may 2011 www.pen.org.au

sydney PEN

PEN magazine

China continues online crackdown

- Netizen protesters applauded
- Shield laws: not tough enough
- Journalists under fire
- Attacks on Wikileaks 'hypocritical'
- UN blasphemy breakthrough
- Storytelling centre targets literacy
- Don DeLillo interview
- Excerpt: *Speech Matters*

Networked media new ground for contested freedom

PEN stands for freedom of expression as a human right. Human rights are rights because we declare them to be and because we exercise our freedoms, as of right. Many courageous persons over a long history have made great sacrifices, giving their freedom and their lives to win these rights and, by their suffering, demonstrating to us all how precious our human rights are. In times past and today in many regions of the world people existed as subjects, who lived as the possessions of their rulers, who could dispose of them according to whim.

In Australia we enjoy our rights as citizens as an expression of human dignity. But these rights are always under attack by autocrats. We honour brave writers who stand up to protect the freedom of their conscience, their freedom of expression and our freedom. We must use our rights or lose them. We join together in PEN to support and exercise human rights and strengthen our freedoms.

Whoever controls the means of communications and the flow of information in a society controls the society. In any coup or revolution, control of the media is a primary aim of governments and rebels. In recent years, that has become much harder to do.

People all over the world are communicating through the World Wide Web and carry networked mobile devices equipped with cameras and phones. New channels of communication such as social networking sites, Facebook, Twitter and blogs give voice to individuals and citizen journalists that can be heard, in the same instant, by their neighbours and their audiences around the world.

These networked media have become a new ground where freedom of expression is contested. Digital communications technologies have been welcomed as instruments of free speech. Demonstrators in the Middle East are using their personal communications devices to organise, express their views, gather support and to report instantly on events to each other and to the world.

But digital communications networks are themselves merely channels which can be used for opposing purposes. These same channels of communication have been used by governments to identify dissidents, for the surveillance and monitoring of their opinions and activities, and to locate them so that they can be disrupted by government forces and arrested or killed. The very same channels that the dissidents use are also used by autocratic governments for propaganda, and audiences cannot always know if apparently bona fide citizen reporters are who they purport to be.

We have seen the Libyan government, fearing loss of control, cut off the internet altogether. Moreover, government political censorship of the Web, such as the Great Firewall of China, is deployed comprehensively to suppress the use of the new technologies for free individual expression. We must now widen the scope of PEN to defend both freedom of speech and freedom to read in the new information and communications networks.

PEN campaigns for the release of writers who are prisoners of conscience, and to promote free speech. Our work is done with support and donations from our members. We are grateful to the Committee and all the volunteers for giving their time and devotion to PEN. In particular we thank Bonny Cassidy who, after two years of inspiring energy and commitment as President, has stepped down. In paying tribute to Bonny, I invite you, in exercising your rights, to contribute to PEN's work.

Michael Fraser

Sydney PEN

Management Committee
Michael Fraser AM (President)
Sandra Symons (Vice-President)
Simeon Beckett (Secretary)
Peter Eichhorn (Treasurer)
Dr Debra Adelaide
Susie Eisenhuth
Angelo Loukakis
Carol Dettman
Jennifer Hamilton

Writers' Advisory Panel
Geraldine Brooks
JM Coetzee
Tim Flannery
Helen Garner
Kate Grenville
Tom Keneally AO
David Malouf AO
Frank Moorhouse AM
John Tranter
David Williamson AO

Life Members
John Bennett
Angela Bowne SC
Mona Brand (1915-2007)
JM Coetzee
Bruce Dawe AO
Deirdre Hill
Nicholas Jose
Thomas Keneally AO
Mabel Lee
Ruby Langford Ginibi
David Malouf AO
Frank Moorhouse AM
Wilda Moxham
Chip Rolley
Vincent Serventy AM
Roberta Sykes
Katherine Thomson
Stella Wilkes MBE

Editor
Susie Eisenhuth

Art Director
Clive Collins

Cover Illustration
Tom Jellett

Printer
UTS Printing

Cover illustration by Tom Jellett

Liu Xia with Liu Xiaobo before his arrest

China crackdown on writers continues

Human rights groups have condemned the 10 year sentence imposed on writer Liu Xianbin on charges of 'inciting subversion of state power', as the crackdown on dissident writers and online communications continues in China.

The sentence, imposed on 41-year-old Liu Xianbin on March 26, is the longest term handed down on that charge since the 11 year sentence currently being served by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo. It comes amid reports of a rash of disappearances and detentions aimed at opposition voices inside China, and a wave of internet and news censorship of coverage of popular uprisings in the Middle East.

The refusal of the Chinese Government to allow author and poet Liao Yiwu to leave China to attend the Sydney Writer's Festival is seen as further evidence of its stepped up surveillance of writers and dissidents. Members of the Independent Chinese PEN Centre (ICPC) – of which Liu Xiaobo is a former president - have faced increased pressure on their movements and communications since October, with several detained and others placed under house arrest.

In March PEN denounced a series of attacks on foreign journalists seeking to visit Chen Guangcheng, a dissident lawyer living under house arrest, calling the attacks "thuggery" and a blatant violation of the international right of all to hear from China's citizens. A number of prominent human rights lawyers have been beaten or detained for meeting to discuss Chen's situation.

Novelist Kwame Anthony Appiah, President of the PEN American Centre, described Liu Xianbin's conviction as "another blatant violation of the right to freedom of expression in China." Once again, he said, "the Chinese government has shown contempt for the fundamental human rights of one of its own citizens, for international treaties to which it is a party and for its own constitution."

A freelance writer, Liu Xianbin was convicted by the Suining Intermediate People's Court in Sichuan Province, after a two-hour trial in which, according to PEN Centre sources, he was not permitted a full defence. None of the arguments his lawyers presented were accepted, and when Liu attempted to make a statement in his own defence, the judge interrupted him repeatedly, leaving him to proclaim "I am innocent! I protest this trial!"

The verdict was reportedly based on the forced testimony of Liu's 13-year-old daughter and text taken from several of his articles published on overseas online Chinese language journals and news web sites, one of which spoke of the future of civil society following the sentencing of Liu Xiaobo. In addition to the 10-year prison sentence, he was sentenced to an additional two years and four months deprivation of political rights for recidivism.

Liu Xianbin was detained on June 28, 2010, on suspicion of inciting subversion after police searched his home, confiscating hard drives, USB devices and notices from editors relating to articles published on overseas web sites. He was first imprisoned in 1992 on charges of 'counterrevolutionary propaganda and incitement' for his involvement in the 1989 pro-democracy movement, and was later sentenced to 13 years in prison for 'subversion of state power' for his writing and his participation in the banned Chinese Democracy Party.

The PEN American Centre has also highlighted concerns for the wellbeing of Liu Xia, wife of Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo, who has been isolated in her Beijing apartment since she was placed under house arrest on October 18, 2010, with phone and internet access cut off soon afterwards. In February, Liu Xia, who has been held incommunicado since shortly after the Nobel Committee announced the award to her husband, was heard from for the first time in months when she succeeded in making a five minute online connection and had a brief exchange with a friend. In a transcript of the online conversation supplied to the *Washington Post*, Liu Xia said she was being held hostage and was "going to go crazy". She said she had only seen her husband once since news of the award came through. "I'm crying," she told her friend. "Nobody can help me."

> ***"I'm crying. Nobody can help me."***

According to *Radio Free Asia*, Hu Ping, the chief editor of *Beijing Spring*, a New York-based pro-human rights and democracy journal, has expressed concern over Liu Xia's psychological state.

The director of PEN's Freedom to Write Program, Larry Siems, urged supporters to continue to campaign for justice for Liu Xia and Liu Xiaobo. "The government has followed up its international bullying over the Nobel Prize with an even more reprehensible bullying of the prize recipient's wife, " Siems said. "I hope writers and readers around the world will join us in standing up for her basic human right to see her friends, her family, and her unjustly imprisoned husband."

Our shield laws leave us unshielded

The recent passage of federal legislation providing a shield defence for journalists and their sources was greeted as an important win in the fight for press freedom. But the *Australian's* **Seumas Phelan**, two time winner of the national Walkley Award for Journalism, cautions that the battle is far from over.

"There is no protection for whistleblowers, and no defence for any Australian against the draconian provisions of our national security information laws, which would have made Joe Stalin proud."

We live in a land of freedom, with a fearless media and where the people's right to know is enshrined in our law and culture. Right?

Well no, actually. Freedom of expression may be in the Australian culture, but it's still a long way off in the law, despite recent gains.

Australian journalists can and do still go to jail for refusing to reveal the source of their stories. Two – Dylan Welch and Linton Besser of *The Sydney Morning Herald* – narrowly escaped that prospect in the lead-up to the Sydney Writers Festival, as people from around the world come to a nation that claims to celebrate freedom of expression, but threatens to imprison those who practise it.

There is still no legal protection for whistleblowers – the opposite in fact: those who expose wrongdoing or corruption in our public life risk prison, while the rorters, the crooks and the criminally incompetent are protected.

For example, Allan Kessing, the conscientious Customs officer who revealed the gaping holes in Australian airport security, is now a convicted felon for whistleblowing. But the security chiefs he exposed remain respectable members of society on fat salaries or pensions, despite the fact their first response to his report was to suppress it, and their second was to go on a witchhunt to punish the leaker.

Most ominously, there is still no protection for any citizen from the powers of official commissions of inquiry. These have absolute power to compel anyone to appear as a witness and answer questions under oath, and witnesses can be forbidden from telling anyone about it, even their spouse. In fact, it's technically an offence for me to have written that last sentence and for you to have read it, because it exposes official powers on security issues, which are legally meant to be kept secret.

This can lead to farcical situations, such as at a hearing of the West Australian Corruption and Crime Commission where an ABC journalist was called to appear. Because of the law's stringent secrecy provisions, she did not tell her husband, who happens to be a police officer. But she met him in the lobby of the commission hearing – he had also been called as a witness, and hadn't told her either. The pair reportedly burst out laughing when they saw each other. Yes, the law can be an ass – but it can be dangerous to our freedom too.

There is good news: under federal shield laws passed in March, despite conservative opposition, journalists and their sources will have greater legal protection. Journalists will now be able to claim confidentiality when asked to identify sources in court, and the court will only be able to demand identification in exceptional circumstances.

