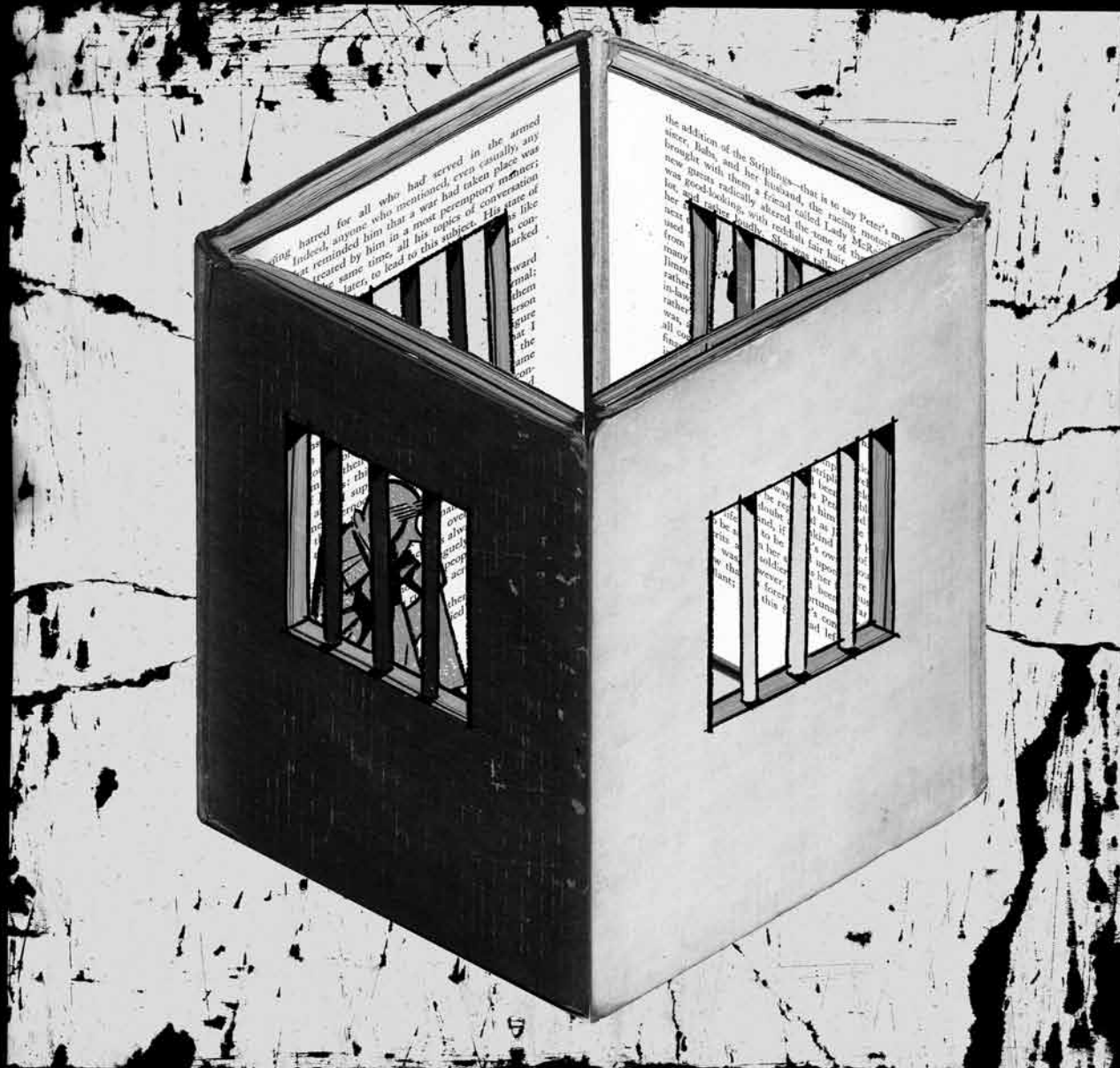


sydney
PEN

sydney pen magazine



Honouring the imprisoned writer

The 3 Writers Project essay excerpts: Max Barry on *Risk* • Larissa Behrendt on *Legacy*

Annual General Meeting • PEN Keneally Award • Sydney PEN Award

The Macquarie PEN Anthology of Australian Literature:
The Launch • Australian Literary Futures Symposium

Translation & Culture in a Global Context Conference excerpts: Brigid Maher • Leah Gerber

Reports: Writers in Prison Conference, Oslo • International PEN
Asia & Pacific Regional Conference

Targetting young readers and writers



It's a privilege to address the Sydney PEN network for the first time in this issue of the magazine, which has been printed with the support of UTS. I'm writing this in Newcastle, where the National Young Writers' Festival is in full swing. I'm here chairing a panel on 'Journalistic Ethics' and touting the importance of our organisation to a generation of students, younger readers and writers. Simultaneously, our volunteers are running a PEN display amidst a diverse and younger crowd at the Festival of Dangerous Ideas (FODI) at the Sydney Opera House.

Many people in these audiences used their first vote as a protest against the Howard Government's untenable association with tightened censorship via terrorism laws, negligent observation of human rights in the treatment of refugees, and suppressive philosophies of writing and teaching Australian history. The case of Tashi Rabten is a particularly powerful one to share with them. A prolific Tibetan writer, editor and student, Tashi Rabten is currently being held without charge in the Tibetan region of Kham. It is feared he has been detained because of his new collection of articles criticising the suppression of protests in Lhasa last year. Gaby Naher, of the Writers In Prison Committee, has prepared two letters concerning Tashi Rabten's situation, which are available on the website for all Sydney PEN members and friends to sign and post.

I recently joined a discussion on this matter with artist Cash Brown and Sydney Festival Director Lindy Hume at the University of Sydney's *Verge Arts Festival*. Our topic addressed immediate concerns about the censorship of creative output in contemporary Australia. Recent instances of Australian writers being censored by local and international law include China's response to this year's Melbourne International Film Festival, author Harry

Nicolaides' trial in Thailand, and writer Kingsley Flett's assets being frozen as proceeds of crime.

With internet filtering now proposed by the Federal Government, the issue of problematic censorship laws is back in public discussion. Our present committee is at the forefront of work on this issue in Australia. Current classification of publications and films, laws against urging and inciting terrorism, and subsequent constraints on academic research are a booby trap for free reading and writing, as set out in Nicola McGarrity and Simeon Beckett's submission from Sydney PEN in response to the National Security Legislation Discussion Paper.

Our own seditious and classification laws prohibit publications, films and games that incite violence and crime; we should keep in mind the current sentence of Sri Lankan journalist and editor JS Tissainayagam for printing, publishing, and distributing a pro-Tamil magazine that was not considered to be in support of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam.

Tissa is now appealing his sentence, and we have joined with the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) and FODI to raise awareness of his case. This is part of a wider Empty Chair "challenge" that Sydney PEN has set for libraries and community groups around the country. We are promoting an Empty Chair Kit that is downloadable from the website so that any public event, meeting or venue can independently host this well-known campaign by featuring the case of a different writer every month.

Committee member Jennifer Wong's visit to Tokyo in July for the PEN Asia Pacific Conference provided us with valuable ideas about how our centre can build on the past work of Nicholas Jose, Chip Rolley and others to engage with the wider region in the long term; and which we can revisit in Tokyo at the 2010 International PEN Congress.

Bonny Cassidy

sydney PEN

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Denise Leith honored for commitment to PEN ideals

The Sydney PEN Award is presented annually to an individual who has worked especially hard to promote the Sydney PEN Centre's values and the PEN Charter. The winner is nominated and voted by Sydney PEN's management committee, and made possible by the generosity of Sydney PEN member Jane Morgan with the support of Mr Charles Wolf at The Pen Shop, Sydney.

In previous years the Sydney PEN Award has recognised Chip Rolley, Nicholas Jose and Rosie Scott. In 2009, we presented the Award to Dr Denise Leith. Denise has studied, written and taught in international relations.

As an Honorary Associate of Macquarie University, she has worked in the areas of Middle East and Australian politics and US foreign policy. The author of *The Politics of Power: Freeport in Suharto's Indonesia* and *Bearing Witness: The Lives of War Correspondents and Photojournalists*, she is currently working on two new books: her first novel, *Salt Water*, and a non-fiction work on Rwanda, *A Season to Live*.

Denise helped to establish the Sydney PEN Award in 2006, so it seems fitting that it now recognises how, as her peer Rosie Scott says, "She fulfils the criteria of outstanding support and commitment to the aims, values and ideals of PEN in every way".

Denise spent five and a half years on Sydney PEN's management committee, in that time taking on the important responsibility for being its "memory" and particularly supporting the Writers In Detention Committee.

According to Rosie Scott, "She is a tireless, creative and passionate worker, generous, public-spirited and hard working. Her trademark wit, intellect and down-to-earth comments enlivened committee meetings for me – always honest and astute. She is the kind of person who never worries about getting credit and whose ego never gets in the way of her work, another rare attribute.

"Her support for the Writers in Deten-



Denise Leith (right) with Mara Moustafine, former president of Sydney PEN, and current president Bonny Cassidy.

Mofid Guirguis, Freeman Studio

tion Committee was an essential aspect of its success. She was effective, committed and always there when you needed her. Her presence on the all-night vigil outside the Immigration Department in support of Sarath Amarasinghe with Tom Keneally and me meant that we were all still laughing at four in the morning even after a long, cold and sleepless night."

Rosie also highlights two of Denise's most significant legacies. Firstly, joining Chip Rolley to represent Sydney PEN at the PEN International World Congress in Bled in June 2005, Denise initiated a resolution condemning attacks on journalists with impunity, which was passed by the Assembly.

Despite opposition, she was able to get this issue tabled and to use her expertise to successfully lobby its approval.

Secondly, her efforts in nominating PEN for the Australian Human Rights Commission awards resulted in the 2004 Human Rights Community Award being awarded to PEN Australia.

The 2009 Sydney PEN Award was presented at the final 3 *Writers* event when Professor Larissa Behrendt spoke on *Legacy* on November 18th at the State Library of NSW.

Bonny Cassidy

Illustration by Tom Jellett acknowledges the Day of the Imprisoned Writer on November 15 when writers world wide join together to commemorate their colleagues under attack.

Past success promises a solid future

The sodden conditions failed to dampen the spirits of those in attendance at the 2009 Sydney PEN Annual General Meeting and presentation of the biennial PEN Keneally Award.

The event, hosted by Middletons law firm, had a decidedly casual feel with more the air of a soiree than a boardroom meeting. The mood was light as old friends were reacquainted and new friends introduced. Treasurer John Beale began the evening's formal proceedings with the presentation of the Annual Report. Substantial increases in revenue and expenses confirmed it had been another busy and productive year for Sydney PEN.

The net operating surplus for 2008 was \$36,903, an increase of \$13,597 over 2007. This result was achieved through increased income from membership and events and a startling 58 per cent increase in donations over the previous year. This dramatic rise in donations was largely due to the contributions of several major publishing companies and reflects the growing public profile of PEN.

Support from donors and corporate sponsors is essential to ensure Sydney PEN's long term sustainability and particular thanks were given to the Copyright Agency Limited, BarNet, Gleebooks, Allen & Unwin, Harper Collins, Book Creator's Circle, the City of Sydney, Customs House Library, UTS, Peachy Print, the Sydney Writers' Festival, NFP Accounting, the Pen Shop and the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts for their ongoing support throughout the year.

With the number crunching out of the way, John shifted the focus to Sydney PEN's activities throughout the year. During 2008-2009, Sydney PEN continued to voice its concerns about issues pertaining to freedom of expression in Australia. Sydney PEN also coordinated a range of literary events to raise awareness of the potential of the written word as a vehicle for democracy, community and power.

An integral part of Sydney PEN's commitment to defend freedom of expression for writers around the world is the Empty Chair campaign, which featured at all



Publisher Meredith Curnow, of Random House which co-sponsors the Sydney PEN Award. It was announced following the Annual General Meeting.



Journalist and author David Marr (winner of this year's PEN Keneally Award), author Tom Keneally and Angela Bowne (former President of Sydney PEN)

major writers' festivals and literary events throughout the year. At each event, an Empty Chair was used to represent a writer who could not be present because he or she was imprisoned, detained, threatened or killed. At the AGM, the Empty Chair acknowledged Liu Xiaobo, a renowned Chinese writer and human rights activist arrested earlier this year for co-authoring a declaration calling for political reform, greater human rights, and an end to one-party rule in China.

Recognition was given to the members of



Tom Keneally who presented the 2009 PEN Keneally Award

the Management Committee for their commitment to Sydney PEN throughout the year.

With many longstanding committee members retiring, the newly elected committee was announced to a warm reception. Bonny Cassidy takes on the role of President, supported by Michael Fraser and Sandy Symons as Vice Presidents and Peter Eichhorn as Treasurer.

Committee members are Carol Dettmann, Gail Jones, Jane Owen, Debra Adelaide, Julie Rose, Jennifer Wong, Nicola McGarrity, Christopher Michaelson and Simeon Beckett. Gaby Naher will continue as Chair of the Writers in Prison Committee and Charlotte Wood will continue to assist with communications.

The 2009 PEN Keneally Award was presented to journalist and writer David Marr for his ongoing advocacy of human rights and



Kathryn McKenzie (Executive Officer, Sydney PEN), John Beale (outgoing Treasurer) and Mara Moustafine (former President of Sydney PEN)

freedom of expression throughout his highly esteemed career. (see report on following pages)

Incoming President Bonny Cassidy thanked David for his contribution to the values of PEN through journalism, broadcasting and community activism for over 20 years and commended his vigilant attention to the free enjoyment of information, insight, beauty and truth.

After a gracious introduction from the iconic and outspoken Thomas Keneally, David thanked Sydney PEN for the award and called attention to the need for stronger guarantees of free speech in Australia.

With Sydney PEN memberships at a record high, it shows that more Australians than ever are informed about, and actively committed to, the protection and promotion of freedom of expression.

Michael Walker

A champion of human rights and freedom of speech

Celebrated writer, broadcaster and journalist David Marr was presented with the PEN Keneally Award following the 2009 Annual General Meeting. As Tom Keneally said, "He is a writer we have all admired for a long time."

Established in 2004, the PEN Keneally Award is given in recognition of outstanding achievement in promoting freedom of expression, international understanding and access to literature as outlined in the charter of International PEN. The award is named in honour of Thomas Keneally for his own contribution to the values of PEN and his commitment to fellowship among writers.

