# BRILLIANT CREATURES

## GERMAINE, CLIVE, BARRY & BOB



ABC Television

mint

serendipity productions

Australian Government | Screen Australia

WRITTEN & PRESENTED BY
HOWARD JACOBSON

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A **STUDY GUIDE** BY PAULETTE GITTINS

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*'They made us  laugh, made us think, made us question, made us see Australia differently...*

GERMAINE, CLIVE, BARRY & BOB

*are*

# BRILLIANT CREATURES

A two-part documentary By Director **PAUL CLARKE**

*and*

Executive Producers **MARGIE BRYANT & ADAM KAY**

*and*

Series Producer **DAN GOLDBERG**

Written and presented

*by*

**HOWARD JACOBSON**

**SCREEN AUSTRALIA**

and

**THE ABC**

present a Serendipity and Mint Pictures production

**A STUDY GUIDE BY PAULETTE GITTINS**









## Introduction

*Robert Hughes: firebrand art critic.*

*Clive James: memoirist, broadcaster, poet.*

*Barry Humphries: savage satirist.*

*Germaine Greer: feminist, libertarian.*

*Exiles from Australia, all of them.*

With these spare, impeccably chosen words, the voice-over of Howard Jacobson opens the BBC/ABC documentary *Brilliant Creatures* and encapsulates the essence of four Australians who, having sailed away from their native shores in the 1960's, achieved spectacular success in art criticism, literature, social critique and theatre. These Australians became cultural icons - and sometimes iconoclasts - in the great cultural kingdoms of London and New York. Head of Arts, ABC Television, Katrina Sedgwick, says that Greer, Humphries, James and Hughes represent ' a high water mark in Australia's social and cultural history. That four such towering intellects could emerge from a country largely defined by a strange combination of brash confidence and cultural cringe is a remarkable thing' The story of the Australia they left in the sixties, and the impact they would have on the world stage is well worth reflecting on.

*But why did they leave? What explains their spectacular success? Was it because they were Australian that they were able to conquer London and New York? And why does it matter so much to me?*

asks our narrator. This is a deeply personal journey for Howard Jacobson, an intrinsic character in this story. Academic and Booker Prize winner, he reflects on his own experience of Australia and how overwhelmed he was by the positive qualities he immediately sensed when he arrived in this country. Why, he asks us, would Australians ever choose to exile themselves from such beauty and exhilaration? What were they sailing away to find?

In wonderfully rich archive and musical sequences that reflect a fond 'take' on the era, director Paul Clarke has also juxtaposed interviews from past and present days. An older Germaine Greer declares: 'I wanted to go to a place where there was beauty; I did believe in the Australian ugliness...' The mature Robert Hughes is far more direct: 'You can tow Australia out to sea and sink it for all I care...' Barry Humphries, in typical ironic style says: 'I was a banned writer (and) most of me enjoyed it...' Later in the Episode, Clive James will reflect that 'Australia felt like a little place far away.'

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In collaboration with film-maker Paul Clarke, director of such landmark series as *Whitlam: The Power And The Passion*, Howard Jacobson explores the role this 'gang of four' played in making Australia 'intellectually inhabitable.'

The fact that there has never been a television series about them to date is surprising, but also opportune. Moreover, the timing is perfect. Robert Hughes died in mid-2012. Clive James is ill and may be dying. Barry Humphries is on his 'farewell tour' with iconic comic figures Dame Edna and Sir Les. And Germaine Greer is still working, challenging taboos and writing.



Howard Jacobson was drawn to the way Australians use language and how critical they were as a nation. That directness of language and criticism has been at the heart of the success of *Brilliant Creatures* in Britain and in the United States. The Australia he was introduced to in 1965, its beauty, its freedom from class barriers, its outspokenness - will be explored throughout *Brilliant Creatures* as a different reaction from our four – and we will see the conclusion Howard arrives at - that Australia was, in a sense, 'too comfortable' to be challenging enough for some of its residents.

The 'cast' of this documentary also includes those who knew our four Australians in their London and American lives - famous authors, artists, critics, historians and television personalities. University colleagues Simon Schama and Eric Idle, TV host Michael Parkinson, authors Martin Amis, Melvyn Bragg and Peter Carey, to name but a few - all reflect on the prodigiously gifted quartet whose 'fresh, cheeky and new' scholarship and intellectual brilliance 'got London by the throat' and helped change England and Australia.

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## Study Guide Aims

1. *Brilliant Creatures* is a landmark work of socio-cultural history. This Study Guide introduces us to the environment of 1960's Australia and Britain, a world ripe for change, new ideas and the breaking down of barriers, social, cultural and political - and the influence of these individuals on both countries.

2. This Guide aims to introduce its audience to the concept of the power and function of language and its impact on the media, social institutions and understanding of the legacy of these four Australians.

3. This Guide also provides links between *Brilliant Creatures* and the Australian National Curriculum at appropriate levels and recommendations for its use in particular subject areas.

## Study Guide Appendices

- Brief biographies
- vocabulary lists
- 'miscellanea'
- further reading/viewing

The level of language all our 'cast' employs and the many references and observations they make means that some in the viewing audience - students in particular - may require some background information or 'back-story' to enhance understanding and enjoyment. A series of Appendices has been provided for these purposes at the end of each Episode. Brief biographies, vocabulary lists and 'miscellanea' should enable viewers to better enjoy the 50-plus years of 'highs and lows' of four witty, rumbustious thinkers whom our director labels 'pugilists of thought'. This Study Guide also contains a Further Reading/Viewing list for viewers to take their knowledge of these *Brilliant Creatures* to another level.

## Pre-viewing Activity

For an introduction to the four iconic Australians who are the subject of this series, it's a good plan to read their biographies in advance. It is also a sound strategy to read of the career and achievements of their friend, Howard Jacobson.

**Germaine Greer: http://www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/germaine-greer-1518.php**

This biography also lists her works, books written about her and a series of video clips in which she disparages her 'iconic' status, delivers an address to students and speaks at The Festival of Dangerous Ideas.

**Barry Humphries: http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/barry-humphries**

This is an Australian government site and lists a series of helpful links to more information about Barry.

**Clive James:** Clive has written his own autobiography: *Unreliable Memoirs.* Further biographies include: Wikipedia: **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clive_James**

**Robert Hughes:** an extensive biography, including links to filmed interviews, may be fond on the Encyclopedia Britannica website: **http://www.britannica.com/topic/274950/websites**

**Howard Jacobson:** The online site: British Council Literature provides an extensive biography of this writer and Booker Prize winner: **http://literature.britishcouncil.org/howard-jacobson**

This is a text for broad audience viewing; all ages and demographics will enjoy this story of another Australia, set in the not-too-distant-past but for many, a world away in its thinking on issues of womens rights, social norms, art and culture, both popular and 'serious.'

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# EPISODE ONE:

## 'OUR FAMOUS FOUR'

'*Australia felt like a little place far away.'* (Clive James)

*'Ever since I was a little girl, I wanted to escape from where I was.*' (Germaine Greer)

'*There was somewhere else outside of Australia and it was called* overseas' (Barry Humphries.

*'When the moment came to leave Australia, I hardly felt a twinge of misgiving.'* (Robert Hughes)

Howard recalls a very different reaction to the continent in the summer of 1965:

*...I sailed into Sydney Harbour, leaving the frozen drabness of an English winter behind....It was as though I was seeing heat and light for the first time in my life...This sense of Australia as an illumination of the spirits has never left me.... The Australia they called a sleepy backwater was my Brave New World...*



## Our 'tour guide'

Howard Jacobson had come to Australia to replace Germaine Greer, then a lecturer at Sydney University. He is an integral part of this documentary, having known all four characters for a number of years, recognizing in the early days what a powerful intellectual force they all were. Throughout these two Episodes, he will be our 'tour guide,' interviewing Clive, Barry and Germaine, listening to their stories, their philosophies, aspirations and successes. (At the time of the making of this documentary, Robert Hughes {1938 – 2012} had died). As we view this Episode, the contention becomes clear: it was in fact that quality of 1950's and 60's Australian life - dull, monotonous, stultifying, but ironically too easy and comfortable, 'raw, bloody-minded and hedonistic' - that fuelled Australians' desire to leave and experience a wider, different, far more challenging world.

*And how did England react to Bob, Germaine, Clive and Barry?*

The answer to this comes from a variety of well-known English and Australian 'talking heads' who were contemporaries of these four striking individuals in the literary, academic, theatrical and art worlds. Author and academic Melvin Bragg begins by reflecting on the world of Britain in the 1960's:

*...a time when the egg was cracking open...with rock 'n roll, with people in the arts and it was a new England they could help to make. And they did help to make it.*

Martin Amis, renowned English author, follows with:

*They were a kind of a beacon of a new kind of freedom... that kind of iconoclasm was the future and 'class' was on the way out...*

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## Humour -

Kathy Lette, expatriate Australian writer living in London says of the difference between the British sense of humour and the Australian:

*The way Australians use humour - we're skeptical about a lot of things but not pessimistic and the humour's very dry, very wry and incredibly mischievous.*

And Simon Schama, a fellow Cambridge University contemporary of Clive James, has this to say:

*They could do what you were not supposed to do – they had this incredible range of learning but they were also outlandish... they were hoodlums in the playground...*

American Playwright and critic Bonnie Greer speaks of Germaine Greer:

*Germaine is one of the twentieth century's landmarks. She'll go down in history, to have made this huge splash in the sea of the zeitgeist at thirty-two years old...*

Film clips of our four young Australians are interspersed as these observations are made: Germaine Greer shocks an audience with her outspoken views about sexual behaviour; Barry Humphries fronts a television interview wearing spectacles that come with built-in 'windshield wipers' and later we see him in his iconic stage role of 'Dame Edna Everage'. Their self-confidence and assurance is clearly evident.







## - and culture

*Australian culture*: what did this mean to our four newly expatriate Australians? Their comprehensive opinion of this concept was generally derisory.

In the meantime, iconic scenes of Sydney Harbour, the Manly ferry and Circular Quay - filmed, of course, in bright sunshine – show Howard strolling along Writers Walk, that path which leads to that other Australian icon - the Sydney Opera House. Writers Walk is embedded with a series of plaques celebrating famous Australians; the camera closes in on Germaine Greer's plaque, a sight which sees our 'tour guide' declaring:

*I'm green with envy; in England the writer has to be dead two hundred years before he's remembered and even then the best he's likely to get is a dark corner of Westminster Abbey. ...Australia reveres its writers. It's wonderful.*

Howard is clearly moved by this dedication and also muses on the plaque dedicated to Clive James, featuring a reflection from his work *Unreliable Memoirs:*

*It would be churlish not to concede that the same abundance of natural blessings which gave us the energy to leave has every right to call us back.*

In these reflections, Howard is asking us to think about the Australian response to its artists: do we acknowledge our talented citizens? Would this not be a positive element in our culture?

Thomas Keneally, another renowned Australian author, confirms Lette and Schama's observations on Australian humour:

*Barry Humphries' political incorrectness was very Australian. He just had to use the phrase "Australian culture" and then throw in Sir Les Patterson and people were rolling in the aisles.*

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And indeed, when we see Barry Humphries costumed in another of his stage roles - the outrageous Les Patterson - we can see why! '

Michael Parkinson reflects on Clive James:

*...a wonderfully funny man and for the academic and an intellectual that he indisputably is he had wonderful comic timing...*

We have a fine example of this provided in Clive's own voice in which he describes the Sydney Opera House:

*I used to think that the Opera House didn't have what it took to be a symbol of Sydney. I thought it looked like a typewriter full of oyster shells after an office party. Foolishly, I said so - the main reason why I had to stay out of town so long.*

It is also highly entertaining to hear Clive as he chats with Michael Parkinson about the cultural changes he has seen in Australia over the years. Clive has the audience gasping in amazement at the depiction of the 1950's infamous 'Six o'clock swill' – an era, now past, in Australia, when hotels were closed at six o'clock at night and the noise in the 'pubs' was 'like an entire Spanish bullfight going on a bathroom.' For an interesting article on this fifty-year Australian phenomenon, see: **http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/the-6-oclock-swill-wed-not-have-a-bar-of-it-now-20140111-30ns3.html**

Howard counters observations like this with another, very different interpretation of Australian life and culture, insisting that although publicans 'fired beer out of a gun' and 'the beaches broiled and the suburbs sprawled', the country was *not* uncultured. 'To me, it was a civilized country,' he insists. 'The 'noise' *he* encountered was:

*- to a visiting Pom, the noise of freedom: convivial, funny, egalitarian and brave; the freedom to run at life, to come from nowhere and aim for everywhere that enabled our four gifted Australians to make the most of their gifts. Raw, hedonistic and bloody-minded it might have been, but weren't these the very qualities that made our famous four famous?'*

## Academia in *'a seething cauldron of belligerence'*

As for academic challenges, he found that Australian students were forthright in their views, not 'choking back their opinions' and when he took his lectureship position at Sydney University, he was amazed at the passion and enthusiasm that greeted him in the place where Clive and Robert had studied, and where Germaine had been a lecturer:



*I'd come, I thought, to teach Australians to read: but it was they who taught me how to scrap. Intellectually, I don't recall a single quiet day in the whole time I was here. we argued abut everything. Lectures were war-zones. Seminars were like mediaeval jousts. We fought each other over books, we fought each other over ideas. We fought each other to a standstill over Emily Bronte - and she wasn't even a student here!*

## - but there was also *'a willed torpor'*

In interviewing journalist, writer and critic Phillip Adams about the origins of 'the verbal virtuosity' of our four Australians, Adams offers the analogy of the pressure upon coal which over millennia, can produce diamonds; in the same way,

*the pressures of boredom produced intellectual diamonds in the likes of Humphries and his collaborators, that they were so surrounded by stultification that out of this came these little glittering jewels...*

Thomas Keneally concurs, using the phrase 'a willed torpor' about Australia from which these 'brilliant children' wanted to escape. And so we come to a qualified conclusion: our four talented Australians were reacting against this torpor, forcing them to look further afield to challenge, inspire and educate them.