This is a big advance for reporters and those who supply information in the public interest – and we owe it to our hung parliament. Shield legislation was one of the key demands of independent MP Andrew Wilkie, along with some limit on the power of the pokie barons to rip off problem gamblers, and the federal Labor government agreed to both measures (although it's facing a $20 million campaign against any protection for the poor pokie machine punters).

But the shield defence for journalists and their sources is now enshrined in national law, and the cover has been extended to the new media outlets – bloggers, tweeters and the unlike (stick with newspapers, people – they work one day at a time, like your lives).

So far, so good. But there are still major problems with the law in Australia, as the threat to the *SMH* journalists made clear. For a start the shield legislation is federal, so it requires the states to enact similar laws, and only one has – Queensland, to its credit, is ahead of the posse with some of the most liberal media regulations in the world. Joh Bjelke-Petersen must be spinning in his grave.

Dylan Welch of the *Herald* was shocked to find the federal shield legislation gave him and his colleague no protection, although the state authorities – rattled by public outrage over the case – eventually decided to drop their action. "Those laws don't cover us one jot," Welch told PEN magazine. "And that is still the case in NSW."

And it's not just journalists and media people who are at risk. There is no protection for whistleblowers, and no defence for any Australian against the draconian provisions of our national security information laws, which would have made Joe Stalin proud.

As *The Australian's* Cameron Stewart told the Melbourne Press Club when he won this year's Gold Quill for outstanding journalism, after a bruising struggle with the police hierarchy: "It's a real fight in this country for press freedom, because it's a very ugly battle that we face, and I hope every single person does what they can to stand up for it."

The Media Alliance, which represents most people working in the industry, welcomes the recent legal advances, but warns there is more work to do. Says federal secretary Chris Warren: "This is a good start, but it doesn't protect anyone whose case is heard outside federal jurisdictions, so we need to see the same laws passed in all states, and extended to cover the plethora of super-judicial bodies, such as the NSW Crime Commission, which still have coercive powers to force journalists to give up their sources under pain of imprisonment."

Besides journalists, Warren has concerns for all who have the courage to speak out. "The corollary to shield laws is legislation to protect whistleblowers," he says. "The Bligh Government in Queensland showed us the way with a Public Interest Disclosure Act that has been called world's best practice in protecting public service whistleblowers. We need to see this legislation adopted in all states and territories as a matter of urgency."

It's important to keep all this in perspective – particularly during a writers' festival, when we have visitors coming from countries where people are literally dying to achieve our freedoms. Compared with the world's repressive regimes, we in Australia are truly blessed. I worked recently with young Karen journalists on the Thai-Burma border. Their newsroom is a bamboo hut, and if they're caught with their laptops on the wrong side of the border by the forces of the Burmese junta, they face a swift bullet in the brain.

But that's the point: Australia is proud to be an open and democratic society that cherishes human rights – and freedom of expression is probably the most basic right of all. Nationally and internationally, freedom needs defending – and no-one can do that better than writers.

Welcome to the festival.

Journalists under fire

Reporting on conflict and disaster puts journalists in harm's way. But as **Alex Giblin** reports, alarming figures on detention, torture and death among both traditional and new media journalists and bloggers have led to a stepped-up campaign to highlight freedom for the press and justice for its practitioners.

He was kicked and beaten, his crew had earlier been captured by vigilantes and delivered to the military for interrogation, bound, blindfolded and held for six hours. Their local 'fixer' was terrified—he knew better than the others how these things so often ended in Egypt.

Mark Corcoran, host and senior reporter on ABC's *Foreign Correspondent*, was in Egypt in February, covering the uprising. There was a violent backlash against journalists, who were being blamed by the Mubarak regime for the state of upheaval.

Corcoran and his crew were walking through Tahrir Square to meet Egyptian politician Ayman Nour, who had been imprisoned by Mubarak's regime in 2005, when a violent group of government supporters, some of them allegedly paid, rushed into the square.

"We sought shelter behind an armoured vehicle from the rocks," says Corcoran. "And then we were surrounded by all these men screaming at us and trying to stop us filming." They piled on top of him—he says it was like being at the bottom of a rugby scrum—and, before he could get to his feet, they had taken his wallet, passport, and mobile phone. "And then we were kind of shepherded and buffeted around into an alley… There were guys in leather jackets who looked like the classic state security guys."

"We were all punched and kicked, and then Craig [his cameraman] and I were forced into a doorway, and…they forced us onto the ground, and I just thought, 'This is it—this is where the knives are going to come out'."

At that moment they were rescued by local shopkeepers who were outraged at what they were witnessing.

The frightening attack on the Australian journalists was one of many during what has seemed at times to be open season on journalists attempting to cover the anti-government protests erupting across the middle east, with journalists from Al Jazeera and the BBC among others caught up in incidents involving death threats, beatings, detention, and torture.

In a recent address at Columbia University, *New York Times* photographer Lynsey Addario spoke publicly about the brutality and sexual aggression she experienced when detained along with three *Times* colleagues, all physically abused. Addario's admission came in the wake of the decision by CBS News correspondent Lara Logan to go public with the fact that she was sexually assaulted while reporting on the upheaval in Cairo.

Indonesian journalists protesting the murder of photojournalist Ridwan Salamun.

"Murder is the ultimate form of censorship"

Anna Politkovskaya

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), more journalists are starting to speak out about sexual assault following Logan's admission. American journalist Judith Matloff has written that the fear of being denied future work in areas of conflict is one reason that sexual assault against female journalists has gone under-reported.

Foreign Correspondent's Mark Corcoran makes the point that as harrowing as his own team's experience was, it pales in comparison to what local journalists routinely experience in countries around the world.

"If you look through the annual reports on journalists who've been killed or injured, most of them are nationals working in their own country, and not people like myself," he said.

According to the CPJ, 859 journalists were killed between 1992 (the earliest year for which they have data) and April 16, 2011. Of those, 87 per cent were local journalists. Many of the journalists most vulnerable to attack are freelancers and local journalists, who don't have large news organizations - and their support systems - behind them. There are 145 journalists currently held in prisons around the world. Many more are beaten and tortured. The CPJ puts the toll of journalists killed so far in 2011 at 14.

The International Federation of Journalists, reporting on the deaths of both journalists and media staff, puts the numbers killed in the past 20 years at over 2000. But it depends on who you count as a journalist; the rise of social media and citizen journalism is blurring the line, as the toll of detentions and disappearances in their ranks continues to grow.

Deaths in journalism are sometimes a consequence of reporters putting themselves in harm's way for the story, being literally caught in the crossfire, and are, in a sense, unavoidable. But a great many of those killed have been targeted and silenced because they were journalists. A classic case was the assassination of Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya in 2006, after she continued to investigate corruption and human rights abuses despite threats made on her life.

Journalists are protected under international law which defines them as civilians. Needless to say, the law is frequently not honoured, and journalists' murderers are rarely convicted. The CPJ says that of those 858 deaths since 1992, 613 were murders and 545—nine out of 10—murders with impunity, that is, where the killers have gone unpunished.

The Philippines, one of the most dangerous places for journalists, has the second worst record of impunity for the murders of journalists, and along with Russia, it is the focus of the CPJ's current *Global Campaign Against Impunity*, which is running under the slogan "Murder is the ultimate form of censorship".

In November 2009, the Phillipines was the site of the Maguindanao massacre, the deadliest mass murder of media in at least 20 years. Fifty seven people were killed, 30 of them journalists.

The journalists were accompanying a convoy, mostly women, heading to the provincial capital, to file Esmael Mangudadatu's

Ridwan Salamun

"How could the defendants be acquitted as though taking my husband's life was the same as a petty crime?"

›

❯ *Continued from 7*

Foreign Correspondent's Mark Corcoran

"What you've got to realise is, any risks we face, the local journalists face every day. And usually a far greater threat, far greater than anything we face."

gubernatorial candidacy papers. Mangudadatu, who was running against the powerful Ampatuan family, had been warned that he would be killed if he went. Instead he sent female relatives and supporters, accompanied by journalists, believing they would be unharmed. All were killed when the convoy was ambushed by about 100 men.

The families of those killed, and Filipino journalists, are still waiting to see the men responsible for the massacre punished. It remains to be seen how the cases will fare in a system rife with corruption.

More recently, in Indonesia, journalists have been protesting following the acquittal in March of three men accused of killing 28-year-old Ridwan Salamun, a journalist for Indonesia's Sun TV. In August 2010 Salamun was stabbed repeatedly while covering fighting between residents of Fiditan village in the Maluku Islands of Indonesia.

The prosecution had only sought eight-month terms for the three men—the same sentence as for petty theft. Police claimed that Salamun had been carrying a machete and that the men were acting in self-defence. The *Jakarta Globe* reported that footage showed that Salamun had only been holding his video camera, and witnesses attest to that.

"The acquittal really breaks my heart," Salamun's widow, Saodah Nurfi Toisutta, told the *Globe*. "How could the defendants be acquitted as though taking my husband's life was the same as committing a petty crime?"

The Indonesian Press Council says it fears the sentence will offer no deterrent to anyone who wants to obstruct a journalist's work in the future. The council said it was angered that the role of protecting journalists had fallen so heavily on it and other advocacy groups when the safety and defence of journalists was the responsibility of their employers.

A free press is the cornerstone of democracy. For a democracy to function properly its citizens must be informed and its journalists uncompromising - interested in the truth, no matter how unpalatable. That is a brief which for many journalists, in many countries, automatically puts them at grave risk.

While journalists working in western democracies may hesitate – despite their freedoms - to question their own governments—elsewhere in the world, under governments that are vastly corrupt and pitiless, there are journalists willing to challenge them, though in doing so they put their lives at risk.

"Foreign journalists dip in and out," reflects Mark Corcoran. "We go to a place for a couple of days, more likely a few weeks, sometimes a couple of months. And then we pull out. What you've got to realise is, any risks we face, the local journalists face every day. And usually a far greater threat, far greater than anything we face.

"What happened to us received quite a bit of coverage. Yet, when a similar fate befalls local colleagues, and usually far worse, it doesn't seem to rate a mention."

