

greatly influenced the post-Soekarno reforms. It is now fortunate that he has been persuaded to publish this selection of his work, indicating his important contributions to the study of international economics.

He shows (essay 5) that any excess of domestic demand over supply, whether originating in the government or private sector, will create a balance of payments deficit requiring financing. The covering of this deficit by government or private borrowing will be largely fortuitous. This is an example of his mature Keynesianism. He is highly suspicious of the efficacy of primarily financial policies as instruments of general balance of payments adjustment (essay 11) and rejects the monetary approach to balance of payments analysis (p. 211).

Heinz Arndt was among the first to recognise that the originally Australian analysis of the relative domestic prices of potential, as well as actual, imports and exports compared to non-potential goods and services (tradeables vs. non-tradeables), and influences on this relation, was an essential part of the analysis of a country's domestic competitive position and, hence, of its international position (essays 4 and 9). His opinion that a balance of payments imbalance arises from domestic conditions, usually inappropriate fiscal or monetary policies, is reflected in his treatment of exchange rate changes (essays 3, 9, and 18). In the case of fundamental (that is, non-temporary) disequilibria, rate adjustments may be an appropriate part of the correction process. Unless it is one of several policy changes, its benefits will be quickly eroded (by inflation following a depreciation). An exchange rate depreciation can only be effective if the change in the relations between the prices of tradeables and non-tradeables leads to a shift of resources from non-tradeable to trade-

able production. If the disequilibrium is temporary, an exchange appreciation will be justified, encouraging a return of resources to non-tradeable production. These temporary shifts in resource use will be wasteful.

The inclusion of an introductory note to each essay 'indicating how it came to be written and what it is about' is a valuable contribution to understanding the background of each piece. It is unfortunate that Avebury set the notes as endnotes rather than as footnotes

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*The Politics of Identity in
Australia*

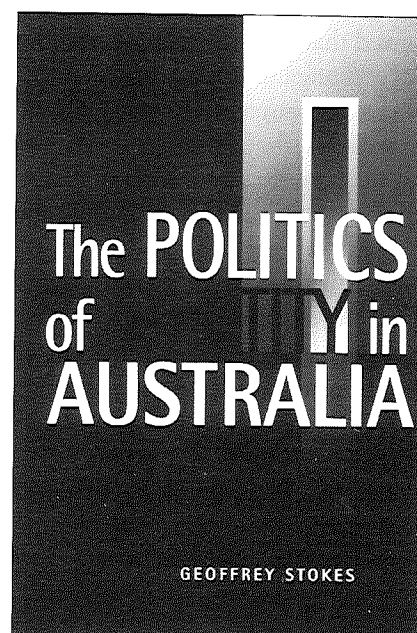
*edited by Geoffrey Stokes,
Cambridge University Press,
1997, 222pp., ISBN 0 521
58672 0, \$29.95.*

This is only one of a predicted landslide of studies of Australian identity which is heading our way. Not since the great Ocker revolution of the 1970s, when Australian masculine identity moved from the lean stockman to the overweight esky-toting bludger, has there been a challenge like the present one. The Hanson debate, the Wik legislation and the question of the success or failure of multiculturalism have all opened up the debate on Australian identity. Questions of who

an Australian is have been partially freed from the cries of racism; this, perhaps, may be the most important development.

The Politics of Identity in Australia has thirteen separate essays in four main sections – theorising identity; gender and sexuality; race, place and citizenship; and culture: literature and film. As such, it attempts to offer a broad range of views on what is increasingly an unmanageable topic.

This also generates a number of



serious limitations to this study. The introduction makes it clear that the collection of essays do not address many points about Australian identity – sexual identity (although there is an essay on gay identity in Australia, by Dennis Altman), disability, material cultural heritage, state or regional alliances or inter- and intra-ethnic questions of identity.

This poses the obvious question – what makes the macro-politics of Australian identity the most important topic for these contributors? Surely all questions of identity cannot be resolved by addressing macro-politics. Identity is surely a mosaic of

interdependent and interrelated allegiances and concurrent 'disallegiances', or oppositions to a specified or unspecified 'other'.

A woman's identity in Australia, for example, can be shaped by her disability, her marital status, and her socioeconomic status. The differing identities of rich and poor in Australia are not, I believe, significantly addressed, apart from almost universal condemnation of the rich and romanticisation of the working-class culture, showing all too clearly the influence of generations of Marxism in academe. Age is also significant, given our greying population, and the possible economic, political and social ramifications which will follow this major demographic change.

This study is less of a mosaic than a series of council-approved paving slabs, which is perhaps too harsh a judgement. But there is a certain predictability about the types of essay – gender, race, politics. On the up side, essays on religion, war and literature provide an alternative and complementary view of Australian identity.

There is something in this collection, if not for everyone, for many. As a part of the increasing output on identity, it is useful, if not groundbreaking.

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Thinking About Law: Perspectives on the history, philosophy and sociology of law

edited by Rosemary Hunter, Richard Ingleby and Richard Johnstone, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1995, 254 pp., ISBN 1-86373-842-8, \$29.95.

Since the early 1990s, legal philosophy has been experiencing somewhat of a resurgence in the law school curricula. It is fair to say that the vast majority of modern legal philosophy has emanated from postmodern¹ and marxist² philosophers who possess – to put it mildly – hostile tendencies towards liberalism. The collection of essays in *Thinking About Law* continues this hostility and, in fact, exacerbates this dangerous trend by presenting 'anti-liberal' philosophy as objective truth.

The book is structured into three parts: part one concerns the legal history of Australia in respect of Aboriginal land rights and, in particular, the Mabo litigation; part two is an introduction to various schools of legal philosophy such as liberalism, marxism, feminism and postmodernism; and part three applies these different philosophical perspectives to various academic pursuits including the historical construction of legal reform, the application of law to society, and the decision making processes of judges.

The editors of this collection of essays purport to 'give more or less equal time to different perspectives' (p.xi). However, this is a most

dubious contention when the reader, in retrospection at the end of the book, realises that Chapters 4 to 7 are essentially radical left wing approaches to legal theory and that Chapters 2 and 3, which introduce the reader to liberal legal theories, are dotted with unanswered criticisms of liberalism.

Let us consider further some of this well rounded [sic] introductory text. We are told that liberalism has been 'a catastrophic failure' which has been subjected to a 'devastating critique' (p.123), furthermore, '[l]iberalism, even in its most successful manifestations, is often dogged by relative material deprivation and spiritual impoverishment' (p.123). There is no mention of the great benefits derived from welfarist liberal societies in the last century including, lest it be forgotten, diversity of opinion and the ability to accommodate numerous philosophical perspectives.

In contradistinction to the scathing treatment of liberalism, this text seems to yearn for the good old days of an academic discourse dominated by marxist ideals:

'The marxist approach to law remains significant despite the demise of marxist practices and the apparent retreat of left thinking in the political arena.'

'marxism remains a useful lens through which to view and explain the institutions of capitalist society'

'Marxism is social theory par excellence'

1 'Postmodernism has approached law from the angle of a radical questioning of the certainties which have underpinned Western institutions... To the postmodern view, law's claim to objectivity, rationality and progress are unsustainable' (p.88).

2 Marxism argues that the 'law reflects class polarities, maintains economic subordination and entrenches social inequities... [moreover,] law is an instrument of the ruling elite who use it to dominate the masses and repress dissidence... the legal system assigns everyone an abstract, formally equal legal personality regardless of economic means, social status, education and so on... [this enables] the systematic application of an equal scale to systemically unequal individuals necessarily tends to reinforce systemic inequalities' (pp.92-98).