## 'The world of the imagination'

The school curriculum was heavily weighted to northern European literature and ideas, which meant that Australians were immersed in the literature, music and art of other lands; thus these had 'no spiritual purchase' when applied to the environment of Australia: 'the locales were different, the flowers were different, the seasons were inverted; our world was not represented,' says Keneally. Thus the world of the imagination - so vital to the arts - was not Australia – centric.

And what of Robert Hughes? Barbara Rose, American art critic, speaks almost with awe as she describes her first encounter with him:

*He was an apparition... in a full length caftan and hippie beads and shoulder-length blonde hair... he looked like Jesus Christ Superstar...*

Australian actor Rachel Griffiths concurs:

*...He was able to communicate the kind of meaning and sense of excitement about visual language... that was stirring...*

- in other words, a charismatic figure.

## The Australia of childhood, 'dullness and confinement' and dreams of escape

Howard visits the locales of Clive, Germaine, Barry and Bob and, together with his interviews, steps back into the world they inhabited: the Australia of the 1950's and 1960's. Walking the streets of Kogarah, a suburb in southern Sydney, he comes across the unassuming home in which Clive James grew up. In 'the Australia-England conversation' he has always wanted to have with Clive, we are given a broad 'sweep' of the Australia of the 1940's and 50's, of a nation 'privileged not to have been blasted by history, (that) came through World War Two relatively intact' for which the country has ' a lot of reason to be grateful.' Clive speaks of his parents' lives 'truncated' by the War – his father being killed on his return home from Japan and his mother, as a result, being a single parent 'who had to spend a lot of time bringing me up'.

Robert Hughes, on the other hand, had 'a patrician lineage', his father and past family members having a fifty - year connection to the prestigious St. Ignatius Riverview College. (see Endnotes) Sophisticated, academically brilliant, cosmopolitan, he attended Sydney University and later became an art critic. In archival film footage, we see him and a young Clive James debating a literary text with intensive and confident aplomb. 'We had fun expressing our opinions,' he recalls to Howard.

Next to be interviewed - and her home suburb of Sandringham ('I love it,' he says) to be visited – is Germaine Greer, described admiringly as 'a bolter'. She declares 'the happiest day of my life as the day I ran away from home.' She, too, recalls the torpid world of 1950's and 60's Australia which she insists still lingers:

*Even now when I'm in the suburbs...I feel this terrible dead feeling...that nothing will ever happen. That I will just drag through day after desperate day and... the world will be happening somewhere...I spoke three languages by the time I was twelve. I was preparing for Europe.*

Remember that in his view, Australia, despite such criticism, lent all of our four Australians much. Howard cites 'those nuns' who sparked in Germaine a spirit of criticism and inquiry and this was followed by ' a fantastic education' at Melbourne University. Germaine agrees, nevertheless offering the ironic observation that 'a teacher's inadequacy is sometimes more important than teacher's skills with an intelligent kid who thinks, "Na, that can't be right." Escape, albeit until she left the country, was to be found in the Melbourne Public Library, where, 'with the help of literature, she would do battle with dullness and confinement.'

*The exhilaration of dullness...I had liberated comedy from the necessity to be funny'* (Barry Humphries)

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Barry Humphries' home in Moonee Ponds was, to him, 'hell'; his parents, he recollects, found him a puzzling child; but he chose to react to life paradoxically by satirizing it intensively. Melbourne, to Barry as it was to Germaine, was dull, but in his response, it became 'exhilaratingly dull' and the focal inspiration for his comedy.

## Eltham and The Drift

Howard refers to a group of 'bohemian' Melbournians collectively named 'The Drift' - artists, painters, film-makers and writers, many of whom had a strong and permanent impact on the local cultural scene and to which Germaine and Barry gravitated. In Christine Wallace's biography of Germaine Greer, *Untamed Shrew*, the writer reflects on how The Drift became the 'natural destination' of this social group:

*It included painters such as John Percival, Leonard French, Clifton Pugh along with Arthur Boyd... poet Chris Wallace-Crabbe...film-maker Tim Burstall and the activist Beatrice Faust....Actor Barry Humphries, a Drift habitué, recalls (the pub meetings which) contained the most interesting people in Australia....Humphries recalls the all-night Drift parties at Eltham, a small, semi-rural town known for its arts community, as 'frightening the wallabies and traumatizing the kookaburras.'*

What we are seeing here is clearly a flourishing and varied artistic and intellectual culture, one which history shows has left its mark on the arts in Australia, and indeed on the world, but one which apparently was not enough to excite Germaine or Barry into staying. The older Barry now characterizes The Drift, in gently mocking fashion, as: 'these so-called bohemians, sort of middle-class wife-swappers really is what they were', declaring 'they were doing it in a picturesque way, up there, in a hamlet outside Melbourne.'

But a truly 'exotic life' - and the world - beckoned.

## The powerful paradox: *'It's too good, mate!'*

Howard speaks to Clive of 'the abundance of natural blessings that gave you the courage to leave: that's a powerful paradox. If those blessings existed in such abundance, why didn't you bloody stay?'

The reply is that 'the action was abroad and especially in Britain'. Howard also extends the answer as he ponders the beauty of the country: 'the more beautiful the place, the more you have to leave it.' Incorporating the myth of the lotus eaters from Homer's 'Odyssey', who 'lie around all day and enjoy the sunshine and not do anything', in this ease of existence, there may lie a little more of the answer to Howard's questioning ofwhy Australians like our four departed these shores:

*It's too good. It's too good, mate! And if you're ever going to achieve anything you just have to get away from it.*





## England in the 'sixties – our Australians arrive

Michael Parkinson contrasts the 'awful, drab' post-war years of England with the 'transformation' of the country in the 1960's, and Melvyn Bragg, concurring, tells us that 'London was the place where you could do what you really wanted to do, which was anything to do with the arts. Our Australian four 'made their impact right away.'

Martin Amis, in returning to his earlier observations about the British class system, denotes it as 'a huge force' but

*'the Australians weren't having that, it wasn't part of their consciousness and they were stepping on toes and... establishing a new kind of freedom and ...disrespect, a very healthy disrespect for everything that was iconic...*

## Earl's Court – 'Kangaroo Valley'

During the late 1960s a large transient population of Australia and New Zealand travellers began to use Earls Court, an inner London suburb, as a hub and over time it gained the name 'Kangaroo Valley'. It was at the time one of the cheapest areas close to central London, and up until the 1990s remained a somewhat down-at-heel district compared to its more up- market neighbours to the North and East. Here it was that newly arrived Australians made a 'little Australia' for themselves - but not our four.'I used to come here when I was missing my Australian friends, just to hear the accent,' reflects Howard.

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It appears that many Australians, having left home, were still emotionally attached to their motherland, so much so that the Earl's court district and the nearby Australia House were the locales that they frequented constantly. This enclave's lifestyle inspired much of Barry Humphries' early satire as he made inroads into the English comedy scene in a Soho club called 'The Establishment'. His early attempts were poorly received, but nevertheless noted by famous people such as Poet Laureate John Betjeman who was impressed with Barry's use of language: 'for him Humphries was rediscovering and re-ordering the Australian language, making poetry out of its cultural detritus.'

## *'Kangaroo Coo-coo'*

Britain was finally emerging from its long post-War winter and if it was receptive to riskier music, bolder art, satire, it was also receptive to the very things the Australians brought over in their luggage - words. Clive James coined a term for the Australian writers love of verbal acrobatics: 'Kangaroo Coo-coo.'

Clive further elaborates on the Australian facility for expression, 'for writing the memorable sentence' which 'is probably the basis of the Australian culture', a 'vividness of expression. Germaine Greer adds to this observation, citing Australian speech as 'characteristically exaggerated and over-coloured'. Barry Humphries' comic-book satire on the uncultivated, innocent Australian living in London, *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie* 'invented a new lexicon of vulgarity', 'recycling schoolboy slang'. His efforts led to these works being banned in Australia for several years, as it was felt he had 'misrepresented Australia'.

## Cambridge days

Clive and Germaine headed to Cambridge University where they would cross paths again with Howard, make their mark in the famous 'Footlights Review' and encounter iconic comedy figures like Eric Idle of the 'Monty Python' fame, and future historian Simon Schama. Schama speaks of the 'intoxication of happiness about what language could do.'

## *'An absence of fathers'*

This is an aspect of at least three of our four Australians which Howard now moves to address: 'Clive's died when he was a little boy, Robert's when he was twelve, Germaine's father was a mystery to her, and Barry was a mystery to his.' Eric Idle observes that perhaps that 'absence' was one of the reasons these Australians came to Europe, 'to find out why their father were killed or put n the army; they were re-claiming something...'

## Robert Hughes – *'an intellectual rugby player'*

A younger Robert Hughes, captured on film in Australia, talks of 'the first original work of art that actually effected my imagination' the work of Norman Lindsay, regarded in his time as 'corrupting' and scandalous, but to him, inspiring.

He left Australia to find 'civilization or imperial loot' as he later called it. Melvyn Bragg speaks of his confrontational but engaging style: 'He spoke with the air of an aristocrat who just stumbled out of a bar with his syntax intact', and let (me) have it between the eyes about art.' While Germaine, Clive and Barry were making things happen for themselves in Cambridge, Robert was initially wandering around Italy, taking in the great art he had only read about in Australia. In Italy he stayed with the Australian expatriate writer Alan Moorehead, a 'father-figure' to him, a man who had left Australia much earlier than our four. Moorehead's wife speaks of Hughes' 'unbelievably glamorous figure, very talkative...erupting into our lives.'

There is a degree of hesitancy in the reflections of Barry Humphries and Germaine Greet when they speak of Robert Hughes; something of an opportunist, is Barry's subtle response, while a Germaine speaks of his 'patronizing' her.

## In print

Print, in the 1960's was 'the medium' and it was through print that our Australians made their first assault on the national consciousness as literary, film or art scholars. Working in Fleet Street, then the centre of the newspaper world and acceptance into the London literary world, 'loaded with words, fastidiously hypercritical, armed intellectually to the teeth' our four Australians brilliance continued to shine.

## Traitors?

Michael Parkinson speaks of the 'huge service' they did to their own country', but because they left it in order to spread their wings, 'they've sometimes been seen as traitors'.

How was Australia reacting to the news of their success? Australians, says our narrator, 'are suspicious of tall poppies.' Had our 'brilliant creatures' outgrown the country that made them brilliant? Where was 'home' now?

That, declares Howard, will be the subject of Episode Two.

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# APPENDIX ONE:
## BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES



**Melvyn Bragg** is an English broadcaster and author. A novelist and writer of non-fiction, Bragg has written a number of television and film screenplays. He is currently Chancellor of the University of Leeds.

**Martin Amis** is an English author whose his father was the Booker Prize–winning author Sir Kingsley Amis. He has written a number of novels which have been published to much critical acclaim. For a detailed biography that is accompanied by an interview, see: **http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/1156/the-art-of-fiction-no-151-martin-amis** Spanning four decades, twelve novels, seven works of nonfiction, two short story collections, and nearly four hundred reviews and essays, Martin Amis's career already testifies to a lifetime devoted to literature. From the appearance of his first novel, *The Rachel Papers* (1973), to his most recent book, *The Pregnant Widow* (2010), Amis has inspired some of the most controversial debates of the contemporary era. His work has prompted new considerations of realism, postmodernism, feminism, politics, and culture, and his personal life has provided fodder for gossip and tabloid journalism.

**Kathy Lette:** first achieved *succès de scandale* as a teenager with the novel *Puberty Blues*, which was made into a major film. After several years as a newspaper columnist and television sitcom writer in America and Australia, she wrote ten international bestsellers including *Mad Cows* (which was made into a film starring Joanna Lumley and Anna Friel), *How to Kill Your Husband and Other Handy Household Hints.*

**Simon Schama** is a British historian specialising in art history, Dutch history, and French history. He is a University Professor of History and Art History at Columbia University, New York. He first came to popular public attention with his history of the French Revolution titled *Citizens*, published in 1989. In the United Kingdom, he is perhaps best known for writing and hosting the 15-part BBC television documentary series *A History of Britain* broadcast between 2000 and 2002.