Tunisian bloggers win online award

As online dissenters risk harsh jail terms in the Middle East - the region ranked highest in blogger arrests – the Netizen Award for online media freedom has highlighted the role of social media in the recent uprisings.

The 2011 Netizen award for efforts to promote freedom of expression online has gone to bloggers at Nawaat.org. The Nawaat site was singled out for playing an important role in rallying anti-government protesters in Tunisia, where the regime of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali had routinely quashed dissent and strictly controlled traditional media.

Ben Ali fled Tunisia in January after protests sparked by the suicide of a student prevented by police from operating a fruit stall to make a living escalated into massive street demonstrations against unemployment, corruption and a clampdown on civil liberties.

"Dictators define themselves through censorship, press bans and arrests of journalists."

The Netizen prize, which is awarded by France-based press freedom campaigners Reporters Sans Frontières (Reporters Without Borders) goes to a Netizen - a blogger, online journalist or cyber-dissident - who has helped to promote freedom of expression on the Internet. Nawaat won against finalists from Bahrain, Belarus, Thailand, China and Vietnam.

The award was presented to Nawaat's co-founder Riadh Guerfali – better known to online readers as Astrubal - by the former French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner at a ceremony in Paris. "Dictatorships define themselves through censorship, press bans and arrests of journalists," Mr Kouchner said.

Created in 2004 as an independent collective blog operated as a platform for all "committed citizens", Nawaat.org covered the social and political unrest that flared in Tunisia in December, with regular posts by its two high profile bloggers, Astrubal and Sami Ben Gharbia, updating events, reporting on protests, warning Internet users about the dangers of being identified online and offering advice about circumventing censorship.

Nawaat.org documented the escalating protests following the student death in the provincial city of Sidi Bouzid, largely ignored initially in the traditional media. The bloggers also provided access on the site to details of the WikiLeaks revelations about government corruption in Tunisia.

The fall of Ben Ali's regime has been dubbed the 'First Wikileaks Revolution' after the anti-government protests gathered pace following the release by WikiLeaks of US Embassy cables describing the rising frustration of ordinary Tunisians with the first family's corruption and high unemployment.

Accepting the award, Guerfali said, "We are deeply honoured by this prize. It will help to strengthen the citizen journalism that we have been practicing for years at Nawaat, despite all the risks involved. This award is not only a tribute to Nawaat but to all our fellow journalists who often risk their lives to keep working in countries where freedom of expression is suppressed."

The Secretary General of Reporters Without Borders, Jean-Francois Julliard, commented that Net freedom is fragile, with 119 bloggers and others currently detained for expressing opinions and posting information online, mainly in China, Iran and Vietnam. "Repressive governments around the world are creating and enforcing codes and practices that restrict free expression both online and offline," said Mr. Julliard. "The number and variety of challenges are increasing, and repressive regimes and their opponents are becoming more and more sophisticated."

Deep Throat goes digital

Politicians calling WikiLeaks an assault on democracy are hypocritical, argues Fairfax journalist **Dylan Welch**. So far all WikiLeaks has done is encourage open and transparent government.

Among those close to WikiLeaks, there are various forms of a two-word phrase being bandied about to help define the organisation's philosophy. Significantly, the second word of the phrase is always ''journalism.''

''Scientific journalism'' and ''transparency journalism'' were two suggestions but some see them, rightly, as overly technical and exclusive. A third version has also gained some cachet: ''sunshine journalism.''

Based on the name of an Australian registered company linked to WikiLeaks – the Sunshine Press – it also evokes the line in Harper's magazine from US jurist and transparency advocate, Louis Brandeis: ''If the broad light of day could be let in upon men's actions, it would purify them as the sun disinfects.''

While some may find attempts to create a new brand of journalism, WikiLeaks' small cadre of founder-members are finding the need for a simple distillation of the organisation's ethos increasingly important.

While it has already captured the world's attention via what may be the greatest leak in modern history, the organisation – most importantly its curious editor, Julian Assange – know it is not enough to have someone's attention; more important is what you do with it once gained.

If this phrase is taken up, it could become the foundation stone of WikiLeaks' evolving philosophy of systemic change through increased transparency. As Assange said in 2006 on WikiLeaks' first website: "The goal is justice, the method is transparency."

But what does this philosophy mean? And what does it mean for journalism?

On one hand, it is nothing new. WikiLeaks is simply the latest iteration of a craft mostly dedicated to transparency. Reporters and their craft, at their best, have long been the sunshine Brandeis spoke of.

Journalism brings down corrupt governments, highlights inequity and injustice, and gives a voice to the voiceless.

That's journalism at its highest. Some believe that in recent years the media has become less focused on its role as the fourth estate, perhaps because of issues of an economic and social nature,

This is where WikiLeaks does make a difference. Through a combination of dedication to the tradition of revelatory journalism – though its dedication is born of what it sees as the moribund state of the mass media – and its ferment among the interwebs, WikiLeaks has undoubtedly altered the media landscape.

No longer will would-be whistleblowers meet journalists in underground carparks wearing trenchcoats and clutching manila folders. Today the manila folder is an untraceable online drop box; the trenchcoat an anonymous online chat system; and the underground carpark an obscure corner of the web's vast expanse.

As a reporter of crime and national security, I know how nervous confidential sources can be – particularly sources with first-hand knowledge of the surveillance undertaken by intelligence agencies. Important conversations on the phone are verboten, as is the use of email.

Perversely, much of my correspondence with confidential sources has taken a technological leap backwards: anything of importance takes place as far away as possible from phones, computers and the ubiquitous security cameras.

But as journalists increasingly hide from technology to get their job done, a bunch of young computer experts have shone a light on a new way.

What WikiLeaks has shown the mass media is that technology is not the enemy in relation to anonymity: it can also be a powerful friend.

If I had met a source similar to the person who furnished WikiLeaks with the embassy cables, I would have had no chance of convincing him he could provide me with classified information from US government servers without placing him at risk. I simply would not have had the technological nous. WikiLeaks can give that assurance. Accordingly, the mass media, and every hack therein, needs to start playing catch-up.

Vitally, WikiLeaks also has a structure that allows it to publish beyond the reach of any – any – jurisdiction.

Think about it. A group of a few dozen people has managed to publish, last year alone, three massive troves of classified information, despite the opposition of the most powerful country in the world. That is something even the world's largest media company could not have done. Nifty, huh?

They also are champions of data analysis. That is a talent becoming more and more important in a world where increasingly the information you need is within public reach, but to get it requires almost Herculean sifting.

An example is Linton Besser of The Sydney Morning Herald, who won the 2010 Walkley Award for investigative reporting. While his was clearly an investigation, it was an

Brad Hunter

investigation of Defence contracts based upon the extraction and analysis of more than 700,000 tender documents from a government database over several months.

In other words, data journalism.

This is not to suggest that WikiLeaks is without problems. It was perhaps too cavalier in its first releases of 2010, failing to adequately redact personal details from sensitive military reports. Assange has at times been portrayed as overly-concerned about his role in WikiLeaks.

But at its heart, WikiLeaks is an organisation committed to transparency, in the way any genuine member of the fourth estate should be.

The people behind it are also journalists, if unconventional ones. This is an important point. Contrary to the posturing of the American and Australian governments, Assange and his colleagues are journalists. If US soldier Bradley Manning was the source for the US diplomatic cables, then the relationship he and Assange had was an entirely traditional journalist/source one.

The idea that Assange was what amounts to a ''foreign agent'' attempting to suborn a US military is wrong. Ask yourself this: if you walked into a bar and met Manning, who did nothing more than say he was a US military intelligence analyst, would you perhaps nudge the conversation towards whether he might be willing to be a source?

If not, you're either not a journalist, or a too-timid one. The only difference between what Assange did and what any fair-minded hack with a nose for news would do is that Assange's interaction occurred online. The internet provides journalists with powerful tools – secure ''drop-boxes'', anonymous communication and crowd-sourcing – but more important is the effect that it will have on journalism.

The United States is in the middle of a strategic realignment to deal with the growing (perhaps exaggerated) cyber-threat posed by China, Russia and other states. Australia is in the middle of a debate about whether the GST should be applied to goods bought online, as more and more Australians realise that they can save money by buying from the other side of the world.

Why should journalism be different? As the industry and the craft struggle to deal with the impact the web has already had – big staff cuts, an increase in bite-sized, reductive reporting – most media companies have failed to move with the times.

Watching Rupert Murdoch trying to erect pay walls around his news sites – a move that failed years ago and is likely to fail again – is not dissimilar to watching a grandfather flail uselessly with an iPad; it is also contrary to the spirit of the web.

The internet is not merely the newest iteration of the gradually improving communications technology of the 20th century. It is the greatest content-provision system the world has ever known, as well as a new machine of democracy that allows millions, perhaps billions, more people than ever before to participate in the grand march of history.

That is why politicians' public statements about WikiLeaks being an assault on democracy and the role of governments are so hypocritical: thus far, all WikiLeaks has done is encourage open and transparent government.

The former Liberal Party MP Ross Cameron recently wrote an opinion piece in the The Sydney Morning Herald showing cautious support for WikiLeaks. Not all of his former party colleagues agreed.

One senior party member was particularly clear about his views of the WikiLeaks phenomenon and what he wants government to do: ''The Catholic Church shut down Galileo for a hundred years. I think we can shut down Julian Assange,'' he told Cameron.

I will not comment on the attendant irony.

www.walkleys.com

PEN international Statement on WikiLeaks

PEN International champions the essential role played by freedom of expression in healthy societies and the rights of citizens to transparency, information and knowledge.

The WikiLeaks issue marks a significant turning point in the evolution of the media and the sometimes conflicting principles of freedom of expression and privacy and security concerns. The culture of increasing secrecy in governments and the rise of new technology will inevitably lead to an increasing number of transparency issues of this sort. PEN International believes it is important to acknowledge that while the leaking of government documents is a crime under U.S laws, the publication of documents by Wikileaks is not a crime. WikiLeaks is doing what the media has historically done.

PEN International urges those voicing opinions regarding the WikiLeaks debate to adopt a responsible tone, and not to play to the more extreme sections of society. In a world where journalists are regularly physically attacked, imprisoned and killed with impunity, calling for the death of a journalist is irresponsible and deplorable.

