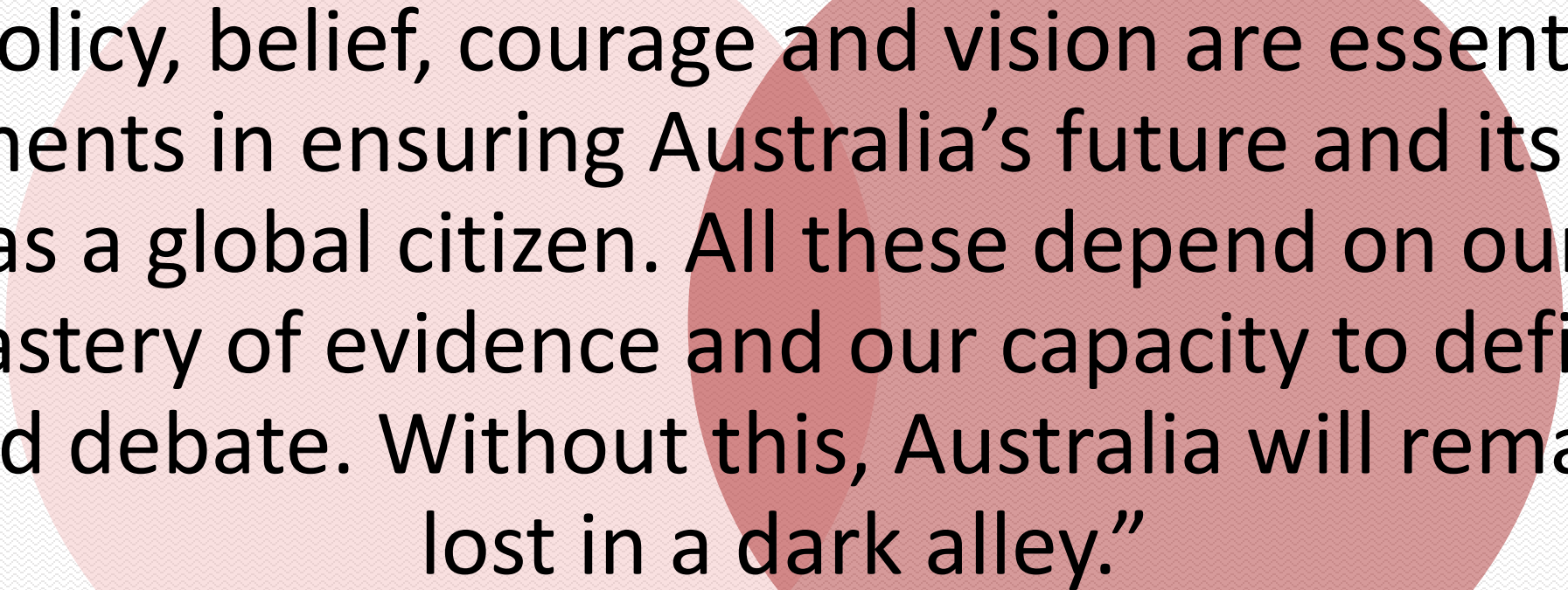


Room for improvement: the quality of debate in upper houses in Australia

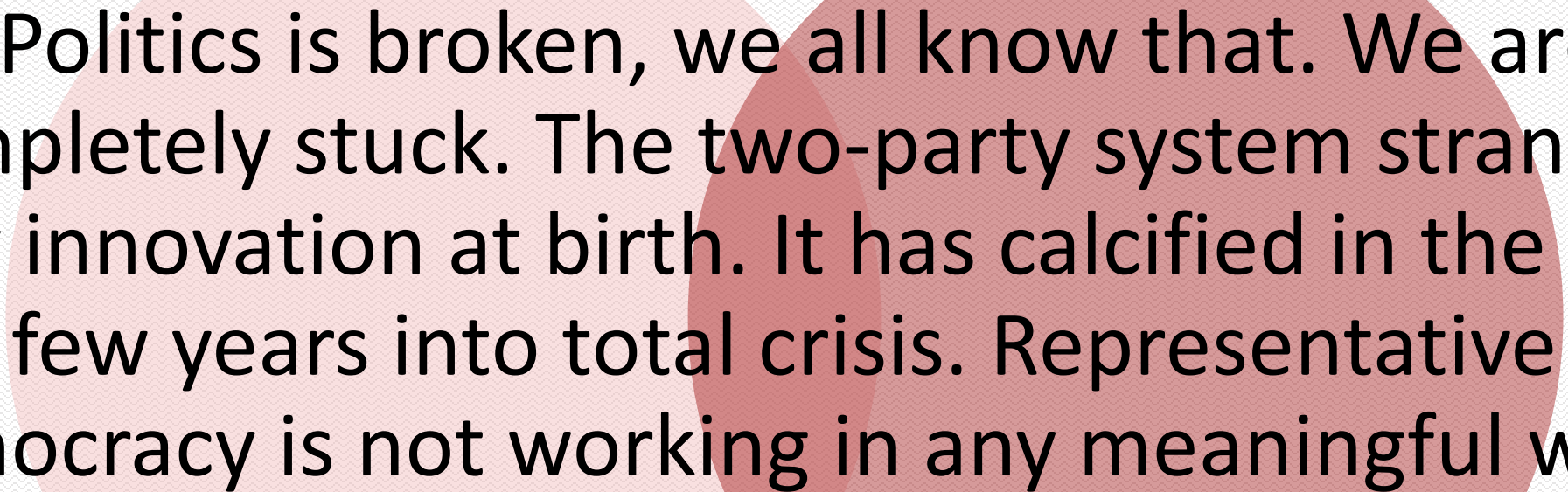


Patrick O'Brien, Secretary, Legislative Council of Victoria Standing Committees



“Policy, belief, courage and vision are essential elements in ensuring Australia’s future and its role as a global citizen. All these depend on our mastery of evidence and our capacity to define and debate. Without this, Australia will remain lost in a dark alley.”

Barry Jones



“Politics is broken, we all know that. We are completely stuck. The two-party system strangles any innovation at birth. It has calcified in the last few years into total crisis. Representative democracy is not working in any meaningful way.”