**Bonnie Greer**: is an American-British playwright, novelist and critic. She is also the Chancellor of Kingston University, a research university located in Kingston upon Thames, United Kingdom.

**Thomas Keneally:** Born in Sydney in 1935, Thomas Keneally completed his schooling at various schools on the New South Wales north coast before commencing theological studies for the Catholic priesthood. He abandoned this vocation in 1960 and turned to clerical work and schoolteaching before publication of his first novel in 1964. Since that time he has been a full-time writer with the odd stint as lecturer (1969-70) and writer in residence. For more detailed information, see: **http://www.middlemiss.org/lit/authors/keneally/keneally.html**

**Barbara Rose:** Art critic and historian of modern American art, Rose wrote a landmark survey of 20th-century American painting and sculpture, *American Art since 1900.* For more information, see: **http://www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/roseb.htm**

**Michael Parkinson:** Sir Michael Parkinson, CBE (born 1935) is an English broadcaster, journalist and author. He is best known for presenting his long-running television talk show, *Parkinson*, from 1971 to 1982 and from 1998 to 2007, as well as other talk shows and programmes both in the UK and internationally. He is also known as a radio broadcaster. He has been described by *The Guardian* as "the great British talkshow host".

**Peter Cook:** Peter Edward Cook was an English actor, satirist, writer and comedian. An extremely influential figure in modern British comedy, he is regarded as the leading light of the British satire boom of the 1960s.

**David Frost:** David Frost was a British journalist and media personality known for hosting several television programs including *That Was the Week That Was* (1962-1963), *The Frost Report* (1966-1967), *The David Frost Show* (1969-1972) and *Frost on Sunday* (1983-1992). While at Cambridge University, Frost showed many talents as editor of the student newspaper and the literary magazine, a member of the Footlights Drama Society and a skilled football and cricket player. His series of interviews with President

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Richard Nixon in 1977 formed the basis for the 2006 play *Frost/Nixon* and Ron Howard's 2008 Academy Award-nominated film adaptation. In 1993, Frost was knighted for his notable career in television. He died of a suspected heart attack in August 2013 while giving a speech aboard the Queen Elizabeth cruise ship.

**John Betjeman:** Sir John Betjeman, poet laureate of the United Kingdom from 1972 until his death in 1984, was known by many as a poet whose writing evoked a sense of nostalgia. He utilized traditional poetic forms, wrote with a light touch about public issues, celebrated classic architecture, and satirized much of contemporary society for his perception of its superficiality. For a full biography, see: **http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/john-betjeman**

**Eric Idle:** (born 29 March 1943) is an English comedian, actor, author, singer, writer and comedic composer. Idle was a member of the English surreal comedy group 'Monty Python.' Episode One of *Brilliant Creatures* informs us of Idle's connection to the famous Cambridge University's 'Footlights' Revue, at which he encountered Germaine Greer, who became the first woman performer in this revue.

**Alan Moorehead:** Alan McCrae Moorehead (1910–1983) Journalist, war correspondent and historian, Moorehead joined the staff of the Melbourne *Herald* in 1933. Reporting taught him to write rapidly and arrestingly, on demand. Re-locating to Britain, and with a dramatic and poetic style combining a sharp, bird's eye view of campaigns and battles with empathetic and detailed observation of fighting men and their commanders, he was twice mentioned in despatches for his courage under enemy fire and was soon widely acknowledged as the pre-eminent British war correspondent. Some Australian colleagues, envious of his success, felt that he had abandoned his Australian identity, along with his accent. At war's end, he resolved to leave journalism and to succeed as a freelance writer. Moorehead's virtual invention of the modern travel-adventure history book placed him in the front rank of popular writers. By 1964, Moorehead felt himself one of a group of expatriates who had begun to resolve in their writing and painting their experience of Australian isolation and nostalgia for England.

After writing seven bestsellers in succession, Moorehead experienced frustration with failed or stalled ventures: a rejected libretto and several stillborn film and writing projects. Refreshed by a visit to Australia with his family in 1965, he welcomed an invitation in 1966 to join the history department at Monash University. Some Australian colleagues never forgave Moorehead's expatriation and success, but his Australian family and friends knew him as loyal and generous. A good journalist, he became a great war correspondent and an outstanding narrative historian, perhaps Australia's finest. Certainly no Australian writer before him had commanded so large an international audience. The many translations and reprints of his books testify to his enduring popularity.

**Norman Lindsay:** Norman Lindsay (1879-1969), artist, cartoonist, and writer, came from a family that produced five artists. His first novel was published in 1913, and by the 1920s he was both proficient and prolific in pen and ink drawing, etching, woodcuts, watercolours and sculpture. Lindsay rejected Christianity, and his art depicts Bohemianism and Arcadian pantheism madly admixed in a fantasy world and was regarded in his time, as 'scandalous' in his depiction of nudes.

As early as 1904 his work was deemed blasphemous and 'morally corrupting', and Robert Hughes makes this observation wryly in *Brilliant Creatures.* There were many critics of Lindsay's work but he remained popular with collectors, and Albert, the loyal but cranky *The Magic Pudding* from his classic children's book (1918) is still just as popular with today's younger generation.



# APPENDIX TWO:
# MISCELLANEA



1. ***The Australian Ugliness*** is a 1960 book by Australian architect Robin Boyd. Boyd investigates the Australian aesthetic in regard to architecture and the suburbs and in the process coins the doctrine "featurism" to describe it. Whilst not entirely a tragedy for the Australian community, Boyd proposes that education in design can be a means to resolve the ugliness he observed.

   In*' Coming Of Age: Robin Boyd's 'The Australian Ugliness' Fifty Years On',* critic Peter Conrad writes:

   *The Australian Ugliness is actually a condemnation of the Australian prettiness. The vice it castigates is Featurism, which – according to Boyd – flinches from utility and camouflages everything in a layer of decorative kitsch that passes for beauty. A coffee table masquerades as a boomerang, and ballerinas sprinkle stardust on doormats. Suburban windows sprout gratuitous gables, and a pub passes itself off as a colonial relic with an overlay of "chintzy old-lavender charm". Boyd saw this ornamental fussing as a symptom of our revulsion from the hot, dangerous, uninhabitable land that lies beyond the perimeter of our cities; it was evidence of our timidity, our preference for comforting illusions.... ...for Boyd, architecture means more than the fabrication of shelters: it is the art that most explicitly measures humanity's relationship to nature and calibrates our position in space. It's a pity that when Boyd wrote he couldn't foresee the transforming impact of the single building that brought modernity to Australia, its design not a box but an assemblage of shells or a flotilla of wind-buffeted sails, showing architecture to be not "frozen music" (as Goethe called it) but music that moves in the air, flowing and metamorphosing as we walk around or through it: he mentions the Sydney Opera House only once, without voicing any enthusiasm for its "poetic expression"... His book is less a work of architectural criticism than a scathing literary satire...*

   For the full article, see: <**http://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2009/december/1295830013/peter-conrad/coming-age**>

2. ***Brave New World:***

   *Brave New World* is a novel written in 1931 by Aldous Huxley. It is set in a future world in which society has been completely structured by genetic engineering; the novel anticipates developments in reproductive technology, sleep-learning, psychological manipulation, and classical conditioning that combine to profoundly change society. The title is vehemently ironic and is derived from Shakespeare's play **"The Tempest" when Prospero's daughter, Miranda, sees another man for the first time and utters the misunderstood words: "O brave new world that has such people in it". In this scene, Miranda is an innocent, naive to the reality behind the glittering vision before her.**

   For more information on the novel, see: **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brave_New_World** and the text itself: ISBN 0-06-080983-3 (paperback edition)

   (For Howard Jacobson, arrival in Australia was for him, a wonderful experience which he compares to Miranda's wonderment.)

3. ***The Class System:***

   English author Martin Amis refers to 'the class system' when we first hear him speak about the society that our four Australians encountered when they arrived in Britain. 'Class' was a staple part of the structure of British society for hundreds of years, dividing people into groups or 'classes' according to power, influence and money, occupation and ownership of property. British society was considered to be divided into three main groups of 'classes':

   - the Upper Class,
   - the Middle Class, and the
   - Lower or Working Class

   **The Upper Class** tended to consist - and still does today - of people with inherited wealth, and includes some of the oldest families, with many of them being titled aristocrats. The upper classes are not only defined by their title, but also by their education, and their pastimes which includes the traditional sporting life involving hunting, shooting and fishing, as well as a great deal of horse riding for both leisure and as a competitive pursuit.

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**The Middle Classes** are the majority of the population of Britain today. They include industrialists, professionals, businesspeople and shop owners.

**Working Class** people are mostly agricultural, mine and factory workers. Class snobbery was an issue.

Although these definitions of social class in the United Kingdom may vary and are highly controversial, most are influenced by factors of wealth, occupation and education. Until recently the Parliament of the United Kingdom was organised on a class basis, with the House of Lords representing the hereditary upper class and the House of Commons representing everyone else, and the British monarch is usually viewed as being at the top of the social class structure.

In the 1960's it was still possible to identify a 'working class' person by his accent and the area in which he lived; the same applied to the other classes as well. Accents were passed on down through the generations as a result of people rarely leaving the area in which they were born. When Germaine, Robert, Barry and Clive first arrived in Britain, this system was very much in evidence - but it was changing. British society had experienced significant change since the Second World War, including an expansion of higher education and home-ownership, a shift towards a services-dominated economy, mass immigration, a changing role for women and a more individualistic culture, and these changes have had a considerable impact on the social landscape. However, claims that the UK has become a 'classless society' have frequently been met with scepticism. Today Britain is a multicultural nation and greater opportunities in education as well as massive changes in industry and a new world-view have meant that one's accent or area in which they live can no longer define their 'class' or their occupation.



4. ***Westminster Abbey/Poets' Corner***

   Westminster Abbey, located in central London is steeped in more than a thousand years of history. Benedictine monks first came to this site in the middle of the tenth century, establishing a tradition of daily worship which continues to this day.

   The Abbey has been the coronation church since 1066 and is the final resting place of seventeen monarchs. A treasure house of paintings, stained glass, pavements, textiles and other artefacts, Westminster Abbey is also the place where some of the most significant people in the nation's history are buried or commemorated. Naturally, the Abbey has its own website:

   **http://www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history**

5. ***Poets' Corner*** is the name traditionally given to a section of Westminster Abbey because of the high number of poets, playwrights, and writers buried and commemorated there. Over the centuries, a tradition has grown up of interring or memorialising people there in recognition of their contribution to British culture. In the overwhelming majority of cases, the honour is awarded to writers.

6. ***Jesus Christ Superstar***

   Wikipedia provides an excellent summary of this musical based on the last weeks of the life of Jesus Christ. A 1971 rock opera with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber and lyrics by Tim Rice, the musical is loosely based on the Gospels' accounts of the last week of Jesus' life, beginning with the preparation for the arrival of Jesus and his disciples in Jerusalem and ending with the crucifixion. It highlights political and interpersonal struggles between Judas Iscariot and Jesus, struggles that are not in the Bible. The resurrection is not included. It therefore largely follows the form of a traditional passion play.

   For more information of this iconic work, see: **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus_Christ_Superstar**

7. ***'Cultural cringe' :***

   Coined in 1959 by writer and critic A.A.Phillips. this term was originally intended to convey Australians' inherent lack of faith in their own culture, an internalized 'inferiority complex' which caused people to dismiss their own culture as inferior to the cultures of other countries. *Phillips* referred to the difficulties that Australian artists and intellectuals faced in Australia. He argued that Australians were prejudiced against the home-grown products, and deliberately overlooked them in favour of imported products.

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**8. *Writers Walk, Circular Quay, Sydney, NSW:***

Howard Jacobson observes and appreciates this Australian tribute to its writers and artists. The writers — with their metal plaques embedded along the walkway around Sydney's Circular Quay — are being honored, and their lives and works celebrated, on the Sydney Writers Walk. You will find these plaques located from around the International Passenger Terminal on West Circular Quay, down to the walkway between the ferry jetties and the train station, and all the way to the side of the Sydney Opera House forecourt on East Circular Quay.

The writers represented on Writers Walk include not only Australians but also those who lived in, or visited, Australia, such as D H Lawrence, Rudyard Kipling and Mark Twain. The plaques, arranged in alphabetical order by surname, provide interesting, informative reading in capsule form.

**9. *Oz Magazine***

Few Australian publications of the 1960s had a greater international impact, or a greater social impact here in Australia, than the legendary Oz magazine. Its publication in 1963 marked the real start of "The Sixties" in Australia, and when transplanted to London in 1967 it became one of the key underground publications of the era.

Oz had two 'lives', one in Australia and one in Britain, and both versions were dogged by controversy, attacked by the Establishment and embroiled in famous legal battles, culminating in the infamous Oz obscenity trial of 1971.