PEN International is also concerned by reports that some web sites, fearing repercussions, have stopped carrying WikiLeaks, and that individuals, under threat of legal action, have been warned against reading information provided by the organization. PEN International condemns such acts and calls upon corporations and states to avoid breaches of the right to free expression. Governments cannot call for unlimited internet freedom in other parts of the world if they do not respect this freedom themselves.

Amended 23 December 2010

Ralston Saul welcomes UN accord on blasphemy

PEN International has praised the UN Human Rights Council's unanimous vote on a religious tolerance resolution, which has brought to an end a 13 year campaign to make blasphemy a crime.

"Freedom of expression may cause discomfort, but it is the ultimate protection for people of any faith," said John Ralston Saul, President of PEN International, welcoming the decision on March 31.

Since 1997, a coalition of countries led by the 57-nation Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has put forward resolutions on "combating religious defamation", which contained language demanding that states ban blasphemy and other religious denigration. PEN and other human rights organizations have lobbied against the proposals, warning that they would significantly erode crucial international and national protections for freedom of expression.

In September 2010, PEN International hosted an influential discussion at the Human Rights Council in Geneva, citing numerous cases where governments have used religious defamation laws to jail writers and suppress unpopular opinions.

In live testimony and videotaped statements, writers and free-expression advocates from around the world spoke about the potential harm of imposing legal restrictions on expression considered offensive or defamatory to religions. They argued that such restrictions would not only do little to foster mutual understanding and respect, but also could be used to stifle creative freedom and suppress minority views and religions.

On 24 March 2011, instead of reintroducing the religious defamation resolution at the current Human Rights Council session, the OIC presented a new resolution that focuses on ending religious discrimination. The resolution removes all references to protecting religions and shifts the emphasis to protecting individual believers, something PEN has long argued is the correct approach both in principle and in the law.

John Ralston Saul

"This unanimous resolution affirms that all nations can come together to agree upon language and a framework for protecting all forms of freedom of expression," said Saul. "The writers of PEN have expressed their belief most passionately that rights are inherent in individuals, not institutions such as organized religions."

Saul cited the words of Nobel Laureate, Wole Soyinka, speaking on the issue last September: "Since you have so many religions in the world, and there is only one humanity, that one humanity and the fundamental claims of humanity have to take precedence."

But meanwhile in Ireland…

Eminent Irish writer Thomas Kilroy has backed a call by Irish PEN for a constitutional referendum on blasphemy. In the wake of the UN Human Rights Council's decision, the Executive Committee of Irish PEN has launched a campaign calling for a referendum to be held In Ireland by the end of 2011. Irish PEN's **Joe Armstrong** explains.

Why do we need a constitutional referendum? Article 40.6.1.i of the Irish Constitution requires that blasphemy be banned and hence abolishing the offence requires a constitutional referendum.

Why is the move towards "defamation of religions" bad? Human rights attach to individuals, not to states, organised groups or ideas. When governments seek to limit the rights of individuals to criticise, they are not seeking, as they claim, to protect faith or belief. Rather, they are seeking increased power over their citizens. Religions are capable of good and evil. To ensure that the good dominates, it is essential to maintain freedom of expression, ensuring writers are free to criticise them.

What's the urgency? The issue is of immediate importance, as it occurs against the backdrop of a sustained push by a number of nations within the UN to promulgate new international restrictions on speech considered defamatory to religions. PEN opposes such restrictions, believing that they do little to promote mutual respect and understanding and knowing from long experience that laws devised to guard institutions against defamation are frequently used to deny individuals the right to freedom of expression; indeed, several countries have jailed writers under blasphemy laws in clear violation of their right to freedom of expression. PEN's efforts to prevent these new, rights-threatening restrictions have been gaining ground in recent years, and Ireland itself has voted against these resolutions at the United Nations.

Passing the Defamation Act 2009 has undercut these international efforts to ensure the protection of freedom of expression. Pakistan, which has been leading the coalition of 57 Islamic states that has been pressing to ban religious defamation internationally, has cited verbatim the Irish legislation to justify the group's continuing efforts to expand blasphemy laws internationally. To its shame, Ireland is now being held up as a model for restricting freedom of expression internationally.

What needs to happen? At a time when Ireland needs to restore its reputation in the world, Irish PEN calls upon the Government to include an amendment removing blasphemy from the Irish Constitution at the earliest opportunity and before the end of 2011.

Wouldn't that be expensive? No. The new Irish Government has already indicated that the long-awaited referendum on children may be held before the end of 2011. The amendment removing blasphemy from the Constitution could be run at the same time for no extra cost.

What is the legal thinking? In 1991 the Law Reform Commission said that there was "no place for the offence of blasphemous libel in a society which respects free speech". In 1996 the Oireachtas Constitution Review Group said: "The retention of the present constitutional offence of blasphemy is not appropriate." The Bar Council has noted that blasphemy and treason are the only crimes explicitly mentioned in the Constitution. In 2008, the Joint Committee on the Constitution said that "in a modern Constitution, blasphemy is not a phenomenon against which there should be an express constitutional prohibition."

Why hasn't it been removed yet? Instead of removing it from the Constitution, the former Fianna Fail Minister for Justice Dermot Ahern introduced blasphemy as an amendment to the 2009 Defamation Bill. In March 2010, Mr Ahern's press office indicated that there might be a constitutional referendum on the matter in the autumn of 2010. On 25 March 2010, Mr Ahern said that he had "clearly stated that I hoped that the matter could be addressed by referendum at a suitable opportunity in the near future". He said a referendum as a "stand alone" amendment would involve "considerable expense" and was not of "immediate importance". He concluded: "I remain of the view that on grounds of cost, a referendum on its own on blasphemy should not be held and that it should instead be run together with one or more other referendums."

What's in Ireland's Defamation Act 2009? Section 36 of the Act defines the new offence of "publication or utterance of blasphemous matter". It concerns matter deemed "grossly abusive or insulting in relation to matters held sacred by any religion" resulting in "outrage among a substantial number of the adherents of that religion". Those found guilty of the offence face a fine of up to €25,000. Moreover, courts are empowered to issue a warrant authorising the police to forcibly enter and search any suspected premises, including a dwelling, for copies of "blasphemous" statements. The new Act came into effect on 1 January 2010.

Why it is of immediate importance Given the moves at the UN, it is now of immediate importance that the Irish Constitution be changed, with the amendment on blasphemy held, at no extra cost, in conjunction with the amendment on children mooted for later in 2011. Irish PEN calls upon the new Government to restore our reputation for free speech without delay.

Tell me a story

Sydney has taken up the challenge set by American writer Dave Eggers to improve literacy and celebrate storytelling. As **Leah Rauch** reports, the new centre is inviting volunteers to join the wordspinning adventure.

Centre founders Tim Dick and Catherine Keenan

The most wonderful thing about being a wordsmith is that everyone is born one. They just might not know it yet. At least that's the gospel according to renowned storyteller Dave Eggers. Eggers believes that everyone has stories to tell, and they should be telling them from the time they are kids (so they don't forget how to do it when they're adults). The problem is that lots of kids don't have the opportunity and support to learn how to write, or how to tell their stories, especially if they're from backgrounds where they don't have access to the things more privileged people take for granted. Determined to do something about that, Eggers set up a storytelling project for children in 2002, aimed at improving kids' basic literacy skills and encouraging them to explore their storytelling potential.

Established in San Francisco, his non-profit organization, named for its address on 826 Valencia, soon spawned seven more chapters in different parts of the States. The vision went international last year with copycat versions in London: the Ministry of Stories set up by literary celebrity Nick Hornby, and in Ireland, Fighting Words, the brainchild of Booker Prize winning author Roddy Doyle.

And now there's to be a similar centre in inner Sydney, open to all children but targeting youngsters who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, including migrant and indigenous kids. In Sydney's case, the literary guardian angels are two journalists, Catherine Keenan and Tim Dick, who work at the *Sydney Morning Herald.* At the time of writing, both journalists are visiting the flagship centre in San Francisco for an intensive training stint, along with Carmel Grimmett, a teacher who will be in charge of the new Sydney centre's education programs.

Keenan put the idea to her fellow journalist at the end of last year after watching a speech by Dave Eggers online. Within six weeks the pair had started to mobilise Sydney's passion for writing. Five hundred volunteers are already awaiting instruction: including writers, journalists and teachers both active and retired, along with representatives from radio stations fbi and triple j, publishing companies, design and media industries. There is also some serious literary muscle involved, with high profile supporters including authors and journalists, Malcolm Knox, Markus Zusak, Anna Funder, James Bradley, Debra Adelaide, Gail Jones, Kate Grenville, David Malouf and Tom Keneally.

If everything goes to plan for Keenan and Dick, the Sydney Story Factory is set to open later this year in Redfern. But in the meantime, they're off to see the wizard.

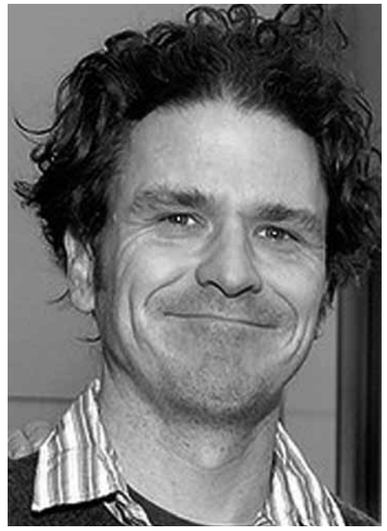
For those who haven't met him, Eggers is a kind of amalgam of Gandalf from *Lord of the Rings*, Aslan from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Harry Potter's* Dumbledore. In the less fantastical world, he is a publisher, editor, author (his first book *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize) and since opening 826 Valencia in 2002, a philanthropist and advocate for students and teachers.

For Eggers it's all about words. The words we use every day. To organise ourselves in the morning to get to work (or get out of work), to create masterpieces, to make ourselves laugh, to send the dog outside. No tool could be more malleable and meaningful. A carpenter can use his spanner to tighten and loosen bolts but a wordsmith can use his spanner to tighten a unicorn's horn or brandish in the faces of an oncoming goblin army.

Eggers is best known as a wordsmith, but it is his vision, initiative and determination to harness the power of the written word that has seen children's lives being transformed in ten practical, magical places around the world.

