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DUTY AND OBLIGATION IN AMERICA AND AUSTRALIA: A COMPARISON

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Should Australia decide, as some would have it, to become a republic in the year 2001 it would find itself constitutionally having to consider many of the questions which had confronted the American Founding Fathers following their their decision to break away from an English monarchy. Chief among them was how to secure a virtuous republic in which royal virtues (which the Americans believed George III had roundly abused) were replaced with civic virtues. Cognisant of the power of the Crown as the means by which "peace, order and good government" were maintained in the American colonies and relying on their previous experience of self-government, they were also aware of the benefits of "people-made" law. Most of the leading thinkers and activitists in the long lead up to the outbreak of the American revolution in 1776 and the final working out of the Constitution of the United States of America just over ten years later were men educated in the classical English tradition and knowledgeable about England generally and about its system of government, its history, and its political philosophy in particular.

In bringing forth a new system of government, they had engaged in a long debate about how to bring together in one system their personal knowledge of the practical and philosophical aspects of government drawn from England and their experience of governing under war-time conditions and their classical learning of Greek and Roman times and of the neo-classical writings of the Renaissance. To read the extensive literature of these times is an exciting experience. The American Founding Fathers debated practically every aspect of government right down to arguments concerning the very nature of mankind and of the necessity for government.

They never doubted the need for some over-arching moral force for order among the people to replace that which they had rejected by defeating England in war and throwing off their allegiance to King George III. Not for them the temptations to madness and excess to which the French were later to fall heir in their revolution only a few years later; not for them the failures of the English revolution under Cromwell the century before. There had to be something new.

The American Founding Fathers took as their inspiration the idea of civic virtue from the classical republics of Greece and Rome. Whether or not they accepted the classical understanding of virtue is open to debate, and in any case this is not as important as it might seem. What matters is that they understood the need to find an alternative to the imperatives of royal virtue in order to sustain their new republic. And they instinctively realized that the greater freedom, the greater the need for an

underlying purpose or set of values which would be viable within the context not of some small city state such as Athens or of a self-governing city such as Florence in the Renaissance, but of a continent yet to be conquered. Influenced as they were by the philosophical and psychological ideas of John Locke, the Founding Fathers sought a definition of civic virtue which stressed the importance of searching for and defining virtues based upon personal sovereignty which would benefit society as a whole.

Thomas Pangle in his stimulating and highly critical study of this aspect of modern republicanism[1] made it plain that the issues of virtue and the understanding of classical republican virtues were key elements in the minds of those involved in formulating the American constitution. However, as Pangle points out, interposed between the American colonial mind and its classical sources were its knowledge of recent history and an understanding of the political and moral philosophies of writers such as Machiavelli, Hobbes and, above all, Locke.

As Pangle points out, the shift of the meaning and end purposes of civic virtues from those centered on the community to those centered on the individual was a revolutionary step. The change, according to Pangle involved a shift away from virtues that sustained status quo and continuity to those which encouraged, through what Max Weber incorrectly called the protestant work ethic, acquisition, investment, expansion, development and change; forces which Adam Smith used as part of the foundations of his epoch making The Wealth of Nations the first edition of which was published in the year of the American Declaration of Independence. The two dates are more than coincidental.

The "cardinal" classical civic virtues, according to Pangle, were "moderation (meaning especially the proper subordination of the sensual appetites), justice (meaning especially reverence for law, unselfish sharing and public spirit), and practical wisdom (especially in assisting one's friends and fellow citizens and taking supervisory care of one's inferiors)." These, Pangle points out, were valued in part "because of their effectiveness in promoting the safety, prosperity and freedom of society."[2] They were also broadly similar to royal virtues which included other virtues such as courage. In these we see the roots of royal or crown virtues and how they came to operate in Australia even, with a little stretch of imagination, in the working of "mateship" and the state's care for the individual. To these one may add other virtues such as justice, obedience, allegiance, patriotism, faithfulness to family, friends, and contracts. But once we begin to think of republicanism as it was argued from the beginning among Americans in the second half of the 18th century, we cannot avoid introducing virtues which also focus on the individual.

The reason for this is not difficult to see. If sovereignty is to be personal, individual, divided and shared out among individuals within a totality of sovereignties, then such a widely diffuse system of rights, obligations and responsibilities would be impossible without some underlying shared or common values—the imposed values of the English monarchy having been discarded.

