

EXTRACTS FROM THE
BLAGGARD
CHRONICLES
BY MISCREANT &
BLAGGARD



Preface

In beginning the biography of my hero, Blaggard, I find myself in some difficulty. What I mean is that though I call Blaggard my hero, I know perfectly well that he is not by any means a great man, and for this reason I can foresee all sorts of inevitable questions, such as: What is so remarkable about Blaggard that you should have chosen him for your hero? What exactly has he done? Who knows of him and what is he known for? Why should I, your reader, waste my time studying Blaggard's life?

The last question is the most vital one. For all I can say in reply to you is that perhaps you will find it out for yourself from the novel. But what if after the reading the novel you do not? What if you do not agree that my Blaggard is in any way remarkable? I am saying this because unhappily it may turn out to be so. He is remarkable as far as I am concerned, but I doubt very much whether I shall be able to prove it to my readers. The trouble is that, though, in a way he is a man of action, he is only so in a vague sort of way, in a way that is not quite clear. Still, it would be strange to demand clarity from people at a time like ours. One thing, though, is beyond question: he is a strange, almost eccentric sort of man. But strangeness and eccentricity are more likely to give a man a bad name than a claim to attention, especially when everyone today seems eager to reduce personality to a common denominator and find some sort of sense amid the general confusion of ideas. An eccentric, on the other hand, is mostly a personality and an exception, isn't that so?

Well, dear reader, one reason you might find to read this tale is that herein lies the story of Miscreant as well as Blaggard - you get two novels for the price of one.

At that point Blaggard stopped writing. There was only so much Dostoevsky he could steal without a plagiarism suit being slapped on him. But he knew Dostoevsky would never have minded. Dostoevsky also ascribed to the philosophy of Blaggardism. What was Prince Myshkin but a blaggard? And Alexy Fyodorovich Karamazov? He was definitely a blaggard; that was what Dostoevsky had been telling the reader in his introduction to the Brothers Karamazov. Dostoevsky himself was undoubtedly a

blaggard, and a bit of a miscreant too, for that matter. And Shakespeare, definitely a Blaggard. How could one begin to describe a man like John Falstaff, the only honest man in all Shakespeare's *oeuvre*, as another blaggard once said, unless one was a blaggard? Hamlet, Claudius and Polonius were much less and far worse than Blaggards. As for the supposedly good men and women - Kent, Horatio, Cordelia - they lacked the degree of Blaggardism to be more than peripheral figures. They were necessary; they were the prosaic glue that stopped Shakespeare's micro-universes disintegrating. But would Shakespeare have written a play called Kent, or Horatio, or Cordelia? No, they would have been as dull as they were preposterous. But a play called Blaggard? That is something Shakespeare had dreamed of. Unfortunately for the species he died before undertaking the most perfect synthesis of a splendid career, a synthesis which would have proven Aristotle completely wrong - though he had done that often enough - a synthesis that would have blended comedy, history, stark unpleasant everyday reality, proto-surrealism, and more comedy, in an artistic tour de force.

Goethe was a blaggard. Mephistopheles a thorough blaggard. Faust a miscreant. Yes, thought Blaggard, I am not alone. Literature is full of blaggards. Rabelais, and the writer of Ecclesiastes, and Henry Miller, and Callicles, and has ever a more blaggardly piece of nonsense been written than Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*? - apart from *Finnegans Wake*, which was unreadable Blaggardism. Seven hundred pages of unadulterated, fulliddidly of whiskersey, hallucinogenic Blaggardism.

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Miscreant had been a little more conscious of Blaggard's comportment lately and had concurrently detected some opportunities by which to share with humanity an insight into itself. It might also be a money-spinner. Recognising the commercial potential and the moral-historical necessity, Miscreant thought he would firstly put together a slick handbook entitled, *The Quintessential Blaggard: A Guide to Blaggard's Character and Behaviour*. Secondly, and a far more extensive project, he would produce a multiple

volume, *The Compleat Blaggard*, detailing all the minutiae of Blaggard's life, personality, career, and police records in several states and territories. Although Miscreant initially did not want to provoke a kind of one-day 50 over game versus traditional test match cricket division that could fracture the country—i.e. fans of the short handbook warring with devotees of the longer study, the marketing possibilities dawned on him. Most buyers of the handbook would turn into purchasers of the multi-volume set over time; or their parents would buy it. Or, most likely, they would want it printed on underwear and pyjamas, so they could read it in bed or while on holidays. Having made a prototype of both books for the underwear and pyjamas, Blaggard and Miscreant spent the following day being photographed by a modelling agency as they wore their new creations.

