And what a queen she is. A regal Samuel Johnson, no Danton. For history the way other nations do. We bouts of bragging followed by sulky Australians. As a nation, we're unfortunately, we do have a queen. have no Thomas Jefferson, no silence. We have never lionised our sure of ourselves, prone to noisy egalitarianism to have someone in the top job who had strong opinions would be an affront to our treasured Englishness and a symbol of her aristocratic heritage. But it wouldn't be much of a life would it?" we cluck at one another. "I feel sorry for her, really." As if she were one of us.

But, of course she isn't. We know nothing of her world view, if indeed she has one, and less of her character and personality. It's all rumour and conjecture the stories of how she clashed with Margaret Thatcher and how fond she was of Ronald Reagan. She is a blank space, a void, into which we project what we will. She keeps her mouth shut we're happy.

And perhaps therein lies the key to her popularity in Australia. We look at her and we are transported back to the 50s. We see her scarf and we think of bumper wool prices and the first cars built in Australia. As long as she makes no difference to her.

But Elizabeth the Second would never exhibit a whim like that. Her secret is to reveal nothing of her internal life. In fact, at 65, our queen is notable for never having voiced an opinion on anything of import. She is like the stolidest of suburban Australians: more concerned with dog breeding and horse racing than matters cultural or political. She is the Ford Laser of monarchs.

Look at her dress sense: polyester to the end. I remember once, in Scotland, finding myself at the side of the road along which the royal motorcade was about to travel. The cars came rushing toward me, too fast to distinguish who was riding where. But, just when it seemed my brush with the house of Windsor would be irrevocably blurred, I suddenly noticed a bright orange glow. It was the Queen clad in one of her more electric outfits. She would have been visible from 20 kilometres or more, casting off light like the aftermath of a nuclear accident.

And what about the scarves? You know, the ones dragged over her head and knotted under her chin in the style of Mrs Hilda Gronk, circa 1952. They were fashionable back then, and useful for protecting less permanent waves from inclement weather. What's her excuse now, apart from a stubborn reluctance to wave goodbye to the age of the Morris Minor? She must be the only person who was actually there who is nostalgic for Britain after the war. But that's our queen. It's as though she dressed from op-shops; all frocks and oversized gumboots. She shows a relentless affection for normalcy, 50s suburban style.

This astonishingly ordinary aesthetic sense is reinforced by her bland sense of obligation. She is said to enjoy the ceremonial side of her job, though she seldom shows it. Instead, the queen's face is generally set in a mask of endurance. She stands there in her sensible shoes, while the speeches are being made and the curtains are being drawn, rocking slightly back and forward, her mouth set, her eyes focused neutrally somewhere in the middle distance. Her boredom is obvious, and yet she battles on. And don’t we admire her for it? "It wouldn't be much of a life would it?" we cluck at one another. "I feel sorry for her, really." As if she were one of us.

And perhaps therein lies the key to her popularity in Australia. We look at her and we are transported back to the 50s. We see her scarf and we think of bumper wool prices and the first cars built in Australia. As long as she keeps her mouth shut we're happy.

We've never liked thinking people, after all. Our prototype intellectuals were hard-drinking, self-consciously proletarian boys of the 1890s the Lawsons and the Patersons, the ones popularly perceived to speak in our own language. We don’t like it when someone tells us how we should be thinking. We prefer to worship at the feet of our own image.

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