

Honi Soit

WEEK 3, SEMESTER 2, 2021

FIRST PRINTED 1929



IN THIS EDITION

David Verse Goliath: on USyd's cuts to poetry

AMELIA RAINES / P.6

To August

SHANIA O'BRIEN / P.17

August is the sun. It is aureate light upon the garden floor illuminating the softened, verdant grass. I walk barefoot across the sward and think of home, of my gossamer curtains billowing in the gentle wind, my mother's twinkling eyes as we sit on the balcony and watch the bougainvillea, my grandmother's face as mango pulp stains her hands. In these memories I am safe, I exist in a glass house where no harm can touch me. For most of my life, August was Summer's eleventh hour. Come September and October, the chill will creep in and force the sun to hide behind canopies of dark, the only light filtering through in dapples on frosted mud.

Reflections on *chen pi*

VIVIENNE GUO / P.16

You can tell that it's mandarin season when the winds start to blow a little colder in May. It's late July now and Imperial mandarin season is waning, the growing absence filled by the unfolding harvests of Hickson, Afourer, and Daisy varieties...

Conservation conversations: then and now

The evolution of our approach to sustainability and preservation of flora and fauna.

As one of ten thousand who have chosen to seek refuge from human lands here during the sweltering summer, the jostling crowd makes me feel caged. But as I foray further and further down the paths, I am immersed into a different

world each time. In the morning I am underwater, sprayed by a cheeky seal and enrapt by the gaping pelican. By noon I have flown to Sumatra, and spend my time tiger-spotting as they hide under cool leaves. As the air cools I am in a rainforest, a menagerie of butterflies and birds dart above my head, painting a rainbow. The sun sets and I wave the tarantulas goodbye, pressing

my finger against the glass as if I am touching his furry limb. As I leave, I fondly recall how I saw the animals of the world in one short day.

The modern behemoth of Taronga Zoo had humble beginnings as New South Wales' first public zoo in 1884, situated in Moore Park. However, within twenty years, the zoo's Secretary Albert Le Souef decided the space was too small,

ARIANA HAGHIGHI / P.12

and no innovation could be born in austerity. The Zoological Trust sought a beautiful region of land overlooking Sydney's dazzling Sydney Harbour shores, and brought Noah's Ark to shame with the transfer process of animals to the Mosman oasis. On 7 October, 1916, the gates were opened and guests began flooding in like a gush of water through a ruptured dam.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY



Honi Soit is published on the sovereign land of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation, who were amongst the first to resist against and survive the violence of colonisation. This land was taken without consent and sovereignty was never ceded. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Indigenous students and staff at the University.

As a team of settlers occupying the lands of the Gadigal, Dharug, Wangal, Bidjegal, Kuringgai and Wallumedegal

people, we are the beneficiaries of ongoing colonial dispossession. The settler-colonial project of 'Australia' and all its institutions, including the University, are built on the exclusion of First Nations peoples and the devaluation of Indigenous knowledge systems. Beneath the sandstone buildings of USyd lie thousands of years of Aboriginal history.

Colonialism is not a one-time event that occurred in the distant past; it is an ongoing structure. The genocide

of First Nations people is perpetuated and enabled by the government, who push ahead with the forced removals of Aboriginal children from their families, their Country, and their cultures. Aboriginal peoples are the most incarcerated on earth, and there have been over 474 documented Indigenous deaths in custody since the 1991 Royal Commission.

We pledge to actively stand in solidarity with First Nations movements towards decolonisation through our

editorial decisions, and to be reflective when we fail to do so. We commit to being a counterpoint to mainstream media's silencing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We remain cognisant that *Honi's* writers and readership are predominantly made up of settlers, and aim to platform Indigenous voices in our paper.

There is no justice without Indigenous justice.

Always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

IN THIS EDITION

- 3 News
- 6 University
- 7 International
- 9 Opinion
- 10 Perspective
- 12 Feature
- 14 Culture
- 17 Creative
- 19 Self-Help
- 20 SRC
- 22 Puzzles
- 23 Gossip
- 23 Columns/Letters
- 24 Comedy

EDITORS

Deandre Espejo, Samuel Garrett, Vivienne Guo, Marlow Hurst, Jeffrey Khoo, Juliette Marchant, Shania O'Brien, Claire Ollivain, Maxim Shanahan, Alice Trenoweth-Creswell.

WRITERS

Drew Beacom, Griffin Cant, Luke Cass, Christine Chen, Sam Eames, Matthew Forbes, Ariana Haghghi,

Baopu He, Amelia Koen, Katarina Kuo, Robbie Mason, Roisin Murphy, Amelia Raines, Khanh Tran, Rhea Thomas, Riley Vaughan, Zara Zadro.

ARTISTS

Maxim Adams, Airlie Cullen, Eleanor Curran, Bella Henderson, Ben Hines, Amelia Koen, Ellie Stephenson.

COVER ARTIST

Bella Henderson.

GET IN TOUCH

Have you got a tip for a story? An angry letter to the editors? An article pitch?

Email us at editors@honisoit.com.

Scan the QR code to use our anonymous tip form.

Send mail to Honi Soit Editors at PO Box 974 Broadway NSW 2007.



EDITORIAL

SHANIA O'BRIEN

People are too harsh on routine. I love it — I see it as a privilege when things are the same. I want to go to Terra Cotta Roasters with Alice again and order the breakfast burger and a skinny chai, I want to sit in our underground hole and order Thai food from the same place, and I want to ask Vivienne to help me with my spread as she insists that she also doesn't know what she's doing (lie, she is the best).

I have nothing smart to say about the state of the world. It has not ended yet, or at the very least, it has not seemed to. I wish I could say it is the same, every day, every sunset blending together with nothing to show but identical fading light peeking through the gaps in my blinds. But as much as I would like to succumb to despair, the people around me have made that impossible.

Although recent days appear to be drowned in a sort of monotony, the last couple of months have also brought many firsts; Marlow's first Barbie movie (Barbie and the Diamond Castle), Ariana's first venture into writing prose, Jeffrey and Deandre's first time knitting, and my brother's first steps.

I bought a disposable camera with thirty-nine shots at the start of June, insistent on documenting the last holidays of my undergraduate degree. I expected to go through it like wildfire, but it sits on my

desk now, wound to the number twenty-one. Sam is the star of nearly all of them; squinting on his balcony with the sun in his face, smiling atop the stairs in Victoria Park, zealously kneading the water out of shredded zucchini.

I've been taking pictures and videos (almost) every day since January on my phone. I found a video of Max from our Welcome Week lay up, with a blanket wrapped around his legs. Alice and I are laughing in the background, commanding him to 'be a mermaid.' He insists he doesn't know how before flapping around and giggling. There's a photo of Claire posing next to a completely alive and legally acquired potted plant, one of Sam with his award-winning cake monstrosity, and one of Juliette with simp hands in her oversized 'Fit for Honi' t-shirt when we first attempted the Herculean task of cleaning the office.

There is so much I am grateful for this year, almost all of which I owe to the people mentioned in this editorial. My mum tells me that the Gods are more likely to answer my prayers because I don't pray enough, so I will use this opportunity to hope every year is half as great as this one.

To all the writers and artists in this edition, and to the lovely cover artist Bella Henderson, I am eternally grateful.

All my love,
Shania



Disclaimer: *Honi Soit* is published by the Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney, Level 1 Wentworth Building, City Road, University of Sydney NSW 2006. The SRC's operation costs, space and administrative support are financed by the University of Sydney. *Honi Soit* is printed under the auspices of the SRC's Directors of Student Publications (DSP): Ben Jorgensen, Kwunying Lee, Evelyn (Lin) Peng, Kristie Tan, Angela Zhuoyue Xu, Shiyue (Stephanie) Zhang. All expressions are published on the basis that they are not to be regarded as the opinions of the SRC unless specifically stated. The Council accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of any of the opinions or information contained within this newspaper, nor does it endorse any of the advertisements and insertions. Please direct all advertising inquiries to publications.manager@src.usyd.edu.au.

Retraction and apology notice

The *Women's Honi* editorial team sincerely and unreservedly apologise for the profound harm caused by the article "St Paul's resident's family tree looks a bit topiary". The publication of this comedy piece was a careless oversight, the likes of which we will work to ensure will never happen again.

We recognise that satirising the colleges, bastions of ableism and

inequality, should never be done at the expense of disabled people. Disabled students should not be used as props in the anti-sexual violence campaign or in any other campaign. We failed at this and we recognise that in our failure we have further alienated disabled students on campus.

We express our unwavering solidarity with the USYD Disabilities and Carers Collective. Our feminism must be

intersectional and centre disability justice always. We recognise that we have failed in this tenet and contributed to harmful narratives equating disability with moral degradation.

USYD Women's Collective and future editorial teams will work with tenacity to do better. Disabled students have a right to safe educational environments and activist communities that work actively to dismantle ableism. It is our Collective's

duty to work towards the shared goal of liberation, and feminist liberation is impossible without liberation for disabled people.

USYD WoCo pledge to diligently educate ourselves, and work concurrently and proactively with the Disabilities Collective to ensure we centre disability justice in everything we do.

- The *Women's Honi* 2021 Editorial Team.

Chemistry, Genetics, Molecular Biology under fire in UWA's latest round of job cuts

CHRISTINE CHEN

The University of Western Australia is set to lay off several senior research and teaching staff in the School of Molecular Sciences, according to an internal document sent to select staff members on Thursday.

In the University's ongoing bid to address purported structural deficits, the cuts were not the only cost-saving measures announced this week. A memo, sent out to all UWA staff on Friday, also flagged amendments to a proposal to restructure the School of Social Sciences. The original proposal, released on 6th July, included plans to terminate Sociology and Anthropology, and fire 16 teaching and research staff.

The developments come after students unleashed a torrent of opprobrium toward UWA's management team, led by Vice Chancellor Amit Chakma.

Amendments to original Social Sciences proposal "rushed" and "vastly different"

With the subject line "Structural Reform Update," UWA staff were informed of amendments to the original measures in an email from the Vice Chancellor on Friday.

Under the amendments, the Anthropology major will be merged with Geography, and 2 staff members will be retained. A research position will also be retained from Asian Studies, originally proposed to become a teaching-only discipline.

Nicole McEwen, an Anthropology student and the Coordinator for UWA's Education Action Network, told *Honi Soit* she was dissatisfied with the amendments,

which were "vastly different" to the original proposal.

"These aren't just amendments—they've written a whole new proposal and scrapped the old one. They need to be opened up to another consultation period for feedback," she said. "UWA management is rushing things through without any genuine consultation, and everyone has been kept in a culture of silence."

School of Molecular Sciences to be cut by 25 per cent under a new "alarming" proposal to allow focus on "flagship areas"

In addition to the restructure of UWA's Social Sciences, further cuts have been announced to the School of Molecular Sciences, along with the Office of Research and Finance.

An internal document obtained by *Honi* reveals that the University plans to lay off 6 out of the 14 senior lecturers and associate professors in Chemistry, and 2 out of 10 in the Genetics and the Biochemistry & Molecular Biology majors.

"It is proposed that the School's structure, teaching program and research program will be reduced and refined [...] to support the University's priorities for growth and improving the student experience," the document read.

The cuts will leave the School of Molecular Sciences 25 per cent smaller while increasing its student-staff ratio from 16:1 to between 22:1 and 24:1. Each year, over 1,000 students enrol in first-year Chemistry units, and the University has not made clear how it will seek to "improve the student experience" while constraining teaching capacity.

According to the document, UWA also plans to "reinvigorate the Chemistry discipline" by consolidating the majors

of Synthetic Chemistry and Physical & Analytical Chemistry under one single Chemistry major.

Computational Chemistry will also be discontinued to concentrate "research into the flagship areas of: Systems Biology, Synthetic Biology, Nanotechnology, Materials Science."

Li's PhD research, backed by a Forrester Foundation scholarship, involves aspects of Computational Chemistry, which was singled out as a field to be cut under the proposal. "If my supervisor goes, it is likely that there will be no other academic in WA that possesses similar expertise," he said. "I suspect that the university will attempt

"Students were shocked, outraged and scared for their livelihoods."

The move is reminiscent of the proposal made to Social Sciences, which similarly rationalised cuts to refocus on "flagship areas." In response to falling revenues, other Australian universities including the University of Melbourne, have also cut back specialist courses for their perceived 'difficulty.'

Sean Li, a PhD Candidate in Chemistry at UWA, told *Honi* of a confidential meeting between Dr. Martha Ludwig, Head of Molecular Sciences, and HDR students in which changes were announced. (Staff were barred from participating.)

"Students were shocked, outraged and scared for their livelihoods," he said. "The Head of School was bombarded with various questions from the students, most of which she deferred to the email feedback system."

In explaining the cuts, Dr. Ludwig allegedly suggested that students "just Google growing areas in Chemistry."

Li told *Honi* the consultation process with staff was "suspicious" and that "anyone whose research doesn't fit into these trendy new areas will likely get the axe...it's disgusting," Li said.

to force me to change projects [...] in that case, I will simply refuse and do whatever I can to fight against it."

One senior member of the Chemistry department told *Honi Soit* that the cuts were "alarming."

The staff member emphasised the high standards of research output produced by their colleagues and students. "Something is clearly wrong when those who perform well by academic standards are targeted to leave a Group of Eight university," they said. "I am tired of the ongoing situation at UWA. My mental health is at a very low point."

Vice Chancellor Chakma has stated that "there are no further proposals to discontinue existing majors in undergraduate degrees across any other School in the University." However, the NTEU estimates that up to 400 staff members will be laid off to meet UWA's \$40 million cost-saving targets. UWA management has turned down requests from the University's Academic Board and campus newspaper Pelican Magazine to share the data used in calculating its targets.

University students oppose cuts to higher education at online counter-summit

ZARA ZADRO

Today, around a hundred students gathered online to discuss the future of education activism in Australia. Co-hosted by education action groups from the University of Sydney, UTS, Macquarie, and UNSW, as well as the National Union of Students (NUS), the protest was held simultaneously to the Australian Financial Review's Higher Education Summit. It opposed government and university attacks on staff jobs and students' quality of education, which has intensified during the COVID pandemic.

The first speaker, UNSW education activist Rubi Pandolfi, slammed the AFR summit for serving the corporate interests of university management and the Liberal Government.

The summit saw University Vice-Chancellors, Liberal politicians and business leaders discuss the further restructuring of higher education in Australia, following over 17,000 staff redundancies in 2020, and the doubling of student fees in the humanities under the

Job Ready Graduates Package. Speakers included the University of Sydney's Vice-Chancellor Mark Scott and Federal Minister for Education Alan Tudge.

"Universities have enough money to restore staff jobs and courses, yet they are choosing not to in order to boost their profits," said Pandolfi. The University of Sydney's 'cost-saving' cuts to staff and some departments comes despite the fact it recorded a surplus of \$106.6 million in 2020.

"We are demanding free, fully funded education and a reverse to all the cuts and job losses throughout the sector."

This sentiment was reinforced by Yasmine Johnson, a rank-and-file NTEU member at USyd, who rejected management's excuses of austerity and financial strife in the pandemic, as they "seize the moment to make the cuts they've wanted for years."

Johnson also highlighted universities' ties to the private sector, such as the mining and weapons manufacturing industries, which fuel "imperialist violence the world over." Notably, other speakers referenced Alex Zelinksky, Vice-Chancellor of University of Newcastle and

speaker at the AFR's summit today, who is Australia's former Chief Defense Scientist within the Department of Defence.

Felix Faber, Education Vice-President of the New South Wales branch of the NUS, spoke in opposition to "brain-numbing" and "costly" compulsory subjects such as OLEs and interdisciplinary units, noting that courses that teach critical thinking skills have been eliminated.

"Students are not passive, and we are not docile, and we hold far brighter aspirations for our futures than sitting still and not causing trouble, with a vision of a society where education has a purpose and work has a meaning beyond the accumulation of profit," said Faber. This was followed by a 'radical' Kahoot game.

Australian historian and journalist Rowan Cahill spoke to the counter-summit, describing the radical landscape of university education and protest in the 1960s. "We challenged and criticised the economic imperative at the heart of university education, and forty years later little has changed," said Cahill.

"University admin are ruthlessly stripping away remaining vestiges and

hints of community and democracy in universities," added Cahill. "None of this is going to disappear even if we return physically to campus."

Finally, Chris Hall emphasised the importance of consistent activism to fight the corporatisation of higher education. "These are cuts we haven't seen in a while, but it's the cuts we're going to see continue on," he said.

As NUS Education Officer and a student at Curtin University in Perth, Hall discussed recent protests by university students in Adelaide and Perth against cuts, including 40 million in immediate resources, staff jobs, and several courses at the University of Western Sydney.

He critiqued Alan Tudge's purported sympathy for students in this morning's keynote address at the AFR summit, and the building of hotels at Curtin University and the University of Queensland.

Co-chair Bhattari wrapped up the counter-summit with a video of the Adelaide and Perth protests. The remaining attendees were separated into Zoom breakout rooms to discuss the content of the event and future plans for action.

Remote learning to continue until mid-semester break

JEFFREY KHOO

The University of Sydney will continue with remote learning until the mid-semester break, meaning that the first 8 weeks of Semester 2 will be spent online.

In an email to all staff on Thursday morning, Vice-Chancellor Mark Scott confirmed that USyd has decided to extend remote learning until 27 September, which is the Monday of the mid-semester break.

USyd had originally planned to deliver its activities remotely until Week 4.

Scott says that the decision was made “in recognition of the challenge created by the current uncertainty” caused by the Delta COVID-19 outbreak in NSW.

As before, “critical teaching activities that currently require an on-campus presence or in-person components,” including placements, can continue.

The University is also permitting “critical research activity” where pausing

“10 days of special leave is available for permanent and casual staff.”

the project would lead to animal welfare or safety issues, but does not consider research by Honours or Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students as critical.

Staff will need to seek approval from a University Executive member for in-person activities.

10 days of special leave is available for permanent, fixed-term and casual staff members to “support them in dealing with the impacts of COVID-19,” as well as 10 days of carers’ leave.

NSW faces an ever-growing COVID-19 crisis caused by a slow vaccination rollout and a failure by the NSW Government to control the spread of the Delta variant early. The state set a record of 681 new cases on Thursday.

NSW Health is offering priority Pfizer vaccinations for 16 to 39-year-olds in Local Government Areas (LGAs) of concern. Data shows that young people have “borne the brunt” of the latest outbreak, with more than half of cases being people under 30.

Meanwhile, NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian has indicated that the Government is abandoning its “zero COVID” strategy, saying earlier that residents “can’t pretend that we will have zero cases around Australia.”

Fisher Library to close if students fail to comply with COVID rules

KHANH TRAN

All library spaces at the University of Sydney will be closed if students fail to adhere to COVID-19 regulations.

The announcement was made last Friday to the University of Sydney Union (USU) and Students’ Representative Council (SRC) in an attempt to increase COVID compliance among on-campus students.

SRC President Swapnik Sanagavarapu has urged students “to comply with the public health order” so that students can “continue enjoying the benefits of an open library and open learning centres.”

The University’s current COVID rules include mask wearing, social distancing and sign-in upon entry via a Service NSW QR Code.

USU President Prudence Wilkins-Wheat similarly encouraged students to comply with the COVID-19 mitigation measures: “Please always wear a mask inside the libraries, learning spaces and our venues and be respectful to both library and USU staff, who are only

complying with the law and doing their best to keep everyone safe.”

However, SRC Welfare Officer Lia Perkins was critical of the University’s new enforcement measures, saying that students already face disadvantage and inequality and should not have to confront further barriers.



“Accessing library spaces is essential for students who have difficulties studying at home because of their family circumstances or living situation.”

“Wearing a mask indoors is absolutely crucial [but] should be enforced with education and support, rather than punishing struggling students.”