Growing up surrounded by family and friends within the education community, Eggers became aware that it was virtually impossible for the teachers he describes as 'the most hardworking and constantly inspiring people that I knew', to dedicate the one-on-one time to students that they required. So using his professional connections, he sought to bridge the gap between the abundance of skills in the writing industries (journalism, publishing, authors, teachers) and the kids who needed them.

"Everybody that I knew had an interest in the primacy of the written word, in terms of…nurturing a democracy, nurturing an enlightened life," he says, "but at the same time there wasn't a conduit that I knew of in my community to bring these two communities together."



Dave Eggers

As Eggers predicted, the plan worked because people who write love the written word, and want others to love it as well. All the centres work from the fundamental belief that one-on-one attention and strong writing skills are imperative to future success, in a writing industry or not.

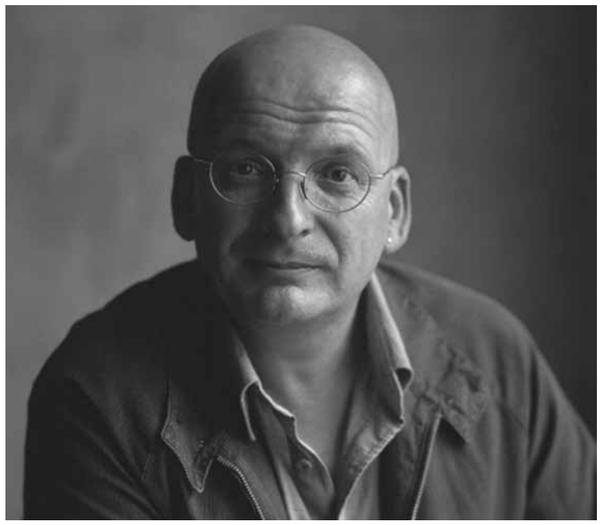
826 Valencia is tucked away behind a Pirates Supply Store, a creative way to get kids in the door (and to get around the commercial zoning requirements of the building). From the pirates store the kids move through to the free writing and tutoring lab. Watched over by volunteer professionals, neighbourhood kids can come in to get free help with their homework, write a story, create a comic and generally get excited about the literary arts. Whatever story a child wishes to create, in whatever form, is catered for.

Catherine Keenan says that her early feedback from teachers indicates that there is concern about the recent focus on teaching children only the literacy skills they will be tested on, such as in the national NAPLAN exams. "There is an awful lot of standardisation and teaching to the test, and at the same time, everyone who thinks about it in a meaningful way will tell you that what is important when these children start growing up will be flexibility and creativity."

›

› *Continued from 15*

Nick Hornby



Roddy Doyle

Recent academic studies have discovered that even though employers rate creativity as one of the most important traits in an employee, children's creativity is steadily declining, which in turn is inhibiting their ability to be flexible, innovative and ready to solve problems.

Keenan says that the Sydney Story Factory is intended as a supplement to the education the children receive at school. "We want it to foster children's love of writing, I suppose that's what it gets down to in the end. And their creativity… a sense of being at home in language, a sense of feeling comfortable with it," she said. "I think if you're not comfortable with words, it's a huge, huge impediment to your life. It drastically curtails the pathways that are open to you. And if you really love it it opens up an enormous number of paths that are worthwhile and interesting."

Ahead of the centre's opening, volunteers will be going into partner schools, offering after hours activities of the kind proposed for the centre. Discussions are underway with several inner-city schools, but Keenan hopes in the future busloads of kids from beyond the inner-city area will visit the centre and volunteers will move out into other areas.

In line with the Eggers tradition of a strictly-for-fun shopfront at the entry to the centres around the world (London is disguised as Hoxton Street Monster Supplies), the planned Redfern centre will be fronted by either a Martian Embassy and Gift Store or a Mad Scientist Supply Store. According to Keenan the kids are pushing for the Mad Scientist option but volunteer market researchers will make the final cut.

A $25,000 donation in March from Lord Mayor Clover Moore got the ball rolling and supporters are now going all out looking for the money and the manpower – including more volunteers - to make the project work.

Like the Eggers original, the Sydney Story Factory will be a non-profit association run by a board. The idea is that donations will keep the centre on its feet along with the dedication, time and support given by the Australian public and members of the literary industries. In time, other centres might start popping up nationwide, but for now, the vision is staying local. And it's all hands on deck.

"If you're literate, you can volunteer with us," says Keenan. "If you're literate and you love stories, then we will find something for you to do."

www.sydneystoryfactory.blogspot.com.

Iranian director wins award for courage

Iranian film director Jafar Panahi will be honoured at this year's Cannes Film Festival with the Carrosse d'Or for courage. In December last year the leading Iranian director was sentenced to six years imprisonment and banned from writing and directing films for 20 years, after he was found guilty of propaganda offences against the Iranian regime.

The 20 year ban on filmmaking - which includes a ban on travel abroad and all media contact – threatens, if it remains in place, to end the filmmaker's career. Panahi has appealed the sentence, but human rights groups say there has been no progress since the appeal was lodged over three months ago.

The Carosse d'Or (Gold Coach) is awarded by the Société des Réalisateurs de Films (SRF) to honour filmmakers for courage and independence of thought. In a statement announcing the award the SRF said: "Because no film-maker, no author, can remain indifferent to the violence of such a decision, the SRF has promised to break the silence imposed on Panahi, for freedom of expression."

This is the second year Panahi's plight has been centre stage at the Cannes Festival. Last year a tearful Juliette Binoche dedicated her Best Actress award to Panahi and joined with his fellow Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami to condemn the filmmaker's detention.

Jafar Panahi won the Camera d'Or at Cannes in 1995 for his debut feature, The *White Balloon*, and the Golden Lion at Venice for his 2000 drama, *The Circle*. His other films include *Crimson Gold* and *Offside*.

A prominent supporter of the protests that followed the disputed presidential election in 2009, Panahi was arrested after joining in mourning for demonstrators who had been killed in the protests. He was later released. In 2010 he was again arrested and although released after three months following a hunger strike, he was convicted and sentenced on the propaganda offences in December.

Cannes is one of several international festivals which have called for justice for Panahi, staging protest screenings and scheduling public events with leading international directors and actors who have joined the campaign.

Jafar Panahi

At the Berlin Festival launch in February, with an empty chair observing Panahi's absence from the festival jury, a prolonged standing ovation greeted Isabella Rossellini's reading of a letter from the director, which said in part: "They have condemned me to twenty years of silence. Yet in my dreams, I scream for a time when we can tolerate each other, respect each other's opinions, and live for each other."

In March, the Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide Film Festivals scheduled fundraising screenings to support the international campaign to free Panahi and his filmmaking colleague, Mohammad Rasoulof, who was sentenced at the same time.

Commenting on the Cannes award, Julie Rigg, film critic for ABC's Radio National, said "Jafar Panahi is a masterful filmmaker, and a courageous man. Where other Iranian filmmakers have chosen exile or allegory, Mr Panahi has continued to make films which show the effects of authoritarianism on the lives of ordinary people (*The Circle, Offside, Crimson Gold*)."

"The sentencing of Jafar Panahi and Mohammad Rasoulof for attempting to make a film is an outrage," Rigg said. "I can think of only one other case where this has happened, and that was in the Soviet Gulag. Their case stands for the many abuses of human rights in Iran, and across the middle east. But the ban on them making films for 20 years is particularly shocking, and the reason this campaign must go on."

Things a writer never takes for granted...

Don DeLillo

Writer Don DeLillo received the 2010 PEN Saul Bellow Award for Achievement in American Fiction. DeLillo is the author of 15 novels, including *Underworld and White Noise*, four plays and a number of short stories and essays. As an active PEN member, he addressed last year's rally in New York city to support imprisoned Chinese writer Liu Xiaobo. He spoke to PEN's **Antonio Aiello**.

PEN: You received this year's Saul Bellow award, PEN's top honour for American fiction. Are you an admirer of Bellow's work?

DeLillo: I still have my old paperback copy of *Herzog*, a novel I recall reading with great pleasure. It wasn't the first Bellow novel I encountered—that was *The Victim*, whose opening sentence ("On some nights New York is as hot as Bangkok.") seemed a novel in itself, at least to a New Yorker. Bellow was a strong force in our literature, making leaps from one book to the next. He was one of the writers who expanded my sense of the American novel's range, or, maybe a better word for Bellow—its clutch, its grasp—and it's a special honor to be awarded a prize that bears his name.

PEN: Is there something about the American novel or fiction that sets it apart from international literature?

DeLillo: There are many kinds of American fiction and I've always had special admiration for work that attempts to be equal to the sweep of American experience. Sinclair Lewis called for "a literature worthy of our vastness." A novelist tends to feel this spread and breadth in his fingertips (or not) and I've tried to bring a sense of our strange and dangerous times into my work. I guess I've said before that I don't think my novels could have been written in the culture that existed before the assassination of President Kennedy. I would eventually write about the event itself and have tried, from the beginning, to find a language—an American language—that might carry the ideas and events in my work to their full potential.

PEN: In a recent interview, you noted that your shift, over the last decade, toward shorter novels had been informed by re-reading several slim but seminal European works of fiction, including Albert Camus's *The Stranger*, Peter Handke's *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick*, and Max Frisch's *Man in the Holocene*. Can you talk a little about the evolution of your work and influences?

DeLillo: A novel determines its own size and shape and I've never tried to stretch an idea beyond the frame and structure it seemed to require. (*Underworld* wanted to be big and I didn't attempt to stand in the way.) The theme that seems to have evolved in my work during the past decade concerns time—time and loss. This was not a plan; the novels have simply tended to edge in that direction. Some years ago I had the briefest of exchanges with a professor of philosophy. I raised the subject of time. He said simply, "Time is too difficult." Yes, time is a mystery and perhaps best examined (or experienced by my characters) in a concise and somewhat enigmatic manner. Next book may be a monster. (Or just a collection of short stories.)

PEN: Thanks to e-books, blogs, and social media, writers are arguably using new technology as never before. Stories are written using Twitter, novels as text messages, and there seems to be a reemergence of serial narratives. Do you think technology will have a considerable influence on fiction? Do you think it already has?

