In the context of translations, Danielson has missed a good opportunity here to correct the long-standing error in the translation of Galileo's *Sidereus Nuncius* as 'Starry Messenger'. Galileo himself wrote very clearly that *Nuncius* was intended to be as 'message', not 'messenger'.

The past is, by definition, politically correct. Arabs existed in the past (as they do today), and Arab thought, especially in astronomy and cosmology, is very much part of Western culture, as the names of many stars remind us every night. The Muslim philosopher Averroës, to quote but one, had strong ideas about cosmology. And because of them he ran into trouble with his own religious authorities, which went by the literal interpretation of the cosmological aspects of the Koran (also entirely neglected in Danielson's book). Considering the initial emphasis the book places on the Torah of the Jews, the absence of Arab authors and thought in this anthology gives an incomplete picture of our direct cultural inheritance.

Danielson does include some irritating digressions in his descriptions of the classics. Why, for example, do we read so much about Arthur Koestler in a chapter supposedly about the Greek philosopher Parmenides? And why should Galileo's translated words be interspersed with rather irrelevant quotes by the nineteenth-century astronomer Mary Agnes Clerke? They are far less acceptable than Danielson's own comments, which are not only required by the genre, but also quite useful.

The framework containing Nicolaus Copernicus, Giordano Bruno, John Milton, René Descartes, Isaac Newton and Immanuel Kant, and also Mary Agnes Clerke and all the others, is very useful. So, in general, is the choice of morsels presented.

Inevitably, though, things become more complex with contemporary twentieth-century cosmology. Opposing schools of diverse thought thrive in our global village, no longer truly 'Western' as the United States has come to embody global cultures. English, like Greek, Arabic, Latin and French before it, is now *de rigueur*, and this simplifies things. Deceptively so, however, because modern cosmology retains uncertainties and debates (origin of redshifts), and a diversity of voices, including non-Anglo-Saxon ones (where is *tavarisc* Zeldovich?) that don't make it onto the pages of this book. Well, as the Romans used to say, *tot capita, tot sententiae* [loosely, each to his own, especially his own taste]. As for the definition of 'book'. This is given in the glossary and is obviously much needed, as it can range from a "device which takes the form of bound pages" to "the universe", as in "the book of the cosmos". ■

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Science in culture

A window on the future

The 'Museum for the Third Millennium' has opened in Melbourne, Australia.

Mark A. Elgar

The largest museum complex in the Southern Hemisphere opened last month in Melbourne, Victoria's capital city. Melbourne Museum is the flagship campus of Museum Victoria, which is responsible for the state's extensive collections. Located for the past 100 years in the cramped State Library Building, the new museum complex is adjacent to the historic Royal Exhibition Building in the picturesque Carlton Gardens.

The relocation to a new, larger building also coincides with a substantial shift in thinking about the arrangement and design of museum exhibits. The shift has been from passive displays of historical artefacts and stuffed animals to exhibits of particular themes that place the collections in a broader context. According to chief executive George MacDonald, the museum will be "full of life and activity, a museum for the Internet Generation and beyond. A museum for the future, not the past."

And they are bringing life to the museum. The Forest Gallery is a world first; a living interpretation of Victoria's tall mountain forest environment, housing 8,000 plants of at least 120 species, and home to a variety of animals, including birds, reptiles, small mammals, frogs and numerous invertebrates. These living 'exhibits', together with various multimedia installations, tell stories about how past and present forces of change have shaped the forest habitat. Unlike zoo exhibits, which focus on a single species, the Forest Gallery provides a more holistic view of the environment. Ross Field, environment programme director, believes the exhibit will "encourage a deeper understanding and appreciation of Victoria's temperate forests, and stimulate visitors to go out and visit them".

The museum delivers messages around issues, rather than the traditional focus on taxonomic groups or historical eras. The exhibitions relate to six core programmes that are the current focus of research and collection development (science, technology, Australian society, indigenous cultures, human mind and body, and environment). Thus, the Australia Gallery shows how Melbourne has evolved, and includes the mounted hide of an Australian sporting icon, the legendary racehorse Phar Lap. Bunjilaka, the Aboriginal Centre, provides a conduit for the Aboriginal communities of southeastern Australia to tell their stories, and allows visitors to explore the nature of Aboriginal law, property, knowledge and their complex relationship with land.

The change in museum philosophy is more than just rearranging exhibits. Robin Hirst, director of programmes, research and collections, says that, "traditionally, museums hold up a

Painting place: Aboriginal art by Paddy Karol.

mirror to reflect the past, while our new museum holds up a window through which we can look forward to what the future might hold". This philosophy is evident in the astonishing Body and Mind Gallery, which opens in a few months' time. This is no stamp collection in a dusty cabinet, but an impressive use of both collections and local expertise to address contemporary issues and provoke public debate. Visitors gain insights into the processes, structures and functions of the mind and body through some 1,300 objects, imagery and interactive experiences, including a series of full-size nude photographs and preserved sections of real cadavers. Undoubtedly, these exhibits will be controversial.

A museum is only as good as its collections, curators and research staff; otherwise, it is little more than an exhibition hall. The move to Carlton Gardens finally brings research staff into the same building as the exhibits. Previously hidden away in a shabby annex, they are now highly visible, through the plate-glass walls, in their well-appointed offices and laboratories.

And here's the rub. It cost some A\$290 million (US\$150 million) to develop the museum and its very impressive exhibits, of which \$263 million came from the Victoria state government. The museum is quick to acknowledge that the programmes, collections and research are an integral part of the exhibition development process. But although the new building provides enviable infrastructure, the museum offers little more than token funding for its research staff. Instead, researchers, like their university colleagues, must compete for government and private-sector funds, which are modest in Australia. A Museum for the Third Millennium may need to make more than a rhetorical investment in its future. ■

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