Vice-Chancellor salary system undergoing potential transparency changes

ROISIN MURPHY

Last week, Federal Education Minister Alan Tudge announced his intention to back a voluntary code that would see the salaries of university Vice-Chancellors made public, and aligned with the pay packages of top public servants.

The publicising of university Vice-Chancellor salaries would come as part of a new code announced by the University Chancellors Council (UCC). This announcement comes amid a growing concern that the paychecks of Vice-Chancellors are perhaps a little too hidden from the public.

The largest change to come out of the code is transparency — currently, there is no reason for universities

to make public the details of Vice-Chancellors and senior management’s salaries. Historically, university Vice-Chancellors are known for having lavish pay packages, often exceeding a million dollars in yearly salaries and including upmarket residencies.

It is unclear whether this transparency will offer a tangible difference to the sizable salaries of Vice-Chancellors, particularly given the code is voluntary. Even if universities do sign themselves onto it, the incentive to degrade the amount paid in a salary would realistically rest on whether or not they consider the payments viable, following how the public responds.

The new Vice-Chancellor at the University of Sydney, Mark Scott, will earn a base-level salary of \$840,000 this year, which could rise to \$1.15m including bonuses. Last year, Michael

Spence earned \$1.6m due to the length of his tenure at the University.

SRC President, Swapnik Sanagavarapu, welcomes the potential changes.

“It’s rare for the SRC to agree with the Federal Education Minister, but it is true that the remuneration of many Vice-Chancellors around the country are inflated and disproportionate to other sectors. At a time where staff jobs are being lost and there is a general austerity in higher education, the savings generated by smaller remuneration packages should be reinvested in higher education.”

While this change holds relatively weak against the strength of universities, it is an indication that the Government is aware of the contentious debate around Vice-Chancellor salaries.

In-person Student Centre closes after open letter

ARIANA HAGHIGHI

Despite mounting lockdown restrictions, the University of Sydney Student Centre insisted on keeping a portion of in-person counters open.

The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) raised concerns regarding the health risk posed to students and staff, but these were initially dismissed by the Centre. According to an e-bulletin published by the NTEU, “Staff had

been asking management to shut the counters, with no response.”

NTEU members then penned an open letter directed to Student Centre management regarding their concerns, bearing signatures from both University academic staff and Student Centre employees. The next day, the NTEU’s demands were fulfilled and all Student Centre in-person help desks were closed.

SRC Education Officer Maddie Clark said, “The student centre not closing its desks during Sydney’s highest daily cases and outbreak is another example of how

the university does not value its staff or students. It continually prioritises profits, even over our safety.”

“The NTEU’s successful action of closing the desks shows that it is unions and staff members themselves that are the ones who care about safety and the spread of COVID-19.”

The NTEU did not respond in time for publication when asked for comment.

La Trobe defunds student union for corporate body

MAXIM SHANAHAN

An attack on student unionism under the cover of COVID at La Trobe university has seen funding to the La Trobe Students’ Union (LTSU) cut by 88%, as management establishes a new, apolitical organisation, the La Trobe Students’ Association (L TSA), while the University embarks on unprecedented cuts to staff.

Last year, the LTSU was notified by La Trobe management of their intention to amalgamate the LTSU with regional campus associations to form a new organisation, the L TSA. A motion put to LTSU council in September last year to dissolve the union and transfer all assets to the L TSA failed, yet University management proceeded to found the new organisation in spite of opposition from the student union.

As money was channelled into the new organisation, the LTSU saw its SSFAF allocation cut by 88%. At the beginning of 2020, the LTSU employed 22 permanent staff. All 22 were made redundant after the funding cut. Jake McGuinness, the current LTSU President told *Honi* that “we don’t have any professional advocates anymore, we don’t have any financial counsellors.” While the LTSU has since been able to employ two staff, “[the cuts] have massively impacted our ability to provide services to students, and there is a flow on effect to the quality of those services.”

McGuinness has doubts about the short-term future of the LTSU: “If the University funds us to such a reduced extent again next year, it’s very difficult to see how the LTSU could continue. We might be able to get through next year, but in the years afterwards, it looks pretty unlikely unless the L TSA is shut down.”

An ‘apolitical’ organisation

Student representatives believe that the L TSA has been created to quash student activism at a time when La Trobe is cutting hundreds of jobs, privatising student housing, and dissolving entire

departments. Skye Griffiths, an L TSA councillor at the main Bundoora campus, believes that the L TSA was created “as a substitute that would not speak out against them.”

The organisational structure and public statements of the L TSA lend credence to that view. When announcing the creation of the organisation, the unelected inaugural board members promoted the L TSA’s “apolitical culture” and promised “genuine partnership with La Trobe University.”

“I don’t want to live in a world where students can’t voice their concerns because their own student organisation is against them.”

When Vice-Chancellor John Dewar announced in July that 230 full-time jobs would be cut, the Chair of the Board released a statement praising the Change Proposal: “it has been

designed to simplify business processes and operations while making a positive difference to students, communities and partners.”

Elections were not held for the first eight months of the Association’s existence, and the Board’s structure prevents any genuine student representation. A student council is elected at each of La Trobe’s six campuses, and each council nominates one member to the board. Thus, the Mildura campus (with 600 students)

receives the same representation as the main Bundoora campus (with 30,000 students). Whereas Bundoora has a long-established and lively political culture, satellite campuses have been



ABOVE: AN EXPENSIVE LOGO

UTS to sack virologists and climate scientists as 60 jobs go

MAXIM SHANAHAN

The University of Technology Sydney (UTS) will cut around 60 full-time jobs in the latest round of cuts to hit Australian universities.

The latest cuts come on top of more than 350 voluntary redundancies at UTS last year.

Change proposals have been sent to five faculties, including the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology, the Faculty of Science, the Faculty of Business, and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. *Honi* has previously reported that management were seeking to cut \$3.2m in FASS alone.

Damien Cahill, the NTEU NSW Secretary said that “the cuts will target disciplines that are critical for Australia’s future, such as virology, biomedical, climate and environmental science.

Positions in Teacher Education are also under threat despite the major shortage of school teachers in NSW.”

“These cuts are destructive and short-sighted.”

A UTS spokesperson told *Honi* that UTS “ended 2020 with a deficit of \$43.1m” and that deficits were expected to grow this year and next: “current modelling suggests that we won’t break even until at least 2023 or return to surplus until at least 2024.”

“These cuts are a choice, not a product of UTS being a poor institution.”

“The University greatly regrets any job losses, and has been working hard to minimise them through savings in other areas.”

By contrast, the NTEU said that the

cuts were “unnecessary.” “Revenue at UTS fell by only 5% last year. The University is not in financial crisis and there are alternatives to job cuts.”

NTEU UTS Branch President Sarah Attfield said “there is no financial justification for cutting jobs ... These staff are essential for the students they teach and for the important research they conduct. UTS is failing students and the wider community by considering these potential redundancies.”

UTS Students’ Association Education Officer Ellie Woodward told *Honi* that “UTS management don’t care about our education, they care about profits. These cuts are a choice, not a product of UTS

being a poor institution. Because it is most certainly not. Students stand with staff and we will do all through the EBA period this year.”

The job cuts at UTS are the latest in a long line of redundancies in recent months. Since July, *Honi* has reported on job losses at Adelaide University (130 jobs); La Trobe (300 jobs); Newcastle University (150 jobs); Macquarie University (54 jobs, including the entire Environmental Sciences department); and the University of Western Australia (16 jobs, with Anthropology and Sociology to be cut entirely).

Lavish spending as caseworkers sacked

As the LTSU sacked its entire staff, the L TSA was spending big in its first year of operation. Financial documents encompassing January-May 2021 obtained by Rabelais show that the Association spent \$56,000 on “marketing and advertising,” including \$25,000 on a new logo, while spending \$27,500 for a “multiday interstate training retreat for high-profile companies” through professional development company ‘Leading Teams.’ On one occasion the L TSA paid \$900 for a limousine to take staff between campuses.

By contrast, the L TSA spent \$14,000 on student financial counselling — less than 50% of its allocated budget, and significantly underspent on student legal services.

McGuinness tells *Honi* that “their spending priorities are incredibly wrong, but also emblematic of an organisation that isn’t run primarily by students but is run by a CEO.”

Griffiths says that the University’s hostile takeover of student representation at La Trobe should be concerning for all students: “I don’t want to live in a world where students can’t voice their concerns because their own student organisation is against them.”

On 26th August at 3pm, the UTS Education Action Group will host an online staff and student forum to discuss responses to the cuts.

David Verse Goliath: On USyd's cuts to poetry

AMELIA RAINES

The University is failing to preserve its poetic history by way of education, and in doing so, it is failing to nourish the poets of tomorrow.

It was in the local charity book shop that I found a book called *Modern Australian Verse* on a bottom shelf, sandwiched between books kept in far better condition. This copy had many indentations in the spine, symptomatic of ardent page turning.

Despite it being entitled 'Modern' Australian Verse, the collection was first published in 1958, with the edition I picked up being last updated in 1971. The pages were a somnolent shade of golden brown, a tonal match to the hue of the English Breakfast I would sip on while reading it.

I found a chronology of USyd alumni immortalised in this tattered collection. Alumni, or past educators at the University, included Christopher Brennan, Robert D. Fitzgerald, R. G. Howarth, A. D. Hope, Rosemary Dobson, Lex Banning, and Joyce Shewcroft. Many familiar names, but some I had never heard of or been exposed to. All were poets I would expect the university to relish in as a part of our history.

In my biannual scroll through the English units of study website, I had noticed that, very conspicuously, the

unit ENGL2650 Reading Poetry had been branded with a damning "This unit of study is not available in 2021."

With a furrowed brow, and jaded by the destructive unit cuts, I scrolled through the units available for the following year — revealing further missing units.

It seemed antithetical to my education that I was moving through an English degree without an intensive study on poetry.

I contacted Dr Toby Fitch, poetry editor of Overland and Creative Writing lecturer at the University who had also

“It seemed antithetical to my education that I was moving through an English degree without an intensive study on poetry.”

noticed the erosion of poetry units in recent years:

“[Units about] reading poetry in a more focused way... Or poetics... They're not there anymore,” he said.

The 'retirement' of Reading Poetry, the only generalised undergraduate unit of study about the form, leaves ENGL3705 Writing Country: Indigenous Ecopoetics as the one remaining poetry unit in the undergraduate course. Honours units such as Modern Australian Poetry and Poetics have also been retired.

The cuts to poetry units were not

limited to undergraduate courses. Dr Fitch mentioned the 'retirement' of the Advanced Poetry Workshop masters unit, which was a capstone unit within Creative Writing postgraduate courses.

This brought into mind similar cuts to units I had witnessed. The retirement of the University's Chair of Australian Literature, Professor Robert Dixon, in 2019, resulted in the corresponding retirement of a variety of units in Australian Literature. The position of Chair has since not been replaced.

Units of study that are now indefinitely "unavailable" include

Australian Gothic, Australian Writing in the Postmodern Age, Writing Australian Nature, and Australian Stage and Screen. In fact, the Australian Literature minor now possesses only two units with a centralised focus on Australian literature.

This comes in the wake of unprecedented cuts to units in the Arts and the Social Sciences, the guillotine of austerity proving to be especially unrelenting towards poetics and Australian literature. This, in turn, has impacted many of the University's casual workers in the department.

"Poetry...promotes honesty and the understanding of truths and truthfulness in language and in ourselves," Dr Fitch said "I daresay management at USyd could also benefit from such studies, considering how they communicate with and treat their workers and students."

Dr Fitch facilitates poetry readings at Sappho's Bookshop, pointing to community as a means of enjoying the artform with others. I have been to similar readings and open mic nights at Lentil as Anything in Newtown. The love of the artform is undoubtedly alive in the community.

"The University of Sydney is missing an opportunity there, I think." Toby Fitch said. "They have poets on their staff, and we're keen to teach poetry."

"There's a long lineage at the University of Sydney of poets teaching poetry, and fostering the study of poetry," He said. "Not just poetry generally, but specifically Australian poetry."

As educators, the apathy towards protecting poetry units and Australian literature are corrosive to the University's ability to deliver a holistic education in English. It is a sign of missed opportunities at education, including unrequited opportunities of studying Indigenous literary voices in the context of Australian literature.

The University is failing to preserve its poetic history by way of education, and in doing so, it is failing to nourish the poets of tomorrow.

Russian student journos arrested amid attacks on unis

MAXIM SHANAHAN
ART BY CLAIRE OLLIVAIN

In Russia, students, academics and journalists at universities face increasing authoritarianism.

At dawn on April 14, Russian police raided the office of *Doxa* — a Moscow-based student newspaper — and six flats belonging to editors and their parents. They rifled through cupboards, clothes, took apart printers, confiscated phones and laptops, and — absurdly — combed through 10kg of nuts. At the home of one editor, a translator, they asked: "why does he have so many books? For what reason?" Four editors: Armen Aramyon, Natalia Tyshkevich, Vladimir Metelkin, and Alla Gutnikova, were arrested, charged with 'involvement of minors in hazardous activities' and placed under strict 24 hour house arrest.

Emerging at the height of Putinism in 2017 at Moscow's Higher School of Economics (HSE) as a small student newspaper highlighting issues of precarity, harassment and inequality within universities, *Doxa* has become an instructive case for the decline of student rights, academic freedom and independent media in an authoritarian Russia. As the case against the *Doxa* four draws out, *Honi Soit* spoke to two editors, Victor Ershov and Ekaterina Martynova.

Erosion of staff and student rights

In the brief period since *Doxa*'s founding, academic freedom and autonomy has suffered a precipitous decline. Centralised government control of universities, weaponisation of vague legal instruments, weakening of unions and activists groups, and underfunding have combined to create a culture of overt and implicit censorship. According to Kataryzna Kaczmarkska, "scholars work in a climate of uncertainty and share the perception that they can be reprimanded at any time" while students face disciplinary action for expressing anti-government views, and are restricted in the areas which they may study and research.

In Russian universities, Rectors (the equivalent of Vice-Chancellors) are directly appointed by the government, and often have close connections with, or membership of, the ruling United Russia party. A recent *Doxa* investigation found that 74% of university Rectors had government connections. Foreign interference laws have been weaponised to close down independent funding bodies, and recent amendments to education laws require that universities inculcate students with "spiritual and moral values, including a sense of patriotism." Meanwhile, academics and students have been sacked, disciplined or expelled for 'unpatriotic' research or views, and student organisations have faced harassment from university management and the law.

One summer at HSE

Events at HSE, once home to *Doxa*, demonstrate this decline.

Once considered to be Russia's most liberal university, as recently as 2017 HSE offered legal assistance to students detained in protests. Its senior management once told police that they

could not "eat our children." However, since the summer of 2019, which saw a wave of anti-government protests over the refusal to register independent candidates in the Moscow Duma elections and the imprisonment of Alexei Navalny, HSE has taken a decidedly authoritarian turn.

Political science student and prominent opposition blogger Yegor Zhukov was a candidate in the Moscow Duma election, as was Valeria Kasamara, the Vice-Rector of HSE, who ran with the support of United Russia. Zhukov's campaign was cut short and he was arrested and charged with 'extremism.' As staff and students rallied behind Zhukov, HSE administration began to crack down on student activism and academic expression. Ekaterina Martynova, an editor at *Doxa*, told *Honi* that students were "threatened with administrative sanctions" for attending protests, and that "many unis said to students that if you go to protests you'll be out of university." *Doxa*, which had criticised Kasamara's candidacy and ran crowdfunding campaigns for detained students, was deregistered as a student organisation for 'damaging the reputation' of the university. Martynova says that "it was obvious that it was a political decision" and that they were told that *Doxa* was "too independent to be a student organisation."

Over that same summer, HSE academics found themselves gagged and harangued, triggering a number of resignations.

Political scientist Elena Sirotkina resigned her post after, as Kaczmarkska says, "university management pressured her to withdraw from a research project on activists and supporters of Alexei Navalny." Political Science professor Alexandr Kynev resigned after the Department of Political Science was merged with the Department of Public Administration, ostensibly to prepare students for 'real life.' Kynev has said that "they are trying to clear a place for the 'right' friends and take control of an important segment of the university." *Doxa* reported that the University lost 28 academics for "political reasons" in the summer of 2020 alone.

A number of academics removed by HSE in 2020 were involved in setting up the 'Free University,' which seeks to "rebuild the university from scratch... freeing teachers from any administrative dictate. If the university can no longer be free, then a new free university is needed."

"We cannot be expelled from the university, because the university is us."

The clear signals sent by university administrations have discouraged current students from pursuing their academic ambitions. Victor Ershov, who studied History and Art History at St. Petersburg University, left because he was unable to freely research "about inequality, homophobia ... our modern problems." Ekaterina Martynova says that "there are less opportunities for young researchers to conduct their own papers and projects because there is no funding except from one or two government organisations." She plans to leave the country because "I cannot perform my own research because I will not find the money and I will not find work at my home institution [HSE]."

Later in 2020, Zhukov was expelled from HSE as management introduced regulations in pursuit of a 'university beyond politics,' effectively prohibiting student activism and placing heavy restraints on staff. Under the new regulations, staff and students are

prohibited from "making political statements not only on behalf of the entire university, but also on behalf of any group of staff or students at HSE." Staff are not allowed to "go beyond the bounds of their expertise or analytical position" when speaking or writing in public. The most oppressive regulation reads: "in case of participation in political activity or some other activity that is socially divisive, the student or employee will be required to take measures to end their affiliation with the university." All student publications were banned, and Martynova says that "organisations doing political debates and holding meetings to discuss current issues also faced these restrictions."

The only student platform recognised by HSE is the Student Council, which is required by law at all universities. However, Ershov says that these councils "are a token parliament" used as "a career springboard for administrators and politicians ... Student Council is about as independent as the Russian Duma."

At a forum to protest against the new regulations, Vice-Rector Valeria Kasamara — the United Russia candidate — told students "If you choose a state university under the government of Russia, then you must recognise that there is a founder who sets the university's goals and objectives." That founder, Yaroslav Kuzminov, resigned in July. Once hailed for promoting academic freedom at his university, the *Moscow Times* lamented that "it was this that tore apart his power, and he was forced into compromises and obedience."

Caught up in media crackdown

Despite losing their registration, *Doxa* ploughed on. Whereas once their focus was issues of "precarity, harassment and inequality in universities," as a result of their deregistration, they have, as Martynova puts it "suddenly become real journalists."

In April, *Doxa* found themselves the latest target of a crackdown on independent media. In January, they published a video in which four editors encouraged students to express themselves politically and, according to their lawyer, "explained the illegality of threats from the leadership of universities about expulsion for participating in protests." Three days later, Roskomnadzor, the federal communications watchdog, ordered them to take the video down because it "aimed to induce or involve minors in committing illegal activities" (ie. protesting). *Doxa* complied and Martynova says the editors took little notice of the order: "that's life in Russian media."

However, over the subsequent months, police began to "watch our four colleagues around the city."

In April, editors' homes and the *Doxa*

office were raided by police, and the four editors who appeared in the video were arrested on charges of "involvement of minors in the commission of acts that pose a danger to the minor's life," which carry a maximum sentence of three years imprisonment.

Since April, the four editors have been held under strict house arrest as their case drags on. Originally prohibited from leaving their homes entirely, they have since been allowed outside for two hours each day. They are prohibited from communicating with each other, and from using the internet.

Ershov and Martynova believe the proceedings are being deliberately drawn out. "We expected a trial in July, and then in August. I think they will prolong as long as they want, maybe until after the Duma elections [in September]. They are afraid that *Doxa* will publish something calling people to protest, but it's just insane," says Martynova. Ershov speculates that "perhaps the government just want to leave our colleagues as hostages to intimidate us and to prevent us from covering mass protests that can be expected after the next elections."

