

AROUND MELBOURNE

Dogs Chasing Each Other's Tails

Architects mount their old hobby horses

THE symbol for the 14th Australian Architectural Convention was two bent arrows made into a square. When asked what it meant, one architect replied "Search me. Maybe it means two dogs chasing each other's tails."

And sometimes it did seem that way. At the convention there was much remorseless self-examination. Almost every speaker told of the frustrations of the 20th-century architect, of the disastrous urban mistakes and of the immutable nature of urban authority. Sydney architects attacked Sydney, Melbourne architects attacked Melbourne and the guest, Arthur Odell, president of the American Institute of Architects, even had a few home truths about the US.

Maybe the most colorful speaker was George Clarke from Sydney. He said: "Our skyline reflects only a simple-minded pursuit of apparent height, apparent power and real money. The rush from one air-conditioned box to another has become, all too often, a necessary evil..."

"The rebuilding of the northern half of central Sydney over the past eight years has been a shameful mess. The city has been disgracefully dehumanised." At this stage someone whispered in my ear "Clarke is Sydney's angry young town planner."

By now the young town planner was on to how the NSW Government called for tenders for the Rocks area: "The prospectus was as unresearched and ambiguous as any such document could ever be. Nine highly qualified teams of planners, engineers and architects wasted 18 months in tortured secrecy from each other, trying to decipher what they were supposed to be doing. Such scarce resources of skilled manpower could have been far more usefully employed working out guideline plans for nine separate redevelopment areas. Let's hope the competition system is never so abused again." He finished by pointing out that what Australia needed and wasn't getting was some sort of national leadership to stop the sprawl and mess of our cities.

Then we had Harry Seidler. Roy Grounds introduced him this way: "When Mr and Mrs Seidler's boy came to Sydney nobody knew what a cat was being let loose among the pigeons. Since then the feathers had not stopped flying nor had the dust settled." Well, Mr Seidler got on to his old hobby horse of lofty office towers which took up 25 per cent or less of the space, leaving breathing

space for humans down below. He talked of the mess of street architecture, higgledy-piggledy buildings one against the other and he called for Government legislation to deal with entire city blocks as an architectural entity.

He conducted his talk smoothly with great sophistication. For example, he showed us a whole series of slides of Sydney buildings. Almost every one was a Harry Seidler building. This was never mentioned. We just instinctively knew. Even the 100 or so students present, knew.

But there was one little bit which wasn't in the script. The Melbourne City Council and the Victorian Institute of Architects ran a competition for the redevelopment of the block opposite Myers in Lonsdale Street. This is a block which has often been mentioned for a "dream civic scheme for Melbourne". The 1500-guinea first prize was won by the Melbourne firm of Leith Bartlett.

Harry Seidler said: "My firm was most interested in this competition and we went to work. The main feature was to be a tower building of 640 feet." And smiling graciously he added: "And this would have given you in Melbourne Australia's tallest building. But we kept getting strange letters altering the conditions. Then I was told about this antiquated two to one formula. I rang an architect friend in Melbourne to find out if they were serious. Apparently they were. So at that stage I decided to give it away."

THE formula is indeed one of Melbourne's oddities. It states that the height of a building can't be more than twice the width of the street it fronts. So Harry Seidler's tower could have been nowhere else but in the centre of the block. Maybe he was so irked because the winners of the competition ignored the formula anyway.

As part of the convention the 28 entries for the competition have been on show at the cultural centre. And the Lord Mayor, Cr Curtis has said: "We have sufficient data for a logical and economical development of the area." Now Melbourne is under the impression that somebody will do something about it, with a tower building of 50 storeys, a new town hall, 16-storey emporium and all.

But last Saturday a dear little pub in Lonsdale Street called the Busy Bee closed its doors forever. To replace the Busy Bee we're to get a building (architects Bogle and Banfield) which will

have six floors of car parking and seven floors of office space. Opposite Myers it should be a nice little goldmine, but how does this fit into the grand plan? It doesn't. It's bang in the middle of the shopping emporium. The permit for it was issued even before the competition was decided. So we do, indeed, have dogs chasing each other's tails.

