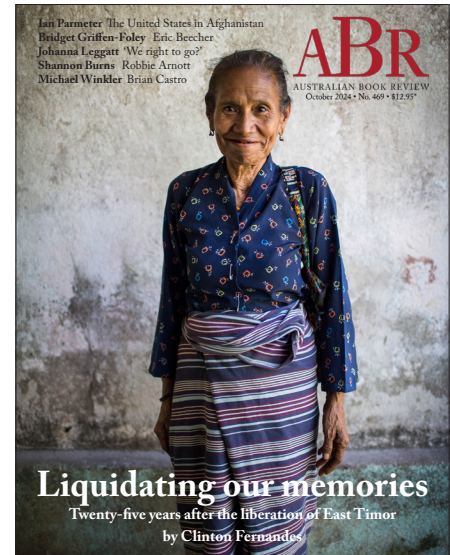


October highlights

This month *ABR* sharpens its memory, looking back at Australia's involvement in East Timor on the twenty-fifth anniversary of its liberation. We ask what the US invasion of Afghanistan revealed, how referendums have been lost and won, and if we've heeded the lessons of the pandemic. Bridget Griffen-Foley reviews a book on media moguls, Scott Stephens explains why 2024 looks a lot like 1939, and we consider ancient India's transformation of the world. Shannon Burns, Michael Winkler, Heather Neilson and Alex Cothren review novels from Robbie Arnott, Brian Castro, Emily Maquire and Malcolm Knox. *ABR* Arts interviews pianist Angela Hewitt and reviews The Australian Ballet's *Oscar* and MTC's *Topdog/Underdog*. There's Proust, Shakespeare, new poetry, poetry reviews and more.



Liquidating our memories of East Timor Clinton Fernandes asks why it took three years and much redaction for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to approve the Official History of Australian peacekeeping in East Timor, a history which it said 'focuse[d] inordinately on historical matters' – matters that involved Australia's support for Indonesia's occupation.

What the invasion of Afghanistan revealed The longest war in US history was fought against and lost to a 'puny opponent' in the Taliban, writes Ian Parameter. In his review of *How to Lose a War* by Amin Saikal, he endorses Saikal's view that this emboldened America's principal adversaries in Russia, China and Iran.

Notes from a media outsider and insider In her review of *The Men Who Killed the News* by Eric Beecher, Bridget Griffen-Foley notes that while the Mogul Era is coming to a close, 'media power wielded by humans matters more, not less, in the age of algorithms'.

'We right to go?' The Victorian Premier trademark Covid-19 press conference opener is something we might like to forget, writes Johanna Leggatt in her review of *Australia's Pandemic Exceptionalism* by Steven Hamilton and Richard Holden, but in the rush to resume normal life, we risk not learning from the past.

Giving up mirrors *Chinese Postman* by Brian Castro might 'have been the perfect literary bomboniere', writes Michael Winkler in his review of the novel. Yet, while there is deep pleasure to be derived from Castro's intertextual gameplaying – to watch the 'detonations of small grenades' – there is in this novel 'grit beneath the shimmer'.

Interview requests and further information

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