Miscreant had done one of those public service exams, about picking the correct numbers and shapes and 'problem solving'. 'How do you think you went?' asked Blaggard. 'Alright' replied Miscreant. 'Could I do well at that?' Blaggard enquired, a little uncertain. 'Not sure' said Miscreant, 'it's about logic'. 'What sort of logic? Aristotelian, Cartesian, Boolean, Hegelian, Cantorean, Modal, Tarskean, Bündchenian?' 'Bündchenian?'. 'Yes – it's existential, requiring a good body, a bikini and the ability to have anything you say taken seriously. Next examination, Miscreant, I suggest you try that. It might get you the job.' The next day, Miscreant went to the sports fashion shop and bought a bikini. Then he headed back to the public service examination room demanding a reappraisal.

Blaggard was waiting by an elevator in one of those large anonymous city buildings and began to read the 'Directions in case of fire' on the wall. 'When you hear "Beep Beep"', it was notified, 'remain here and wait for further instructions'. 'Beep Beep' Blaggard

practiced mildly to himself, without encumbrance. ‘When you hear “Whoop Whoop” evacuate the building’. ‘Whoop Whoop’ said Blaggard, confident he had mastered both sounds, the difference between them, and what to do, or not do, in case of hearing either. Just as the elevator reached his floor the ‘Beep Beep’ noise suddenly began and startled Blaggard who glanced about to see if he could spot anything or anyone. Because it was a place of public administration nobody was around. ‘Beep Beep’, the signal blared, louder and louder. Blaggard looked at the ‘Directions in case of fire’ again. ‘Wait here for further instructions’ it definitely said. After two minutes, during which he saw nobody but heard charging footsteps going down a fire-escape somewhere, Blaggard became uneasy. This feeling was to intensify considerably when Blaggard detected a whiff of smoke. His eyes bulged. The noise bellowed unchanged, “Beep Beep.” Blaggard continued to wait by the lift, transfixed by the instructions. Flames appeared from around a corner. Then from the elevator shaft. Smoke poured in and Blaggard could hardly see the “Directions in case of fire” anymore. But there was no “Whoop, Whoop.” Things started to collapse; flames and burning ash raged through the room. Blaggard coughed and spluttered. Then he heard a loudspeaker from outside: “Is there anyone inside the building? Move towards the windows immediately”, said someone from an emergency rescue service. Still there was no “Whoop, Whoop”, only a deafening “Beep, Beep.” “Fuck this” thought Blaggard and ran towards where he thought there was a window as the flames threatened to engulf him.

Blaggard broke a pane of glass and stepped nervously out onto a ledge. “There he is” he heard someone say from below. Then, “Hey, that’s Blaggard”, said someone else. “How yer goin Blaggard?” enquired another. Blaggard decided that this was not a favourable position from which to launch into a dialectical response. Existentialism had triumphed. He watched and waited anxiously as rescuers manoeuvred towards him.

Eventually the fire-brigade and a tactical response team reached Blaggard in a large mobile ladder and he fell in, exhausted. ‘Where was the fucking “Whoop, Whoop” noise?’, Blaggard demanded angrily of his rescuers. ‘Whoop, Whoop’, responded a fireman, ‘Went out in 1993 because of a campaign that determined it sounded too much like that whistling sound some men make in the direction of some women some of the time. Now it’s just an extended “Beep, Beep”’. If you hear that for more than two minutes

run like hell'. 'Why didn't they say that on the f.n' instructions?', the vociferous Blaggard roared. 'A Government committee decided to cutback and use the money on a committee meeting'. Revolutionary thoughts were entering Blaggard's head as he passed out.