There were plenty of talks, from the Town Clerk, Mr Rogan, from the Local Government Minister, Mr Hamer, and on ugliness from Robin Boyd. One good line: "Heaven knows we need that freeway (the South Eastern). Expediently, the freeway edged away from the old buildings and waded into the Yarra—removing probably forever any likelihood of a landscape development of our poor old river. Everyone concerned must have known what should have been done. Last century they knew: consider the South Bank along Alexandra Avenue."

But the convention wasn't all talk. There were the bus tours to city buildings, to Monash University and the rest, but the *piece de resistance* was the Walter Burley Griffin tour. Just as the best of Griffin is beginning to disappear he has become an architectural fad. The tour covered some Griffin houses and flats in Toorak, but the real masterpieces were Newman College at Melbourne University and the Capitol Theatre. The college is superbly intact. When it was built in 1916 it was described in one journal as "grotesque" and it was particularly unloved by the Rector, Father Murphy. As the old story goes, he asked for Gothic and got Griffin. Its main entrance is a glorious octagonal-domed dining hall in reinforced concrete.

The tour ended at the Capitol Theatre with all the elements of a Wagnerian tragedy. Many an architect has described this as Melbourne's best building. When we arrived the pneumatic drills were in action and they were ripping the guts out of it for a shopping arcade.

Kevin Borland, our Griffin expert, said: "We didn't fight hard enough to save this building. We're too inhibited. Maybe we should have marched up and down with placards. The design was perfect. It was like Beethoven's 5th Symphony. All the details were repeated in everything. The intimate Griffin design was repeated right down to the ashtrays, the EXIT signs, the windows, the screen curtains. The marvellous foyer with its domed ceilings used to remind me of the whispering gallery at St Paul's. Call out and your voice was repeated. Oh yes, the ceiling will be preserved in a smaller theatre upstairs but the concept will be ruined. "As they say, 'the operation was a success but the patient died'."

—BATMAN

Monkeys and Men

The Concept of Race. Edited by Ashley Montagu. Free Press of Glencoe. 68s. 3d. Worlds Without End. N. J. Berrill. Macmillan, NY. 59s. 6d.

"Descended from the apes! My dear, we will hope it is not true. But if it is, let us pray that it may not become generally known." This, reputedly, was the reaction of the wife of the Canon of Worcester Cathedral when the theory of evolution was first announced. The theories put forward in "The Concept of Race" are likely to spark a similarly indignant reaction in some of the older anthropologists, to say nothing of the racists. Its editor, Ashley Montagu, has already involved himself in controversies with "The Natural Superiority of Women" and a book about dolphins; the present work should also generate lively debate.

Thinking people have long recognised that there is no scientific basis for the doctrine of superior and inferior races, although the subject is still fiercely argued at the social level. Proceeding from recent researches in genetic theory and related fields, the ten distinguished scientists whose findings have been assembled here go one step further with their belief that the entire concept of race is biologically and anthropologically unsound.

It was at the height of a period of nationalist and imperialist expansion that the anthropologists created the race "omelet" by averaging the characteristics of given geographical groups, giving the resultant taxonomy a completely erroneous base. To paraphrase Dr Montagu (who has been arguing towards this conclusion for twenty years), the differences between groups are outweighed by the similarities and these similarities should serve as a foundation for a new world order rather than the differences be used as an excuse for the enslavement or exploitation of one race by another.

Dr Loring Brace, in his essay, examines the causes of skin color, hair texture, face formation and bone construction, finding the variations to be largely due to long-continued confinement within set geographical limits. Dr Jean Hiernaux underscores these findings with an examination of the uselessness of race as a classificatory device. Further evidence to support the theory is presented by Drs Frank Livingstone, Robert Anderson, Lancelot Hogben, Nigel Barricot, Paul Ehrlich, Richard Holm and S. L. Washburn. Their unanimity is probably indicative of future developments; although it is possible that these anthropologists, motivated by humane sentiments, are moving on to assertions beyond the evidence. Whether "scientifically" proven or not, the discussion is pertinent and provocative and the inhumanity that has been practised in the name of race makes

one hope that the term will eventually be abandoned as advocated.

When ten writers are turned loose on the same subject, a certain amount of repetition is unavoidable and this, along with the specialised terminology, makes the going heavy for the layman.

