

Religion, Politics and the University

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L'obscurité couvre le monde,
Mais l'Idée illumine et luit;
De sa clarté blanche elle inonde
Les sombres azurs de la nuit.

Elle apaise l'âme qui souffre,
Guide la vie, endort la mort,
Elle montre aux méchants le gouffre,
Elle montre aux justes le port.

Victor Hugo, *Les Châtiments*, Vi.vii

It has seemed to me that I once inhabited an academic world more inhospitable, indeed more threatening to my persistent interests, than the one surrounding me now. As a young scholar I was not a little ruffled by the considerable number of teachers and senior students who disparaged my enthusiasm for taking on 'religious topics' in Arts faculties (first at Melbourne and then at Monash). On reflection I had somehow cobbled together for myself, especially from Melbourne's History programme in the early 'sixties, the nearest approximation to a Religious Studies major as we find it currently in Sydney and other universities around the country. Ethnohistory came to be slotted in *en route* because the University of Melbourne lacked an Anthropology department.

The various criticisms of my having pursued religious issues so pertinaciously were memorable, though uneven. The friendliest

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judgement, and the one I immediately took to heart, came from my first year tutor who advised me in the corridor at the beginning of my second year, 'really, you should spend some time studying politics' (meaning in that context political history). Some other voices sounded less amicable. One argument had it that, if I happened to be looking for a job, perhaps an academic one, I was not really equipping myself in the right way, unless I intended to enter the ministry. Another ran along the lines that, if I were to be a 'progressive', I should appreciate how religion is best seen as a heritage, a typically conservative, if not reactive, force in a world moving on towards more enlightened, and of course more rational outlooks. And, as you will expect, I heard more strident outcries: religion was positively dangerous; it had caused untold social horrors; it was positively psycho-pathological in nature and effect; I was religious: had I not considered how dangerous I was, let alone unbalanced in my preoccupations?

Yet, thankfully, I also had my sustainers and sympathisers, the positive reinforcers among lecturers and fellow students; but on balance I had to fight for my perspectives and to avoid my own depressive feelings of being a 'displaced person' in the secular Australian university. The establishment of what we now call Studies in Religion, or Religious Studies, or Comparative Religion, or the History of Religions, was as yet barely in sight in any of the nation's Arts offerings (and what little of relevance there was in British institutions attracted no attention).¹ It appeared extraordinary to me that if one could specialise in the study of economics, or political systems, or art, or any one of a number of languages, then why was a phenomenon as vast and as influential as religion not allowed its own disciplinary sphere? Even Marx had acknowledged that 'the beginning of all criticism' was 'the criticism of religion';² and yet, if he apparently meant by religion more than just theological argument, which criticism was going to convince if it proceeded from inadequate knowledge of an enormous subject?

Some of the confinement belonging to the Australian situation I circumvented by studying overseas, but on taking research degrees back here the thin edge of the wedge to achieve my highest

scholarly aims was provided by the History of Ideas. Both my main supervisors, for the Master's and Doctoral degrees, were political theorists: first, Graeme Duncan, who went on to become Professor of Politics at Adelaide University, largely on the basis of his work *Marx and Mill*; and second, Eugene Kamenka, Marxologist, and best known for his books *The Ethical Foundations of Marxism* and *The Philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach*.³ Kamenka held the only professorship in the History of Ideas in the southern hemisphere, and since I was his first student, and because his chair was discontinued upon his relinquishment of it, I like to think I am keeping up the enterprise he initiated, by ostensibly transferring the special professorial niche to Sydney (where Kamenka had in any case held an earlier post in Philosophy).

Although we were profoundly reconciled just before his death, my relations with Kamenka were what we may call 'ideologically stormy'. I vividly remember him being so perturbed by my constant probing into religious ideas that he took me into his office and gave me a solid two-hour one-to-one Oxbridge-like tutorial on Marxian political economy. Somehow I was supposed to be unmesmerised from my 'Methodist upbringing' to face the real world. Matters came to a head for me in 1971, when I announced I was developing a keen interest in the notion of retribution in its various aspects, including beliefs about divine judgement.⁴ His reaction was instantaneous, at least over the last inclusion: 'That would surely be one of the most unproductive ideas you could choose to pursue. It gathers in no interesting developments and it will take you nowhere'. I suppose I should have seen it coming. I was talking to a non-theistic White Russian Jew: post-pogroms, post-holocaust, and a protégé of Sydney's John Anderson at that.