Unfortunately for Australia, the end of the 20th century is not a time noted for its interest in either moral, ethical, or religious values as was America in the 18th century. Nor does it seem concerned about the position of the individual within society or its relation to government. For, despite all that is said, Australians are not the individualists they suppose themselves to be. It is highly likely that, like the Canadians who labour under a similar system of government and enjoy a similarly long attachment to the Crown and its attendant royal virtues, they would find themselves in a similar position to the American Founding Fathers if and when their royal prop were suddenly to be removed.

Cardinal virtues were, however, conjured up during an era when individuals were subordinate to family, community, and city. Their purpose was to provide the basis for a stable society which in turn nourished as well as protected its members. The recognition and acceptance of these and other subordinate and derivative virtues, such as serving one's country in times of war, was the accepted antidote to what were considered the dangers to the community of self-interest and self-love. These communitarian virtues, ante-dating the Christian era, were taken over and Christianised with the rise of monarchism in Europe under the Holy Roman Empire. Virtue then became associated with the concepts of Christian morality and the monarch's duty to ensure, as a minimum, that the Ten Commandments were observed, and offenders punished for their transgressions. Anyone seeking to restore virtue in a multicultural society, as Australia has now become, must, as did the American Founding Fathers in their search for a new secular order, begin with the verities of republican Greece and Rome.

By contrast, Australia's move into republicanism is generally marked among its political leaders by their total lack of any comprehension of what republicanism means other than the replacement of the Queen of Australia as the hereditary head of state by a commoner head of state. This is despite the plain fact although the commitment of both state and federal governments to virtuous government and democratic ideals is much in doubt, most republicans, and seemingly all parliamentarians of whatever political persuasion, seem determined to maintain the monarchical Westminster system of government intact. Of course it could be argued that Australia's Framing Fathers, worthy Victorians as they were, thought it inconceivable that a country governed by gentlemen (not to mention gentlewomen) would behave in any other way than mindful of their duties, obligations, and responsibilities and according to the cardinal virtues of justice, prudence, temperance, and fortitude.[3] This was certainly the excuse used by Australia's Framing Fathers for deliberately omitting a Bill of Rights from their variant of the United States constitution. Although they may be excused for making such a blunder, its omission profoundly affected the subsequent development of Australia's constitutional and political cultures.

There is, however, no similar excuse to explain Australia's current failure to inquire more deeply into the issues which will inevitably arise consequent upon replacing a crowned head of state by an appointed or elected commoner lacking in everything save what is constitutionally valid and authorised by law. Nothing has yet been proposed to replace the moral imperatives which underpin the authority of the Crown . This is

especially disquieting in an age when tolerance, which admits of standards, has been replaced by neutralism which, having no values of its own, accords all human behaviour exactly equal worth. This is Hobbe's writ large as such morality and virtue as might exist would be no more than what was written into law.

The causes of this comparatively recent change, certainly during the lifetime of anyone over the age of sixty years are, in part, due to the extremes of individualism. However, this is not a sufficient explanation. One of the major causes must be the decline, if not the demise, of the bourgeoisie whose Victorian virtues did so much to temper the excesses of both upper and working classes during the 19th century. It is surprising, therefore, that Marx's real enemy was not the capitalist class as such, but the property owning bourgeoisie and their ways which did so much to direct and maintain the essential spirit of a changing society. Consequently the middle class and their ways became the targets of ridicule and vilification by the left. As a consequence the bourgeoisie were effectively neutralised. Relinquishing their hold on social behaviour, their children became active participants in the demolition of their own class values. This was certainly true of so many of those involved in the 1960s and 1970s "revolt of the young" who saw themselves victims of their class and their parental values: but the real turning point was the Great European War of 1914-1918 when the bourgeoisie knowingly sacrificed their sons on the battlefields of France and Belgium.

One of the key elements in this changing attitude to social values was the development of schools of psychology which increasingly began to see human kind as little more than an intelligent animal responding either to stimuli or a sub-conscious over which it had little or no control. This widely accepted definition of humankind deprived life of any intrinsic meaning. Its acceptance was made all the easier by reductionism and the replacement of theology and philosophy as the queens of science, by physics, mathematics and socio-biology.[4]

The process of dethroning virtue as the principle bonding agent cementing people one to another in a hierarchy of communities began during the Renaissance. It gathered momentum during the early years of the scientific revolution which helped foster the modernisation of European ideas about people, society and government by such savants as Machiavelli in his master work The Prince and Hobbes in his Leviathan.