Suzanne Moore, *The Guardian*, February 2019

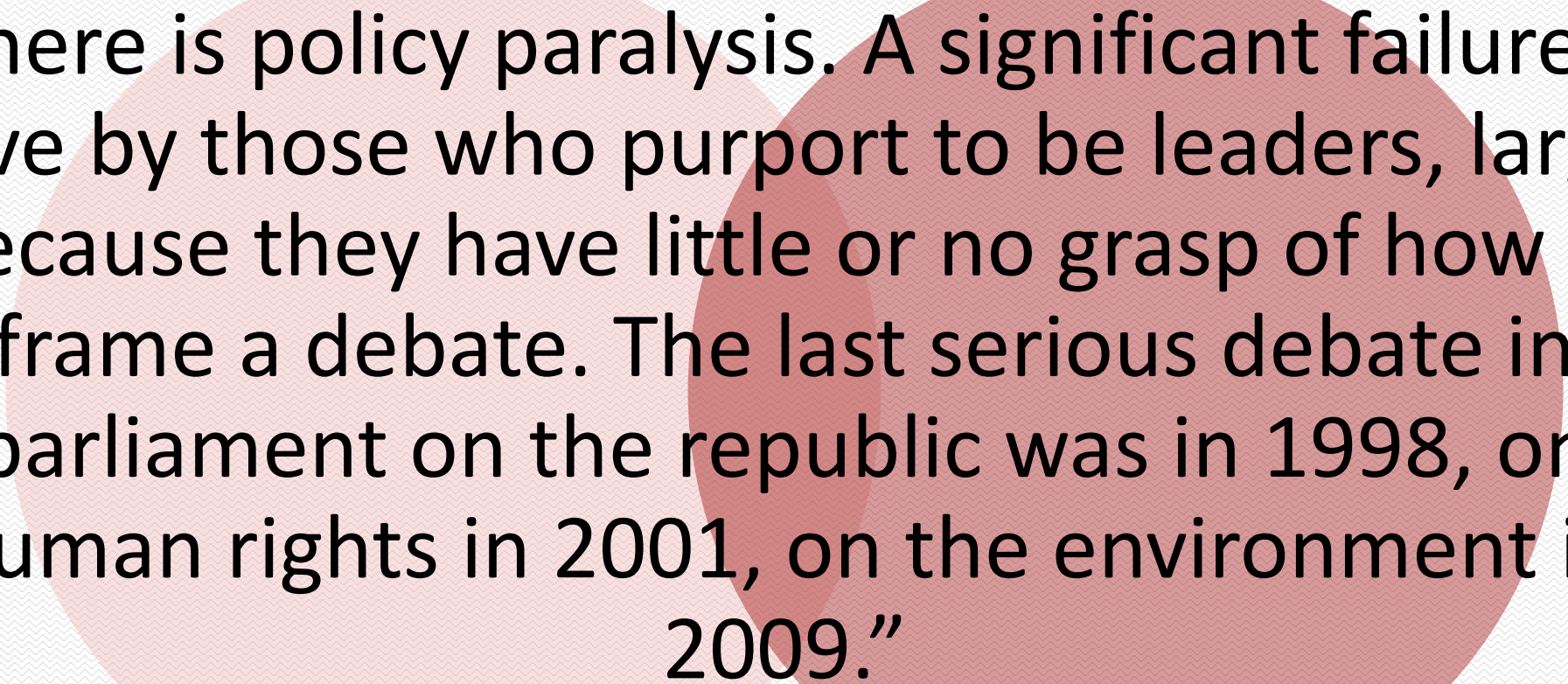




The 5 'great principles' of Westminster

1. Public business shall be conducted in a decent and orderly manner
2. The minority is protected
3. Every member is able to fully and freely express their opinion
4. Full opportunity is provided for the consideration of every measure
5. Heedless or impulsive legislative action is prevented.