Strangely, I have always taken that to be the parting of the ways, and that somehow Kamenka was speaking for those powerful modern intellects (and perhaps in advance more emotionally-charged and searing post-moderns) who have resiled from a punitive God. At that time, however, I had not read the texts closely enough to appreciate how many of the great Western minds at the cutting edge—Payne, Rousseau, Madame de Staël, the young Hegel, Marx, the Mills, Wollstencraft, Nietzsche, Freud, Lawrence (and why

not also mention those two philosophic epigones Lenin and Hitler (*en passant?*)—all stumbled out of the Biblical tradition in a Marcionite-looking rejection of the requiting Divinity.⁵ They could not stomach the idea that paradoxically most intrigued me, the primary and theological notion of judgement, indeed divine justice. And we are probably in a good position now, by an intelligent application of deconstructive principles, to detect that their reactions were mostly at the ‘gut level’ and that they did not even want to try to place, or argue through, what they fervently rejected: the dreadful Being of our ultimate Assessment.

Be that as it has been, I was in any case—and perhaps fittingly—cast out of the Australian ivory tower at the beginning of 1972. The first lectureships in Religious Studies in an Australian university were actually offered ‘outside the country’, that is, in our Territory to the north, Papua New Guinea, which had not yet become independent, and which was deemed so ‘very religious’ that the nascent University of Papua New Guinea admitted the utter necessity of the appointment I accepted. Port Moresby, after all, is the gateway to the most complex ethnologic scene on earth, with about a quarter of the planet’s discrete languages and ‘belief-systems’ being in Melanesia alone.⁶ In all its diversity, the region of our nearest South Pacific neighbours provides a perfect introduction to the richness of the religious world, indeed, the complex nature of the human condition.

As is well enough, moreover, I found Papua New Guinea the arena of basic payback. Revenge warfare was in sundry places still open; certainly it was everywhere subterranean, and both group suspicion and expectation of aggression were pervasive. If you were doing serious work on religion in a variety of contexts you had to face the possibility of your own death at the deliberate hands of another. Perhaps my least extinguishable memory here is that of the longest spear I have ever seen being held up against my gullet, by a warrior with wildly staring, hyperthyroid-like eyes. Then again, the Melanesians, acclaimed for their pig-kills and food presentations, are an extraordinarily hospitable, generous, reciprocating lot, with a concessive side that they have turned to their own advantage in the processes of socio-religious change—

as in the nurturing of their own churches and the building of their new nations. Reviewing these contrary-looking impetuses, what strikes one again and again, in the oscillations between the blatant physical clashes and the give-and-take of exchange, is almost a fixation among Melanesians with the implications of their lives' events: weighing the pressures of obligation, and interpreting the twists and turns between the safe and the dangerous, the acceptable and the tabu. The basic 'logic of retribution', as I have called it, is what you assess you owe to others for their support and what others, *per contra*, deserve for their enmity. And it is not just the living that are involved in these ascertainments; the dead and the spirit order require your reciprocity as against the risk of their disapproval or the loss of their aid to you and your people's survival.⁷

This, on reflection, amounts to *primary politics*, as well as a complex fundamentally religious. In any case, as is hopefully a truism by now, the lessons of our nearest neighbours are most definitely those of political economy, an integral nexus of forces that some of us have had to struggle to get acknowledged as an object of study in this university's Faculty of Economics.⁸ And I have to admit that what steadily came over me in Melanesia—when I saw, among other sights irrepressible from memory, the despairing faces and protruding bellies of (deliberately) starved West Papuan (or Irian Jayan) refugees; when I noticed the banana leaf roofs of squatters' and settlers' houses hard up against the university and the glaring spaces between the floorboards of those families struggling to buy adequate building materials; when I worried over the thick mucous line caked up in the hot sun on the face of an isolated Down's Syndrome boy; when I had to avoid having my bottom licked by agile pigs lurking behind a stinking village toilet; when I contemplated the eerie turquoise blue of the tailings that seeped into the upper Jaba River from the Panguna copper mine on Bougainville; or learnt that one of my own senior and indigenous colleagues no longer felt safe about returning home because he had illegally logged his own people's land to pay off a large political debt—what came over me was that I could never be politically objective again.⁹ That is not to sanction the

free reign of subjectivity, in the guise, possibly, of prejudice and partisanship. No, the paradox was that a considered, indeed, why not say best primed and best informed apprehension of world affairs—of its glaring disparities, its impenetrable travails—impels you past political *science*—past distantiating and rationalisations about other people's, even other species', conditions, to the claims of justice. The very rocks and plants cry out for mercy that 'brutals' have already disdained to bestow on their fellow humans (as one discovers, ever so noticeably, in the 'Third World').