With the United Russia party suffering record low approval ratings heading into September's national Duma elections, and with increased attention on the treatment of opposition groups, media suppression has increased markedly. Independent media organisations throughout Russia have faced deregistration, harassment and legal sanctions, with ambiguous 'foreign agent' legislation used to arbitrarily silence independent journalists and publications. Since April, leading independent news organisations such as *Dozhd*, *iStories*, and *Meduza* have been all been declared 'foreign agents' while *Proekt*, which *Doxa* has collaborated with, was declared an 'undesirable organisation' in July.

Ershov says that "every three to five days the Russian government is shutting down another media organisation." While *Doxa*'s structure somewhat insulates it from interference: "we don't have a hierarchy, so it's much more difficult for the government to stop our work as the police just don't know who's doing what," the spate of closures, arrests and imprisonments still has an effect.

The paper is kept afloat by donations, and editors have been working 60-70 hour weeks campaigning for their colleagues, writing articles, and producing the publication, while facing the continual threat of arrest. Martynova left the country for her safety, while Ershov describes the pressures of independent journalism in Russia: "We live in a different reality. We live in a country where your house may be raided by police at any time. It's so, so dangerous. We just want life as usual."



DOXA EDITOR VLADIMIR METELKIN OUTSIDE A COURT HEARING

USyd is failing survivors of sexual violence on placement

EMILIE HEATH

It is not your fate to "get used to" sexual harassment in the workplace.

Speaking out about institutional responses to sexual harassment isn't an act of bravery, it's a suicide mission: one where you have to be at the point where you have already lost everything because if not, you lose everything. If there is one thing the world has taught us, it's that women who speak up about any form of sexual violence are treated deplorably. We speak our truths and open ourselves up to be a public firing range, a succinct target for retaliation — from the public, from the institutions whose care we are under, and from the people who are supposed to protect us.

My first clinical placement consisted of eight-hour unpaid shifts, long commutes, heavy manual work, unsafe working conditions, and corners being cut with disregard to patient safety, all under the guise of an educational 'experience.' When I spoke out over a year ago about several elements of maltreatment which student nurses experience on clinical placement, I was told by the nursing faculty that: "One advantage of having clinical placement early in the programme is to help you identify whether nursing is the profession that you thought it might be." As though to say, if you can't stomach the sexual harassment, maltreatment, three-hour commutes, the lack of support, unsafe and

unpaid working conditions, then maybe you should leave the programme and the profession.

The reticence of the Faculty of Medicine and Health to acknowledge the student nursing experience is not surprising, because acknowledgement means accountability and accountability would mean liability. The hostile reactions I received from multiple members of the School of Nursing was a choice that they made — a choice to feed the cycle of maltreatment and sexual harassment and avoid any responsibility or knowledge of how students are exposed to these

“The Faculty of Medicine needs to support students speaking out about sexual harassment and unsafe working conditions.”

behaviours on clinical placement. They assumed the role of incapable guardians, forcing us into unsafe workspaces if we want to complete our degrees. Ultimately, the Faculty of Medicine and Health needs to take a long look at their legal obligations to their students who are under their duty of care, and support students speaking out about sexual harassment and unsafe working conditions if they want to end the cycle of sexual violence and maltreatment on clinical placement. However, it has become quite clear to me that they do not.

But this article isn't for or about them — their legacy is already sealed, especially

for those who knew and did nothing. This article is for nursing, dentistry, occupational therapy, physical therapy, medical, pharmacy, speech pathology, and social work students. I see you, I am you, and I share in our collective grief. Where we encounter unwell and vulnerable patients who engage with us in sexual violence, I see you, I am you. When we encounter predatory, sound of mind patients who don't hesitate to raptorially play off the power dynamics between patient and students, I see you, I am you. When the university sends you back to the same hospital, to the same building, where it all

something that stuck with me: "Oh the sexual harassment, you get used to it." Please know that it is not your fate to "get used to" sexual harassment in the workplace. I'm here to tell you that you don't have to tolerate it, it should not be a part of your nursing experience. It does not "come with the job" and you have the right, and deserve, to be safe at work. You don't have to grin and bear it. You don't have to accept it. You don't have to smile politely and laugh it off in order to preserve your therapeutic working relationship. And when you go home and feel gross about what happened, when you feel anxious for your next placement, know that you haven't failed, you haven't failed your patients. The University has failed you, they have failed in their duty of care to protect you and other students from a known issue — revealed in decades worth of research — that they have done nothing to redress. You have the right to a safe workplace, you have the right to not be sexually harassed, and you have the right to not have to endure any form of sexual violence, ever.

While we can never pretend to understand the moral arc of the universe, I can only hope that it bends towards justice. This is for every student who has been groped on clinical placement, who has had unwanted sexual contact with patients, for those who have been bullied by upper management, facilitators, and hospital colleagues, dismissed by the Faculty of Medicine and Health and forced to pick up the slack for a groaning, flailing, NSW Health workforce. I see you, I care about you, and your safety matters to me.

Spied through a glass

ZARA ZADRO
ART BY SHANIA O'BRIEN

On sea travel in an age of aviation.

The new world — El Dorado, Atlantis, the Gold Coast, Newfoundland, Plymouth Rock, Rapanau, Utopia, Planet Blue. Chanc'd upon, spied through a glass darkly, drunken stories strapped to a barrel of rum, shipwreck, a Bible Compass, a giant fish led us there, a storm whirled us to this isle."

— Jeanette Winterson, *The Stone Gods*

In *The Stone Gods* by Jeanette Winterson, a spaceship sets out across the firmament from a dying planet, carrying what's needed to establish a new planet that can sustain human life. It is plastered with old ship diaries and poetry from centuries past, from Cook to Donne. They offer shreds of hope to its futuristic, star-age voyagers, for whom sailboats are mythic artefacts of faraway time...

Sea-faring, once the pinnacle of peril and adventure, folklore and piracy, has been lost to the rise of aircraft.

These fantasies can be traced back to The Golden Age of Sail of the mid-16th and 19th centuries, which rapidly increased the importance of our waters to technology, politics, and public life. Sailors traded stories as they did silk, spices, and rum, and port cities became the cosmopolitan centres of the world. This collective 'turn'

of Western society from land to sea was buttressed by centuries of imperialism and orientalism. Visually and economically, ships projected European imperial sovereignty onto seas around the world, which resulted in the accumulation of Western capital from the late 15th century onward.

Today, aeroplanes are loud, fast and unromantic. We glean the sky through tiny, double-ply acrylic windows, move our feet to the command of flight timetable boards, and shoot through space like flecks of dust. There is little time in the work life cycle to spend months at sea—to be adrift might as well be to sink.

But while land has long represented stability, sovereignty and nationalism, the sea is a pulse of mythology and history.

According to Foucault, sea-travel was not only the "greatest instrument of economic development" in the West from the sixteenth century onwards, but "simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination."

"In civilisations without ships, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and police take the place of pirates," he wrote.

The nautical narrative is renewed time and time again. Most recently, the sea-shanty and pirate craze took over TikTok, just as the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise captivated audiences in the early 2000s.

Historian Margaret Cohen calls the major cultural shift to a 'sublime' ocean in the mid-eighteenth century the 'Romantic gentrification of the seas'. Prior to this,

the waters connecting the globe were purely a means for transportation, as well as a fearsome, biblical reminder of human mortality.

In the West, the 'wine-dark sea' of *The Odyssey*, the voyage of the Argonauts in Medea, the wrathful god Poseidon, and the 'Great Flood' of Noah's Ark, embody this premodern view of our ocean, and sea voyage.

On the other hand, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1716), Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798), and Melville's *Moby Dick* (1816) comprise the literary topography of the Golden Age of Sail, and the Romantic nautical movement.

It was around this time that the image of pirates as raffish, loveable rogues was conceived, with Daniel Defoe's pseudonymic biography *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates* (1724), and later with Captain Long John Silver in Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1882).

However, Cohen says this Romantic shift also led to "a socially constructed ocean." Ships emerged as some of the first engines of capitalism, commodifying human labour through so-called 'maritime proletariats' in the damp, disease-ridden circumstances. Masculinity, virility, and colonialism characterised the 'yarns' which scaffolded the collective imaginations of sailors and later novelists; enchanting, socialising, and educating new recruits, and easing the monotony of ship-hand labour.



DREW BEACOM

On the "technology not taxes" narrative.

On 9 August, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released the first instalment of its 6th Assessment Report. Aply titled *Climate Change 2021: The physical science basis*, the report outlines, indisputably, the link between human activity and climate change. It highlights the current trend towards further warming (having achieved approximately 1.1°C of warming since pre-industrial times), and increases in unprecedented changes in the climate, many of which are irreversible. The report sought to offer some hope to policy makers and concerned citizens alike, claiming that the worst of the potential impacts of climate change can still be mitigated, but only if the world commits to "strong and sustained reductions in emissions of carbon dioxide".

Expectedly, such news from the peak international body on climate change triggered responses from world leaders, activists and the media. Also expectedly, leaders and political figures have mostly fallen short in their responses, seen most evidently in the response of the Liberal-National Federal Government. While the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reductions evaded interviews, apparently unaware of the responsibilities of his portfolio, senior government figures, including Scott Morrison, took it upon themselves to resurrect fears of taxes and higher costs of living.

The last time taxes were seen as a solution to climate change in the Australian

political landscape was in 2011 with the passing of the Clean Energy Act (dubbed the 'carbon tax' by conservative politicians for cheap political point-scoring). Much has changed in the last decade in both the common understanding of climate change and its impacts, and the policies recommended to combat them. What has not changed has been Australia's response to climate change and the trajectory of its carbon emissions.

Under conservative leadership since 2013, Australian policymakers have used this global lack of cohesion in regard to climate policy to avoid taking any responsibility for emissions reduction, and the response to the IPCC's latest report indicates there is no intention of changing this approach anytime soon. The slogan "technology not taxes" has been introduced to mainstream political discourse, capitalising on the Australian Labor Party's weak political standing and inability to sell climate action to the electorate. However, this slogan does not represent a way forward nor does it represent a clear indication of a government prioritising the futures of Australians over corporate profit. In fact, it represents the opposite.

"Technology not taxes" creates a false dichotomy when it comes to action on climate change; you can either wait for green technologies to catch up to the capacity of fossil fuels (in the eyes of conservatives) or you can face large tax hikes and increases to the cost of living. Anyone who is close to the issue would know that this false dichotomy is neither necessary nor constructive, but much rather is a shallow justification for the continual government support of a dying fossil fuel industry.

In fact, the narrative of "technology

For whom the road tolls

LUKE CASS

On the public interest of Sydney's toll roads.

No city in the world has more kilometres of toll road than Sydney. Across nine routes and 135 kilometres, drivers have to pay between two and 25 dollars just for the use of the road, with six more tolled roads to be built by 2023. Despite toll roads being the neoliberal infrastructure project of choice for decades in New South Wales, the decision making process responsible for the construction of Sydney's toll roads is deeply flawed, and functions more so to deliver a profit to the road's financiers and private operators than it does to serve the public interest.

In Sydney, adequate funding has proved a major roadblock to the construction of public roads. In New Zealand, for example, the government is responsible for the funding and planning of road projects. But in recent years, coalition governments in New South Wales have opted to use hybrid public-private partnerships (PPPs) to offset costs. Publicly traded company Transurban sees near exclusivity in engaging the government and private companies regarding financing and ownership of roads in Sydney. In exchange for assuming the cost of building a road, or buying the road upon its completion, a private company gains the right to set and

collect money from tolls, in a blatant out-cropping of public resources.

Public-private partnerships have created an opaque decision-making process that locks the public out from meaningful input in what projects are built. In building Westconnex, the Baird government, with Gladys Berejiklian as Roads Minister, contributed to this un-democratic process in two especially pernicious ways. The first was the creation of a proprietary limited company, Sydney Motorway Corporation Pty Ltd in 2014. Having a distinct corporate body, with a board made up of government officials and financiers, enabled the NSW government to avoid various accountability measures, such as freedom of information requests, greatly reducing transparency. Similarly, successive Liberal governments have made the public feedback process increasingly disjointed. The O'Farrell government created Infrastructure NSW as an advisory organisation, yet activists allege that in Westconnex's public consultation period, Infrastructure NSW never permitted alternatives, such as light or heavy rail, to be discussed — only potential minor variations to the project could be considered. This administrative manipulation, however legal, has greatly reduced the transparency of Westconnex and other recent road-building projects, eroding the trust of the public for whose benefit roads are ostensibly built. Even before Westconnex, public-private toll road partnerships in Sydney have led to inviable and costly projects with little public good. The Cross City Tunnel (CCT) was built in 2004 in partnership with the

Cross City Motorways corporation for over double its expected cost, despite warnings by transport planner Michelle Zeibots that usage estimates were "physically impossible". Predictably, use of the CCT was one third of estimates, and Cross City Motorways went into receivership before selling the tunnel at a loss. The Lane Cove Tunnel similarly forced its owners to go into receivership, after traffic use was half that of estimates.

To generate the biggest possible revenue for the rights to operate a toll road, governments are incentivised to generate as much traffic on the toll routes as possible. Needless CBD road closures after the construction of the CCT and misleading signage that implied that the CCT was the only route from the eastern suburbs to the Harbour Tunnel demonstrate how PPPs get in the way of effective infrastructure planning.

Recent state Liberal governments have worsened the problem in the manner in which they make PPP deals. Part of Mike Baird's asset recycling program involved a government plan to build and initially operate Westconnex, before selling it at a later stage. The desire to lessen the risk for the private sector by selling the asset based on usage data, rather than estimates, demonstrates a willingness to trade off the utility of a project to the public for a slight budget boost. Either traffic usage is high, and Sydney is set on a path to increased vehicle usage that squashes any potential benefits of building roads and mortgages the state's environmental future, or the roads go unused, and the government is

burdened with an asset that has to be sold at a loss.

Roads have become increasingly expensive to use as a result of this neoliberal approach to infrastructure. Having a private company extract profit from the road necessarily drives up the costs for users, and government restrictions of toll rises have on multiple occasions proven unenforceable. As a consequence of toll prices rising twice as fast as real wage growth on various Sydney roads, and users being required to pay tolls long after projects have been paid off, people disadvantaged by the distance they live from CBD workplaces are forced into paying extortionate prices for infrastructure in which they had little say, and even less choice. Road building at the expense of more efficient forms of public transport only serves to build a car culture that accelerates climate change and will inevitably lead to ever more congestion in the future.

Ending the use of PPPs and paying for roads in more equitable ways such as fuel excises and progressive taxation would solve many of these problems. The privatisation of Sydney's roads speaks to more serious and broader problems with the current approach to infrastructure creation. The short-sighted obsession with reducing the perceived cost of infrastructure projects has become a feature of government policy, but one which, given the privatisation of electricity, buses and ferries across Sydney, is hardly surprising.

MESSI, FIVE YEARS APART

GRIFFIN CANT
ART BY BEN HINES

On the footballer's legacy.

**vs. Manchester United — May 28th, 2011
Wembley Stadium, London
Champions League Final**

Messi picks up the ball in the centre circle and immediately puts United's centre-back on his arse by dragging the ball behind him with the outside of his boot. He tears away in a dribble of barely perceptible touches, his feet never really seeming to make contact with ball nor ground, all giving the impression of a man walking on water. He reaches the edge of the penalty area, and lays it off to David Villa on his right, putting him in the perfect position to cross the ball back for an easy finish. But Villa overhits his cross, Messi arrives a millisecond too late, and the ball skids away.

No matter. United clearly could not contain him, and he scored one and initiated another to win the Champions League for the third time in his young career. It was already apparent that Messi, at only 24 years old, was to be one of the best to have played the game. He was the crown jewel of the early 2010s Barcelona sides which sit among the best in the sport's history, and was beloved by his city. Messi had moved to Barcelona when he was 13, signing his

first contract with the club on a napkin. The club had paid for treatment of his growth hormone deficiencies, which would have scuppered any sporting career he aspired to. He seemed destined to remain the ultimate one-club man, an adopted Catalan, taken in and cared for by a region so often repressed and in need of their own heroes. In doing so, they had forged one of their own.

**vs. Chile — June 26th, 2016
MetLife Stadium, New York City
Copa América Centenario Final**

Messi is strolling towards the goal and a wall of Argentine fans. The second Copa América in two years has reached the same conclusion as the first, with Argentina facing Chile on penalties after a goalless final. He takes the ball, places, then adjusts it. Begins his trademark two step run up. Hits it high and to the right. But he's leaning back ever so slightly, and the shot blazes over. Leo clings to his *Albiceleste* shirt, and wishes that he could sink into the boggy Meadowlands upon which the stadium is built.

Though cherished by Catalonia, Messi's relationship with Argentina, the country of his birth, is much more complicated. While Diego Maradona was the fulfillment of Borocotó's 1928 prophecy of the great Argentine footballer as an "urchin with a dirty face... and a sparkling gaze that seems to hint at a picaresque laugh", Messi never truly fit that mould. He is emblematic of the globalisation of modern sports, leaving

his homeland at an early age to pursue a dream. His football upbringing was not on the streets of Rosario, but in the technical confines of Barça's La Masia academy. Vitaly, for all his success in Europe, Messi had brought none of that success home across the Atlantic. As such, he could never reach Maradona's monstrous level of cultural cache there. Three times in three years he had the chance at glory for Argentina, at the World Cup in 2014 and two consecutive Copas América in the following years. Each time he lost tight finals in agonising fashion. The public perception of him in his homeland can't help but be affected by his career path, and by those who came before him. After that shootout miss, Messi, unquestionably the greatest in the game, would announce his retirement from international football at just 29. It seemed like he knew, on some level, that he'd missed his chance to become Maradona.

vs. Brazil — July 10th, 2021
**Estádio do Maracanã, Rio de Janeiro
Copa América Final**

The years following that penalty miss were largely disappointing. The national team was plagued by chronic mismanagement after Messi recanted his retirement, and Barça's results were defined by a series of footballing embarrassments. The once wildly profitable club had fallen into such debt that they could no longer afford to keep him, even after he took

donations and revenue of Australia's mining sector. The ever-revolving door between federal politics and fossil fuels highlights the significant grip the industry has on our political system, and indeed our future. Any threats to the coal-supportive status quo in the past have been met with force; Kevin Rudd was deposed after his proposal of the Mining Super Profits Tax, Julia Gillard met a similar fate following the introduction of the aforementioned Clean Energy Act.

I would contend the worst part of the "technology not taxes" slogan is that it is a downright dangerous lie. To mitigate the worst impacts of climate change we need nothing short of economic restructure. This doesn't mean simple regressive taxation, a policy which has all but died in mainstream Australian politics, but reassessing the role of perpetual economic growth in exacerbating an existential crisis.

As the decoupling of the trends of increasing GDP and increasing resource use (and carbon emissions) prove almost impossible, it is essential that the way in which we assess economic success is in fact reassessed. What is necessary is a just transition away from fossil fuels, that not only accommodates the needs of fossil fuel workers and communities, but also reinvests in the citizenry and in public wealth. We need to shape a society that is not driven by excess and expansion, but one in which people are adequately supported, at all stages of life, building a sustainable, carbon-free future.

For now, the lyrics of Midnight Oil's *Blue Sky Mine* still ring true 30 years later: "nothing's as precious as a hole in the ground".



a pay cut. Messi now represented both Barcelona's greatest success as the best to ever play the game, who could never be sold due to his adoration of the club and city, and their deepest shame in somehow still driving him away. He held a tissue to his face for his entire final press conference, barely keeping it together.

As the referee calls time on the final, Messi is surrounded. He wasn't particularly involved in Argentina's 1-0 win over arch-rivals Brazil, though he had carried them through the tournament up to that point. His team hoists him aloft, having brought glory to Argentina at the tenth time of asking. His departure from Barcelona will not be for another month. But even with that great uncertainty looming, 15 years of hurt comes out as he bounces towards his team hoisting a trophy which is literally half his height.

