

One Big Mouth, Two Left Feet.

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Opening my big mouth often enough ends with my putting one or more of my left feet right into it, and this morning on RRR, Germaine Greer made clear in her interview with Tony Biggs (now archived online [here](#)) just how misguided I had been in my criticisms of her post-mortem dissection of Steve Irwin. In that piece ("The Many Voices of the Higher Man") I had claimed that, despite all his his buffoonery, Steve Irwin's memory was still to be praised for his practical efforts toward saving Queensland rain-forest from the bulldozer, and more importantly, for his conceptual efforts toward having us re-evaluate our attitudes to the predator's place in nature.

I still stand by these claims, while also recognizing that the uses and abuses of predator-imagery need to be carefully distinguished (something that Germaine Greer's new book *On Rage* might help me to do once I've read it). But I crossed the line when I had a go at turning the tables on G.G., and asking what exactly *she* was doing to address the ecological crisis currently under way? My premature answer (i.e. "nothing") was just plain wrong. I in my ignorance was simply unaware of her efforts and her passionate concern on this front. Although stepping back into the crowd is always a coward's move, I'll do it here anyway, for the fact is that in this instance I was simply being one of the herd, whose opinions are engineered by the commercial mainstream media. I didn't even know that G.G. made annual visits to Australia, nor about the conservation property she owns in Queensland. The question naturally then becomes: why are these things not reported? Why was Steve Irwin constantly promoted, while Germaine Greer goes typically ignored? It's not hard to figure out, is it? As she herself puts it on page ten of *The Whole Woman*:

The media, which make news as well as carrying it, are the real sources of power in our pseudo-democracies. The most cursory examination of even the most progressive organs of information reveals a curious inability to recognize women as news-makers, unless they are young, or married to a head of state or naked or pregnant by some triumph of technology or perpetrators or victims of some hideous crime or any combination of the above.

This serves to underline how active and critical we now have to be in seeking out and sorting out information, and in taking responsibility for what we do and do not know. The passive consumer is the witless dupe whose mind is exploited for its opinion-power, no less than their pocket is exploited for its spending-power, or their body exploited for its labor-power.

I would thank God for Triple R if only He existed.¹ But He does not, and only fools worship lies engineered to exploit them by means of foisting a deluded conception of reality upon them. The delusion that all thought is somehow connected to, and accessible from, a central command-post fully transparent to itself (a "God") needs only to be made explicit for its obvious stupidity to become apparent. But the side-effects of this way of thinking about reality can remain in place even after the central delusion has been recognized and overcome. One such side-effect is the hierarchical way of thinking upon which most of our media of communication are built. The thought that there is a single center entails that there are a small number of privileged and powerful individuals closest to that center,

¹ Actually, I also think that atheists are just as misguided as theists, and conceptually dependent on their enemies in just the same way that so-called Satanists are conceptually dependent on Fundamentalist Christians. Materialists say there is nothing but matter, forgetting that they have no more idea what matter actually is, than theists have any real idea what divinity actually is.

surround by a second larger rank of people who in turn mediate the flow of diluting power concentrations down through the ranks which terminate in the masses of mere viewers, passive consumers whose only power is the power to consume, and who are themselves never represented. When was the last time you saw someone *watching* TV on a TV show?

This political structure was first worked out by priests, hence its name, *heiratos* being the word for priest in Ancient Greek, a word which the Greeks themselves got from the Ancient Egyptians. This way of thinking about reality (and hence organizing society) is very ancient, and thus very difficult to overcome. And it is not at all necessarily tied to religion. Not only the Catholic Church, but also the corporate world is built around this way of thinking. Catholics feel that the Pope is closest to God and his arch-bishops closest to him and their sub-bishops closest to them and so on down to the parishioners, who think of themselves as kneeling before God, but are in actual fact kneeling before priests. The television viewer feels Rupert Murdoch and Kerry Packer are in some metaphysical sense closer to the center of power in the world, and their managers closest to them, and the producers closest to the managers and so on down to the viewer whose reality is mediated by these layers of hierarchy who supply the interpretations required to make sense of their lives and tell them the facts they need to know. The confusion is the belief that this way of organizing society accurately reflects the nature of reality. But it does not: it in fact enforces a very unnatural way of thinking and acting upon us. The fact is that Rupert Murdoch and Kerry Packer are not closer to reality in any sense than you or me.

Now compare the significant absence of representations of viewers on TV with triple R, where listeners are continually referred to and involved in all sorts of ways, and announcers often speak from the listener-perspective. This isn't just about a warm fuzzy feeling of being included (not that there's anything wrong with that), but it is actually a political issue, in that listening to RRR is the only time I have the experience of being represented, of feeling that the people speaking represent my way of thinking and feeling. I certainly do not get that experience listening to parliament, or watching commercial TV. There, I am simply unrepresented and do not register on the radar, and am thus alienated. If it wasn't for places like RRR, there would be no sense in which I felt I was living in a democracy at all, that I was represented. For the champions who run RRR are not trapped by the hierarchical way of thinking. The autonomous collective of on-air presenters and off-air organizers do not have an agenda of exploitation to push, and thus have nothing to hide from themselves, and so no need of the mystification that surrounds power in the corporate world. For this reason information flows freely and critically without central control and hierarchical regulation, and the difference between consumer and producer blurs into insignificance. The collective cultural achievement of this network is not quantifiable, but those not blinded by the ludicrous conviction that that which cannot be measured does not exist are able clearly to see that RRR (and all of Melbourne's other community broadcasters) make a qualitative difference to Melbourne which amounts to its being nothing short of, as Bigsy puts it, "rock capital of the woorld."