Machiavelli, a keen observer of the passing scene, sought to replace normative principles and ideals of human behaviour with practical and obtainable goals of human conduct which a ruler could follow. According to Machiavelli virtues were for the mastering of emotion and talents "in ruthless competition for security, riches, dominion, and—rarest but most gratifying—the promise of lasting glory."[5] Machiavelli's virtues separated the people from their ruler since those who acquired them would be a threat to the prince himself. But Machiavelli went even further, concluding that classical virtues led to an attitude of "effeminate humility" that encouraged petty tyrants and fragmented political life. Not surprisingly his critics accused Machiavelli of amorality because he questioned whether virtue was either necessitated by "the fall of man" or created by a synthesis of passion (man's inherent nature) and reason (man's intellect).

Stimulated by the early fruits of the scientific revolution, Hobbes also broke with tradition. His ideas about good and bad were developed as a result of his enchantment with the new mathematics which seemed him to present a better way to deal with issues of morality than basing them on divine order. This led him to postulate that virtues were man-made. Although not entirely original in reaching this conclusion, it enabled Hobbes to show how virtues and other common values became ingredients in the formation and holding together of civil society when translated into positive laws which made men moral and educated them for civility.

The most powerful modern enemies of virtue, seen as qualities inherent or intrinsic to the nature of mankind, were the French positivists and their English associates, the utilitarians. Both schools claimed to be "rational" and in so doing rejected both history and convention. Each in their way inspired the modern schools of economics and sociology in which all explanation is to be found in fact and material evidence and the theories and laws which these might adduce. Psychology and psychiatry were later to lend further support to this pessimistic view of mankind.

The effect of combining positivist and utilitarian thought was to shift the emphasis from "right" behaviour (or means), to"right" ends. The alleged "rightness" of the ends thus justified the over-throw of such inhibitions as might in any way hinder the attainment of these right or "just" ends. Consequently, the removal of the need to justify or relate what was being done to revealed or traditional values while in pursuit of ends became one of the basic tenets of revolutionaries. This was a particularly attractive proposition to those whose aim was to impose upon society, by extreme force if necessary, some pre-figured alternative to the status quo. In this, socialists and those inspired by Marxist "ideals" took a leading part, and where the class war was waged literally nothing was barred in the Procrustean perfection of man and society by ideological zealots. What made this even more tragic was that those who had the freedom to expose the utter falsity of what was claimed to be a just cause, remained silent, or, all too often, were themselves part of the conspiracy.

Basic to all of this was the idea that "good" and "bad" were entirely situational. Traditional values were nothing more than devices to sustain the bourgeoisie. From this it followed that natural or inherent rights were illusions standing in the way of "progress". Even worse, their invocation as a means to limit the power and authority of government was to frustrate the attainment of goals which were superior to the virtues which stood in the way. However, as we are now beginning to appreciate, this is a pure piece of Rousseauian thinking whereby anyone that stands in the way of the attainment of the "general will"—whatever that might be—is a traitor to be dealt with like a traitor.

As Professor O'Brien points out in <u>The People's Case Stated</u>:

> [T]here are choices and we must choose. In the vital matter of how we are to be governed, the essential choice is between the acceptance of evolutionary trial and error or rejection of that idea in favour of acceptance of arbitrary definitions and impositions of the state in constitutional, ethical and moral matters, including

what it means to be human and all that flows from it.[6]

The intellectual power of positivism and utilitarianism and their influence in particular over socialist thinking were immeasurably increased by the uncritical way in which socialism's claim to be the basis of a science of mankind was widely accepted. The shift of emphasis from the classical schools of thought to the new models of thinking in Western universities made positivism and utilitarianism particularly attractive as teaching "aids" as they allowed not only the absorption of the findings of psychology and sociology but also the propagation of a whole range of socialist ideas and thinking. As a new way of looking at the world, past and present, this may not have been entirely wrong; after all, the sum of human knowledge has been expanding steadily since the beginning of the Renaissance and dramatically after 1850. However, the fallacy was that what was taught at universities was all too often taken to be the real world rather than merely a new set of mental constructs about that real world.

The growth of government and the power of governments to intervene cannot, therefore, be divorced from the growth of the universities and the increasing proportion of university graduates in government bureaucracies. There is nothing new in this trend, after all most Western universities began as theological, classical and medical schools closely allied with supplying the needs of church and state. What changed the situation was the switch of emphasis from man as a fallen angel—therefore inherently aware of good and evil—to the 20th century view of man as an animal—only a gene or two away from the chimpanzee.