David Blunt



“There is policy paralysis. A significant failure of nerve by those who purport to be leaders, largely because they have little or no grasp of how to frame a debate. The last serious debate in parliament on the republic was in 1998, on human rights in 2001, on the environment in 2009.”

Barry Jones



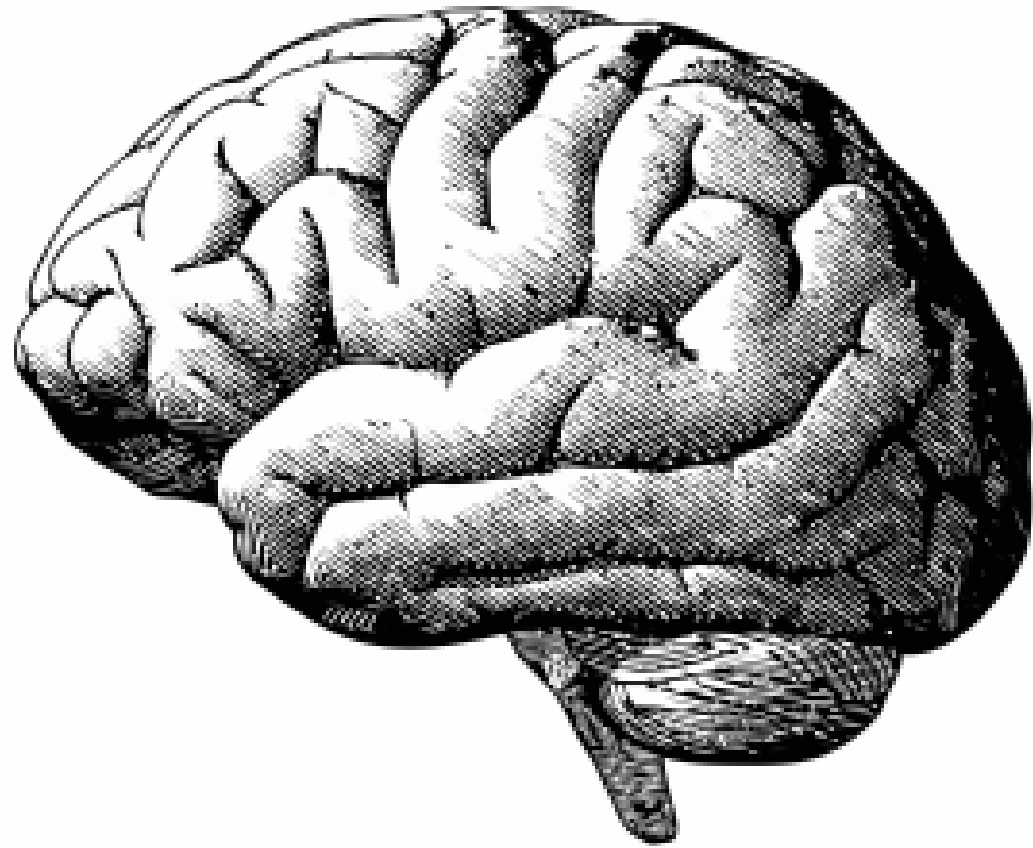
Why upper houses?

