Prize For Poetry and The Adrian Consett Stephen Prize For Prose.

Kelsie Burrus

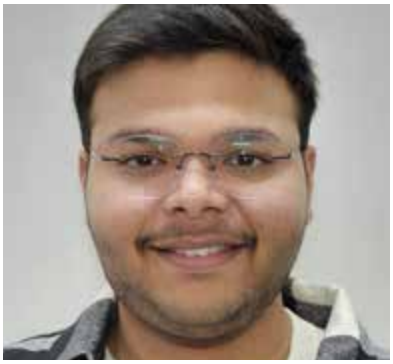
Kelsie Burrus is a visiting student of environmental sciences at California Polytechnic State University

Kaitlyn Cozart

Kaitlyn Cozart is a visiting student from University of Colorado Boulder.

Lavanya Gautam

Lavanya Gautam is pursuing a Master of Public Policy and Management at the University of Melbourne. Her research interests lie in development policy, migration trends, international relations, and economics. She is passionate about addressing societal challenges through effective governance.



Anurag Mittal

Anurag Mittal is a student at The University of Melbourne, where he is pursuing a Master of Economics. His research interests lie in international trade, political economics, and international relations. He is passionate about understanding the global economy and how it affects people's lives.

John Kerr

A writer, editor, researcher and publisher, John Kerr has specialized in Australian crime since the late 1980s, and was a court-and-police reporter in the 1970s. His last two books are The Wieambilla Shootings 2023, and The Big Folbigg Mistake 2022 are available at www.kerrpublishing.com.au He is a panel judge of the Furphy Literary Awards.

Allan Lake

Award-winning Australian poet Allan Lake, originally from Canada, explores existential anxiety in the face of human concerns outside of an intact Nature. Lake has been published in 17 countries in journals like The Hong Kong Review, Island Magazine, Cordite Poetry Review, The Canberra Times, StylusLit, Meniscus, Quadrant, American Writers Review and The Antigonish Review.

Carolyn van Landenberg

Carolyn van Langenberg lives in the Blue Mountains in New South Wales. Over several years, she has published fiction and poetry. The fish lips trilogy (*fish lips*, *the teetotaller's wake* and *blue moon*) embraces Australia's uneasy post-WW2 relationship with colonialism.

Elyse LaParle

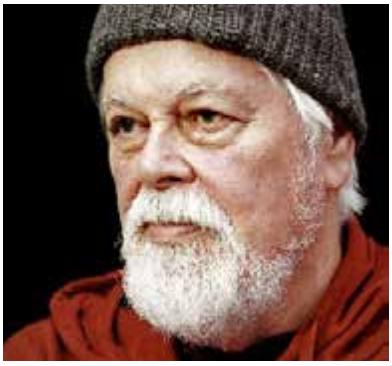
From Rhode Island Elyse LaParle is a visiting student from the University of San Francisco.

Charlotte Read

Charlotte Read is an Australian wildlife conservationist, who aids anthrozoology research, such as human-wildlife conflict mitigation, across three continents.

John Tons

John Tons is a political philosopher and activist. His most recent book John Rawls and Environmental Justice describes a mode of governance that will enable communities to implement a sustainable and socially just future.



Paul Watson

Canadian-American champion of ocean conservation, Captain Paul Watson is the founder of Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, 1977, and the Captain Paul Watson Foundation, 2022, as well as the Church of Biocentrism. An outspoken critic of capitalism, Captain Watson promotes veganism, population reduction, and a biocentric, rather than anthropocentric, worldview. He is the author of *Urgent! Save our Oceans to Survive Climate Change*.

Tony Webb

A long-time community and environmental activist, Tony has an MSc in Energy Resources Management and a PhD in Humanities exploring how strong emotions aid or hinder personal and political change. A former ALP candidate in the 2018 SA election he now lives in Melbourne working on a joint Fabian/LEAN food industry security/sustainability project and development of men's emotional health and wellbeing groups through the Men's Sheds network.

Tracy Westerman

Dr Tracy Westerman AM is a proud Nyamal woman from the Pilbara region of WA, considered a critical thought leader in Aboriginal mental health, suicide prevention and cultural competency. In 2003, she became the first Aboriginal person to complete a combined Masters & PhD in Clinical Psychology. She holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Psychology, a master's degree in clinical psychology and Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology). This is despite coming from a background of disadvantage and one in which she had to undertake most of her tertiary entrance subjects by Distance Education.

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