DeLillo: The question is whether the enormous force of technology, and its insistence on speeding up time and compacting space, will reduce the human need for narrative—narrative in the traditional sense. Novels will become user-generated. An individual will not only tap a button that gives him a novel designed to his particular tastes, needs, and moods, but he'll also be able to design his own novel, very possibly with him as main character. The world is becoming increasingly customized, altered to individual specifications. This shrinking context will necessarily change the language that people speak, write, and read. Here's a stray question (or a metaphysical leap): Will language have the same depth and richness in electronic form that it can reach on the printed page? Does the beauty and variability of our language depend to an important degree on the medium that carries the words? Does poetry need paper?

PEN: You were brought up Catholic, but religion seems to play a relatively minor role in your work. You tend to turn faith on its head. When you imagined a jihadist behind the September 11 attacks, for example, you emphasized the "blood bond with other men," as you put it in an interview, rather than his religious beliefs. Do you think about the role religion plays or doesn't play in your writing? What do you think about the prominence of religion in American politics—or the antagonism toward Islam that has become especially visible in the last few months?

DeLillo: The Latin mass had an odd glamour—all that mystery and tradition. Religion has not been a major element in my work, and for some years now I think the true American religion has been "the American People." The term quickly developed an aura of sanctity and inviolability. First used mainly by politicians at nominating conventions and in inaugural speeches, the phrase became a mainstay of news broadcasts and other more or less nonpartisan occasions. All the reverence once invested in the name of God was transferred to an entity safely defined as you and me. But do we still exist? Does the phrase still soar over the airwaves? Or are the American People dead and buried? It seems the case, more than ever, that there are only factions, movements, sects, splinter groups, and deeply aggrieved individual voices. The media absorbs it all.

PEN: You have explored paranoia in several books, perhaps most notably in *Libra*, your novel about the Kennedy assassination. Nowadays, wild claims can "go viral" and become "true" through endless "reporting" on cable news, and the tendency toward paranoia seems stronger than ever in America; many Americans doubt the standing president is a U.S. citizen, for instance. What do you think of today's information landscape? Do you see it having an effect on free expression? On fiction?

DeLillo: The earlier era of paranoia in this country was based largely on violent events arid on the suspicions that spread concerning the true nature of the particular event, from Dallas to Memphis to Vietnam. Who was behind it, what led to it, what will flow from it? How many shots, how many gunmen, how many wounds on the President's body? People believed, sometimes justifiably, that they were being lied to by the government or elements within the government.
Today, it seems, the virus is self-generated. Distrust and disbelief are centered in a deep need to raise individual discontent to an art form, often with no basis in fact. In many cases, people choose to believe a clear falsehood, about President Obama, for instance, or September 11, or immigrants, or Muslims. These are often symbolic beliefs, usable kinds of fiction, a means of protest rising from political, economic, religious, or racial complaints, or just a lousy life in a dying suburb.

"It's important to remember that we can also know a country from the writers who are not permitted to publish their work—fiction, nonfiction, journalism—in accord with honest observation and clear conscience. Writers who are subjected to state censorship, threatened with imprisonment or menaced by violent forces in their society clearly merit the support of those of us who enjoy freedom of expression."

PEN: Can you talk about your involvement with PEN and what it means to defend the rights of writers in the U.S. and around the world? What do you see as the writer's role or responsibility in the public sphere?

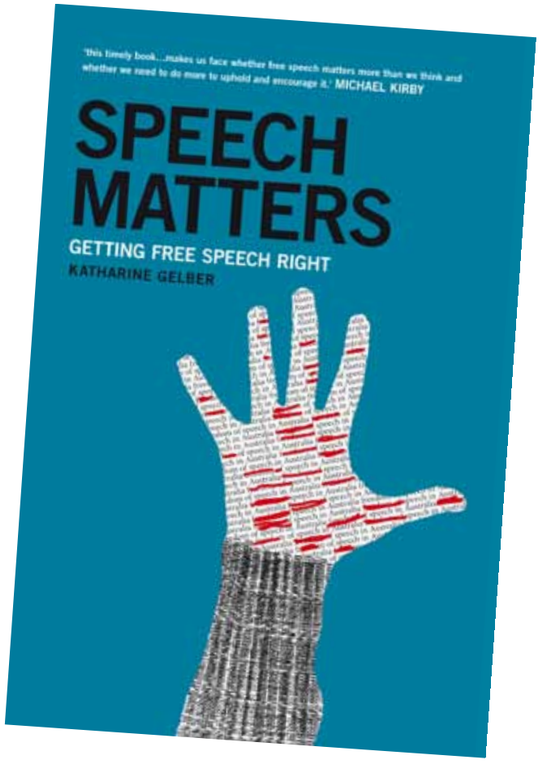
DeLillo: The writer's role is to sit in a room and write. We can leave it at that. Or we can add that writers have always felt a natural kinship, country to country, language to language. We can know a country through its fiction, often a far more telling means of enlightenment and revelation than any other. The shelves in the room where I'm writing these words are crammed with books by foreign writers. This is work that I've been reading and re-reading for decades, title after title forming a stream of warm memories.

It's important to remember that we can also know a country from the writers who are not permitted to publish their work—fiction, nonfiction, journalism—in accord with honest observation and clear conscience. Writers who are subjected to state censorship, threatened with imprisonment or menaced by violent forces in their society clearly merit the support of those of us who enjoy freedom of expression.

There are things a writer never takes for granted, like the long life he will need to live in order to write the long novel he is trying to write. Maybe freedom to write belongs at the top of the list, on behalf of those writers who face the grim reality of being enemies of the state.

Getting free speech wrong

In her new book ***Speech Matters, Getting Free Speech Right,*** political analyst **Katharine Gelber** describes how in exploring the land of the 'fair go', she discovered a political culture that is failing free speech. And rather than blaming government alone, she questions the extent of the public's commitment to freedom of speech.
In this extract from the book, Gelber focuses on art, long a medium for conveying political views. Singling out two cases where political artworks were removed from public view, she argues that despite our professed support for free speech, we are remarkably tolerant of activities that curtail it, even when they are illegitimate and wrong.



Art has long been a medium for conveying political views. The fact that this form of expression takes place through graphic representations does not lessen its importance as a vehicle for political speech.

Political art, be it in the form of sculpture, painting, photography, a video installation, a multimedia exhibit, theatre, puppetry or apparel, is clearly a mechanism for engaging in political speech.

Much artwork is not directly intended by its creator, or viewed by its audience, as political. Some artwork may be categorised as political by some, but not all, of its audience regardless of the intentions of the creator. Still other pieces are intended to be political statements by their creator, and again may or may not be so received by an audience.

In the realm of artistic creativity, the lines where a piece of art may be considered to constitute political speech are difficult to draw brightly.

Defining an artwork as necessarily political can be fraught with difficulty. Nevertheless, it may well be that, in the famous words of Justice Potter Stewart's concurring opinion in a 1964 United States Supreme Court case concerning pornography, 'I know it when I see it'.

We think we know when an artwork is political because our reactions to it stir our consciousness on issues we consider to be related to the world of politics. To some, that world is relatively confined – the realm of government policy. To others, that world is incredibly broad.

The difficulties of defining political artwork are in many ways the same as the difficulties in defining political speech. There is no need to repeat here the debates that I have outlined earlier in this book. Suffice to say that I will be focussing in this chapter on artworks which are clearly and uncontrovertibly political, in the sense that they were intended by their creators to make a statement on a contemporary political issue related to government policy and that they were evidently (as we shall see) received as such by their audiences.

These artworks are also political in the sense in which political speech is conceived in this book. That is to say, they constitute expressions that are essential to democratic legitimacy because they engage the public in critique and debate about essential questions of governance. The artists themselves have individually engaged in speech that enables them to express their views about issues of governance, and thus to engage in processes of democratic legitimation concerning public policy. The audience is also able, in viewing the artists' works, to form a view – including a contrary view to that of the artists themselves – about issues of public policy, and thus to be provoked to engage thoughtfully in the same processes of democratic legitimation.

The fortunes of political art in contemporary Australian political culture are not happy. The story that I will tell in this chapter is one of overbearing attitudes towards censorship on the part of regulators, backed up by spurious or even non-existent legal powers. Artworks that raise particularly controversial views are likely to fare badly in Australian political culture; they are likely to be seized, removed or taken off exhibition. What we see in this area is a particular sensitivity to the views that can be expressed in artwork, combined with very little appreciation of the importance of artwork as a medium of political expression. In Australia in the new century, the active censorship of political art is an expression of a hostile political culture. More than in any other area discussed in this book, this hostility leads to responsesby authorities despite an evident lack of appropriate legal or regulatory basis for doing so.

I will focus in this chapter on two examples of political art. The first was an outdoor exhibition in the Bankstown area of western Sydney entitled *'Weapons of Mass Distraction'*, created by artist Zanny Begg. The second was an exhibit at an inner-city gallery in Melbourne of an artwork by artist Azlan McLennan. Both were dealt with harshly by regulatory authorities, with a spurious basis for so doing. Both were removed from public view. Both appeared to generate fierce and determined opposition from a small number of members of the public, and the regulatory authorities' response to that opposition was to censor. In so doing, they demonstrated a narrow understanding indeed of the importance of freedom of political speech and their (potential) role in preserving and nurturing that freedom.

The arts in Australia

One aspect of understanding the fate of some political artworks in Australian political culture is to examine overall government attitudes towards arts funding. Despite Australia's relatively small size, it has had a remarkable impact on the global arts stage and has been extensively engaged in the arts. It was in Australia that the world's first feature film was made, in 1906. Comprehensive federal government funding and policy for the arts began in the 1970s and strong support was maintained until the latter half of the 1990s. Under Prime Minister John Howard's leadership, the arts and artists became identified with 'elitist' groups who were pleading 'special interests'. They were set against – and in contrast to – the 'mainstream', for whom Howard intended to govern.