As Hobbes had already pointed out, the short answer to the question "What are our duties as citizens" is the "Whatever the state decrees". And if government is unlimited in its power, as the Rousseauian, utilitarian and extreme Westminster men claim it ought to be, then virtue as something independent or inherent ceases to exist. Is this what Australia's republicans, having removed the Crown, really want? Or, having divested themselves of one set of values are they in intent on defining a new "Australia" built on virtues yet to be defined? The die-hard republican's insistence that they want no change in the form of government seems to demonstrate that is exactly what they want. As Professor O'Brien points out, the utilitarian view of Australia would oppose federation, reject a true bill of rights (one which offered the individual immunity from the actions of government), support centralism, seek plenary and unlimited powers to implement whatever programmes it thought fit and, using a universal franchise as its tool, seek to be a government in permanent office.[7]

Federalism to Australia's Framing Fathers was merely a vehicle, a means to the end of a politically united geographical Australia. To the American Founding Fathers, on the other hand, the prospect of a strong federal government represented a potential threat to their freedom and a possible return to despotism. The ensuing constitutional arrangement and form of government it created were not only designed to reduce the possibility of a new tyranny, but by accepting the necessity for virtue, included mankind, along with all its foibles, as part of their contract with posterity.

In this regard, the notion of duty, obligation and responsibility as binding forces were implicit in a newer and revolutionary sense: their acceptance was the foundation stone of citizenship. This extended the English notion of government by consent and made citizenship the way by which individuals accepted the duties and obligations of that status. By requiring citizens in those early years to "abjure all foreign kings and potentates", it also ensured that each American had foresworn his or her subject status.[8]

Duty, obligation and responsibility are fundamentally altruistic, but because they begin with loyalties to family, friends and community, they inevitably shade off into less personal and more abstract realms of state, nation and even cosmopolis. The real distinction between what Australians have grown to expect under a constitutional monarchy (where men and women freely give themselves to the service of community, state and nation without thought of reward or even of recognition) and a republic is, therefore, the extent to which a secular, neutralist republic could expect the same response. To assume, without any thought or discussion, that altruistic service would automatically continue under a republic could be a fatal blunder; especially since the"minimalists" want us to concentrate solely upon that the question of an alternative head of state in order better to appreciate our "national identity".

One would have thought that since identity is allied with reputation, which in turn is measured against accepted standards, then a nation that officially abandons its one remaining moral force, would be in grave danger of having no standards or values by which the nation as a whole could be measured. Australia is well known for its pragmatism, but judged by the evidence given at recent royal commissions,[9] improper conduct and corruption in Australia has more often than not been inspired and sustained by government rather than the business community.

Australia's loss of government virtue is currently the most dangerous and insidious threat to our society. With politicians and even judges engaged in various nefarious activities; with executive governments involved in business deals of one kind or another with powerful and often debt ridden wheeler-dealers; with the public purse being debauched without proper supervision; with governments living beyond the country's means and unwilling to face up to the consequences of what they are doing; it is little wonder that so many question whether honesty is any longer the best policy. The corrupting of the "rich and powerful" by the government (whether intentional or not) through its control of legislation and of resources is accompanied by a parallel corrupting of the poor, and no longer powerless, by the darker side of the welfare state where mendicancy has for many become away of life.

In his stimulating work, Wealth and Poverty, George Gilder, a severe critic of capitalism, nevertheless saw that the keys to upward mobility and the way out of poverty lay in "three principles - work, family and faith - interdependently reaching toward children and future". These, "the pillars of a free economy and a prosperous society" were, he believed, "being eroded now in America by the intellectual and political leaders of perhaps the freest and most prosperous of all the world's societies".[10] Gilder's three principles, work, family and faith (and by that he did not mean exclusively religious faith

but faith in the future) provide an operational context for the application of the four cardinal virtues - justice, prudence, temperance, and fortitude. These are at the very core of what is often referred to as "family values" without the speaker having the faintest idea as to what these values are, or were. Some, with more than a backward glance to days when it was every man (and woman) for himself, even refer to them as "Victorian values", when in fact they were, at the time, widely taught and accepted virtues to be aspired to in every day life.[11]

There can be little doubt that Gilder's three principles, work, family, and faith were the salvation of both parents and children in years before the welfare state. It was usually by the example of parents practicing the habits of the virtuous family that virtue was itself passed on from generation to generation.

