

scionability' not only causes alarm in many, particularly commercial, camps but lures some commentators into an appeal to recognise that equitable remedies are derived from one general principle which gives rise to a variety of particular applications within equity. This debate informs several of the papers.

Many of the papers identify areas where equitable principles are now 'active' which at first glance appear novel applications. Professor Paul Finns' 'The Forgotten 'Trust': The People and the State' is a wonderful exploration of the concept of fiduciary and the notions of state responsibility to the citizen. This is particularly topical in light of the decision of Toohey J in *Mabo (No 2)* and the republican debate which will gather increasing momentum as the centenary of federation nears. Familiar debates from seemingly disparate dis-

courses appear such as a feminist analysis of the public/private construction of male, female contributions in relation to *de facto* property disputes referred to in the Commentary of Professor Marcia Neave on Professor Rebecca Bailey's excellent paper 'Property Disputes in *De Facto* Relationships: Can Equity Still Play a Role?'.

Equity Issues and Trends is a valuable contribution to appraisal of the location of equitable principles in the continuing search to help people solve their problems and offer a better remedy to those who follow. It is to be hoped its academic nature and style do not deter readers from the wide range of areas covered.

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Judge Dredd

Starring Sylvester Stallone; Rated M.

Judge Dredd is not a spunk. Especially when lying in wait under that sexy latex gear is Sylvester Stallone.

Based on a phenomenally successful comic, *Judge Dredd* has finally come to the Big Screen. The rumour mill had been promising it for years, and speculation about who would play the great man was rife, from Arnie to Jean-Claude, but when the dust settled it was Sly who emerged in the Versace designed Judge's gear. And a fine figure he cuts too — has anyone ever stuck their chest out so much?

The film fairly quickly removes one of the key comic elements — preserving Dredd's secret identity. Sly whips off his helmet at the first available moment, and leaves it that way for the majority of the film — must have been in the contract that we should be allowed to enjoy his ugly mug. But still, somehow, the film manages to be ok, and not betray the comic's intent too much.

Dredd is a Judge, which basically means he's a street-walking police force, courtroom, jury and executioner. He and the other judges patrol the mean streets of the Megacities, huge sprawling metropolii that are the last refuges of city-dwelling humanity, keeping out the Cursed Earth and keeping in tens of millions of people. A citizen guilty of some offence is summarily dealt with, collared, judged on the spot, and sentenced. No need to deal with hung juries

and expert witnesses in this cyberverse, they're all built into the one person.

To help them in their crusade against all evil-doers (which in the comic included litterers landing two years) the Judges ride 'LawMasters', ultra-souped up cycles that are really tanks on two wheels, and wield very deadly 'Law-Bringers', a gun which can just about do anything. And they wear the aforementioned sexy bullet-proof bodysuits with enormous shoulder pads and helmets which only reveal a very square jaw. Armed with all this gear, a Judge is a pretty forbidding character, and none more so than Dredd, the ultimate Judge who has given his life to the Law. No emotions, no friends — as he so poetically puts it, he IS the Law.

The problem of course, is that so much power in one individual can lead to corruption.

Which is precisely what happens when a young upstart is angling for the Chief Judge position, and pretty quickly gets there — simultaneously removing ex-chief Sydow, imprisoning Dredd, freeing his evil clone twin Rico, and bringing untold chaos to the city. Not a bad day's work. Luckily, Dredd returns, and wreaks his own justice, with the help of obligatory love interest Judge Hershey. There are monstrous robots, mutated headbutting machines, and a vat full of Rico-clones, but none of that is enough to stop THE LAW.

The fx are great: Mean Machine Angel a highlight with his agro-dial and very attractive steel-pipe body. The Megacity is a convincing conglomeration which makes you believe that it's real. Special graffiti experts were hired to give the streets an authentic grubbiness, and it pays off. The only downer is the LawBringers, which have a tinny feel to them, kinda like some plastic on a pair of wheels.

The film pretty much skips over the entire issue of the fact that the Judges are a totally fascist organisation, ruling by terror and doing basically whatever they like in the name of their Law — which is encapsulated in a book looking suspiciously like a bible. They even seem like nice people at some points, unheard of in the 2D world, where these guys and gals are not nice, not fair, and definitely not role models.

A superb episode of the comic detailed the rise of a civilian 'democratic' movement, where the entire city rose up to claim their independence and to demand democracy. They did not demand that the Judges be removed, but rather that the people decide what's best for themselves. This notion did not go down so well with the powers that be, and Dredd played a central role in bringing down the independence movement and reestablishing control — but not without some doubt. This was philosophy not often seen in the comic medium, and evidently far too challenging for the movie to deal with. Explosions and rampaging robots hold sway whilst your brain takes a brief holiday.

The only philosophical moment comes when Rico and Dredd confront one another (state on state, mate on mate, brother on brother). Rico, trying to regenerate a zillion clones of himself, gives Dredd a choice — the clones could be 'made to be Judges, call them morons, or free-thinking individuals, call them... Human'. Gasp! He's right! But then the film loses the plot again, as Rico accuses Dredd, of all people, of being too Human and not reaching to be a God. Whew, for a moment the bad guys were making sense.

And yet, despite the lack of philosophy, despite having Sly at the helm, and despite not wanting to, somehow the film was enjoyable. The piles of 2000AD comics in the shed are probably rolling over in their grave to hear someone say it, but Judge Dredd, the film, is ok.

Christian McGregor wishes Devo would tour again.