More concerning than these rhetorical flourishes were the concrete measures that the federal government of that time took in relation to funding arrangements for artistic endeavours that were perceived as critical of government policy. In late 2005 the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade withdrew its sponsorship of the Jakarta International Film Festival because the films that were to be screened, including a documentary entitled The *President v David Hicks,* were not considered to promote 'greater mutual understanding between the people of Australia and Indonesia'. In April 2003 five video game creators were granted a $25,000 Australia Council grant to develop a video game called *'Escape from Woomera'*. Both the Minister for Immigration Philip Ruddock and the Minister for the Arts Rod Kemp publicly attacked the council, saying the decision reflected 'poorly' upon it and its judgment 'that the organisation should lend its name to the promotion of unlawful behaviour'. In 2004 a play written by Ros Horin and called *Through the Wire* was staged in Parramatta, to rave reviews.

Yet when it applied for funding from the federal Minister for the Arts, the application was rejected. Unofficially, the word was that the government found it politically disagreeable. In the end, it was funded by others including the New South Wales Ministry for the Arts and private backers. Another Australia Council–funded play entitled Two Brothers was widely regarded as inspired by the relationship between the Treasurer Peter Costello and his well-known brother, the Reverend Tim Costello. In the play, boat people drown as the Australian navy looks on. Government outrage about the play led to rumours that the Australia Council was to be abolished.

It was in part to offset the effects of these kinds of scandals that newly elected prime minister Kevin Rudd, in somewhat of a publicity coup, recruited high-profile actor Cate Blanchett to preside over discussions about the future of the arts at his 2020 Summit, held at Parliament House in Canberra in April 2008. In an evident vote of confidence in the prime minister's strategy, Blanchett co-chaired the section devoted to the theme 'Towards a Creative Australia' less than a week after giving birth to her third child.

It is, of course, not only the federal government that mediates the regulatory frameworks within which works of art can become embroiled. State governments, local councils, police, council rangers and other authorities can become involved. For example, in New South Wales in 2008 the Leichhardt Municipal Library in Sydney's inner west scheduled a pictorial exhibition entitled *'Al-Nakba'* and produced by a local community group called Friends of Hebron. The photographs, poems and articles were on the topic of Palestinian refugees living in Hebron, and the exhibition was approved by the library for a general audience to view. The night before the exhibition was due

›

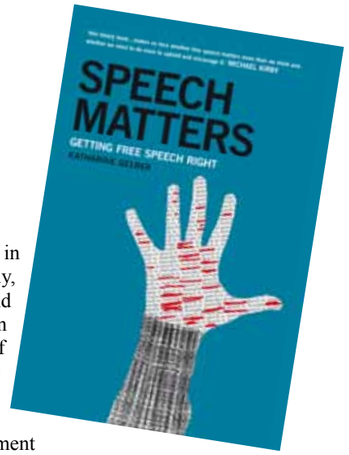
❯ *Continued from 21*

to open, police counter-terrorism officers visited the library and spoke with the librarian. The next morning the library cancelled the exhibit.

The arts continue to occupy a precarious position in Australian society, the economy and the national psyche. Artists repeatedly assure the public and the government that the arts are a good thing both for the economy and for humanity generally. As Juliana Engberg put it, the arts 'add to humanity, create the conditions for a civil society, encourage tolerance and ways to deal with new ideas, encourage empathy and analysis'. This is an honourable list; the contributions made by the arts to society as a whole are many and varied. That is why, when censorship occurs, it needs to be fully justified and limited only to those cases in which it can be demonstrated that the art is harming processes of democratic deliberation and legitimation, and/or individuals' capacities to engage in those processes.

Zanny Begg's 'Weapons of Mass Distraction'

In late 2004 the University of Western Sydney and the Blacktown Arts Centre jointly hosted an outdoor exhibition entitled, *'[OUT OF GALLERY]: A Series of Guerilla Exhibitions in Western Sydney'*. One of the artists whose work was selected for exhibit was Zanny Begg. Her works were ten life-size cardboard cutouts of soldiers dressed in military fatigues. Above their heads on the same piece of cardboard was the slogan 'Checkpoint for Weapons of Mass Distraction'. The slogan was clearly a deliberate parody of the stated basis for the commencement of military operations in 2003 in Iraq, when a 'Coalition of the Willing' was led by US President Bush and supported by Prime Minister John Howard. The justification for military intervention had been that the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction, consisting of chemical and biological weapons and the potential capacity to manufacture nuclear weapons. It later emerged that the intelligence on which these claims were made was selectively used, and incorrect. Weapons of mass destruction were never found in Iraq. Additionally, the nuanced and qualified way in which some of the intelligence had initially been presented within government circles was lost in the context of the release of information to the public.



Begg's installation was a specific intervention into the official justification for the war in Iraq, raising the possibility that it was a distraction from other political issues. Viewers had considerable scope to analyse for themselves what those issues might be.

Prior to installation of the ten pieces, the Blacktown Arts Centre drew up a contract with the artist, agreeing on the images to be used and that her artwork would be placed in ten specified outdoor sites across the local government area. The sites selected were 'grey areas', meaning areas that lay between public and private space: car parks, abandoned buildings and so on. The artworks were to be affixed with cable ties, making them easy to remove. The intention of the artist, with the agreement of the Arts Centre, was to leave the pieces in place for the public to do with them what they wished. This included allowing members of the public to deface or remove the pieces.

Begg commenced installing her work on 23 November 2004. After having installed five pieces, she was in the car park of the Blacktown Arts Centre installing a sixth when a Community Law Enforcement Officer approached her and told her it was an 'illegal sign'. Begg denied it was illegal and suggested that the officer speak with the Arts Centre. The officer went into the Arts Centre, and returned a short time later. When he returned he stated that the artwork was 'inappropriate'.

He said, 'It's too political. It's totally inappropriate in the climate of terrorism'.

The officer told Begg that the council had informed the exhibition's curator that Begg's work had been removed from the exhibition. He directed her to remove her pieces from the exhibition, and said that if she did not comply, 'I'll take you down to the station and you'll be fined'. Begg left the car park and contacted the curator of the exhibition, Mr Adnan Begic. Begic confirmed that her work had been removed from the exhibition and told her to take down all her pieces immediately. She expressed disagreement with Begic's decision and they agreed to meet the next day so that she could show him the locations of the pieces and he could take them down. When they did this, the pieces had already been removed.

Begg and Begic organised a meeting with the Blacktown Arts Centre and the Blacktown City Council to discuss the decision. Begg describes the attitudes of the council and Arts Centre's representatives at this meeting as 'hostile'. The council representatives initially suggested that the reason Begg's work had caused concern was because Begg herself had been wearing army fatigues while installing the work. This was untrue, and could be easily verified by looking at a photograph that had been published in the local media of her installing the work. They also claimed she had been carrying a toy gun. She said this was also untrue.

The representatives then claimed that Begg's attire and toy gun had led to federal counter-terrorism authorities being called and council members being questioned. At this point in the meeting a new, and more senior, council representative arrived in the room who was less hostile to Begg and Begic. This representative acknowledged that there had been a misunderstanding by the council of Begg's behaviour on the day of the installation. Despite this acknowledgement the council officers looked over the exhibition list and either cancelled or relocated all other artists' work in the exhibition located outside the Blacktown area.

I subsequently interviewed representatives of the Blacktown Arts Centre and Blacktown City Council to obtain their views. In this interview, the representatives emphasised their view that the artwork had not been 'censored' or 'cancelled'. Rather, they stressed, a 'temporary pause' had been placed on the exhibition. When I asked them to clarify the difference between a temporary pause that was never lifted and a cancellation, they stated that Begg had installed her exhibit two days before the scheduled installation date and that this had caused problems because final approvals from some sites had not yet been secured. However, no further effort was made to permit installation of the artworks and the 'pause' never ceased to operate.

The legal basis for the council's decision has never been fully or adequately explained. It appears that there was no clear legal basis for the decision at all, since the exhibit had been approved by the Arts Centre and funded by the council. Rather, an over-enthusiastic council officer's actions appear to have hit a nerve at the council. If this caused only consternation and controversy it would not have been a concern. However, it resulted in the shutting down of an approved exhibit on spurious grounds.

In a media report immediately after the incident, a council spokesperson was quoted as saying the artwork had been classed as 'street entertainment', which required a permit. But this is nonsensical since the artwork had been approved by the Arts Centre and the exhibi- tion had been funded by the council. Then, shortly after the meeting between Begg, Begic, the Arts Centre and the council, Begg received the only written piece of evidence regarding the legal basis for the removal of her artwork. This was an email from the council telling her one piece from her exhibit had been impounded and that she was being fined for placement of an 'illegal sign' for the amount of $410.30. No further detail was provided. Begg responded by saying that the artwork had been installed with the express permission of the Blacktown Arts Centre, and that the exhibition had been funded by the council.

Therefore it simply could not be considered an 'illegal sign'. She was successful in having the fine rescinded, but given no explanation for the decision. Despite Begg making several more attempts to ascertain the exact ground on which the decision to cancel her exhibition was made, she consistently received no response. However, the real reason may have been revealed in other media coverage in which the mayor reportedly said, 'This sort of thing in the name of art is not going to go on in our city'.

Begic subsequently left the Blacktown Arts Centre, citing interference by the council in its curatorial decisions, an allegation

❯

❯ *Continued from 23*

substantiated by media reports in February 2005 that staff had left the Arts Centre due to a pattern of mayoral interference and censorship.

In interview, the Blacktown Arts Centre denied these allegations; however, in the newspaper coverage the mayor, Leo Kelly, was quoted as saying the artwork had 'discredited the council' and that he had refused to explain further the council's decision to remove the work.

Following this media coverage, the next meeting of Blacktown City Council, on 9 February 2005, raised the issue of 'allegations in a newspaper article' about interference in the direction of the Blacktown Arts Centre; however, 'following advice from the mayor', this item was not proceeded with and it was not raised again.

In February 2005 Begg held a new exhibition at the Mori Gallery in inner-city Sydney. It was called 'Checkpoint' and contained 100 pieces identical to those in the first exhibition – cardboard cutouts dressed in military fatigues, carrying rifles and tagged with the slogan 'Check-points for Weapons of Mass Distraction'. The exhibition filled the gallery and spilled out onto the sidewalk. The exhibition also featured A3-size political placards produced by other artists. It proceeded without incident, and the exhibition brochure contained articles authored by academics and other artists critical of the controversy, as well as a letter of protest sent at the time of the incident to Blacktown City Council and signed by 102 supporters.

