

Book reviews

The ice-cream man



By Jenny Mounfield
Ford Street
Publishing
ISBN:
978-1-876462-68-0
RRP: \$16.95

How many of us still hear the mellow chimes of Mr Whippy as he weaves through the suburbs on a hot summer's afternoon? Or is Mr Whippy more of a remnant to a bygone era replaced by McDonalds 30c soft serve?

This title goes a little way to reinvent a neighbourhood character that what was once a joy to all children.

One summer afternoon, three boys play a prank on the ice-cream man. This one decision sets into motion a chain of events that will forge a life-long bond, testing each boy as never before. Three boys united by fear and their need for friendship. Three boys united against the ice-cream man.

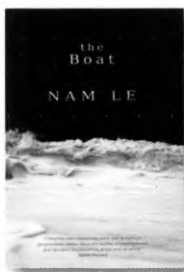
This scary story tells the tale of three friends and will keep readers engrossed as they follow the fortunes of the boys and their interaction with the ice-cream man after he drives off instead of serving them.

This is an intriguing tale filled with twists, turns and mystery, presented by author Jenny Mounfield, who uses authentic and believable language combined with solid prose.

There are also many questions touched on in this novel that will be of interest and resonate with young readers.

The ice-cream man is packed full of action and emotions and suspense against the backdrop of the sweltering heat, which only adds to the tension, reflecting the mood and atmosphere of the story.

The boat



By Nam Le
Penguin Australia
ISBN:
9780241015414
RRP: \$29.95

This book has been exceptionally well received and can be found on many recommended reading lists across the country.

In 1979, Nam Le's family left Vietnam for Australia, an experience that inspires the first and last stories in *The boat*. In between, however, Le's imagination travels across the globe.

The seven stories display an amazing confidence and range for so young an author, moving from a religious festival in Tehran to the days before an atomic bomb is dropped on Hiroshima to the cardboard shantytowns of Colombia where 14-year-old boys yearn to get 'an office job,' slang for work as a hired assassin.

Surrounding these imagined worlds, like bookends, are two stories that draw on details from Le's own life. The first, "Love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice," features a young Vietnamese writer named Nam, who leaves his job as a lawyer in Melbourne, Australia, to attend the Iowa Writers' Workshop; he has an American girlfriend and a folder full of stories that depict children in Hiroshima, Colombian assassins and a New York painter who dines at Picholine.

The last story, "The boat," describes a dire 13-day journey from Vietnam to a Malaysian camp, an experience not that different from one that Mr. Le, just a few months old, and his family went through after joining the legions of refugees trying to escape the Communist regime in 1979.

Le writes with authority and poise, and shows an intuitive, gut-level ability to convey the psychological conflicts people experience when they find their own hopes and ambitions slamming up

against familial expectations and the clash of cultures.

Each story uncovers a raw human truth. Each story is absorbing and fully realised as a novel which together makes up a collection of astonishing variety and accomplishment.

His writing style is both graceful and respectful and often languid in pace. But the beauty of his work is that he writes about people and characters that demand reading.

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Current practices in public libraries

By Miller, William and Pellen, Rita M., (eds.)

Haworth Press

ISBN: 978880789036070.

Another Haworth compilation volume of articles that appeared previously in one of their journals, *Public Library Quarterly*, the collection comprises 15 diverse papers from a range of American contributors, both practitioners and academics. A number of the papers are strongly oriented to the local situation in the US, covering areas such as the funding situation for public libraries, the role of the New York Public Library Science, Industry and Business Library and the use of Civil Rights' 'Freedom Songs' for developing outreach programs. However, other contributions are more general (though often drawing on local examples), covering areas such as mentoring for public library leadership, marketing and advocacy for the library and public libraries and human rights.

Like any collection of this kind, there is something of interest for most readers; but there is also a lot that is likely to be of marginal interest. The strong focus on the US situation makes this volume of limited relevance to most of those working in the Australian public library arena.