Another paradox confronted me, however, with an apparently contrary tug. For, while I felt forced to secure my 'Ethical Foundations', as an anchorage for trying to make clear judgements in the awful crevices of the world's political faultiness, I was supposed to be teaching this new discipline, Religious Studies, in which one was to strive for the most impartial, even-handed representation of the world's religions. In teaching any particular unit on religion and politics, of course, the involvement of religion in political machinations had to be addressed, and one was bound to ask the questions, whether this or that action was 'truly Buddhist' or 'really Christian', and whether religious visions were recurrently being used and bastardised for special interests. But 'purist' comparative religion looked to demand this difficult juggling act of supreme equanimity, letting the voices of each tradition clarify themselves through patience—and in a language showing my youthful unacquaintance with jargon at the time—by giving each of them a 'fair go'.¹⁰

So, now. At this time, what sorts of issues stand before us, and here in this space? Twenty years after my senior colleague, Eric Sharpe, foundation Professor in Religious Studies at Sydney, graciously directed me to give the first introductory course of lectures in our discipline in this university (1978), is the atmosphere truly more hospitable for taking up such challenging agendas? When pondering these last two decades of many researches in varied lands, and of work side by side here with these wonderful colleagues—

Eric Sharpe, top methodologist in the whole field;¹¹ the enterprising Arvind Sharma;¹² desert archaeologists Bill Jobling

and now Iain Gardner;¹³ the Yentl-like Rachael Kohn;¹⁴ littérateurs James Tulip and Jennifer Gribble;¹⁵ Adrian Snodgrass on the intricacies of Asian art and architecture;¹⁶ Tony Swain on indigenous Australia, body theory, and now Chinese traditions;¹⁷ Carole Cusack on Celts and Goths;¹⁸ Indologists Michael Comans and the Peters Masefield and Oldmeadow;¹⁹ Zoroastrian philosophers Khosro Khazai and Kaikhosro Irani;²⁰ Ruth Lewin on comparative monotheisms;²¹ psychologist Kathleen O'Connor and cognition-meditation theorist Edward Crangle;²² sociologists Hans Mol, Pieter Vrijhoff and also Michael Horsburgh;²³ philosophers Patrick Burke and Victoria Barker,²⁴ cosmologist Alex Klotz and process thinker Charles Birch;²⁵ esotericists John Cooper and Gregory Tillett;²⁶ and more besides, including guest lecturers from Divinity,²⁷ from other departments and faculties, and theological colleges; and with admirable administrative back-up, from Margaret Gilet to Valerie McMullan, and research assistantships, from Lucy Davey to Hazel Elliot²⁸

—one would have to be immensely thankful for the riches of scholarly collaboration, and, considering the minimum of dissension among us, for something of a success story.

I am sure that the august company above, however, would not want me to be complacent. Even while there are now more NSW Higher School Certificate candidates taking Religious Studies than there are choosing Modern History, a struggle over perceptions still drags on. Not a few undergraduates report back on a fairly common 'outside reaction' to their curriculum: 'Why are you studying such madness?' Certain academic irritations with Religious Studies die hard. Isn't religion really superstructural, or factorial, and better absorbed back into other disciplines where there is supposed to be so much less chance of bias or propaganda? or less likely interference in politics, even big business?

Not to forget, of course, *apropos* these reactions, that this is also that peculiar place, Sydney. Thus, from other quarters, one may occasionally find a slip of paper emanating from the Evangelical Union warning its members against taking our courses.²⁹ Shades of sectarian strife, perhaps, that kept the scholarly

study of religion on the margins of the secular academy for generations.³⁰ Shades, again, in Sydney's case of Archbishop Gough's outburst as recently as 1961 against the 'godlessness' of the Andersonians in the Sydney Arts Faculty;³¹ and I suppose it would have been no less a worrying memory for him that, in days gone by, Anderson's best sparring partner, from 'the religious side', had been that quasi-heretic Samuel Angus, whose immense knowledge of early Christianity in its Hellenistic setting makes him a rather worthy precursor to our outfit.³²

At this point, however, there are all sorts of less expected entanglements to confront the domain of intellectuals. Religion has actually become a very popular topic within the Western post-modernist vogue. A serious concern at this juncture, especially for people who have spent a lifetime in the study of religions, is that scholars of other disciplines—sometimes figures of considerable weight—can drop into the arena and come up with some remarkable generalisations: some sociobiological explanation as to why we have religion at all, for example, or the magical key to understand it lying in our common fall towards death.³³

With all this, admittedly, one still meets with some of the old tendencies; as Hegel put it,

we find that subjective fault-finding whereby a proud position is taken, to put religion in its place by overlooking the object, without entering into it [heaven forbid!], and without having comprehended its positive aspect.³⁴

(And doubtless some might justify such an approach as if it is akin to my own responses to the invidious 'world system', though adopting that ploy would in fact mean riding the slippery-slide of reason to avoid taking the subject seriously.) But by now there are hordes of new and glib generalisations, posited boldly to 'capture', and often dispense with, the whole curious phenomenon of religion. As if any generality could encapsulate the spiritual wellsprings of every known civilisation—the myths, cosmologies, macrohistories—along with the profound quests of revered individuals who held up sustaining visions for whole traditions and continuing collectivities, the phenomenology of a hundred-and-one theophanic

experiences, altered states, special cognitions, rituals, symbols, colour, music, paraphernalia, and so on and on! Fie on these arrogant stabs in the dark!