The award has previously recognised Indonesian publisher, the late Joesoef Isak (see obituary page 30), and distinguished Australian author Frank Moorhouse. In 2009, David Marr stood out from a diverse short-list of writers as one whose contributions to the values of PEN have crossed biography, journalism, broadcasting, and community activism.

Throughout his career, Marr has been an advocate and champion of human rights and freedom of speech. First trained as a lawyer, he began his journalistic career writing for *The Bulletin* and *The National Times*, of which he became editor in 1980. In 1985, he became an investigative journalist on ABC-TV's *Four Corners* and since 2004 has been based at *The Sydney Morning Herald* reporting on politics, the law, the arts, human rights and censorship.

David Marr has also had an illustrious literary career and is the author of a number of major biographies including the *The Ivanov Trail*, a study of the work and

thinking of ASIO that culminated in the fiasco of the Combe-Ivanov affair, the multi-award winning *Patrick White* (1991), and *Barwick* (1992), a biography of the former Chief Justice Sir Garfield Barwick.

In 2003, Marr co-wrote *Dark Victory* with Marian Wilkinson, a stirring account of the Australian Government's handling of the Children Overboard affair and the racial hysteria used to demonise the Tampa refugees. This remarkable work of investigative journalism was a major voice of dissent and exposed the Howard Government's manipulation of the situation for its own ends.

Marr has also written widely on the resurgence of censorship in Australia and formed *Watch on Censorship* to draw attention to new restrictions and explore the politics behind them. In 2008, Marr published *The Henson Case*, a polemic account of the great moral panic surrounding the work of Australian photographer Bill Henson. The work was recently short listed for the Alfred Deakin Prize for an Essay Advancing Public Debate in the 2009 Victorian Premier's Awards.

Sydney PEN President Bonny Cassidy presented the award to David Marr. She said the escalating interest of Australians in the potential of the written word and language as vehicles for democracy was in no small part due to David Marr.

"His work has not only responded urgently to topical issues but has burned steadily over more than 20 years of writing," she said.

In his acceptance speech, Marr remarked upon "the strangeness of our own society".

"My job," he said, "has been to look at the anomalies, to investigate the politics



David Marr, winner of the 2009 PEN Keneally Award

behind them and ask what they say about this country."

One of the key anomalies to which he is referring is the widely held belief we live in a country that promotes and celebrates freedom of expression.

"Most of the time, those of us concerned with these things feel Australia is a place where we can speak and write freely." However, he said the reality is often quite the opposite.

He presented a series of cases in which freedom of expression had been severely restricted or emphatically denied, "cases not just odd but absolutely unique to Australia".

Among such cases were the radical and ongoing ban of Pasolini's 1975 film *Salò* and the impending trials of compulsory filtering of the Internet in Australia, a measure that no other democracy has its equivalent.

Marr called attention to the need for a fundamentally democratic arrangement that would entrench stronger guarantees of free speech than this country has ever had.

"Australia is the last democracy on earth not to have some charter or bill of rights," he said. It's a fact that is peculiar enough in itself but perhaps overshadowed by what he refers to as "Australia's strange passivity in the face of these restrictions on free speech". These are restrictions he can't imagine being tolerated in Europe or the United States.

"We've known what's going on. If we cared, we didn't care enough to stop it. Boredom, indifference and fear have played a part in this. So does something about ourselves we rarely face: Australians trust authority. Not love, perhaps, but trust. It's bred in the bone. We call ourselves larrikins, but we leave our leaders to get on with it. Even the leaders we mock," he said.

True to character, David Marr demonstrated supreme humility when accepting the award and thanked Sydney PEN for "setting him in his ways".

"This award is recognition of his consistent heroism in standing up for freedom of speech and human rights," Tom Keneally said. "To Maestro Marr and Citizen Marr, we salute you."

Michael Walker

Anthology a milestone in our literary landscape



The Governor General Quentin Bryce talking with author David Malouf.

In describing *The Macquarie PEN Anthology of Australian Literature* a touchstone and a milestone of our literary landscape when she launched it at Admiralty House in July, the Governor-General Quentin Bryce said many things came to her mind when she thinks about Australian literature. And she gave examples:

"The classics we read at school in the late 50s – Joseph Furphy, Marcus Clarke and Rolf Boldrewood. I can still feel the pages of our Grade 12 text by Cecil Hadgraft...a small book but a very engaging and influential one in my life.

"I used to climb through windows at my boarding school to read *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony* by neon light on the roof, three stories high.

"Later, my friends and I discovered Jessica Anderson, Eleanor Dark, Miles Franklin...devouring their novels in our own coming of age.

"Then the intoxicating lyricism of Judith Wright, the force and passion of Kath Walker.

"Earlier this month I saw Sam Watson's biographical play *Oodgeroo: Bloodline to Country*. In the line it draws between past and present, we felt the electric thrill of a literary culture that is alive and flourishing."

According to the Governor-General, Australia is witnessing a huge contemporary interest in writers and writing with literary festivals, author talks, book clubs and book sales attracting thousands. And emerging from the consciousness of crisis, there is a national consensus that Australian writing matters.

"*The Macquarie PEN Anthology of Australian Literature* blossoms in the midst of this energy, marking the place where we have richly and circuitously arrived, impelling new writerly journeys across our terrain," she said. "Behind it is the historic work of PEN in advancing freedom of speech and cultivating literary community."

She pointed to the fact that the founders of Sydney PEN – Dorothea Mackellar, Ethel Turner, and Mary Gilmore – appear in the anthology and said that Sydney PEN's legacy is entwined with the larger story of our expression.

"This anthology gives us our place, our country, in its many distillations, refractions, and melodious echoes. We encounter in it territory that acquires familiarity.

"It maps the multiplicity of what it has meant to be Australian: men's and women's writing, European voices alongside Indigenous and Asian, the sung and unsung, icons and iconoclasts, words of protest, of irony, and of elegy.

"I want to see it take root in our schools, universities, libraries and communities."

Professor Nick Jose, General Editor of the Anthology, introduced the editorial team – Peter Minter, Elizabeth Webby, Nicole Moore, Kerry Goldsworth, David McCooey and Anita Heiss – and gave a brief overview of the origin of the project.



Kerry Goldsworth (one of the Anthology editors) and Susan Wyndham (literary editor, The Sydney Morning Herald)



The Governor General is amused.

It began, he said, with Mary Cunneen, the advisory publishing editor, who asked, back in 2003, why there wasn't such an anthology already.

"Mary and I presented the idea to Sydney PEN who supported it and off we went. It became real when the Dean of Humanities at Macquarie University, Christina Slade, now Dean at the City University in London, saw the potential and set up a research centre for the project with Jill Roe as Director and Chris Cunneen as co-ordinator, with assistance from Jan Zwar, Geoff Payne and Michael Austin.

"Macquarie also provided our leading educational advisors, Donna Gibbs and Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan, who became part of a large national and international panel of consultants."

Professor Jose acknowledged funding support from the Australian Academy of the Humanities, the Australian Research Council, the Sidney Myer Fund and the Nelson Meers Foundation, and the Australia Council, among others, and drew special attention to Dr Imre Saluszinsky for his advocacy for the role of Australian literature in education. And he thanked the publisher Allen & Unwin.

"From the moment the project crossed her horizon, Elizabeth Weiss has been there with her team, especially senior editor Angela Handley and senior publicist Renee Senogles, and Michael Campbell. Elizabeth has guided the project, and all of us associated with it, with clarity, commitment and love every stage of the way," he said.

Professor Steve Schwartz, Vice-Chancellor of Macquarie University, thanked the Governor-General for launching the Anthology, which he described as a work of national and international significance.

"Importantly, it will generate renewed interest in Australian literature which, as the anthology demonstrates, has enlivened and challenged Australians for over 200 years.

"This project is a standout example of innovation in action, of people working together in a spirit of generous collaboration supported by funding from both public and private sectors."

Sandra Symons

Creation of an anthology

A symposium, Australian Literary Futures, was held at the State Library of NSW on August 1 to mark the publication of *The Macquarie PEN Anthology of Australian Literature*. The symposium, presented in association with Macquarie University and Sydney PEN, brought together authors, scholars and editors to discuss the significance of Australian literature for contemporary readers, in schools, universities, and for different audiences here and around the world. This report by Debra Adelaide, Amanda Hoh and Gemma Black covers some of the key sessions.



Carol Dettman, Elizabeth Weiss, Bonny Cassidy and Robin Derricourt



Nick Jose, Donna Gibbs and Susanna Gannon



Penne Hackforth-Jones

The re-enchantment of Australian literature

The customary PEN Empty Chair on the stage was dedicated to journalist, poet and president of the Independent Chinese PEN Centre, Liu Xiaobo, who was arrested and jailed last year during a campaign to speak out and write without restriction. It was, as ever, a sober moment when Ben Saul, outgoing vice-president of Sydney PEN, drew the audience's attention to this symbol of the freedom that Australian writers take for granted.

Otherwise the session was an occasion to celebrate writing, in particular our own literature. As Professor Jill Roe, co-editor of the new *Macquarie PEN Anthology of Australian Literature*, announced at the start of the symposium, this was the moment for the "re-enchantment of Australian literature".

Nick Jose, general editor of the anthology, introduced the editorial team to whom he acknowledged a "debt of gratitude": Elizabeth Webby, responsible for the period 1788-1900; Nicole Moore, responsible for 1900-1950; Kerryn Goldsworthy, responsible for fiction and drama from 1950 to the present; and David McCooley, the deputy general editor, also responsible for poetry and non-fiction from 1950 to the present. (The two editors of the Indigenous content, Anita Heiss and Peter Minter, were unable attend the symposium).

While it was trying to make Australian literature more available, and to "take a snapshot of the last 100 years or so", the anthology also met PEN's mandate to pursue and promote the freedom to write. Part of the royalties will go to Sydney PEN to help fund activities in the south-east Asian region. PEN's effectiveness could be judged by successes like the release from detention last year of over 100 writers, all due to its global network of letter writers. The world is watching, Dr Ben Saul noted, and the world cares.

A former honours student of Professor Elizabeth Webby, Ben Saul also confessed a personal interest in the anthology program, in particular the special pleasure of now being able to "rip through Patrick White in under 30 pages" as opposed to the gruelling task of having to read one White novel every week at university.

Imre Salusinszky's three-year term at the Australia Council had just commenced when the anthology project came his way; with a commitment to audience development, the Literature Board found several reasons to encourage the vibrant educational context of the project.

Dr Salusinszky's personal encounter with the history of the teaching of Australian literary studies in universities must have struck a chord with the audience, detailing as it did the rise from marginalisation and then the decline of dedicated subjects and courses over the last 30 years. The Literature Board felt that a new anthology would help recapture a tradition of teaching Australian literature.

But what is Australian literature? Dr Salusinszky was asking the question of himself around the same time as the editors of this book. "Australian" did not mean national, and an anthology needed to reflect – and reflect upon – the Australian experience in the broadest possible way. That suspicious phrase the "national identity" should, he said, be kept far away from literary studies; it was a disturbing, even sinister term. (At this point the audience might have considered the Empty Chair before them, signifying so many writers who are punished for failing to conform to concepts of nationalism.)

The final speaker, Donna Gibbs, one of the two educational advisers on the anthology, outlined the history of the poor representation of Australian literature in schools. Early texts were of course British and only in the 1980s

did any significant Australian texts enter the reading lists. And despite there now being many Australian texts set on school reading lists, encouragement for teachers to choose these texts is undermined by a lack of education and confidence.

The anthology follows current syllabuses where texts are studied as products of contextual and cultural factors and where students are required to read many different types of texts. The structure of the anthology, Donna Gibbs explained, creates ready opportunities "to create and find contrasts, affinities and oppositions" directly responsive to teaching needs.

Consultation with teachers also revealed that they required help with using an anthology, to understand the literary traditions they felt were unfamiliar. So Donna Gibbs and her colleague Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan developed the anthology's unique teaching guide as a supporting document. (See the website where the teaching guide is free to download: <http://www.macquariepenanthology.com.au>; it is also available on DVD). It is designed to encourage teachers to extend classroom discussions and balance the familiar with the new, thus having great ramifications for teachers.

It was an illuminating start to the symposium, especially for those unfamiliar with recent trends in the teaching of Australian literature. By the end of the session, the answer to the question, Is there a need for an anthology today? was clearly affirmative. And as Jill Roe reminded the audience, despite every advance "there is still the sense that Australian literature is, if not on trial, at least obliged to justify itself".

Debra Adelaide

How do you fit 200 years of literature into one volume?

The speakers in this session included leaders in the academic field – Philip Mead, formerly Chair of Australian Literature at University of Western Australia and now Senior Lecturer in Australian Literature at the University of Tasmania, Robert Dixon, Chair of Australian Literature at the University of Sydney, and Elizabeth McMahon, Senior Lecturer at the University of NSW and co-editor of *Southerly*. Their comments provoked animated responses from panel members Elizabeth Webby, Nicole Moore, Kerryn Goldsworthy and David McCooley.

Work included in the anthology is organised chronologically by birth date and begin with an excerpt from *Journal of a First Fleet*

Surgeon by George Worgan who was born in 1757. The list concludes with Chi Vu born in 1973 and his story, *Vietnam: A psychic guide*.

However, where do you start? General Editor Nick Jose said the first step was to divide the years into blocks by chronology, genre and content. "The editors went away and came up with lists that were usually too long but they gave us a starting point and we came together as a group and worked out things we had to have really."

Robert Dixon started the panel discussion with this point. Although the notion of a canon has sustained an idea of "high-brow" fiction for centuries, Dixon suggested that the "canon is not so much a theme as a process across generations." He asked each of the editors to reflect on the issue of iconic works, the way generational changes have affected those works and how each editor added their own personal touch through their inclusions.

For Elizabeth Webby, the inclusion of stereotypical iconic works like Henry Lawson's *The Drover's Wife* created tensions between what readers expect in an anthology of Australian literature and other works she was particularly passionate about.

"One of the things I tried to do, and I'm sure everybody else did too, is to select works that would still live for a contemporary audience, that weren't dead or boring." Part of that, she said, was also the wonderful opportunity to introduce texts that many readers had not heard of.

Kerryn Goldsworthy said that it was a passionate decision to include *The Christmas Parcel* by Olga Masters. Though Masters is not necessarily a writer who springs to mind when thinking of an Australian anthology, Kerryn Goldsworthy said that this text is the closest thing to a perfect short story.

David McCooley addressed Robert Dixon's question about iconic texts and the traditional idea of the canon. He said the anthology is for us to read and teach from now, but it may not be so relevant to us in years to come.