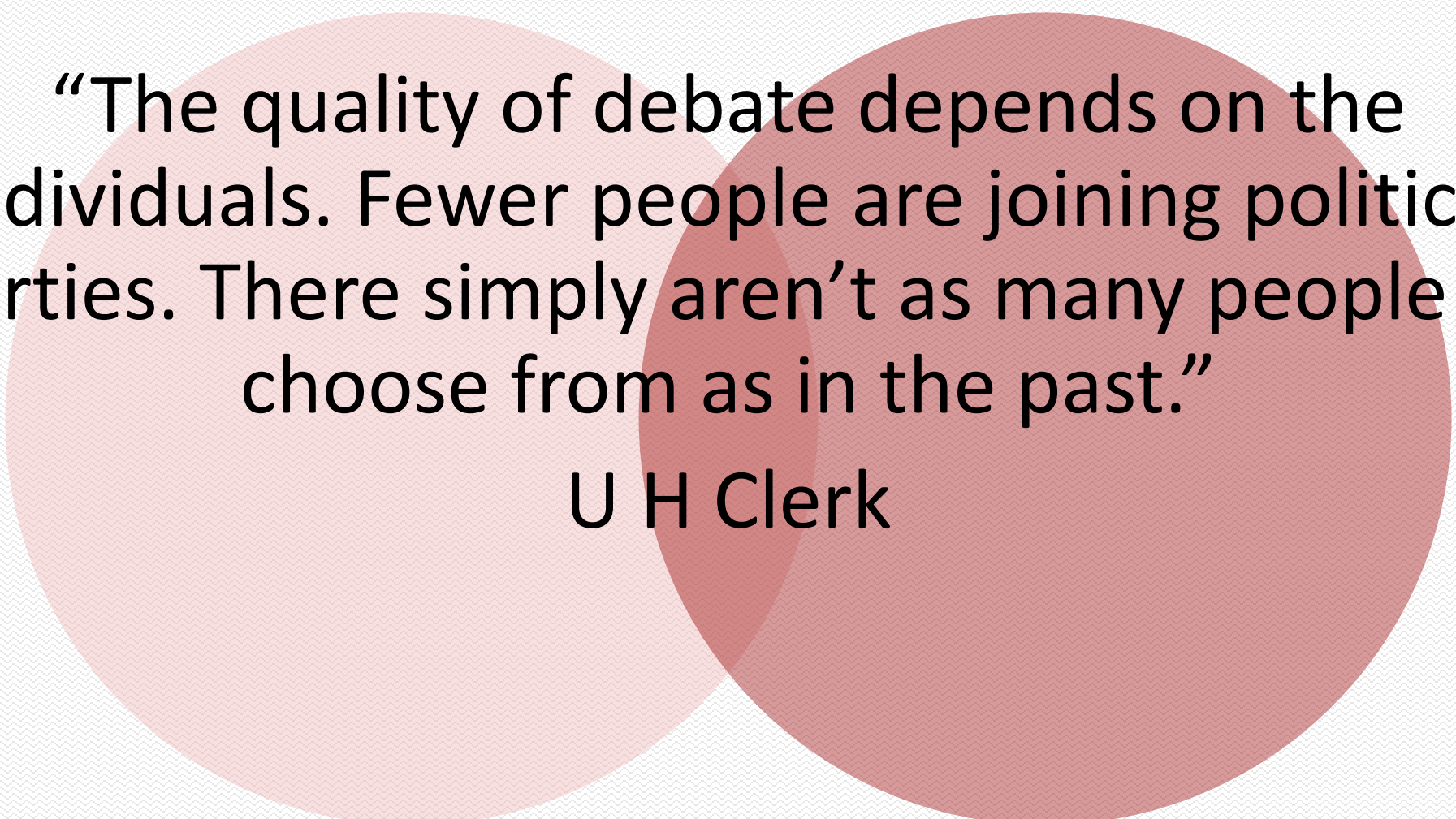
“Stunned!”











