



HSC English Prescriptions

Advanced speeches

2009–2012

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Introduction

The following speeches are those detailed for study in the HSC English (Advanced) course for **2009–2012**. (See *English Stage 6 Prescriptions: Area of Study, Electives, Texts: Higher School Certificate 2009–2012*, p 21.)

Module B: Critical Study of Texts

This module requires students to engage with and develop an informed personal understanding of their prescribed text. Through critical analysis and evaluation of its language, content and construction, students will develop an appreciation of the textual integrity of their prescribed text. They refine their own understanding and interpretations of the prescribed text and critically consider these in the light of the perspectives of others. Students explore how context influences their own and others' responses to the text and how the text has been received and valued. (Reread *English Stage 6 Syllabus*, p 52 of the Advanced course.)

Nonfiction – Speeches

The speeches selected for study are the following:

Margaret Atwood, 'Spotty-Handed Villainesses', 1994

Paul Keating, Funeral Service of the Unknown Soldier, 1993

Noel Pearson, 'An Australian History For Us All', 1996

Aung San Suu Kyi, Keynote Address at the Beijing World Conference on Women, 1995

Faith Bandler, 'Faith, Hope and Reconciliation', 1999

Sir William Deane, On the occasion of an ecumenical service for the victims of the canyoning tragedy, 1999

Anwar Sadat, Statement to the Knesset, 1977.

Margaret Atwood

'Spotty-Handed Villainesses'

From a speech given in various versions, here and there, in 1994

...My title is 'Spotty-Handed Villainesses'; my subtitle is, 'Problems of Female Bad Behaviour in the Creation of Literature'. I should probably have said, 'in the creation of novels, plays and epic poems'. Female bad behaviour occurs in lyric poems, of course, but not at sufficient length.

I began to think about this subject at a very early age. There was a children's rhyme that went:

There was a little girl
Who had a little curl
Right in the middle of her forehead;
When she was good, she was very, very good,
And when she was bad, she was horrid!

No doubt this is a remnant of the Angel/Whore split so popular among the Victorians, but at the age of five I did not know that. I took this to be a poem of personal significance – I did after all have curls – and it brought home to me the deeply Jungian possibilities of a Dr Jekyll–Mr Hyde double life for women. My older brother used this verse to tease me, or so he thought. He did manage to make 'very, very good' sound almost worse than 'horrid,' which remains an accurate analysis for the novelist. Create a flawless character and you create an insufferable one; which may be why I am interested in spots.

Some of you may wonder whether the spotty-handedness in my title refers to age spots. Was my lecture perhaps going to centre on that once-forbidden but now red-hot topic, The Menopause, without which any collection of female-obilia would be incomplete? I hasten to point out that my title is not age-related; it refers neither to age spots nor to youth spots. Instead it recalls that most famous of spots, the invisible but indelible one on the hand of wicked Lady Macbeth. Spot as in guilt, spot as in blood, spot as in 'out, damned.' Lady Macbeth was spotted, Ophelia unspotted; both came to sticky ends, but there's a world of difference.

But is it not, today – well, somehow unfeminist – to depict a woman behaving badly? Isn't bad behaviour supposed to be the monopoly of men? Isn't that what we are expected – in defiance of real life – to somehow believe, now? When bad women get into literature, what are they doing there, and are they permissible, and what, if anything, do we need them for?

We do need something like them; by which I mean, something disruptive to static order. When my daughter was five, she and her friend Heather announced that they were putting on a play. We were conscripted as the audience. We took our seats, expecting to see something of note. The play opened with two characters having breakfast. This was

promising – an Ibsenian play perhaps, or something by GB Shaw? Shakespeare is not big on breakfast openings, but other playwrights of talent have not disdained them.

The play progressed. The two characters had more breakfast. Then they had more. They passed each other the jam, the cornflakes, the toast. Each asked if the other would like a cup of tea. What was going on? Was this Pinter, perhaps, or Ionesco, or maybe Andy Warhol? The audience grew restless. ‘Are you going to do anything except have breakfast?’ we said. ‘No,’ they said. ‘Then it isn’t a play,’ we said. ‘Something else has to happen.’

And there you have it, the difference between literature – at least literature as embodied in plays and novels – and life. Something else has to happen. In life we may ask for nothing more than a kind of eternal breakfast – it happens to be my favourite meal, and certainly it is the most hopeful one, since we don’t yet know what atrocities the day may choose to visit upon us – but if we are going to sit still for two or three hours in a theatre, or wade through two or three hundred pages of a book, we certainly expect something more than breakfast.

What kind of something? It can be an earthquake, a tempest, an attack by Martians, the discovery that your spouse is having an affair; or, if the author is hyperactive, all of these at once. Or it can be the revelation of the spottiness of a spotty woman. I’ll get around to these disreputable folks shortly, but first let me go over some essentials which may be insulting to your intelligence, but which are comforting to mine, because they help me to focus on what I’m doing as a creator of fictions. If you think I’m flogging a few dead horses – horses which have been put out of their pain long ago – let me assure you that this is because the horses are not in fact dead, but are out there in the world, galloping around as vigorously as ever.

How do I know this? I read my mail. Also, I listen to the questions people ask me, both in interviews and after public readings. The kinds of questions I’m talking about have to do with how the characters in novels ought to behave. Unfortunately, there is a widespread tendency to judge such characters as if they were job applicants, or public servants, or prospective roommates, or somebody you’re considering marrying. For instance, I sometimes get a question – almost always, these days, from women – that goes something like, ‘Why don’t you make the men stronger?’ I feel that this is a matter which should more properly be taken up with God. It was not, after all, I who created Adam so subject to temptation that he sacrificed eternal life for an apple; which leads me to believe that God – who is, among other things, an author – is just as enamoured of character flaws and dire plots as we human writers are. The characters in the average novel are not usually folks you would want to get involved with at a personal or business level. How then should we go about responding to such creations? Or, from my side of the page, which is blank when I begin – how should I go about creating them?

What is a novel, anyway? Only a very foolish person would attempt to give a definitive answer to that, beyond stating the more or less obvious facts that it is a literary narrative of some length which purports, on the reverse of the title page, not to be true, but seeks nevertheless to convince its readers that it is. It’s typical of the cynicism of our age that,

if you write a novel, everyone assumes it's about real people, thinly disguised; but if you write an autobiography everyone assumes you're lying your head off. Part of this is right, because every artist is, among other things, a con-artist.

We con-artists do tell the truth, in a way; but, as Emily Dickinson said, we tell it slant. By indirection we find direction out – so here, for easy reference, is an elimination-dance list of what novels are not.

Novels are not sociological textbooks, although they may contain social comment and criticism.

Novels are not political tracts, although 'politics' – in the sense of human power structures – is inevitably one of their subjects. But if the author's main design on us is to convert us to something – whether that something be Christianity, capitalism, a belief in marriage as the only answer to a maiden's prayer, or feminism, we are likely to sniff it out, and to rebel. As Andre Gide once remarked, 'It is with noble sentiments that bad literature gets written.'

Novels are not how-to books; they will not show you how to conduct a successful life, although some of them may be read this way. Is *Pride and Prejudice* about how a sensible middle-class nineteenth-century woman can snare an appropriate man with a good income, which is the best she can hope for out of life, given the limitations of her situation? Partly. But not completely.

Novels are not, primarily, moral tracts. Their characters are not all models of good behaviour – or, if they are, we probably won't read them. But they are linked with notions of morality, because they are about human beings and human beings divide behaviour into good and bad. The characters judge each other, and the reader judges the characters. However, the success of a novel does not depend on a 'Not Guilty' verdict from the reader. As Keats said, Shakespeare took as much delight in creating Iago – that arch-villain – as he did in creating the virtuous Imogen. I would say probably more, and the proof of it is that I'd bet you're more likely to know which play Iago is in.

But although a novel is not a political tract, a how-to book, a sociology textbook or a pattern of correct morality, it is also not merely a piece of Art for Art's Sake, divorced from real life. It cannot do without a conception of form and a structure, true, but its roots are in the mud; its flowers, if any, come out of the rawness of its raw materials.

In short, novels are ambiguous and multi-faceted, not because they're perverse, but because they attempt to grapple with what was once referred to as the human condition, and they do so using a medium which is notoriously slippery – namely, language itself.

Now, let's get back to the notion that in a novel, something else has to happen – other than breakfast, that is. What will that 'something else' be, and how does the novelist go about choosing it? Usually it's backwards to what you were taught in school, where you probably got the idea that the novelist had an overall scheme or idea and then went about colouring it in with characters and words, sort of like paint-by-numbers. But in reality the process is much more like wrestling a greased pig in the dark.

Literary critics start with a nice, clean, already-written text. They then address questions to this text, which they attempt to answer; ‘what does it mean’ being both the most basic and the most difficult. Novelists, on the other hand, start with the blank page, to which they similarly address questions. But the questions are different. Instead of asking, first of all, ‘what does it mean’, they work at the widget level; they ask, ‘Is this the right word?’ ‘What does it mean’ can only come when there is an ‘it’ to mean something. Novelists have to get some actual words down before they can fiddle with the theology. Or, to put it another way: God started with chaos – dark, without form and void – and so does the novelist. Then God made one detail at a time. So does the novelist. On the seventh day, God took a break to consider what he’d done. So does the novelist. But the critic starts on Day Seven.

The critic, looking at plot, asks, ‘What’s happening here?’ The novelist, creating plot, asks, ‘What happens next?’ The critic asks, ‘Is this believable?’ The novelist, ‘How can I get them to believe this?’ The novelist, echoing Marshall McLuhan’s famous dictum that art is what you can get away with, says, ‘How can I pull this off?’ – as if the novel itself were a kind of bank robbery. Whereas the critic is liable to exclaim, in the mode of the policeman making the arrest, ‘Aha! You can’t get away with that!’

In short, the novelist’s concerns are more practical than those of the critic; more concerned with ‘how to’, less concerned with metaphysics. Any novelist – whatever his or her theoretical interests – has to contend with the following how-to questions:

- What kind of story shall I choose to tell? Is it, for instance, comic or tragic or melodramatic, or all?
- How shall I tell it?
- Who will be at the centre of it, and will this person be a) admirable or b) not?
- And – more important than it may sound – will it have a happy ending, or not?

No matter what you are writing – what genre and in what style, whether cheap formula or high-minded experiment – you will still have to answer – in the course of your writing – these essential questions. Any story you tell must have a conflict of some sort, and it must have suspense. In other words: something other than breakfast.

Let’s put a woman at the centre of the something-other-than-breakfast, and see what happens. Now there is a whole new set of questions. Will the conflict be supplied by the natural world? Is our female protagonist lost in the jungle, caught in a hurricane, pursued by sharks? If so, the story will be an adventure story and her job is to run away, or else to combat the sharks, displaying courage and fortitude, or else cowardice and stupidity. If there is a man in the story as well, the plot will alter in other directions: he will be a rescuer, an enemy, a companion in struggle, a sex bomb, or someone rescued by the woman. Once upon a time, the first would have been more probable, that is, more believable to the reader; but times have changed and art is what you can get away with, and the other possibilities have now entered the picture.

