industrial societies, there is no guarantee that the market will work or evolve in a manner compatible with the nation’s long-term interests and security. The state must retain a significant residual responsibility to steer the process of economic development, to ensure that productive (or strategic) investment occurs as and where the nation requires it, cope with the impact of technological change upon society, and compensate (or retrain) those adversely affected by structural change.

Redefining the state’s role should go together with reasserting the principle of collective social responsibility. Society is not just an aggregate of individuals. Wealth is produced by social co-operation as well as individual effort. Society is fully entitled to appropriate some portion of this wealth (or surplus)—by means of a graduated income tax or by taxes on wealth (or inheritance)—to spend on infrastructure, the social wage, or the less fortunate. Labor should stress the complementarity of state and market (on the model of non-anglo-saxon market societies); the superiority of communitarian value-systems to individualistic; and it should affirm the importance of social equality as a counter to the current stress on freedom, although it may have to shift the emphasis to equality of life chances (or to Mr Whitlam’s “positive equality”) from equality of outcomes. It should press for a fully democratic constitution with basic rights, including now the right to withdraw one’s labour.

Overall, Labor should not make the mistake of looking backwards, of trying to “reinvent socialism” too literally: substantial parts of the socialist program really have gone. It should try instead to develop a more critical and informed approach to the market, which means especially constructing a more balanced and selective view of the state’s role in contemporary society. There is plenty of literature available, critical of the neoclassical paradigm, to develop a supporting communitarian perspective in which many of the ethical concerns of socialists would find a home.

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MALE ORDER

Sexual violence is back on the agenda, reports Ros Mills.

Crimes of Violence: Australian Responses to Rape and Child Sexual Assault, Jan Breckenridge and Moira Carmody (eds). (Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1992.)

Sexual violence is on the public agenda. Not so long ago only feminists, and radical ones at that, spoke out publicly about the prevalence of male violence. Issues concerning male sexual practices which were previously shrouded in secrecy are now part of mediaspeak and government policy. Jan Breckenridge and Rosemary Berreen note that “domestic violence” is “a practice without a history”. Writing on incest they suggest that “the effectiveness of an incest taboo is not evidenced in a capacity to prohibit the occurrence of incest. Rather its effectiveness is best witnessed in the capacity to inhibit public discussion and acknowledgment of the nature and extent of the problem”. Feminists have achieved what previously seemed impossible: public discussion of men’s sexual violence against women and children in the home.

‘Speak-outs’ by feminists are, on the whole, now a thing of the past. Non-funded crisis phones run from private homes and voluntary services in ill-equipped and overcrowded conditions have been replaced in most Australian states by funded (albeit underfunded) public services. In many instances these services are run by feminist professionals with a focus on efficient service provision and therapeutic healing processes. The general feeling is that a battle has been won. But have feminists been too hasty? Have we really dealt once and for all with the question of how, and if, to use the state (government funding, policy, legislation, policing and so forth) to bring an end to male violence? And can we keep male sexual violence on the agenda, other than as aberrant behaviour? For despite the statistics now available, and despite feminist challenges to widely held notions of rape and incest, sexual violence is still understood as the pathological behaviour of a few rather than as the actions of many ordinary men known and sometimes loved by their victims. ‘Normal’ male heterosexual practices have yet to come under public scrutiny.

The contributors to Crimes of Violence are sexual assault workers, researchers and policy makers involved in the area of sexual violence. The collection is, generally speaking, addressed to workers and various professionals who, in the course of their work, come into contact with sexual violence.

And, like many edited collections, it tends to be a mixed bag. Its importance for sympathetic professionals unfamiliar with feminism is indisputable. The debunking of patriarchal myths of rape and incest, the critique of the family and of mother-blame, the importance of believing women’s and children’s stories and giving positive feedback on responses and survival techniques, are familiar to femi-
Possession, Appleyard opens by telling us of his dad who replied to a question about the capacity of a container by giving a formidably exact figure after barely a pause. Dad was an engineer. Such cocksurety can be one of the least attractive aspects of blokeish science (and engineering, with its 'Toys for Boys' ethos, has been among the worst offenders).

But other writers tackled that chestnut effectively years ago. Foremost among them is Steven Rose, professor of biology at Britain's Open University. Rose showed back in 1973 how one can obtain credible views of humanity described at the chemical, physiological, psychological or ethological level. Yet you can make sense of them in terms of social policy and 'the spiritual' only when you put them all together with the other essays we have of the human lot—the socio­logical ones, political ones and so on. Bryan Appleyard finds the world as defined only by science to be arid and

Perhaps the title Crimes of Violence is telling. After all, can we really define rape and incest in terms of a crime of violence and leave out sex? Is it any more useful to define rape in this way than it was in the 70s to define rape as sex and leave out power? Given the nature of patriarchy as eroticised power, can rape be measured in terms of the level of violence acceptable in 'normal' sex acts? And, given the connection between power and sex, can a definition which recognises both be accommodated within 20th century liberal discourse which is based on the myth of 'gender-neutral' equality? Both Breckenridge and Carmody acknowledge these problems in various ways but slide away from confronting them full on.

Crimes of Violence is not just about men's rapacious sexual violence, it seems to me—all this is central to the content—but about feminism in the 90s. Perhaps the importance of this text is that it highlights the necessity for more feminist debate—between feminists in service provision, policy making, academia, and, most importantly, between states. Feminists need to undertake a thorough reappraisal of 'rape culture', male sexuality and feminist interventions. And there is a clear need to acknowledge and locate 'welfare feminism' somewhere within the political grid of feminism. Some of the writers in this collection depict welfare feminism as somehow different and more radical than liberal feminism, but at the same time as offering a more useful negotiating position than radical feminism. Is welfare feminism the only way to go? And is radical feminism really such an anachronism as this collection seems to suggest?

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MY FAVOURITE READ

We asked seven interesting people about their most memorable reading moments of the year. These are their stories...

SHAGGY DOG DAYS
It's been a dog of a year. I look back on dear friends who perished—ones you never dreamed would be gone by Christmas—ABC Radio's Peter Hunt, businessman Ken Myer, and Francis James. Books were picked up and read fitfully, not in my usual unstoppable way. When we used to go to a tropical island with the kids they would ask: 'Why d'you come all this way just to sit on a beach for nine hours turning pages?' 'Because this is my idea of paradise,' I replied.

But I did devour Margaret Atwood's Catseye (Bloomsbury) with its chilling evocation of young cruelty. Her writing is like perfect glass: clear and fragile yet shining in patterns that always take you by surprise.

I'm still moving in fits through A S Byatt's Possession, 511 pages of delicious whimsy and symbolism. The tale is of obsessive involvement with the niceties of a past age and how their reflections are there, just the same in modern relationships. Byatt's scholarship is impressive, but you don't have to let that put you off. I read it as a long-distance eng lit shaggy dog story. Captivity Captive by Rodney Hall is quite a contrast. The writing is spare and pungent. The story is of murder and mystery. Hall is one of our international stars; he's read less than he should be in Australia. This book is a terrific one to start a Rodney Hall quest.

I tried Understanding The Present by Bryan Appleyard but got roundly put off on nearly every page. Appleyard writes for the Sunday Times in London and his theme is the hegemony of science—how it spreads like a cancer invading other territories that should be discrete—taking over spirituality, moral welfare, even commerce. Appleyard opens by telling us of his dad who replied to a question about the capacity of a container by giving a formidably exact figure after barely a pause. Dad was an engineer. Such cocksurety can be one of the least attractive aspects of blokeish science (and engineering, with its 'Toys for Boys' ethos, has been among the worst offenders).

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