Specialists of religion have every right, under the circumstances of these novel capitalisations, to tell cautionary tales about the perils of reductionism, about the consequences of not doing one's homework. And these same specialists—I will call them all my colleagues—bear the awesome responsibility of carefully sifting through every putative solution, and not being swept off their feet themselves by attractive but narrowing representations. To adapt a phrase from Alfred de Vigny: beware 'the God of new ideas' and sophisticated faddism,³⁵ and watch for the biases 'desperate innovations' constantly secrete. Remember, above all, that the affluent West is now experiencing the ultra-democratisation of knowledge. Ever clever Sue and Sally, Dick and Harry can now display on the Internet whatever previously unpublishable 'claptrap' they choose to present about religion. More generally, we have hastened into the era of the Knowledge Economy in which data and the 'Hi-Tech' can easily replace wisdom, and even more quickly generate enticing wealth.³⁶

The Swiss historian of the last century Jacob Burckhardt, the consistent if disagreeing friend of the ailing 'founder post-modernist' Nietzsche, was the most astute foreteller of our dilemma. Intriguingly, he depicted an ongoing reciprocal relationship between religion, politics and culture. If one was out of kilter, the others would be in trouble. Surveying the Western tradition above all, he plotted what ensued, first, from the corruptions of politics in Antiquity, second, from religion's corruptions in the later Middle Ages, and third, from the destabilisation of *culture*, a set of effects still unfolding under 'mass democracy'.³⁷ His was a conservative mind, I concede, and that of a high-brow recluse, but it is obvious that he got one thing straight. The West has come to have a serious cultural crisis on its hands; and post-modernism, as the latest cultural-philosophic fashion, is only symptomatic of it. Cultural expression is over-heterogeneous and bears with it little cohesive force. Brilliant custodians of knowledge, in a process of constantly deferred judgements, have decided that they are not

certain of anything any more.³⁸

Meanwhile, outside the academy, and beyond the computer world of the 'symbolic analyst', is it any wonder, given the absence of a healthy cultural direction, that we see a march to the right in religious and political conservatism, a march to a compensatory 'certainty' of fundamentalisms or special anarchies?³⁹ Meanwhile, outside the West, was it not inevitable that our disadvantaged neighbours would look on the luxury of our directionlessness as the very reason to make religion more important in their social life?⁴⁰ Intimations of payback, of a special kind. And if, in the academy, we hold—through some unthought-out sense of concession—that everybody's view of life is basically 'distorted' anyway (as I read only last week in an anthropological text),⁴¹ then we are in danger of losing our way. Our own precious capacity to adjudge truth will be clouded. We will be drained of that sapiential—even apocalyptic—strength of purpose that we are ultimately responsible for each other, and responsible to 'Someone/ Something' deeper and more fundamental than any of us, as we flounder on in our little collective narcissistic trap called Australia.

But, what, to move towards the end, about the teaching of both religion and politics in the University? Politics and religion? This is surely the 'flavour of the month', and more. In a virtually post-Communist world, religious surges are everywhere, integral to the spawning of so many new ethnic nationalisms trying to throw off the shackles of artificial statism and unworkable imperialisms. Just contemplate Africa, with religion caught and struggling between (neo-)tribalism—that basic politics which is already religious in itself—and the inventions of the modern state.⁴² On and on we could go, with all the 'hot-points' from Northern Ireland, through the Middle East, Sri Lanka, on to Southeast Asia, and to a certain spillage affecting us. Why, how obvious it is that the study of politics and religion in tandem is crucial, and will become even more vital as days go by, for an understanding of the real world.

Yet, how far the Australian academy seems to be behind in handling these realities. I can assure you, teaching religion and politics together is a rather lonely business. If I had not had the support of Professor Michael Hogan, for a start, who began by

tackling the Australian materials for us and then co-taught with me about the global scene,⁴³ I probably would have languished long ago; and there have been others in Government, CEPACS, Asian Studies, RIAP, etc. giving me extra bits of confidence over the years. For, to clarify, there are plenty of people ready to teach politics; but ask them for anything detailed and in depth on religion: no; they're not trained for it, don't want to touch it, and so on. There are now lots of scholars in Religious Studies: ask them to enter into the murky world of politics: no; it would be a whole new 'ball game' and one preferably not played.