"Ned Kelly's Jerilderie Letter now means something different to us after Peter Carey's *True History of the Kelly Gang*, from what it meant before that. So really we can't get away from our own temporality. We are stuck in time and we're looking from our own perspectives and as much as we would like to think that this is an actual model of Australian Literature in the last 200 years, it's not."

Philip Mead asked the editors about their personal choices and the remarkable and provocative inclusions they chose for the anthol-



Gail Jones and Elizabeth McMahon



Kerryn Goldsworthy



Susan Wyndham, Gerard Windsor and Debra Adelaide



Philip Mead

» Continued from page 11

ogy. He considered that many editors “want to illustrate just straight literature, diaries, letters, the speeches, the iconic texts,” but said he noticed a few startling and unusual inclusions.

Tom Petrie’s Reminiscences of Early Queensland by Constance Campbell Petrie, sprung to mind for Nicole Moore. “It’s an amazing account of game play by those communities, by children and their traditional games so it’s an extraordinary piece of writing,” she said.

Elizabeth Webby mentioned Eliza Dunlop’s poem, *The Aboriginal Mother (from Myall’s Creek)*. Dunlop was born in Ireland and later moved to Australia with her husband in 1838. Her work was published in Australian newspapers as a protest against the Myall Creek Massacre. At the time, white Australian stockmen were being tried and later hung for the murders of Aboriginal people.

Professor Webby said that Dunlop stands out as she is one of the first European women to write sympathetically about Aboriginals. At the time, it was a source of inspiration as “there was a lot of angst about white people, you know, using aboriginal voices as she did then and she was somewhat criticised for it.”

Elizabeth McMahon was interested in the structure of the anthology. She shaped her question around the combination of genres in the book and wondered how much of the reading might be obscured by having extracts from novels and plays compared to entire poetry works and short stories. She asked the editors to respond to the idea that there may be issues with contextualising the different writing periods and mediums as readers are confronted with such a large picture of Australian literature.

David McCooley explained the idea of extracts as a starting point for a reader of the anthology. “When we put in an extract of a book, it’s not saying just read this and that will do, it’s saying, you should have a look at this author in a bit more detail. And that’s what, as a whole, the anthology is doing. It’s not trying to be the end word on what literature is about, it’s about the great writing this country is.”

Amanda Hoh

Australian literature on the international stage

The strength and richness of Australian literature comes from its inability to define itself, according to Australian literary academic Ivor Indyk.

This might come across as unconstructive, just when one thought we’d overcome our old identity crisis. However, Professor Indyk doesn’t see it this way.

“Australian literature is fundamentally an immigrant literature,” he said. “A sense of displacement is fundamental to our identity – even

Indigenous people have become radically displaced from within the country. In a sense, our strength is our openness to other cultures, and our inability to define what exactly is Australian.”

The question of what defines Australia and being Australian inevitably arose with the launch of the Anthology, and led to all of the unavoidable questions that surround an attempt to canonise a nation’s literature – questions of content and definition.

Nick Jose dealt with these questions eloquently in the book’s introduction, recognising both the impossibility of an exhaustive literary canon, and the necessity of compiling the text in what some view as a crisis facing Australian literature.

However, if one is to go by Professor Indyk’s notion that Australia’s immigrant heritage and cosmopolitan nature could provide an answer to that elusive question of Australianness, then perhaps the national anthology could have focused more on the international.

This was one of Professor Indyk’s main criticisms of the anthology. He felt it should have paid even more homage to the first generation of Australian immigrants on whose shoulders later generations of Australian writers stand.

He suggested that, just as the anthology was very successful in including the voice of Indigenous Australians, it could have done more for the early settlers.

“People underestimate the extent to which Australian literature has been informed by the atavistic,” he said.

For example, while he praised the inclusion of London-born Patrick White (1912-1990), he also lamented that “the Hungarian contribution to Australian literature is represented in the stories of Patrick White and not through [Hungarian-born Australian poet] David Martin (1915-1997).”

What really concerned Professor Indyk was the omission of Australian-born writer Edward Vivian (Vance) Palmer (1885-1959).

“Vance Palmer was a great champion and defender of Australian literature. If such a key figure was omitted from the literary anthology of another country, it would be regarded as a very serious matter,” he said.

However, in his review of the anthology, Indyk praised it as a compilation of Australian literature that wasn’t institutional, and he applauded the larrikinism and idiosyncrasies that really made the anthology, well, Australian.

Gemma Black

When risk defines and confines us

What’s more risky: buying a lottery ticket, running across the train tracks or choosing to leave your steady job and pursue a career as a novelist?

Bestselling satirical novelist Max Barry explained how our attitudes towards risk define and confine us in his essay on *Risk* and following discussion with Julian Morrow at the State Library of NSW.

Deciding to become a writer after working as an Account Manager for information technology giant Hewlett-Packard could be seen as a risky decision but that’s exactly what Max Barry did.

He is the author of the novels *Syrup* (1999, a *Los Angeles Times* Best Book of the Year), *Jennifer Government* (2003, a *New York Times* Notable Book), and *Company* (2006, a *New York Times* bestseller), all of which are currently under film production development. He also created the online nation simulation game *NationStates*, which has been played by over two million people worldwide.

Max’s lecture used the mishandling of financial risk in the corporate world as a springboard to a more general discussion about the ways our attitudes towards different kinds of risk define us as people and how risk influences the fundamental decisions we make about our lives.

“You can plug a set of numbers into a financial model and get a definitive answer as to whether something is a good risk or not, whereas when it comes to real life, there’s no model,” he said.

Max set a distinctly personal tone for his lecture as he recalled conversations with his father, whom he deemed as “possibly the most risk averse person on the planet”. Max’s father valued security over uncertainty and had trouble comprehending Max’s ‘risky’ decision to marry young and throw in his stable job to try his hand as a novelist.

In 2004, two days before his 60th birthday, Max’s father climbed the balcony rail of his



Max Barry and Julian Morrow

Sandra Symons

high-rise apartment and took his own life after looking ahead to the future and deciding he could not risk living it.

His father’s death led Max to consider the relationship between the risk of failure and the risk of regret on the wide range of decisions we make throughout our lives.

Following the lecture, Max sat down with *The Chaser*’s Julian Morrow to discuss some of the key themes raised in his essay. Once again, Max’s own life experiences were brought to the fore when Julian asked about his own risk-taking behaviour since becoming a father. Max reflected upon his experience watching and allowing his three-year-old daughter to make mistakes and emphasised the importance of risk-taking as a process by which we learn to map out our own safety values and understanding of the world.

The evening concluded with Max fielding questions from audience members on topics as diverse as gambling, risk-laden professions and base-jumping. Despite his claims that he is not an authority on the subject, Max’s reflections on risk were both insightful and inventive. His lecture and discussion succeeded in contextualising risk as a necessary and ever-present factor of life.

Michael Walker

The fallacy of a risk-free life

Since 2007, PEN has commissioned three acclaimed Australian writers to each write an essay and deliver a lecture on a big issue facing contemporary Australia. Max Barry delivered the second in the 2009 series on *Risk* in Sydney and Canberra in July. This is an excerpt from his essay.

There are types of risk we all understand. If I cross a busy road, I might be struck and killed. If I invest in shares, I might lose my money. If I marry this girl, I may wind up regretting it; if I don't, I might regret it, too. These are situations we describe as *risky*.

Then there are situations that don't seem risky until someone points it out to us. You might not consider going to the ballot box to be risky, but according to the political ads from all major parties, it is fraught with danger. "Don't risk Labor," the Liberals told us at the last Federal Election – not "Don't vote Labor," don't *risk* Labor. The Nationals' slogan was, "Don't risk Rudd." The election before that, the Coalition message was "Don't risk Latham."

No sooner were Labor in power than they were telling us we couldn't risk the Coalition. "Liberals – DON'T RISK IT," advised a TV ad from ALP Canberra in the lead-up to the 2008 ACT Legislative Assembly election, and the same message screamed from a sticker placed across the actual masthead of the *Canberra Times*.

The National Party in 2007 went to extraordinary lengths to portray voting as a risk. In a TV spot, a man encounters a casino labeled: *POLLING PLACE*. Before him is a craps table, offering a game called *RISK IT*. "On November the 24th," says the voiceover, "you can take a risk by voting for something completely different. But as you roll the dice, remember what's at stake." The man rolls, and 'wins' such things as 'Halved Inflation,' 'Real Wages up 20 per cent,' and 'Industrial Disputes down 66%.' Then he digs a finger into his ear and eats the wax. "If you can afford

to risk 10 years of your achievements," says the voiceover, "roll the dice." The man rolls again, but –ack! – one die changes to a picture of Kevin Rudd's face, against the background: "LOSER." The voiceover asks, "Why risk it... when you don't have to?" And up comes the final graphic: a question mark, and the advice: "Don't gamble on Rudd." The background audio is a slot machine arm being pulled.

It's hard to imagine any piece of theatre that could try harder to portray voting as risk. There have been starker examples of fear-based political advertising, none more notable than the jaw-dropping 1964 US TV ad spot *Daisy*, which threatened viewers with the annihilation of their daughters by nuclear bomb should they fail to vote for Lyndon B. Johnson in the presidential election. But the Nationals' effort is distinctive for its absence of anything in particular to worry about. Its message is not so much, "Don't risk rising inflation," as "Don't risk." As if, to paraphrase Franklin D. Roosevelt, we have nothing to fear but risk itself.

This makes sense only if we have risk-free alternatives. But is there not risk even in re-electing the devil you know? As they say in the financial services industry, a place never more familiar with risk than in 2009, "past performance is no guarantee of future results." And unless you consider your current government perfect in all respects, then in not electing a new one, you must risk the opportunity for something better.

But it is a compelling idea, that things can be made risk-free. It appeals to our desire to eradicate uncertainty, to protect ourselves and those we love, to make the world safe. It is, unfortunately, a fallacy: there is some

form of risk in everything we do, even if we do nothing. And the fallacy is a treacherous one, for once we believe that risk-free is possible, we damage our ability to distinguish between small risks and large ones. We can begin to see all risks, no matter how slight, as unacceptable. And that is a dangerous thing indeed.

At the railway crossing near my house, there is a boom gate, a separate pedestrian crossing that automatically locks when trains approach, flashing lights, a clanging alarm, and, for a while in 2007, a gigantic billboard emblazoned with "*Don't Risk It!*," part of a half-million dollar government campaign to "raise awareness of the dangers of level crossings."

As each train draws within about 400 metres of the crossing, it issues a loud blast from its horn, in order to alert those people who have failed to heed the boom gate, the automatically locking pedestrian gate, the lights, the alarm, and, in 2007, the billboard.

In days gone by, each of these things on its own would have been considered ample warning that stepping onto train tracks can be dangerous. In the small country town where I grew up, I made my way across train tracks far from any official crossing every day of school, and I don't recall ever needing more warning than the tracks themselves. The profusion of safety measures at my local crossing suggests a near-pathological relationship with risk: the belief that 300-tonne trains moving at 80 kilometres per hour through urban environments can be made completely safe, if only we add more bells or lights.

It seems that as our world grows safer, the risks that remain become more stark. The



Max Barry

Sandra Symons

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Australian mortality rate amongst children aged 1 to 14 is 0.014 per cent, or 14 deaths per 100,000 children. Each represents an unimaginable tragedy, but the rate is less than half what it was even two decades ago, and a mere fraction of decades before that. Against this, we have never been more obsessed with keeping our children safe.

A 2006 study found that after many schools have banned running, the playing of informal games, or unsupervised access to sporting equipment, the most common lunch break activity for Australian Year 7 students is “sitting and talking,” and if our numbers have followed the British trend, less than one in 10 Australian children makes his or her own way to school today, compared to eight in ten two decades ago. And if we are beginning to reverse this trend, it is not because we are conquering our fear of risk; on the contrary, it is because of the emergence of a new danger

– the smoking gun – that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud.”

Not even the war’s most aggressive proponents claimed Saddam Hussein actually possessed the means to drop a nuclear bomb on an American city, but there were claims – false, as it turned out, but still, credible at the time – that Iraq had attempted to acquire yellowcake uranium from Niger, which could, if Iraq had a lot of money, scientists, time, and very expensive equipment, be separated, purified, and used as a warhead in a long-range missile, if Iraq had any long-range missiles. Therefore, no-one could deny that there was a risk. A tiny, extraordinarily convoluted risk, perhaps, but a risk nevertheless.

The danger of Iraq’s nonexistent nuclear arsenal felt compelling because it had several risk properties that humans tend to exaggerate: its likelihood was unknown, it would affect a great number of people, it was beyond the

remember, so it is part of your normal life. And, most importantly, at the wheel of a car, you are, or feel you are, in control.

Control is key. If you have a mother, as I do, who grips the sides of her seat when you navigate a T-intersection, who closes her eyes around corners and gasps during merging, try not to take it as a comment on your ability. It may be, rather, that risks seem larger when you can’t do anything about them.

Take, for example, the arresting photograph published in a small Virginian newspaper in 2004, which was captioned: “Mellisa Williamson, 35, a Bullitt Avenue resident, worries about the effect on her unborn child from the sound of jackhammers.” In the photo, Ms Williamson gazes off into the distance at construction work, one hand near her pregnant belly, the other in the process of raising a cigarette to her lips.

This picture zipped around the globe, gaining so much attention that the newspaper went back and interviewed Ms. Williamson again. She said she’d heard people talking about it, but: “It didn’t bother me. It went in one ear and out the other. I’ve heard this all my life.” Her doctor had warned her of the dangers of smoking when pregnant, but had also said that stress was bad for her baby, and Ms Williamson felt that if she gave up smoking, she would become stressed. “If people don’t like it, that’s their opinion. They’ve got theirs and I’ve got mine.”

One explanation of Ms Williamson’s behavior is that she is not really concerned about her unborn child – that she objects to the noise of jackhammers not because it might damage her fetus, but because it makes it harder to hear the contestants on *Jeopardy!* And this may be true. But only if Ms Williamson is a caricature of a human being, a woman of monstrous self-interest and incomprehensible stupidity. And in truth, I doubt that people like that exist in the numbers suggested by tabloid newspapers, and our own temptation to demonise and

simplify. It’s possible that Ms Williamson does worry about her unborn child, but the risk from smoking is controllable, but the jackhammers outside her window are not.

And let’s return to that railway crossing near my house. The reason this crossing has accumulated bells, lights, automated gates and billboards is not because people were failing to notice the warnings it already had. It’s because they were ignoring them. That’s the message from a *Don’t Risk It!* billboard: not “Watch out!”, but “Seriously, this is dangerous, so stop running across the path of oncoming locomotives to get to work three minutes earlier.” And while it’s tempting to think such people must be dumb as rocks, the truth is they’re not, and that’s why they do it.