Oz was a focal point for many confrontations between progressive and conservative groups over a range of issues including the Vietnam War, drugs, the generation gap, censorship, sexuality, gender politics and rock music, and it was instrumental in bringing many of these concerns to wider public attention. Above all, it focussed public attention on the issue of free speech in democratic society, and on how far short of the ideal Australian and English society actually was at that time.

Through both its lives, the two key figures in Oz were editor and author Richard Neville and artist and cartoonist Martin Sharp, but the 'honour roll' of Oz alumni includes many famous names like Robert Hughes, Richard Walsh, Germaine Greer, Felix Dennis and Charles Shaar Murray.

**10. *Sylvia Plath/ The Bell Jar***

Germaine Greer refers to this American poet and her semi-autobiographical novel *'The Bell Jar'* when comparing life for her in to the stifling environment of 1950's and 60's Australia. In Plath's novel, her protagonist compares her life to being trapped 'under a bell jar', a symbol of emotional and psychological suffocation.

**11. *Valhalla***

In Norse mythology, Valhalla is the hall of slain warriors, an after-life for Vikings, who live there blissfully under the leadership of the god Odin. Valhalla is depicted as a splendid palace, roofed with shields, where the warriors feast. Howard Jacobson refers to Australia as a 'Valhalla' – a place of happiness and ease.

**12. *'Dux of the school'***

Actor Rachel Griffiths refers to Germaine Greer as having been 'dux' of her Melbourne school. *Dux* is Latin for *'leader'* . In schools in Scotland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Iceland, *dux* is a modern title given to the highest ranking student in academic and sporting achievement in each graduating year. Therefore, Germaine was the top or 'leading' student in her final year.

**13. *Dada/Dadaism***

'Dada' was a literary and artistic movement born in Europe at a time when the horror of World War I was being played out in what amounted to citizens' front yards. Due to the war, a number of artists, writers and intellectuals -- notably of French and German nationality -- found themselves congregating in the refuge that Zurich (in neutral Switzerland) offered. Far from merely feeling relief at their respective escapes, this bunch was pretty ticked off that modern European society would *allow* the war to have happened. They were so angry, in fact, that they undertook the time-honored artistic tradition of protesting.

Banding together in a loosely-knit group, these writers and artists used any public forum they could find to (metaphorically) spit on nationalism, rationalism, materialism and any other -ism which they felt had contributed to a senseless war. In other words, the Dadaists were fed up. If society is going in this direction, they said, we'll have no part of it or its traditions. Including...

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no, wait!... *especially* artistic traditions. We, who are non-artists, will create non-art -- since art (and everything else in the world) has no meaning, anyway.

About the only thing these non-artists all had in common were their ideals. They even had a hard time agreeing on a name for their project. "Dada" - which some say means "hobby horse" in French and others feel is just baby talk -- was the catch-phrase that made the *least* amount of sense, so "Dada" it was.

Using an early form of Shock Art, the Dadaists thrust mild obscenities, scatological humor, visual puns and everyday objects (renamed as "art") into the public eye. Marcel Duchamp performed the most notable outrages by painting a moustache on a copy of the *Mona Lisa* (and scribbling an obscenity beneath) and proudly displaying his sculpture entitled *Fountain* (which was actually a urinal, sans plumbing, to which he added a fake signature).

The public, of course, was revolted -- which the Dadaists found wildly encouraging. Enthusiasm being contagious, the (non)movement spread from Zurich to other parts of Europe and New York City. And just as mainstream artists were giving it serious consideration, in the early 1920s, Dada (true to form) dissolved itself.

Barry Humphries added his own contribution to this 'non-movement' in the 1960's by holding a Dada exhibition of his 'art works' which satirised both the movement and artistic pretensions in general.

**14. *Australia House***

A major London landmark, Australia House is the office of The High Commission of Australia in London. It is a Grade II listed 'heritage' building. It is both Australia's first diplomatic mission and the longest continuously occupied diplomatic mission in the United Kingdom.

**15. *Private Eye Magazine***

Since its first publication in 1961, *Private Eye* has been a prominent critic and lampooner of public figures and entities that it deemed guilty of any of the sins of incompetence, inefficiency, corruption, pomposity or self-importance and it has become a self-styled "thorn in the side" of the British establishment. As of 2013, it is Britain's best-selling current affairs magazine, and such is its long-term popularity and impact that many recurring in-jokes from Private Eye have entered popular culture.

Edited by Ian Hislop, it offers a unique blend of humour, social and political observations and investigative journalism. Published fortnightly, the magazine is read by over 700,000 readers and costs just £1.50 an issue.

**16. *Monty Python*** (sometimes known as The Pythons) are a British surreal comedy group that created Monty Python's Flying Circus, a British television comedy sketch show that first aired on the BBC on 5 October 1969. Forty-five episodes were made over four series. The Python phenomenon developed from the television series into something larger in scope and impact, spawning touring stage shows, films, numerous albums, several books and a stage musical as well as launching the members to individual stardom. The group's influence on comedy has been compared to The Beatles' influence on music.

**17. *'High Table'***

The *High Table* is a table for the use of fellows (members of the Senior Common Room) and their guests at Oxford, Cambridge, Dublin and Durham colleges, and other, similarly traditional and prestigious academic institutions (such as University of London; University of Manchester and University of Bristol in the UK, and The University of Trinity College and Massey College at the University of Toronto). The table is normally but not always on a raised platform and at the end of the dining hall, although not always. On more formal evening occasions, dinner jackets are worn. It is also normal to wear academic gowns.

18 ***Academic gowns***

Academic dress or 'gown' – a loose black robe worn over one's everyday clothing is a traditional form of dress for academic settings, primarily tertiary (and sometimes secondary) education, worn mainly by those who have been admitted to a university degree (or similar), or hold a status that entitles them to assume them. There are differences in the design of these gowns that signify Bachelor's, Master's or Doctoral degrees.

**19. *The Renaissance***

By the term Renaissance (" New Birth"), used in its narrower sense, is meant that new enthusiasm for classical literature, learning, and art which sprang up in Italy towards the close of the Middle Ages, and which during the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries gave a new culture to Europe. Using the word in a somewhat broader sense, we may define the Renaissance as the re-entrance into the world of that secular, inquiring, self-reliant spirit which characterized the life and culture of classical antiquity. This is simply to say that under the influence of the intellectual revival the men of Western Europe came to think and feel, to look upon life and the outer world, as did the men of ancient Greece and Rome; and this again is merely to say that they ceased to think and feel as mediaeval men and

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began to think and feel as modern men. Speaking from the Italian city of Florence in 1968, Robert Hughes speaks of the Renaissance with awe and devotion. In a modern, general sense, a 'renaissance' can mean a 're-birth' in the study of, or interest in, any aspect of art, culture or science.

**20. *Pan, satyrs, Bacchus – staple features of the paintings of Norman Lindsay***

- are all figures of Greek and Roman myth.
- In Greek religion and mythology, *Pan* is the god of the wild, shepherds and flocks, of nature, of mountain wilds, hunting and rustic music.
- *A satyr* is one of a troop of male companions of Pan and Dionysus with goat-like (features, including a goat-tail, goat-like ears and horns. In Roman Mythology there is a similar concept with goat-like features, the faun being half-man, half-goat.
- *Bacchus* was the Roman *god* of agriculture and wine.

**21. *Ph. D. – 'Doctor of Philosophy'***

'Ph. D.' is, in many countries a postgraduate academic degree awarded by universities. In the context of academic degrees, the term "philosophy" does not refer solely to the field of philosophy, but is used in a broader sense in accordance with its original Greek meaning, which is "love of wisdom". The detailed requirements for award of a Ph.D. degree vary throughout the world and even from school to school. It is usually required for the student to hold an Honours degree or a Master's Degree with high academic standing, in order to be considered for a PhD programme. A candidate must submit a project or thesis or dissertation often consisting of a body of original academic research, which is in principle worthy of publication in a peer-reviewed context. In many countries a candidate must defend this work before a panel of expert examiners appointed by the university; in other countries, the dissertation is examined by a panel of expert examiners who stipulate whether the dissertation is in principle passable and the issues that need to be addressed before the dissertation can be passed.

**22. *Led Zeppelin***

Led Zeppelin were an English rock band formed in London in 1968. The band consisted of guitarist Jimmy Page, singer Robert Plant, bassist and keyboardist John Paul Jones, and drummer John Bonham. The group's heavy, guitar-driven sound, rooted in blues on their early albums, has drawn them recognition as one of the progenitors of heavy metal, though their unique style drew from a wide variety of influences, including folk music. Led Zeppelin are widely considered one of the most successful, innovative and influential rock groups in history. They are one of the best-selling music artists in the history of audio recording; various sources estimate the group's record sales at 200 to 300 million units worldwide. For further information, see Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Led_Zeppelin

**23. *Fleet Street***

**Fleet Street** (London) was for centuries the home of the newspaper industry and the name is still used to describe the national press. It ran from the Fleet River, a noisome ditch, to the Strand—strategically between the city and the court. From Tudor times it was the haunt of booksellers, writers, and printers. The first daily newspaper, the Daily Courant, was established there in 1702, and The Times, in Printing House Square to the east, followed in 1785, under the name Daily Universal Register. In the 1980s there was a wholesale exodus of newspapers to less-congested sites elsewhere.

**24. *'Tall poppies'***

Interestingly, this term was coined as far back as 1931, when NSW Premier J.T.Lang gave the term *tall poppy* to all those on government salaries above £10 per week (a princely sum in those days).Today the tall poppy is usually someone who is very successful in their field.

Unfortunately, Australia has developed what we call the *Tall Poppy Syndrome* (TPS). This is the action of eagerly 'pulling down' the more successful people in our society should they show the slightest imperfection.

Is this done to everyone who is successful? Actually no. It tends to be aimed at those people the public perceives as being arrogant or not deserving the amount of success they've achieved. The public's perception of the tall poppy is often influenced negatively by the media.

**25. *Kitsch***

(noun) something of tawdry design, appearance, or content created to appeal to popular or undiscriminating taste.

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# APPENDIX THREE: VOCABULARY

1. ***Iconoclasm*** : (noun) attacking cherished beliefs, traditional institutions, etc., as being based on error or superstition.

2. ***Zeitgeist*** (noun, German) : the spirit of the time; general trend of thought or feeling characteristic of a particular period of time.

3. ***Hedonist***: (noun) a person whose life is devoted to the pursuit of pleasure and self-gratification.

4. ***stultification, stultify:*** (noun, verb) to render absurdly or wholly futile or ineffectual, especially by degrading or frustrating means: e.g., *Menial work can stultify the mind.*

5. ***Torpor:*** (noun) lethargic indifference; apathy.

6. ***Truncated:*** (verb) cut short

7. ***Acolyte:*** (noun) any attendant, assistant, or follower.

8. ***Bohemian***: (noun) an old name for a native of the country of Bohemia, now called The Czech Republic; when usually in lowercase, it means a person, as an artist or writer, who lives and acts free of regard for conventional rules and practices.

9. ***Libertarian*** (noun) a person who advocates liberty, especially with regard to thought or conduct.

10. ***Cosmopolitan:*** (noun) belonging to all the world; not limited to just one part of the world; taking in and celebrating all influences.

11. ***Raffish:*** (adj) mildly or sometimes engagingly disreputable or nonconformist, careless or unconventional in dress, manners, etc.

12. ***Intelligentsia:*** (plural noun) intellectuals considered as a group or class, especially as a cultural, social, or political elite.

13. ***Squalor:*** (noun) living in filth and misery

14. ***Paradox, paradoxical*** (noun, adjective): a self-contradictory proposition, such as *I always tell lies;* an opinion that conflicts with common belief ; paradoxical: describing a person or thing exhibiting apparently contradictory characteristics.

15. ***Sardonic:*** (adjective) characterized by bitter or scornful derision; mocking; cynical; sneering: e.g. *a sardonic grin*.

16. ***Ruminate:*** (verb) to meditate or muse; ponder.

17. ***hamlet:*** (note the lower case): a small village.

18. ***Askance:*** (adjective) with suspicion, mistrust, or disapproval

19. ***Iconic: (***adjective) relating to, resembling, or having the character of an icon. In common language, this refers to a famous object, image, idea or individual known by everyone.

20. ***'Wag'*** (noun) a term to describe a person known to be a humorous, witty individual.

21. ***Detritus:*** (noun) any disintegrated material; debris. (used as a metaphor in this documentary)

22. ***Hyperbole:*** (noun) an obvious and intentional exaggeration; an extravagant statement or figure of speech not intended to be taken literally, as "*to wait an eternity."*

23. ***Metaphysical:*** (adjective) concerned with abstract thought or subjects, as existence, causality, or truth.

24. ***Lexicon:*** (noun) the vocabulary of a particular language, field, social class, person, etc.

25. ***Vulgarity:*** (noun) the condition of being vulgar, demonstrating a lack of 'good manners'

26. ***Acculturating :*** (participle) assimilating the cultural traits of another group

27. ***Lechery:*** (noun) unrestrained or excessive indulgence of sexual desire.

