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This thick volume casts useful light on federal courts and their jurisdiction—an area recently plunged into uncertainty by the High Court’s strict interpretation of Chapter III of the Constitution. As Justice Gummow notes, the ‘Judiciary’ chapter’s ‘ten modest sections’ have become both ‘a charter for the protection of individual liberty’ and ‘a means for shaping the State judicial systems’ (p. xii). Cheryl Saunders concurs that, in Australia, the separation of federal judicial power has been used to protect values that in other countries are entrenched in a Bill of Rights (pp. 28 and 33). Gavan Griffith and Geoffrey Kennett argue that imposing too strict a test for impartiality on federal judges might deter State parliaments from enacting appropriate safeguards for State judges (pp. 38, 41 and 61). Stephen Parker reminds us that judicial independence only has value as a ‘derivative concept’ for protecting judicial *impartiality* (p. 71); the losing party must be able to believe that the arbiter was ‘equidistant’ between the two sides (p. 68).

Sir Anthony Mason notes that the High Court now uses its powers of leave and remitter to keep its workload manageable (pp. 108 and 112), and to select appeals that involve pertinent principles rather than large monetary amounts (pp. 107 and 113). Robert French discusses federal courts created by parliament, such as the current and former bankruptcy, industrial, family and federal courts, while his fellow judge Brian Beaumont explains how justice itself requires efficient methods of case management (pp. 161 and 163). Margaret Allars argues that the separation of powers enhances legal pluralism, which in turn checks majoritarian tyranny (pp. 223–4). Henry Burmester advocates a narrow, traditional view of *locus standi*, requiring constitutional plaintiffs to be ‘directly and actually affected’, leaving ‘resolution of generalised grievances’ to the political process (pp. 228–9).

Leslie Zines notes that federal courts retain accrued jurisdiction even after the original federal matter has been disposed of, raising the possibility of bizarre tactics by litigants (p. 294). Brian Opeskin argues that the Founders’ decision to separate federal from State jurisdiction was unnecessary, and creates problems now that parliament has set up lower federal courts (pp. 303–4). Peter Nygh discusses the vagueness of the Judiciary Act 1903 (Cth) ss 79–80, as to how much State law is ‘picked up’ by federal courts sitting in that State.

Justice Andrew Goldsmith compares the federal judges of 1978 with those of 1998, using such sources as *Who’s Who*. His findings are interesting (eg changes in religious backgrounds) and some are counter-intuitive (eg despite mandatory retirement, the average age is unchanged at 58). Tony Blackshield compares the Australian and US rules for appointing and removing federal judges. He prefers the American removal procedure (involving a proper trial by the Senate) (p. 409), but considers Australia better at the appointments stage, as US Senate confirmation hearings have ‘erupted periodically into…crisis’ (p. 436).

Finally, Fiona Wheeler summarises recent High Court decisions disqualifying federal judges from non-judicial offices. The High Court’s approach is not only restrictive but also vague: ‘Although constitutional lawyers would welcome the opportunity to discover more about the doctrine…, it is unlikely that either the potential judicial appointee or the Commonwealth would relish this risk’ (p. 474).

The book is usefully equipped not only with an index and notes on contributors, but also excerpts of the relevant provisions of the Constitution, the Judiciary Act 1903 (Cth) and the Jurisdiction of Courts (Cross-Vesting) Act 1987 (Cth). My sole—minor—disappointment was the lack of Canadian comparisons, especially given that Opeskin is a Canadian expert, and that Canada offers a closer analogy to Australia than the United States.