A train closes to within 400 metres of a crossing, and all the warnings activate. If you were about to cross the tracks, then according to the bells and lights, what would have been safe a second ago is now dangerous. But you are an intelligent human being. You know that a train 400 metres away is not much more dangerous than it was a moment earlier. In reality, that train will represent a steadily increasing danger the closer it gets. And it was not perfectly safe at 401 metres, either: this is merely the distance judged adequate to give even very slow human beings time to clear out of the way. Similarly, you know that your car does not abruptly transition from safe to deadly the moment its speedometer rises above the speed limit. These are demarcations not between risk and safety, but between degrees of risk considered acceptable and unacceptable by relevant government authorities.

This is easy to forget. The more our governments do to protect us from risk, the more we believe that eliminating risk is our government’s job – that all accidents are at least partly government’s fault, and must be responded to so that they can never happen again. As understandable as this attitude is – as human – it is futile. The world is not risk-free, and cannot be made so.

“Seriously, this is dangerous, so stop running across the path of oncoming locomotives to get to work three minutes earlier.”

from which our children require protection: the obesity epidemic.

A 2003 survey by the Australian National University’s Centre for Social Research found that Australians overwhelmingly believed crime rates were rising; older Australians in particular believed they were rising dramatically. But Australian crime rates in almost every category have been dropping steadily, and in the five years prior to the study, crime victimisation rates fell around 20 per cent.

Our increasing distaste for risk has led us down some dark paths. In 2002, US President George W. Bush argued for the invasion of Iraq despite the absence of any compelling evidence that that nation had weapons of mass destruction, because there was a risk it might. “We cannot wait for the final proof

ability of you as an individual to control, and it was completely outside normal experience, but, thanks to Hollywood and videotape, easy to imagine.

Take, by way of comparison, the risk of stepping into a car. This is a lot safer today than it once was, but still more likely to kill you than anything else except heart disease, cancer, stroke, and suicide. That, however, is a known risk: you are not going to be surprised to discover that in fact 50 per cent of all car trips end in death; that cars are in fact far more dangerous than you knew. Furthermore, while a crash may have dreadful consequences, its scope is relatively small: it will not affect dozens or thousands of people, so doesn’t have quite the same capacity to grip the mind as, say, a plane crash. Also, you have ridden in cars for as long as you can

Humble crusader for human rights

She has faced public threats and abuse, been arrested and shot at, but Hina Jilani remains one of the most vocal human rights campaigners in Pakistan. The esteemed lawyer recently visited Sydney and spoke about the current crisis in world leadership and the spate of attacks on Indian students in Victoria.

It seems that Hina Jilani was bound for a life of rebellion. At the age of 14, her family were forced off their land when it was confiscated by the Pakistani Government; at 16, she risked gunfire to lead a student protest with her sister, Asma, against their country's dictator Ayub Khan; and by the time she graduated from law studies at the age of 21, she had seen her father, a wealthy landlord and horse breeder, imprisoned several times for his outspoken views.

Now, at 56, Hina Jilani is one of the world's most respected human rights lawyers. She established Pakistan's first all-female legal practice with her sister in 1981 and, from 2000 to 2008, was the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Human Rights Defenders. She is an Advocate of the High Court and of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and has been at the forefront of the struggle for the rights of women, minorities and prisoners in her country for almost 40 years.

Visiting Australia recently to deliver the annual Hal Wootten Lecture at the University of New South Wales, she poured scorn on the world's leaders for diminishing the prospects of peace and security.

"There is an apparent lack of political vision, capacity and a will to resolve areas of conflict," she said. "Long term conflicts have been allowed to fester with disastrous consequences for the security and wellbeing for populations around the world. These realities indicate a deficit in world leadership."

Her distress with the current global situation was delivered precisely and forcefully in a 30-minute speech to the 300-strong crowd. Focusing on the Asian region, she discussed the burgeoning powers of military organisations who commit violations such as rape, torture and extra-judicial executions with impunity, the weakening of the rule of law and human rights guarantees through national security laws and counter-terrorism measures, and the ultimate sacrifices paid by minorities, indigenous peoples and the vulnerable when countries accede to the demands of powerful economic interests.

The words impressed upon the Sydney audience, who responded with a concentrated silence. Later, the crowd exited the theatre to a clear night sky and into a society where women can venture out after dark on their own and

disagree with their husbands without fear of reprisals. Yet, it is in her home country that Hina's words gain full force. Pakistan still embraces ancient cultural and religious taboos, subjecting women to some of the harshest repression in the world. Human Rights Watch issued a report in May 2008 that stated between 50 and 90 per cent of Pakistan's 82 million girls and women are victims of violence. It is against this backdrop that Hina draws her inspiration, and her fiercest criticisms.

"When I was younger, I used to feel anger," she says. "Now it's more like outrage at the injustice that I feel. And I do feel that it is not possible to look away when injustice is happening around you. We cannot leave the victims alone and without support."

This statement did not ring true for the 15 or so people in Epping, Melbourne, who watched on as four men of Indian descent were set upon and beaten outside a pub in September. It was one of several recent attacks on Indians, and Indian students in particular. Hina says these events should be of serious concern to Australian authorities.

"Australia should keep up its reputation of a multi-racial society and multi-cultural society. And these, I'm sure, are incidents that raise a lot of questions with regards to race relations in this country and the kinds of attitudes that people may have in certain pockets."

"I am happy to observe that the Government has voiced its concerns over this but I'm hoping that programs can be initiated where the tendency to racism can be suppressed and discouraged through good initiatives."

Hina Jilani has spent most of her adult life speaking out on behalf of victims, criticising the human rights record of governments from Guatemala to Colombia and China to the US and calling her then-president Pervez Musharraf "a military dictator" who rigged polls, lied to the world and brokered sweet deals with the military.

Most recently, she worked on the UN fact-finding mission on the Gaza conflict. It released its report on 17 September which found evidence that indicated serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, as well as war crimes, were committed by Israel, and that Palestinian armed groups committed war crimes and possibly crimes against humanity.

The response to Hina's criticisms, delivered personally



Hina Jilani

Chrissa Favaloro

and through official human rights reports over the years, has been harsh: she has been shot at, arrested, received death threats and faced repeated intimidation and public abuse. At one point, newspapers in Pashawar, Pakistan, published large advertisements urging the faithful to punish her and her sister, Asma Jilani Jahangir, for undermining the country's values.

"Anybody who is working in human rights, who is challenging and criticising both state and non-state actors who are involved in very serious human rights violations, don't feel safe."

She takes measures to protect herself and her staff. "We do take precautions. I think that human rights defenders are very well aware of the capacity and capability of those who threaten them to carry out what they threaten."

Instead of living in fear, however, she says her sense of security comes from the movement with which she works and the people who surround her. It is one of those people, on this occasion a security guard at her firm, AGHS Legal Associates, who potentially saved her life 10 years ago.

At the time, Hina was representing 29-year-old Samia Sarwar, a mother of two who had suffered 10 years' of abuse at the hand of her husband, whom she was forced to marry. Much to the shame of her family, she was seeking a divorce and had taken refuge at a women's shelter established by Hina and Asma.

Days later they agreed to meet Samia's mother, only to allow her to enter the legal office with an assassin by her side who shot Samia repeatedly and narrowly missed Hina – the killer was shot dead by security. Amnesty International reported that a witness saw Samia's mother walk away from the murder "cool and collected, as though the woman slumped in her own blood was a stranger".

Honour killings like Samia's continue to occur in Pakistan, with the law accepting a pardon if family members forgive the assailant – neglecting to address the fact that family members are often the instigators of the attacks. Despite the many achievements of human rights defenders like Hina Jilani, the situation in Pakistan and many parts of Asia is deteriorating.

"Pakistan is undergoing one of its worst crises," says Hina. "Terrorism is a concern, there is a sense of deprivation that has become very, very deep in the smaller provinces... there are economic and social issues that should be of grave and serious concern to the country. We are undergoing a very deep economic crisis, and also a crisis of food security. I only hope that Pakistan, which has been able to come out of past crises, will be able to recover from this one."

So what are her thoughts on Australia's recent track record on human rights?

"I think Australia's lack of a human rights act should be a cause of concern over here. As far as Australia's human rights record goes, there are areas of concern – I do believe that the right of human rights in terms of fair trials and due process needs a review."

"But the basic concern around Australia's human rights record has always been with regard to race relations and the rights of the indigenous population. I do believe certain mechanisms have been set up but there has to be more engagement of those mechanisms with the reality of the lives of the indigenous population, and the whole question of discrimination and equality has to be dealt with."

Throughout her 30 or so years as a practising lawyer – Hina still operates her practice in Lahore – she has set many hard-won precedents in the courts. For example, she secured favourable judgments from the courts on the question of a woman's right to marry a man of her own choice, and without the consent of a guardian.

She has also made her mark outside the court system: in 1983, Hina and Asma protested on behalf of a young blind girl, Safia Bibi, who had been raped but was in jail for adultery. They were sent to prison for 20 days and the case caused a worldwide media furore. The first day of their protest, 12 February, has now been immortalised as Pakistan Women's Day, when women in Pakistan come out onto the streets to commemorate the beginning of the struggle for women's rights.

"Every case in which I do achieve something makes me proud. Every step that we take where human rights are concerned symbolises one step further for the rights of those vulnerable citizens we take the case up for," says Hina.

In a world where, in her words, "conflict and violence within states, terrorism, trans-national organised crime, poverty, a crisis of public health and environmental degradation are some of the most visible threats to peace and security", how does she maintain hope for the future?

"Obviously there is that element of outrage at the things are happening. I think even the small achievements are very, very rewarding for me. There is never a period where one doesn't hope."

Chrissa Favaloro

Australian Voices in Germany: the translation of Anna Funder's *Stasiland* into German

The 3rd Conference of the International Association for Translation & Intercultural Studies (IATIS) was held at Monash University, Melbourne, in July 2009. The theme of the conference was 'Mediation & Conflict: Translation and Culture in a Global Context' and embraced such topics as cultural translation, the translator/interpreter as cultural broker in a trans-national world, the role of literary translation in challenging or reinforcing cultural difference, new media in translation, and political and ideological dimensions of translation. This is an excerpt from a paper presented by Dr Leah Gerber, of Monash University.



Dr Leah Gerber

*Dr Leah Gerber is a Lecturer in German Studies/
Translation and Interpreting Studies at Monash
University.*

In an interview with ABC broadcaster Terry Lane in May 2006, Anna Funder was asked: 'What was a nice Australian girl doing poking around in Germany's dirty linen?' When Funder first started working on *Stasiland*, only seven years after the fall of the Wall, information regarding the Stasi's activities was still emerging in the media and was often reported sensationally.

In 1996, Funder went to Berlin with the aim of writing a text that delved into Germany's recent past, uncovering the stories victims of the Stasi – those who had in some way stood up to the regime, thus revealing significant acts of courage. Readers of *Stasiland* are introduced progressively to these figures: Miriam (whose husband, Charlie, died in a Stasi prison), Julia (from whom Funder sublets an apartment in the former eastern part of Berlin, and whose education and career chances were cut off by the Stasi) and Frau Sigrid Paul (whose sickly baby was stuck on the western side of the wall, prompting Paul and her husband to undertake an escape attempt through a tunnel into West Berlin).

Other stories she encounters on her journey through *Stasiland*; she meets the

state cartographer responsible for painting the line of the Berlin Wall through the city, for example, while her friend, the late East German rock star Klaus Renft, divulges his experiences of living under the Stasi.

Yet when the German translation of *Stasiland* (which bears the same title) was published in 2004, the question asked by many German readers was: why was a foreigner, an outsider, writing about such a sensitive part of German history?

Over several years, Funder studied and worked in Germany; she speaks fluent German and, in light of this deep and ongoing relationship with Germany, may well be termed a 'bicultural observer'. This is an important attribute. For a non-German to engage with a very sensitive part of German history, the necessity to be both bilingual and bicultural is not a requirement, but at the same time, it positions the author in a place of relative authority.

Yet Funder strongly believes that her ability to gain access to people's histories was more than likely enhanced by the fact that she was *not* German. In 2006 she stated: 'I've spent a long time in Germany. I think that it

was a great advantage for me to be foreign, because I don't think that East Germans would have spoken nearly as openly to a West German asking them these questions, and I think in some ways, West Germans wouldn't have noticed some of the things I noticed from the outside. So in the end I thought it was an advantage.'

When the German translation (by Harald Riemann) was published in 2004, Funder recalls how her Hamburg-based publicist warned her, shortly before her departure to Germany for the publicity tour, to 'Wear a flak jacket. The booksellers, especially in the former East Germany, are livid.' Despite the relevance of the subject matter for German audiences, 23 German publishers had rejected the book, despite its international success.

One of the explanations Funder received was that it was by far the best book 'by a foreigner' on the issue but that there was no way of publishing it in the 'current political climate'. Finally, a German translation was commissioned and published by a small publisher 'der Europäische Verlagsanstalt/Sabine Groenewold Verlage' in Hamburg.

When the translation was finally launched

at the Leipzig Book Fair in the 'Runde Ecke' building (the former Stasi Headquarters), Funder was met with a shout from the back of the room: a woman yelling 'Who gave you the right to write about us?'. Funder's response was clear: 'where I come from, writers can write about almost anything they choose' and 'From what authority should I have sought permission?' Variations of this question pervaded the interviews she undertook with the German media, including one from an East German journalist, who asked, 'But what will they think about us abroad now?'

Funder was prodded why she had not written about 'normal life' in the GDR; why did she search for extreme stories? Again, her answer was clear: 'I didn't make up the Stasi and their extreme methods. I also didn't have to look very far at all to find stories of resistance and its terrible consequences. And I didn't find the world that the East German state created in any way "normal."'

Many of these reactions are bound up with the question of national self-image: as a comparison for Australian audiences, what Funder did would be akin to an outsider writing about one of the most shameful

Anna Funder's debut publication, Stasiland, was published by Text (Melbourne) in 2002. Stasiland won the Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction in 2004 and has been published in 20 countries and translated into 16 languages. Ms Funder's essay Courage was part of Sydney PEN's 3 Writers Project.

The translation of Anna Funder's *Stasiland* into German

stains on Australia's past: the treatment of Aboriginal peoples and, most specifically, the stolen generation. We too would question whether someone 'else' should have the right to write about this reality; perhaps because this is an act which we find almost impossible to do ourselves.