Blaggard had been up to something. Something drawn direct from the pages of the *Quintessential Blaggard*. It was quintessential Blaggard behaviour and afterwards he had gone home and read Augustine's *City of God*. No matter how much he loved and respected Augustine as a writer, spirit and former Blaggard himself, the present Blaggard could not act on the implications for others in Augustine's autobiographical reflections. For modern blaggards, and especially postmoderns, there was no alternative to a licentious life. Try though Blaggard would to fit him in, or reinvent him, the Augustinian God was dead and could play no role other than an external topic of study in Blaggard's life. The distant interlocutor could not convince Blaggard to give up his bawdy ways. Were Blaggard to have a road to Damascus experience and turn to living the religious life he would no longer be Blaggard. Either-Or. Blaggard mused on the vinculum between himself, Augustine and Kierkegaard, what genii all three were, then curled himself up into a ball and went to sleep.



Augustine



Kierkegaard



Blaggard

Blaggard saw himself as engaged in intellectual combat with the French postmodernists. He didn't bother with their lesser Anglo-Saxon neophytes; they were sub-standard

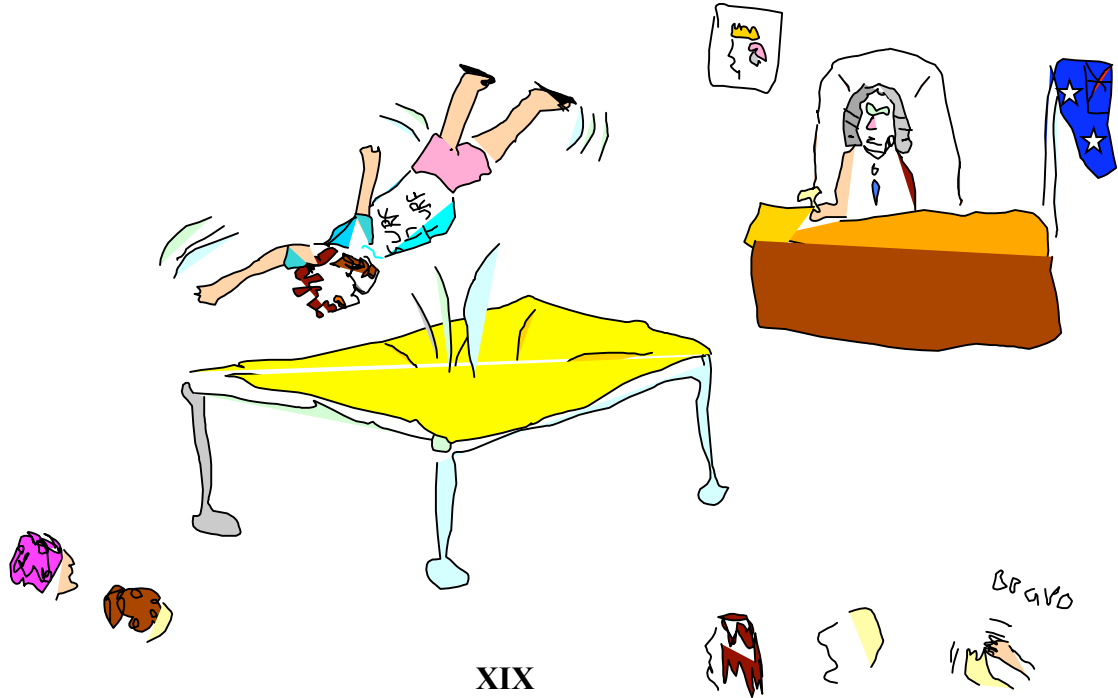
opposition. He envisaged a climactic contest between flashy French smoke and mirrors, and Blaggard's own garden of earthy, earthly delights, accompanied by a few divine invocations. How about that, Blaggard thought, in the privacy of his own home, a live on stage conflagration between me and Baudrillard, or Derrida, or...? Blaggard struggled to recall any well-known French theorists who were still living. Those who hadn't hurled themselves from windows, succumbed to excess, or been killed by their wives. On the surface, not all that different from me, Blaggard very briefly mused, before turning on "Talking Footy".

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Blaggard had been summoned to appear before a Royal Commission. It was an inquiry into a politician's involvement in financial irregularity and other scandalous behaviour. Because Blaggard was a political theorist and something of an expert on ethics in public life, the authorities thought he might be professionally useful and perhaps a drawcard when they tried to impress the media. Blaggard could also list it on his CV as a consultancy and pick up some handy cash.