28. ***Daunting:*** (adjective) causing fear or discouragement; intimidating

29. ***Imperial:*** (adjective) connected with empire

30. ***Loot:*** (noun) spoils or plunder of war; a collection of valued objects

31. ***Seditious, seditiousness:*** (adjective, noun) inclined to undermine society and its structure for ideological reasons.

32. ***Mentor:*** (noun) a wise or trusted counsellor or teacher

33. ***Prim:*** (adjective) formally precise or proper

34. ***Expletive:*** (noun) a swear - word

35. ***Patronize:*** (verb) to behave in an offensively condescending manner

36. ***Fastidious:*** (noun) excessively particular, critical, demanding, hard to please.

37. ***Hypercritical*** (adjective) extremely critical

38. ***Laughingstock:*** (noun) an object of ridicule, the butt of a joke

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# EPISODE TWO: 'A SORT OF REQUIEM'

## SYNOPSIS

*Barry's high-wire scabrousness.*

*Germaine's louche puritanism.*

*Clive's voracious mastery of every medium.*

*Bob's erudite thuggery.*

With his usual gift for apt description, Howard Jacobson encapsulates the emergent talents of these four Australians who were to make their home in England or abroad for many years, further reminding us that his own life 'strangely has been intertwined with theirs for the last fifty years.'

*They needed to escape to flourish but paradoxically what flourished were the very things that made them Australian: Barry's high-wire scabrousness, Germaine's louche puritanism, Clive's voracious mastery of every medium... Bob's erudite thuggery. What are these but expressions of Australian genius?*

We pick up the story of Barry Humphries, Germaine Greer, Clive James and Robert (Bob) Hughes in 1970's London, in 'the Britain (Howard) had been glad to leave.' Their brilliance was about to burst on the nation. Britain was no longer the class-bound country they found on their initial arrival Change was in the air. In 1972, Clive landed the job of TV critic at *The Observer* newspaper.

*'Call no man happy if he has never been ordered to go home and watch television.'*

(Clive James)

Already a published writer in the *New Statesman* and *The Listener* – popular London magazines – 'everybody you wanted to reach read them' – Clive turned television programme criticism into an entertainment everyone wanted to read. Prior to this, a television column was 'what you did when you retired and when you couldn't really write columns' according to Melvyn Bragg.

## *'Carelessness of distinctions'*

Clive and Howard discuss an important element of intellectual appreciation: popular culture and *serious* culture. *What do these terms mean?*

***Popular Culture*** is the entirety of ideas, perspectives, attitudes, memes, images and other phenomena that are within the mainstream of a given culture, especially Western culture of the early to mid 20th century and the emerging global mainstream of the late 20th and early 21st century. Heavily influenced by mass media, this collection of ideas permeates the everyday lives of the society. Popular Culture is often viewed as being trivial and "dumbed down" in order to find consensual acceptance throughout the mainstream. As a result, it comes under heavy criticism from various non-mainstream sources (most notably religious groups and countercultural groups) which deem it superficial, consumerist, sensationalist, and corrupted.

***Serious Culture*** would pertain to aspects of literature, art, music, aesthetics, and philosophy which have withstood

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'the test of time', are iconic, widely recognized as 'great', 'classic' and approved of by pundits and academics.

For Clive, there was no distinction to be made; both types of culture were worthy of scrutiny, appreciation and astute analysis: 'Popular culture was my observation point, I had a natural affinity to it and nothing was more natural to me in the world than to say what I thought.'

*Clive's form of engagement with popular culture was a witty penetration based on serious reading. He want to...get everybody high on words and thoughts and ideas... that are cleverly confounding at the same time* (Simon Schama)

In other words, the way to approach popular culture is *from a learned base,* and this is the basis of Clive's' style. If we listen to his review of Melvyn Bragg's television interview with renowned English playwright Harold Pinter, we cannot fail to be amused and impressed with the intelligence of wit that accompanies it.

(In Appendix Four, there is a selection of Clive James' television reviews. Read and enjoy them for their humour, perception and engaging style. And for a large selection, go to: **http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/clive-james/** Further reading and articles on Germaine Greer, Robert Hughes and Barry Humphries will also be found in Appendix Four. )

*'People without a sense of humour shouldn't be trusted with anything...Humour is common sense, dancing'* (Clive James)

## 'The Female Eunuch' makes its presence felt

If a sense of humour is 'common sense, dancing' then the book that made Germaine Greer famous was 'rage cavorting', declares our commentator. 'Part feminist tract, part literary criticism, *The Female Eunuch* was also a dismantling of that Australian masculinist code known as 'mateship'.

*'Everybody now knows that there is something called "womens' liberation." A lot of people think they know what it is but they don't. But a great many more people think they'd perhaps better find out'* (Germaine Greer, 1972)

This important book, written when Germaine was only thirty-three years old, queried the patriarchal view of society, inspiring a generation of women to do the same. Here is an observation from her text, and we can hear the rage and criticism of social norms:

*I'm sick of the powder room, I'm sick of pretending that*



*some fatuous male self-important pronouncements are the objects of my undivided attention. I'm sick of going to films and plays when someone else wants to and sick of having no opinions of my own about either. I'm sick of being a transvestite, I refuse to be female impersonator. I'm a woman, not a castrate...*

Curiously, when this text is discussed by Howard and Germaine, the author is critical of its quality ('it's badly written, I'm afraid'). Archival film of vox-pop questioning of women results in a number of negative responses to the question: 'Do you want to read it?" However, expatriate writer Cathy Lette, however, speaks of the impact *The Female Eunuch* had on her mother; 'it changed her views on everything, on motherhood, on the workplace, on friendships, on the division of housework.' Nonetheless, when this is put to Germaine, she insists she has not changed anyone's life: 'I didn't change your life; *you* changed your life... the thing about the book was not the book... it was the moment... books don't change events, events create books.'

## - as does 'The Adventures of Barry McKenzie'

While Barry Humphries has a characteristically satirical take on Germaine's text, he was at this time having personal difficulties with an allergy to alcohol which saw him dangerously distracted from his work, 'getting drunk, performing in '*Oliver!'* and forgetting which theatre he was appearing in, 'more to be found in the gutters somewhere or being beaten up in back lanes', reflects Phillip Adams, so in conjunction with Australian film director Bruce Beresford, making a film of his comic strip *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie* was a means of re-directing Barry's attention – 'and it worked brilliantly... he played almost three quarters of the characters...'

The 'gormless' protagonist was declared to have 'made a fool of Australia', scandalizing many who considered the humour and the characterization crass and vulgar, 'misrepresenting' Australia.

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## - and *'Heaven and Hell in Western Art'*

Bob, too, had been undergoing emotional difficulties, although outwardly prospering as 'a psychedelic lecturer and an art pundit,' consoling himself with booze and rugs and literature, leading a 'harum-scarum sort of freelance life, in debt, with the bailiffs after him.' But by chance his book *Heaven and Hell in Western Art* caught the attention of the managing director of the American newsmagazine *Time,* who asked 'Why can't *Time* having art writing like this?

And so began in 1970, Robert Hughes' career as art critic for *Time,* and a lifetime of *writing and publishing seminal works like The Shock of the New and The Fatal Shore.*

*'He was a good ranter'* (Simon Schama)

Regarded by American pundits as a 'brave, colourful man who just went counter to everything' his character is encapsulated by art critic Barbara Rose in the words of the Chris Christoferson song, *The Silver-tongued Devil:* 'he's a walking contradiction, partly truth and partly fiction...'

In an interview with John Alexander, a friend of Robert, we learn that he would write scathing critiques of contemporary artists and then mingle with them in a local bar, with no fear of being attacked by them, verbally or otherwise; ' he relished the idea'.

Here is an example of the kind of withering analysis that he was famous for:

*If the cliché of modern sculpture used to be a piece of stone chewing gum with a hole it it, then the cliché of video art is a grainy close-up of some UCLA (University of California and Los Angeles) graduate rubbing a cockroach to pulp on his left nipple for sixteen minutes...*

## Publications and media success- the impact

Germaine Greer, successful in England, now made her presence felt in New York; the birth of feminism in the United States saw *The Female Eunuch* create a great impression, heightened by a much publicized debate in New York's Town Hall, captured in the documentary *Town Bloody Hall,* between the provocative and famed novelist Norman Mailer and a panel of well-known feminists including Germaine. In awe of Mailer's talents and with Mailer obviously struck by her formidable intelligence, the experience was a sensation. Despite Mailer's reputation for sexism, Germaine found him admirable because he appeared to understand and empathize with the 'vulnerability' that every writer feels.

And Barry Humphries, in his various impersonations of Dame Edna Everage and Sir Les Patterson, found himself a television celebrity and in his own way, according to writer Kathy Lette, is a wonderful 'parody' of the 'sexist oaf' not uncommon in the Australian workplace.

*"Did you see Clive James the other night? Absolute classic!" 'You'd hear that a dozen times a day on one of the shows.'* (Martin Amis)

Clive James now found himself at the helm of a television talk-show, thoroughly enjoying the performing aspect of his occupation, and encompassing a viewing audience, when the programme was at its height, of seventeen million viewers. The show aired for twenty years. The product of such mainstream popularity so often means a disregard of serious literary abilities - people who host television shows aren't capable of 'higher' artistic achievement, goes the mantra. And Clive James *is* a serious writer – of poetry, memoirs, novels and translations.

Robert Hughes was once warned by Clive James that if he 'did too much TV, nobody who mattered would ever take him seriously.' 'I'm glad,' Hughes wrote later, ' that I ignored his advice and happier still that he did.' Hughes' first great television series was *The Shock of the New,* and his style was riveting; a 'lyrical aggressive, erudite, clear explanation of the history of Modernism'.

## And what is 'Modernism?'

**Modernism** is a philosophical movement that, along with cultural trends and changes, arose from wide-scale and far-reaching transformations in Western society in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Among the factors that shaped Modernism was the development of modern industrial societies and the rapid growth of cities, followed then by the

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horror of World War I. Modernism also rejected the certainty of Enlightenment thinking, and many modernists rejected religious belief.

Modernism, in general, includes the activities and creations of those who felt the traditional forms of art, architecture, literature, religious faith, philosophy, social organization, and activities of daily life were becoming outdated in the new economic, social, and political environment of an emerging fully industrialized world.

As we watch archival film of Hughes standing before the camera and expounding on the various art works he has targeted for analysis, we can sense how he made these works 'come alive' as those who worked with him declare. An astute observer of the contemporary art world, he is said to have accurately predicted the demise of Modernism as an art movement - a mark of profound perception.

*'A man in a dress - a licence for mischief!'* (artist Grayson Perry)

As novelists declare that the characters they create take on an independent life of their own, so it appears that Barry's famous characters of Dame Edna and Sir Les Patterson also evolved to 'escape' their creator. She is now, according to devotee Howard, 'a supreme affirmation of unfettered life'.

## Nostalgia

'*The other side of the exhilaration of leaving home is a longing to go back.'* (Howard Jacobson)

At the height of the brilliant careers our four Australians turned their thoughts to the Australia they had left. Again, we are presented with the contention that Barry, Germaine, Bob and Clive did great things because they were far from home, 'away from any comfortable, consoling sense of belonging.' The beauty and ease of 'The Lucky Country' meant that distraction may result in aspiring to a development of one's talents. Our famous four are now queried about how, in retrospect, the influence of Australia may have impacted on their resultant international success. They speak with fondness and wisdom of the land they left behind:

***Clive:***

*I don't think I could have come from anywhere else...I think my impudence is Australian, my insensitivity is Australian, my lack of respect for social nuance and position is Australian.*

*Unreliable Memoirs,* Clive's 'breakout book' published in 1980 to the warmest of receptions is nevertheless 'shot through with an anticipation of melancholy', says Howard, and the closing sentence is apt in demonstration of this, writing of *the light on the Bridge calling us home. Pulsing like a beacon through the days and the nights, the birthplace of the fortunate sends out its invisible waves of recollection.*

***Germaine:***

*My generation grew up without fathers till at least we were six or seven... all our relationships with our fathers were never quite right and one of the reasons that we are the way we are is because we lacked that parental element.*

***Robert*** ;

According to Howard, this Australian seemed to have taken the absence of his deceased father and transferred it to his text *The Fatal Shore, '*burning with the rage of the disinherited', having its readers 'thrust back into history', memorializing the 'total cruelty of (Australia's) founding.'

## Homeland critics

*They were there, we were here... they weren't central to what was happening here'* (PhillipAdams)

Australians found it hard to forgive any of them for having kicked their heels clear from the country years before, and it appears that although their fame was known, their celebrity met with a degree of criticism. 'Years went by when we all got it in the neck from resident Australians,' reflects Clive, and when Germaine visits Australia as she often does, she is queried for some of her more outspoken opinions. 'We don't like people who go away' reflects writer Peter Carey.



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It was, sadly, a mightier hand than Australian public opinion that cut Robert Hughes down. A shocking car accident in the outback of Western Australia saw the art critic almost fatally injured, 'bloodier than Banquo' in his own words. He never fully recovered and the resultant publicity took its toll on him as well; charges of elitism and the 'silver spoon' that he had been born with were the stuff of scathing comment. Despite this adverse press reaction, Hughes' love for Australia was known to his friends; he was deeply touched by his plaque set along Writers Walk. 'He was our Dante', says Peter Carey,' he did take us on a ride into Hell, the hell of the beginning of our country,' a much needed 'trip' according to this writer and friend.