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BIG AND ME
David Miller

Big and Small are machines that work together as a team. "But some days Big goes a bit wobbly, and I get a lot worried."

Big malfunctions in a variety of ways and Small tries to help with the assistance of The Boss and Mechanic.

The story is a metaphor for a child living with an adult who suffers from mental illness.

Big and Me is dramatically illustrated with paper sculpture.

RRP \$26.95

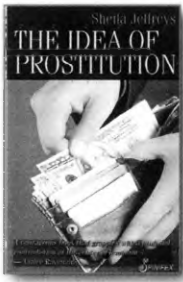
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Book reviews

The idea of prostitution



By Sheila Jeffreys
Spinifex Press
ISBN:
9781876756673
RRP: \$32.95

There are (at least) two competing views on prostitution:

- Prostitution as a legitimate and acceptable form of employment, freely chosen by women;
- Prostitution as a form of degrading the women and causing grave psychological damage.

In *The idea of prostitution*, Sheila Jeffreys explores these sharply contrasting views. She examines the changing concept of prostitution from White Slave Traffic of the Nineteenth Century to its present legal status.

The book includes discussion of the varieties of prostitution, including the experience of male prostitutes; the uses of women in pornography; and the role of military brothels compared with slavery and rape in marriage. Sheila Jeffreys explodes the distinction between 'forced' and 'free' prostitution, and documents the expanding international traffic in women.

The author examines the claims of the prostitutes' rights movement and the sex industry, while supporting prostituted women. Her argument is threefold: the sex of prostitution is not just sex; the work of prostitution is not ordinary work; and prostitution is a 'choice' not for the prostituted women, but for the men who abuse them.

At times *"The idea of prostitution"* is controversial, however it is always interesting reading and goes far to remove any romantic notion of the sex industry that may have been perpetuated by recent titles that almost celebrate the

industry. It certainly questions more liberal notions about what it means to be a woman in today's society in which certain practices are still tolerated or have been normalised."

Sheila Jeffreys is the author of many books on feminism and on violence against women. She is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Melbourne.

Australian slang



Penguin Australia
ISBN:
9780143009115
RRP: \$16.95

What does it mean to be Australian? For some, Australia is a land far away, with kangaroos in everyone's garden, heat, desert and Paul Hogan drinking beer.

And when you think of the way we speak, many expect us to only to say "g'day mate", and the phrase popularised by Paul Hogan, "Throw another shrimp on the barbie!"

Australia Slang, Aussie Slang, or Strine as it is sometimes called, is a reflection of the harsh Australian land and the no-nonsense "let's get on with it" attitude of the Australian people. So a lot of corners are cut both with what we say and how we say it.

Australian slang celebrates and interprets Australia's rich and vivid language. It is intended for locals as well as visitors, because many Australians have no idea quite how alien and incomprehensible their native language can be to outsiders, even to other English speakers.

Every culture has a vocab that is street wise and our speech is peppered with words and phrases whose arcane meanings are understood only by

the initiated. It is these colourful colloquialisms that *Australian slang* sets out to explain.

Australian slang has a few marked features. An obvious one is the habit of abbreviating words and adding 'o' or 'ie' to the end. Thus 'workers compensation' becomes 'compo', 'afternoon' becomes 'arvo' and aggressive becomes 'aggro'; while 'barbecue' becomes 'barbie', 'blowfly' becomes 'blowie' and 'budgerigar' becomes 'budgie.'

A large proportion of our slang seems to centre on a small number of topics, notably sex, alcohol (particularly beer), and intoxication – who would have thought there could be more than 30 terms for 'drunk' and 18 for 'vomit'?

A range of books and dictionaries were consulted during the research process for this book, and a necessarily sceptical and discriminating eye cast over the trash and treasure trove of the internet. Language overheard being used in everyday life was also included. It is fascinating to discover the myriad and contrasting ways terms and phrases are defined and used by different people and sources. The Australian language is certainly an ever-changing and evolving entity.

