

discussion, they receive subtle and thoughtful treatment. Bell's home territory, however, is the world of state power, and it is this that always retains primary causal significance. My point here is not the extreme one of 'the state is dead in the face of globalisation or transnationalism'. Rather, my concern is the analytical one of whether we should grant these forces independent salience and how we should judge their transformative potential. Here we see the down side of Bell's style of analysis. There are now substantial literatures on the constitutive power of social norms, on the strengths and weaknesses of institutions, and on the many faces of globalisation. Yet Bell barely gives these literatures a sideways glance, which leaves her unable to say something of a deeper nature about the relationship between these forces and global power.

Finally, Bell's work bears the mark of a core realist anxiety. Namely, that realists purport to identify the true underlying dynamics driving international politics, yet they are constantly confronted by policy-makers who act in ways contrary to these dynamics. For Bell, this anxiety permeates her discussions of the Bush Administration. I remember a conversation with her when the Bush team came to office, when she noted the extraordinary, and undeniable, foreign policy experience of the group. It is clear from the book, though, that the team has failed the diplomatic test, that they have failed to understand the importance of legitimacy in undergirding American power. For many of us, ideologically driven irrationality is the root of this failure. Bell is reluctant to reach such conclusions though, occupying instead a more ambivalent stance toward the current administration. This seems, in part, to be because of her own past assessment of Rumsfeld, Cheney, Rice and others as sober, policy-hardened realists, but it also derives, I think, from a general realist reluctance to call ideology by its name and to acknowledge the central place

of irrationality in international relations.

These quibbles aside, Bell's *A World Out of Balance* is a fine contribution to contemporary debates about unipolarity and world politics. It is also a tribute to her long career as one of Australia's most important and much loved analysts of world affairs. She has been a voice in almost all of the key debates animating Australian international relations scholars for decades, and I will not be the only one who learns much from this most recent intervention.

**Reviewed by
Professor Chris Reus-Smit**

*The Power of Speech:
Australian Prime Ministers
Defining the National Image*
By James Curran
Melbourne University Press,
2004, 304pp, \$35,
ISBN 0522850987

This excellent book illustrates two major features of political life that tend to be forgotten in an age of generalisations and ideological conflict. The first is the importance of particularity; that individuals are moulded by particular circumstances and cannot be accounted for by reference to general *Zeitgeists*. The second is that things are not always as they seem and one should beware of using individuals, even highly significant individuals such as Prime Ministers, as emblematic of their age.

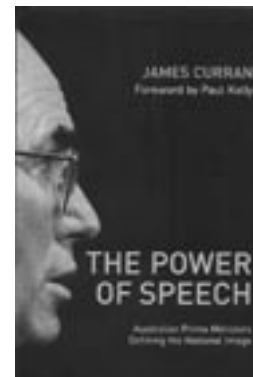
This book seeks to explore the development of Australian nationalism over the past 50 years through the words of Australian Prime Ministers, with a particular emphasis on Whitlam and his successors. In a sense the title is misleading; it does

not really engage in a close analysis of the rhetoric and language of these men. Rather, it explores their ideas through an exploration of their lives, upbringing, influences, careers and public statements.

The theme of the book is that every Prime Minister since the 1960s has had to deal with the fact that the old Australian identity of what Keith Hancock once called 'independent British Australians' has largely faded away but that it has not been a simple case of replacing it with an 'Australian identity'. The response of individual Prime Ministers has largely depended on their particular upbringing and experiences. These have been various, illustrating that any idea of an Australian 'national culture' must be understood in a relatively loose way.

Gough Whitlam was the product of a classical education, a father who was an internationalist and advocate of human rights and the tradition of British parliamentary government. His 'new nationalism' was not that of Don's Party but of a man who, in the tradition of Evatt, was really a liberal internationalist. Only in retrospect, seen through the eyes of nationalist and radical authors and historians, does Whitlam become confused with Barry McKenzie.