Stories about space invasions are similar, in that the threat comes from outside and the goal for the character, whether achieved or not, is survival. War stories per se – ditto, in that the main threat is external. Vampire and werewolf stories are more complicated, as

are ghost stories; in these, the threat is from outside, true, but the threatening thing may also conceal a split-off part of the character's own psyche. Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* are in large part animated by such hidden agendas; and both revolve around notions of female sexuality. Once all werewolves were male, and female vampires were usually mere sidekicks; but there are now female werewolves, and women are moving in on the star bloodsucking roles as well. Whether this is good or bad news I hesitate to say.

Detective and espionage stories may combine many elements, but would not be what they are without a crime, a criminal, a tracking-down, and a revelation at the end; again, all sleuths were once male, but sleuthesses are now prominent, for which I hope they lay a votive ball of wool from time to time upon the tomb of the sainted Miss Marple. We live in an age not only of gender crossover but of genre crossover, so you can throw all of the above into the cauldron and stir.

Then there are stories classed as 'serious' literature, which centre not on external threats – although some of these may exist – but on relationships among the characters. To avoid the eternal breakfast, some of the characters must cause problems for some of the others. This is where the questions really get difficult. As I've said, the novel has its roots in the mud, and part of the mud is history; and part of the history we've had recently is the history of the women's movement, and the women's movement has influenced how people read, and therefore what you can get away with, in art.

Some of this influence has been beneficial. Whole areas of human life that were once considered non-literary or sub-literary – such as the problematical nature of homemaking, the hidden depths of motherhood, and of daughterhood as well, the once-forbidden realms of incest and child abuse – have been brought inside the circle that demarcates the writeable from the non-writeable. Other things, such as the Cinderella happy ending – the Prince Charming one – have been called into question. (As one lesbian writer remarked to me, the only happy ending she found believable any more was the one in which girl meets girl and ends up with girl; but that was fifteen years ago, and the bloom is off even that romantic rose.)

To keep you from being too depressed, let me emphasise that none of this means that you, personally, cannot find happiness with a good man, a good woman or a good pet canary; just as the creation of a bad female character doesn't mean that women should lose the vote. If bad male characters meant that, for men, all men would be disenfranchised immediately. We are talking about what you can get away with in art; that is, what you can make believable. When Shakespeare wrote his sonnets to his dark-haired mistress, he wasn't saying that blondes were ugly, he was merely pushing against the notion that only blondes were beautiful. The tendency of innovative literature is to include the hitherto excluded, which often has the effect of rendering ludicrous the conventions that have just preceded the innovation. So the form of the ending, whether happy or not, does not have to do with how people live their lives – there is a great deal of variety in that department (and, after all, in life every story ends with death, which is not true of novels). Instead it's connected with what literary conventions the writer is following or pulling apart at the moment. Happy endings of the Cinderella kind do exist

in stories, of course, but they have been relegated largely to genre fiction, such as Harlequin romances.

To summarise some of the benefits to literature of the Women's Movement – the expansion of the territory available to writers, both in character and in language; a sharp-eyed examination of the way power works in gender relations, and the exposure of much of this as socially constructed; a vigorous exploration of many hitherto-concealed areas of experience. But as with any political movement which comes out of real oppression – and I do emphasise the real – there was also, in the first decade at least of the present movement, a tendency to cookie-cut: that is, to write to a pattern and to oversugar on one side. Some writers tended to polarise morality by gender – that is, women were intrinsically good and men bad; to divide along allegiance lines – that is, women who slept with men were sleeping with the enemy; to judge by tribal markings – that is, women who wore high heels and makeup were instantly suspect, those in overalls were acceptable; and to make hopeful excuses: that is, defects in women were ascribable to the patriarchal system and would cure themselves once that system was abolished. Such oversimplifications may be necessary to some phases of political movements. But they are usually problematical for novelists, unless the novelist has a secret desire to be in billboard advertising.

If a novelist writing at that time was also a feminist, she felt her choices restricted. Were all heroines to be essentially spotless of soul – struggling against, fleeing from or done in by male oppression? Was the only plot to be *The Perils of Pauline*, with a lot of moustache-twirling villains but minus the rescuing hero? Did suffering prove you were good? (If so – think hard about this – wasn't it all for the best that women did so much of it?) Did we face a situation in which women could do no wrong, but could only have wrong done to them? Were women being confined yet again to that alabaster pedestal so beloved of the Victorian age, when Woman as better-than-man gave men a licence to be gleefully and enjoyably worse than women, while all the while proclaiming that they couldn't help it because it was their nature? Were women to be condemned to virtue for life, slaves in the salt-mines of goodness? How intolerable.

Of course, the feminist analysis made some kinds of behaviour available to female characters which, under the old dispensation – the pre-feminist one – would have been considered bad, but under the new one were praiseworthy. A female character could rebel against social strictures without then having to throw herself in front of a train like Anna Karenina; she could think the unthinkable and say the unsayable; she could flout authority. She could do new bad-good things, such as leaving her husband and even deserting her children. Such activities and emotions, however, were – according to the new moral thermometer of the times – not really bad at all; they were good, and the women who did them were praiseworthy. I'm not against such plots. I just don't think they are the only ones.

And there were certain new no-no's. For instance: was it at all permissible, any more, to talk about women's will to power, because weren't women supposed by nature to be communal egalitarians? Could one depict the scurvy behaviour often practised by women against one another, or by little girls against other little girls? Could one examine the Seven Deadly Sins in their female versions – to remind you, Pride, Anger,

Lust, Envy, Avarice, Greed and Sloth – without being considered anti-feminist? Or was a mere mention of such things tantamount to aiding and abetting the enemy, namely the male power-structure? Were we to have a warning hand clapped over our mouths, yet once again, to prevent us from saying the unsayable – though the unsayable had changed? Were we to listen to our mothers, yet once again, as they intoned – ‘If You Can’t Say Anything Nice, Don’t Say Anything At All’? Hadn’t men been giving women a bad reputation for centuries? Shouldn’t we form a wall of silence around the badness of women, or at best explain it away by saying it was the fault of Big Daddy, or – permissible too, it seems – of Big Mom? Big Mom, that agent of the patriarchy, that pronatalist, got it in the neck from certain seventies feminists; though mothers were admitted into the fold again once some of these women turned into them. In a word: were women to be homogenised – one woman is the same as another – and deprived of free will – as in, ‘the patriarchy made her do it’?

Or, in another word – were men to get all the juicy parts? Literature cannot do without bad behaviour, but was all the bad behaviour to be reserved for men? Was it to be all Iago and Mephistopheles, and were Jezebel and Medea and Medusa and Delilah and Regan and Goneril and spotty-handed Lady Macbeth and Rider Haggard’s powerful superfemme fatale in *She*, and Tony Morrison’s mean Sula, to be banished from view? I hope not. Women characters, arise! Take back the night! In particular, take back the Queen of the Night, from Mozart’s *Magic Flute*. It’s a great part, and due for revision.

I have always known that there were spellbinding evil parts for women. For one thing, I was taken at an early age to see *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Never mind the Protestant work ethic of the dwarfs. Never mind the tedious housework-is-virtuous motif. Never mind the fact that Snow White is a vampire – anyone who lies in a glass coffin without decaying and then comes to life again must be. The truth is that I was paralysed by the scene in which the evil queen drinks the magic potion and changes her shape. What power, what untold possibilities!

Also, I was exposed to the complete, unexpurgated *Grimm’s Fairy Tales* at an impressionable age. Fairy tales had a bad reputation among feminists for a while – partly because they’d been cleaned up, on the erroneous supposition that little children don’t like gruesome gore, and partly because they’d been selected to fit the fifties ‘Prince Charming Is Your Goal’ ethos. So *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty* were okay, though *The Youth Who Set Out to Learn What Fear Was*, which featured a good many rotting corpses, plus a woman who was smarter than her husband, were not. But many of these tales were originally told and retold by women, and these unknown women left their mark. There is a wide range of heroines in these tales; passive good girls, yes, but adventurous, resourceful women as well, and proud ones, and slothful ones, and foolish ones, and envious and greedy ones, and also many wise women and a variety of evil witches, both in disguise and not, and bad stepmothers and wicked ugly sisters and false brides as well. The stories, and the figures themselves, have immense vitality, partly because no punches are pulled – in the versions I read, the barrels of nails and the red-hot shoes were left intact – and also because no emotion is unrepresented. Singly, the female characters are limited and two-dimensional. But put all together, they form a rich five-dimensional picture.

Female characters who behave badly can of course be used as sticks to beat other women – though so can female characters who behave well, witness the cult of the Virgin Mary, better than you'll ever be, and the legends of the female saints and martyrs – just cut on the dotted line, and, minus one body part, there's your saint, and the only really good woman is a dead woman, so if you're so good why aren't you dead?

But female bad characters can also act as keys to doors we need to open, and as mirrors in which we can see more than just a pretty face. They can be explorations of moral freedom – because everyone's choices are limited, and women's choices have been more limited than men's, but that doesn't mean women can't make choices. Such characters can pose the question of responsibility, because if you want power you have to accept responsibility, and actions produce consequences. I'm not suggesting an agenda here, just some possibilities; nor am I prescribing, just wondering. If there's a closed-off road, the curious speculate about why it's closed off, and where it might lead if followed; and evil women have been, for a while recently, a somewhat closed-off road, at least for fiction-writers.

While pondering these matters, I thought back over the numerous bad female literary characters I have known, and tried to sort them into categories. If you were doing this on a blackboard, you might set up a kind of grid: bad women who do bad things for bad reasons, good women who do good things for good reasons, good women who do bad things for good reasons, bad women who do bad things for good reasons, and so forth. But a grid would just be a beginning, because there are so many factors involved: for instance, what the character thinks is bad, what the reader thinks is bad, and what the author thinks is bad, may all be different. But let me define a thoroughly evil person as one who intends to do evil, and for purely selfish reasons. The Queen in *Snow White* would fit that.

So would Regan and Goneril, Lear's evil daughters; very little can be said in their defence, except that they seem to have been against the patriarchy. Lady Macbeth, however, did her wicked murder for a conventionally acceptable reason, one that would win approval for her in corporate business circles – she was furthering her husband's career. She pays the corporate-wife price, too – she subdues her own nature, and has a nervous breakdown as a result. Similarly, Jezebel was merely trying to please a sulky husband; he refused to eat his dinner until he got hold of Naboth's vineyard, so Jezebel had its owner bumped off. Wifely devotion, as I say. The amount of sexual baggage that has accumulated around this figure is astounding, since she doesn't do anything remotely sexual in the original story, except put on makeup.

The story of Medea, whose husband Jason married a new princess, and who then poisoned the bride and murdered her own two children, has been interpreted in various ways. In some versions Medea is a witch and commits infanticide out of revenge; but the play by Euripides is surprisingly neo-feminist. There's quite a lot about how tough it is to be a woman, and Medea's motivation is commendable – she doesn't want her children to fall into hostile hands and be cruelly abused – which is also the situation of the child-killing mother in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. A good woman, then, who does a bad thing for a good reason. Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* kills her nasty lover due to sexual complications; here too we are in the realm of female-as-victim, doing a bad

thing for a good reason. (Which, I suppose, places such stories right beside the front page, along with women who kill their abusive husbands. According to a recent *Time* story, the average jail sentence in the U.S. for men who kill their wives is four years, but for women who kill their husbands – no matter what the provocation – it's twenty. (For those who think equality is already with us, I leave the statistics to speak for themselves.)

These women characters are all murderers. Then there are the seducers; here again, the motive varies. I have to say too that with the change in sexual mores, the mere seduction of a man no longer rates very high on the sin scale. But try asking a number of women what the worst thing is that a woman friend could possibly do to them. Chances are the answer will involve the theft of a sexual partner.