Although the acquiring of virtue is a personal matter, its observance should be very much a community concern the lack of which often lies at the root of the loss of virtue. Virtue is clearly the foundation stone but there can be little doubt that the practice of virtue out of context, that is, without at least some attention being paid to duty and obligation, robs virtue of its altruism. The state, for example, has a duty to protect the citizen from outside aggressors and internal disorder, as well as to protect the weak, help the poor and sick and provide courts of justice, free from corruption, to dispense justice for all. This is a two-way process; in return, the citizen is obliged to obey laws freely entered into with his consent, to respect the rights of others and duty bound voluntarily to serve his or her country in time of need. Thus citizenship should require the acceptance of responsibilities, among them participating in political life.

The situation facing Australia at the end of the twentieth century, with the overwhelming majority of people prosperous and at work and the nation benefitting from one hundred year's of self-government, is very different from that facing the former thirteen American colonies as they wrote what turned out to be the first truly modern constitution. The Americans made virtue the keystone of the arch of the new republic. Modern Australians, by contrast, are so uncertain and unclear about almost anything that smacks of either virtue or right behaviour that republicanism could deal the coup de grace to what little remains of virtue on the one hand, and the altruistic performance of duty and obligation on the other.

Although most countries with their cultural roots in the classical tradition of ancient Greece and Rome and of Christendom have suffered a loss of virtue, this trend is of comparatively recent origin. It is only in the last forty years that a steady increase in crime, family breakdown and aberrant behaviour had reversed a 150 year downward trend in the simplest of all measures, crime. This index, looked at more closely, points to significant changes in male behaviour; males commit most crime; males are most likely to abandon their family responsibilities; men are more likely to resort to the unrestrained use of violence than women. Thus there seems to be good grounds for arguing that the loss of virtue is very much a male phenomenon.

Because women as a general rule seem not to respond in quite the same way one

is entitled to ask whether women have an inherent understanding of virtue and its basis in self-respect and right conduct. This would at least seem to have been true historically where women in a wide variety of ways have, from the cradle to the grave, moderated the "maleness" of men.[12] Whether female virtue is culturally induced or biologically inherent is not the issue. What is to the point, however, is that females are nowadays less able than they once were, to moderate male behaviour; especially juvenile and immediately post-juvenile male behaviour. There are some signs that this may be only temporary and it would be a tragedy if women were to ape men, as they are sometimes inclined to do, and shed their traditional self-restraint and moderating influence on their menfolk in a kind of "Bonnie and Clyde" folly.

The maleness of our loss of virtue ought more to be recognized for what it is, a failure to understand that virtue among males is not inherent but learned by experience and from example. That is, males become virtuous by the practice of virtue. Aristotle was well aware of this when he wrote that we acquire virtue in precisely the same way in which we learn crafts; "so also, then, we become just by doing just actions, temperate by doing temperate actions, brave by doing brave actions".[13] In seeking for some contemporary explanation for what is occurring to our society we cannot, indeed, we must not, ignore the "maleness" of the problem. If this is true, then the causes may not, as commonly believed, lie in the economic realm, but in the massive shifts in the gender relations between men and women and a waning interest in the acquiring of virtue.[14]

Crime and almost every other form of deviant behaviour among males is almost entirely confined to the learning, experience, and knowledge acquiring age band of fifteen to thirty years of age. It is during these years that males acquire new and lose old traits. While they ought to acquire the virtues which Aristotle said could only be acquired with age, what most of them actually acquire is hardly what Aristotle had in mind.

Human behavior among the young is largely conditioned by home, school and, increasingly, youth culture. Western society's concern with the supremacy of the individual takes on new meaning in an educational framework which, especially in the English speaking world, can be so child-centered as to be almost without meaning within the context of the roots and achievements of their own culture. Thus, the old idea that schools should teach diligence, discipline, perseverance, morality, obedience, and humility, with the teacher providing focus as the major source of what was being taught, no longer holds and the acquiring of virtue no longer holds pride of place.[15]

We cannot blame the education system entirely for this situation as it might just as well be responding to the weakening of parental as well as society's belief in the value of diligence, discipline, perseverance, morality, humility and the central role played by culture norms. Hence the struggle between parents who may wish schools to teach what they themselves may no longer practice or believe cannot be won in the classroom. The spread of "children's rights" interposes a third element in a situation in which children are encouraged to see themselves as individuals freed from the restraints of both family and society in the pursuit of rights. Even so, parents are only partly to blame. Youth

culture, an inheritance of the 1960s, has momentum and is a powerful self-defining force which parents, like teachers, are struggling to comprehend and control.