Naturally, this presents an uneasy, distressing process of self-understanding. Also, for many English-speaking readers, *Stasiland* would have provided the first in-depth, non-fiction account of this historical period. In Germany, positive impressions of East German life tend to outnumber those that portray the real, often damaging conditions under which people lived. In literary works by authors such as Thomas Brussig, for example, or in Wolfgang Becker's highly successful film *Good Bye, Lenin* (2003), the 'reality' depicted draws on the idea of 'Ostalgie' – to a nostalgia for the former East, focussing on aspects of GDR life such as foodstuffs and cultural activities, many of which disappeared after the fall of the wall.

The translation of *Stasiland* provokes many fascinating questions. Firstly, we have a source text (the original English language version) in which the geographical setting, cultural/historical context is post-Wende Germany; all of the figures (bar the author/narrator) are German and therefore it is the source text that is inherently foreign to a large portion of its readers.

Funder also interviewed a number of ex-Stasi men, all of whom voluntarily answered an advertisement she placed in the *Märksiche Allgemeine Zeitung*; these were carried out in German and translated by the author into English for use in the text.

One of the key challenges posed to the translator, therefore, is how to present a 'reversed' translation situation. Usually, to borrow Itamar Even-Zohar's words 'through the foreign works, features [...] are introduced into the home literature which did not exist there before'. Here we have an original work

in which the setting is foreign to the source reader familiar to the target reader. Funder has also made all the necessary concessions in her original text to account for the uninformed 'implied' reader; she imports German terms but always provides explanations. What does the translator do with such information? How does he negotiate these integral aspects of the text into the German translation?

In my correspondence with Anna Funder, further intricacies came to light, including the fact that she was offered no communication with the translator despite tendering the use of all of her original (German) research material. When the translation was completed, Funder was provided with the proofs, which she found it so unacceptable (it was littered with mistakes) that she spent three months making improvements to the text.

Later, when EVA was restructured, the rights were passed on to Fischer and, upon hearing this news, Funder requested a new translation. This was refused, but Funder was assured that the mistakes would be corrected. However, she was never sent the 'revised' translation to check before it was published. The original EVA hardback version is no longer in print, and as I was completely unaware of its existence prior to talking with the author, my analysis compares the original against the Fischer (paperback) version.

The process of the German translation of *Stasiland* also throws up some fascinating questions about the notion of 'translation as intervention'. There are various instances of 're-writing', i.e. altering the translation in some way as per the expectations or norms of the target audience. Here, I must mention that my use of the term 're-writing' does not apply to that which is often used to describe the act or art of translation (i.e. that a translation will never be the same as the original). Instead, it describes what Andre Lefevere refers to as actions undertaken by figures within the literary system who 'rewrite' or alter texts with the aim of making them fit within the

dominant (or one of many) ideological or poetological currents of their time.

Lefevere shows how these figures 'occasionally repress certain works of literature that are all too blatantly opposed to the dominant concept of what literature should (be allowed to) be – its poetics – and of what society should (be allowed to) be – ideology'.

In her re-working of the EVA translation, Funder made several changes to the text – beyond corrections to grammar and expression. She also updated the 'ending' of Julia's story. In the original, the narrator (Funder) emails Julia about her return to Berlin and includes Julia's reply – Julia has moved to the USA. But in the translation, the narrator receives no reply to the email and instead visits Julia's apartment – Julia is not there, so Funder leaves a note.

There is no doubting the original author's entitlement to make changes to his/her own text, yet it presents a fascinating example precisely because an intervention of this kind is not a common occurrence in a translation process, mainly due to the fact that many authors would not be equipped with the linguistic tools necessary to read their work/s in translation.

It is surprising how many authors are unaware of how their works read in translation, simply because they do not have the tools (or access to people who do) to be involved in the process.. What is so unique in this case is the fact that Funder is equipped with the *ability* to do so: being both culturally and linguistically fluent in German she was able to penetrate the translation of her text in a way many authors cannot.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to the translator of *Stasiland*, and the primary reason behind my interest in this translation, is the fact that the cultural context of the book is more familiar to the target audience. The question begs: how does one go about translating a text which is (impliedly) culturally *more* familiar

to target readers than to its original audience?

Much of what I would term rudimentary information – Funder obviously included this to take into consideration her implied (uninformed) reader, including passages on the post-war division of Germany, of the political make up of the East German State etc. These were mostly omitted from the translation. And, one could argue, rightly so. Because Funder foreignised so much terminology in her original, importing many German words and phrases into the English text, she often had to provide explanations, yet such information would be rather tedious (and potentially condescending) for a German audience.

Rewriting has occurred at various levels in the translation of *Stasiland*; not only by the translator, but also, as we now know, by the original author. The corrections made to some of the German language used in the text mostly take into consideration German standards of grammar, for example 'Scheissfreundlichkeit' becomes 'Scheißfreundlichkeit' and a reference to the television program 'Das Rote Optik' is altered in the translation to 'Die Rote Optik' (thus reflecting the correct gender of the noun).

Other corrections which occur in the translation illustrate a further motivation behind rewriting: respecting historical accuracy. Funder's original text contains several minor factual inaccuracies – again, source text readers would presumably fail to notice these. One such example refers to the date on which Erich Mielke, former Minister for State Security, killed a man at a 1931 demonstration in Berlin. Funder records the date as '8 August'; in the translation, the correct date of 'August 9' appears.

When dealing with a non-fiction text containing information about a particular period in German history, factual accuracy – particularly when the implied reader of the text *would* be all the wiser – is an implied necessity. »

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The translation of Anna Funder's *Stasiland* into German

The final instance of rewriting is far more dramatic, and casts, I believe, a very clear light on some of the expectations of this particular target audience and their acknowledgment of the past. It draws on Lefevere's notion of patronage, whereby outside forces – societal forces, generally driven by ideological concerns – influence the nature of the translation produced.

In *Stasiland*, Funder includes a paragraph about the so-called 'Insider Committee', a group of ex-Stasi men who submit papers on their view of history, as well as general lobbying for former Stasi officers. She details the threats made by these men to various members of the public whom they fear may uncover them, including delivering porn to unsuspecting wives, car brakes being cut etc.

The original German publisher EVA was sued by a group affiliated to the so-called 'Society for the Protection of Civil Rights and the Dignity of Man', which took offence at this passage (an interim injunction was given against EVA). The offending passage – a sizeable paragraph which appears on page 84 of Text Publishing's version) was subsequently removed from the German translation (page 90 of the Fischer version) thus representing a clear act of patronage, highlighting the very real hypersensitivity of this particular target audience to the content of Funder's text.

Neither EVA nor Fischer made any attempt to have the injunction lifted, nor is there any note in the text indicating that this omission had taken place, and the reasons for doing so. Ultimately, this instance emphasises the real fear with which other members of German society react to intimidation from groups such as these. One may then argue that the translation is no longer truly reflective of the author's voice, nor, one could reason, is it reflective of the real situation in post-Wende Germany.

The way in which translations of Australian-German texts into German

challenge the traditional imaginings of the Australia-German relationship and, while there is clearly room and audiences for texts such as these in the German literary system, the degree to which the translation of such texts is forced, overtly or covertly, to adhere to various target cultural norms is an exciting area for further investigation.

Anna Funder received the 2009 NSW Writer's Fellowship by NSW Premier and Minister for the Arts Nathan Rees in September. Ms Funder has been awarded the prestigious \$20,000 NSW Government fellowship to help her write her next book, *The General's Pleasure*, a fictionalised account of the 18th century explorer Matthew Flinders and his prison guard, General de Caen.

Established in 1982, the annual fellowship – funded by the NSW Government – is awarded to assist the writing of a new literary work by a writer living in NSW. It can be awarded to a novelist, poet, playwright or other writer of fiction or non-fiction.

Previous winners include Frank Moorhouse (2007) for his novel *Palais de Nations*, John Tranter (2002) for a book of poetry and Colleen Burke (1999) for her autobiographical novel *Looking Over My Shoulder*.

Translation and Mediation in a Conflict Zone: Joe Sacco's Comics Journalism

The 3rd Conference of the International Association for Translation & Intercultural Studies (IATIS) was held at Monash University, Melbourne, in July 2009. The theme of the conference was 'Mediation and Conflict: Translation and Culture in a Global Context' and embraced such topics as cultural translation, the translator/interpreter as cultural broker in a trans-national world, the role of literary translation in challenging or reinforcing cultural difference, new media in translation, and political and ideological dimensions of translation. This is an excerpt from a paper presented by Dr Brigid Maher, of Monash University.

In conflict zones where there is strong international media interest, translators tend to be in high demand, yet we rarely get much of an insight into their role in bringing the news into our homes.

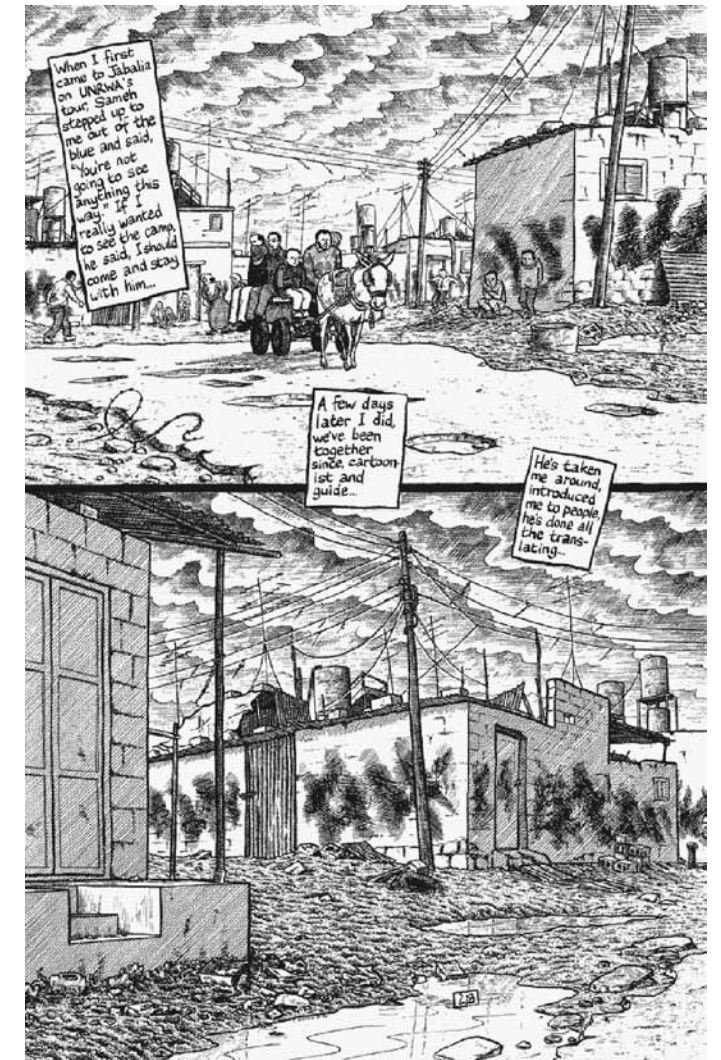
Translation is all too often 'invisible': many of the newspaper articles we read or the news programs we see are likely to have involved translation at one or more stages of production, but translators are rarely acknowledged, whether they interpret during interviews, or translate press releases, background material or whole articles.

Perhaps news agencies feel that audiences just prefer not to have to think about the multiple agents behind a news story.

In situations of significant conflict, where time is of the essence and immediate facts and objectivity are highly valued, the introduction of that extra level of complexity represented by the presence of translation and the translator might be seen as muddying the waters excessively.

Thus, in spite of their central role in the journalistic process and, often, the considerable personal risk they run, the input of translators goes largely unnoticed and unacknowledged.

One interesting and rather creative exception to this is the work of Joe Sacco, a Maltese-born American journalist whose work is an unusual combination of many of the processes and concerns of journalism with the medium of comics.



He focuses on ordinary people's day-to-day lives under occupation and in war, and he frequently uses translators, interpreters and fixers, whose vital contribution he makes quite visible in his work.

Sacco's main works of comics journalism are about conflict situations in Palestine and in Bosnia. Palestine first appeared in serial form between 1993 and 2001, but has since been collected as a single volume of some 280 pages (Fantagraphics Books, 2007), and recounts his visits to a number of different parts of Palestine and Israel.

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Joe Sacco's Comics Journalism



Brigid Maher

Dr Brigid Maher is a Lecturer in the School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics at Monash University.

Safe Area Gorazde (Fantagraphics Books, 2000) is about the war in the town of Gorazde, Eastern Bosnia, a so-called Safe Area that for much of the war was, in fact, a very dangerous place to be. By the time Sacco visited, the situation was somewhat calmer, but travel in and out of the area was still restricted and people were traumatized and very concerned about the town's future.

The Fixer (Drawn and Quarterly, 2003), also looks at the war in Bosnia, and its focus is a man called Neven, who worked for Sacco as an interpreter, guide and all-round fixer during his visits to Sarajevo in the mid-1990s, and whom he meets up with again in 2001.

In all three works, Sacco reminds readers of the mediated nature of his journalism by drawing attention to the presence of translators in his interactions and by making them into subjects, depicting some of the other roles they have in life – soldier, teacher, student, brother, girlfriend.

It is in part the medium – comics – that allows Sacco to focus our attention on the place translation has in the journalistic process: he fully exploits the interaction of words and images to make his translators seen and heard.

Firstly, because of the visual nature of the comics medium, we know what Sacco's translators look like – he includes them in some of the panels rather than trying to create the illusion of going solo in a conflict zone.

Some of his drawings show the translator and the occasional inclusion of 'he says' or 'she says' in the speech bubbles indicate very clearly the way translators help relay to Sacco the speech of his interviewees. Instead of just using a first-person translation as an outright replacement of the original, Sacco's inclusion of the translator's 'he says' draws our attention to the fact that this is translated discourse – a third figure is present, enabling the interaction to occur.

Of course, this 'he says' business would get a little clunky if you had to read it over and over through an entire comic, and if every panel faithfully depicted the translator it would get rather crowded, so this technique appears only occasionally in Sacco's work.

However, there are other ways in which he makes translation visible. For example,

sometimes one finds the interviewee 'speaking' (that is, with the speech bubble coming from their mouth) but the translator is also pictured and appears to be speaking too.

Occasionally, speech bubbles telling the same story shift from the speaker to the translator, a technique which helps us appreciate the double-voiced nature of Sacco's interactions with his interviewees. One case of this is in *Palestine*, where an elderly interviewee tells of the death of her husband. In the final panel of her story it is not her but Sameh, the translator, who is pictured, with a speech bubble saying 'He died on the road'.