Some famous seductresses have really been patriotic espionage agents. Delilah, for instance, was an early Mata Hari, working for the Philistines, trading sex for military information. Judith, who all but seduced the enemy general Holofernes and then cut off his head and brought it home in a sack, was treated as a heroine, although she has troubled men's imaginations through the centuries – witness the number of male painters who have depicted her – because she combines sex with violence in a way they aren't accustomed to and don't much like. Then there are figures like Hawthorne's adulterous Hester Prynne, she of *The Scarlet Letter*, who becomes a kind of sex-saint through suffering – we assume she did what she did through Love, and thus she becomes a good woman who did a bad thing for a good reason – and Madame Bovary, who not only indulged her romantic temperament and voluptuous sensual appetites, but spent too much of her husband's money doing it, which was her downfall. A good course in double-entry bookkeeping would have saved the day. I suppose she is a foolish woman who did a stupid thing for an insufficient reason, since the men in question were dolts. Neither the modern reader nor the author consider her very evil, though many contemporaries did, as you can see if you read the transcript of the court case in which the forces of moral rectitude tried to get the book censored.

One of my favourite bad women is Becky Sharpe, of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*. She makes no pretensions to goodness. She is wicked, she enjoys being wicked, and she does it out of vanity and for her own profit, tricking and deluding English society in the process – which, the author implies, deserves to be tricked and deluded, since it is hypocritical and selfish to the core. Becky, like Undine Spragg in Edith Wharton's *The Custom of the Country*, is an adventuress; she lives by her wits and uses men as ambulatory bank-accounts. Many literary adventurers are male – consider Thomas Mann's *Felix Krull*, *Confidence Man* – but it does make a difference if you change the gender. For one thing, the nature of the loot changes. For a male adventurer, the loot is money and women; but for a female one, the loot is money and men.

Becky Sharpe is a bad mother too, and that's a whole other subject – bad mothers and wicked stepmothers and oppressive aunts, like the one in *Jane Eyre*, and nasty female teachers, and depraved governesses, and evil grannies. The possibilities are many.

But I think that's enough reprehensible female behaviour for you today. Life is short, art is long, motives are complex, and human nature is endlessly fascinating. Many doors

stand ajar; others beg to be unlocked. What is in the forbidden room? Something different for everyone, but something you need to know and will never find out unless you step across the threshold. If you are a man, the bad female character in a novel may be – in Jungian terms – your anima; but if you're a woman, the bad female character is your shadow; and as we know from the Offenbach opera *Tales of Hoffman*, she who loses her shadow also loses her soul.

Evil women are necessary in story traditions for two much more obvious reasons, of course. First, they exist in life, so why shouldn't they exist in literature? Second – which may be another way of saying the same thing – women have more to them than virtue. They are fully dimensional human beings; they too have subterranean depths; why shouldn't their many-dimensionality be given literary expression? And when it is, female readers do not automatically recoil in horror. In Aldous Huxley's novel *Point Counter Point*, Lucy Tantamount, the man-destroying vamp, is preferred by the other female characters to the earnest, snivelling woman whose man she has reduced to a wet bath sponge. As one of them says, 'Lucy's obviously a force. You may not like that kind of force. But you can't help admiring the force in itself. It's like Niagara.' In other words, awesome. Or, as one Englishwoman said to me recently, 'Women are tired of being good all the time.'

I will leave you with a final quotation. It's from Dame Rebecca West, speaking in 1912 – 'Ladies of Great Britain... we have not enough evil in us.'

Note where she locates the desired evil. In us.

The Honourable PJ Keating MP, Prime Minister
Funeral Service of the Unknown Australian Soldier

11 November 1993

We do not know this Australian's name and we never will.

We do not know his rank or his battalion. We do not know where he was born, nor precisely how and when he died. We do not know where in Australia he had made his home or when he left it for the battlefields of Europe. We do not know his age or his circumstances – whether he was from the city or the bush; what occupation he left to become a soldier; what religion, if he had a religion; if he was married or single. We do not know who loved him or whom he loved. If he had children we do not know who they are. His family is lost to us as he was lost to them. We will never know who this Australian was.

Yet he has always been among those whom we have honoured. We know that he was one of the 45,000 Australians who died on the Western Front. One of the 416 000 Australians who volunteered for service in the First World War. One of the 324 000 Australians who served overseas in that war and one of the 60 000 Australians who died on foreign soil. One of the 100 000 Australians who have died in wars this century.

He is all of them. And he is one of us.

This Australia and the Australia he knew are like foreign countries. The tide of events since he died has been so dramatic, so vast and all-consuming, a world has been created beyond the reach of his imagination.

He may have been one of those who believed that the Great War would be an adventure too grand to miss. He may have felt that he would never live down the shame of not going. But the chances are he went for no other reason than that he believed it was the duty he owed his country and his King.

Because the Great War was a mad, brutal, awful struggle, distinguished more often than not by military and political incompetence; because the waste of human life was so terrible that some said victory was scarcely discernible from defeat; and because the war which was supposed to end all wars in fact sowed the seeds of a second even more terrible war – we might think this Unknown Soldier died in vain.

But, in honouring our war dead, as we always have and as we do today, we declare that this is not true. For out of the war came a lesson which transcended the horror and tragedy and the inexcusable folly. It was a lesson about ordinary people – and the lesson was that they were not ordinary. On all sides they were the heroes of that war; not the generals and the politicians but the soldiers and sailors and nurses – those who taught us to endure hardship, to show courage, to be bold as well as resilient, to believe in ourselves, to stick together.

The Unknown Australian Soldier whom we are interring today was one of those who, by his deeds, proved that real nobility and grandeur belongs, not to empires and nations, but to the people on whom they, in the last resort, always depend.

That is surely at the heart of the ANZAC story, the Australian legend which emerged from the war. It is a legend not of sweeping military victories so much as triumphs against the odds, of courage and ingenuity in adversity. It is a legend of free and independent spirits whose discipline derived less from military formalities and customs than from the bonds of mateship and the demands of necessity. It is a democratic tradition, the tradition in which Australians have gone to war ever since.

This Unknown Australian is not interred here to glorify war over peace; or to assert a soldier's character above a civilian's; or one race or one nation or one religion above another; or men above women; or the war in which he fought and died above any other war; or one generation above any that has been or will come later.

The Unknown Soldier honours the memory of all those men and women who laid down their lives for Australia. His tomb is a reminder of what we have lost in war and what we have gained.

We have lost more than 100 000 lives, and with them all their love of this country and all their hope and energy.

We have gained a legend: a story of bravery and sacrifice and, with it, a deeper faith in ourselves and our democracy, and a deeper understanding of what it means to be Australian.

It is not too much to hope, therefore, that this Unknown Australian Soldier might continue to serve his country – he might enshrine a nation's love of peace and remind us that, in the sacrifice of the men and women whose names are recorded here, there is faith enough for all of us.

The Honourable PJ Keating MP
Prime Minister of Australia

Noel Pearson

'An Australian history for us all'

Address to the Chancellor's Club Dinner
University of Western Sydney
20 November 1996

Chancellor, distinguished guests. It is my honour to have been invited to speak this evening on some questions about Australian history that are presently at fundamental issue in this country. I had the great privilege to have been taught history at the University of Sydney by Professor Schreuder, who was for me inspirational and I hope that the University of Western Sydney has shared that pleasure. I was therefore delighted to accept his invitation, but alas I cannot promise my teacher's rigour. I come only with some observations about how our popular understanding of the colonial past is central to the moral and political turbulence we are still grappling with as Australians.

I fear however that I am in danger of indulging in agonising navel-gazing about who we are and conducting what Prime Minister John Howard calls the perpetual seminar for elite opinion about our national identity. I will nevertheless persevere.

It is very clear that guilt about Australia's colonial history is what the Americans would call a hot button issue in the Australian community. It has been a hot button for some time now. You would not need to be a political genius to bet that the guilt issue is one of the keenest buttons that the Federal Member for Oxley and her followers in our national government have pressed, and with great electoral resonance.

The polls will tell you this: most ordinary Australians are offended by any suggestion that they should feel guilty about any aspects of the country's past. They vehemently reject any responsibility for it. Many will reject any notion that some of the legacies of the past live in the present and need to be dealt with. They will say that Aborigines must stop being victims and 'should get over it, it's all in the past, we had nothing to do with it, we are not guilty, help yourselves'. Others still will say 'it's all in the past, we had nothing to do with it, we are not guilty but we are willing to help alleviate your present condition.'

In his Sir Robert Menzies Lecture this week, Prime Minister John Howard supported these views, views that are held overwhelmingly by the majority of ordinary Australians. He characterises the recent historiography of colonial relations and the discussion of Australian history during the Labor ascendancy as having been altogether too pessimistic. Following Professor Geoffrey Blainey's description of the 'black armband view of history' John Howard implies that a history has been cultivated by the politically-correct classes which urges guilt and shame upon Australians about the national past.

Earlier the Prime Minister said on the John Laws radio program in Sydney:

‘I sympathise fundamentally with Australians who are insulted when they are told that we have a racist, bigoted past. Australians are told that quite regularly. Our children are taught that...some of the school curricula go close to teaching children that we have a racist, bigoted past. Of course we treated Aboriginals very, very badly in the past – very, very badly – but to tell children whose parents were no part of that maltreatment, to tell children who themselves have been no part of it, that we’re all part of a sort of racist, bigoted history is something that Australians reject.’

There is no doubt in my mind that the Prime Minister’s characterisation of the historiography that has developed over the past twenty-five years, and the particularly lively discourse in the wake of the High Court’s decision in the Mabo Case, which judgment canvassed the legal and moral implications of this history, is a characterisation that resonates with the instincts and feelings of ordinary Australians.

It is now well understood that up until the 1960s there was, in the writing and indeed teaching of Australian history, the historiographical equivalent of *terra nullius*: a history that denied or ignored the true facts of the colonial frontier. This was what the late Professor Bill Stanner called the Great Australian Silence. In what I consider to be a truly masterpiece lecture series for the Boyer in 1968, Professor Stanner said:

‘... inattention on such a scale cannot possibly be explained by absent-mindedness. It is a structural matter, a view from a window which has been carefully placed to exclude a whole quadrant of the landscape. What may well have begun as a simple forgetting of other possible views turned under habit and over time into something like a cult of forgetfulness practiced on a national scale ... the Great Australian Silence reigns; the story of the things we were unconsciously resolved not to discuss with them or treat with them about.’

The popular, Anglo-Celtic story of Australia’s past was seriously distorted by significant omissions and by some straight out fictions, such as the fiction of ‘peaceful settlement.’ The certitude with which history and the humanities generally proclaimed the myth of *terra nullius* meant that the legal invisibility of Aboriginal people and a steadfast belief in our inhumanity was embedded into popular belief.

On the writing of colonial history in North America, Robert Hughes pertinently advises:

‘The reading of history is never static. Revise we historians must. There is no such thing as the last word. And who could doubt that there is still much to revise in the story of the European conquest of North and South America that we inherited? Its scheme was imperial: the epic advance of Civilisation against Barbarism: the conquistador brings the Cross and the Sword, the red man shrinks back before the cavalry and the railroad. Manifest Destiny. The white American myth of the nineteenth century. The notion that all historians propagated this triumphalist myth uncritically is quite false: you have only to read Parkman or Prescott to realise that. But after the myth sank from the histories deep into popular culture, it became a potent justification for the plunder, murder and enslavement of peoples and the wreckage of nature.’