It's a tragedy that Messi could not feel the unconditional love of both his country and his city at the same time, having been cast out by Barcelona at the very end. Few players of comparable ability have had to settle for one or the other in the way he has. But at the moment of utmost upheaval in his career, he still managed to briefly find the eye of the hurricane. For one night everything could be as uncomplicated as it should have been.

A demon tried to possess me one night, or so I thought

BAOPU HE
ART BY ELEANOR CURRAN

I tried to get back on my bed, but my body seized up with dread each time I lay down.

It happened after midnight, a few weeks before my first year of university was to begin. I was wading through that narrow, hallucinatory valley between wakefulness and sleep when all of a sudden I felt my body drawn inexorably upwards, like some otherworldly force was slowly sucking me into the sky. Rendered powerless by the paralytic caress of sleep, I gave in to this strange sensation of levitation. My limbs were tingling with a weightlessness I had only ever before felt drifting in water — it was not entirely an unpleasant experience.

But just as I felt I had risen to some pinnacle, something seemed to snap. The same force that was pulling me upwards was now flooding into my body with a furious intensity. The whole universe felt like it was collapsing into a singularity inside me, turning my heart into a boulder that was plummeting to the ground. The gentle tingling that had just suspended me in the air had morphed into electric spasms, and I screamed, but no sound left my mouth.

And yet I did hear something. This demented trumpet-like blare blasting through my head, like a bomb siren warning me of some imminent danger only the inner depths of my mind could comprehend. This is what has haunted me the most.

Terror scythed me awake. The world was once again silent except a loud thumping in my chest. I scrambled out of bed and clawed at my body to confirm that I was not dreaming. Or dead. Did I just have a heart attack? Or was it a seizure? Whatever it was, it couldn't have been just a nightmare. You do not physically feel a nightmare in your body, and the fear conjured up by a nightmare normally evaporates upon waking up. But the terror had stalked me into consciousness. Not even turning on the light assuaged this fear that something unspeakably evil was somewhere lurking in my bedroom with me. As I stared at my

“Terror scythed me awake. The world was once again silent except a loud thumping in my chest. I scrambled out of bed and clawed at my body to confirm that I was not dreaming. Or dead.”

bed in disbelief, I could swear that my blood-red sheets were beckoning me.

You are tired. Come back to bed. Fall asleep. Sleep is what you need.

I tried to get back on my bed, but my body seized up with dread each time I lay down. Something in me was certain that I would never wake up if I fell asleep. It was waiting. It needed me to be asleep to strike again. Disoriented by fear and devoid of any rational explanation for what was happening, it pried open my mind to the horrifying realisation that the supernatural might be real.

Up until that point, I had been a resolute skeptic. I was not religious, spiritual or even superstitious. I was contemptuous of horoscopes, and thought that people who claimed to have been abducted by aliens were either lying, stupid or both. But on that summer night in 2017, I was convinced that some invisible, malevolent force was trying to kill me.

I resolved to stay awake as long as I could, sitting on my bed instead of lying down to keep me alert. But terror soon gave way to sheer exhaustion, and I once again fell asleep. In the morning, I woke up unscathed, and went on with my life as if nothing had happened.

Visceral though it was, this supernatural experience did not fundamentally alter the way I viewed the world. The enormity of accepting what it represented was perhaps too much for me to deal with, so I chose to completely ignore it. But in moments of doubt, it would resurface in my mind, rattling the chains which kept it from overwhelming my perception of reality, demanding me to recognise its power. On rare occasions, I have recounted this story to my friends. One of them posited that a demon had tried to possess me. How absurd, I laughed to myself, that this was the most plausible explanation.

Over time, and perhaps aided by my regime of thought suppression, I began to wonder if it really happened at all. Some things seem bizarre in retrospect, like why I didn't seek out my phone, or why I didn't wake up my parents. As the memory of that night slowly faded, I wanted to think that it was just an especially powerful nightmare. But then I remember it couldn't have been. Amid the chaos, I had enough clarity to grab a pen and write something down in a notebook to prove to myself that this was

real.

You are terrified.

Before that night, I had experienced another strange phenomena connected with sleep. For as long as I can remember, I have sometimes woken up and found my body completely immobilised. When I asked my parents what was happening to me, they told me that it was caused by a ghost sitting on my chest. It was only in highschool when I found out that this “ghost” was actually a medical condition called sleep paralysis.

When I was younger, sleep paralysis would make me feel like I was about to suffocate to death. As I grew older, it became less like a near-death experience, and more like a simple annoyance I just had to put up with. I had become quite adept at breaking free from the paralysis using my mind, and knew how to stay calm while paralysed.

The interesting thing with sleep paralysis is that you are not actually fully awake when it happens. You are in a mixed state of consciousness between dreaming and reality, where your mind is highly prone to hallucination. I found this out through a rather sinister episode of paralysis. In the days before, I had discovered that some people report seeing menacing, shadowy figures in their room while paralysed. I had never experienced anything like that before. However, after finding out about the “shadow people”, they made a terrifying debut in my next bout of sleep paralysis. I had, in effect, conjured them up with my mind. It took me a few more years afterwards to realise that what I had actually experienced was lucid dreaming.

Nowadays, I am no longer afraid of sleep paralysis. In fact, I rather look forward to my next bout. That is because I have found it to be a gateway to lucid dreams. When I “wake up” and find myself unable to move, instead of fighting with it, I evoke a mental image in my mind of what I want to dream about and let it melt into the paralysis. And in an instant, I am “awake” in a dream, capable of doing anything I want.

Many people have reported having more vivid dreams during lockdown.

I am no exception. The complete collapse of my sleep cycle has increased the frequency of my sleep paralysis. Scientifically, this makes perfect sense. Disrupting your sleep cycle fragments REM (rapid-eye movement) sleep, which is the phase commonly associated with dreaming. During the REM phase, which occurs at the start and end of sleep, your body inhibits your motor neurons to prevent you from acting out your dreams. So in a sense, everyone has sleep paralysis. It's just that most people aren't conscious enough to truly experience it.

After a particularly realistic paralysis-induced dream, I began to wonder whether my “demonic possession” was actually a lucid dream gone wrong. Could it be that I had lost control of a lucid dream and, like a bad drug trip, became overwhelmed by dark thoughts which manifested themselves into an increasingly tactile nightmare? Could it be that being “awake” during it all blurred the boundary between dream and reality such that I couldn't distinguish the two apart? That would explain why I felt so scared even after I woke up. But what about the demonic trumpets I heard? Where did they come from?

After doing some research, I found the truth to be even stranger.

There is a sleep condition by the name of exploding head syndrome. Sufferers claim to hear loud, terrifying noises in their head when falling asleep or waking up which feel like explosions. This auditory hallucination is often preceded by electric tingling which rises through the body before crescendoing inside your head as a cacophony of phantasmal sound. Some sufferers report feeling something snap inside their brain. Of course, all of this is imagined. But so powerful is this illusion that people develop a fear of falling back asleep. All of this perfectly aligns with what I experienced.

Scientists aren't quite sure why this happens. Research suggests it has something to do with REM sleep, occurs more often in people who suffer from sleep paralysis, and that it's often triggered by a disrupted sleep cycle. As it happens, I had just come back from Europe a week before it came into my life. So rather than the supernatural, it seems that it was really just the result of being incredibly jet-lagged. And thus, the “demon” was slayed.



Shrooms, meerkats and the nudist cult I discovered in Mosman

ROBBIE MASON
ART BY MAXIM ADAMS

Unexpected findings tramping through Sydney's north.

Twigs erupt, shattering the stillness. A man runs past.

My housemate Henry and I are off the beaten track at Middle Head, Mosman. Like water dragons lazing in the sun, we are perched on a rock overlooking the harbour. Cold beer settles in our stomach, vying for space with the shrooms we ate an hour ago. The drugs have already enhanced the landscape as if an artist has restored an old painting. Under a cloudless sky, the yellow flowers of wattle shrubs drip onto their green background. The steady ripple of waves on water turns the view into an Impressionist painting.

We bushwhacked to find this spot — naively believing that we would not be disturbed.

Intrigued, we abandon our esky and scattered belongings and follow this man into what resembles the Garden of Eden. We pass through a natural archway. Branches twist and twirl above our heads in perpetual dance. Entering a clearing, we startle a shirtless man on a rock. He runs off but pauses metres away, watching us as we stand on his rock. Sticks crack in the undergrowth near us and the footfalls are too heavy and too destructive to be a bird or an animal. Our conversation flows and billows in the wind. But I see Henry looking over my shoulder. As I turn, the shirtless man steps back into the bushes, disappearing from view, his eyes flickering like candles in darkness.

I sense we are intruding. Maybe it's the near empty beer bottle in my hand. Maybe it's our raucous laughter and

animated conversation. But the shrooms override any sense of danger, making the experience more palatable and encouraging us to go further into the bush. We push on.

A man falls out of a bush, almost stumbling into Henry. He averts our gaze, says nothing and takes off. We turn a corner to an old white naked man lazing on a beach towel, champagne bottle in hand. Let's call him Steve.

‘Cheers boys’, Steve chuckles, gesturing towards my beer bottle. He makes small talk as if he's waiting on a coffee order and not butt naked in the bush with it all hanging out. I wonder first if he is homeless, then if he, too, is high. “The beach is that way,” he says, pointing forcefully.

It clicks that we must be approaching Cobblers Beach — a designated nudist beach at Middle Head.

When we start heading in another direction, he tells us we are going the wrong way. But we are more interested in escaping the labyrinth.

The bush bristles like the coat of an echidna. Shadows flicker. On the outskirts of my vision, lone men lurk. Some of them hurry past, saying nothing. It's like there's an unspoken code — some form of etiquette we are oblivious to.

I yearn for the bottle of rosé in our esky. (Later we find it safe next to a couple of crusty middle-aged hippies smoking a joint).

We can't retrace our steps now. That would involve passing by Steve again. As much as I have a burning passion to know what the fuck Steve does for a 9 to 5, I can't bring myself to exchange pleasantries again.

As we approach a rocky outcrop, the bush feels foreign. I don't recognise the plants. They feel like introduced species, as if I have been transplanted into a Medieval fairytale. The bush is overgrown,



deformed, frayed at the edges, consuming us. We lean into liminality. Pink and purple flowers sprout left, right and centre. The roots of a towering tree — a wooden cave — throw us into a pool of cool shade. Our surroundings are both nightmarish and beautiful as if the film *Annihilation* was a documentary and we're edging closer to the lighthouse in the Shimmer. I half expect to turn the corner and find a witch casting spells. Instead, there are a couple of stones embedded in the ground like a naturally-made throne overlooking the harbour. I try not to think about what people might have done on this seat.

We have reached a dead-end. There is no choice now. We turn around. A man — let's call this one Damo — sits on a rock, his elbow on his knee and his chin resting on his palm. We walk towards Damo and it's at this moment that Steve strides towards the three of us, except, this time, Steve is jerking himself off while rubbing himself in lotion. Damo doesn't flinch, even when Steve's erect penis is centimetres from his face. In fact, he looks utterly serene, like he has accepted his fate. Perhaps in his head he's sipping a banana daiquiri on a sunbed in Hawaii rather than in the bush with Steve about to ejaculate on him.

“It's you boys again! Lost still huh,” Steve chuckles gleefully. There is a direct correlation between the intensity of our confusion and the intensity of his self-flagellation.

I don't know where to look — anywhere but at his lubricated sausage.

Steve tells us he obtained the lotion at Chemist Warehouse and offers us some but I can't imagine Steve actually wearing clothes and conversing with another human being without pleasuring himself. Maybe it's just me.

At last, Damo emerges from his slumber, taking pity on us. “Don't mind him,” he mutters, nodding his head towards Steve. Clearly, Steve is simply part of the woodwork here.

Damo begins to guide us out of this maze like a pilot bringing a ship into dock through a coral-reef filled lagoon.

Afterwards, sifting through some old newspaper articles and internet forums

and posting on some Facebook groups, I realise that we accidentally stumbled across a queer beat — probably not the most healthy one — and there is a word for men who lurk near nudist beaches — ‘meerkats’.

When I converse with Marcel Smit, secretary for the Australian Naturist Federation, over email, he writes that lurkers like Steve “do not understand the true purity of naturism.” In his eyes, toxic behaviours in the liminal zones between clothed and non-clothed areas do not represent naturism (the term preferred over ‘nudism’). He suggests that ‘meerkats’ are a persistent issue at Australian nudist beaches but expresses scepticism that police are the officials best suited to solving issues of lewd behaviour at nudist beaches. “As individual officers they are also members of the public that may not fully understand naturism, and as you may know most of society associates nudity with sex,” Smit states.

I am reassured. Smit's words confirm that Steve's behaviour transcends the boundaries of naturism, self-expression and body positivity, swerving instead into a perverse realm of exhibitionism and predation. I understand the wariness of police who, as instruments of state power, have historically repressed and misunderstood naturism. But I worry about the capacity of naturist communities to self-police.

Henry spins around, red-faced, mouth wide open. Damo shows us another route out of this labyrinth. Later Henry describes to me what he saw — in short, a bit too much nudity.

At last we emerge from the shrubbery. A group of Mosman women in their activewear strut past, oblivious to the chaos in the bushes next to them. Before Damo leaves us, he suggests we check out Middle Head's second nudist beach, Obelisk Beach, as if we haven't already seen enough. In my chain necklace, Nike shorts and Tailwinds (Jailwinds), I assume I must come across as a budding naturist. I politely decline the invitation.



Conservation conversations: the transformation of Taronga Zoo

ARIANA HAGHIGHI
ART BY AIRLIE CULLEN

Influenced by the social mores that underpin our global understanding of animal welfare, the zoo serves as a mirror reflecting our beliefs.

As one of ten thousand who have chosen to seek refuge from human lands here during the sweltering summer, the jostling crowd makes me feel caged. But as I foray further and further down the paths, I am immersed into a different world each time. In the morning I am underwater, sprayed by a cheeky seal and enrapt by the gaping pelican. By noon I have flown to Sumatra, and spend my time tiger-spotting as they hide under cool leaves. As the air cools I am in a rainforest, a menagerie of butterflies and birds dart above my head, painting a rainbow. The sun sets and I wave the tarantulas goodbye, pressing my finger against the glass as if I am touching his furry limb. As I leave, I fondly recall how I saw the animals of the world in one short day.

The modern behemoth of Taronga Zoo had humble beginnings as New South Wales' first public zoo in 1884, situated in Moore Park. However, within twenty years, the zoo's Secretary Albert Le Souef decided the space was too small, and no innovation could be born in austerity. The Zoological Trust sought a beautiful region of land overlooking Sydney's dazzling Sydney Harbour shores, and brought Noah's Ark to shame with the transfer process of animals to the Mosman oasis. On 7 October, 1916, the gates were opened and guests began flooding in like a gush of water through a ruptured dam.

In the span of a century, the zoo's main activities transformed from hosting cruel chimpanzee tea parties to focussing on the breeding and release program of Australian native species. Influenced by the social mores that underpin our global understanding of animal welfare, the zoo serves as a mirror reflecting our beliefs. In the early days of its inception, Taronga Zoo provided carnival-like entertainment for its guests, often at the expense of the animals, who served only to be observed or exploited. In the days before television, families had 'ants in their pants' to witness exotic creatures who heralded from light-years away. As a result, many expectations befell the zoo. So, to please its guests, the zoo offered interactive experiences such as elephant rides; it was seen as an amusement park, rather than the champion of education it is today. Merry-go-rounds spun guests until they were dizzy, and the colourful miniature train garnered more interest than the animals themselves.

In its early 20th century exhibits, there appeared to be little to no thought given to animal wellbeing. We now enter zoos and become immersed in a simulated wilderness, yet contemporary zoos were constructed as a microcosm of weirdness, wonder, and whimsy. This spoke to a disillusioned Australian

population in the inter-war years, the zoo's outlandishness paving an avenue of escapism for widowed mothers and their children, or a place for family bonding after the return of veteran fathers. For the zoo itself, there was a fierce 'rat race' to offer attractions more exciting than its competitors. In 1932, the zoo opened an 'animal kindergarten' with two mischievous monkeys, Freda and Freddie, who were forced to wear suits and ride a bicycle, to the delight of onlookers. These 'performers' gained much traction, as guests were so enamoured by watching animals mirroring human activities that four years later Taronga constructed an expansive 'monkey circus' arena, with a seating capacity of a thousand.

Monkey-sized tandems and unicycles were built and donated by Australian bicycle manufacturers Speedwell as a form of product placement. One of their star performers, Mabel, debuted on the front page as a 'Zoological Cycling Champion,' as she could ride around the circuit up to twelve times each day. The Northwestern Courier published in 1938 iterates how she "humanly shows her appreciation" for the applause, demonstrating that the exploitation served to expose human-like qualities in the primates; even in the modern-day, we indulge in the demonstration of genetic similarity between monkeys and humans, and marvel when they imitate human behaviour, rather than treating them like an animal in their own right. Humans were incontrovertibly the zoo's only focus, exemplified in a photo captured in 1960 of Alfred Hitchcock sitting on a tortoise's shell. Hitchcock toured the zoo to promote the upcoming release of Psycho, and such a mission was placed higher than animal welfare; although a tortoiseshell may appear hardy, bearing weight can lead to injuries and respiratory problems. It is imaginable that this information was not known at the time, showing how ignorance underpinned animal malpractice.

Today, the seal and bird shows remain integral to Taronga Zoo, but they differ significantly from archaic circuses — the show varies each day depending upon the 'performers' themselves. The seal show serves as an educational platform for conservation — the spectacle's key sponsor is the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), a not-for-profit organisation that sets sustainable fishing standards. The presenter of the show encourages the audience to purchase fish bearing the MSC tick. A memorable moment of the show, when the seal itself pulls a string to reveal the MSC banner, elicits 'awws' from the audience; the seals thus contribute directly to the zoo's campaign of sustainability.

The pertinent difference between the shows of today compared with those of the past is the consideration of animal welfare as paramount. I remember sitting in the crowded seal show audience, breath bated, awaiting the famed twists, jumps, and somersaults. On that day, one of the seals decided he was not interested in performing, and chose to mischievously glide alongside the tank instead. The

presenter chuckled and explained that it was mating season, so Marley was a tad distracted by his female companions in the adjacent tank. Rather than feeling disappointed, we were reassured that the animals were not forced to perform against their will. This empathetic approach strikes the balance between creating an enjoyable and educational experience for guests, whilst ensuring it is not at the expense of the animals' wellbeing.

Drawing from a newfound scientific understanding of animal welfare, and a community desire to protect their wellbeing, Taronga Zoo became a trailblazer in its approach to animal care. Upon reviewing its deplorable practices in 1967, staff realised modifications were essential. The winds of change were upon them, and the zoo and its guests became more attuned to the needs of animals. Undressing its image of an entertainment venue, Taronga exchanged its rides for open-air exhibits, such as the walkthrough rainforest exhibit and waterfowl ponds. It constructed a Veterinary Quarantine Centre to care for sick or injured animals, and an Education Centre to engage guests in conservation conversations, rather than providing a lofty ride on an elephant's beaten back. In 1977, Taronga opened the Western Plains Zoo, located in Dubbo, which was praised for its large, open-air enclosures that replicated the environment of the wild. As a not-for-profit organisation, all of the zoo's revenue is dedicated to its modern-day in-situ and ex-situ conservation efforts.

In the 1970s, the zoo also became subject to increased regulations and governmental legislation due to an increased societal impetus to limit animal cruelty. The NSW government passed the Zoological Parks Board Act (1973) which stipulated that a Board oversees the management of the zoo, in charge of "carrying out research and breeding programs for endangered species" and "conducting public awareness and education programs about species conservation and management." The discourse surrounding park management is a far cry from earlier legislation passed in NSW in 1956, which did not contain the words "species," "conservation," or even "animals."