“The quality of debate depends on the individuals. Fewer people are joining political parties. There simply aren’t as many people to choose from as in the past.”

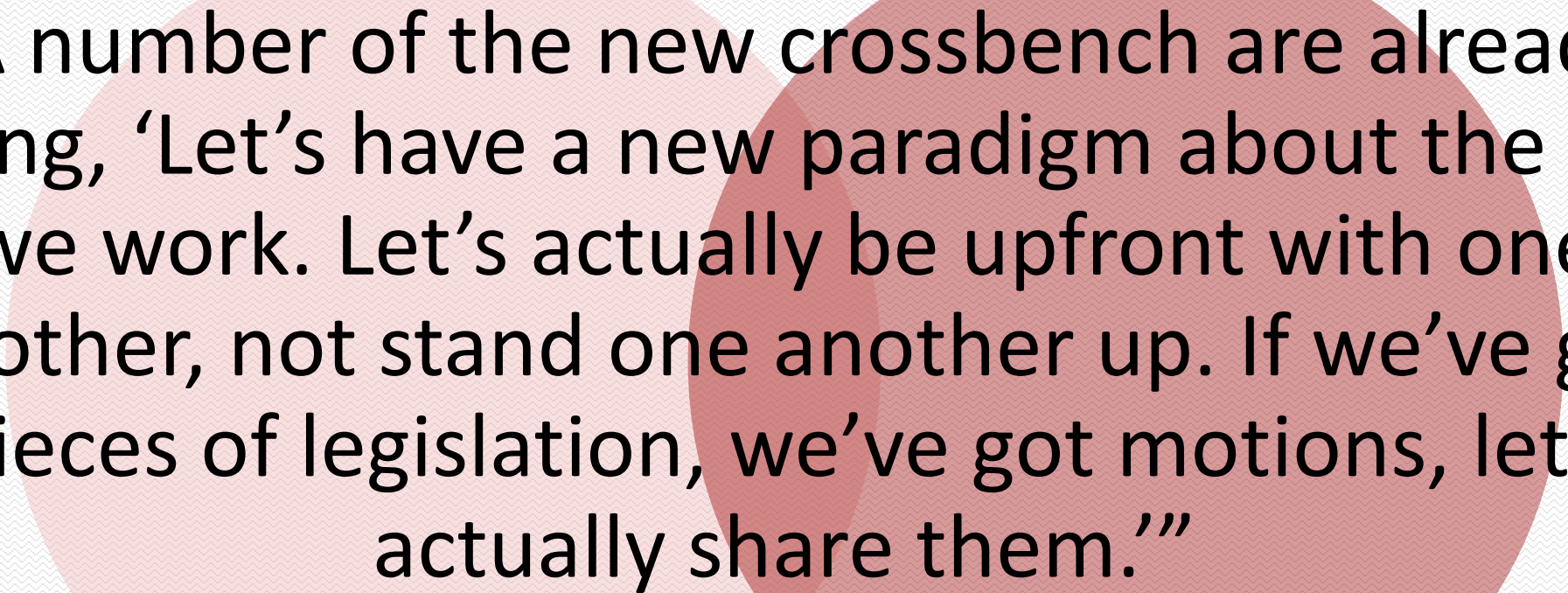
U H Clerk

FRANZ
KAFKA
THE TRIAL



\$4.95/394.70484.3

DEFINITIVE EDITION



“A number of the new crossbench are already saying, ‘Let’s have a new paradigm about the way we work. Let’s actually be upfront with one another, not stand one another up. If we’ve got pieces of legislation, we’ve got motions, let’s actually share them.’”