However, there is now accumulated a new Australian history, to which Professor Blainey has also contributed, which tells the story of the other side of the frontier. The contributions of Professor Henry Reynolds and his colleagues at James Cook University which has been a powerhouse of Australian frontier history, along with the oral histories of Aboriginal people, have illuminated aspects of the Australian past that had previously been buried. The national narrative now recognises and incorporates Aboriginal achievement, death and sacrifice.

It is this narrative that was substantially adopted by the judges of the High Court of Australia in their historical survey in the Mabo Case. The judges did not just dwell on the legal implications of the recognition of native title by the common law of Australia, they canvassed the historical consequences of this conclusion and its moral implications. There are at least two explicit moral implications put forward by the judges.

Firstly, Justices Deane and Gaudron said that the failure of the law to recognise the rights of Indigenous peoples to their traditional homelands which led to their death and dispersal left the country with ‘a legacy of unutterable shame.’

Secondly, Justice Brennan (as he then was) said that the dispossession of the Aboriginal inhabitants ‘underwrote the development of the nation.’

These are two brief but critical observations made by our nation’s highest court, when confronted with questions about the country’s colonial past and the belated accommodation of Indigenous people in the present. These are the key instances when the Court ventured beyond its role in declaring our common law, and suggested some moral leadership.

It is very clear from what the Prime Minister and his Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator John Herron, have said about these matters, that they do not deny the depredations against Aboriginal people that are illuminated by the new Australian history. John Howard said: ‘Injustices were done in Australia and no one should obscure or minimise them.’

Clearly then the debate today is not so much about the facts of the past. There is generally common ground about them. The debate is about how Australians should respond to the past. The Prime Minister puts his view very clearly, he said:

‘... in understanding these realities our priority should not be to apportion blame and guilt for historic wrongs but to commit to a practical program of action that will remove the enduring legacies of disadvantage.’

Senator Herron said in his Enid Lyons Memorial Lecture recently:

‘I also believe that a clear distinction must be made between the importance of acknowledging the injustices of the past and the need to secure an admission of guilt for those injustices. I do not believe that most Australians feel individual guilt about these injustices, for the simple fact that they took no direct part in them...Certainly, as a

nation, we have a responsibility to be frank and forthright about those aspects of our history that are not always palatable, and importantly to learn from the mistakes that have been made. However true reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is not about assigning guilt for the actions of our forbears. Rather it is about achieving an appropriate balance between acknowledging and respecting the lingering pain from past injustices and acting decisively to ensure full equality of opportunity in the future.'

At the height of the native title debate in 1993, in a speech to the Endeavour Foundation, the then Leader of the Federal Opposition, Dr John Hewson, applied his own faculties to these questions and remarked that: 'A divisive debate over issues long gone should never be preferred to a unifying search for common ground.'

In my Hancock Memorial Lecture I argued that it should not be necessary for the truth to be distorted in order for white Australians to be able to live with themselves. Dr Hewson's suggestion was that the truth about the past should suffer in the name of a united Australia. The situation is entirely the reverse. It seems to me that the psychological unity of this country depends upon our taking responsibility for the future by dealing with the past. Anything less is simply evasion of reality.

I said that there was every indication that Australia is mature enough to deal with these questions: how do we explain the past to our children? How do we locate ourselves as Australians in relation to the diverse traditions and experiences that comprise our combined heritage?

How do we as Indigenous people respond to the legacy of colonialism and that brutal, troubled, culture by which we were dispossessed? Do we reject it outright, and furthermore, do we require Anglo-Celtic Australians to spurn their origins in the name of penance and of solidarity with us?

I argued that such a response to our history is quite inappropriate, now when at last we may be approaching a state of 'live and let live' in this country. It is at odds with the quest to discover 'what unites us' as well as 'what separates us'. There is an extent to which I agree with Robert Hughes when he observed:

'The need for absolute goodies and absolute baddies runs deep in us, but it drags history into propaganda and denies the humanity of the dead: their sins, their virtues, their efforts, their failures. To preserve complexity and not flatten it under the weight of anachronistic moralising, is part of the historian's task ...'

I argued that we need to appreciate the complexity of the past and not reduce history to a shallow field of point scoring. I believe that there is much that is worth preserving in the cultural heritage of our dispossessors, much that I for one would be loath to repudiate and much that has also become ours, not necessarily by imposition but by appropriation.

I said that contrary to the propaganda of colonialism, which justifies our dispossession through neo-Darwinian arguments that Aboriginal cultures were doomed to extinction

due to our innate inability to ‘progress’, our cultures are resilient and adaptable. We have taken from you and we should not belittle ourselves by contending that we have had no choice in the matter. The reverse is also of course true. You have taken from us not just our land and not just all of the icons of Indigenous Australia, but some of our ways of approaching things have become an inescapable part of Australia’s national mythology. This cultural interface has not been entirely woeful.

But has the so-called black armband view of history been about apportioning guilt?

In his speech at Redfern Park in December 1992, the then Prime Minister Paul Keating said this about guilt:

‘Down the years, there has been no shortage of guilt, but it has not produced the responses we need. Guilt is not a very constructive emotion. I think what we need to do is open our hearts a bit. All of us.’

In his recent address to the Asia Australia Institute at the University of New South Wales, the former Prime Minister reiterated his view when he said:

‘...the process of reconciliation had to start with an act of recognition. Recognition that it was we non-Aboriginal Australians who did the dispossessing; and yet we had always failed to ask ourselves how we would feel if it had been done to us. When I said these things, it was not my intention to impress guilt upon present generations of Australians for the actions of the past, but rather to acknowledge that we now share a responsibility to put an end to the suffering. I said explicitly that guilt is generally not a useful emotion and, in any case, the recommended treatment is confronting the past, not evading it.’

So if both sides of this apparent debate deny that the allocation of guilt is necessary for the country to deal with the colonial past, then why has it been alleged that Australians have been urged by the black armbands, through a delirium of political correctness, to feel guilty about the past?

The distinction made by John Herron between acknowledgment of the past and guilt about the past is indistinct from the statements by the former Prime Minister that it was not about guilt but about opening our hearts a bit.

The denial of the place of guilt will be at odds with many Indigenous Australians, for whom injustice is not in the remote past but within their living memories. Those who feel keenly the legacy of that past in the present, in the form of loved ones who now suffer the terrible psychological consequences of being removed from their families and being institutionalised, will not readily say that guilt is an altogether irrelevant emotion.

However, as Social Justice Commissioner, Michael Dodson, recently observed, it has not been Aboriginal people talking about guilt in coming to terms with our history, it has been the Prime Minister and Senator Herron who have been most anxious to exorcise the spectre of guilt.

As to the question of guilt, I am myself equivocal. I know very clearly that as individuals, ordinary Australians cannot be expected to feel guilty about the past. Ordinary Australians might fairly be held to account for what happens in their own lifetimes and perhaps, what they leave for the future. It is indeed a useless objective in the teaching and writing of history to hold individuals to account for the past.

However, as a nation, the Australian community has a collective consciousness and conscience that encompasses a responsibility for the present and future, and the past. Our collective consciousness includes the past. For how can we as a contemporary community in 1996 share and celebrate in the achievements of the past, indeed feel responsibility for and express pride in aspects of our past, and not feel responsibility for and express shame in relation to other aspects of the past? To say that ordinary Australians who are part of the national community today do not have any connection with the shameful aspects of our past, is at odds with our exhortations that they have strong connections to the prideful bits. After all the heroic deeds at Gallipoli and Kokoda are said to be ours as well. Lest we forget.

My feeling is that guilt need not be an ingredient in our national (re)consideration of our history. For those Australians who are not still afflicted with the obscurantist tendencies of the past, who are untroubled about recognising the truths of the past, and are prepared to acknowledge the legacies of that past, guilt is not a feature apparent in their psychology. In my experience, it is for those Australians who resist the truths of history and who yearn for a return to the Great Australian Silence, and who deny some responsibility to deal with the legacy of the past in the present, that guilt seems to be an ingredient. The more vehement the denials the more they betray an anxiety to exorcise guilt.

But if present generations of Australians cannot be held to account for the past, they are surely responsible for the infidelities of the present.

At the present moment the Yorta Yorta people of the Murray River region around Barmah and Shepparton are prosecuting a native title claim in the Federal Court of Australia, in relation to their remnant traditional homelands. William Cooper, an ancestor of the present Yorta Yorta claimants wrote in 1938 to the then Prime Minister, Mr Lyons. He said:

‘I have addressed numerous letters to the editor of the various newspapers and find my pleas for better conditions are, in nine cases out of ten, ‘pigeon holed’.

‘In spite of this fact we live in the hope that some day the newspapers will begin to publish the truth concerning Aboriginal affairs so that the public, being informed, will see that the great evils from which we are suffering are remedied...

‘We Aborigines are a ‘protected’ people. I understand that the correct meaning of the word ‘protector’ is ‘one who protects from injury; one who protects from oppression; a guardian; a regent; one who rules for a sovereign’.

‘It would please us greatly to have a protector over our people who would live up to that standard, but how do our protectorates work? ... Take for instance the policeman who was appointed as a protector of the Aborigines in Central Australia. He went out one day to arrest a native who was reputed to have killed a white man.

‘He stated in his evidence that he shot 17 natives and later shot another 14 and a so-called ‘Justice of the Peace’ officially, without trial, justified the constable for shooting these 31 people. Now ... do you think this Justice of the Peace could justify the Constable before God ?

‘Do you think that he could justify his own judgment before the king?...The whole thing is contrary to British Justice and cannot be justified even before a much lower tribunal, the white people (if they knew the facts) and of these you are one!

‘History records that in the year 1771 white men first landed on the shores of what is now called Botany Bay. They claimed that they had ‘found’ a ‘new’ country – Australia. This country was not new, it was already in possession of, and inhabited by, millions of blacks who, while unarmed excepting spears and boomerangs, nevertheless owned the country as their God-given heritage.

‘From the standpoint of an educated black who can read the Bible upon which British constitution and custom is founded, I marvel at the fact that while the text book of present civilisation, the Bible, states that God gave the Earth to man, the ‘Christian’ interferes with God’s arrangement and stops not even at murder to take that which does not belong to them but belongs to others by right of prior possession and by right of gift from God..

‘The time is long overdue when the Aborigines should be considered as much and as fully under the protection of the law as any other citizen of the Empire...

‘This more particularly in view of the fact that history records that in the commission originally given to those who came from overseas the strict injunction was given that the Aborigines and their descendants had to be adequately cared for...

‘The taking of rightful belongings has not yet ceased...

‘Will you, by your apathy, tacitly admit that you don’t care and thus assume the guilt of your fathers?’

When on 3 June 1992 the High Court of Australia suggested that Mabo might be the foundation of a lasting compromise between the old and new of this continent, I was seized with a conviction in its correctness. But my concern has not just been with the narrow legal meaning of Mabo, though it is critical. I am concerned with the spirit of historical reckoning and acceptance and compromise and reconciliation which it represents. I have hoped that it might be possible for our national leaders to gain an intellectual, if not an emotional or spiritual, understanding of its importance.

Mabo threw the country into social, political and psychological turmoil. I always said that it was the turmoil and confusion the country had to have.