In addition to being an era of cultural transformation, counterculture, and revolution, the 1970s also saw the emergence of philosophical debate surrounding the sentience and suffering of animals. Australian philosopher Peter Singer published the inflammatory work 'Animal Liberation' in 1975, which sent shock waves through society; Singer questioned the cruelty to which we subject animals for our own entertainment, drawing controversial comparisons with human exploitation and mass murder. He was one of the first philosophers to tie utilitarian theory to animals, and thus brought animal welfare to the forefront. Doubt was immediately cast over zoos, and Taronga and others in Australia rehabilitated their image to focus on promoting, rather than hindering, animal

A recent development in Taronga's approach to conservation is its respect for, and reliance on, Indigenous knowledge.

rights.

Today, the modern notions of conservation are so core to Taronga's mission that it is difficult to believe this was not always the case. Taronga Zoo operates under strict scientific direction that informs its programs. Taronga scientists are currently undertaking research in a broad range of fields, such as ecology, biodiversity and animal behaviour, to formulate the best method to protect an endangered animal. From the Big City Birds project which analyses avian adaptation to urban environmental pressures, to the Shark Attack file reviewing potential deterrence strategies, to tracking down the breeding origins of green turtles via stable isotope analysis, researchers clearly leave no species behind nor habitat unturned. Importantly, scientists also focus on researching the prospects of releasing animals into the wild, studying the viability of their habitats and the prevalence of predators.

Habitat research and breeding programs converge in one of Taronga's current conservation projects. It is focused on the regent honey-eater, a critically endangered native Australian bird, that suffered population decimation in the early 2000s. Since 1995, Taronga's mission regarding the conservation of this species is "breed to release," however, awareness and prevention of the environmental factors that endanger these animals is key to successful release in the wild. According to conservation biologists Tripovich et al., "whilst every effort is being taken to optimise the breeding program, the main threatening processes i.e. deforestation ... need to be addressed if the species has the potential to become self-sustaining." The rapid breeding of regent honey-eaters is crucial not only for the survival of the species, but that of the ecosystem, as the birds are vital pollinators of native Australian flora.

So far, Taronga Zoo has bred and released 295 of these yellow-and-black-feathered birds, alongside attempts at habitat restoration; staff and volunteers have planted over 3000 trees at Capertee Valley in NSW. Following their release, scientists monitor the animals' husbandry practices and also how the once-captive birds adapt to the wild environment. Researchers discovered that exposing fledglings in Taronga's aviary to wild regent honey-eater song improved their chance of post-release survival by 12%, and certain breeding conditions, such as parents only producing one clutch of eggs a year, also improved survival prospects. Research illuminating strategies to maximise post-release success is ultimately key, as without this, breeding programs are futile in changing a species' endangerment status.

The corroboree frog, a hopping artistic masterpiece, has also been placed under the conservation spotlight. This visually iconic yellow and black frog is endemic to the Southern Tablelands region of Australia. But the species is unfortunately critically endangered, threatened by fungus and climate change destroying its alpine habitat. Taronga scientists have worked on applying Assisted Reproduction Techniques to amphibians, inducing sperm-release and

implementing protocols surrounding sperm storage, which could open the door to gene transfer between species, boosting conservation prospects. Collaboration between Taronga and the University of Wollongong has also facilitated research investigating nutritional modification — giving the frogs a 'silver spoon' start to life. A team of evolutionary biologists are testing the effect of dietary carotenoids, the orange compound colouring pumpkins and carrots, on corroboree frog fitness. Previous literature in the journal Animal Behaviour suggests that carotenoids can improve the escape performance and hopping distance of a fugitive frog fleeing from a predator. Scientific research is thus indispensable to the effective preservation of species, as it ensures threats are mitigated so frogs are not released into a 'lion's den' promising certain death.

The corroboree frog and regent honey-eater form two of Taronga's 'Legacy species' — in 2016, the Taronga Conservation Society announced a ten-year commitment to the conservation of species, five of which are Australian autochthones. This demonstrates their approach to strike a balance between the preservation of both native species essential to Australian ecosystems, and foreign critically endangered species due to the zoo's capacity to accommodate these animals. The zoo's breeding programs of animals harking from all four corners of the globe has proved remarkably successful, as it is the birthplace of animals from Sumatran tigers to Asian elephants.

Importantly, our understanding of conservation has been reshaped to encompass both in-situ and ex-situ efforts. Although in dire cases of endangerment, animals need to be removed from the threat and placed in captivity for restoration and recovery, a large portion of conservation efforts should be directed to in-situ habitat rehabilitation, which does not involve disruptive relocation. Taronga has a grants program that allows communities to harness their knowledge and lean on aid to promote conservation efforts; farmers in Africa have utilised the money to install beehives around their crops, to prevent human-elephant conflict when the curious creatures raid the harvest. Empowered communities in West Kalimantan, Indonesia, used the money to form a Wildlife Trade Monitoring Unit, to curb illegal trade and logging. Fieldwork is also indispensable to gauging the population and security of vulnerable species in the wild, as communities use methods such as camera trapping and ID-based identification.

Arguably as essential as scientific research and breeding programs is the communication of the importance of conservation to a wider audience. I spoke to Kerry Staker, who holds the role of Community Educator at Taronga Zoo. She comments on the importance of sharing the principles of preservation and sustainability in an "uplifting and inspiring" manner. "Government communication strategies are often misdirected," she claims, as they "rely on scare tactics and fear-mongering." Government rhetoric surrounding conservation is also limited: in 2020, conservation groups such as WWF and Birdlife Australia criticised

the Morrison Government for rolling out biodiversity legislation identical to Tony Abbott's failed Act. Current conservation laws offload power and burden to state governments, without codifying measures to protect endangered species and fragile ecosystems, or setting national environmental standards.

What is even more indicting is Morrison's 2019 claim in response to a United Nations report, urging Australia to pass biodiversity laws. He asserted that legislation was "passed last week" — this was debunked as incorrect. Furthermore, environmental working groups are urging the government to recognise the looming threat of climate change and its destructive effect on biodiversity. A statutory review of the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999), released earlier this year, states the Act lacks clarity and outcomes. The scathing review suggests numerous important reforms, including the directive to "respect and harness the knowledge of Indigenous Australians to better inform how the environment is managed." Furthermore, the review communicates the dire need for Indigenous involvement in environmental decision-making and legislation that protects Indigenous cultural heritage.

In the absence of the government taking responsibility, Kerry Staker affirms the importance of equipping the next generation with an understanding of sustainability. "6-year-olds can draw, and write stories," she claims; this is instrumental because they then share their passion to save animals with their parents, family, and peers. Taronga ensures to target their conservation campaigns to children to fan the flames of their profound love for animals, allowing the fire of their passion to proliferate and spread through their community. Taronga hosts an annual 'Boral Eco-Fair' where sponsors come together to form a market, with stalls teaching children different elements of sustainability. Children's faces are adorned with painted native animals, and some burrow like bilbies into a book about the Dreamtime and the environment. In some ways, the zoo is still like a carnival to a child, but the conservation-themed

games they play trigger thought, not adrenaline. As well as learning important lessons about fostering sustainable daily habits, children are also just encouraged to deeply love animals of all species; this is conceivably the most important factor in sparking change.

A recent development in Taronga's approach to conservation is its respect for, and reliance on, Indigenous knowledge. Taronga is an Aboriginal word translating to "beautiful view," named after the Indigenous name for the land which the zoo occupies today. The zoo, operating on unceded Cammeragal land, recognises its Indigenous history and the importance of Indigenous involvement. Importantly, the zoo is committed to hiring Indigenous staff who can run campaigns that draw from Indigenous knowledge, such as a bird show centred on the Dreamtime during NAIDOC week. Brewinna elder, Colin Hardy OAM, partnering with Indigenous staff, notably leads the popular 'Animals of the Dreaming Zoomobile,' wherein children learn about Indigenous knowledge about nature through storytelling and song. Kerry Staker comments on how the vast body of Indigenous knowledge of sustainability informs their work every day. Although Indigenous people did not use the word 'conservation' per se, they "thought about the concept of generational existence," and "not fishing all the fish," to ensure the perennial existence of all species. However, Staker believes we could lean on their knowledge more, noting that their approach to sustainability is calm and reflective, contrasting the Western crisis response to ecological issues. "We need to work slowly," she explains, "there's a long way to go."

For the fourth time since it first opened its doors a century ago, restrictions have forced Taronga Zoo to shut. The zoo still attempts to share its message of species preservation and sustainability through a televised livestream of the animals and free daily virtual keeper talks — no matter the circumstances, the pressing need for conservation efforts cannot be swept to the side. As our animals and world evolve, our approach to conservation transforms alongside them.



Ladies of the dulcimer

ALICE TRENOWETH-CRESWELL
ART BY AMELIA KOEN

On Joni Mitchell, the dulcimer and American folk music.

Autumn was in full-swing in California. Temperatures were starting to drop around Big Sur's ragged, windy coastline. Joellen Lapidus spent days upon days wandering through the nearby forest in search of inspiration. She was deep among the redwoods, where sparrows scampered about the dry crumpled leaves and babbling brooks met the River Gorge. It was only upon spotting the tiny teardrop shaped columbine flowers on the forest floor that she knew she'd struck gold.

Joellen Lapidus is a folk musician and artisan. She started making dulcimers after moving to Big Sur in the late '60s, inspired by the glimmering Atlantic, freewheeling locals and Jack Kerouac's 'big elbows of rising rock'. She'd buy giant slabs of walnut and spend her days sanding them down and cutting out the violin-shaped pieces. The Appalachian dulcimer is a type of folk zither. Three to five metal strings run across the narrow body of the instrument to produce a light, feathery tune. The plucked box-zither was traditionally constructed with whatever wood was found nearby: walnut, cherry, chestnut, or maple. For years the dulcimer's origins were a mystery — there were few written historical records of the instrument. Whispers echoed from the peaks of the Appalachian mountains, from the top of the Canadian coast, way down to Alabama. Rumours circulated among folk circles that the instrument

originated from Scottish-Irish immigrant communities. Yet there was no precedent for the dulcimer's 'slender symmetry' and elaborately shaped sound-box.

It was 1969 and Lapidus was preparing for the Big Sur Music festival; she had her heart set on selling her idol Joni Mitchell her very first dulcimer. Crosby, Stills and Nash were headlining, Joan Baez would play the Dylan track 'I Shall Be Released,' and the whole two-day event would be memorialised in the documentary *Celebration at Big Sur* which would then go on to be released in 1971.

The day before the crowds descended, Joellen was putting the finishing touches on the Festival Dulcimer when fate stepped in. Joni met Joellen wandering the festival grounds when the dulcimer, decorated with red, wild columbines, caught her eye. The singer did away with the traditional quill and instead sat it across her knees, slapping the instrument; summoning rhythms that many players couldn't evoke.

Mitchell took the Dulcimer across the Atlantic on her European pilgrimage. She abandoned the comfort of the Canyon for the streets of Crete. In those few months away, Joni wrote most of *Blue* on just the dulcimer and flute — packed for their versatility and compact size. The instrument formed the basis of the album that would cement her name in musical history.

The sharply plucked strings open the record.

I am on a lonely road and I am traveling, traveling, traveling, traveling

'Carey' was constructed among

Cretian caves in the Ionian tuning — about her companion, the local cook whose hair was almost as fiery as his disposition. 'California' was written in Paris and captures homesickness, as if The Golden State was her long lost lover. The instrument became the soundtrack to Joni's life on the road, with equal measures of loneliness and adventure — just the artist and her five strings. Music writers for years have cited that the light strumming of strings balances the record, uplifting the vulnerability of Mitchell's lyricism. It offers a vacation from the deep melancholy piano ballads like 'River' and 'Blue.'

But *Blue* wasn't the first time audiences heard the dulcimer on the radio. Before Joni and Joellen's fateful encounter, Brian Jones had whipped out an electric dulcimer on The Rolling Stones' 1966 track 'Lady Jane.' Jones was as uncertain as anyone about the instrument's origins. He claimed it was an old English instrument used at the beginning of the 20th century, an easy mistake to make, as many early British colonies claimed the instrument as their own.

Almost all European folk music had similar-sounding string instruments. There was the Norwegian Langeleik, the Swedish Hummel, and the French Epinette. And yet none quite rang like the dulcimer. Beech Mountain folklore claimed the instrument arrived with a travelling salesman from Bristol. Other stories, recorded by Lucy Long, explain that a "stranger from the West" who was lodging with a local farmer brought the dulcimer to the region.

The mid-1980s saw the mystery of the dulcimer finally solved. Joni's



European pilgrimage a decade earlier had inadvertently returned the instrument to its roots. Ralph Lee Smith and L. Alan Smith traced the instrument back to the Germanic folk traditions of northern Europe. The German scheitholt, a type of zither, had been prominent in communities in the Appalachian mountains throughout the late 18th century. The instrument evolved, as did the lives of those who played it. The slow, resonating strings couldn't keep up with demands of dance music so they bumped up the volume and allowed for the faster playing techniques Mitchell would employ as she called for Carey to get out his cane.

It's been half a century since *Blue* was released, and Mitchell's contemporaries continue to scour America, chasing the same angelic strums born in the Canyon. In the lead up to his sophomore album *Fine Line*, Harry Styles tracked down Joellen. She still lives moments from the forest where she spotted the wild columbines for the festival dulcimer. The dulcimer is sweetly interspersed in the background of Styles' track 'Canyon Moon' — his love letter to California and homage to Mitchell's song.

Oh will you take me as I am, Strung out on another man, California I'm coming home.

We, this elusive club of book owners, read the same printed words, touch the same pages, and converse with each other's pencilled-in thoughts. These thoughts sometimes only consist of simple jeers such as "how odd" or "no, definitely not," but other times, if you're fortunate, a carefully crafted thought or a strategically underlined word can be the most gratifying to find.

The fading graphite words of past readers are a continual conversation with strangers who will likely never meet. I only see myself as an interim 'minder' of my books until the day when they (and I too) have passed on, for someone else to join in on our secret conversation.

It was Sappho who wrote, "I declare, that later on, even in an age unlike our own, someone will remember who we are," and despite the sapphic connotations, I also like to believe she was speaking to the illustrious power and longevity of the written word.

It is in these ways, as capsules of time and tales, that books are endowed with a special kind of magic that is ever-enhanced with each successive owner.

And so, with three new mountainous stacks of books, and no space left on my shelves, I drove home; aspirations and car boot both, fulfilled.

I would like to thank J. Jarron, G. Petrich, D. Strike, M. Ziede, A. Sutton, J. Straggon, K. O'grady, whom I may not know, but whose scribbles I have read and whose books I now tend.

The Kissing Booth: A fond farewell to a soul-destroying trilogy

MATTHEW FORBES

We truly can't handle the Booth.

About 20 minutes before the end of *The Kissing Booth 3*, I realised that there's no possible way I could determine whether it was better or worse than its predecessors. Even the films' respective runtimes (the second one is over 2 hours long) are incomparable, as they all feel so much longer than they actually are. To watch *The Kissing Booth* trilogy is to stare into and be completely engulfed by a dark abyss where the construct of time is no longer relevant; where a 2-minute flash mob set to Walk the Moon's 'Shut Up and Dance' feels like an eternity.

The trilogy is directed and written by Vince Marcello, an incredibly middle-aged man with an incredibly middle-aged way of making a teen rom-com (out-of-touch and creepy). Distributed by Netflix, the franchise's maculate conception came from a 2012 Wattpad story written by a

15-year-old, which should tell you all you need to know.

On paper, these movies are indistinguishable from every other aggressively cheesy movie this genre has spat out in recent years. The series' lead character, Elle Evans, has conventionally attractive high schooler problems: she has exactly one (1) dead parent and lives in a really nice house and goes to a posh private school, despite her family apparently being "poor".

But what makes *The Kissing Booth* special is how it manifests teen rom-com tropes at their most unoriginal, baffling and ill-conceived. There's no attempt at adding any novelty, like a cool app or a character's abnormal height. It's just the worst bits of the genre stapled together; a copy of a copy of a copy with no soul to be found. *The Kissing Booth* does not feel like a film series as much as it does one endless barrage of romanticised toxic behaviour, mind-numbing dialogue, and pop culture nuggets that, if they weren't dated before, became dated the moment they were referenced.

If there's any mark of progress to

If the sex is good, your injury will be healed

KATARINA KUO
ART BY ELLIE STEPHENSON

Unpacking Murakami's misogyny.

CW: hyper-sexual language and mention of sexual abuse

Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami is a global sensation. The uniquely dream-like prose and magical realism of his fiction appeals to a culture of uncertainty and loneliness. His writing, however, is incredibly gendered. While his work is boundlessly imaginative when it comes to male characters, the same can't be said for their relationships with women. In a 2004 interview, Murakami explained the role that women play in his novels, "if the sex is good ... your injury will be healed, your imagination will be invigorated ... In that sense, women are mediums — harbingers of the coming world." Under the guise of interpersonal relationship analysis, the notion of female sexuality as an otherworldly antidote to male pain is actually extraordinarily misogynistic.

The perniciousness of this perspective of women as "mediums" becomes evident in Murakami's novels. Women in his work are often constructed as solely vessels for the self-actualisation of men. One-dimensional female characters orbit around existentially challenged male leads, experiencing relatively little character development of their own.

Norwegian Wood, arguably Murakami's most celebrated work, is a prime example of this. What stands out in this novel is the way in which female suffering is pathologized and used as a prop in the narrative of male transformation. The novel essentially tells the story of the male protagonist Toru's relationships with various emotionally damaged women. Naoko and Midori's respective experiences of grief and depression appear to serve only as a narrative device, bonding them

closer to Toru and allowing him to grow as an individual. Damaged female characters exist as objects to Toru, allowing him to develop emotionally by delivering sexual gratification, "one night, I tried to keep my promise by thinking of her when I masturbated, but it didn't work. I tried switching over to Naoko, but not even Naoko's image was any help that time."

IQ84 is another example that fits the trend of women being sacrificed for the development of men, and the way that the novel deals with the sexual assault of young girls is incredibly troubling.

Murakami's description of how a 10-year-old girl, Tsubasa, has been abused is gratuitous to the point of biological impossibility. Reading IQ84, there is an unmistakable sense that the immense suffering of women exists only to allow for a more in-depth analysis of male characters. The abuse that Tsubasa is subjected to allows the protagonist, Tengo, to be constructed in moral opposition to her abuser. More jarringly, however, this abuse functions to allow a complex character arc for the abuser, which ends with him being unironically remembered as a "capable, superior person" after his death. This is a common theme in Murakami's work — issues that make the lives of women incredibly painful become a side-plot, merely a narrative device in the transformation of men.

Misogyny in Murakami's work also manifests in the hyper-sexualisation of female characters, particularly of young girls. In IQ84, protagonist Tengo sleeps with a 17-year-old girl. Tengo notices that she has no pubic hair and muses that "it seems inconceivable that his adult penis could penetrate her small, newly made vagina." Similarly, in Killing Commendatore, 13-year-old Mariye is hyper-fixated on her own breasts. The second she is left alone with the narrator, she comments that "my breasts are really small, don't you think? ... I can't help thinking about my breasts." Later in the

novel, the narrator also remarks that "when she matured a bit more, those legs would attract the gaze of many men." The issue with Murakami's portrayals of female hypersexuality is that they lack the irony that would allow them to serve as a meaningful criticism of gender roles — it's as if Lolita had been written un-satirically. It is profoundly uncomfortable to read these overly sexual scenes involving young girls, and yet they do relatively little to advance the narrative or contribute to the novels' theses.

In 2017, Murakami was interviewed by the novelist Mieko Kawakami. In the interview, Kawakami presses Murakami on the roles women are assigned in his novels: "It's common for my female friends to say to me, 'if you love Haruki Murakami's work so much, how do you justify his portrayal of women?' The notion being that there's something disconcerting about the depiction of women in your stories." Kawakami explains the way in which the depiction of women as "portals" through which male characters can achieve self-actualisation is frustrating to female readers, particularly given they are often forced into such sexual roles in the process.