Malcolm Fraser equally emerges as a much more complex figure in Curran's hands; no mention of Ayn Rand but rather of Gilbert Ryle, post-war Oxford and Arnold Toynbee's *A Study of History*. Curran emphasises that Fraser 'maintained a deep suspicion of nationalism' and was animated by a genuine fear of communism and a desire that individuals be left alone to make their own way in the world. Likewise Bob Hawke experienced the world of Oxford in the 1950s but his primary influence, according to Curran, was



his Congregationalist upbringing and the emphasis that this placed on the need for consensus. It was somewhat uplifting to read one of Hawke's university professors refer to the 'maturity' of his character and it is clear that Hawke, like Whitlam and Fraser before him, was driven by deep moral concerns.

Only with Paul Keating do we reach what might be described as a 'vulgar nationalism'. Hawke, Whitlam and Fraser were all highly educated men; Keating received his view of the world from Jack Lang, who had been dismissed from office in New South Wales during the Depression and who was a good hater. This was later reinforced by Melbourne left-wing historian Don Watson, who introduced him to the slogans, if not the substance, of the work of Manning Clark. Unlike his predecessors Keating spent little time attempting to reconcile the new emerging Australia with the established British traditions that underpin much of its political and legal structures. He preferred an aggressive anti-British Australian nationalism. But even here all is not as it seems; despite his Irish roots, Keating, in shades of Jim Hacker, was a great admirer of Churchill and prone to striking Churchillian poses.

Perhaps Churchill is what links Keating to John Winston Howard. Howard has again attempted to reconcile a form of Australian nationalism with Australia's British heritage. He is an unashamed nationalist who wants to take the country beyond the 'problem' of Australian identity. He has his own version of Australian nationalism that is linked to his father's and grandfather's involvement in World War 1 and seeks to defend what he sees as traditional Australia.

All of these Australian prime ministers have had different versions of Australian nationalism and with the exception of Keating they have not espoused an aggressive and

belligerent form of that nationalism. Perhaps this has been because that form of nationalism in Australia has largely been the domain of extremist intellectuals, both of the Left and of the Right. Prime Ministers live in the real world where they have both the world outside Australia, as well as that inside it, with which to deal.

Curran also argues that these men were products of a time, and an intellectual culture, that was suspicious of nationalism in the wake of its excesses in World War II. It is interesting that all were born before 1945 and had finished their formal education prior to 1960. Whatever we might think of them individually it is clear that they have all been motivated by powerful moral drives, that they have been and remain 'true believers' in their individual creeds.

Australia has yet to experience a Prime Minister who is baby boomer. It is yet to experience a Prime Minister who is the product of the 'progressive' education system that was ushered in by the 'swinging' 1960s. In that sense Curran's study tells us a lot about the values held by a generation of political leaders whose time is almost at an end. What we now need to know about now are the values and understandings of a new generation of leaders who were born into, and educated in, a rather different, and less morally solid, world.

Reviewed by Gregory Melleuish

*Skepticism and Freedom:
A Modern Case for
Classical Liberalism*

By Richard A. Epstein

University of Chicago Press,
2003, 320pp, US\$39,
ISBN 022 621 3048

Human ignorance has played a prominent role in modern arguments against extensive government. As F. A. Hayek writes in a classic passage from *The Constitution of Liberty*, 'it is because every individual knows so little and, in particular, because we rarely know which of us knows best that we trust the independent and competitive efforts of many to induce the emergence of what we shall want when we see it' (CL, p. 29). However, some authors have argued that this same ignorance means

we are unable to claim objective moral priority for any particular conception of legal order. In *Skepticism and Freedom*, Richard A. Epstein explores these contrasting appeals to skepticism in debates about law and government.

Epstein seeks to defend the moral priority of the classical liberal view of the state through an appeal to human intuitions about ethical behaviour. He situates his work within the 'natural rights' tradition of classical liberalism, while rejecting crude characterisations of this approach as a form of 'social Darwinism' (p. 76). In Epstein's view, it is because humans share basic ideas about right and wrong conduct that we should trust 'repeated, ordinary interactions between individuals' to give rise to moral wisdom (p. 86). It follows that we should scrutinise government attempts to override the moral preferences of individual