And the challenge for ordinary Australians today is this: that the foundation for compromise – that is the acknowledgment under the common law of England that with the sovereign claim over the Australian continent on behalf the Crown, came the recognition of the native title of the Indigenous inhabitants who became subjects of the Crown entitled to the protections of the law – this compromise comes from their own legal and institutional heritage. Mabo is not a product of Indigenous heritage. Rather more it is the product of the country's English heritage: it is a product of the genius of the common law of England.

If there is one thing about the colonial heritage of Australia that Indigenous Australians might celebrate along with John Howard with the greatest enthusiasm and pride, it must surely be the fact that upon the shoulders of the English settlers or invaders – call them what you will – came the common law of England and with it the civilised institution of native title. What more redemptive prospect can be painted about the country's colonial past? It just confounds me that this golden example of grace in our national inheritance is not the subject of national celebration. After all, Indigenous people are entitled to say: 'it is your law'.

The amendments to the Native Title legislation that are proposed by John Howard's government amount to a derogation and a diminution of the entitlements that Indigenous people have under the common law, which were negotiated in good faith with the Federal Parliament on behalf of the non-Indigenous community, in 1993. Make no mistake, if the amendments as proposed by the Howard Government succeed, Mabo will be no more. There will only be some remnant rights. The spirit of compromise and moral reckoning which Mabo represents will be lost to us and to future generations. It is for our national leaders to rupture the spirit and meaning of Mabo as a key opportunity in our history, and for ordinary Australians to allow this to happen in the coming months; then we will be held to account. Of these obscenities we will indeed be guilty.

William Cooper, whose hopes for justice for his Yorta Yorta people are the subject of Federal Court proceedings under the Native Title legislation, would remind us:

'The taking of rightful belongings has not yet ceased ... Will you, by your apathy tacitly admit that you don't care and thus assume the guilt of your fathers?'

In conclusion, what substance is there in the new emphasis on our colonial history that Prime Minister John Howard and his Minister are urging and in the crusade against the black armbands and their alleged obsession with guilt? The answer is: nothing at all. The Prime Minister has not been able to grasp what his predecessor was able to: that it is not about guilt, it is about opening our hearts a little bit.

And to have an open and generous heart in relation to these things, means that when you acknowledge the wrongs of the past, you might try to do so ungrudgingly. An open heart means that if a people have suffered wrongs and have wounds that are still keen, then there must be some respect for that. It would be inappropriate for us to say to

Jewish people today, ‘the treatment of your people has been terrible, but perhaps we should not be so consumed by it, maybe it is time to now look forward’. These are matters for these people to come to terms with. Hectoring by the leading spokesmen for the other side of the colonial grievance, which the Prime Minister represents, about how we need to move on, is stupid. It is ungracious and insensitive and will advance nothing in the relationship. It diminishes one’s sincerity.

My concern is that our present national leadership is only thinking in terms of broad characterisations and slogans. A more rigorous examination of the so-called politically correct, black armband, histories would have revealed the fact that no one is urging guilt upon the Australian people.

The new approach is significantly anti-intellectual. The new free speech is tabloid free speech, where people who should expect to account for what they say, are able to conduct so-called debate about issues through tabloid-style slogans that are carefully crafted to activate those hot buttons in our community. Black Armbands. Guilt Industry. Political Correctness. Aboriginal Industry. These are lines that resonate. They work on the evening news grabs. They work on the radio airwaves. So we end up with this brain-damaged dialogue between the politicians and the punters passing for free speech and public debate. The politics of mutual assurance.

I am sure that Robert Hughes, whose seminal book *Culture of Complaint* was touted as the first foray against political correctness but is an intelligent and invigorating critique of anti-intellectualism, would be ashamed to see what is passing for free speech and history in this country today. If John Howard wants to properly comprehend a balanced and perhaps even conservative critique on how we might deal with our history, he might care to read Robert Hughes rather than the opinion polls.

Aung San Suu Kyi
Nobel Prize Laureate

Keynote Address at the Beijing World Conference on Women

31 August 1995
Read on Video

It is a wonderful but daunting task that has fallen on me to say a few words by way of opening this Forum, the greatest concourse of women (joined by a few brave men!) that has ever gathered on our planet. I want to try and voice some of the common hopes which firmly unite us in all our splendid diversity.

But first I would like to explain why I cannot be with you in person today. Last month I was released from almost six years of house arrest. The regaining of my freedom has in turn imposed a duty on me to work for the freedom of other women and men in my country who have suffered far more – and who continue to suffer far more – than I have. It is this duty which prevents me from joining you today. Even sending this message to you has not been without difficulties. But the help of those who believe in international cooperation and freedom of expression has enabled me to overcome the obstacles. They made it possible for me to make a small contribution to this great celebration of the struggle of women to mould their own destiny and to influence the fate of our global village.

The opening plenary of this Forum will be presenting an overview of the global forces affecting the quality of life of the human community and the challenges they pose for the global community as a whole and for women in particular as we approach the twenty-first century. However, with true womanly understanding, the Convener of this Forum suggested that among these global forces and challenges, I might wish to concentrate on those matters which occupy all my waking thoughts these days: peace, security, human rights and democracy. I would like to discuss these issues particularly in the context of the participation of women in politics and governance.

For millennia women have dedicated themselves almost exclusively to the task of nurturing, protecting and caring for the young and the old, striving for the conditions of peace that favour life as a whole. To this can be added the fact that, to the best of my knowledge, no war was ever started by women. But it is women and children who have always suffered most in situations of conflict. Now that we are gaining control of the primary historical role imposed on us of sustaining life in the context of the home and family, it is time to apply in the arena of the world the wisdom and experience thus gained in activities of peace over so many thousands of years. The education and empowerment of women throughout the world cannot fail to result in a more caring, tolerant, just and peaceful life for all.

If to these universal benefits of the growing emancipation of women can be added the ‘peace dividend’ for human development offered by the end of the Cold War, spending less on the war toys of grown men and much more on the urgent needs of humanity as a whole, then truly the next millennia will be an age the like to which has never been seen

in human history. But there still remain many obstacles to be overcome before we can achieve this goal. And not least among these obstacles are intolerance and insecurity.

This year is the International Year for Tolerance. The United Nations has recognised that ‘tolerance, human rights, democracy and peace are closely related. Without tolerance, the foundations for democracy and respect for human rights cannot be strengthened, and the achievements of peace will remain elusive’. My own experience during the years I have been engaged in the democracy movement in Burma has convinced me of the need to emphasise the positive aspects of tolerance. It is not enough simply to ‘live and let live’: genuine tolerance requires an active effort to try to understand the point of view of others; it implies broad-mindedness and vision, as well as confidence in one’s own ability to meet new challenges without resorting to intransigence or violence. In societies where men are truly confident of their own worth women are not merely ‘tolerated’, they are valued. Their opinions are listened to with respect, they are given their rightful place in shaping the society in which they live.

There is an outmoded Burmese proverb still recited by men, who wish to deny that women too can play a part in bringing necessary change and progress to their society: ‘The dawn rises only when the rooster crows’. But Burmese people today are well aware of the scientific reason behind the rising of dawn and the falling of dusk. And the intelligent rooster surely realises that it is because dawn comes that it crows and not the other way round. It crows to welcome the light that has come to relieve the darkness of night. It is not the prerogative of men alone to bring light to this world: women with their capacity for compassion and self-sacrifice, their courage and perseverance, have done much to dissipate the darkness of intolerance and hate, suffering and despair.

Often the other side of the coin of intolerance is insecurity. Insecure people tend to be intolerant, and their intolerance unleashes forces that threaten the security of others. And where there is no security there can be no lasting peace. In its Human Development Report for last year, the UNDP noted that human security ‘is not a concern with weapons – it is a concern with human life and dignity’. The struggle for democracy and human rights in Burma is a struggle for life and dignity. It is a struggle that encompasses our political, social and economic aspirations. The people of my country want the two freedoms that spell security: freedom from want and freedom from war. It is want that has driven so many of our young girls across our borders to a life of sexual slavery where they are subject to constant humiliation and ill-treatment. It is fear of persecution for their political beliefs that has made so many of our people feel that even in their own homes they cannot live in dignity and security.

Traditionally, the home is the domain of the woman. But there has never been a guarantee that she can live out her life there safe and unmolested. There are countless women who are subjected to severe cruelty within the heart of the family which should be their haven. And in times of crisis when their menfolk are unable to give them protection, women have to face the harsh challenges of the world outside while continuing to discharge their duties within the home.

Many of my male colleagues who have suffered imprisonment for their part in the democracy movement have spoken of the great debt of gratitude they owe their

womenfolk, particularly their wives, who stood by them firmly, tender as mothers nursing their newly born, brave as lionesses defending their young. These magnificent human beings who have done so much to aid their men in the struggle for justice and peace – how much more could they not achieve if given the opportunity to work in their own right for the good of their country and of the world?

Our endeavours have also been sustained by the activities of strong and principled women all over the world who have campaigned not only for my own release but, more importantly, for our cause. I cannot let this opportunity pass without speaking of the gratitude we feel towards our sisters everywhere, from heads of governments to busy housewives. Their efforts have been a triumphant demonstration of female solidarity and of the power of an ideal to cross all frontiers.

In my country at present, women have no participation in the higher levels of government and none whatsoever in the judiciary. Even within the democratic movement only 14 out of the 485 MPs elected in 1990 were women – all from my own party, the National League for Democracy. These 14 women represent less than three percent of the total number of successful candidates. They, like their male colleagues, have not been permitted to take office since the outcome of those elections has been totally ignored. Yet the very high performance of women in our educational system and in the management of commercial enterprises proves their enormous potential to contribute to the betterment of society in general. Meanwhile our women have yet to achieve those fundamental rights of free expression, association and security of life denied also to their menfolk.

The adversities that we have had to face together have taught all of us involved in the struggle to build a truly democratic political system in Burma that there are no gender barriers that cannot be overcome. The relationship between men and women should, and can be, characterised not by patronising behaviour or exploitation, but by *metta* (that is to say loving kindness), partnership and trust. We need mutual respect and understanding between men and women, instead of patriarchal domination and degradation, which are expressions of violence and engender counter-violence. We can learn from each other and help one another to moderate the ‘gender weaknesses’ imposed on us by traditional or biological factors.

There is an age-old prejudice the world over to the effect that women talk too much. But is this really a weakness? Could it not in fact be strength? Recent scientific research on the human brain has revealed that women are better at verbal skills while men tend towards physical action. Psychological research has shown on the other hand that disinformation engendered by men has far more damaging effect on its victims than feminine gossip. Surely these discoveries indicate that women have a most valuable contribution to make in situations of conflict, by leading the way to solutions based on dialogue rather than on viciousness or violence?

The Buddhist *pavarana* ceremony at the end of the rainy season retreat was instituted by the Lord Buddha, who did not want human beings to live in silence [I quote] ‘like dumb animals’. This ceremony, during which monks ask mutual forgiveness for any offence given during the retreat, can be said to be a council of truth and reconciliation.

It might also be considered a forerunner of that most democratic of institutions, the parliament, a meeting of peoples gathered together to talk over their shared problems. All the world's great religions are dedicated to the generation of happiness and harmony. This demonstrates the fact that together with the combative instincts of man there co-exists a spiritual aspiration for mutual understanding and peace.