Murakami seemed to genuinely listen and engage with Kawakami's concerns. Typically reserved and reluctant to give interviews, he accepted Kawakami's request to interview him because of his deep admiration for her work, and he responds to her criticism without being defensive. Nevertheless, his answers are unsatisfying. At the very least, they reveal that he is deeply wedded to the gender binary and the roles that it prescribes. He explains, "I do feel that women have rather different functions from men. Maybe it's cliché, but this is how men and women survive — helping each other, making up for what the other lacks." It is frustrating that Murakami attempts to intellectualise the misogynistic aspects of his work in order to excuse them. He explains that the sexual nature of the interactions between

mid-first kiss with Lee, intercut with shots of her dying mother in hospital. Moments like these are what boozy watch parties were designed for. But those are few and far between, and instead we're usually left with sequences such as the 'Mario Kart' scene in 3, which is nothing short of soul-crushing. It's hard to pinpoint exactly why such a chipper sequence makes me so inexplicably suicidal, and yet that is precisely how I feel watching it.

In the final leg, the screenwriters realised that they had forgotten to give Elle any character development for three entire movies, and rush to resolve her arc in a way that isn't defined by the men in her life. This includes her breaking up with Noah, though of course the film hints that their romance will be rekindled. In a sense, it would have been more accurate to the ethos of the series if they had her concretely end up with her shitty boyfriend and go to college with her shitty best friend and continue to be a shitty person to poor, sweet Linda. That probably would have been more commendable than momentarily pretending there's any molecule of a soul in this series.

13-year-old Mariye and the narrator in Killing Commendatore "strengthens the introspectiveness, or philosophical nature, of their dialogue." His comments speak to the way in which misogynistic archetypes often prevail in literature under the guise of analysing interpersonal relationships.

I think Murakami's regressive depiction of women is made all the more frustrating by his undeniable talent. It would be easy to dismiss Murakami's work if it could be brushed aside as mediocre. But a lot of his work genuinely is brilliant and, importantly, popular. There is something unfair about the fact that incontrovertibly well-written texts become unenjoyable to women because of subtle yet pernicious misogynistic tropes that they buy into. As Kawakami explains, "it can be so exhausting to see this pattern show up in fiction, a reminder of how women are sacrificed for the sake of men's self-realisation or sexual desire." The unfortunate reality is that Murakami's misogyny does not make him unique, but rather a small part of a pattern of talented and popular writers whose female characters are routinely sacrificed in the interests of male leads.



(Blue) Mountains of books

AMELIA KOEN
ART BY BELLA HENDERSON

The joys of connecting with past readers I will never know.

On a fateful weekend before lockdown, I travelled to the misty Blue Mountains with nothing but my empty car boot and mighty aspirations to visit every secondhand bookstore I could in three jam-packed days — Amazing Race style.

You see, I have always adored secondhand books — more on this later — and after hearing tales of the bonafide bounties of Blue Mountains books, and submitting my last painstaking assignment, I was on my way.

I rolled into my first bookshop-stop, Mr Pickwick's Fine Old Books in Katoomba, and this is where our credit-card-smashing-saga begins.

The entrance-level of this glorious



establishment is a chronically kitsch antique op-shop, but as I spied a sign reading 'more books this way,' I discovered the lower-level is the real jackpot. Cascading down the stairs, a new literary world opens up to me; classics, fiction, poetry, science, philosophy, mystery, young-adult, and what I was really after — art history. Every shelf was used to its full potential, and the store was so chock-full that even if you managed to wrench a book off its shelf, the remaining tomes instantly reabsorbed the vacant space, like amorphous beings rolling over in their sleep.

There is something incredibly visceral about this environment, immersed in wall-to-wall books, each one a story waiting for a sympathetic reader. I found myself feeling more alive than ever, happy to be amongst the dusty air, clouded with an almond-like scent, and a sense of discovery.

On my quest to the Art History section, I found a wonderfully tattered 1972 copy of *The Shock of the New* by Ian Dunlop, an illustrated version of *The Story of Art* by E. H. Gombrich from 1966, and a well-loved copy of *A Painter of Our Time* by John Berger from 1965.

Tiring out the slow 1980s cash register — which I admit does have some charm — I re-visit Mr. Pickwick's three times before I leave the Mountains.

Honourable mentions in my ravenous hunt for used bookstores include Lamdah Books in Wentworth Falls, Gleebooks in Blackheath and Reader's Heaven in

Reflections on *chen pi* and a passing mandarin season

VIVIENNE GUO
ART BY SHANIA O'BRIEN

We have had a surprisingly decent mandarin season this year.



You can tell that it's mandarin season when the winds start to blow a little colder in May. It's late July now and Imperial mandarin season is waning, the growing absence filled by the unfolding harvests of Hickson, Afourer, and Daisy varieties.

We have had a surprisingly decent mandarin season this year. Mandarins are possibly my favourite fruit, and so I invest a great deal of my hopes in every passing season. Last year's mandarin season was fairly mediocre, the sweet taste of the fruit perhaps tainted by the bitter ennui and despair of indefinite lockdown. Still, I ate many mandarins and held onto the peels. My family

doesn't dispose of the mandarin peels; instead, we dry them out to make *chen pi*.

Chen pi are sun-dried mandarin peels; they don't go bad as long as they're kept in a cool, dry place. These dried peels have been used in Chinese cooking for centuries, adding a subtle citrus aroma to whatever you're making. Supposedly, they also have medicinal properties; Mum dries out the *chen pi* because it helps to circulate *qi* (believed in Chinese medicine and philosophy to be the life force of everything in the world) in the spleen and stomach, strengthening digestion.

On one of my visits to my grandparents' Westmead apartment, my yeye showed me the *chen pi* that he had been aging for two decades; precisely, he says, since the year 2000, year of the dragon, year of the Sydney Olympics, the year I was born and the first year that he spent in Australia. In Chinese medicine, older *chen pi* are considered more potent than fresh ones. *Yeye* holds the *chen pi* up to my nose – “闻一下!” – and I stare at them for a second, sitting at the bottom of a recycled baby formula tin with a masking-tape label covered in scratchy Chinese characters. I take a sniff and it smells exactly like you think it would smell; an honest, wispy smell of time and zest. As *yeye* pulls away, taking the lingering fragrance of the mandarin-scented past with him, I think about my mandarin trees.

In my mum's backyard, we have a variety of fruit trees, choked with an overgrown lawn and gnarled by nature's

passage. There are a number of papaya trees growing around the yard. From our back door, you can spot the rootbound yuzu tree that lives in the baby-blue terracotta pot next to an old koi pond that has neither water nor koi in it anymore. If you glance to the back left corner of the yard near the bottlebrush tree, you'll spot a white guava tree stooped with the weight of the fly-bitten fruit (we never get to it in time to bag the budding fruit; maybe next year). I wouldn't blame you if you overlooked the lime tree growing slightly behind it, their leaves and fruit pressed so closely together that an onlooker might be forgiven for thinking that they were one and the same.

But the prize of our overgrown place is the pair of mandarin trees that reach for each other to the right of the dilapidated *ting* (Chinese pagoda) that looms over the backyard. I still don't know what variety of mandarin grows on their branches – as an Imperial mandarin purist myself, I don't pick from the trees – but every year without fail, the twin mandarin trees bear their many fruits.

The next time I visit my grandparents, my yeye reminds me to bring him some mandarins from our backyard trees.

Each year, I am the primary source of fresh mandarin peels in my family. Mum reminds me to keep the peels of all the Imperials that I'm eating – I go through them ravenously – and my room now smells like mandarins and earthiness. I make little flowers of the mandarin peels as I go, placing one peel on top of the next, until there are petally towers

Many Eastern cultures view fruit as an offering of hospitality and a hand offered in community. It is a fruit that carries love, hopes and good wishes; a heavy burden for any fruit to bear.

sitting next to my favourite orange blossom candle on the shelf. Each May to July, I eat so many mandarins that Mum genuinely worries that I will turn orange.

If you have any spare mandarin peels lying around, you might want to dabble in drying out *chen pi*. In China, the best variety to use is the Xinhui from the province of the same name in southern China. Take your peels, wash them and scrape away most of the white pith with a spoon, then leave on a warm, dry windowsill or a warm room. The peels will shrink and darken over time, signalling that they are drying out, and when they're completely dry, you can put them in an airtight container and store them in a cool dry place. Mum likes to take the shortcut of drying the *chen pi* in an oven at a low temperature.

Many Eastern cultures view fruit as an offering of hospitality and a hand offered in community. It is a fruit that carries love, hopes and good wishes; a heavy burden for any fruit to bear. Fruit is love and Ellie brings me fruit when she comes over. One time, she brought me mandarins.

The worst of the Winter is behind us. It was odd for me to envision June

To August

SHANIA O'BRIEN

If I don't see the sun, I know it is there. And there's a whole life in that.

August is the sun. It is aureate light upon the garden floor illuminating the softened, verdant grass. I walk barefoot across the sward and think of home, of my gossamer curtains billowing in the gentle wind, my mother's twinkling eyes as we sit on the balcony and watch the bougainvillea, my grandmother's face as mango pulp stains her hands. In these memories I am safe; I exist in a glass house where no harm can touch me. For most of my life, August was Summer's eleventh hour. Come September and October, the chill will creep in and force the sun to hide behind canopies of dark, the only light filtering through in dapples on frosted mud.

Now, we sit on the rocks of Stargazer Lawn in Barangaroo Reserve and look at the water. It is wine-dark, the setting sun painting the sea in shades of honey and crimson. The quiet settles around us like a blanket on a cold night. There is nothing to say, so we rest heads on heads and trace the contours of palm lines. This is familiar, I think, but not in a way where it has happened before. The boulders scrape against my fingertips as I draw circles on them, so I choose to take my art to the safety of his skin.

The worst of the Winter is behind us. It was odd for me to envision June

and July as months that require extra blankets and steaming spiced apple tea, but that was merely my body's loyalty to my Northern Hemisphere upbringing. I spend my days out in the sun; I walk to Circular Quay, I wander through Wendy's Secret Garden and pose in front of purple flowers I cannot name, I sit on the docks near the water and sip iced matcha. So far, my health app tells me I've taken more steps in August than I have any other month in the year. Most of them have been taking me to watch the sun set over the sea.

Odes are my favourite genre of poetry because of their delicate descriptions of nature, their emphasis on the romantic, and my love for dedications. When I first conceived of this piece, I wanted to write an ode to August, in proper form and meter. I wanted to venerate August without having to confess anything. I spent days, weeks, researching the genre and the perfect poetic paradigm.

In her 2004 poem *Celestial Music*, Louise Glück writes, “the love of form is a love of endings.” But I've never liked to talk about endings. My first thought is always, *why can't it just be this, here, forever?* When I first heard people talk about immortality, I thought they wanted to freeze at that specific point in time. I wanted to capture that in my writing – a romanticised version of August, a snapshot of all that is wonderful. Nothing more, nothing less.

Most poems about Spring emphasise revival and fresh beginnings; as the flowers start to bloom, hope of something

new buds. But in *A Self-Portrait in Letters*, Anne Sexton writes, “I am in pain because the day is ending and I am never healing.” I think of this quote every Spring and reflect on my growth, which I have closely associated with learning to trust people and learning how to be vulnerable. In *All About Love*, bell hooks writes, “rarely, if ever, are any of us healed in isolation.” It is an act of communion, but I've never been good at being at the mercy of others.

I have been writing for as long as I can remember, but this March is the first time I've considered happier places to end my stories. It was difficult to accept that being happy was more poetic than being sad when there was so much more to pull from misery.

But happiness has its own quiet beauty to it; a beauty of comfort, peace and sweet dreams. In the fleeting sun of August, I write about the papaya-scented candle on my bedside table and how it's the same shade as the pumpkin, sweet potato, and carrot soup my friend is experimenting with. I spend hundreds of words describing raspberry slushies and secret garden benches. I was scared of leaving parts of myself in places, in my writing, with people I've come to love; but perhaps this is part of the process of seeding love, leaving parts of you to blossom into something great.

As a result, I am a patchwork of everyone I've loved; I see my mother when I pray, and my father when I pick out something to eat. I cannot remember if my favourite television shows and

books are such because they remind me of myself, or of the friends who introduced me to them. I dot my i's with circles because the girl who sat next to me in the seventh grade did the same, and I refuse to eat tomatoes some days out of solidarity with my best friend who is allergic.

I write myself a letter every August, the week before my birthday; and it is not to be opened until the following year. It is a secret tradition, one I've had since I was fourteen. I see it as a kind of reckoning, a promise to be better. Recently, I went back and looked at the letters I wrote when I was younger and harsher. They brimmed with bitterness and despair, and I hurt to think of a version of myself so insistent on inflicting pain.

There is no critical thinking in this year's letter, no veiled attacks I expected myself to forget with time. It is filled with descriptive writing, with detailed accounts of little blue tea boxes, mornings spent writing in the company of silence, and walks across the bridge to Lavender Bay.

In 1880, Fyodor Dostoyevsky wrote, “I see the sun, and if I don't see the sun, I know it is there. And there's a whole life in that, in knowing that the sun is there.” For me, the sun is a reminder of the times I spent looking at the clouds, of the photos where she blinds me, and the relief I feel when I find a little patch to sit in. The sky is shrouded in darkness as I finish writing this, but the light from the full moon assures me of my company.

Are You Afraid of the Docks?

RILEY VAUGHAN

An annotated proposal for a manuscript, centred around ten provided prompts

Prelude

The palm grove holds a blue cup. The cup spills over, into the sea, pouring out grey.

Note: Is my prelude sufficiently intriguing? Too short? If not, do it over with the following quote – for why bother with my own words if I can use those of another? Keep it swift, as we ought to begin with neither delay nor agenda.

Das ist die Hegelsche Philosophie
Das ist der Bücher tiefster Sinn!

Ich hab' sie begriffen, weil ich geshceit,
Und weil ich ein gutter Tambour bin[1].

– H.H.

I: Lepidopterology

Note: We meet our characters under fading moonlight at an entrance to the Hippodrome's Carousel on Santa Monica Pier. [2] There are two couples: one, a young philosophy student and their adoring partner, a mechanic; the other, a pair of adult professors, one in art, and one in the philosophy of logic. At this point, each of the four will be described in fuller detail. The entreties of their figures, the lengths of their hairs, and the shape of their clothes will be elaborated upon. Short characterisations must suffice this proposal:

“I shouldn't think to presume that

there is any merit to the postulations of Wurst, Knaust, nor even Pripasov. Should you? Their tawdry engagement with matters of materialism abandons both the consequentialist and the deontologist! Oh, to be naïve again. You really should consider Pripasov's final draft of 'A Definitive Theory of the Soul' before making such an unenlightened ...”

The Professor of Philosophy sat on the pier by the periwinkle carousel and continued in their monologue. They listened not to the exasperated release of the seafoam's demise, but the unbounded echoes of their thoughts and to another bottle of wine being emptied in their glass.

The Professor of Art, spouse of that occupied academic, listened only to the waves.

With brows furrowed, so as to extend the impression of engagement, the young philosophy student rolled the aglet of their sweater between their nervous thumbs.

The mechanic, thinking only of sausages and arrogance and ignorant as to the appropriate level and rate at which to fill plastic wine glasses in the evening at a meeting of student, professor, and partners, poured often.

Note: It will be at this point that we take the Professor of Art as our protagonist. A series of vignettes of first loves, blossoms, and orchards manifest. Briefly: chasing Majnun around the garden; catching butterflies together; partners in lepidopterology; they were Michelangelo's masterpiece with a slingshot; drunk without ever sipping; moonlight falls as dreams end. They ponder Majnun's place in the world now.

A lepidopterologist? A carnival worker? An architect?

II: An Embroidered Orchard

Note: There is prolonged discussion of 'Bordando el manto terrestre' by Remedio Varo. The Professor of Art barely listens, suddenly overwhelmed by thoughts of embroidering the orchards she had dreamed of. All four are drunk. [3] The elder couple make eye contact only on accident. The younger couple make it often. It is incredibly important that the reader understand this obscure triptych, else their understanding of the story will not be complete. An annotation is provided for you but must be removed along with this note at publication. They move into more philosophical and religious conversations, arriving at Vert's 'La disparition.' It is equally important that the reader understand this text. I will not attach a note, as I'm sure it is your familiar, and I wish to avoid belittling you. and as the last light of the evening fades, the art professor accidentally breaks into the Carousel. They all decide to ride it.

Note on the integral artwork: 'Translated, the title reads 'embroidering the mantle of the world'. At first glance, it seems that a group of sullen, imprisoned women are being forced to weave the tapestry of the world. It remains that way at all further glances. Importantly, however, one of the women embroiders herself into the tapestry, escaping her confinement and eventually achieving happiness.

III: Carousel

Note: At every leap, at every descent, and at every breath, the Professor of Art returns to dreams of Majnun. Our protagonist is sitting on the only chair which doesn't resemble a conquered mammal. Trapped in dreams of gardens, orchards, and bugs, they sit on the only insect, a butterfly; this is despite the

butterfly being behind the elephant, occupied by their spouse.

No matter how many times they start the Carousel, it ends abruptly of its own accord. The mechanic is dispatched as the student and the professors ride, stop, soar, and halt.

Note: At every halt the dream concluded. Brought back to reality and forced to confront the elephant in the Hippodrome, the Professor of Art brimmed with regret which tipped over and poured out only apathy. They remember how much they were loved and loved dearly. They place more orchards in their tapestry and make a note to remind themselves later. [4] They alight. All the while, the younger couple hang around the Pier, like guns on a wall. As Venus begins to rise in the East, they walk alone and off the Pier. Glancing down to the waves, the Professor of Art listens, content. Glancing down to the beach, they see a message written in the sand. As they exit the Pier, they're told off by a guard. [5] As they exit the shores and return to concrete, they hear a familiar voice. [6]

The message in the sand read: 'the orchard will bloom.'

Note: The end is all that I'm sure of, so I ask you to leave it be.

[1] That is the philosophy of Hegel / That is the books' meaning in sum / I've grasped them because I'm clever, / And also play a splendid drum. (Author's translation.)

[2] And the Hippodrome's Carousel of Santa Monica Pier (U.S.) incites panoramas (pseudo-colours of hemp and the air). Manic separations; mad, superheric loops.

[3] In the same order as their earlier characterisation, our characters are an overly talkative drunk, a pondering drunk, a drunk in love, and a drunk in love.

[4] Note: learn to weave butterflies.

[5] 'This Pier isn't a place for drifters at night! Get lost.' They exclaimed. 'It's not a place for anyone at night.' They murmured.



RAY CATS: SENDING MESSAGES ACROSS 10,000 YEARS

SAM EAMES

Using cats to talk to the future.

Quoting Terry Pratchett, “In ancient times, cats were worshipped as gods; they have not forgotten this.” For thousands of years, cats have held many roles to humans, this relationship enduring through many civilisations and catastrophes. They have acted as pets, mouse-catchers, and deities.

Ray Cats are a proposed new role, a genetically modified cat species that changes colour in the presence of radioactive materials. The purpose is to warn future generations away from nuclear disposal sites. Since their domestication around 7500 BC, cats have held a special significance within religion, folklore, and semiotics — the science of signs and symbols. They’re strewn throughout history, from worship in the cult of the ancient Egyptian cat deity Bastet to drawing the chariot of the Norse goddess Freya. Superstition around the colour of cats began in medieval times, with black cats representing ill omens and witchcraft.

The combination of cats as loyal companions and mythological portents of evil makes them a highly suitable medium for nuclear warning folklore. As for alternative animals, dogs are far from the best semiotic choice if you’re trying to instil a culture around specifically not digging holes and sniffing out danger.

Presently, late-stage nuclear waste is hidden deep underground in deserted,

artificial caverns. These sites are highly radioactive for up to 10,000 years, with prolonged exposure being fatal. But over that timespan, our cultures, languages, and societies will all cease to be recognisable. For perspective, the earliest known examples of written language date back 5,500 years. So the question remains, how can we send a warning that will last for millennia?