By depicting the same story coming from both speakers we get a sense of the way both contribute to its enunciation. We also see Sameh's subjectivity, as his pained facial expression at this crucial dramatic moment clearly shows us that translating the woman's trauma is emotionally difficult for him.

In another scene, too, Sacco draws our attention to just how distressing the translation of conflict is, particularly working for someone like him, who requires details and 'vivid descriptions' because of the visual nature of his medium and his journalist's desire to faithfully represent the stories he mediates.

Sameh takes him around the Jabalia refugee camp, where he lives, translating and interpreting for him during a number of interviews and conversations. Sacco wants to know: 'How many soldiers? How did they beat you? Then what happened? [Sameh] helps me wring it out of the people I interview.... And he's heard every blow and humiliation described twice, once by the person telling me, and again when it's come out of his mouth in translation...'

A similar point is made in Mona Baker's *Translation and Conflict* (Routledge, 2006) about the traumatic effects suffered by some interpreters in South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation trials, relaying day after day the testimony of witnesses and survivors. Baker suggests that people's personal stories about their 'place in the world' may be the most difficult to translate or interpret, and Sacco's panels certainly seem to corroborate this, as he reminds us of the personal



toll the translation of trauma can take.

Sacco's is a particularly personal kind of journalism, one that involves stories and testimony, as well as excerpts of history, politics and other contextual information. This aspect offers revealing insights into the journalistic process, for in addition to their linguistic, cultural and practical expertise, Sacco's fixers provide emotional support and friendship, and offer their own life stories as material for his collections.

The main instance of this is Sarajevo resident Neven, the subject of *The Fixer*, but we also get to know Sacco's other translators – Edin and Emira in Bosnia, and Sameh and Ammar in Palestine.

In Sarajevo, the charismatic Neven offers real comfort and reassurance; Sacco feels like a fish out of water among some of the tough guys of a conflict zone, but with Neven he feels at ease. Their relationship is an interesting one of interdependence: Sacco is forever buying Neven drinks and coffee and feeling guiltily indebted to him, but at the same time, as a budget-conscious freelancer, he is alarmed at the way when Neven's around 'my wallet [...] eases out of my trousers and starts spewing money!' (*Fixer* p. 59).

His account of his relationship with Neven constantly reminds us of the power of money

in a conflict zone. Neven wants to exploit his skills in any way possible to get ahead during a time of hardship. At the same time, Sacco reminds us that the journalist has quite a bit in common with their translator – both make a living out of conflict and pain and, in a sense, the greater the pain, the better the living: "When massacres happened", Neven [tells him], "those were the best times. Journalists from all over the world were coming here."

Sacco and Neven's relationship is also rather conflicted because Sacco starts to realize that Neven is not always a reliable informant and is wont to embellish upon his own heroic participation in the war. Sacco is initially rather naïve and wide-eyed when it comes to Neven's transition from fixer to interviewee, but later finds out that his dramatic story about how he and a small team of men destroyed four enemy tanks was most likely apocryphal.

Sacco often highlights the journalist's reliance on people's generosity, their willingness to share their stories and often painful memories. We see this directly, but also through metaphorical parallels between people's gifts of stories, and their generosity with their homes and (often scarce) food. The one thing people have to offer him in an unequal power situation is hospitality

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Joe Sacco's Comics Journalism

and a sense of home. He depicts himself as a rather greedy recipient of all this warmth and generosity: 'I eat like a king in refugee camps', he writes, and one family's 'chicken fried crispy in a sort of lemon sauce' is 'finger-lickin' good!'

He's a hearty eater, but also, by extension, always hungry for a story. People's narration of their own stories is a form of giving, and his reworking of these stories for his audience is a kind of taking, eating, and, in a sense, regurgitating in a new form.

This also applies to the stories of his translators. While they are mediators for Sacco, he also mediates their personal narratives for us, his audience; he 'stories' his friends and interpreters, particularly Neven in *The Fixer* and Edin in *Safe Area Gorazde*.

If locals provide enormous emotional, material and logistical support to Sacco, we also see that he and his fellow journalists bring something highly valued to the conflict zones they visit – the capacity to transmit people's stories to an international public, as well as a much-needed breath of fresh air in a stifling atmosphere of conflict and frustration.

He documents some of the outside influences that conflict, and the media interest in it, bring into a place. In Bosnia, his English-speaking friends love his idiomatic expressions and use them at every opportunity. There is also a shared cultural baggage of American popular music and Hollywood films that brings Sacco and his new friends together.

They watch American action movies on video – as long as the homemade generator on the Drina river holds out – and Neven describes a dramatic moment in his colourful career as a soldier as 'it was like in the Doc Holiday [sic] movies'.

Films contribute significantly to Sacco's Bosnian friends' perceptions of the US, and it is interesting to note the way Neven uses the genre of the Western to 'translate' his own war-time experience for Sacco and his readers. But Westerns, for all their violence and drama, cannot be as graphic and confronting as the actual experience of war, as Sacco knows from more than once being invited to sit through what he calls 'Gorazde's own

Most Horrifying Home Videos', gruesome amateur footage of war-time attacks, injuries and surgery.

While Sacco gives a sense of the potential for translation – and journalism – to create a space for cultural exchange and understanding, irony is always a feature of his work, and he seems aware of the dangers of glossing over the presence of conflict, or suggesting that the international news media will somehow be able to waltz in and fix everything up.

Much of the irony comes from Sacco's depiction of himself: his features are always very cartoony, and you can never see his eyes behind his glasses. This means that he comes across as a bit naïve and lost, and he is certainly very open about the fear he feels at times in the conflict zones he visits, especially Palestine. For example, the first time he hears percussion grenades in Ramallah he over-reacts: he waves his arms around in panic and sweat beads fly off his face.

When he first arrives in Palestine he declares, again with a good dose of self-mockery, 'I will alert the world to your suffering! Watch your local comic book store...'

And while many of Gorazde's residents get excited about the presence of an American journalist in their midst, 'One old man took one look at me and abandoned all hope that the U.S. military *could* rescue Bosnia. "Americans are short and wearing glasses," he noted'.

Irony seems to be a sure-fire way of preventing Sacco's fogged-up glasses from becoming rose-coloured (and ours as well). As he occasionally fishes around for signs of mutual respect or forgiveness in situations of seemingly intractable ethnic conflict, his optimism and eagerness are tempered by ironic self-reflection on his own position as yet another international journalist out for a story.

He tells how an Israeli soldier suggested he visit the Old City in Nablus, to see a 'beautiful market'. Sacco says 'The way he said "beautiful" ... I knew he wished he wasn't there as a soldier'. But when he relates this to a family of Palestinians in Kalandia, 'They listen to my story impassively... [...]

I suppose one loose anecdote doesn't bridge any gulfs... Anyway... it's not like I'm here to mediate... and let's face it, my comics blockbuster depends on conflict; peace won't pay the rent'.

I mentioned the personal toll that translating conflict has on Sameh in Jabalia. In addition to this, his job at the rehabilitation centre, where he teaches deaf children, is at risk; he might be demoted.

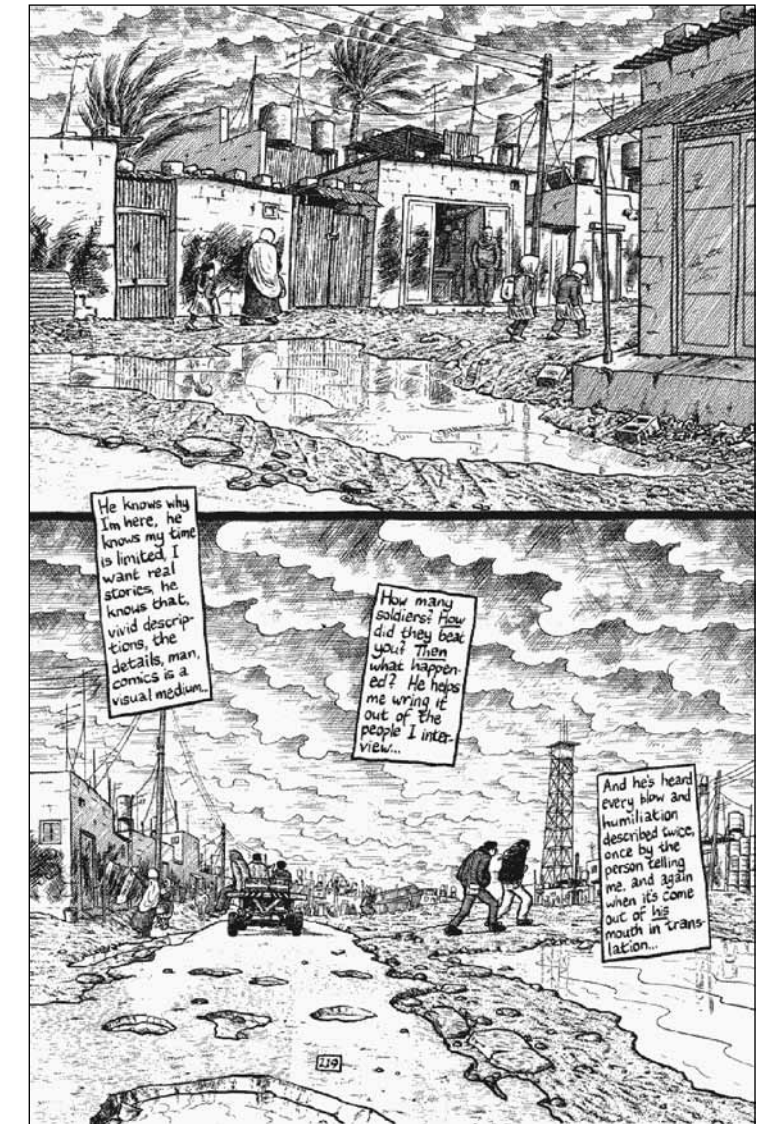
Sacco writes: 'It's an office politics thing [...] But my presence has been the catalyst... Well think about how I feel...'. The pair of them walk despondently through the squalor of Jabalia, but in the first frame of the next page, we see that Sacco's inner journalist never rests: 'That'd make a good picture...' is his thought as they pass by some goats nosing around in the rubbish.

The irony comes from the juxtaposition of his empathy for Sameh with his greedy desire for evocative images of Palestinian misery. Here, Sacco uses irony as a way of distancing himself from certain aspects of his work as a journalist, including the potentially exploitative elements and the tendency to always be on the lookout for a good story or image, even as someone else's life might be falling apart.

Some interviewees are downright cynical and question what can really be achieved by one more journalist observing and commenting upon their misery. In Jabalia refugee camp, an interviewee 'wants to know how talking to you is going to help her'. The fact that her barrage of questions – 'What good is it to talk to you?', 'Aren't we people, too?', 'How are words going to change things?' – is relayed through Sameh, the interpreter, makes this scene more powerful, more uncomfortable for Sacco and for us, because we get a sense of *two* voices relentlessly asking these questions on behalf of a whole community of people.

The faces crowded into some of the panels further add to this impression of a collective challenge issued in two languages (even though it is all in English).

Sacco makes some attempts to justify his presence but the woman is unmoved. Ultimately, he seems to concede he has no answer to her question: 'Well... Tell her I don't know what to say to her. Where's my shoes?' Here, as in the examples cited above, irony seems to be his most effective and productive way of responding to the tragedy and injustice of ethnic and religious conflict, and to the challenges the journalist faces in



finding and passing on other people's stories.

In its demands and its possibilities, comics journalism is quite different from other varieties of journalism and can offer a new and productive way of expressing the mix of voices, languages and experiences that contribute to the reporting of international conflict.

Sacco gives us an insight into the role of interpersonal and intercultural relationships – including friendships, prejudices, generosity and obligations – in news-gathering, and introduces us to some of the individuals mediating, both culturally and linguistically, between our journalists and the casualties of international conflict.

These are figures that are often invisible and inaudible to consumers of world news, yet Sacco reminds us that his translators have stories and identities of their own that are inextricably mixed up in the very conflicts that give them their living.

The courage of conviction

Joesoef Isak, journalist, publisher, political activist, fighter against injustice, passed away in his sleep on 15 August, aged 81. Writer and translator Max Lane remembers his friend.

Joesoef Isak was one of three men who founded a publishing company in 1980 called Hasta Mitra. All three had been political prisoners for at least 10 years under the Suharto dictatorship and all three had been prominent intellectuals, publishers and journalists before they were arrested. I got to know all three while they were preparing to publish their first books, the novels of Indonesia's great writer, Pramoedya Ananta Toer – novels he had written while on the prison island of Buru, in eastern Indonesia. I became translator of the first four of these novels (*This Earth of Mankind*, *Child of All Nations*, *Footsteps* and *Glass House*) published in Indonesia, all of which were banned soon after they were published.

The establishment of Hasta Mitra, Sanskrit for "hands of friendship", and the publication of Pramoedya's novels was an act of bravery and defiance that is perhaps hard for people to grasp today. Joesoef, Pramoedya and the third man, Hasyim Rachman, had all been arrested, without warrant or process, in 1965. They were three of hundreds of thousands detained during the period between October, 1965 and October, 1966.

One of the Army's generals, Suharto, had seized the political initiative in the wake of a mutiny by pro-Left colonels and was waging a terroristic purge of the Indonesian Left. There were more than 25 million members of left-wing organisations at the time, more than half of all registered voters, and Suharto decided the terror had to be total. Between 500,000 and 2 million people were slaughtered, depending on which report one believes. One key general later claimed that three million were killed. Joesoef, Pramoedya and Hasyim were among the 15,000 "survivors" who were

kept in prison for between 10 and 14 years without ever being charged or put on trial.

In 1980 after 10 or more years in prison, kept away from the new society created by Soeharto's totalitarianism, Joesoef, Pramoedya and Hasyim found themselves pariahs. As with all political prisoners, they had I.D. cards marked with the letters E.T., standing for "political prisoner". They were banned from many areas of work, including writing and publishing.