According to Wilson, the issue of "rights" (seen as existing independently of all else) places "individuality and individual consent front and center on the political stage. ... Kant was hardly breaking new ground when he argued that man must be treated as an end and not merely as a means to someone else's end.[16] In concentrating upon the individual and the rights of individuals we have, however, failed to appreciate that the greater the right, the greater the responsibility.

Thus, the more rights and freedoms are absolute and unlimited, the more they are conditioned (and therefore limited), by acquiring virtue by the acceptance of the obligations and responsibilities that go with, and are the corollary of, the exercise of absolute rights.[17] There is nothing new in this idea. Rousseau used almost precisely the same argument in his Social Contract as part of his scaffolding to support his theory of the general will.

However, even if one rejects (as does the author) Rousseau's theories, we must admit, if we are to talk of a free people in a free society in which government is by consent, that the resultant civil society can only be maintained on the basis that absolute rights are exercised virtuously throughout society and its attendant polity. In this regard, modern government as the only universal force is a not only a part of this covenant of virtue, but has a special role in seeing that justice prevails, laws obtained by consent are obeyed, and, above all, ensures that government is itself virtuous.

All this was much easier when governments played a limited economic role; when state revenues were small, the spread of legislation limited, the welfare needs of the people met by either private or municipal charity, or not at all, and when religion could exercise an enormous influence over society. The temptations for modern governments exceed all that were ever contemplated by the savants of the 18th century who saw an extremely limited role for government. Nowadays, the necessity of obtaining consent at the ballot box has all too often led governments into fields of social welfare and social equity which are tantamount to vote buying out of the public purse: and not all that dissimilar from either vote buying in England before the passage of the Reform Bill of 1830 and the "bread and circuses" policies of the last of the Roman emperors. In Australia such is the size of government that its employees represent the largest single block of votes, amounting to something like twenty five percent of the electoral roll where voting is compulsory and, with their dependents, comprise almost the entire electorate in Canberra, the national capital: a city that has been given the status of a quasi-state, and boasts of ministerial government.

The real distinction between rights and virtues lies in the fact that whereas the former are usually recognized by formal treaty between the ruler and the governed, the latter are the unwritten part of the fabric of a civil society. It is noticeable that virtue has declined in all multi-cultural societies where human rights are observed. This is not because newcomers are any less virtuous than indigenous people (indeed incomers may

even consider themselves more virtuous), but because of the uncertainties which institutionalised multi-culturalism engenders within what was previously an unassailed set of cultural and national norms. But if the majority community is one where individual rights are recognized, then, paradoxically, multi-culturalism is no more than individualism writ large and on behalf of the collective rights of the members of a sub-culture.

Since Australia has gone far beyond the early 1960s and 1970s stages of patronising "restaurant multi-culturalism", one is entitled to question whether a society can be completely happy with itself when all is neutral, non-judgmental and of equal value. It is more likely, however, that the need for a multi-cultural perspective might not extend beyond the first or second generation of immigrants.

What is not fully appreciated, however, is that multi-culturalism, whether one likes it or not, is aimed not so much at maintaining a minority culture, but redefining the mores of the existing and predominant culture. Australia, for example, has developed one of the Western world's most distinctive cultures by bringing about an Anglo-Celtic cultural amalgam unlike anything to be found elsewhere, and certainly not in the british Isles. Even so, and despite a common language, there still exist in Australia hidden but powerful cultural fracture lines of which Irish republicanism is but one. Thus, if multi-culturalism has any long term value it will be as a mechanism whereby much that is now public will become increasingly of private observance, having contributed on the way something to a new definition of what it is to be Australian.

This of course returns us to our original proposition that if a republic based upon the principle of people-as-sovereign is to be established, it must generate a common set of values where virtue and decency transcend all other values. As one who was fortunate enough to have been a serving member of the Indian Army under the old Empire and to have maintained contact with India ever since, as well as travelling widely in the new British Commonwealth of Nations, I am constantly struck by the extent to which the British left behind in their former colonies and dominions a remarkable set of over-arching values which continue to give common values to people of different races, different religions and, above all, of different cultures.

The Anglo-Celtic culture has provided a unifying set of values which continue of their own momentum: each acquiring with time a new identity in the place of their adoption. It is important, therefore, that one should not lose sight of the fact that the settler colony of Australia with its common language has been able to develop a unique variant of Anglo-Celtic culture whose increasing tolerance should provide the way forward for an even more distinctive Australia.

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