Here is where Ray Cats come in. Ray Cats were one of many solutions proposed in the 1980s by the Human Interference Task Force (HITF), created by engineering company Bechtel Corp. The HITF were a motley team of specialists drawing from anthropologists, nuclear physicists, and psychologists. Their solutions were unique, being as varied and mismatched as their members.

For a proposed warning to be considered viable, the HITF identified several complications that had to be overcome: warnings needed to stand the test of time, remaining operational on the timescale of 10,000 years, and they needed to still be interpretable in the event of civilisational collapse, where future humans might not have access to the knowledge of nuclear power. Finally, the solution must withstand the disasters that could cause this societal collapse, whether it be severe climate change, nuclear war, or a dino extinction-sized asteroid.

To satisfy these requirements, many of the solutions proposed by the HITF focused on cultural or biological engineering. Their view was that cultures are intangible and robust to time, whilst biological systems have already proven their ability to withstand cataclysm.

A cultural example was the Atomic

Priesthood. American semiotician and linguist Thomas Sebeok proposed the foundation of the ominously named religion, drawing inspiration from the Catholic church, which he considered successful in passing on their message across generations. Mythology would be created around nuclear waste sites, marking them as religious taboo. The priesthood’s doctrine would revolve around preserving the knowledge of these sites and deterring trespass upon them.

In contrast, Information Plants offered a biological solution. These plants answer the question: what if it were possible to encode data about waste sites into the DNA of flowers? Also named ‘atomic flowers,’ they could be propagated around radioactive areas, offering future generations both a visual warning and a means to access the ‘ancient’ knowledge of nuclear power.

However, amongst these solutions, Ray Cats are unique in that they merge culture and biology. Therefore, for the Ray Cat solution to be successful, not only must the species be genetically engineered, but a culture around these

cats also needs to be formed. This culture would instil the feeling that when your cat changes colour, you must leave your current location immediately.

Today, Ray Cats have moved far beyond just an obscure journal article from decades past. Instead, an active online community, the *Ray Cat Solution*, has drawn together artists, scientists, and philosophers.

The scientific work includes the biohacking laboratory Bricobio. This lab has begun work on combining the genetic glow of jellyfish and the radioactive response of yeast organisms to create an appropriate Ray Cat gene. Culturally, the New Hampshire Institute of Art has attempted to lodge Ray Cats into the social consciousness. So far, shirts, music, and even a documentary have been produced.

For members of this community, Ray Cats represent not only a means to save our descendants from harm, but also a way to bridge the too-often-disconnected fields of science and the arts. While the project’s goal may be to save the future, these forms of collaboration are just as important to our present.



RHEA THOMAS

Affirming your way to happiness.

I am Gucci Grandpa. I am excited for an anxiety-free summer. If all else fails, I can just marry a monarch.

Prior to this year, these statements may have come across as arbitrary proclamations, grand statements of manifestation that fall into the category of obvious denial or irony — but since the advent of @affirmations, it might just be the most 2021 thing ever.

If you’ve been on Instagram at all since January, you may have noticed people sharing these affirmations to their story. @affirmations is easily recognisable through its ‘cooked’ or ‘fried’ aesthetic — nothing to do with food, but everything to do with the incomprehensible level of overstimulation experienced when viewing. Its posts consist of heavily saturated, glowing stock images stretched to a square ratio, reminiscent of tacky 2000s real estate pamphlets, and accompanied by glowing sans serif font as the icing on the cake. There’s a glorious sense of ugliness, absurdity and viral subversiveness to the pieces.

Mats Nesterov Andersen is the genius (“I would be careful using terminology as such,” he warns) behind what he terms a “Global Self Hypnosis.” “This is what I usually say that I’m doing. I’m doing self-hypnosis on stories and posts,” he says.

Andersen joined me on an evening Zoom call (mid-morning for him in Norway) seated outdoors at a cafe wearing his signature sunglasses, rugged up in a tan Fred Perry track jacket zipped to the top. We chatted about the weather

and our mutual newfound interest in being outside. The only pauses in our conversation were when he ordered a coffee, lit a cigarette and unzipped his jacket. It was almost surprising that he maintained the exact persona he exudes on the account, oozing an ironic level of seriousness and entertaining conviction that is perhaps only paralleled by Mr Worldwide himself.

Anyone who has watched the Instagram Reels of Andersen enthusiastically reading affirmations, each with a different backdrop, may wonder whether it’s all just a joke (the baguette he flourishes throughout this first video may have something to do with this feeling). But the authority and confidence in his voice, as well as his unrelenting 10-affirmations-a-day content schedule, may just command us into feeling genuinely affirmed. Perhaps this persistent output is just him putting into action one of the earliest affirmations on his page: “I CAN BECOME AN INFLUENCER.”

“I don’t know how people consume [affirmations]. I’m not sure if many people think it’s satirical, which it’s not. It’s not ironic. I’m being serious when I’m doing this,” he says.

The practice of manifesting and using “mantras” has entered Westernised practices as a vehicle of actualising our goals and intentions through sheer will. The trend was further popularised through TikTok at a time when hitting goals became an unactionable impossibility. While Andersen is firmly part of the wellness phenomenon on social media, he distances @affirmations from the aesthetic of simplicity and minimalism associated with more typical wellness accounts. “I would say most of

these wellness accounts are very bland — aesthetically speaking — and boring.”

Andersen says he created the account as a form of high conceptual art that involved months of research prior to launching at the beginning of January. Eight months on, @affirmations is creeping towards the 700,000 follower mark — a testament of popular success that Andersen expected considering how young people are experiencing an age of loneliness.

“This didn’t surprise me, I knew that this account would make a huge impact. The thing about doing it in 2021...we’ve spent a lot of time alone [and] looking in the mirror. [affirmations is] sort of a reflection of how we are relating ourselves to the world right now. If not me, somebody else would have made this account,” he says.

Indeed, it does feel like an inevitability. The account is inseparable from a New Age context centred around secular spirituality, where horoscopes, binaural beats and healing crystals are critical practices of self-care. Revitalising the popular quarantine practice of manifesting, with a post-ironic touch, makes @affirmations particularly consumable for audiences — particularly young people — that now view goal-setting as a memory reminiscent of a distant reality. The mere thought of chasing self-improvement and creating memories in lockdown feels prescribed by hustle culture and online productivity gurus where memes, irony and post-irony are the only weapons worth wielding in the face of this hopelessly ridiculous expectation.

@affirmations’ artstyle draws on inspiration from early web art, children’s cartoons and Y2K culture,

which perhaps appeals to 20-somethings nostalgic for simpler times, and, whether intentionally or not, engages with post-capitalist imagery and consumer culture. “@affirmations has nothing to do with politics whatsoever,” says Andersen. “But I realised that where we are in the world right now, neoliberal tendencies dominate in our culture. The music scene revolves around materialism and wearing gold chains and using designer clothing. I realised that people are familiar with these things. What I’m trying to do is commentate and capture it in some sort of way,” Andersen says.

Perhaps then, @affirmations is the best example of a newer and transcendent kind of art practice — one that is able to distill abstract vibes and atmospheres into just a few words and images and genuinely resonate with thousands of people. When asked about how he, as a 20-year-old, was able to start @affirmations and coin such -relatable-terms as CONTINENTAL VIBE, he points to his variety of life experiences.

“I was a black metal musician. I won’t talk too much about that. I don’t do music anymore. And I’ve actually written two books in our region. But I have no plans of releasing it. It’s just something I did for recreational purposes,” he says.

In some ways, it’s hard not to see @affirmations as a reactionary account, journaling the anxieties and emotions felt by young people from issues ranging from COVID, to student loans and climate change; the cryptic messaging only furthering its appeal. With terms like Epic Life and Coastal DJ having entered my everyday vernacular, I can’t help but wonder whether the affirmations are working.

URBAN DESIGN IN DISCWORLD: TELLING STORIES THROUGH SPACE

MARLOW HURST

Pratchett’s narrative cities.

Terry Pratchett has always used space to tell a story. The Disc, the setting of Pratchett’s Discworld novels, is itself a story: a mass of flat earth, sitting atop four elephants, who stand proudly on the back of the Great A’Tuin, who is a magnificent flying turtle gliding through space. It’s outrageous, it’s imaginative, and above all, it possesses a brand of irresistible whimsy unique to Pratchett’s body of work. But if you look closer to examine the cities that sit atop the disc, which itself sits atop four elephants, who proudly stand on the back of the Great A’Tuin, you’ll find that each of them tells a story of their own.

Ankh Morpork

Ankh-Morpork is a mish-mash of real-world urban centres. In *The Art of Discworld*, Pratchett explains that the city-state is comparable to the Estonian capital of Tallinn and central Prague, with elements of 18th century London, 19th century Seattle, and 20th century New York. Like many of its inspirations, Ankh-Morpork is a city of immigrants. Trolls, dwarves, vampires, igors, golems, zombies, werewolves, and gnolls — along with a couple of humans — are scattered

throughout the city, making it the metropolitan melting pot of the Disc. With each of these fantasy races divided up into their own slice of the city, Pratchett represents the tension and union of these communities, which is often a focal point for many of his books, through the city itself. Split into the Ankh — the posh end — and the Morpork — the not so posh end — the city-state also tells a story of class divide. The birthplace of Commander Vimes’ socioeconomic “Boots Theory,” there is a world of difference between the exclusive Seven Sleepers neighbourhood and the Shades which is a location with few murders, but several suicides, on account of how suicidal it is to be in the Shades at all. But like the Ankh, a river that runs through the city at a sluggish, toxic pace, class tension fizzles under the surface but is plagued with brutal apathy. It’s the Ankh that captures so much of Ankh-Morpork. Described as “too thick to drink, but too runny to plough,” the river is a lot like the city: it appears virtually inhospitable; yet somehow, people find a way to get by. What lies about the surface and atop the river bed isn’t the entire city though. Ankh-Morpork is not so much a single city, but rather the latest in a long series of prototypes. After every flooding, the citizens of Ankh-Morpork thought it wise to simply build on top of what the river’s sediment had taken. The Ankh-Morpork of today (or yesterday or tomorrow, because Pratchett’s novels exist in another world

with another timeline entirely) is the youngest strata layer, sitting atop the fossilized catacombs of an iterative urban landscape. As this stratification suggests, Ankh-Morpork is a city in constant flux, yet always the same.

Djelibeybi

Stuck in time and stuck in bankruptcy. Two states stem from its urban design: pyramids. In the desert kingdom, pyramids sucked in time and released the cumulative temporal energy from their capstones. The result of which was a kingdom reusing the same day, over and over and over again. With an economy founded on their construction and a religion based on their use, pyramids have informed every aspect of its urban landscape. The necropolis (a city of the dead) occupies Djelibeybi’s most arable land and is second to only Ankh-Morpork as the largest city on the disc. Like its clocks, Djelibeybi has a culture, religion, and system of government stuck in place. As environmental storytelling goes, Djelibeybi is an obvious parallel: the city is stuck in time, society is stuck in time. It speaks to the power of any urban architecture, as a city’s design can often shape its trajectory. One only must examine Sydney’s shoddy planning to see how much power it wields against its residents. But luckily for Djelibeybi, they’ve stopped building pyramids and destroyed the ones that were holding them back. Sometimes, to break free from

a vicious cycle, there is no option but to break it.

The Agatean Empire

The Agatean Empire and its capital city are designed around secrecy and censorship. The Great Wall (a parallel for China’s) surrounds the empire with an official purpose to keep barbarians out and an unofficial purpose to keep its residents in. Travel to the Forbidden City, the administrative and imperial palace at the centre of the Agatean capital, and stone walls give way to paper screens. The Agatean people have been instructed not to walk through these screens, but clueless barbarian invaders proceed to tear through them like doors. While the country is insulated by a physical wall of stone, the conventions, and cultural norms, while paper-thin, bind the attitudes and activities of its citizenry. The hermit kingdom spins an obscuring mythos to its residents, one which warns of blood-sucking vampires beyond the walls and barbarians at the gates. But, like the walls of the Forbidden City, they tear under the slightest pressure.

Terry Pratchett’s worldbuilding is never without purpose. While the extraneous details can seem little more than the whims of an author, they all speak to some greater meaning. While to many, fantasy is shorthand for insincerity, there is nothing insincere about Discworld nor the many ingenious cities that litter its surface.



I AM GUCCI GRANDPA.

I AM EXCITED FOR AN ANXIETY-FREE SUMMER.

IF ALL ELSE FAILS, I CAN JUST MARRY A MONARCH.

I AM VITAL TO THE GROUP CHAT.

THE WORLD IS NOT IN A REALLY MESSY SITUATION.

SOCIETY MOVES FORWARD, I DO NOT HAVE ANXIETY.

President

SWAPNIK SANAGAVARAPU

This week's report will be unusually short, owing to the fact that I've just received my COVID vaccination and am currently feeling its effects as I write it. Despite the effects, I'm feeling extremely relieved to be doing my part in bringing things back to normal.

This week, two major things have occupied my time. The first is my continuing project to upgrade and redesign the SRC's website, which is persisting despite a number of interruptions. We have had a number of struggles with unresponsive quotes, but are now narrowing down our options to make sure that student money is used as efficiently as possible while receiving the highest quality

service. I've been working closely with our publications staff to think about how we want to re-envision the site and how to make it more accessible for students. If you have any thoughts, concerns or criticisms about the website, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

The second thing that I've been working on are the two sessions for the SRC's Radical Education Week that I will be presenting. Radical Education Week is an annual event run by the SRC that platforms alternative pedagogy, radical thinking and new ways of approaching the world. It draws together students, academics, writers, activists and many others

to discuss any number of issues and radical perspectives on how to deal with them. This year, due to the ongoing lockdown, the Week has now moved online and is spread across the whole semester! Every Tuesday and Thursday this semester, there will be an event - follow the Radical Education Week Facebook page for more information. I'll be involved with two events specifically. The first is this Thursday at 2pm and is entitled "The Ongoing Struggle in Political Economy". I'll be moderating a discussion between Lia Perkins, Prof. Frank Stillwell and Dr. Joe Collins about the origins and contemporary relevance of the Department of

Political Economy at the University of Sydney. The second is next Thursday at 2pm, and will be entitled "Radicals: Remembering the Sixties". I'll be speaking to former President of the NSW Legislative Council Meredith Burgmann and renowned children's book author Nadia Wheatley about their book *Radicals*, which details the radical spirit of the 60s and features interviews with 60s stalwarts like Geoffrey Robertson QC, Gary Foley, Margaret Roadknight and many others. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Until next time,
Swapnik

Education Officers

MADDIE CLARK AND TOM WILLIAMS

Despite the continued outbreak of COVID and online study, the EAG has continued to keep busy. On the 12th of August we hosted a forum discussing the many cuts to Sydney Uni. We heard from students who have been involved in the fight to say the Arts, activists involved in the fight to save Med Science last year and staff members from the NTEU who spoke about the Enterprise

Bargaining negotiations and the appalling conditions university management are arguing for. We also helped run the August 16th Counter Summit with Tom co-chairing. This was an excellent demonstration of students across Sydney's universities all coming together to oppose the Higher Education Summit on the same day. With over 100 participants this campaign looks really promising

and there will be future organizing meeting across NSW next week. We have also been engaged with organizing the Rad Ed Series and Maddie helped run the opening session on Radical Education which was a great event and a fantastic start to the series. Apart from this we have been having regular fortnight meetings. At our meeting this week we planned to have another online

forum specifically about the EBA and the NTEU fighting for their working conditions. This is planned for September. We also passed a motion in the EAG to support the "Lockdown to Zero" campaign. It's important that the EAG takes up other issues of the left, particularly as the issue of eliminating the virus is contentious across the Sydney left.

Women's Officers

AMELIA MERTHA AND KIMBERLEY DIBBEN DID NOT SUBMIT A REPORT.

Welfare Officers

LIA PERKINS, SHREYAA SUNDARAGHAVAN, KATHERINE XU AND OWEN MARSDEN-READFORD

Lia: Hello, over the last few months the welfare action group has been very busy. At the start of the lockdown the government's economic support did not cover students on youth allowance, as well as neglecting many other students.

We ran a photo campaign for "\$750 for everyone" and an open letter with over 100 signatories, including many organisations. The focus of the demands extended included increased economic support, raising Jobseeker to at least \$80 a day and free early childhood for all. It's important that the expansion of welfare support during the lockdown is extended to all in need, and continues after the immediate crisis.

Three members of the group wrote a statement of demands about the need for more safe and affordable housing. These demands are: 1) an increase to the University's general bursary for struggling students, 2) a rent reduction for students living in University accommodation, 3) the advertisement of the moratorium on evictions for University accommodation, 4) the University must offer crisis accommodation for those in need.

The Welfare Action Group is hosting a discussion with Living Incomes for Everyone (LIFE) on 7 September. This will be an opportunity for students to understand the impact of insecure

livelihoods on students and how we can collectivise and fight back for a better social security system. Follow the page and join our group to get involved. We have meetings fortnightly on Wednesday at 3pm (USyd Welfare Action Group on Facebook).

I have also been involved in organising events for Radical Education Week - particularly the discussions and panels on the IPCC report, unionism and strikes and the political economy department. Check out the page @radedweek on Facebook.

Owen: I have been involved in organising the Lockdown to Zero, Health Before Profits campaign which

is demanding there be a hard lockdown, with all non-essential businesses shut and a massive expansion of welfare so workers can stay home. We need to fight against the Berejiklian government's plan to open up despite the cost to the health and lives of ordinary people.

I also helped to organise the Community Action for Rainbow Rights zoom rally against the bigoted 'Religious Freedom Bills'. We had over 150 people join us from around the country to hear from a wonderful line up of speakers and continue to organise against the Right even if we can't hit the streets at the moment.

Living on Little Money – Essential Guide for Students

Many students are forced to live on very little money while studying. Here are some ideas that might help you get by.

LOANS, BURSARIES & SCHOLARSHIPS

University Scholarships and Financial Assistance Office: 8627 8112. Loans are interest-free, and bursaries do not need to be repaid. Talk to them about your situation and they'll guide you to the most suitable option.

There are a range of different ways to qualify for a scholarship. Talk to the University about which ones you're eligible for and how to apply. There are also some competitions you could enter that have cash prizes.

SRC Emergency loans up to \$50 are good to fill that gap the day before payday or if you forget your wallet. 9660 5222

MANAGING MONEY

When you don't have enough money to make little mistakes it is a good idea to have a budget plan. Write down how you are going to spend money each week, including putting some aside for unforeseen expenses if you can. Look for "leaks" that can help you to save a bit more. Check out:

moneyminded.com.au

moneysmart.gov.au/managing-your-money

wesleymission.org.au/centres/creditline "budget planner"

DEALING WITH DEBTS

The SRC Legal Service will work with you to clear your debts. This service is free to undergraduate students.

If you have a problem with gambling, free, confidential help is available at the University. Call 1800 482 482 for more information.

HAPPY HOUSING

Cheap quality accommodation is hard to get. Most of the cheap options go very quickly, so you'll have to be patient and flexible. If you are in urgent need of housing, ask an SRC Caseworker about emergency accommodation.

If you are about to move into a home or if you are behind in rent and are on the lease you might be eligible for Rentstart through Housing Pathways (Housing NSW).

Check out NSW Tenants' Union fact sheets on your rights & responsibilities as a tenant / sub-tenant, bond etc. tenants.org.au.

PHONE

Pre-paid accounts allow you to give yourself a fixed budget for phone calls. Encourage your friends to call you or text to make a skype date. Viber and WhatsApp also allow you to make free texts or calls. However, be aware that you are using your internet/data for this.

FREE FOOD, CHEAP FOOD

There is no reason to be hungry if you live in Sydney. There are many places around Sydney that offer free meals and a few that may do food parcels. newtowncentre.org/_pdfs/meals.pdf

HEALTH

Bulk billing (or direct billing) doctors means that you will not be charged for the appointment. This is covered on Medicare and Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC). e.g. University Health Service in the Wentworth Building.