In introducing exobiology — the science of life "out there"—to the general reader, Professor Berrill adopts an entertaining manner but he, too, has some important messages and his speculations are never incompatible with the scientific facts. He explains the problems of interplanetary and intergalactic exploration in a way that is as realistic as it is imaginative and, in the process, provides a wealth of background information on the solar system, the galaxies, time, and the nature of life itself. Chapters on the unique roles of water and gravity are particularly good. A vein of dry humor runs through Dr Berrill's prose and his book is further lightened by quotes from some of the better science fiction writers.

If man needed a reason (other than it is there) for leaping into space, a good one is provided by the fact that, within several centuries, there will be standing room only on earth if we don't destroy ourselves in the meantime. However, the author brings us sharply back to earth with a few calculations (it would take 129,000 years to reach the nearest star at a cost of \$3,000,000 per man) and finally decides that space travel, even in the most distant future, will be confined to our own apparently uninhabitable planetary system. Due to what C. S. Lewis called "God's Quarantine Regulations", it rather looks as if we must accept our isolation even if there is intelligent life on other worlds and, in the light of Dr Berrill's conclusions, one feels we would do better to concentrate on improving what is probably the only speck of the universe we will ever know.

TOM PICKERING

Judicial Whoredom

The Great Abductors. Judge Gerald Sparrow. John Long. 26s. 6d.

A Man of Quality. A biography of the Hon. Mr Justice Cassels. Iain Adamson. Frederick Muller. 38s. 6d.

Gerald Sparrow is a former judge. After being a lawyer for nearly thirty years he retired from the profession in 1954 remarking that he preferred "simple whoredom to the complicated and expensive prostitution of talent which is the modern legal profession". So saying he became a professional writer and in the last decade has published over a score of volumes including works under the heads of travel, biography, humor and crime. "The Great Abductors" belongs to the latter category and is one of a series by him which includes "The Great Swindlers", "The Great Impostors", and "The

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Great Forgers". The author deals breezily with cases of abduction from the seventeenth century to the present day including the Eichmann kidnapping. According to the dust jacket Sparrow "has some new things to say about the tragedy of the Lindberg kidnapping". If he has he keeps them to himself. Instead we are treated to such profundities as "... the entire affair was conducted under the grim shadow of tragedy, so that, looking back, one knows that, for some perverse reason, Fate had decided to strike this evil blow at an American and his young and lovely bride".

Sir James Cassels is a former professional writer—a Fleet Street journalist—who became a successful lawyer. He enjoys a special niche in legal history as the last octogenarian judge England will ever have, the compulsory retiring age now being fixed at seventy-five. He was one of the greatest criminal advocates of this century—almost the only barrister ever to discomfort Sir Bernard Spilsbury in the witness box. For some years he was a Conservative MP with what his biographer calls "rather tribal views on politics". His views on legal matters were analogous. He was not in favor of change in the structure of the English legal system and urged members of the Bar to stand firm against reformers. Whilst others were urging sympathetic treatment for homosexual offenders he was declaring "This type of offence seems like a disease sweeping the country. It must be stamped out". In private life he was genial, kindly, humorous and popular with his colleagues. This biography is principally of interest for its accounts of famous cases in which he was involved either as a barrister or judge. Unfortunately it is probable that many of them, like those of the matricide Sydney Fox and the multiple child murderer Straffen, will be familiar to most readers already.

GORDON HAWKINS

The Tycoon Myth

The Banker. Leslie Waller. Cassell. 33s. 6d. Leslie Waller's "The Banker" is about the myth that has been created around big business rather than about big business itself. The business cycle has enjoyed a vogue among second string American writers for some years, reaching a quantitative peak in the "Executive Suite" and "Patterns" era; most of the more glamorous businesses (with advertising still the most favored) have suffered portrayal as arenas in which modern man becomes the gladiator working out his primeval passions at the expense of other human beings. Even an amateur psychologist could give half a dozen good reasons why this sort of escapist stuff goes over well in this sedentary age.

All the big business books have much in common, but probably the most important is that they tend to foster the curious misconception that a person is formed by what he is—factory executive, stockbroker, advertising man—rather than the other way about.

Until now, bankers have not had a great deal of this once-over-lightly treatment, though in fairness it must be admitted that they provide as good material as most. Woods Palmer is a modern American banker, a millionaire come out of the west following the sale of his family's bank in Chicago to take a top position in a leading New York bank. He begins his new career as an innocent, but learns fast that banking has come a long way since the Medicis first hung out their three balls.