Our curriculum specialisations, one can quickly perceive, have not really helped the situation, any more than the 'lag factor' that has made Religious Studies a latecomer to Australian university education. We are intellectually, and to a large extent in our public life, a secular backwater of the Antipodes, only beginning to be touched by the highly fascinating, complex, real world around us, in which politics and religion are veritably mixed. Most of us are enjoying rampant individualism, not appreciating the powerful assumptive forces present and necessary for holding traditionalist and often less stable societies together.

Surprise, surprise! Suddenly, this year, the President of our nearest big neighbour turns out to be the Head of the largest Islamic organisation on earth—the Nahdatal Ulama. So there stands 'Gus Dur', otherwise Abdurrahman Wahid, ready to live out his new and hectic rôle against the doctor's orders. And as a very gentle, wise Muslim, conscious of the need to honour pluralism in a multi-religious society, he has to be as sensitive to the nuances of religious discourses as to political partisanship. Actually, I do not think the Federal Government is half ready for him: I suspect, especially due to the skilful negotiations of our successful Japanese doctoral student Hisanori Kato, that our School and other parts of the university have a closer affinity to his mentalité, and he is interested in our doings.⁴⁴

I am reminded here of the time in Port Moresby when I asked Bill Hayden, then Deputy Prime Minister, why he 'didn't spend some time talking to religious, as against political, leaders', during his time in Papua New Guinea; and he all too quickly retorted,

‘Well, so long as they’re not a pack of fundamentalists!’ I relate this tidbit, not just because one should be appalled that any human being, let alone a politician, should preclude communication with people of a different ‘mind-set’, but mainly because, in fact, and as I have argued before, such religious leaders in Melanesian nations are equally as important as Bishop Belo and his associates have been in East Timor, in bringing cohesion and common value orientation to ethnically fragmented situations.⁴⁵

Overall, how important the dialogical rôle is going to be; how increasingly urgent it will become to engage with traditions great and small that are somehow being held together in a world with those terrifying disparities in political economy, and with such rapid ‘Hi-Tech’ change. The world is bleeding to death through misunderstanding, and with transferences of confusion to us, to Sydney—surely by now the most multi-cultural (and therefore multi-religious) city on the planet—there is a clear priority to equip ourselves with a solid grasp of religio-political issues, and participate in the conciliations, and reconciliations, of Dialogue.⁴⁶

It is interesting. Many years ago Professor Sharpe came out with it: there is an underlying value, a presumptive judgement underpinning the facilitation of dialogue, and also in the bracketing of your preconceptions to practice ‘the phenomenology of religions’ and give them a ‘fair go’. This value—why was it overlooked when so obvious?—is ‘charity;’ or, to be less old-fashioned, the attempt at ‘unconquerable goodwill’.⁴⁷ Yes, in the end, I would maintain—why not say the End of Time?—such goodwill, love in the deepest sense, including a prophetic candour and a radicalised Eros, *is* the Last Judgement; for in the light of it we can forever see more clearly our own venalities, hypocrisies, deliberate misunderstandings, exploitativeness, and imperialisms.⁴⁸

In this you will see how I allow for critical theology, the insights of which partly live outside the academic (often ‘scientismic’) system, to enter into one’s work like a bolt of lightning, to jolt one out of the anæsthesia of just doing the work, or of fulfilling a nice, interesting task. We fast approach the Second Millennium: as university people, as the intelligent public, it behoves us to ask ourselves again, however embarrassing and

unnerving the question is, 'Really, what are we doing here—in this surprising cosmos?'. Hopefully our answer will have something to do with the claims on us of our own yearnings for humaneness, or our positive willingness towards justice and goodwill.

I will conclude, since next Saturday we will have to cast our votes Yes or No over a Republic and a constitutional Preamble, by reading a suggested preamble—Submission No. 602 to the Referendum Task Force—that has been overlooked by the Prime Minister and by almost all the media.⁴⁹ It reflects what preambles should do: face our present realities and give us vision, with the religio-spiritual and the politico-juridical knit together.

Since the inalienable rights of each individual person are not guaranteed either by Nature or by ungoverned will, We, the people of this Land called Australia, rely on God or the highest conceivable principles of Justice to ensure these rights under the following Constitution.

The Australian Constitution acknowledges the prior occupancy of this Land by indigenous inhabitants, whose Ancestors have lived and managed their communities in its landscapes from Time Immemorial. Together with its first peoples, the modern nation known as Australia came into being through colonial settlements that federated in good will and have in turn regulated the immigration of many peoples from across the seas. Lamenting past ills and labouring against their effects, we uphold in Australia both great achievements and a spirit of community unparalleled in modern times, and embody our ideals for the common good in these fundamental laws.

Have a great Millennium.