The first two days of the inquiry were dull; terribly tedious, full of boring monologues on procedure, terms of reference, and interminable technical piffle. Several members of the local university politics department loved it. Blaggard was scheduled to appear on the third day, a development that the public gallery and the media were looking forward to. The full bench of the Commission awaited him, and, at ten o'clock sharp, Blaggard entered through a double-door, pushing a trampoline in front of him. Having parked the unit in front of the panel and acknowledging the Chief Justice who headed the Commission, Blaggard climbed onto the trampoline, warmed himself up with a couple of minor bounces and then sprang into action. "What sort of philosophical precedents can be applied to how these politicians should have acted and how they haven't in this case?" asked the Chief Justice. While completing his third somersault, Blaggard answered that the peccadilloes displayed by the politicians—and which had been well canvassed in the newspapers—were similar to his own, and indeed also the Chief Justice's. Moving smoothly into a reverse double-pike with intermittent handclaps, Blaggard launched into a longish expose of the Chief Justice's penchant for forcing himself into tight, transparent PVC panties and locking himself under the kitchen sink.

The gallery went into a paroxysm. Not to mention the media. “Blaggard revolutionises ethics”, “Legal system turned on head—triple twist with 3 point degree of difficulty—by Blaggard’s incredible display”, “Who are we?” were among the headlines.



Many of Blaggard’s former students were amazed to learn that Blaggard had suddenly become an environmentalist. Their recollections had led them to believe that Blaggard liked barbeques and drinking bouts in the outdoors. He would lie on a blanket and be blissfully at ease under the shade of a tree. He had been known to profoundly sympathetic things like ‘I like that tree’ or ‘Aren’t the birds in that tree beautiful’. But apart from this, Blaggard was a city man and his occasional forays into the bush were either accidental or the result of some planned Bacchanalia. But, to be fair, he had never been known to kick a tree, or attack it mercilessly without reason. Of course, when he had been clambering through shrubberies he had on occasion given some vegetation a bruising, but never with malice.

So apart from the odd encounter with nature, Blaggard had kept silent on the subject of global warming. Until he not only became thoroughly convinced of its truth but convinced he had a solution. He presented his findings in *Scientific American* under the

title of 'The Hot Air Problem and How to Cure It'. The paper is too long to reproduce in full, but the thrust is clear from the abstract:

When the ice age came about there were no universities or newspapers or televisions. There was far less hot air than at the turn of the millennium. Global Warming has only been noticed since the mid-1970s. It was precisely then that the world saw an unprecedented increase in the number of universities and later that journalists almost *in toto* had re-bleated the 'ideas' that were coming out of universities on the environment and social change. One way to solve the problem would be to close down all disciplines that do nothing but create hot air. But that would lead to a lot of social chaos and resentment and unemployment - and the unemployed are unfit to do anything other than create hot air. A more humane and rational undertaking would be to establish think tanks where those wishing to study hot air subjects are elevated in balloons propelled by hot air generated by the discussion. It is essential, if this strategy is to be successful, that the amount of hot air required for lift off be carefully calculated, and that large group discussions and conferences wait until the balloon is beyond the earth's atmosphere.

This paper was submitted with calculations and delineations of the trajectories and times so that there should be no accidents. Meanwhile Miscreant had come up with the idea that some of these balloons could be two storied and that the hot air creators be kept in a separate module while tours and parties be conducted on the upper deck, free from the crap generating the hot air below.

Blaggard was at one of those holiday-Monday fetes, advertised as a "family fun day". People were wandering about indifferently, thinking of ways to leave their husbands or wives, children were attempting to cover themselves in as much tomato sauce as possible.

Up on the stage overlooking the oval some activity was getting underway. Contestants were gathering and more were called for. A prize was offered: three weeks on the Riviera, all expenses. Blaggard thought, "I'll have some of that".