Anyone retaining a soft spot for "The Hucksters", Frederic Wakeman's early definite work on advertising, will recognise Palmer as "sincere", in the sense that having recognised the atmosphere in which he is to operate he makes a point of out-dissembling everyone else.

Other old friends from stock are here too—there is Lane Burckhardt, the old, wise, omnipotent tycoon; there is Mac Burns, operator and political Mr Fixit and we are left in little doubt that if his collar and cuffs are immaculate his neck and wrists are probably dirty; there is Virginia with whom Palmer becomes romantically involved (to his credit, he believes it is real), and there is the wife whose coldness provides his excuse.

The book is almost classically constructed for readability by the greatest number of people. A little sex on the side makes bankers seem very human and doubtless helps with the reader's sense of identification. With considerable skill Waller covers conversationally an incredible variety of topics—science-fiction, politics, the mechanics of high finance, the applications of atomic power in some technical detail, Freudian psychology—with no noticeable diminution of readability or pace. It is difficult not to admire his abilities as a storyteller.

NOEL BUCKLEY

Cry Out No Longer

(Ungaretti: *Non gridate piu*)

Stop murdering the fallen.
Be still; cry out no longer

If you really want to hear them,
If you hope not to perish.

Theirs is the faintest murmur,
They make no more disturbance

Than the springing up of grasses,
Content where no man passes.

CHRIS WALLACE-CRABBE

which any meaningful analysis is impossible.

To a lesser degree much the same can be said of the English and American statistics. But in England the statistics can be supplemented by such serious and informative studies as Gibson and Klein's "Murder" (1961) and Morris and Blom-Cooper's "A Calendar of Murder" (1964). In America there is Henry and Short's "Suicide and Homicide" (1954) and Wolfgang's "Patterns of Criminal Homicide" (1958) amongst other works. In Australia no comparable studies have appeared. Indeed despite the widespread newspaper coverage and the almost obessional public interest there is a sense in which it is true to say that not enough interest is taken in murder here.

What literature relating to the subject there is consists in the main of accounts of individual cases. Most of this is at the paper-back "Great Australian Crimes" or "The Story Behind Australia's Most Amazing Mystery" level. The "story behind" incidentally usually turns out to be identical with the story which appeared in the papers at the time. This is not altogether surprising as it is customarily written by one of the crime reporters who covered the case. Two notable recent exceptions to the rule, however, are K. S. Inglis' "The Stuart Case" (1961) and Creighton Burns' "The Tait Case" (1962). Unfortunately both are more concerned with what has been called "criminal politics" than with crime.

A minor social problem

ONE other study which must be mentioned is Stanley Johnston's brief but extremely valuable "Criminal Homicide Rates in Australia" (1962). Johnston is principally concerned to demonstrate, on the basis of analysis of the Commonwealth Year Book figures and Police annual reports, that the common journalistic tendency to contemplate only the short term can be highly misleading and unnecessarily alarming. He does this very effectively, showing that the mean rate of murder and attempted murder convictions (grouped together in the statistics) has fallen from 7.79 per million of population in the first five years of the century to 3.53 per million in the last five years prior to 1960. He shows too that, on the figures, "criminal homicide is less frequent in Australia than in most other places". It is probable, for reasons mentioned earlier, that a realistic murder rate would be higher than these figures suggest. But even if the figures were doubled or trebled murder would still be a relatively minor social problem.

The fact is that even as a form of violent death being murdered is a comparative rarity. The number of persons

killed on the roads in one State alone (NSW) for whose deaths drivers were responsible (by reason of intoxication, excessive speed, overtaking improperly, etc.) was 640 in 1963-64. This is thirty-two times greater than the average annual number of murder convictions in the whole of Australia in recent years. And incidentally 640 represents an increase of 133 over the figure for 1962-63. Yet a single murder excites far greater public interest and arouses much more violent feelings than any number of deaths on the roads however culpable the drivers responsible may be.

There seems to be little rational basis for this. Indeed in States where capital punishment has been abolished (NSW since 1955 and Queensland since 1922) there is a strong case for abandoning the distinction between murder and manslaughter altogether and substituting one category of culpable or unlawful homicide. Ruper Cross, the present Vinerian Professor of Law at Oxford, raised this question when he was in Sydney in 1962. He remarked, too, that although it usually surprises laymen very much "it is not at all easy to distinguish between murder and manslaughter". The characteristic understatement points to the crux of the matter.