This forum of non-governmental organisations represents the belief in the ability of intelligent human beings to resolve conflicting interests through exchange and dialogue. It also represents the conviction that governments alone cannot resolve all the problems of their countries. The watchfulness and active cooperation of organisations outside the spheres of officialdom are necessary to ensure the four essential components of the human development paradigm as identified by the UNDP: productivity, equity, sustainability and empowerment. The last is particularly relevant: it requires that 'development must be by people, not only for them. People must participate fully in the decisions and processes that shape their lives. In other words, people must be allowed to play a significant role in the governance of the country. And 'people' include women, who make up at least half of the world's population.

The last six years afforded me much time and food for thought. I came to the conclusion that the human race is not divided into two opposing camps of good and evil. It is made up of those who are capable of learning and those who are incapable of doing so. Here I am not talking of learning in the narrow sense of acquiring an academic education, but of learning as the process of absorbing those lessons of life that enable us to increase peace and happiness in our world. Women in their roles as mothers have traditionally assumed the responsibility of teaching children values that will guide them throughout their lives. It is time we were given the full opportunity to use our natural teaching skills to contribute towards building a modern world that can withstand the tremendous challenges of the technological revolution which has in turn brought revolutionary changes in social values.

As we strive to teach others we must have the humility to acknowledge that we too still have much to learn. And we must have the flexibility to adapt to the changing needs of the world around us. Women who have been taught that modesty and pliancy are among the prized virtues of our gender are marvellously equipped for the learning process. But they must be given the opportunity to turn these often merely passive virtues into positive assets for the society in which they live.

These, then, are our common hopes that unite us – that as the shackles of prejudice and intolerance fall from our own limbs we can together strive to identify and remove the impediments to human development everywhere. The mechanisms by which this great task is to be achieved provided the proper focus of this great Forum. I feel sure that women throughout the world who, like me, cannot be with you join me now in sending you all our prayers and good wishes for a joyful and productive meeting.

I thank you.

Faith Bandler

'Faith, Hope and Reconciliation'

at the Talkin' up Reconciliation Convention, Wollongong
August 1999

I first would like to thank the Indigenous people of the Illawarra for inviting me to come today. I was here once before and some of those past memories have been stirred with some of you whom I have had a chance to speak with, so thank you.

Lord Mayor, Evelyn Scott, Linda Burney and all honoured guests, when I put my thoughts together to come and speak to you this morning, I found a module in my thinking. It was getting in the way. There was a little sadness because I felt the reconciliation program had slowed since 1967 and then the considerable support for those who sponsored racism excused some of their terrible utterances in the name of free speech, and then the terrible tragedy revealed to us of the stolen children.

So briefly I will try to portray my thoughts of these days and the days before. Earlier we thought our efforts were set in stone. But the track hasn't been easy and it was not so. It is hard to say what we have heard and seen recently, to hear it without shame and anger, and those are two elements which tend to stand in the way of the planning of good strategies.

Some who are here today have lived, breathed, struggled and climbed those ramparts of the rugged past, and when reaching the summit, have seen the ugliness when looking down – the disagreeable habits of those who close their eyes to the past, the willing ignorance and blindness to other peoples' way of life, those who long for a homogeneous society where all think alike.

But I'm pleased to say that out there, there are decent people. They may have different cultures, different political beliefs, but they know there is a need to heal the wounds of the past, the terrible indignities.

My learning was rather hard and slow. It took some time for me to understand, when there are millions in the world today who are hungry, millions who are homeless, millions who are without work, the wrongfully imprisoned, the deaths in custody, the tortured, the mass murder of women and children, why in the name of creation our differences should matter. Why is it so hard to find our commonalities?

The most commonly voiced opinions of some who are willingly blind is that we focus on the failures and faults and too little praise is given. But if praise must be given it ought not to be given to the powerful but rather to the powerless, who patiently bear the brunt of many misdeeds and indecencies.

So in the struggle to reconcile you said it's about working together. That will mean lightening the burden of that terrible baggage that has to do with our differences. And in the short term, there's a fair bit to do about it.

Many have worked with determination, at most times against tremendous odds, with the talk-back jockeys lined up against them, and those who are deliberately blinkered and our troubled relationships with them. They are chained in their stubbornness, but we are free, and if we need to go forward without them, then we must.

To the youth present, and the not so young, let me say this: this movement should be one wherein we should ask not what is in it for me, but what is in it for us.

The fair-minded people out there can come along with us. None is without fault, none is without blemish, but they greatly outnumber the objectionable and the crude.

At this conference we might ask ourselves if our efforts are enough to make this country a better place for those who come after us. So you, the younger who are present, and those who are not present, have a hard job to do. You have brought change, true, but to eliminate some of the inbuilt attitudes of this society, the task is yet to be tackled.

This year Australia is celebrating 50 years of citizenship. Before 1949 we were all British subjects. Well, some were: it's not 50 years since Indigenous Australians has the right to citizenship.

We are not to forget the White Australia Policy, introduced at the turn of this century, excluded the peoples from South Africa, the peoples from the Pacific Islands and all Asian countries from Australian citizenship rights. Non-Indigenous Australians had the influence of the White Australia Policy, and those to whom it applied were considered, at times, less than human beings.

Thus the campaign for Aboriginal citizenship rights, carried on from 1957 to 1967, was rather difficult. And it's time for us to remember that rights are not handed on a platter by governments, they have to be won.

This conference in its deliberations will consider land rights. In the efforts to hold and protect their land from the invaders in 1788, there were many who lost their lives. There were fierce battles and conflict and, true, there were lulls, in the move for land rights. But even in the most isolated communities, the people spoke about their land.

For the executive of my council, FCAATSI, land rights seemed to be put on the back burner. It was the most poverty stricken in the whole of Australia, so we had to be careful with what few resources we had. These were the matters that had to do with equal wages for equal work, particularly for the black stockmen, and other needs like housing, education opportunities, freedom of movement, the false arrests. So these problems had to be dealt with and faced and we had to mobilise the forces to meet those needs.

Until 1962. Alec Vesper came down from the community at Woodenbong in the north of NSW, and he drove us on to form a subcommittee for land rights. I recall Alec addressing the 1962 FCAATSI Conference with the bible in one hand and the dictionary in the other hand, and he told us all to get up and fight for land rights. The

result of that was that a subcommittee was formed to deal with land rights and Dulcie Fowler was the secretary.

Ken Brindle, whom I know the Illawarra people will remember with great affection, once complained to me that he couldn't talk to Dulcie, because all she could talk about was land rights. Dulcie initiated a petition addressed to the Federal Parliament for Aboriginal people to reclaim their land.

It's a fitting time to mention briefly the struggle of the people for land rights of Mapoon, Weipa and Aurukun, particularly when Bauxite was found on their lands. And we might take strength by remembering their brave actions to combat the mining companies.

Jean Jimmy came to the south from Mapoon, and she told us how her people were forced by the police into boats to leave their land and as they sailed from Mapoon they saw their houses and their church on fire. Jean Jimmy and her people had an unforgivable fault in the eyes of the white people. They said the land they lived on and the land their forebears lived on for thousands of years was theirs.

Friends, what is reconciliation about? It is about promoting discussion. It is about the rights of the Indigenous people. It's about those rights being enshrined in legislation. It's about being watchful and remembering, and remembering that governments only *might* implement, and they might not. It's about the violation of the first people's rights, and it's about valuing the differences of those cultures that make up this country.

In 1975, the Racial Discrimination Act was introduced. All rights must now be recognised, and it's our job to make sure that they are. It is rare that a government will deliver out of the goodness of its heart, but history has shown that a genuine people's movement can move more than governments. It can move mountains.

Dear friends, much pain has been endured in the past, and that pain is no longer designated to hopelessness. It's time to move the process of reconciliation forward with a little more speed. That is the task. If not now, when? If not us, who?

Sir William Deane, Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia

**On the occasion of an ecumenical service for the victims
of the canyoning tragedy**

5 August 1999

We are gathered in great sadness to mourn the deaths of the 21 young people who were killed in the canyoning accident near here, last week. They came from five nations – Switzerland, the United Kingdom, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia. Their loss is a profound tragedy for their families and friends who are in the thoughts and the prayers of all of us at this service today. We pray with them for their loved ones who have died. And we also pray that, in the words of our Lord (Matthew Ch.5, v.4), they will truly be comforted.

Fourteen of the victims of the tragedy came from Australia. Collectively, their deaths represent probably the greatest single peacetime loss of young Australians outside our own country. That loss affects not only their families and friends, dreadful though that is. It also deeply affects our nation as a whole and all of its people.

I have, as Governor-General of Australia, with Senator John Herron of our Government, come here on behalf of Australia and of all Australians, to mourn them, to be with and to sympathise with their family members and friends who are here, and to demonstrate how important they were to their homeland. For us, the tragedy is somehow made worse by the fact that they died so far away from the homes, the families, the friends and the land they loved so well.

Australia and Switzerland are on opposite sides of the globe. Yet, in this age of modern telecommunications, one effect of the disaster has been to bring our two countries closer together. On every night since the accident, Switzerland has been in every Australian home that has been tuned into the television news, as well as on the radio, in all our newspapers and other media outlets. Conversely, the fact that two-thirds of those who died came from Australia has given rise to an increased awareness here in Switzerland of my country and its people.

Switzerland has, of course, itself experienced the shock and sorrow of overseas tragedy in the past. Perhaps that has heightened the sympathy and understanding which it has shown in recent days. I have already had the privilege of meeting with you, Madam President, and with Vice-President Ogi and exchanging condolences. I would, on this solemn occasion, like to express to the Swiss authorities and to the people of Switzerland, particularly the people of the Wilderswil and Interlaken regions, our abiding gratitude for all the help and assistance they have provided in the aftermath of the tragedy. In particular, I pay tribute to the bravery of all those who worked in the rescue efforts. We thank them for their skill and dedication. I also particularly mention the competence, the compassion and the kindness of all who have helped to look after the survivors and the relatives who have come here.

The young people – certainly the young Australians – who have been killed all shared the spirit of adventure, the joy of living, the exuberance and the delight of youth. That spirit inspired their lives, and lit the lives of all who knew them, until the end. We remember that and so many other wonderful things about them as we mourn them and grieve for young lives cut so tragically short. And all of us feel and share in their collective loss. For these 21 young men and women were part – a shining part – of our humanity. As John Donne wrote, ‘No man is an island’. Anyone’s ‘death diminishes’ us all because we are all ‘involved in mankind’.

Yesterday, my wife and I, together with family members and friends of the Australian victims, visited the canyon where the accident occurred. There, in memory of each of the 14 young people who came from our homeland, we cast into the Saxetenbach 14 sprigs of wattle, our national floral emblem, which we had brought with us from Government House in Canberra. Somehow, we felt that was bringing a little of Australia to them.

It was also, in a symbolic way, helping to bring them home to our country. That is not to suggest that their spirit and their memory will not linger forever, here in Switzerland, at the place where they died. Rather, it is to suggest that a little part of Switzerland has become, and will always be, to some extent, part of Australia. As it will also be part of the other countries outside Switzerland – New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom – from whence they came.

It is still winter at home. But the golden wattles are coming into bloom. Just as these young men and women were in the flower of their youth. And when we are back in Australia we will remember how the flowers and the perfume and the pollen of their and our homeland were carried down the river where they died to Lake Brienz in this beautiful country on the far side of the world.

May they all rest with God.

Anwar Sadat, President of Egypt

Statement to the Knesset

20 November 1977

Translated from Hebrew

In the name of God, the Gracious and Merciful.

Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Peace and the mercy of God Almighty be upon you and may peace be for us all, God willing. Peace for us all on the Arab land, and in Israel as well, as in every part of this big world, which is so complexed by its sanguinary conflicts, disturbed by its sharp contradictions, menaced now and then by destructive wars launched by man to annihilate his fellow man. Finally, amidst the ruins of what man has built and the remains of the victims of Mankind, there emerges neither victor nor vanquished. The only vanquished remains man, God's most sublime creation, man whom God has created – as Gandhi the apostle of peace puts it: to forge ahead to mould the way of life and worship God Almighty.

I come to you today on solid ground, to shape a new life, to establish peace. We all, on this land, the land of God; we all, Muslims, Christians and Jews, worship God and no one but God. God's teachings and commandments are love, sincerity, purity and peace.

I do not blame all those who received my decision – when I announced it to the entire world before the Egyptian People's Assembly – with surprise and amazement. Some, gripped by the violent surprise, believed that my decision was no more than verbal juggling to cater for world public opinion. Others, still, interpreted it as political tactics to camouflage my intention of launching a new war. I would go as far as to tell you that one of my aides at the Presidential Office contacted me at a late hour following my return home from the People's Assembly and sounded worried as he asked me: 'Mr. President, what would be our reaction if Israel should actually extend an invitation to you?' I replied calmly, I will accept it immediately. I have declared that I will go to the end of the world; I will go to Israel, for I want to put before the People of Israel all the facts.

I can see the point of all those who were astounded by my decision or those who had any doubts as to the sincerity of the intentions behind the declaration of my decision. No one would have ever conceived that the President of the biggest Arab state, which bears the heaviest burden and the top responsibility pertaining to the cause of war and peace in the Middle East, could declare his readiness to go to the land of the adversary while we were still in a state of war. Rather, we all are still bearing the consequences of four fierce wars waged within 30 years. The families of the 1973 October War are still moaning under the cruel pains of widowhood and bereavement of sons, fathers and brothers.

As I have already declared, I have not consulted, as far as this decision is concerned, with any of my colleagues and brothers, the Arab heads of state or the confrontation States. Those of them who contacted me, following the declaration of this decision, expressed their objection, because the feeling of utter suspicion and absolute lack of confidence between the Arab states and the Palestinian people on the one hand, and Israel on the other, still surges in us all. It is sufficient to say that many months in which peace could have been brought about had been wasted over differences and fruitless discussions on the procedure for the convocation of the Geneva Conference, all showing utter suspicion and absolute lack of confidence.

But, to be absolutely frank with you, I took this decision after long thinking, knowing that it constitutes a grave risk for, if God Almighty has made it my fate to assume the responsibility on behalf of the Egyptian people and to share in the fate-determining responsibility of the Arab Nation and the Palestinian people, the main duty dictated by this responsibility is to exhaust all and every means in a bid to save my Egyptian Arab people and the entire Arab Nation the horrors of new, shocking and destructive wars, the dimensions of which are foreseen by no other than God himself.

After long thinking, I was convinced that the obligation of responsibility before God, and before the people, make it incumbent on me that I should go to the farthest corner of the world, even to Jerusalem, to address Members of the Knesset, the representatives of the people of Israel, and acquaint them with all the facts surging in me. Then, I would leave you to decide for yourselves. Following this, may God Almighty determine our fate.

Ladies and gentlemen, there are moments in the life of nations and peoples when it is incumbent on those known for their wisdom and clarity of vision to overlook the past, with all its complexities and weighing memories, in a bold drive towards new horizons. Those who, like us, are shouldering the same responsibility entrusted to us, are the first who should have the courage to take fate-determining decisions which are in consonance with the circumstances. We must all rise above all forms of fanaticism, self-deception and obsolete theories of superiority. The most important thing is never to forget that infallibility is the prerogative of God alone.

If I said that I wanted to save all the Arab people the horrors of shocking and destructive wars, I most sincerely declare before you that I have the same feelings and bear the same responsibility towards all and every man on earth, and certainly towards the Israeli people.

Any life lost in war is a human life, irrespective of its being that of an Israeli or an Arab. A wife who becomes a widow is a human being entitled to a happy family life, whether she be an Arab or an Israeli. Innocent children who are deprived of the care and compassion of their parents are ours, be they living on Arab or Israeli land. They command our top responsibility to afford them a comfortable life today and tomorrow.

For the sake of them all, for the safeguard of the lives of all our sons and brothers, for affording our communities the opportunity to work for the progress and happiness of man and his right to a dignified life, for our responsibilities before the generations to

come, for a smile on the face of every child born on our land – for all that, I have taken my decision to come to you, despite all hazards, to deliver my address.

I have shouldered the prerequisites of the historical responsibility and, therefore, I declared – on 4 February 1971, to be precise – that I was willing to sign a peace agreement with Israel. This was the first declaration made by a responsible Arab official since, the outbreak of the Arab–Israeli conflict.

Motivated by all these factors dictated by the responsibilities of leadership, I called, on 16 October 1973, before the Egyptian People’s Assembly, for an international conference to establish permanent peace based on justice. I was not in the position of he who was pleading for peace or asking for a ceasefire.

Motivated by all these factors dictated by duties of history and leadership, we signed the first disengagement agreement, followed by the second disengagement agreement in Sinai. Then we proceeded trying both open and closed doors in a bid to find a certain path leading to a durable and just peace. We opened our hearts to the peoples of the entire world to make them understand our motivations and objectives, and to leave them actually convinced of the fact that we are advocates of justice and peacemakers.

Motivated by all these factors, I decided to come to you with an open mind and an open heart, and with a conscious determination, so that we might establish permanent peace based on justice.

It is so fated that my trip to you, the trip of peace, should coincide with the Islamic feast, the holy Feast of Courban Bairam, the Feast of Sacrifice when Abraham – peace be upon him – great-grandfather of the Arabs and Jews, submitted to God; I say when God Almighty ordered him, and to Him Abraham went, with dedicated sentiments, not out of weakness, but through a giant spiritual force and by a free will, to sacrifice his very own son, prompted by a firm and unshakable belief in ideals that lend life a profound significance.

This coincidence may carry a new meaning to us all, which may become a genuine aspiration heralding security and peace.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let us be frank with each other, using straightforward words and a clear conception, with no ambiguity. Let us be frank with each other today while the entire world, both East and West, follows these unparalleled moments which could prove to be a radical turning point in the history of this part of the world, if not in the history of the world as a whole. Let us be frank with each other as we answer this important question: how can we achieve permanent peace based on justice?

I have come to you carrying my clear and frank answer to this big question, so that the people in Israel as well as the whole world might hear it, and so that all those whose devoted prayers ring in my ears, pleading to God Almighty that this historic meeting may eventually lead to the results aspired to by millions, might also hear it.

Before I proclaim my answer, I wish to assure you that, in my clear and frank answer, I am basing myself on a number of facts which no one can deny.

The first fact: no one can build his happiness at the expense of the misery of others.

The second fact: never have I spoken or will ever speak in two languages. Never have I adopted or will adopt two policies. I never deal with anyone except in one language, one policy, and with one face.

The third fact: direct confrontation and a straight line are the nearest and most successful methods to reach a clear objective.

The fourth fact: the call for permanent and just peace, based on respect for the United Nations resolutions, has now become the call of the whole world. It has become a clear expression of the will of the international community, whether in official capitals, where policies are made and decisions taken, or at the level of world public opinion which influences policy-making and decision-taking.

The fifth fact: and this is probably the clearest and most prominent, is that the Arab Nation, in its drive for permanent peace based on justice, does not proceed from a position of weakness or hesitation, but it has the potential of power and stability which tells of a sincere will for peace. The Arab-declared intention stems from an awareness prompted by a heritage of civilisation that, to avoid an inevitable disaster that will befall us, you and the entire world, there is no alternative to the establishment of permanent peace based on justice – peace that is not shaken by storms, swayed by suspicion, or jeopardised by ill intentions.

In the light of these facts which I meant to place before you the way I see them, I would also wish to warn you in all sincerity; I warn you against some thoughts that could cross your minds; frankness makes it incumbent upon me to tell you the following:

First: I have not come here for a separate agreement between Egypt and Israel. This is not part of the policy of Egypt. The problem is not that of Egypt and Israel. Any separate peace between Egypt and Israel, or between any Arab confrontation state and Israel, will not bring permanent peace based on justice in the entire region. Rather, even if peace between all the confrontation states and Israel were achieved, in the absence of a just solution to the Palestinian problem, never will there be that durable and just peace upon which the entire world insists today.

Second: I have not come to you to seek a partial peace, namely to terminate the state of belligerency at this stage, and put off the entire problem to a subsequent stage. This is not the radical solution that would steer us to permanent peace.

Equally, I have not come to you for a third disengagement agreement in Sinai, or in the Golan and the West Bank. For this would mean that we are merely delaying the ignition of the fuse; it would mean that we are lacking the courage to confront peace, that we are too weak to shoulder the burdens and responsibilities of a durable peace based on justice.

I have come to you so that together we might build a durable peace based on justice, to avoid the shedding of one single drop of blood from an Arab or an Israeli. It is for this reason that I have proclaimed my readiness to go to the farthest corner of the world.

Here, I would go back to the answer to the big question: how can we achieve a durable peace based on justice?

In my opinion, and I declare it to the whole world from this forum, the answer is neither difficult nor impossible, despite long years of feud, blood vengeance, spite and hatred, and breeding generations on concepts of total rift and deep-rooted animosity. The answer is not difficult, nor is it impossible, if we sincerely and faithfully follow a straight line.

You want to live with us in this part of the world. In all sincerity, I tell you, we welcome you among us, with full security and safety. This, in itself, is a tremendous turning point; one of the landmarks of a decisive historical change.

We used to reject you. We had our reasons and our claims, yes. We used to brand you as ‘so-called’ Israel, yes. We were together in international conferences and organisations and our representatives did not, and still do not, exchange greetings, yes. This has happened and is still happening.

It is also true that we used to set, as a precondition for any negotiations with you, a mediator who would meet separately with each party. Through this procedure, the talks of the first and second disengagement agreements took place.

Our delegates met in the first Geneva Conference without exchanging a direct word. Yes, this has happened.

Yet, today I tell you, and declare it to the whole world, that we accept to live with you in permanent peace based on justice. We do not want to encircle you or be encircled ourselves by destructive missiles ready for launching, nor by the shells of grudges and hatred. I have announced on more than one occasion that Israel has become a fait accompli, recognised by the world, and that the two super powers have undertaken the responsibility of its security and the defence of its existence.

As we really and truly seek peace, we really and truly welcome you to live among us in peace and security.

There was a huge wall between us which you tried to build up over a quarter of a century, but it was destroyed in 1973. It was a wall of a continuously inflammable and escalating psychological warfare. It was a wall of fear of the force that could sweep the entire Arab Nation. It was a wall of propaganda, that we were a nation reduced to a motionless corpse. Rather, some of you had gone as far as to say that, even after 50 years, the Arabs would not regain any strength. It was a wall that threatened always with the long arm that could reach and strike anywhere. It was a wall that warned us against extermination and annihilation if we tried to use our legitimate right to liberate

the occupied territories. Together we have to admit that that wall fell and collapsed in 1973.