Notes

- 1 The University of Manchester offered the longest standing model of relevance, under the guidance of S. G. F. Brandon. See E. J. Sharpe, 'S. G. F. Brandon (1907–1971)', *History of Religions* 12 (1972): 71ff. Sharpe (see *infra*) inherited most of Brandon's teaching rôle, while the author of this lecture was for a short time under the Oxford tutorship of Brandon's close associate, E. O. James.
- 2 'Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie, Einleitung', *Deutsche-*

- Französische Jahrbücher*, 1844, in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Berlin, 1957, vol.1, p.378.
- 3 Graeme Duncan, *Marx and Mill: Two Views of Social Conflict and Social Harmony*, Cambridge, 1973. Kamenka's two works were published from London, in 1962 and 1970 respectively.
 - 4 For later published results of my doctoral researches on Western materials, see G. W. Trompf, *The Idea of Historical Recurrence in Western Thought*, vol.1: *From Antiquity to the Reformation*, Berkeley, 1979, pp.92–106, 155–74, 231–42, 283–90; *Early Christian Historiography: Narratives of Retributive Justice* (Cassell Religious Studies), London, 2000.
 - 5 Foreshadowing the second volume of Trompf, *Historical Recurrence*, subtitled *From the Later Renaissance to the Second Millennium*, Berkeley, chs.3–4, and also a related article entitled 'From the Distillation of the Gospel to Classic Liberalism', for *The Journal of the History of Ideas*. Hegel is a special case for later changing his orientation; see R. Gascoigne, *Religion. Rationality and Community: Sacred and Secular in the Thought of Hegel and his Critics* (Archives internationales d'histoire des idées 105), ch.1.
 - 6 Trompf, 'Melanesian Religions', in R. E. Asher, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, Oxford, 1994, vol.5, p.2442.
 - 7 See Trompf, *Melanesian Religion*, Cambridge, 1991, ch.3 (developed from a 1974 article), and see n.45 for the fully developed position.
 - 8 I touch here on those days of solidarity with students demonstrating outside Vice-Chancellor John Manning Ward's office to secure first and second year undergraduate offerings in Political Economy (as against just separate courses in Economics and Government).
 - 9 For background to each of these images, A. Smith, Trompf, and K. Clements, *Flight From Limbo: Refugees in Papua New Guinea*, Canberra, 1985; Trompf, 'The Ethics of Development: An Overview', in *The Ethics of Development: The Pacific in the 21st Century*, eds. S. Stratigos, et al. (Waigani Seminar 17, vol.1), Port Moresby, 1987, pp.102ff.; *Urban Warrior*, Suva (forthcoming).
 - 10 To be sure, my doctoral researches taught me that the equivalent of this balancing act in Political Studies is comparative constitutional theory (but one would have to wonder about that, if the putatively 'high-level' debate leading up to the 1999 Referendum choice between 'Monarchy and 'Republic' is anything to go by).
 - 11 See esp. his *Comparative Religion: A History*, London, 1986 edn. Professor Sharpe held the Chair of Religious Studies from 1977 to 1996. During his time the Department of Religious Studies became the School of Studies in Religion (1991), and he had been Head of the Department of Religious Studies, 1978–81, 1983–85.

- 12 Sharma became Professor of Religious Studies at McGill University, Toronto, Canada. He is best known for editing the volume *Our Religions*, San Francisco, 1995, and for founding the journal *Religious Traditions*, published jointly by Sydney and McGill.
- 13 The late Dr William Jobling was at various points Acting Head of Department in the 1980s; Dr Gardner is current Head of School (since 1998). See Jobling, e.g., *Nabataean-Aramaic: A Provisional Lexicon*, Kensington, Maryland, 1995; Gardner, e.g., is editing the *Kellis Literary Texts* (Dakhleh Oasis Project Monographs), Oxford, 1996–99, vols 1–2 thus far appearing.
- 14 Dr Kohn is now an executive producer in the Religion Department of the Australian Broadcasting Commission. See her ‘Cults and the New Age in Australia’, in *Many Religions All Australian*, ed. G. Bouma, Sydney, 1991, pp.149–62.
- 15 Associate Professor James Tulip was Head of School, 1991–96; and Associate Professor Jennifer Gribble took that position for an interim period during 1997. See esp. Tulip and M. Griffiths, eds, *Religion, Literature and the Arts: Conference Proceedings*, Sydney, 1995–96, 2 vols; Gribble, ed. and introd., *George Eliot’s Scenes From Clerical Life*, Harmondsworth, 1998.
- 16 Dr Snodgrass became Dean of Architecture. See esp. his *The Symbolism of the Stupa* (Studies in Southeast Asia), Ithaca, 1985; *The Matrix and Diamond World Mandalas in Shingon Buddhism*, New Delhi, 1988.
- 17 Dr Swain is currently Senior Lecturer in the School. See esp. *A Place For Strangers: Towards a History of Australian Aboriginal Being*, Cambridge, 1993; *Chinese Religions* (Studies in World Religions 2), New Delhi (forthcoming).
- 18 Dr Cusack is currently Lecturer in Religious Studies. See esp. *The Conversion of the German Peoples* (Cassell Studies in Religion), London, 1998.
- 19 Comans: see esp. trans. and comment. to Vasudevsastri Abhyankar’s *Advaitamoda*, New Delhi, 1988; Masefield: see esp. *Divine Revelation in Pali Buddhism*, Colombo, 1986; Oldmeadow, with C. Cusack, eds, *This Immense Panorama: Studies in Honour of Eric J. Sharpe* (Sydney Studies in Religion 2), Sydney, 1999. Dr Oldmeadow is currently joint Lecturer in Asian and Religious Studies.
- 20 Khazai, *Les Voyageurs d’Arta* (Collection: les sources de savoir), Brussels, 1993; Irani, *Understanding the Gathas*, Womelsdorf, Pa., 1994. Emeritus Professor Irani is recurrent Visiting Professor to the School (from the City University of New York).
- 21 See esp. ‘Cooking up for a Storm: Some Preliminary Remarks concerning Zoroastrian and Jewish Domesticity’, in *Mehregan in Sydney: Proceedings of the Seminar in Persian Studies*, eds. Trompff