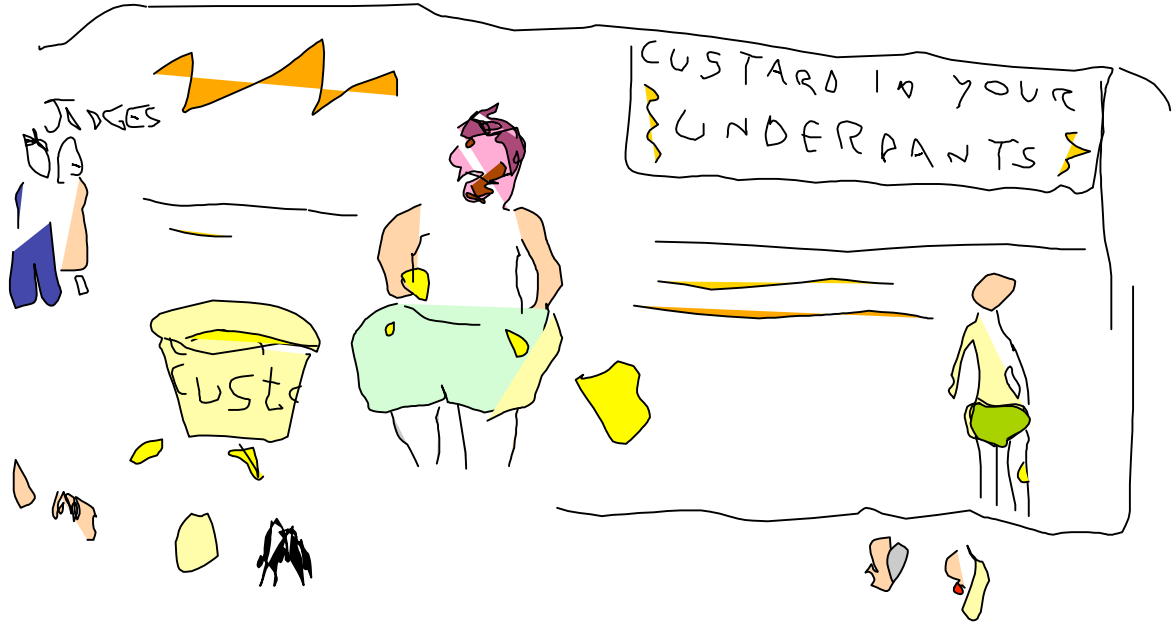
What Blaggard had entered into was a 'Custard in your Underpants' competition. The aim was for each contestant to fill his or her underpants with as much custard (banana) as possible, while continuously wearing the underpants. The winner would be the person who filled the most custard, by weight, into their underpants. This of course favoured those entrants with larger underpants and some of the children were seriously disadvantaged. Another prize was to be awarded to the person who left the custard in their underpants the longest: a trip for one to Rapid Bay.

The contestants stood on the stage, in their underpants, awaiting the start. Some confident, some nervous as large vats of custard were wheeled on to the stage. 'Ready' said the compere, 'fill your pants!'. A hurricane of frenzied activity swamped the stage as the contestants plunged into the vats heaping handfuls of custard down the front, back and sides of their underpants. Some ingenious storage places were located. Blaggard preferred to operate from outside a vat, systematically accumulating double handfuls and carefully inserting them into his underpants. It was based on a political science methodology he had learnt as a doctoral candidate.

After 15 minutes (during which several contestants achieved their Warholian fame) the siren sounded and the judges inspected the field. Blaggard had run second, having filled his somewhat tattered and untidy jocks (he knew he should have listened to his mother) with 14 kilos of banana custard. The winner, a member of parliament, had managed to fit 15 and a half kilos into the lingerie he had been wearing since the night before. The third place getter was informed that he could eat all the custard he had stuffed in.

Four days later Blaggard received a phone call from the competition organisers. 'Oh, you must be ringing about me running second' said Blaggard, 'do I get anything for that?'. 'Yes, the MP was looking for someone to accompany him to the Riviera, but you've also won the "leave the custard in your underpants the longest" prize as well.' After a short reflective silence an inkling raced through Blaggard's brain. He was still wearing those jocks and the custard was still in them. Only now it had solidified. 'A

ticket to Rapid Bay' said the compere, 'and we'll throw in a hammer and chisel and a new pair of underpants'.



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Miscreant: Managerialism

Blaggard: Slow moving lump of misery with black hair, like a pageboy, on top

Miscreant: It's a terrible hairdo, isn't it?

Blaggard: Disgraceful.

Miscreant. And that is what managerialism has to contend with! Maybe you've underrated it

Blaggard: Even if you managed it, properly, you still end up with a slow moving lump of misery - with black hair on top

Miscreant: Like a page boy. The problem is there is nothing of any significance, interest, value, complexity, shade

Blaggard. Come on, get to the point

Miscreant. That this slow moving lump of misery might say, that anyone in their right mind would want to listen to

Blaggard: Well, that is right.