Yet, there remained another wall. This wall constitutes a psychological barrier between us. A barrier of suspicion. A barrier of rejection. A barrier of fear of deception. A barrier of hallucinations around any action, deed or decision. A barrier of cautious and erroneous interpretations of all and every event or statement. It is this psychological barrier which I described in official statements as representing 70 percent of the whole problem.

Today, through my visit to you, I ask you: why don't we stretch our hands with faith and sincerity so that, together, we might destroy this barrier? Why shouldn't ours and your will meet with faith and sincerity, so that together we might remove all suspicion of fear, betrayal and ill intentions? Why don't we stand together with the bravery of men and the boldness of heroes who dedicate themselves to a sublime objective? Why don't we stand together with the same courage and boldness to erect a huge edifice of peace that builds and does not destroy? An edifice that is a beacon for generations to come – the human message for construction, development and the dignity of man? Why should we bequeath to the coming generations the plight of bloodshed, death, orphans, widowhood, family disintegration and the wailing of victims?

Why don't we believe in the wisdom of God conveyed to us by the Proverbs of Solomon:

'Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil; but to the counsellors of peace is joy. Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with strife.'

Why don't we repeat together from the Psalms of David:

'Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle. Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts. Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours.'

To tell you the truth, peace cannot be worth its name unless it is based on justice, and not on the occupation of the land of others. It would not be appropriate for you to demand for yourselves what you deny others. With all frankness, and with the spirit that has prompted me to come to you today, I tell you: you have to give up, once and for all, the dreams of conquest, and give up the belief that force is the best method for dealing with the Arabs. You should clearly understand and assimilate the lesson of confrontation between you and us.

Expansion does not pay. To speak frankly, our land does not yield itself to bargaining. It is not even open to argument. To us, the national soil is equal to the holy valley where God Almighty spoke to Moses – peace be upon him. None of us can, or accept to, cede one inch of it, or accept the principle of debating or bargaining over it.

I sincerely tell you that before us today lies the appropriate chance for peace, if we are really serious in our endeavours for peace. It is a chance that time cannot afford once again. It is a chance that, if lost or wasted, the plotter against it will bear the curse of humanity and the curse of history.

What is peace for Israel? It means that Israel lives in the region with her Arab neighbours, in security and safety. To such logic, I say yes. It means that Israel lives within her borders, secure against any aggression. To such logic, I say yes. It means that Israel obtains all kinds of guarantees that ensure those two factors. To this demand, I say yes. More than that: we declare that we accept all the international guarantees you envisage and accept. We declare that we accept all the guarantees you want from the two super powers or from either of them, or from the Big Five, or some of them.

Once again, I declare clearly and unequivocally that we agree to any guarantees you accept because, in return, we shall obtain the same guarantees.

In short, then, when we ask: what is peace for Israel, the answer would be: it is that Israel lives within her borders with her Arab neighbours, in safety and security within the framework of all the guarantees she accepts and which are offered to the other party. But how can this be achieved? How can we reach this conclusion which would lead us to permanent peace based on justice?

There are facts that should be faced with all courage and clarity. There are Arab territories which Israel has occupied by armed force. We insist on complete withdrawal from these territories, including Arab Jerusalem.

I have come to Jerusalem, as the City of Peace, which will always remain as a living embodiment of coexistence among believers of the three religions. It is inadmissible that anyone should conceive the special status of the City of Jerusalem within the framework of annexation or expansionism, but it should be a free and open city for all believers.

Above all, the city should not be severed from those who have made it their abode for centuries. Instead of awakening the prejudices of the Crusaders, we should revive the spirit of Omar ibn el-Khattab and Saladdin, namely the spirit of tolerance and respect for rights. The holy shrines of Islam and Christianity are not only places of worship, but a living testimony of our uninterrupted presence here politically, spiritually and intellectually. Let us make no mistake about the importance and reverence we Christians and Muslims attach to Jerusalem.

Let me tell you, without the slightest hesitation, that I did not come to you under this dome to make a request that your troops evacuate the occupied territories. Complete withdrawal from the Arab territories occupied in 1967 is a logical and undisputed fact. Nobody should plead for that. Any talk about permanent peace based on justice, and any move to ensure our coexistence in peace and security in this part of the world, would become meaningless, while you occupy Arab territories by force of arms. For there is no peace that could be in consonance with, or be built on, the occupation of the land of others. Otherwise, it would not be a serious peace.

Yes, this is a foregone conclusion which is not open to discussion or debate – if intentions are sincere and if endeavours to establish a just and durable peace for ours and the generations to come are genuine.

As for the Palestinians cause, nobody could deny that it is the crux of the entire problem. Nobody in the world could accept, today, slogans propagated here in Israel, ignoring the existence of the Palestinian people, and questioning their whereabouts. The cause of the Palestinian people and their legitimate rights are no longer ignored or denied today by anybody. Rather, nobody who has the ability of judgement can deny or ignore it.

It is an acknowledged fact received by the world community, both in the East and in the West, with support and recognition in international documents and official statements. It is of no use to anybody to turn deaf ears to its resounding voice which is being heard day and night, or to overlook its historical reality. Even the United States, your first ally which is absolutely committed to safeguard Israel's security and existence, and which offered and still offers Israel every moral, material and military support – I say – even the United States has opted to face up to reality and facts, and admit that the Palestinian people are entitled to legitimate rights and that the Palestinian problem is the core and essence of the conflict and that, so long as it continues to be unresolved, the conflict will continue to aggravate, reaching new dimensions. In all sincerity, I tell you that there can be no peace without the Palestinians. It is a grave error of unpredictable consequences to overlook or brush aside this cause.

I shall not indulge in past events since the Balfour Declaration 60 years ago. You are well acquainted with the relevant facts. If you have found the legal and moral justification to set up a national home on a land that did not all belong to you, it is incumbent upon you to show understanding of the insistence of the People of Palestine on establishing, once again (sic) a state on their land. When some extremists ask the Palestinians to give up this sublime objective, this, in fact, means asking them to renounce their identity and every hope for the future.

I hail the Israeli voices that called for the recognition of the Palestinian people's rights to achieve and safeguard peace. Here I tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that it is no use to refrain from recognising the Palestinian people and their rights to statehood and rights of return.

We, the Arabs, have faced this experience before, with you and with the reality of Israeli existence. The struggle took us from war to war, from victims to more victims, until you and we have today reached the edge of a horrifying abyss and a terrifying disaster, unless, together, we seize the opportunity, today, of a durable peace based on justice.

You have to face reality bravely as I have done. There can never be any solution to a problem by evading it or turning a deaf ear to it. Peace cannot last if attempts are made to impose fantasy concepts on which the world has turned its back and announced its unanimous call for the respect of rights and facts. There is no need to enter a vicious

circle as to Palestinian rights. It is useless to create obstacles. Otherwise the march of peace will be impeded or peace will be blown up.

As I have told you, there is no happiness to the detriment of others. Direct confrontation and straightforwardness are the shortcut and the most successful way to reach a clear objective. Direct confrontation concerning the Palestinian problem, and tackling it in one single language with a view to achieving a durable and just peace, lie in the establishment of their state. With all the guarantees you demand, there should be no fear of a newlyborn state that needs the assistance of all countries of the world. When the bells of peace ring, there will be no hands to beat the drums of war. Even if they existed, they would be soundless.

Conceive with me a peace agreement in Geneva that we would herald to a world thirsty for peace, a peace agreement based on the following points:

First: ending the Israeli occupation of the Arab territories occupied in 1967.

Second: achievement of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian People and their right to self-determination, including their right to establish their own state.

Third: the right of all states in the area to live in peace within their boundaries, which will be secure and guaranteed through procedures to be agreed upon, which provide appropriate security to international boundaries, in addition to appropriate international guarantees.

Fourth: commitment of all states in the region to administer the relations among them in accordance with the objectives and principles of the United Nations Charter, particularly the principles concerning the non-resort to force and the solution of differences among them by peaceful means.

Fifth: ending the state of belligerency in the region.

Ladies and gentlemen, peace is not the mere endorsement of written lines; rather, it is a rewriting of history. Peace is not a game of calling for peace to defend certain whims or hide certain ambitions. Peace is a giant struggle against all and every ambition and whim. Perhaps the examples taken from ancient and modern history teach us all that missiles, warships and nuclear weapons cannot establish security. Rather, they destroy what peace and security build. For the sake of our peoples, and for the sake of the civilisations made by man, we have to defend man everywhere against the rule of the force of arms, so that we may endow the rule of humanity with all the power of the values and principles that promote the sublime position of mankind.

Allow me to address my call from this rostrum to the people of Israel. I address myself with true and sincere words to every man, woman and child in Israel.

From the Egyptian people who bless this sacred mission of peace, I convey to you the message of peace, the message of the Egyptian people who do not know fanaticism, and whose sons, Muslims, Christians and Jews, live together in a spirit of cordiality, love

and tolerance. This is Egypt whose people have entrusted me with that sacred message, the message of security, safety and peace. To every man, woman and child in Israel, I say: encourage your leadership to struggle for peace. Let all endeavours be channelled towards building a huge edifice for peace, instead of strongholds and hideouts defended by destructive rockets. Introduce to the entire world the image of the new man in this area, so that he might set an example to the man of our age, the man of peace everywhere.

Be the heralds to your sons. Tell them that past wars were the last of wars and the end of sorrows. Tell them that we are in for a new beginning to a new life – the life of love, prosperity, freedom and peace.

You, bewailing mother; you, widowed wife; you, the son who lost a brother or a father; you, all victims of wars – fill the earth and space with recitals of peace. Fill bosoms and hearts with the aspirations of peace. Turn the song into a reality that blossoms and lives. Make hope a code of conduct and endeavour. The will of peoples is part of the will of God.

Ladies and gentlemen, before I came to this place, with every beat of my heart and with every sentiment, I prayed to God Almighty, while performing the Curban Bairarn prayers, and while visiting the Holy Sepulchre, to give me strength and to confirm my belief that this visit may achieve the objectives I look forward to, for a happy present and a happier future.

I have chosen to set aside all precedents and traditions known by warring countries, in spite of the fact that occupation of the Arab territories is still there. Rather, the declaration of my readiness to proceed to Israel came as a great surprise that stirred many feelings and astounded many minds. Some opinions even doubted its intent. Despite that, the decision was inspired by all the clarity and purity of belief, and with all the true expression of my people's will and intentions.

And I have chosen this difficult road which is considered, in the opinion of many, the most difficult road. I have chosen to come to you with an open heart and an open mind. I have chosen to give this great impetus to all international efforts exerted for peace. I have chosen to present to you, and in your own home, the realities devoid of any schemes or whims, not to manoeuvre or to win a round, but for us to win together, the most dangerous of rounds and battles in modern history – the battle of permanent peace based on justice.

It is not my battle alone, nor is it the battle of the leadership in Israel alone. It is the battle of all and every citizen in all our territories whose right it is to live in peace. It is the commitment of conscience and responsibility in the hearts of millions.

When I put forward this initiative, many asked what is it that I conceived as possible to achieve during this visit, and what my expectations were. And, as I answered the questioners, I announce before you that I have not thought of carrying out this initiative from the concept of what could be achieved during this visit, but I have come here to deliver a message. I have delivered the message, and may God be my witness.

I repeat with Zechariah, ‘Love right and justice.’

I quote the following verses from the holy Koran:

‘We believe in God and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes and in the books given to Moses, Jesus, and the prophets from their lord. We make no distinction between one and another among them and to God we submit.’