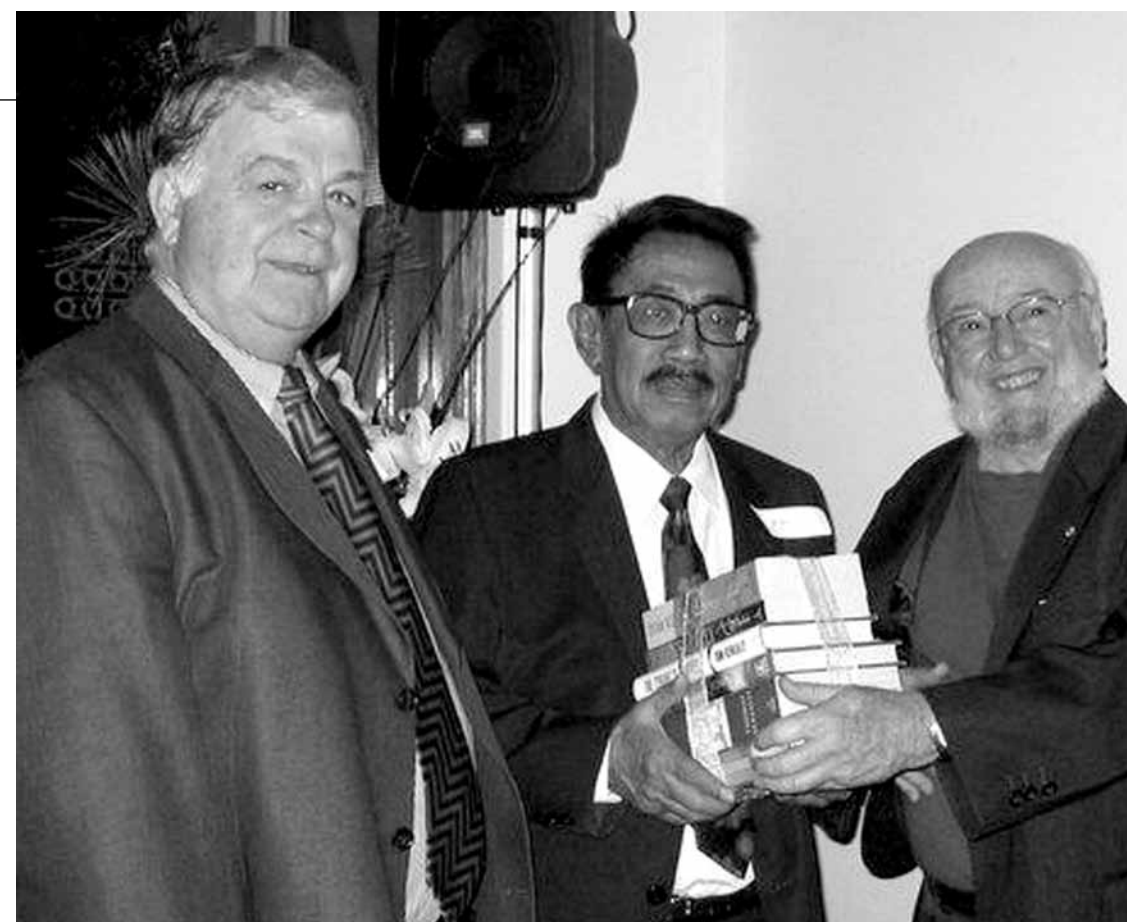
The establishment of Hasta Mitra and the publication of Pramoedya's first novel, *This Earth of Mankind*, in 1981 was not just the first but also the only act of open defiance. Joesoef, Pramoedya and Hasyim were true vanguard fighters until Suharto was ousted by Indonesian students in 1998.

Pramoedya was the writer whose works made up the major component of Hasta Mitra's publishing program in the 1980s and during most of the 1990s, although Hasta Mitra published other works as well.

Joesoef was editor of Pramoedya's manuscripts and also the manager of Hasta Mitra's political response to the regime's actions against their publishing efforts. Before being arrested, Joesoef had been a journalist.

As a journalist he began writing reviews of classical European music specialising in commentaries the romantics, from Bach to Beethoven. He became editor of one of Jakarta's major daily newspapers, *Merdeka*.

This Earth of Mankind was published in 1981. It is difficult to convey the impact its appearance had. I cannot think of any other case in any country of how a historical novel, set decades before the time of its publication, could have such an impact. Everything about the publication – who published it and how it



Brian Johns, chair of the Copyright Agency Limited, and author Tom Keneally with Joesoef Isak (centre) who was awarded the Sydney PEN Tom Keneally Award in 2005.

was received by most readers – was a kind of pure defiance and rejection of everything that Suharto and the New Order represented.

Review after review lauded the book, hailing the return of Pramoedya to the published world. For Joesoef and Hasyim, a whirlwind was let loose. But about two months after *This Earth of Mankind* was published, a formal ban was issued. However, there was no order sent to the publishers. So Hasta Mitra just kept on publishing.

Hasta Mitra remains one of Indonesia's most important publishers. Joesoef published the best selection of American, Australian, Dutch and Indonesian essays on Sukarno on the century anniversary of his birth in 2001. And he organised the mammoth translation of 800 pages of US state department and CIA papers concerning the US reaction to the events of 1965, a revelation for many young Indonesians.

Max Lane is a translator and writer based in Australia and Indonesia. He is the translator of the *Buru Quartet* novels, *This Earth of Mankind*, *Child of All Nations*, *Footsteps* and *Glass House*, published by Penguin Books. He has also translated the plays and poems of W.S. Rendra. He has written many articles on Indonesia and Southeast Asia for publications in Australia and Indonesia.

Of activities, campaigns and work for exiled writers

The 8th Writers in Prison Committee (WiPC) Conference was held in June before the three-day Global Forum for Free Expression hosted by Fritt Ord, the private-public organisation devoted to Freedom of Expression, Norwegian PEN, and the International Freedom of Expression Exchange. The program attracted over 500 guests and participants. This is a summary report from the conference committee.



Lydia Cacho



Sihem Bensedrine

The holding of the WiPC conference within the Global Forum for Free Expression enabled higher than usual participation of Centres from countries that often cannot participate, such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Colombia, Kenya, Venezuela, Russia.

The generous support of the Norwegian Publishers Association and subsidies from the GFFE itself enabled WiPC to invite speakers who were attending the Forum to speak to the WiPC meeting. Participants were able to hear presentations and meet with writers with direct experience of repression. These included Lydia Cacho (Mexico), Jiang Weiping and Gloria Fung (China), Sihem Bensedrine (Tunisia), Chi Dang (Vietnam) and Samay Hamed (Afghanistan). Their presence served to underline the importance of PEN advocacy in providing support to writers and journalists living under pressure, and to provide an impetus to PEN members for increased and greater action.

PEN Centres under pressure

Delegates from Ethiopia, Somalia, Russia, Kenya, China (including the Uyghur and Tibetan communities), Colombia, Venezuela and Turkey gave testimony on the legal and physical threats they face in their promotion of free expression. This resulted in the recommendation that Centres in countries that do not face such difficulties should form support networks around those that do.

Centre activities

Delegates were given the opportunity to share with other Centres their activities, many of which were inspirational.

Among them were the campaign by the **American** PEN Centre against anti-terror and other legislation that has an impact on the right to information in the USA.

The **Basque** PEN Centre, which has members detained in Spain for their commentary on Basque independence, spoke of their work for Iranian writers from minority groups.

English PEN's visit to writers under oppression in Azerbaijan was a source of great support and provided greater insight into the situation there. Like PEN America, it places high importance on working on free expression issues in its own country, and was instrumental in achieving the abolition of defamation from UK law.

A high profile campaign in **Sweden** in support of a detained Eritrean writer led to over 200,000 signatures on a petition. Centres were encouraged to join Swedish PEN in their efforts.

Danish PEN similarly had great success in its celebrations marking the 15 November Day of the Imprisoned Writer where hundreds of signatures were collected and postcards sent on behalf of detained writers, while leading writers made presentations at the Copenhagen Book Fair.

Catalan PEN equally has a long standing

and well developed program of literary events on free expression, exile and linguistic rights producing excellent and attractive materials.

Belgian Flemish PEN has an excellent program of panel debates and readings around the issue of free expression that they hold year-round.

Norwegian PEN has been a mainstay of WiPC activities, specifically in developing PEN's exile program, working in collaboration with IFEX and other organisations, including visits to countries such as Tunisia and Afghanistan.

PEN Turkey is specifically interested in the problems of suppression in the name of religion, and has a particular concern for writers in neighbouring countries, working with the **Uighur** PEN Centre in a project linking Central Asian writers.

The **Swiss Romande** Centre is based in Geneva which makes it perfectly placed to monitor the UN Council on behalf of and in consultation with the PEN office in London.

Campaigns

The WiPC conference is also the venue where previous campaigns are evaluated and plans made for the future.

China was a theme for 2008/09 using the Olympic Games as a focus. A major success was the imaginative use of the internet through the Poem Relay project as an advocacy tool to promote literature and translation, as well as the global network of writers. Learning from this, the WiPC conference agreed that this idea can be adapted for PEN's work on other projects.

Freedom of Expression in the Americas is the current focus for 2009 and which was commended for its use of the web as a campaign tool. The meeting explored ways of developing the China action success into the Americas campaign. Lydia Cacho's powerful presentation on Mexico, as well as expert testimony from the Colombian and Venezuelan PEN Centres, served to illustrate the issues facing writers in those countries. The conference gave the opportunity for representatives from around a dozen PEN Centres to spend time in a working group evaluating the campaign so far and to plan for the rest of the year.

Religious Defamation is a running focus of PEN's activities, with the PEN HQ monitoring developments in the UN and the European Union. PEN's WiPC Program Director gave an outline of its work so far, the problems faced by the Rapporteur on Freedom

of Expression, and overview of attempts to stifle free speech relating to religion.

2010 - Fifty Years of WiPC: the meeting noted that 2010 will be the 50th year since the establishment of the WiPC within International PEN and it was agreed that throughout the year PEN will mark this important anniversary. It will be an opportunity to look back at developments over the past half century, to celebrate and to identify key cases from each era that represented the struggle for free expression over the years. Public events featuring writers who had benefited from WiPC attention or who have experienced WiPC advocacy are planned, including at PEN's international literary festivals.

Exile work

The Conference provided an opportunity for discussion on how to develop PEN's work for exiled writers. Increasingly Centres are working alongside the International Cities of Refuge Network, and some of the PEN Writers in Exile Network energy has been transferred to joint activities with ICORN. It was agreed that there would be a final review of the Network at the next PEN congress and that the collaboration with ICORN should be enhanced.

Global Forum For Free Expression and PEN

The WiPC's hosting of a panel discussion on prison testimonies between Sami el Hajj, former Guantanamo detainee, and Jack Mapanje, Malawi writer, was extremely successful, providing an opportunity for participants to hear first hand of accounts of imprisonment, and also to hear powerful and moving poetry written from prison.

One of the most moving and lively debates at the GFFE was on silenced women's voices where PEN Kenya President Philo Ikonya and honorary member Lydia Cacho of Mexico, discussed the marginalisation of women in the media alongside Afghan political, Malalai Joya and writer Irshad Manji.

Full minutes of the 8th International WiPC Conference meeting are available to PEN members on request from Sara Whyatt, Program Director, WiPC
sara.whyatt@internationalpen.org.uk

For more on the Global Forum on Free Expression, including details of the panel debates mentioned above go to
<http://expressionforum.org/>



Samay Hamed



Jiang Weiping



Sami el Hajj



Jack Mapanje



Chi Dang

A legacy of her own

Larissa Behrendt's CV is not a short read. Professor, lawyer, author, Indigenous activist and Director of Research at the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning at the University of Technology, Sydney, her list of achievements could give any reader a head spin.

Her list of achievements includes the 2002 David Uniapon Award and a 2005 Commonwealth Writer's Prize for her novel *Home* and most recently, being named Indigenous Person of the Year for 2009 at the national NAIDOC awards for her contribution to the Aboriginal community.

"I was really touched to receive a community award," she says. "It was particularly important to me because being a strong critic of the intervention hasn't made me popular with the Government and with the conservative elements of the Aboriginal community who have been pro-intervention."

"To have this award come when it did was a wonderful affirmation that the broader community feels that my work is important, and that I'm doing work they recognise as being of importance to them," she says. "Looking back on all the things I have achieved, this award has been one of the highlights."

She says other highlights include graduating from Harvard Law School as the first Aboriginal person with a Masters and Doctorate degree, and the publication of her first novel, *Home*, about the impact of the removal policy across three generations of an aboriginal family.

"It was story close to my heart so having

it published and then recognised in the way it was, was fantastic," she says.

But despite lengthy list of achievements, Larissa says the Aboriginal community helps her to keep things in perspective.

"There's always been a lovely sense from the Aboriginal community that reminds me that accolades are great, but what really matters is how you keep on making a contribution to the community. For me, these sorts of achievements are always a reminder that there is a lot more I can give to a community that has given me so much, she says.

Even as a child Larissa knew she wanted to work on Indigenous issues so it was no surprise that she went that way. "I had a sense that Aboriginal people weren't treated fairly and that law had a key role to play in that," she says.

Growing up in a "very political" home and having a grandmother who was part of the Stolen Generation made the choice to study law a natural one," she says.

"My father would often talk about things like land rights, dispossession or sovereignty – issues that relate in some way to the legal framework. So by the time I got to the end of high school it seemed like a natural choice to want to do law," she says.

Larissa came to Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning in 2001 as Director of the unit in 2001, stepping down to her current role as Director of Research in 2005. With Jumbunna, Larissa has worked on various projects including research on the impact of the intervention in the Northern Territory.

"We help to monitor how things are

travelling on the ground. In particular, we have been interested in getting health statistics and in looking at the impact quarantining of welfare payments and its impact on aboriginal people especially aboriginal women," she says.

The research can also be used in a more practical way to assist people in the Northern Territory to make complaints to United Nations about the breaches of the human rights that has been part of the intervention, she says.

Larissa's second novel *Legacy* continues her work on Indigenous issues; this time she chooses to take an intimate look at a complicated relationship between a father and a daughter set against the backdrop of the 1970s, an era marked by rights activism, an era Larissa describes as the "opening of the door" on Indigenous people.

For Larissa, *Legacy* will not only pay homage to her late father, it will serve as a reminder of the importance of fighting for Indigenous rights.

"If you look at where we are now compared to where we were generation ago, rights has played huge part in getting access to health and education," she says.

Annie Dang

Larissa Behrendt spoke on *Legacy* with Germaine Greer in Sydney on November 18, and Professor Hilary Charlesworth in Canberra on November 24 as part of the Sydney PEN Voices: The 3 Writers Project. Professor Behrendt's essay, along with those of Malcolm Knox (*Honour*) and Max Barry (*Risk*) will be published in one volume by Allen & Unwin. An excerpt from Larissa's essay follows.



Larissa Behrendt

Legacy of impoverished culture of rights

A Eualeyai/Kamillaroi woman and 2009 NAIDOC Person of the Year, Professor Larissa Behrendt is Director of Research at the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning at the University of Technology, Sydney. The last in the 3 Writers Project, she spoke on Legacy at the State Library of NSW on November 18 and the National Library of Australia, Canberra, on November 24. This is an extract from her essay.