Miscreant: That is the sheer falsity of this society. That it not only allows, but often positively insists that SMLOMWBH (on top) not only are required and encouraged to say things, but literally thousands of innocent people have to bear the insufferable agony of it

Blaggard (interrupting), that this person was cute enough 50 years ago to have had a brain

PAUSE - silence as they reflect on this great thinking

Blaggard: And now to Walker McKenzie

Miscreant: what a little twerpish, pathetic snivelling, self-important mealy-mouthed pipsqueak upstart

Blaggard: I've got nothing more to say about him.

Miscreant: Well I have. He is a preposterous, pretentious in the extreme, pissweak little fart, a hypocrite, bullshitter, dishing out the most turgid, bleating crap - he deserves...

Blaggard: From the point of managerialism, McKenzie is successful. From the point of humanity, McKenzie is a timely reminder of what a waste of space large sections of the

species is and just how perilously close we are to the end. If he had the smallest skerrick of human decency, he would transport himself to a high building and jump off

Miscreant: Can we wrap this turkey up and carry on tomorrow?

With that they wrapped up Walker McKenzie and stuck him in a broom cupboard.

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Miscreant had finally found the perfect job - drinking \$50 of wine per hour while being paid \$20 per hour to do it. It was not always available, but on those days when there was a good solid day's work he would jump out of bed, do his yogic routine of three touch the toes, all concentration directed to the work that lay before him, then lick his lips, dash out the door - before running straight back in to the accompanying shriek of the next door neighbour who would report to the police that her next door neighbour had sprung out of his house fully naked with a heightened member. Miscreant would have to later explain to the police, through the burble of his eight hour day accomplishment, that the height simply had to do with job enjoyment, and the lack of clothing simply had to do with the total preoccupation - that befitted his astute philosophical mind - with his work. Hopefully the police would be understanding. But for now Miscreant had work to do and he marched off - this time fully clothed - thinking of his great mentor Smithson whose job he had recently taken on. Smithson had been the greatest wine taster in the world and he didn't even bother to go home. He had been found floating face up, beamingly happy, but utterly corked and dead - for three minutes before being resuscitated, and sent packing. After that experience Miscreant had called in at the swimwear shop where he bought a pair of kiddy floaters lest he decide to do away with bottles and just go straight to the source, the vat itself, as Smithhson had done. Good man, thought Miscreant, while reflecting on Smithson - but kiddy floaters would have made him even greater - a thoroughly fulfilled man.

As if out of nowhere, it appeared, slowly, yet purposefully meandering up the hill, a van. Even from this distance one could see a nose pressed firmly to the windscreen. The nose itself was worthy of a Shakespeare to tell its history: such battles, loves, tragedies and

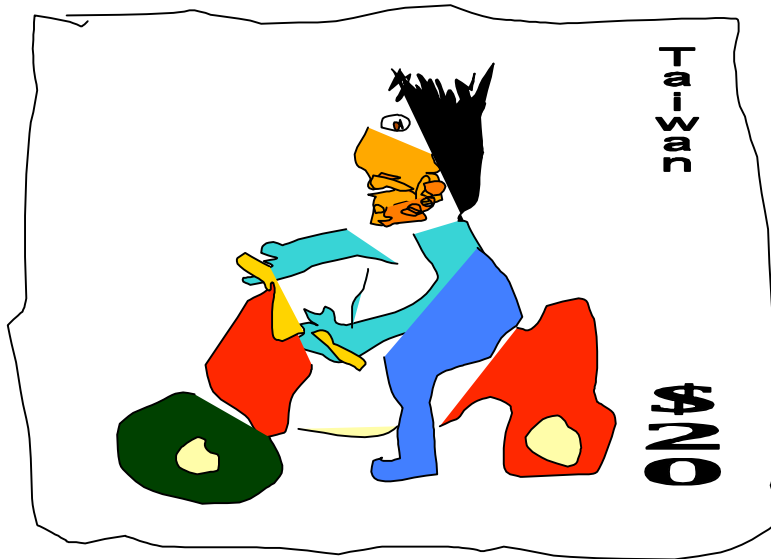
comedies - this nose had experienced them all. This once so noble nose had, - let's not say fallen on hard times, for that would take us too far away from its inherent dignity, but let us say - had seen better days. This nose, which had been more than once completely submerged in the finest wines from the Rhine valley, from Tuscany, from the Loire, was now, here on the outskirts of Canberra, dedicated to the humble, but by no means unimportant task, of assisting with the directing and steering of this van. The nose, belonging to Prof. Colin Smithson, former composer of tuba concertos and choir master, was overlooked by two peering eyes moving swiftly from side to side for a house, a house seemingly far, far away. For this was just the beginning of the journey. Smithson knew the importance of his task. This was his mission. The name on the side of the van said it all: 'We bring the nosh if you give us the dosh - B& M's Slow Food Delivery: All you can eat for all you can pay for.' Smithson, humming the Liebestod of Tristan, one hand committed to the bottle of red, the other firmly on the wheel supporting the chin, supporting the mouth, supporting the nose, supporting the windscreen, was dutifully fastening his ears to the sound inside. The slurp and roll from behind his seat was the slurp and roll of gravies and veg, curries and stews on their journey to new owners. What responsibility lay here. And never for a moment did he not have one ear cocked on the food: the slightest mishap, to brake too quickly, to hit a pedestrian, or an animal, this had to be avoided at all cost. The good name of the company was at stake. And to be part of that name, even with all his history, a belch of pride swelled up within him when he thought of being number one van driver for this most noble of human endeavours: the feeding of the hungry.