And the other left foot in my mouth? In the heat of enthusiasm over his apology to Australians from the half a dozen generations of migrants to Australia for our myriad forms of disrespect to them and their culture over the past 200 years, I called Kevin Rudd "otherwise excellent" - excepting only his residual cultural arrogance in assuming that "the problem" is for so-called "aboriginals" to quote "catch up" with quote "white Australians." My spirit of generosity towards Rudd, as engineered as had been my anger towards Greer, is now well and truly dead, as is also the anger. The totalitarian tendencies of this sinophilic Christian are now becoming painfully clear. I have been told by him that "all Australians" love sport and respect the Olympic medal winners, for example. I love physical exercise, but I hate sport with a passion, and from my perspective the Olympic athletes are far greater parasites than any dole-bludger could ever be. These puppets are used to distract attention from what

the economic elite are doing to this planet on a daily basis, and are constantly praised for doing so. Every hour wasted on footage from Beijing's propaganda exercise is an hour NOT devoted to footage of today's million hectares of rainforest destroyed, or footage of today's military invasion of a small and weak country by one of the world's many military superpowers, or footage of the very last member of a species of some rare mammal dying. And people come away from an evening's TV viewing feeling that they know "what's going on." That's what's wrong with sport.

To those who might say that this anti-sport stance makes me un-Australian, I would refer them to Henry Lawson, who most I think would agree was fairly Australian. What Lawson reckoned was wrong with the average Australian youth was this: "The average Australian youth is a weedy individual with a weak, dirty and contemptible vocabulary, and a cramped mind devoted to sport; his god is a two-legged brute with unnaturally developed muscles and no brains." ("Our Countrymen" *Worker* 1893 - as reprinted on p.308 of Cronin ed. *A Camp-Fire Yarn: Henry Lawson Complete Works 1885-1900*). These youths grew up and took charge, mistaking their games for culture. But the actual culture, the culture to which Lawson gave voice, continued unabated despite being increasingly ignored, until today, the disoriented offspring of those cultural philistines sing "Waltzing Matilda" with no idea what a matilda is, nor what it means to be homeless, nor that, even in Patterson's watered-down version of Lawson's voice, they are singing a radical challenge to capitalist values. But sing it they, do and alive we are: Lawson's heirs, who remain a voice from the colony denouncing the monarchy, the church and the state with equal vehemence, nauseated by the games that fools (religious and sporting) play, but restored at once to faith in the Earth and in Earthlings by the immediacy of this land and the indestructible wealth of our literary inheritance.

Likewise Rudd's childish enthusiasm for "World Youth Day" (read World Immaturity Day). "All Australians" he said were happy and supportive of this idiotic event. Millions of tax dollars we were told were well spent on these simpering morons and their ludicrous worship of a pie in the sky. Rudd's fundamental conviction is that he is in touch with the absolute, and to paraphrase Bill Burrows: "If you're doing business with a religious person, get it in writing - his word ain't worth anything, not with the good lord telling him how to cheat you on the deal." In other words, beware of those who mistake the projections of their own mind as messages from an absolute authority, for they are so sure that they are right that they are unable to remain critical of themselves; or, in Nietzsche's words, "we are, from the bottom up and across the ages, *used to lying*" (BGE §192) - and the religious are so used to lying to themselves and falsifying their own experience that they are incapable of real faith - not faith in sky-pies, but faith in the Earth and in each other. Rudd's faith is not in the Earth, but in the sky and in the cloudy foundations behind which he hides from himself and from others the real source of his actual power. As Frank Zappa said (somewhere in *The Real Frank Zappa Book*), politics is the entertainment branch of industry. That would make Rudd chief apologist for the forces dredging the bay, building the de-sal plant and the pulp mill in Tasmania, draining the Murray-Darling and bulldozing forests from Apollo Bay to Port Douglas. He and acting-premier Brumby dance to one and the same military brass-band, uncritical in their absolute and simplistic adherence to the value of growth for its own sake, and confused to the point of incomprehension about their own actual power if not to solve the world's problems, then at least show a curious world how it can be done on a small scale. For although Chinese culture is awesome in its antiquity and marvelous in its productivity, the only thing the world has to learn from China in the ecological department is what *not* to do (likewise regarding work conditions and the dangers of de-regulated industry and privatized government). Massive and reckless deforestation, an extinction rate rivaled only by Australia, pollution problems on a scale dwarfing others elsewhere on the globe, and the re-normalization of rampant exploitation of your fellow man for your own benefit - all these stand testament to the ruthless disregard for the fragility of the planet common to both Communist and Capitalist regimes.