- and R. Honari (Sydney Studies in Religion 1), Sydney, 1998, pp.47–52..
- 22 O'Connor: see esp. 'Reconsidering the Psychology of Religion', in *Hermeneutical Approaches in Psychology of Religion*, ed. J. A. Belzen (International Series in the Psychology of Religion), Amsterdam, 1997, pp.85–108; Crangle: see esp. *The Origin and Development of Early Indian Contemplative Practices* (Studies in Oriental Religions 19), Wiesbaden, 1994. Dr Crangle is currently Lecturer in the School.
 - 23 Mol: see esp. *Identity and the Sacred: A Sketch for a New Social-Scientific Theory of Religion*, Oxford, 1976; Vrijihoff: see esp., with J. Waardenburg, eds, *Official and Popular Religion* (Religion and Society 19), The Hague, 1979; Horsburgh: see esp. 'Towards an Inclusive Spirituality', *Disability and Rehabilitation* 19/10 (Spec. Issue, ed. D. A. Selway, 1997): 398–406. Associate Professor Michael Horsburgh was Head of School, 1997–98. Associate Professor William Newell should be mentioned in passing as often engaged in comparative studies in religion in the Anthropology Department.
 - 24 Burke: see esp. *The Fragile Universe: An Essay in the Philosophy of Religions* (Library of Philosophy and Religion), London, 1979; Barker: see esp. 'Derrida's God', in Tulip and Griffiths, eds, 1996, pp.153–60. Dr Barker is currently Lecturer in the School.
 - 25 Klotz: see esp. *What is Truth?* (forthcoming); Birch: see esp. *On Purpose*, Sydney, 1990.
 - 26 Cooper: see esp. coeditorship, *Gnostica* (monograph series), until his death in 1998; Tillett: see esp. *The Elder Brother: A Biography of Charles Webster Leadbeater*, London, 1982.
 - 27 Note esp. Philip Esler, former casual Lecturer in New Testament, now Professor of New Testament (and Dean), University of St Andrews, Scotland; and Barbara Thiering, part-time Lecturer in Divinity, esp. her earlier and least controversial work, *Redating the Teacher of Righteousness* (Australian and New Zealand Studies in Theology and Religion 1), Sydney, 1979.
 - 28 See Davey, trans. of *Pháp-Chánh-Trupèn: The Religious Constitution of Caodaism*, Sydney, 1992 (from the French version); Elliot, 'Religion, Spirituality and Dementia', *Disability and Rehabilitation* 19/10 (Spec. Issue, ed. D. A. Selway, 1997): 435–41. The School of Studies in Religion is also deeply thankful for endowments, esp. the Macartney Hill and Scottow bequests, but including (earlier) the Robert A. Pretty Fund (instituted by Mrs Verlie Stevenson and Rev. Dr Gordon Dicker), and the Zoroastrian Gift bequest (serviced by Mrs Mehravara Marzbani).
 - 29 'Religious Studies at the University' (small anon. pamphlet), Evangelical Union, Sydney, 1992.
 - 30 For longterm background, see N. Turner, *The Sinews of Sectarian*