It was 3.30 in the morning when the van that had been carousing through hills and vales and plains pulled up at 1 Burke St. Birdsville. With a sprightly leap that a man a quarter of his age would have been proud of Smithson hit the ground. In the van lay fourteen empty red wine bottles, the brain had exhausted the entire catalogue of Wagner and Schubert. The nose took in the food wafting through the night air. Opening the back of the van he beamed with pride. Not a drop had hit the floor. It was all there and he smiled to himself after having a spoonful of the Green Fish Curry with Brussel sprouts and fried egg - it was still warm. 'We've done it old boy' he said to himself. After reaching in the dark for two buckets he knocked loudly on the door. 'I hope all of

Birdsville hears me. They have never seen food like this in these parts of the world. Civilisation is a glorious thing, he thought, as a snatch of Brahms drifted through a well-wined synapse. He boomed in a dignified manner, 'B& Ms Slow food order for Clark'. A light went on and after some moments a man came to the door dressed in leather gear. Smithson took a step back, but without blinking an eye repeated the phrase. 'Slow food?' said the man in leather. 'Yes' said Smithson, 'And it is still warm, as you can see for yourself'. After receiving his thirty dollars plus a generous five-dollar tip he climbed back in the van and sat there looking into the starry night. 'Yes' he thought, 'this is the life.' Then he ventured off in the knowledge that in a house in Birdwood, after a damn good thrashing, a bloke in leather would be settling down to a very unostentatious, unassuming and moderately fine (in the Aristotelian sense of the mean) warm meal. He could feel Wagner coming on.

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The Taiwanese government had issued a stamp with Blaggard's likeness on it. Well, a likeness of sorts. Blaggard had straight dark hair and was riding a motor scooter.



An enlarged image of the special issue Taiwanese stamp of Blaggard

The Taiwanese government did this for international political reasons - to get Blaggard's vote in the UN, and try to pull the rug from under their bitter rival, the PRC. Blaggard was the only individual ever to be awarded a vote in the UN. He was a state in himself. He had sovereignty. He had possibilities. He had even become a member of the Security Council. While in Taiwan, Blaggard went to a drive-in movie theatre on his motor scooter - to see Smokey and the Bandit. In his younger days Blaggard had been a big Burt Reynolds fan and still retained some appreciation for Burt's acting skills.

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“When autumn leaves...begin...to...fa-all”. With that mellifluous statement Blaggard closed his set at the Red Castle jazz club where he performed as a vocalist every Monday night. Simultaneously, the tune opened his television show, Blaggard's New and Unusual Products, which was broadcast live every Monday night, direct from the Red Castle. Autumn Leaves was becoming a signature for Blaggard. Jazz freaks and t.v. viewers hoping for quirky gift ideas were identifying it with him. “What have we got for you tonight” wondered Blaggard aloud as the audience looked on in anticipation. His assistant Miscreant, who also played a few instruments in the jazz band, wheeled out this week's assortment of new and unusual products.