There are a number of concerning features to this story, and they centre around the way in which authorities and individual officers perceive their regulatory role in relation to freedom of speech. At no stage in any of these detailed discussions did the issue of freedom of speech, or more specifically freedom of political speech, come up. At no point in time did the council officer or the representatives of the Arts Centre display any overt awareness of the need to respect and nurture the conditions within which freedom of speech might be able to flourish.

Instead, we saw the reverse of this. What we can perceive in this story is a readiness, a willingness, to trample on this key freedom for no other reason than personal opinion. At every level of authority, from the local mayor to the council officer, and in between, the considerations which appeared to play a part in this sorry saga had nothing to do with freedom of speech at all.

This demonstrates a great vulnerability for freedom of speech at the level of regulatory authority. It demonstrates that in relation to local level planning and permission issues, regulatory authorities prioritise and seek out the application of rules and regulations to behaviour they see as aberrant or controversial. They apply those rules and regulations even without clear guidelines for their use, or a questioning of their applicability. Most worryingly, they appear to do so with little or no regard whatsoever for the magnitude of what they are doing – interfering in a fundamental freedom that is vital for the development of individual capabilities and the workings of democracy itself. There was evidently a complete lack of awareness of the importance and magnitude of what they were doing, whether expressed in exchanges with the artist, reports in the media or minutes of council meetings.

I turn now to consider a second example of this kind of over-reactive regulation of artwork, before drawing broader conclusions from these stories.

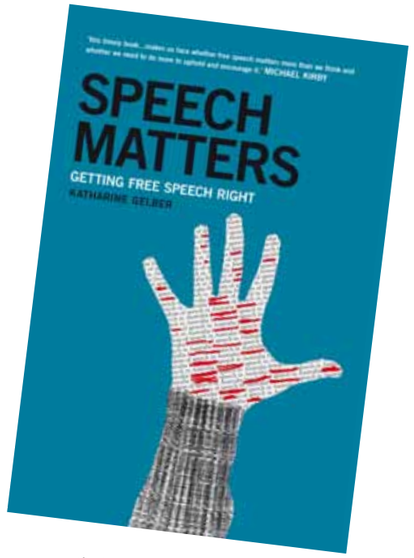
Azlan McLennan's 'Proudly un-Australian'

In Melbourne in 2006 an artist named Azlan McLennan defaced an Australian flag. He tore holes in it, including a hole through the centre of the Union Jack in the top left-hand corner and two other large holes in the middle of the flag. He also tore the seam off two edges so it looked tattered and ragged, and he burned it in parts. He mounted the result of this work on a street billboard belonging to the Trocadero art gallery in Melbourne under the slogan *'Proudly un-Australian'*.

He had a contract with the gallery for this artwork to be displayed for six weeks.

Two days after the artwork went on display, local police came to the gallery. The gallery was closed at the time of their arrival, so they could not enter it. They went to the proprietor of a neighbouring internet café and asked to use their premises to gain access. They made their way through the premises of the café, and used a window to reach the verandah roof. From there they leaned over and simply removed the artwork from the exterior wall of the art gallery. The removal occurred without any prior consultation with the art gallery or the artist. The police did not speak to anyone at the gallery, and after having removed the exhibit they showed it to the proprietor of the internet café before taking it away. Later, police headquarters claimed the officers had been acting on public complaints. In an interview I conducted with McLennan, he confirmed that he was never given any further information on the nature, number or substance of any public complaints. His artwork was returned to him several weeks later.

"The term 'un-Australian' was at that time a mechanism used routinely by the federal government to dismiss its critics and to undermine the claims of people who the government viewed as outside the 'mainstream' and as pleading a special interest."



The removal of the artwork created a furore and considerable media coverage. McLennan is of the view that the police officers did not appear to have known 'what they were getting into', and that they were surprised by the level and tenor of the publicity arising from, and scrutiny of, their actions. Although he had expected 'someone to be offended somewhere' by the work, he was not anticipating its removal, and the actions of the police do not appear to have been adequately explained. He saw the work as 'definitely' a means of expressing political speech, and believes 'absolutely' that political speech deserves strong protection. McLennan stated that he was not, however, an absolutist on freedom of speech. He said that prejudice is normalised in our society, in spite of its claims to be free and democratic, so that where speech targets disadvantaged minorities, it ought to suffer public censure.

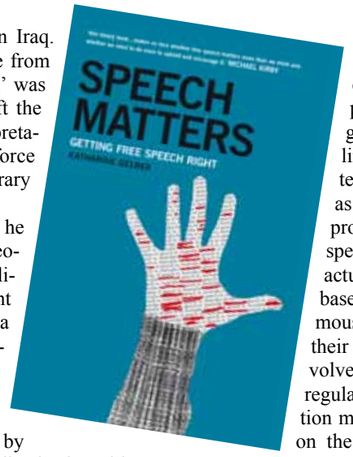
The artwork itself was an impetus behind the attempt by the government parliamentarian Bronwyn Bishop to criminalise the destruction of the flag (as discussed earlier), an attempt that was unsuccessful. In the immediate aftermath of the flag's removal the police said they were considering laying charges against the artist, possibly for offensive behaviour. However, charges were never laid; indeed, it is highly unlikely that a relevant charge even existed. In a media interview, McLennan responded, 'We're living in a particularly paranoid political climate . . . things like burning the flag should be a democratic right.'

The artist claimed to have created the artwork as a protest against newly enacted sedition laws. It was ironic that the force of governmental authority was brought to bear on an artistic work designed to highlight the over-reaching scope of that same governmental authority in relation to freedom of speech.

Conclusions

Both the artworks discussed here were highly critical of government policy on controversial issues related to terrorism. Both of them were intentionally provocative, and overtly and deliberately used phrases and rhetoric that were in common usage at that time. In Begg's case, the idea of weapons of mass destruction was a constant refrain used by the government when discussing and justifying

❯ *Continued from 25*



its decision to wage war in Iraq. Her alteration of the phrase from 'destruction' to 'distraction' was a deliberate attempt to shift the audience's focus and interpretation of the meaning and force of the phrase in contemporary Australian politics.

In McLennan's work, he used the rhetoric of those people regarded as 'un-Australian' against the government by juxtaposing it against a defaced flag, and declaring his pride in being 'un-Australian'. The term 'un-Australian' was at that time a mechanism used routinely by the federal government to dismiss its critics and to undermine the claims of people who the government viewed as outside the 'mainstream' and as pleading a special interest. The rhetoric of 'un-Australian' was used by the government as shorthand, which seemed superficially valuable but actually conveyed a more sinister meaning. The term implies that Australians have a set of values that are both important and charitable. It implies that to be Australian is to belong to a club of good, like-minded people who believe in the Australian mantra of a 'fair go'.

Describing someone as 'un-Australian' was a powerful, speech-based mechanism of exclusion. The term un-Australian was used in relation to people of non-Anglo ethnicity who were alleged to be involved in violent activities. It was used to describe asylum seekers, and even corporations who tried to avoid paying employees what they owed them. If you were un-Australian, by implication you were a person of lower worth, a person who did not believe in a fair go. The phrase was a mechanism of exclusion, marginalisation and silencing. It was in this context that McLennan declared himself to be 'proudly un- Australian'.

By that he meant that he was proud to disagree with government policy on some issues, proud to belong to groups marginalised from Howard's mainstream.

What is really important about these stories is that the censorship that both artists suffered did not come from the highest levels of government. They represent silencing and censorship at the level of local authority, and with the willing compliance and support of some members of the public. Typically, what occurs in these kinds of instances of censorship is a result of actions by local councils, council officers and suburban police officers. These are groups who escape the lime- light and who often do not see themselves as potential abrogators, or protectors, of freedom of speech. Yet the reverse is actually true; these locally based authorities wield enormous regulatory power in their capacity as individuals involved in the enforcement of a regulatory system. Their discretion matters; their views impact on the extent to which speech can be said to be free in concrete terms. They decide whether people get a say or not.

It is vital that we recognise the importance of the role of individuals at a local level in the mediation of speech freedoms in contemporary politics. Once we recognise this, we know that to improve the fate of freedom of political speech in Australia it is vital that the political culture changes. This means that it is imperative not always to focus on what might happen at the level of federal or state laws. What I have done throughout this book, and particularly in this chapter, is to focus also on local levels of authority. I have shown not only that these local levels of authority possess enormous powers to prevent people from practising freedom of speech, but that they have a tendency to use those powers against freedom of speech, in a way that is often blind to the consequences of what they are doing. This situation makes free speech perilous.

If we can strengthen political culture so that the public, and by extension regulatory authorities at every level including – and especially – the local level, begin to nurture and favour freedom of speech, we will begin to tackle the risks our society poses to freedom of speech. The problems of free speech restriction and limitation in this country are too enormous, too multifaceted and too complicated to be resolved by regulatory or legal responses alone. The only meaningful way this can be addressed is by changing Australian political culture.

***Speech Matters,* Katharine Gelber, University of Queensland Press, 2011.**

PEN is always seeking sponsors. We would like to thank the sponsors who have helped us in various ways in the past.

HarperCollins*Publishers* Australia

ALLEN&UNWIN

2ser 107.3

BarNet

asa Australian Society of Authors

Book Creators Circle Collective Websites

INVENTIVE LABS

NFP Bookkeeping specialists in not-for-profit organisations

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

SYDNEY WRITERS' FESTIVAL

The PenShop ...doing one thing well

gleebooks 2008 Independent Bookseller of the Year

We are grateful for the support of Dr Gene Sherman and Brian Sherman AM.

Support from sponsors enables Sydney PEN to continue its work promoting literature and defending freedom of expression.

sydney PEN

The empty chair is the powerful symbol PEN International uses to represent writers and journalists who are imprisoned

Stu Spence

Painted Chair, Reg Mombassa

Help us to campaign to free writers detained around the world and promote freedom of expression.

Become a member of PEN, or give a membership as a gift, and your donation will assist us to develop events and campaigns to highlight the plight of imprisoned writers, to put pressure on their captors, to support human rights and to strengthen our freedoms.

Go to our website, or contact us at
PEN International Sydney Office
Level 4 Bon Marche Building
University of Technology Sydney (UTS)
PO Box 123 Broadway NSW 2007