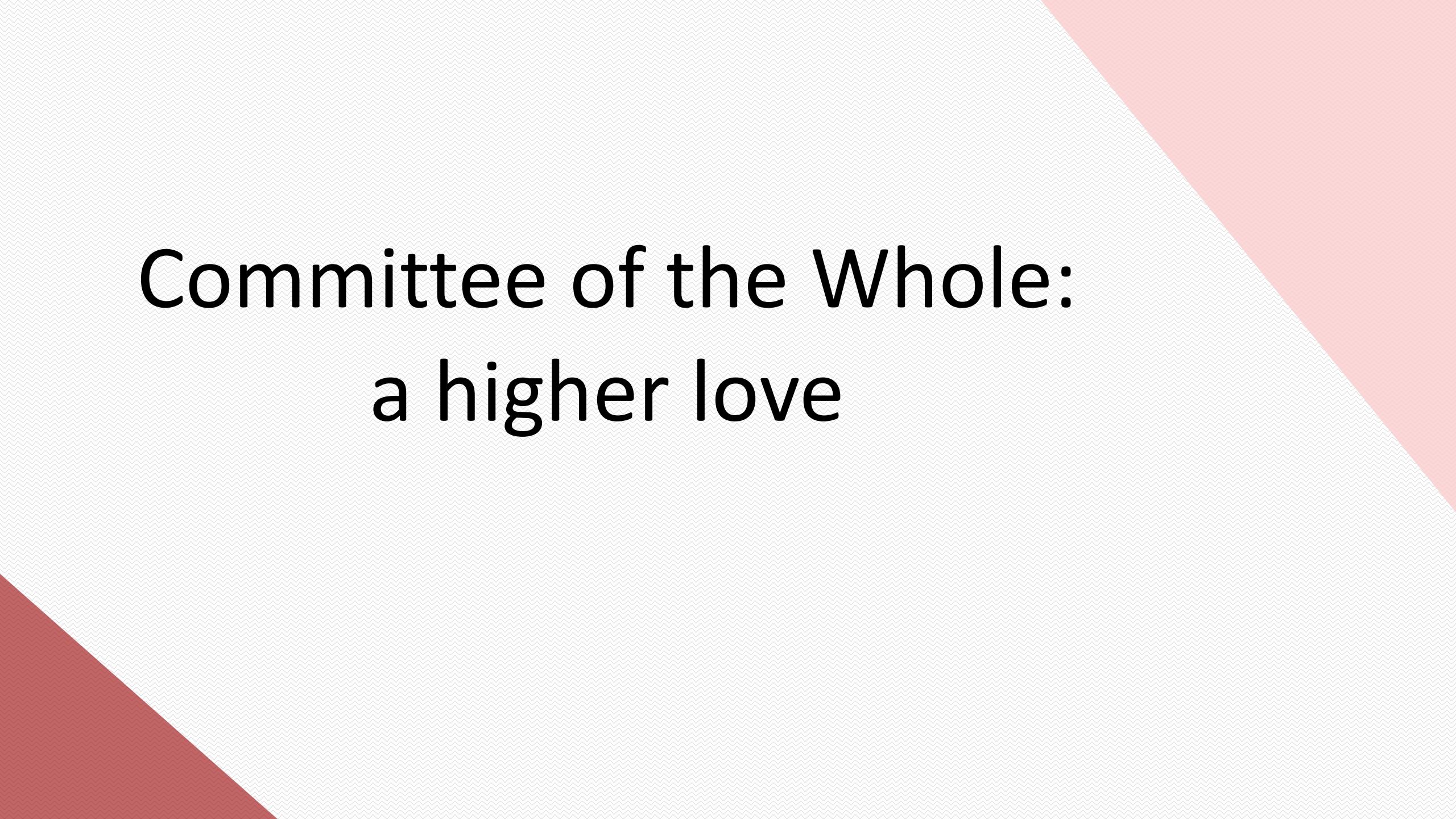
Gavin Jennings



“The real politics is happening
somewhere else.”

Rob Oakeshott

The power of committees



Committee of the Whole:
a higher love



“Committee of the Whole is where debate
in this chamber is most effective.”

U H Clerk

A matter of conscience



A 50/50 call



“Everyone has to cooperate.”

U H Clerk



Mixed member proportional representation voting