Standing in the middle of the trolley of products was Smithson dressed in full-length purple and green scuba gear with a mask through which one could tell he'd had a few. Again. Attached to the top of the mask was a metal arm at the end of which was a small television screen. The purpose of the screen was to enable scuba divers or snorklers to watch the cricket whilst they were underwater. There was only one channel: cricket.

‘Give us a demonstration then old boy’ said Blaggard, lounging back in the host's chair with his feet up on a large desk like Carson and Letterman sat behind on their shows. Smithson plunged into a toddler's wading pool at the front of the television set. ‘An excess of ambition and a deficiency of talent, that's just what we don't need’ said Blaggard, dryly.

It had been almost ten years since Blaggard had seen Caringella who at that stage in his life was still wearing the cassock that he had worn when he broke out of the seminary late one evening thirty years earlier with a crateful of communion wine and a nun tucked under either arm. He had tried for a while to make a go with one nun but, after the altar wine ran out, she left him for a surfing champion named Mac who, about three weeks later, was found mysteriously dead, with a copy of Eric Voegelin's 'The Eclipse of Reality' inserted into his behind, while drifting, nailed to his surfboard, among the high seas.

He had then ventured into the business world. He thought the burgeoning interest in organic food had created a business opportunity, which would combine his abiding interest in theology and food. Borrowing money from all his friends in the dioceses he spent half on setting up the plant and equipment for his new fried crispy wholemeal hosts and the other half having his good friend Hans Bertelung visit Rome and put the case for why the host must be wholemeal and crispy, and why the present day host was actually a relapse into a Nestorian heresy. Bertelung then pulled out the Crispies for Christ prototype packet, which showed a beaming, halo-headed Caringella in a sublime moment. He had just tasted a Crispies for Christ then slammed them on the table and urged the pontiff to tuck in. Unfortunately, the pontiff lost a tooth. Bertelung tried to repair the fiasco with theological quotations and references, but the Crispies for Christ venture was doomed and Bertelung, who was never to write a theological word again, was excommunicated. He was last seen as chauffeur for the New York Satanist, Santo Le Fey.

But what were these trifles compared to Caringella on Augustine. This was, thought Blaggard, one of those daringly bold watering prospects, the transcendental heights of which have rarely been experienced in a twentieth century university since a young maiden in Oxford opened her blouse and pointed her glories at the droningly serious Theodor Adorno, who immediately stopped lecturing on Kant and went into a Dionysian frenzy as he waltzed, jitterbugged, and finally, with all decorum lost, threw off his

checked sports jacket, opened up his tie a little, and broke out into Let's Twist Again - with an astonishing

Schönbergian rendition that showed that jazz is not always crap.

But that was nothing compared to Caringella on Augustine. The room was abuzz as in came Caringella with his violin case, rosary beads and machine gun - laying them on the table. He announced 'I haven't written a paper. Any one have a problem with that?' The room was silent, then he ripped open his trench coat and where there had once been a cassock was a bright red tutu and fishnets covering the more than ample figure of a seventy five year old Italian man who had been eating spaghetti for three meals a day for each and every day of his life since he had been two days old.

'Now listen,' he said, as the room was aghast, except for Blaggard who was standing on his feet applauding the fact for all the millions of words written on concupiscence in Augustine, nothing had so faithfully rendered the full meaning of Augustine's concept as that daring act by Caringella. 'I want you know to call me Pauline - and anyone who doesn't well' - and he picked up the rosary beads swung them around a few times and made like a garrot. Then without a further ado he stood on his hands and asked Blaggard to join him. Then he asked Blaggard to place the copies of the City of God and Confessions and Christian Doctrine on one foot and the five volumes of Voegelin's Order and history on the other - and he started juggling the lot on both feet while walking up down on his hands singing Your Tiny Hand is Frozen. This last movement made Blaggard think that his future as a philosopher was totally worthless. Everything that could be said had been said right here, now.

Even the most skeptical had become converted and cued up later to by Eric Voegelin's Collected Works in the hope that those writings - which Caringella sold out the back of his ice cream truck downstairs might provide some brief fragment of the transcendence that they had collectively experienced in the masterful interpretation of Caringella's lecture on Voegelin's appreciation of St. Augustine.