For the common law distinction between murder and manslaughter has never been clear. Both cover a wide range of offences which differ greatly in character and culpability; and there is what has been called "a no-man's land between murder and manslaughter". This has proved to be fertile soil for legal logic chopping. Yet what precisely is the point of differentiating between the type of murder involving 'reckless indifference to human life' and manslaughter involving "gross negligence"? Why go through the process of attempting to assess what in a particular case may constitute sufficiently "grossly insulting language or gestures" for a crime reduced from murder to manslaughter? In both cases the objective harm involved—the death of a human being—is identical. The degree of moral selfishness or wickedness may be different. But is there any satisfactory answer to the objection posed by Sir Ernest Gowers who was Chairman of the UK Royal Commission on Capital Punishment, 1949-53: "To assess the gravity of crimes precisely in terms of moral responsibility is a task we may hope to see competently performed on the day of judgment, but we would be wise to acknowledge that it is beyond our powers"?

Nor is there any reason to regard murderers as always particularly vicious criminals from whom society can only be protected by statutory life sentences. Indeed the rate of recidivism amongst

murderers is about the lowest for any type of offender. And all the available evidence shows murder to be overwhelmingly a domestic crime—a family affair in which husbands kill their wives and parents kill their children.

Someone inside

THE UK Home Office Research Unit found that nearly half of all adult women (i.e., over the age of 16) murdered are killed by their legal husbands; and another quarter are killed by other relatives or lovers. So it is not "prowlers" or the figures lurking in the shadows outside the home that they should be most apprehensive about; but rather someone inside, probably sitting stolidly in front of the TV. Again, children are customarily (and wisely) cautioned not to speak to strange men; yet about three-quarters of victims under 16 are not killed by strange men at all. They are killed by their parents or other relatives. It is interesting to note that other English, and also American, studies produced analogous results. It may be that the pattern is slightly different in Australia but an examination of Press reports over a number of years suggests that it is very similar. Indeed the problem of murder seems very largely to be that of protecting wives from their husbands and children from their parents.

What can we do about it? Unfortunately, reputedly deterrent penalties like capital punishment are likely to be of little use in such cases. Most of them seem not only to arise out of unhappy circumstances which invite compassion, but also to be the result of such great emotional stress as to rule out any consideration of the consequential penalty.

But then there is no evidence that hanging provides the public with more effective protection against any type of murder than imprisonment. The death penalty is still available, and occasionally enforced, in Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and the ACT. Yet the incidence of criminal homicide is just as frequent and just as consistent in these hanging jurisdictions as in Queensland and NSW where it has been abolished.

Why this should be so, when other crimes are subject to marked variations, we do not know. Nor, at present, are we trying to find out. Indeed our knowledge of the nature of murder is extremely limited. Amongst other things, it has been suggested that pharmacological experiments conducted on convicted murderers might help to enlarge it. But it is characteristic of the nature of our interest in the matter that currently we either ignore or destroy all our potential research subjects in this field.

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Maybe the most colorful speaker was George Clarke from Sydney. He said: "Our skyline reflects only a simple-minded pursuit of apparent height, apparent power and real money. The rush from one air-conditioned box to another has become, all too often, a necessary evil . . .

"The rebuilding of the northern half of central Sydney over the past eight years has been a shameful mess. The city has been disgracefully dehumanised." At this stage someone whispered in my ear "Clarke is Sydney's angry young town planner."

By now the young town planner was on to how the NSW Government called for tenders for the Rock's area: "The prospectus was as unresearched and ambiguous as any such document could ever be. Nine highly qualified teams of planners, engineers and architects wasted 18 months in tortured secrecy from each other, trying to decipher what they were supposed to be doing. Such scarce resources of skilled manpower could have been far more usefully employed working out guideline plans for nine separate redevelopment areas. Let's hope the competition system is never so abused again." He finished by pointing out that what Australia needed and wasn't getting was some sort of national leadership to stop the sprawl and mess of our cities.