## What of the future?

'Is there a last frolic in them?' asks Howard. Germaine has set up *The Friends of Gondwana Rainforest* in order to protect the most threatened sub-tropical rainforest I the world - a departure from the work of *The Female Eunuch* and 'this is as it should be,' she declares.

And is Dame Edna now really about to hang up her frock? Barry declares he is 'sick of trailing her around', but 'she might be doing the odd television spot'. (Barry has recently been performing in straight dramatic television roles and musical performances. He has a large body of work in film, novels and memoirs.)

And Clive has crowned a career of astonishing versatility with a translation of one of the greatest of all epic poems - Dante's *Divine Comedy* - 'a verse translation of the verse masterpiece.' 'I'm clearing my desk and resigning myself to the fact that I can't do anything big. The idea of writing the perfect poem still attracts me,' he adds.

'These films have been a sort of requiem for all of (these Australians),' reflects Howard:

*Clive, very ill and writing exquisite poems of remorse, Barry indulging Dame Edna for one final demonic act of comic cruelty and Germaine concentrating her energies on one small Garden of Eden instead of the great battlefield of ideas she once audaciously commanded...*

Each responds with a little 'gallows humour' of the way they might wish to be buried.

*I might want to be eaten:'* Germaine.

*Outside my parents' house was a grassy verge called a nature strip and there might be nice, if there was enough room for people to leave bouquets of flowers. A state funeral ...might be a nice little event and I think I'll stay alive for it:* Barry.

*Strangely enough, I'm not afraid to die in your own time, having lived a full and rewarding life is a great privilege; it's bad manners to complain:* Clive.

Finally, it is once more Howard's propensity for the apt summary as he declares of his friends,

*They called Australia a culturally stagnant country but don't they prove that you can come from a rough house and be more civilized for it. Australia taught them to mistrust cant. To question authority. To nose out self-righteousness. And to imagine on an epic scale.*

*And was it not for these qualities that we have admired and loved them all?*



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# APPENDIX ONE:
## BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES



- **Harold Pinter:** Activist, Screenwriter, Poet, Playwright. Harold Pinter is a renowned playwright and screenwriter. His plays are particularly famous for their use of understatement to convey characters' thoughts and feelings. In 2005, Pinter was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Inspired in part by Samuel Beckett, he created his own distinctive style, marked by terse dialogue and meaningful pauses. He was the son of a Jewish tailor and grew up in a lower middle-class neighborhood in London.

  During World War II, Pinter saw some of the bombing of his city by the Germans. This firsthand experience of war and destruction left a lasting impression on Pinter. At the age of 18, he refused to enlist in the military as part of his national service. A conscientious objector, he ended up paying a fine for not completing his national service.

  Pinter started out as an actor. Pinter wrote a short play, *The Room*, in 1957, and went on to create his first full-length drama, *The Birthday Party*. Critic, Harold Hobson of wrote that Pinter was "the most original, disturbing and arresting talent in theatrical London.' With 1960's *The Caretaker*, Pinter had his first taste of success. *The Homecoming* (1965), considered by some to be his masterwork, explored familial tensions. In 2005, Pinter was honored with the Nobel Prize for Literature. The selection committee cited Pinter a writer "who, in his plays, uncovers the precipice under everyday prattle and forces entry into oppression's closed rooms." Some saw the choice of Pinter, an antiwar campaigner, as a political statement. For a detailed biography, see: **http://www.biography.com/people/harold-pinter-9441163#death-and-legacy&awesm=~oDKwNdiFGi31wv**

- **Bruce Beresford:** (born 1940) is an Australian film director who has made more than 30 feature films over a 50-year career. Notable films he has directed include *Breaker Morant* (1980), *Tender Mercies* (1983), *Crimes of the Heart* (1986) and *Driving Miss Daisy* (1989).

- **Norman Mailer:** Norman Mailer burst on the scene in 1948 with *The Naked and the Dead,* a partly autobiographical novel about World War II, and for the next six decades he was rarely far from the center stage. He published more than 30 books, including novels, biographies and works of nonfiction, and twice won the Pulitzer Prize: for *The Armies of the Night* (1968), which also won the National Book Award, and *The Executioner's Song* (1979).

  He also wrote, directed, and acted in several low-budget movies, helped found The Village Voice and for many years was a regular guest on television talk shows, where he could reliably be counted on to make oracular pronouncements and deliver provocative opinions, sometimes coherently and sometimes not.

  Mailer belonged to the old literary school that regarded novel writing as a heroic enterprise undertaken by heroic characters with egos to match. He was the most transparently ambitious writer of his era, seeing himself in competition not just with his contemporaries but with the likes of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky.

- **(Edward) Gough Whitlam:** Gough Whitlam became Australia's 21st Prime Minister on 5 December 1972. Whitlam led the reform of the Labor Party platform during the ALP's long years in Opposition. As Prime Minister he immediately set about implementing a reform program that included strengthening Australia's status by making Queen Elizabeth II Queen of Australia. His government drew on international agreements to develop programs on human rights, the environment and conservation. His Labor government, the first after more than two decades, set out to change Australia through a wide-ranging reform program. Whitlam's term abruptly ended when his government was dismissed by the Governor-General on 11 November 1975. For more details, see: **http://primeministers.naa.gov.au/primeministers/whitlam/**

- **Peter Carey:** born in Australia in the sleepy country town of Bacchus Marsh in 1943, Peter Carey has become one of Australia's most celebrated authors. His first job was at an advertising agency where, unusually, he was introduced to the world of great writers. His first work was published in 1974 and made him an overnight success. *War Crimes*, *Bliss*, *Illywhacker*, *Oscar and Lucinda* made his name. *Illywhacker* was short listed for the Booker Prize. *Oscar and Lucinda* won it. A prolific writer, he now lives in New York.

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# APPENDIX TWO: MISCELLANEA

1. ***The Female Eunuch:*** In the early 1970s, a woman's role in society was still set by male expectations. While women were expected to work and be educated, it was considered more important that they marry and become housewives. Women were also paid less than men for the same work, and denied many opportunities because they were women.

   In 1970, Australian-born author Germaine Greer wrote *The Female Eunuch*, a book that challenged a woman's traditional role in society, and provided an important framework for the feminist movement of the 1970s.

   *The Female Eunuch* called on women to reject their traditional roles in the home, and explore ways to break out of the mould that society had imposed on them. It also encouraged women to question the power of traditional authority figures – such as doctors, psychiatrists, priests and the police – who at the time were not used to being questioned, and to explore their own sexuality.

2. ***mimeograph machines:*** A mimeograph is a duplicating machine used to make copies by pressing ink through the holes of a stencil and onto sheets of paper. This type of machine is also known as a stencil duplicator, mimeo, or mimeograph machine. There are various kinds of mimeographs, including single drum and dual drum versions, and they can be powered by an electrical motor or hand cranked to produce copies without the use of electricity. The mimeograph was invented by Thomas Edison in the late 19th century, and mimeographs were widely used in offices, schools, and similar settings until the late 1960s when they began to be replaced by other duplicating machines, such as photocopiers and the offset printing press. Mimeographs are uncommon today, but are still favored by some users because they are cheap, reliable and simple to operate.

3. ***transvestite:*** a person and especially a male who adopts the dress and often the behavior typical of the opposite sex especially for purposes of emotional or sexual gratification.

4. ***Oliver!:*** Oliver! is a British musical, with music and lyrics by Lionel Bart. The musical is based upon the novel *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens.

5. 'Poms' The terms *pommy, pommie* and *pom*, in Australia and New Zealand usually denotes an English person (or, less commonly, people from other parts of the UK).

   There are several folk etymologies for Pommy or Pom. The best-documented of these is that *pommy* originated as a contraction of "pomegranate" According to this explanation, "pomegranate" was Australian rhyming slang for "immigrant" (*"Jimmy Grant"*). Usage of "pomegranate" for English people may have been strengthened by a belief in Australia that sunburn occurred more frequently among English immigrants, turning those with fair skin the colour of pomegranates. Another explanation – now generally considered to be a false etymology – was that "pom" or "pommy" were derived from an acronym such as POM ("Prisoner of Millbank"), POME ("Prisoner of Mother England") or POHMS ("Prisoner Of Her Majesty's Service"). However, there is no evidence that such terms, or their acronyms, were ever in use here.

6. ***The Adventures of Barry McKenzie:*** The Adventures of Barry McKenzie is a 1972 Australian film starring Barry Crocker, telling the story of an Australian 'yobbo' on his travels to the United Kingdom. Barry McKenzie was originally a character created by Barry Humphries for a cartoon strip in *Private Eye.* The movie was the first Australian film to earn a million dollars, and a sequel *Barry McKenzie Holds His Own* was made.

   Barry Humphries appears in several roles, including: a hippie, Barry McKenzie's psychiatrist Doctor De Lamphrey, and as Aunt Edna Everage (later Dame Edna Everage). Humphries would later achieve fame with the character of Dame Edna in the UK and USA. The film was produced by Phillip Adams, and directed by Bruce Beresford.

7. ***Marx, Marxism:*** The philosopher, social scientist, historian and revolutionary, Karl Marx, is without a doubt the most influential socialist thinker to emerge in the 19th century. Although he was largely ignored by scholars in his own lifetime, his social, economic and political ideas gained rapid acceptance in the socialist movement after his death in 1883. Until quite recently almost half the population of the world lived under regimes that claim to be Marxist. This very success, however, has meant that the original ideas of Marx have often been modified and his meanings adapted to a great variety of political circumstances. In addition, the fact that Marx delayed publication of many of his writings meant that is been only recently that scholars had the opportunity to appreciate Marx's intellectual stature.

   The term '*communism' i*s applied to Marx's political philosophy. Former communist nations like the GDR (German Democratic Republic), the USSR (Union of soviet Socialist Republics) and others were classified under this heading. 'Marxism' is the term applied to

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Marx's philosophy. For more detail see: **http://www.historyguide.org/intellect/marx.html**

8. **CIA:** The Central Intelligence Agency. This is a United States government organization dedicated to *preempt threats and further US national security objectives by collecting intelligence that matters, producing objective all-source analysis, conducting effective covert action as directed by the President, and safeguarding the secrets that help keep (the) nation safe.*

   The United States has carried out intelligence activities since the days of George Washington, but only since World War II have they been coordinated on a government-wide basis. To make a fully functional intelligence office, post-war President Truman signed the National Security Act of 1947 establishing the CIA. The National Security Act charged the CIA with coordinating the nation's intelligence activities and correlating, evaluating and disseminating intelligence affecting national security. The CIA has a detailed and extensive website at: **https://www.cia.gov/about-cia/history-of-the-cia**

9. ***Time Magazine: Time*** (often written in all-caps as **TIME**) is an American weekly news magazine published in New York City. It was founded in 1923 and for decades dominated by Henry Luce, who built a highly profitable stable of magazines. A European edition (*Time Europe*, formerly known as *Time Atlantic*) is published in London and also covers the Middle East, Africa and, since 2003, Latin America. An Asian edition (*Time Asia*) is based in Hong Kong. The South Pacific edition, which covers Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands, is based in Sydney, Australia. In December 2008, *Time* discontinued publishing a Canadian advertiser edition.

   *Time* has the world's largest circulation for a weekly news magazine, and has a readership of 25 million, 20 million of which are based in the United States.

10. ***Puritanism:*** In the modern world, this term may refer to :

    1. a 16th century religious doctrine espoused by those who called themselves 'the Puritans'. This Christian sect demanded a rejection of worldly pleasures and a severe, disciplined lifestyle.
    2. Scrupulous moral rigor, especially hostility to social pleasures and indulgences. Howard Jacobson refers to Germaine Greer's 'puritanism' as a way of describing her suspicion of hedonism (see Appendix) and her lack of self-promotion.

11. ***Vanity Fair: Vanity Fair*** is a magazine of popular culture, fashion, and current affairs published by Condé Nast. The present Vanity Fair has been published since 1983 and there have been editions for four European countries as well as the U.S. edition. This revived the title whose last title publication was February 1936 after a run from 1913. There are currently four international editions of Vanity Fair being published, namely in the United Kingdom (started 1991), Spain, France, and Italy, with the Italian version published weekly.

12. ***Feminism:*** a doctrine based on the advocacy of women's rights on the grounds of the equality of the sexes, advocating social, political, and all other rights of women equal to those of men. The Feminist Movement is an organized movement for the attainment of such rights for women. Writers like Germaine Greer are regarded as 'the first wave' of feminist writers.

13. ***'love-in':*** While Howard Jacobson uses this term to describe the attraction between Norman Mailer and Germaine Greer, he is actually suggesting that the attraction arose from a meeting of and appreciation of intellects and humor. The original definition of a 'love-in' refers to the 1960's 'hippie' era: 'a gathering at which people express feelings of love, friendship, or physical attraction towards each other.