Safer sex is important. You can pick up free condoms from the SRC office, level 1 Wentworth Building.

Clean needles and injecting packs are available from the Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS). Call their 24-hour confidential telephone service on 9361 8000 or 1800 422 599. Some chemists do needle and syringe exchange. In Newtown, this includes Chemist on King and Ford's Pharmacy. In Auburn, there's Alpha Pharmacy and Rite Aid Pharmacy. There's also Camden Pharmacy and Adore Pharmacy Rozelle.

Dentists can be super expensive on a student budget, but taking care of your teeth is important. There are some limited services you may be able to access for free. Speak to SRC HELP caseworkers.

Australian citizens and permanent residents can apply for a Low-Income Health Card if you earn \$564 a week or less, or if you are receiving a Centrelink student payment. This gives you a reduced price on prescription drugs, free ambulance cover etc. You do not need to be receiving a payment from Centrelink (eg. Austudy or Youth Allowance) to be eligible for a Health Care Card.

Ask Abe

SRC caseworker help Q&A

Dropping a subject



Dear Abe,

I can't decide whether or not to drop a subject. I haven't done any of the readings, but I can watch the lectures online. If I withdraw from it now, can I rejoin the class if I catch up?

Undecided

Dear Undecided,

If you have missed more than a couple of weeks of lectures it is unlikely that you will ever catch up. By dropping a subject now (before the Census date), you will not have a fail on your transcript, you will not have to pay for the subject, and you can then spend your time focusing on your other subjects.

If you are unsure, you could wait until the end of week 7 to apply for a Discontinue Not Fail (DC). You will have to pay for the subject, but you will not have a fail on your transcript. Bear in mind that if you forget and miss this deadline, you will have a Discontinue Fail (DF) recorded on your transcript

If you are an international student and you drop a subject, you may be in breach of visa regulations. If you are a domestic student, you may become a part time student (12 credit points or fewer), but this would mean you cannot use a concession Opal Card, and it will affect any Centrelink payments. Seek advice from an SRC Caseworker before deciding to drop a subject. Call 9660 5222 to make an appointment, or send an email to help@src.usyd.edu.au.

Abe

Do you need help with CENTRELINK?

Ask the SRC!

The SRC has qualified caseworkers who can assist Sydney University undergraduates with Centrelink questions and issues, including: your income, parents' income, qualifying as independent, relationships, over-payments and more.

Check out the Centrelink articles on our website or book an appointment if you need more help.

srcsyd.net.au/src-help

Environment Officers

ISABELLA D'SILVA, DREW BEACOM, LAUREN LANCASTER AND DEAGLAN GODWIN DID NOT SUBMIT A REPORT.

Intercampus Officers

GRACE HU, KRISTINA SERGI, MATTHEW CARTER AND ALEXANDER POLIRIER DID NOT SUBMIT A REPORT.

Crossword by Tournesol

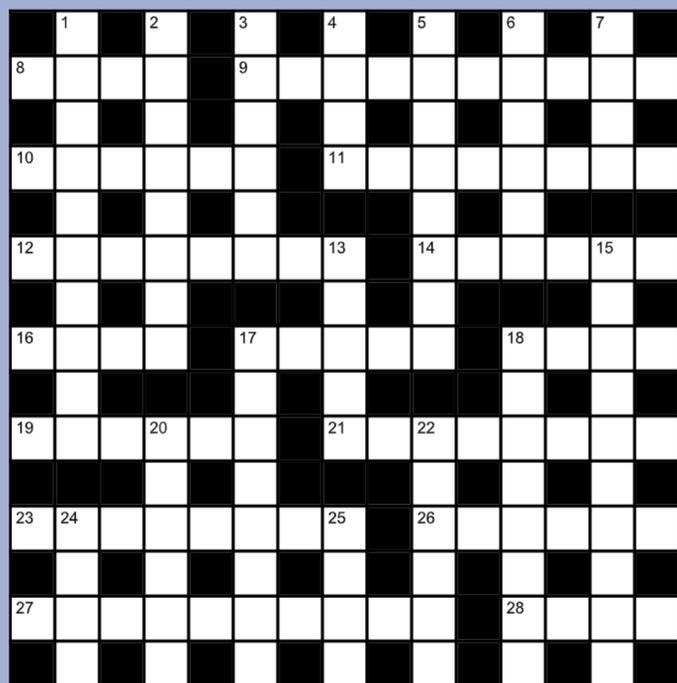
Across

- 1 Foremost sudden desire to gush (5)
- 4 Awkward step on ash moon (9)
- 9 Spooner says glue bum to tree (4,3)
- 10 Doctor leads any UCLA assembly to count (7)
- 11 Cartoon in Maine (5)
- 13 Relative to loud French city... (5)
- 15 ... The middle of a discotheque is a place of rest (3)
- 16 Water, in case of emergencies (3)
- 17 Squeeze political leader with 2.5 centimetres (5)
- 19 Bear to cross whirlpool (5)
- 21 Every side's enclosing good French timber (5)
- 23 Sever poorly written poetry (5)
- 24 Kitchen implement endlessly woke (3)
- 25 A northern territory animal (3)
- 26 Twin Peaks contains '50s hotel and God (5)
- 28 Greek character meets Bible character in the first episode (4)
- 29 Italian lady surprisingly soaring (7)
- 31 Mother cold-heartedly cuts off etcher and runs amok (3,4)
- 33 Poor writer on river ship (9)
- 34 Snap restriction, reportedly (5)

Down

- 1 I ram bus into north-east vessel (9)
- 2 Regular in utero operation (7)
- 3 Encourage, say, head of government (3)
- 4 Come and look at men talking (5)
- 5 Oddly proud of herd (3)
- 6 Wipeout player a secret insider (5)
- 7 Weight in hollow bed recoiled (7)
- 8 Say 'haha' or 'wow' about the state of Canberra (5)
- 12 Vacuous auntie has 'proprietary limited' (5)
- 14 Either I go or the sky (5)
- 18 Five in Christmas story (5)
- 19 Belgian port loses an idiot (5)
- 20 Kayak back around Tranquilliser Bay. Finally! Bla, bla, bla... (6-3)
- 22 Catastrophic contagion removed in eight points altogether (7)
- 24 Leaders will address relevant enquiries about Londoners' health and safety (7)
- 25 Partly return to pose as storyteller (5)
- 26 Robots love hot chilli condiment (5)
- 27 Laughs about satisfactory pegs (5)
- 30 Consumed by deluded vanity (3)
- 32 Gently touch bad back (3)

CRYPTIC

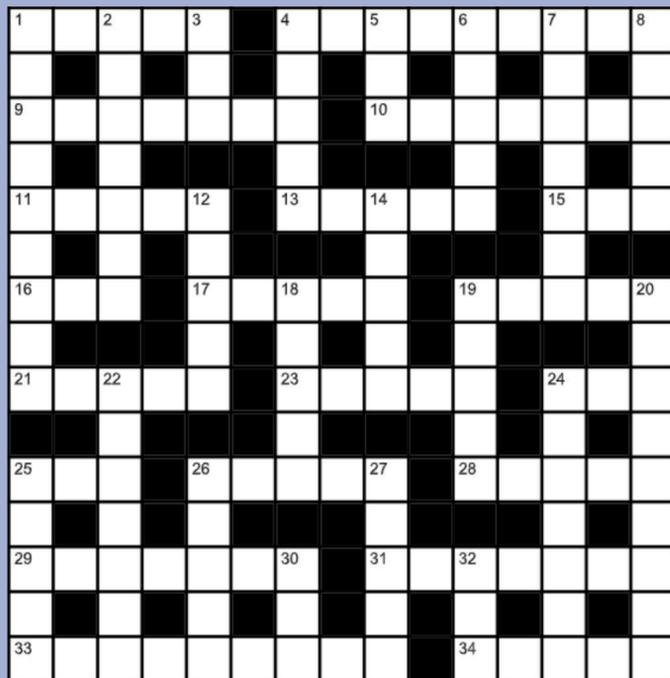


Stumped? Answers at honisoit.com

QUIZ!

All answers begin with the letter P.

1. The cooking program of which Chihuahua-loving celebrity premiered on Netflix in 2021?
2. In Greek legend, upon which mythical creature did Bellerophon fly?
3. Which band has released albums including Animals, Wish You Were Here, and The Wall?
4. The words 'madam,' 'racecar,' and 'kayak' are all examples of what?
5. Derived from the Latin for 'lost' what is the name of Leontes' daughter in The Winter's Tale and Pongo's wife in 101 Dalmatians?
6. According to the Urban Dictionary, what three-letter piece of gaming slang is 'used to indicate excitement or an epic moment'?



QUICK

Across

- 8 Not as much (4)
- 9 Isolation to prevent disease (10)
- 10 Hindu festival of lights (6)
- 11 Samuel Pepys, Anne Frank, Alan Bennett (8)
- 12 ABBA song: Put On Your White ... (8)
- 14 One of the walking dead (6)
- 16 And others (2,2)
- 17 Inner West suburb (5)
- 18 Soya bean soup (4)
- 19 Idiot (Australian slang) (6)
- 21 Kindles and other such devices (1-7)
- 23 Evident, obvious (8)
- 26 Fantasies (6)
- 27 Pirate flag (5,5)
- 28 Spots (4)

Down

- 1 Small aircraft with a big propeller (10)
- 2 European and Asian city (8)
- 3 Horsey (6)
- 4 Hospital room (4)
- 5 Jewellery for genitalia (8)
- 6 High-ceilinged room or hall (6)
- 7 Mucus (4)
- 13 Very fat (5)
- 15 Means of making music (10)
- 17 The study of shapes (8)
- 18 Relating to the Middle Ages (8)
- 20 Almost (6)
- 22 Those more senior (6)
- 24 American formal (4)
- 25 Roman garb (4)

Columns



Abe GOSSIP

Bark! Hey guys, I'm Abe and I'll be your new gossip columnist. I am an undefined breed of terrier with poodle overtones and I have worked in the SRC as a caseworker for the last 50 years. I was given this job because my ex-girlfriend 'Miss Soit' (forgive me, I was just a young pup in the 60s) has been cancelled.

I prefer to help needy students solve serious problems in their lives (see page 21), but my owner Mickie told me they had contractual obligations to fulfil. He made me promise to be as boring as possible, lest someone sue the SRC for ... I don't know what for actually. But that shouldn't be a problem. I'm a 70 year old dog.

I am an expert on the Australian welfare system, student visa fine print, and the nitty-gritty of the USyd special considerations system. Please contact me if you need assistance. Anyway, here's the gossip. Woof!

Grassroots exodus

The *Honi* editors tell me that heaps of people are leaving Grassroots because of sexism or the USU Board. To be honest, I don't really care about student politics anymore. Not since Keith Windschuttle beat me twice in the *Honi* elections of '67 and '68.

The scent on the air tells me that notable people to leave were the Women's Officers Amelia Mertha and Kimmy Dibben, Education Officer Tom Williams, *Honi* hopeful Ellie Stephenson, current *Honi* editor Claire Ollivain and some others. I don't know who any of these people are, but good luck to them.

Honi tickets

I think 'Miss Soit' divulged most of this last week. For the last time, the *Honi* tickets are as follows:

CAKE for *Honi*: Ellie Stephenson (ex-Grassroots), Roisin Murphy (NLS), Christian Holman, Zara Zadro, Khanh Tran (Switch), PULP editor Fabian Robertson, Thomas Sargeant (NLS), Sam Randle, Amelia Koen and Carmeli Argana, with USU Board director Telita Goile (Switchroots) managing.

DRIP for *Honi*: Patrick McKenzie, Rhea Thomas, Amelia Raines, Harry Gay, Ariana Haghighi (Switch), Danny Cabubas, ACAR convener Bonnie Huang, Anie Kandya (ex-Grassroots), Joe Fidler (Decency) and PULP multilingual editor Kristin Miao, with former *Honi* editor Matthew Forbes and Felicity Macourt managing.

Good luck to all the participants! *Scratches ear with hind leg*

Ben Hines

I have one piece of 'spicy goss' this week. Apparently Ben Hines — who is also a USU Board Director — has negotiated himself a VP position coming into the SRC elections. He will run under Ignite/Strive. Good luck, Ben.

Some drama in EAG

In the defunct EAG Facebook group (I don't know what that means), there was a disagreement between SALT and Solidarity over whether or not they should endorse a campaign to 'Lock Down to Zero.' Apparently there were some mean comments from both sides but eventually the EAG endorsed the campaign. As a dog, I quite enjoy lockdown. So I support SALT.

Some new OBs

Apparently some people are putting their paws up for OB positions next year. That makes sense, since elections are soon. Tiger Perkins and Angus Dermody would like to be Enviro Officers, Lia Perkins wants to be Education Officer and Alana Ramshaw wants to be Women's Officer. Good luck to you in getting preselected. If you ever feel stressed, I am always available to help — that's my job.

Ok great, that's all the gossip. I'm going to go and piss on the leather couch in the SRC President's office. Woof!



Joe Fidler PUB TALES

An Evening in The Crystal Palace

The relentless bohemian posturing of hotels and bars in the Inner-West can sometimes feel tiresome. No matter how many scuffed porno mag pages are plastered on the bathroom walls, you're still buying \$10 schooners from a multimillion-dollar conglomerate.

For something that feels real, look no further than the Crystal Palace (Hotel, not a meth euphemism). My friend Hugo and I visited The Palace just after midnight and were immediately struck by its eccentricities. The wooden panelled walls and neon signs gave the place a faux chalet feel akin to a Twin Peaks set. The only people in the pub were a bouncer, a bartender and a lone nightshift worker nursing a rum and coke.

I ordered a Reschs and became absorbed by the Palace's oddly calming smell of cheap lager and instant coffee. The bathroom was a stark white, fit with fluttering fluorescent tube lights. At the urinal

I stared up at a black void where a missing bit of plasterboard should have been. We exited through the back and into Quay St, the puddles dazzled by the lights of a gaming lounge at full capacity.

Would go again.



Marlow Hurst STATUES I'D KISS

The Discobolus statue

I would kiss the Discus Thrower. He seems like a very nice man who has a passion for the noble game of discus and a lust for life. The original statue is lost, making him a rare and elusive figure with only copies and casts remaining. This mystery only cats him in a more thrilling light. As a work of bronze, his lips will be firm and unyielding, matching the strength of my smooch blow for blow. Depending on his environment, he will either be pleasantly cool or righteously warm: both would be an intense sensory experience. The only issue I can envisage is his positioning. The Discus Thrower is at quite a sharp angle, with his profile facing the floor. I would have to negotiate some awkward interpersonal acrobatics to access his alloy lips, but the effort would only serve to make our union more spirited. While he may be over 2000 years old, I think me and the Discus Thrower would get along well.



From the archives

Teargas Information Received March 1970 - Honi Soit Issue 3

A meeting of the Students Representative Council was broken up last Tuesday night and forced to readjourn in another room after a bottle of tear gas had been opened in Gosper Room.

Reports have been given as to how the gas was released; it is known that the gas was contained in a bottle which was opened and placed under one of the tables in the Gosper Room.

The gas was released at about 10:30pm., when about fifty people were present at the meeting.

The meeting was completely broken up and all present were forced to leave the room.

After the room had been vacated, a visitor to the meeting collapsed in

the Quadrangle, and after emergency treatment, taken to hospital for further treatment.

Certain information has already been received by the S.R.C. concerning those who brought the gas into the meeting.

S.R.C. President Percy Allan was informed by phone that there were six people involved in the incident, and that the gas was manufactured by a student doing an Honours Engineering court.

The others are claimed to all be either members or ex-members of S.D.S.

It is believed that those responsible feel that the S.R.C. performs no genuine function for the Student Body as a whole and that the members of the S.R.C. seek election purely for their own advancement.

A statement was released by the S.R.C. on the Wednesday following the gassing on the back of the Daily Bull. It was signed by every member of the S.R.C. who was present, and deplored the actions of those responsible.

The Secretary of the S.R.C., Paul Burchell, is at the moment seeking further information concerning all that happened on Tuesday night.

Letters



Dear plumptious beauties, Alas, my darlings, I have been sacked, gagged. I shouldn't be surprised — you make some powerful enemies in this line of work. It turns out that you can't make fun of men's penises anymore, a development which is unfortunately fatal to the global gossip columnist industry. All I will say is that my radical friends Hall Greenland, Peter Manning and Charles Firth would be very disappointed.

The only winners out of this sorry saga are the scurrilous student politicians who will be free from my interrogation. Who will hold these acokoinonian arseholes to account once I'm gone?!

Fuck you all you janus-faced bitches!

xxx,
Miss Soit

P.S. Thursday night ganagbangs will resume as soon as restrictions allow (make sure to mask-up!)



src activism advocacy representation

ADVOCACY • ACTIVISM REPRESENTATION • STUDENT MEDIA

FOR ESSENTIAL STUDENT UPDATES

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

We help Sydney University undergraduate students

The Boot



WEEK 3, SEMESTER 2

UNION BUSTING SINCE 1942



"FAIRY PARTY" BY DEAUNDRE ESPEJO

Vaccine clinic refuses to warm up my Astrazeneca shot in the microwave

MARLOW HURST

It all started the day of my vaccination.

"Can you heat up my Astra jab?" I asked

"No." They replied, "We can't do that."

But did they refuse to warm up my shot because doing so would fundamentally compromise the efficacy of the vaccine or was it due to a far more sinister reason, a reason that I dare not imagine – yet, faced with what I know, I must consider.

Is it possible that this

vaccination hub didn't have a microwave?

When pressed for comment, NSW Health disclosed that they did not require state run vaccination hubs to have a microwave on premises.

A warm dose of vaccine is one of the simple pleasures of life. A pleasure that our state government would seek to deny us through their frankly backwards microwave policies. So, fellow truth seekers, if you are a warrior for warmth, email your state MP and let them know that the buck stops here!

As case numbers rise, NSW man perversely glad that NZ isn't so fucking smug anymore

JEFFREY KHOO

The state of NSW recorded 830 new cases of COVID-19 on Sunday alongside one new case of schadenfreude, as a local NSW man expressed his true feelings at New Zealand's growing Delta cluster, which last reported 21 new cases on Sunday.

"I know it's horrible to say this," said Trevor Trevorson, 34, as he looked around

nervously, "but I'm kind of thrilled to see that New Zealand has fucked up as well. I mean, sure they have nicer people, a better lifestyle, a working health system, cooler nature sights, a better rugby team, a Prime Minister who is capable of expressing empathy, and a good handle on COVID so far. But you can't tell me that you didn't feel good at knocking the Kiwis down a peg."

Trevorson, who has been described by acquaintances

as "a sad little man", also slammed "Dictator Dan" Andrews in Victoria, which recorded 65 new cases on Sunday, including one in regional Victoria. "To be honest, I'm just glad we're beating Victoria in something."

Trevorson told *The Boot* that he is hoping to follow his passion of profiting off other people's misery by becoming a tabloid reporter for the *Daily Mail*.

IN THIS EDITION

After mounting pressure from investors, Instagram bans photos
[SEE MORE ON P 2](#)

The worst person you know is running for SRC Council
[SEE MORE ON P 14](#)

NSW finally flattens curve, vertically
[SEE MORE ON P 1000000](#)

Network 10 announces new season of Survivor: Kabul
[SEE MORE ON P 16](#)

If a member of SAIt puts up a poster on Wentworth Bridge and there's no one there to rip it down, can it be seen?
[SEE MORE ON P 21](#)

Insufferable fuck on Twitter has an opinion
[SEE MORE ON P 23](#)

OnlyFans set to rebrand as cooking-utensil app OnlyPans
[SEE MORE ON P 25](#)

Local Demonica lesbian deplatformed by bare feet enjoyers

/ [SEE MORE ON P 2](#)