- Warfare*, Canberra, 1972. Cf. also E. Osborn, *Religious Studies in Australia since 1958*, Sydney, 1978 (on developments in the two decades before Religious Studies was established at Sydney, but a somewhat lopsided account for stressing Divinity-connected scholarship and neglecting Indologists, Sinologists, Anthropologists of Religion, etc.). Cf. G. Mullins, 'Religious Studies in Australia', *Millah wa' Millah* (spec. issue), Manchester, 1959).
- 31 Admittedly, positive outcomes soon issued from the controversy he initiated; see D. W. Dockrill, 'Archbishop Gough and the Sydney Philosophers: Religion, Religious Studies, and the University', in C. Cusack and P. Oldmeadow, eds, *This Immense Panorama*, pp.10ff.
 - 32 See esp. his *The Mystery Religions and Christianity*, London, 1924, and *The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World*, London, 1928.
 - 33 I allude to such socio-biologists as Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, Oxford, 1976, esp. pp.205–13, and Jaynes, *The Origin of Consciousness and the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*, Boston, 1982; and such philosophers as J. Derrida and G. Vattimo, eds, *Religion*, Cambridge, 1998, and Martin Heidegger before them, *Sein und Zeit* (Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung 8), Halle, 1927. For other curious developments, see Trompf, *In Search of Origins* (Studies in World Religions 1), London, 1990, esp. ch.6.
 - 34 G. W. H. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* (in *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. H. Glockner, Stuttgart, 1971, vol.1), p.67. My trans., with square bracketed addition.
 - 35 See P.-G. Castex, *Vigny: l'homme et l'œuvre* (Connaissances des lettres 34), Paris, 1952, p.147.
 - 36 K. Suter, 'The Knowledge Economy', *The ABN Report* 7.1 (1999): 14–19. As this lecture was being given, Frederick Tobin, so-called Director of the Adelaide Institute, was arrested in Germany for creating an anti-Semitic 'hate site' on the Internet (maintaining *inter alia* that the holocaust never happened).
 - 37 On his friendship with Nietzsche, cf. esp. A. Herman, *The Idea of Decline in Western History*, New York, 1997, pp 87–90, 94–97, 106–08.
 - 38 See Trompf, 'Postmodernism as Decadence', in A. Erjavec, ed., *XIVth International Congress of Aesthetics* (Filozofski Vestnik, 1999 Suppl., pt.2: Proceedings), Ljubljana, 1999, pp.75–84. Cf. J.-F. Lyotard, *La condition post-moderne: rapport sur le savoir*, Paris, 1979, introd.
 - 39 See E. Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*, London, 1992, esp. pp.2ff., 80ff. Do not be surprised if some activities arise among Australian intellectuals akin to the white-oriented neo-paganic Austrian Telyn Society, which included Viktor Adler, unexpected inspirer of Hitler. Cf., for background, W. J. McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Populist*

- Politics in Austria*, New Haven, 1974.
- 40 Cf. M. Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*, Berkeley, 1993.
- 41 A. Lattas, *Cultures of Secrecy: Reinventing Race in Bush Kaliai Cargo Cults*, Madison, 1998, p.301 (awaiting my review in *The Journal of Religion*). For an earlier comparable relativism, see W. La Barre, *The Human Animal*, Evanston, 1955, pp.236ff.
- 42 For preliminary orientation on the above issues, A. Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Wiles Lectures 1996), Cambridge, 1997, chs. 5–6.
- 43 See Hogan's *The Sectarian Strand: Religion in Australian History*, Harmondsworth.
- 44 H. Kato, 'Islamic Conversations', *Inside Indonesia* 57 (Jan.-March, 1999): 22–23. Cf. his 'Religion and its Function in Society: Islam and the Creation of a Democratic Society in Indonesia' (doctoral dissertation, University of Sydney), Sydney, 1999.
- 45 See Trompf, *Payback: The Logic of Retribution in Melanesian Religions*, Cambridge, 1994, pp.457-60.
- 46 For background orientation on the challenges of misunderstanding, see H. Kraemer, *World Cultures and World Religions*, London, 1960.
- 47 A phrase from ethicist Joseph Fletcher. Cf. my first philosophical article, 'The Conscience in Situation Ethics', in T. P. Grundy, ed., *Conscience in the '70s*, Canberra, 1972, pp.15–31.
- 48 See Trompf, 'Does God Requite in History? Comments on a Theme in World Christianity', *Studies in World Christianity* 4.1 (1998): 65–83.
- 49 How and why Prime Minister John Howard called for and then avoided a whole range of proposed preambles should be the subject of an investigation (if only because of the prospective wastage of tax-payers' money in offering them a vote over one formula, and in my view an inadequate effort at that).
- 50 Among other things, the Preamble of a great and emergent nation such as ours should allude to the principles of other constitutional prefaces (but as a corrective, hence the approach to Nature and the human condition at the onset); it should honour the firstness of Aboriginal habitation throughout this Continent without using tendentious language yet with clear signals of apology; it should admit Australia is the product of colonial societies; it should avoid explicit reference to war (the Howard-Murray proposal sounds like Algernon Sidney on that point); and it should accentuate realistic positivities for the collective hope. See also, for broader orientation, D. Johnston and C. Sampson, eds, *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, Oxford, 1994.