My father was five when he was placed in a home. He grew up in a time and place where he was made to feel ashamed of his heritage and darker skin. These attempts to make him feel ashamed of himself only made him feel more Aboriginal, not more white.

His mother had been taken from her family when she was 12 and never found her way back. Dad said no-one ever confirmed he was Aboriginal but he always knew. When he found his extended Aboriginal family he learned our language, cultural stories and the kinship relationships. His Aboriginality became a source of great pride for him and it defined who he was and how he felt about himself. I don't think he was comfortable in the company of other Aboriginal people until he knew who he was and where he was from.

Through my father I was born into the Eualeyai and Kamillaroi nations. Of a different generation, I inherited his knowledge about our Aboriginal culture. And I inherited his politics.

My father was not at the Tent Embassy. We lived in Cooma in 1972 so we were not far from Canberra. I wonder now what he thought about it, whether he was secretly drawn to it but too ashamed or uncomfortable to go.

He told me it was when Neville Bonner was elected to Parliament that he first realised that being Aboriginal was not a bad thing.

Actually, he said that it was when someone at the pub said that they thought Neville Bonner was a great bloke that he realised that being Aboriginal could be acceptable. Bonner came into Parliament in 1971 and was elected in his own right the year of the Tent Embassy.

My father believed in rights to land, language and culture and, like every Aboriginal person I know, he also believed that education was the key. He worked tirelessly with the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and the Aboriginal Studies Association. He set up the Aboriginal Research and Resource Centre at the University of NSW. Dad was forced to leave school at the age of 14 so to end his career running a university research centre shows his determination and the depth of his knowledge. He also became heavily involved with Link-up, the organisation that reunited Aboriginal families affected by the policy of removing Aboriginal children from their parents.

And in all this work – of assisting Aboriginal people to find their families, of encouraging them to study, of working to ensure that more non-Aboriginal people were educated about Aboriginal issues – he defined his experiences and aspirations using the language of rights and he believed better protection of human rights for Aboriginal people was a key part of political struggle.

Watching my father's practical devotion to

his work while he used the language of rights, seeing him articulate a vision that included a stronger framework of rights protections is perhaps what always made me sceptical about the false dichotomy that began to develop in the Howard era that argued that you either had practical things (health, housing, education, employment) or you had big picture rights issues. This oversimplification completely misrepresented the way that Aboriginal people framed their political aspirations. There was no divide between "rights" and what would come to be known as "practical reconciliation". Instead, there was a desire for equal rights and also a claim to rights that flowed from the unique position of Indigenous people – rights to land, culture, language and political and economic autonomy. There was also the belief that the recognition of rights would transform the playing field on which Aboriginal people interacted with the rest of Australia.

But despite all the progress made between my father's generation and mine in terms of access to education and other rights, many Australians, while perhaps agreeing with the assertion that Aboriginal people are entitled to the same things as other Australians, are uncomfortable – even suspicious – about the language and concept of rights.

While happy to see Cathy Freeman win, hang Indigenous art in their homes or offices, comfortable with cultural performances at the beginning of events such as the opening of the Olympic Games and even happy to acknowledge Aboriginal people at the beginning of a social event with a "welcome to country", there is little support for the protection of land, cultural heritage and languages or any other right that would assist in supporting and sustaining Aboriginal culture.

Yet the concept of human rights is more pervasive and universal than the parochial debates about rights in Australia would indicate. From the American and French revolutions to the anti-slavery movement,

from the works of Vattel and Vittoria to those of Thomas Paine and John Locke, notions of inherent rights had been developing around the world. They developed into their contemporary form after World War II as Europe reeled from the aftermath of the excesses of the darkest sides of human nature.

In fairness, it is not just Indigenous rights that make many Australians uncomfortable. Similar anxiety is expressed about the talk of human rights in relation to any minority – especially Muslims and asylum seekers. This is the legacy of an impoverished culture of rights within the Australian community and this culture has a long history.

When the framers of our Constitution sat down to draft our Constitution they looked at the way that other countries – particularly the United States and France – had included rights within their legal systems. They decided that the decision-making about rights protections – which ones we recognise and the extent to which we protect them – were matters for the Parliament. They discussed the inclusion of rights within our Constitution but decided to leave it silent on most human rights.

A non-discrimination clause that would have included rights to due process before the law and equality before the law was debated but was rejected. It was decided that entrenched rights provisions were unnecessary and it was determined that Australian states would have the power to continue to enact laws that discriminated against people on the basis of their race. As testament to this, the first legislation passed by the new Australian Parliament were laws that entrenched the White Australia policy.

In 1997 the High Court heard a case – *Kruger v Commonwealth* – that considered the legality of the formal government assimilation-based policy of removing Indigenous children from their families. Children who had been removed under the Northern Territory Ordinance that permitted the removal of Indigenous children from

» Continued from page 37

Legacy of impoverished culture of rights

their families on the basis of their race and one mother who had lost her child under the same provision, claimed a series of human rights violations. These included the implied rights to due process before the law, equality before the law, freedom of movement and the express right to freedom of religion contained in s.116 of the Constitution. They were unsuccessful on each count. The decision of the court highlighted the general lack of human rights protection in our legal system and also emphasised how, when those rights are not protected, there is a disproportionately high impact on the vulnerable.

It is not true, of course, to say that Australians are always indifferent to the plight of Indigenous people. In 1967, after a grass roots campaign of over 20 years, a referendum was passed by an overwhelming majority – just over 90 per cent voted for the change – driven by a campaign that asked Australians to say “yes to Aborigines”.

Some people still believe that the referendum gave Aboriginal people citizenship or the right to vote. In fact, it allowed for Indigenous people to be included in the census and it allowed the Federal Parliament the power to make laws in relation to Indigenous people.

Those who advocated for a “yes” vote to alter the Constitution to allow the Federal Government to make laws for Indigenous people thought it was going to herald in an era of non-discrimination for them. There was an expectation that the granting of additional powers to the Federal Government to make laws for Indigenous people would see that power used benevolently.

Consideration as to whether the races power can be used only for the benefit of Aboriginal people, as the proponents of the “yes” vote had intended, was given some residual attention by the High Court in *Kartinyeri v Commonwealth* (the Hindmarsh Island Bridge case). The case was brought after a federal heritage protection law was

repealed specifically so it no longer applied to the contested area in the Hindmarsh Island area. Only Justice Kirby argued that the “races power” did not extend to legislation that was detrimental to or discriminated against Aboriginal people. The majority of the court held that the power could be used to withdraw a benefit previously granted to Aboriginal people and thus to impose a disadvantage.

The 1967 referendum did not produce a new era of equality for Aboriginal people as its proponents had hoped. It left unchanged the two choices made by the framers of the constitution – that the Australian legal system should have the power to make racially discriminatory laws and that it should be left to Parliament to make the decisions about human rights unfettered or unencumbered by benchmarks or frameworks.

Within this legal framework, one without human rights benchmarks, policies are made that impact on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for which there is no ability to challenge or seek redress for any negative impact. This framework has permitted the destruction of cultural heritage and language, taken away rights to land, fishing and hunting and resources and it permitted the policy of removing Aboriginal people from their families.

The world we live in now is very different to the one that the framers of our constitution imagined. Aboriginal people were not a dying race. We were not inferior. Australia did become a home to many races.

Since the time that our constitution was drafted, every other Commonwealth country has modernised its legal system to incorporate our contemporary understanding of human rights through a bill of rights.

Legislative bills of rights also offer a rights framework. They require public servants to ensure that the legislation they draft is compliant with the rights in the human rights legislation. They also require parliament to indicate that legislation is compliant with those same

standards and, if not, they need to indicate in what way it is not and to justify why it is not.

Both of these processes require policy makers and legislators to think about human rights in their decision-making processes. And while the rights in legislation can be over-ridden, there is greater transparency and accountability by government to the community about when and why rights are infringed.

In these ways, Australia would be enriched if there was a national Charter or Bill of Rights that required this level of scrutiny and accountability when public servants draft legislation and when parliaments pass them into law. And it would be a positive step towards the better protection of Indigenous rights in this country.

And there is one way to overcome the concerns that Aboriginal people have about the easy suspension of human rights. This concern stems in no small part from the fact that the only three times the Racial Discrimination Act has been suspended were:

- as part of the compulsory welfare quarantining and compulsory acquisition of land that were part of the Northern Territory intervention
- as part of the Native Title Amendments post-Wik, and
- in the Hindmarsh Island Bridge dispute when heritage protection laws were also prevented from applying to the area in dispute.

Each time the Racial Discrimination Act has been suspended it has been to prevent the protection of Indigenous people from discrimination – and arguably at the times when they needed those protections the most.

So the issue of Constitutional reform must still remain part of the rights agenda whether there is a bill of rights or not.

And while we could look to the Canadian constitution for inspiration on how to entrench the protection of Indigenous rights into our constitution, there is perhaps a more

inclusive and strategic approach. Just three rights entrenched in our constitution would substantially improve our rights framework:

- The right to be free from racial discrimination;
- The right to due process before the law; and
- The right to equality before the law.

Even if all of these changes were achieved, it would not take the issue of a treaty with Aboriginal people off the table.

The people at the Tent Embassy did not fight so that my generation would still be protesting on the lawns. They wanted Aboriginal people who could be doctors and lawyers and accountants and nurses and welfare workers and judges so that they could improve the lives not just for their own families but for others within the community.

I might look middle class and assimilated to outsiders but my father and his generation did not want us growing up to be white. It was important to him that I knew my culture, my place in the world, that I understood the cultural values of reciprocity, inter-relatedness to the environment, obligation to country, respect for Elders. He wanted me to know my totems and my dreamings. He knew that without this, I would not be complete.

My education, my success, my ability to be articulate are the result of the determination of the Aboriginal people the generations before me – the Coopers, the Maynards, the Fergussons, the Pattons, the Foleys, the Mansells and the Aboriginal women who stood beside them and behind them. They did not want to surrender their Aboriginality to gain equality with non-Aboriginal people. They saw a great injustice in being treated as inferior and being denied basic rights to health, housing, education and employment. But they also wanted to protect their identity and culture. To keep Aboriginality strong. They believed that this vision could be the legacy of an improved human rights framework for Aboriginal people.

Professor Larissa Behrendt has been admitted to the Supreme Court of the ACT and NSW as a barrister. She is a Land Commissioner at the Land and Environment Court, the Alternate Chair of the Serious Offenders Review Board, a member of the Academy of Social Sciences of Australia and a founding member of the Australian Academy of Law. She is the Chair of the Humanities and Creative Arts panel of the Australian Research Council College of Experts. In 2002, she won the David Uniapon Award and in 2005 a Commonwealth Writer's Prize for her novel Home. Her latest novel, Legacy, has just been published by UQP. Larissa is a Board Member of the Museum of Contemporary Art, a board member of Tranby Aboriginal College and a Director of the Bangarra Dance Theatre.

Four key areas of action are shared priorities



Takashi Atoda



Takeaki Hori

Sixteen PEN Centres from Asia and the Pacific, as well as one PEN Centre from Africa and three members of International PEN staff, came together in July for the International PEN Asia and Pacific Regional Conference in Tokyo to discuss the work of PEN Centres in this region.

The Conference served as a starting point for the Asia and Pacific Regional Program, which will see the International Programs team of International PEN working closely with all Centres in this region in the 2009 – 2010 period.

Delegates gave brief presentations on the work, goals and challenges of their Centres. Four key areas, summarised below, were identified as the shared priorities for the PEN Centres in the region. Delegates also attended individual meetings with International PEN staff for more in-depth discussions about their Centres and how they will participate in the Asia and Pacific Regional Program.

The four key areas identified as shared priorities by the PEN Centres at the meeting were the following: Translation, dialogue and literary exchange; Freedom of Expression; Education, youth and schools; Capacity building: organisational development of PEN Centres, including membership, communication and sharing of resources.

The conference decided on a series of further actions. They are:

- International Programs team to produce an individual Centre summary based on the information provided in mapping questionnaires as well in individual meetings.
- International Programs team to undertake regional fundraising efforts to lever funds for

some of the key goals identified by Centres in the region.

- Increase information exchange between Centres in the region and Centres in other regions, including an Asia and Pacific edition of the International PEN electronic newsletter that will be shared with all PEN Centres.
- PEN Centres in the region to develop possible initiatives and projects under the four key areas. PEN Centres to discuss any possible initiatives with International PEN.

Delegates attending the conference were Abdul Sami Hamed (**Afghanistan**), Sampurna Chattarji (**All-India**), M. A. Qayum (**Bangladesh**), Emily Wu, Nan Zhao and Jinzhong Wang (**Independent China**), David Yung (**Hong Kong**), Gil-Won Lee and Hae-Rim Yang (**Korea**), Berni Janssen (**Melbourne**), Ram Kumar Panday (**Nepal**), Nelson Wattie (**New Zealand**), Syeda Henna Babar Ali (**Pakistan**), Maria Karina Africa Bolasco (**Philippines**), Mohamed Sheriff (**Sierra Leone**), Jennifer Wong (**Sydney**), Kunthar (**Tibetan Writers Abroad**), Kaiser ÖzHun (**Uyghur**), Ganbat Rinchin (**prospective Mongolia PEN**) and observer Tsogbadrakh Dashdondov.

And from the host Japan PEN were Takashi Atoda (**President**), Jiro Asada (**Executive Director**), Masaaki Nishiki (**Chairman of International Committee**), Yukiko Chino (**Seminar Organiser**), Tsutomu Ide (**Associate Secretary General**) and Takeaki Hori (**International PEN Board**).

International PEN was represented by Caroline McCormick (**Executive Director**), Frank Geary (**International Programs Director**) and Ana Fletcher (**International Programs Assistant**).

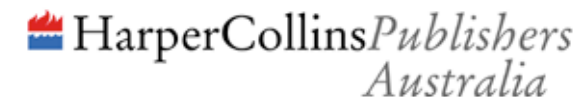
Silent Pens

what it must be
locked free
only to dream
words that never
offend words soft
mellow
maybe all should
write of daffodils
paint in blue
watching clocks melt

how it must be
a writer behind
great walls
waiting
for someone
to ride bears
tame dogs
fly eagles
surrounded
by another's truths

great to be
that person
whose words
opens
closed doors
closed hearts
closed walls
triumphantly
releasing
soldiers of silent pens.

Letizia C de Rosa



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Do you know others who care about creative expression and the free exchange of information and ideas? A PEN membership brochure is available from Sydney PEN, 14A Lonsdale Close, Lake Haven, NSW, 2263. t: 1300 364 997; f: 02 4392 9410; sydney@pen.org.au or www.pen.org.au