14. ***'Town Bloody Hall'***: Mark Holcombe, in the New York magazine *Village Voice* describes an event that took place in New York City on April 30th, 1971:

    *a standing room only audience of local literati and feminists packed New York City's Town Hall to watch Norman Mailer, who had just written "The Prisoner of Sex," grapple with a panel of passionate feminists. The subject was Women's Liberation, an issue on which Mailer seemed like the devil's own advocate.*



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*There to test him was a fearsome panel of feminist representatives, among them journalist and lesbian spokeswoman Jill Johnston; legendary literary critic Diana Trilling; president of The National Organization of Women (NOW), Jacqueline Ceballos; and possibly his toughest match, the glamorous and razor-tongued author of The Female Eunuch, Germaine Greer.*

*On the streets it was simply Mailer versus Greer in a knockdown debate on women's liberation. The event, produced by Shirley Broughton and her ongoing Theatre For Ideas, turned into true theatre for the celebrity-stuffed audience, who vigorously offered opinions and roared their approval and disdain throughout the raucous affair. It remained the most stimulating and entertaining action to date in the continuing comedy/drama of the war between the sexes and is reverently referred to by writers on the subject...*

15. ***The Pentagon:*** Three buildings housing great institutions of the U.S. government have come to be regarded as national monuments and have become part of national and international history: the White House, the Capitol, and the Pentagon. The Pentagon is three in one: It is a building, an institution, and a symbol. It is an engineering marvel—a product of its time and civilization. It is doubtful that any building of comparable size and utility has been constructed before or since so expeditiously.

    The institutional status of the Pentagon derives from its role as nerve centre of the country's armed forces—the largest of U.S. government institutions. From 1942 to 1947 it housed the War Department and since then the major elements of the Department of Defence: the Office of the Secretary of Defence, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the highest echelons of the headquarters of the four services. From the Pentagon the President and the secretary of defence have exercised worldwide command and control of the country's armed forces.

    A symbol to the nation and the world since its beginning, the Pentagon above all is a metaphor of American power and influence with all the good and bad images such a symbol suggests.

16. ***Avant garde*** The **avant-garde** (from French, "advance guard" or "vanguard", literally "fore-guard") are people or works that are experimental or innovative, particularly with respect to art, culture, and politics. The avant-garde pushes the boundaries of what is accepted as the norm or the status quo, primarily in the cultural realm. The avant-garde is considered by some to be a hallmark of modernism, as distinct from postmodernism. Many artists have aligned themselves with the avant-garde movement and still continue to do so, The avant-garde also promotes radical social reforms.



17. ***'The silver spoon'*** The English language expression silver spoon is synonymous with wealth, especially inherited wealth; someone born into a wealthy family is said to have "been born with a silver spoon in his mouth". As an adjective, "silver-spoon" describes someone who has a prosperous background or is of a well-to-do family environment, often with the connotation that the person doesn't appreciate or deserve his or her advantage, it being inherited rather than earned. In Australia the expression "silvertail" is also used, with nearly identical meaning. It has been used in cultural or political situations to describe someone as aristocratic or out of touch with the common people.

18. ***Dante:*** **Durante degli Alighieri**, simply called **Dante** (c. 1265–1321), was a major Italian poet of the Middle Ages. His Divine Comedy is widely considered the greatest literary work composed in the Italian language and a masterpiece of world literature. In Italy he is called il Sommo Poeta ("the Supreme Poet") and il Poeta. He, Petrarch, and Boccaccio are also called "the three fountains" and "the three crowns". Dante is also called "the Father of the Italian language".

19. ***Friends of Gondwana Rainforest :*** Friends of Gondwana Rainforest is a Registered Charity in the UK, set up at the beginning of 2011 to highlight the plight of the remnant rainforests of the ancient continent of Gondwana. Their website is: **http://gondwanarainforest.org/**

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# APPENDIX THREE: VOCABULARY

1. **Cavorting:** (verb participle) to behave in a high-spirited, festive manner
2. **Patriarchy** (noun) 1. a form of social organization in which the father or male is head; the supreme authority in the class or tribe and descent is reckoned on a male 'line.' 2. A society or community based on this social organization.
3. **Fatuous:** (adj) foolish, inane
4. **Photogenic:** (adj) having features that look well in a photograph
5. **Polemic:** (noun) a controversial argument against some opinion or doctrine
6. **Unscrupulous:** (adj) unprincipled, unrestrained by conscience
7. **Degenerate:** (noun) 1. one who has fallen below a normal or desirable level in physical, mental or moral qualities; 2. (verb) to diminish in quality
8. **Gormless:** (adj) lacking in initiative, foolish
9. **Bristle** (verb): to become annoyed or irritated
10. **Tract:** (noun) a brief treatise or pamphlet for general distribution, usually on a religious or political topic.
11. **Pundit:** (noun) a learned person, expert or authority; a person who makes comments or judgments, especially in an authoritative manner
12. **Psychedelic:** (adj) of or noting a mental state which intensifies sensory perception, also hallucinations and distortions, pertaining to the drugs which produce this state, eg, LSD.
13. **'Harum-scarum'**(adj) (adj) reckless, rash, irresponsible
14. **freelance** (noun or adj) a person who works as a writer, designer, performer or the like, selling work by the hour, day or job.
15. **Bailiff:** (noun) an officer employed to execute writs and make arrests for unpaid debts.
16. **Scabrousness:** (noun) the act of being risqué, daring to offend
17. **Louche** (adj): 'shady', disreputable
18. Voracious: (adj) exceedingly eager or avid to consume, either food or other; eg, *a voracious reader.*
19. **Erudite:** (adj) learned or scholarly, knowledgeable
20. **Decorum:** (noun) dignified behaviour, politeness
21. **Narcissist** (noun) a person who is overly self-involved, often vain and selfish
22. **Smitten:** (verb) 1. Struck as with a hard blow 2. Grievously or disastrously stricken or afflicted. 3. Very much in love
23. **Condescension:** (noun) behaviour that is patronizing; treating someone as if he/she were inferior
24. **'chunder':** (verb) vomit; originating from old seafaring days(See Urban Dictionary)
25. **mogul:** (noun) an important, powerful or influential person
26. **insidious: (**adj) entrapping, beguiling; or treacherous, deceitful
27. **coruscating :** (adj) sparkling, gleaming
28. **manifest:** (adj) obvious, readily perceived by the eye or the understanding
29. **sublimities:** (noun) something of high moral, aesthetic, intellectual or spiritual value; noble, exalted
30. **nostalgia:** (noun) a wistful desire to return in thought or fact to a former time in one's life, to one's homeland, family or friends
31. **nuance:** (noun) a slight difference or variation in expression, meaning or in colour or tone
32. **elitism:** (noun) practice or belief in rule by an elite, ie, a select or favoured group of people
33. **requiem:** (noun) a funeral service for the deceased
34. **cant:** (noun) insincere, especially conventional expressions of enthusiasm for high ideals, goodness or piety.
35. **Teetotaler:** one who never drinks alcohol

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# APPENDIX FOUR: FURTHER READING/VIEWING

## Clive James: REVIEW: *Boardwalk Empire*, series four, the final episode

Obviously Coca Cola did not come through with permission to quote their logo. But in all other respects Boardwalk Empire is the full blast from the past. If you can't stand looking at Steve Buscemi, you can always look at the furniture and wallpaper in his mansion. And if you're wondering where the actor Stephen Graham, playing Al Capone, learned to be such a cuddly psychopath, the answer is that he played Baby Face Nelson in Public Enemies. By now the Americans have as big a gift for the traditional as we have; and they have a lot more money.

To stay with the bad guys for a moment, badness is incarnated by Billy Bob Thornton, playing the mad-eyed top villain Lorne Malvo in the new series Fargo (Channel Four). Billy Bob not only has bad tattoos and a bad smile, he has bad hair: it hasn't become a plot-point yet, but surely, as the episodes unfold, that rug will have to be lifted, thus to reveal whatever lies beneath. A tattoo of a coiled dragon, probably...

## Clive James REVIEW: The Winter Olympics has been going downhill since the opening ceremony.

To my perhaps jaded eye, the Winter Olympics (BBC One & BBC Two) has been, since the opening ceremony, all downhill, especially when the skiers are not going downhill at all, but are slogging along the level snow for miles before lying down to fire a rifle. A lot of the winter sports are dead boring. But there are a few unmissable events, mainly on the ice-rink; and anyway there was the opening ceremony, which featured Vladimir Putin and, helping to carry the Olympic flag, a young lady rhythmic gymnast who might very well be, we were told, Putin's unofficial inamorata.

We were told this by our normally strait-laced BBC commentary team, headed, for these Olympics, by the doughty Clare Balding, now thoroughly established as the Beeb's go-to girl for flogging excitement into a dull sport. Clare can keep a straight face while referring enthusiastically to "legends of the luge". According to my researches, there is nobody alive who can name even a single legend of the luge. There are people who own a luge who can't name a legend of the luge.

Theoretically, to watch someone lying on their back as they ride a tea-tray into the pit of doom should be madly exciting, but it is not. Nor are the heavily publicised new acrobatic snow-board events all that gripping after you have seen the first competitor do all the tricks. The next competitor does all the same tricks and it is up to the raving commentator to provide the excitement. "There's the double upside inside switchback triple twist!"

But hush, the skaters are on the rink, and once again the Russians have manufactured a 15-year-old miracle girl. Linking her jumps in a legato line, she is cooler than the ice. We have seen it all before, but it's still pretty wonderful. There were a few real-life episodes missing from the dramatised Russian history spectacular in the opening ceremony, but they can be legitimately proud of some of their skaters, those glittering incarnations of a great poetic tradition....

Louis Nowra: '***The Better Self?*** (The Monthly, Politics Section) reviews Germaine Greer's canon: **http://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2010/february/1329283585/louis-nowra/better-self**

(According to a fellow Australian writer, Louis Nowra, Greer fundamentally misunderstood how women tick, and modern realities have debunked her vision of how they would live after casting off traditional shackles. In his essay to mark The Female Eunuch's 40th anniversary, Nowra lam-

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basts the book as “hopelessly middle class” and Greer’s depiction of women as misogynistic.)

Robert Hughes obituary in The Guardian, written by Michael McNay

**http://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/aug/07/robert-hughes**

Robert Hughes on Rembrandt: ‘*Connoisseur of the ordinary:’ The Guardian, Culture, Art And Design > Art: 11th February 2006)*

Robert Hughes on early van Gogh, Rovbert Hughes on Art: ‘*:* The Guardian, Culture, Art And Design > Art: 8th August 2012)

(**http://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/aug/07/robert-hughes-art-writing-highlights**)

**Barry Humphries:** For fifteen witty - and often outrageous! - quotes from Barry Humphries, visit: **http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/8586482/Barry-Humphries-15-witty-quotes.html**

# THE FILM MAKERS

## Producer: Margie Bryant

In her statement accompanying the series *Brilliant Creatures,* our producer speaks of ‘a tweet that led... to an obituary for art critic Robert Hughes, from which a spectacular series was born’. Margie Bryant is the Director/Owner of Serendipity Productions in Sydney, Australia. Serendipity is the co-format owner and executive producer of SBS’s highest rating series WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?, now in pre-production for series six. THE ART OF AUSTRALIA, a BBC/ABC series with Wall to Wall, will commence production early in 2013. Other collaborations include C4 series RICHER THAN YOU THINK, with partners Clear Story and collaborative consumption guru, presenter Rachel Botsman, and Howard Jacobsen and Clive James. Previous co-productions with Films of Record UK and Context TV Germany have yielded high budget, top-end, award-winning documentaries RACE FOR THE BEACH (BBC/SBS) and SHOOTING UNDER FIRE (Nat Geo).

## Director: Paul Clarke

Paul Clarke is a highly successful creator of documentary TV, virtually unknown to the public but among the most resourceful and innovative filmmakers we have. His style is subjective and empathetic. It’s all about making our social history relatable, taking irreverent approaches to material the past presents, and Clarke always looks for passion and humour in what he discovers. Then he underscores it with music, developing narrative sequences and giving each a song to convey the mood

He reflects on the making of *Brilliant Creatures:*

*I couldn’t have become a film director without the influence of the four people who are the subject of this series. For my generation....the work and powerful characters of Germaine Greer, Barry Humphries, Robert Hughes and Clive James stood above us like an Australian Mt. Rushmore.*

Our director’s firm belief is that ‘We only make shows that we would stay home to watch.’ Paul Clarke has a back catalogue of films, shorts, features and series that includes *Whitlam: The Power and the Passion, Recovery, Long Way To the Top, One Night The Moon, Kulli Foot, Love Is In the Air* and *Spicks & Specks*, *Bombora - The Story Of Australian Surfing* and *Wide Open Road - The Story Of Cars In Australia.*

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# CURRICULUM RELEVANCE

*Brilliant Creatures* is a non-print text which will function most appropriately at VCE level in Units 1-4 in the 'Context/ Creating and Presenting' section of the English course. It will apply to the following Contexts:

- The individual and society
- Exploring Issues of Identity and Belonging
- Personal Journeys
- The Australian Identity

*Brilliant Creatures* as a film text may also apply to VCE Media Studies, Units 1,3, and 4.