Some of the terms in this book might surprise Australian residents, who never would have imagined that seemingly mundane words such as 'manchester', 'removalist' and 'fossick' could be unique to the Australian vernacular. Whether you hail from overseas or from the Lucky Country itself, this book is sure to offer you new insights into the Australian language – whether it's learning a new way to insult a mate, or discovering the true meaning of 'dip your eye!'

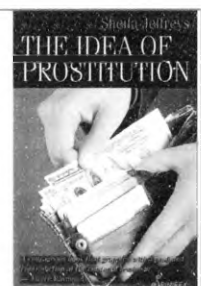
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The Idea of Prostitution

Sheila Jeffreys

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www.spinifexpress.com.au



Bo-r-ne Ya-goo-na Par-ry-boo-go: Yesterday today tomorrow: an Aboriginal history of Willoughby

In 2007 Willoughby City Council was successful in receiving an Indigenous Heritage Program grant through the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts which the Council matched dollar for dollar. The grant was to research and write an Aboriginal history of Willoughby from pre-settlement until the present day. The Metropolitan Local Land Council was consulted during the planning stage and the project was managed by Frances Sims, the former Library Services Manager of Willoughby City Council and currently the Director of Public Library and Community Learning Services at the State Library of New South Wales. It was facilitated by David Watts, the Manager of the Aboriginal Heritage Office for the Northern Sydney Region. Val Attenborough, Senior Research Scientist in Anthropology at the Australian Museum, and Cameron White, of the National Trust, were also consulted by the author.

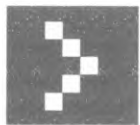
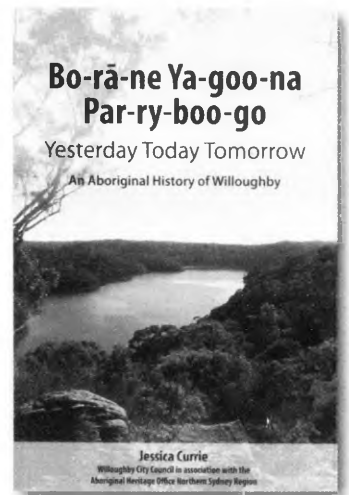
As a result of this grant, Council's consultant, Jessica Currie, completed writing the book *Bo-r-ne Ya-goo-na Par-ry-boo-go: Yesterday today tomorrow: an Aboriginal history of Willoughby* in June 2008. The title for this book is from the vocabulary compiled by First Fleet Judge Advocate, David Collins, based on information supplied by Bennelong. The story begins with Creation and takes the reader on a journey through prehistory and then the early contact period. But at this point the Aboriginal people do not fade away from the landscape. Rather a story of survival and adaptation unfolds

as Aboriginal people, their culture and heritage, have come to be embraced in an attempt to achieve understanding. Unfortunately one of the Aboriginal people interviewed, Auntie Beryl Timbery Beller, passed away in March 2008 and the Mayor dedicated the book to her memory.

Bo-r-ne Ya-goo-na Par-ry-boo-go: Yesterday today tomorrow: an Aboriginal history of Willoughby was launched at a 'Yarn Up' at the Aboriginal Heritage Office on 15 October, 2008 by the Mayor of Willoughby, Cr Pat Reilly. The official launch was followed up by an Author Talk which attracted over 60 members of the community.

We were delighted to have *Bo-r-ne Ya-goo-na Par-ry-boo-go: Yesterday today tomorrow*, selected by the Sydney Morning Herald as its non-fiction Pick of the Week on 13th December. The Herald stated that "this is a benchmark for Aboriginal research and is worthy of emulation by other suburban councils." Willoughby City Council has decided to donate a copy of this book to each school in the area. Willoughby City Council is very proud to have copies available for purchase from the Library (ph 02 9777 7900) for \$19.95, plus \$7.00 postage and handling.

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