Then we had Harry Seidler. Roy Grounds introduced him this way: "When Mr and Mrs Seidler's boy came to Sydney nobody knew what a cat was being let loose among the pigeons. Since then the feathers had not stopped flying nor had the dust settled." Well, Mr Seidler got on to his old hobby horse of lofty office towers which took up 25 per cent or less of the space, leaving breathing

space for humans down below. He talked of the mess of street architecture, higgledy-piggledy buildings one against the other and he called for Government legislation to deal with entire city blocks as an architectural entity.

He conducted his talk smoothly with great sophistication. For example, he showed us a whole series of slides of Sydney buildings. Almost every one was a Harry Seidler building. This was never mentioned. We just instinctively knew. Even the 100 or so students present, knew.

But there was one little bit which wasn't in the script. The Melbourne City Council and the Victorian Institute of Architects ran a competition for the redevelopment of the block opposite Myers in Lonsdale Street. This is a block which has often been mentioned for a "dream civic scheme for Melbourne". The 1500-guinea first prize was won by the Melbourne firm of Leith Bartlett.

Harry Seidler said: "My firm was most interested in this competition and we went to work. The main feature was to be a tower building of 640 feet." And smiling graciously he added: "And this would have given you in Melbourne Australia's tallest building. But we kept getting strange letters altering the conditions. Then I was told about this antiquated two to one formula. I rang an architect friend in Melbourne to find out if they were serious. Apparently they were. So at that stage I decided to give it away."

THE formula is indeed one of Melbourne's oddities. It states that the height of a building can't be more than twice the width of the street it fronts. So Harry Seidler's tower could have been nowhere else but in the centre of the block. Maybe he was so irked because the winners of the competition ignored the formula anyway.

As part of the convention the 28 entries for the competition have been on show at the cultural centre. And the Lord Mayor, Cr Curtis has said: "We have sufficient data for a logical and economical development of the area." Now Melbourne is under the impression that somebody will do something about it, with a tower building of 50 storeys, a new town hall, 16-storey emporium and all.

But last Saturday a dear little pub in Lonsdale Street called the Busy Bee closed its doors forever. To replace the Busy Bee we're to get a building (architects Bogle and Banfield) which will

have six floors of car parking and seven floors of office space. Opposite Myers it should be a nice little goldmine, but how does this fit into the grand plan? It doesn't. It's bang in the middle of the shopping emporium. The permit for it was issued even before the competition was decided. So we do, indeed, have dogs chasing each other's tails.

There were plenty of talks, from the Town Clerk, Mr Rogan, from the Local Government Minister, Mr Hamer, and on ugliness from Robin Boyd. One good line: "Heaven knows we need that freeway (the South Eastern). Expediently, the freeway edged away from the old buildings and waded into the Yarra—removing probably forever any likelihood of a landscape development of our poor old river. Everyone concerned must have known what should have been done. Last century they knew: consider the South Bank along Alexandra Avenue."

But the convention wasn't all talk. There were the bus tours to city buildings, to Monash University and the rest, but the *piece de resistance* was the Walter Burley Griffin tour. Just as the best of Griffin is beginning to disappear he has become an architectural fad. The tour covered some Griffin houses and flats in Toorak, but the real masterpieces were Newman College at Melbourne University and the Capitol Theatre. The college is superbly intact. When it was built in 1916 it was described in one journal as "grotesque" and it was particularly unloved by the Rector, Father Murphy. As the old story goes, he asked for Gothic and got Griffin. Its main entrance is a glorious octagonal-domed dining hall in reinforced concrete.

The tour ended at the Capitol Theatre with all the elements of a Wagnerian tragedy. Many an architect has described this as Melbourne's best building. When we arrived the pneumatic drills were in action and they were ripping the guts out of it for a shopping arcade.

Kevin Borland, our Griffin expert, said: "We didn't fight hard enough to save this building. We're too inhibited. Maybe we should have marched up and down with placards. The design was perfect. It was like Beethoven's 5th Symphony. All the details were repeated in everything. The intimate Griffin design was repeated right down to the ashtrays, the EXIT signs, the windows, the screen curtains. The marvellous foyer with its domed ceilings used to remind me of the whispering gallery at St Paul's. Call out and your voice was repeated. Oh yes, the ceiling will be preserved in a smaller theatre upstairs but the concept will be ruined. "As they say, 'the operation was a success but the patient died'."

—BATMAN