## Context/Creating and Presenting:

Key terms and concepts are the focus of this English Area of Study. The student task is to identify the ideas, arguments questions and problems and to respond to them in a selection of written modes - expository, creative, persuasive. Resources to develop and engage with the Contexts are widely available from the set texts prescribed by VCAA, to the abundance of examples in everyday life, in media issues, films, novels and the Internet.

# CONTEXT: THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

This VCE English Unit 1 & 2 is linked to and extent to the Units 3 & 4 Context 'Encountering Conflict'; personal experiences of conflict mean that often the individual is placed in a position which means they must make a decision: should they evade the conflict or meet it and defend themselves? How will they respond to it?

The causes of conflict in the life of our *Brilliant Creatures* are/were largely intellectual, social and cultural; they felt their attributes needed development and for this they needed to leave Australia so that they could 'grow'. Germaine Greer speaks of 'the Australian ugliness' and the need to escape it, describing Australia as '**a huge rest home, where no unwelcome news is ever wafted on to the pages of the worst newspapers in the world.**' Robert Hughes speaks of 'a very intense love-hate relationship' with Australia. His father wanted him to be a lawyer; instead he chose art and art criticism. There was a time when he was considering renouncing his Australian citizenship as a result of media treatment. He speaks of 'this silly notion that I've seen expressed in recent years that in some way expatriation is treason." And Barry Humphries has remarked that 'living permanently in Australia is rather like going to a party and dancing al night with one's mother.'While many Australians in the youth of our four individuals regarded Australia with great pride, many also felt in conflict with this sentiment. The impact of international society on the developing talents and careers of our four is also an aspect of this Context that can be explored.

Questions that need to addressed in this Context:

- What features of a society might we find a desire to rebel against?
- How does society shape us as individuals?
- What elements constitute an individual?

# CONTEXT: EXPLORING ISSUES OF IDENTITY AND BELONGING

In the context *Exploring Issues of Identity and Belonging*, the title gives equal emphasis to identity and belonging, suggesting that each is related to the other. The groups we choose to belong to and the ways we connect with others help to form our identity. Together, these issues go to the heart of who we are and how we present ourselves to the world.



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## What is Identity and Belonging?

An identity is who or what a person or thing is. Your identity defines who you are. It is a self-representation of your interests, relationships, social activity and much more. Our sense of identity and belonging is impacted by various factors, including our experiences, relationships, and our environment. The journey to find identity and belonging can often be a struggle, since we ask ourselves, 'who am I?' vs. 'who do others want me to be?' and 'where do I belong? Where do I fit in?' This point in our lives is completely subjective, meaning that it is our personal view that influences our decisions. The issue of identity and belonging has encompassed humans for many generations, and will remain a key turning point for many to come.

Identity is multi-faceted, meaning that a combination of many traits forms one identity. An identity can be defined as anything, depending on what you wish others to perceive and also how others wish to perceive you. Listed below are some examples of 'identities' :

- **Career identity :** Lawyer, nurse, environmentalist, politician
- **Family identity :** Father, mother, older sister, nephew, cousin
- **Skills identity :** Athletic, intelligent, leader, listener
- **Cultural identity :** History, tradition, religion, gender, ethics
- **Social identity :** Peer group, clique, gang, club, mob, social class

Note that people do not just possess one concrete identity. We are neither just a doctor nor an entrepreneur, but also someone who loves rock music and likes to dine out. In different situations, we may alter our identity accordingly to the environment and the people. For example, you may be lively with your primary school friends, yet more reserved and serious with your high school friends. This is usually due to our innate desire to belong; sacrificing or amending our identity to do so.

## What is belonging?

Belonging means to feel a sense of welcome and acceptance to someone or something. As suggested by Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a psychological theory centered on humans' innate desire for fulfillment, belonging is a need that we naturally seek in order to feel loved. In the same manner as our identities, there are many forms of belonging.

- **Relationships :** Family, friends, partner, teacher, associate, pet
- **Social :** groups, classes, clubs, organisations, teams
- **Environment :** Australia, America, Melbourne, Queensland, countryside, metropolitan, nature vs. man-made environments

If we fail to find a sense of belonging, isolation and depression often ensues. However, there are those who do not belong but are in fact, liberated by their independence. This may be due to their desire to rebel from family tradition, friends' expectations or work commitment and thus, are pleased to be set-apart.

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## What influences identity and belonging?

Everything and everyone can influence a person's identity and belonging. While some influences can be major, such as one's relationship with their family, other influences may be minor, for example an incident with a friend many years ago. For different people, the same experience may have affected them to a different extent, for example, a pair of friends travelling to an art exhibition. While for one friend, the experience was exquisite and a good night out, for the other, it may have inspired them to switch careers and become an artist. Although we all live in the same world where many of our experiences overlap, the reason why we are all unique is because we ultimately choose what does or does not impact us in a crucial or unimportant way. It is through the addition of the myriad parts of our lives that come together to create our identity.

## Why does the struggle with identity and belonging occur?

It is a valid point to argue that everyone has struggled with their identity and belonging during a chapter of their life. There comes a time when our opinions and beliefs begin to differentiate from those around us. During this time, some people may discover where they belong, whereas many others do not. It is not solely one stage of our lives when we are confronted with an identity crisis, but a continuous challenge throughout our lives as we encounter new experiences that will alter our thoughts, emotions and perspective on ourselves.

Each of us is an individual with our own talents and tastes and a unique outlook on the world. Our race, culture, religion, family, environment may be some of the factors that define us as individuals. Some of these factors are outside our control. The schools we attend, the socio-economic conditions we experience in our early years may also impact upon the way we see ourselves. However, identity is not just a simple matter of external circumstances, or of genetics: we all differ from each other in our response to the world and the personalities we develop.

With a few exceptions, one human quality that we all share, despite our individual identities, is the need to belong. However, the cost of belonging can be substantial. Families, for example, may have expectations that conflict with our own individual ambitions. Groups may demand unquestioning obedience and conformity. It is painful, for most of us, to be an outsider but there is often a price to pay for belonging. It can be difficult to balance these conflicting impulses, to be both independently ourselves and to belong to a wider community.



## *Brilliant Creatures* - relevance

As we can see from the 'journey' taken by our four Australians, the desire to develop intellectually, to see the world beyond the comfortable – and often uncomfortable - confines of Australian society - meant that there was a price to be paid: the 'tall poppy' reaction from some in the media, the degree of remorse in hurting or inconveniencing some of those left behind, the nostalgia or possible homesickness after a lifetime abroad, a lack of acknowledgement – or even understanding – of the changes in the land left behind.

## CONTEXT: PERSONAL JOURNEYS

In **http://year11vce-english.wikispaces.com/Journeys**

- the following questions are posed as an introduction to this Context:

- How is the concept of the journey explored in the text?
- How do different journeys challenge us physically, emotionally and intellectually?
- What are the differences and similarities between physical, imaginative and inner journeys?
- What new insights can be gained through experiencing journeys?
- How do journeys influence and change our understanding of ourselves and the world around us?

The dissatisfaction we find in our lives may be an important force in motivating the journey we take and here is where *Brilliant Creatures* is a particularly suitable text for this Context, tracing the early lives of four remarkable Australians, their maturity in their newly adopted countries, their attachment to their homeland despite, for some, their many years of absence.

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## CONTEXT: THE AUSTRALIAN IDENTITY

Discussion Questions

1. What 'stereotypes' are there of the 'typical' Australian? What 'typical' Australian images and representations can you think of? Are they a realistic representation of Australian society?

2. Is the typical Australian identity a 'multicultural' one?

3. Why might some Australian residents feel they do not belong?

4. What is a 'true' Australian?

It is interesting to note that a number of 'talking heads' in *Brilliant Creatures* make observations about Australian identity.

- Kathy Lette comments on the uniqueness of the Australian sense of humour;

- Martin Amis and Simon Schama reflect on the lack of reverence they have towards notions of 'class';

- Clive James speaks of the originality and creative quality of Australian expression, as does Germaine Greer. 'Impudence, insensitivity, lack of respect for social nuance and position', writes Clive, 'makes me Australian'.

- Howard Jacobson speaks of the best qualities of his Australian friends as questioning authority... nosing out self-righteousness... imagining on an epic scale.'

For an excellent unit focusing on this Context, see: **http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/primary/hsie/teaching/stage3/s3_assests/s3_ident.pdf**

## English/EAL Years 11 – 12 – National Curriculum Links

The English curriculum in the senior secondary years continues to provide a range of choice of more specialised courses to meet students' needs and interests. Some examples of options may include the study of film or literature, a general English studies program oriented to vocational uses of English and English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D).

In the Language Strand, students apply their knowledge about language to a variety of disciplines and purposes. In doing so, they demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of grammar and language features from the textual to the word level, and the ability to identify and analyse how language is used, and implement this understanding for different purposes and audiences.

In the Literature Strand, students will better understand literary texts and discuss and debate the elements that make a text culturally valuable. Students engage in extensive analysis of literary texts, in terms of contextual aspects such as social impact, purpose and message. They also analyse literature texts for technical aspects such as language, plot and character development. (Students compare past and present texts in relation to themes, purposes or language features, in order to discuss issues of form, content, and structure). Students compose texts that show informed appreciation of plot and character development, effective language use, and representation and manipulation of ideas.

The Literacy Strand involves students producing a growing range of creative expository, persuasive and other texts under various circumstances with a variety of stimuli, and demonstrate an ability to create written, spoken and multimodal texts both individually and with peers.

## The Arts – Media, Film, Drama: Links to the National Curriculum

The scope and sequence of the Australian Arts Curriculum embodies:

- Dance
- Drama
- Media Arts
- Music

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## Visual Art

Through Media Arts, individuals and groups participate in, experiment with and interpret the rich culture and communications practices that surround them. In media arts, students develop knowledge and understanding of five key concepts: the media languages used to tell stories; the technologies which are essential for producing, accessing and distributing media; the various institutions that enable and constrain media production and use; the audiences for whom media arts products are made and who respond as consumers, citizens and creative individuals; and the constructed representations of the world, which rely on shared social valued and beliefs.

## VCE Media Studies Units 1, 3 & 4

In this subject, at both Year 11 and Year 12, the study of narrative structures and social values demonstrated through a variety of texts – including film – are explored. Story elements working with production elements include:

- the point of view from which the narrative is presented;
- camera/film/techniques and qualities including shot selection, movement and focus;
- lighting;
- acting;
- visual composition and mise en scène;
- sound, including dialogue, music and sound effects.

The content and focus of the four Units of the VCE Media Studies course are:

Unit 1: Representation and technologies of representation;

Unit 2: Media production and the media industry;

Unit 3: Narrative and media production design;

Unit 4: Media: process, influence and society's values.

*Brilliant Creatures* presents as an excellent and highly relevant text for study.

## Unit 1

### *Area of Study 1:*

Focus: An analysis of media representations and how such representations depict, for example, events, people, places, organisations and ideas.

### *Area of Study 2:*

Focus: Technologies of representation; different media forms and their features and practices.

## Unit 3

### *Area of Study 1:*

Focus: The narrative construction of film, television or drama texts; students learn that narrative is a fundamental element of construction of meaning in media products.

## Unit 4

### *Area of Study 2:*

Focus: Media texts and society's values; students undertake the study of an identified significant idea, social attitude or discourse … to critically analyse its representation in the media.

### *Area of Study 3:*

Focus: Media influence; students explore the complexity of the relationship between the media, its audiences and wider community in terms of the nature and extent of the media's influence.



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## WRITING TASKS: A SELECTION OF PROMPTS FOR EACH CONTEXT:

### The individual and society:

1. The values of a society may be judged by the freedoms it allows individuals.
2. Society defines our roles.
3. The relationship between individuals and society is necessarily a fragile one.
4. The individual has an obligation to society.

### Personal Journeys:

1. Personal journeys involve both positive and negative experiences; both are necessary for an individual to grow.
2. Show how individuals change as a result of different influences in their personal journeys.
3. On their personal journeys, individuals have different obstacles and experiences which they must confront and conquer.
4. Our lessons come from the journey, not the destination.
5. It is good to have an end to journey toward, but it is the journey that matters in the end.
6. At no time are we ever in such complete possession of a journey, down to its last nook and cranny, as when we are busy with preparations for it.
7. We find that after years of struggle that we do not take a trip; a trip takes us.

### Exploring Issues of Identity and Belonging:

1. Sometimes we need to accept change in order to grow.
2. Each person has different identities for different relationships and situations.
3. Without connection to others there is no *me.*
4. To be true to yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest achievement.

The Australian Identity:

1. Our identity determines where we belong.
2. Unique qualities define an Australian.
3. The true Australian identity is linked to opportunity and the hope of a better life.
4. Perhaps the most significant quality of our true national identity is our ability to accept others who are different from us.

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