

Honi Soit

WEEK 10, SEMESTER 2, 2021

FIRST PRINTED 1929



IN THIS EDITION

Students protest Gender & Cultural Studies merger and Future FASS

CLAIRE OLLIVAIN / P.3

Magpie mayhem!

CLAIRE OLLIVAIN & SAMUEL GARRETT / P.6

The Australian magpie usually eats worms and insects, but during swooping season on campus there is only one prey that matters: students.

The case of the pink streetlamp

MARLOW HURST / P.7

Finding family

SHANIA O'BRIEN / P.15

I have built a castle in my mind, and it puts Neuschwanstein and the Umaid Bhawan to shame. It stretches well into the clouds and its stained-glass windows trap sunlight within their jewel hues ...

Stucco: 30 years and still standing

JENAE MADDEN & LEAH BRUCE / P.10

Stucco's history re-imagined.

The conventional history of Stucco begins with the trite tale of an abandoned glass factory. A glass factory, turned squatters' den, turned legitimate University of Sydney owned, but not operated, accommodation. It's an interesting tale of successful collective student action, radical democratic self management and sticking the middle finger to an increasingly competitive rental market of the inner-city suburbs in its first waves of yuppification. And, yet this tale manages to say nothing at all.

But history told in this way reduces Stucco to its mere origins, and overlooks three decades of colourful residents and their ongoing allegiance to keep the co-operative alive. The Wikipedia page, reportage online and even the odd, fleeting mention in the *Honi* archives, all fail to articulate what makes Stucco so treasured to those who come to live within its walls. Unfortunately, as trite as it were, not everyone will come across the University's co-op during their degree. We want that to change. So, before the tale is retired and rewritten, let us give the obligatory Stucco brief

history, and then tell you how, against the odds, it has managed to remain.

Gorbachev becomes Soviet leader, and Tears for Fears plays in the distance from a Sony Walkman. On the top floor of the University of Sydney's Manning Bar, a bunch of architecture students meet every second Monday as the 'Sydney University Housing Co-operative', later to be known as 'Stucco'. They are drawing up the plans for a new, alternative type of affordable housing. The 'co-operative' model, as it were, imagined residents as shareholders, working for

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
- 8 Analysis
- 10 Feature
- 12 Culture
- 14 Culture
- 18 Games
- 20 Health
- 22 Writing Comp
- 24 SRC
- 26 Puzzles
- 27 Letters
- 27 Columns
- 28 Comedy

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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

Alice Trenoweth-Creswell

One of the great feelings in life is walking down King Street after a long night out, comforted by the hustle and bustle of my neighbourhood. Punters file in and out of The Bank, laughter echoes down from open windows, and the scent of spilt beer wafts out of The Townie. I share a smile with the bouncer at Earl's Juke Joint, and feel the perpetual judgement of the man at the corner store as I fumble around the fridge, buying yet another blue Powerade. Tonight, *Thunder Road* blasts through my headphones as I turn towards South King — and the piano melody melds with twinkling lights from restaurants and bars that had been boarded up for months on end. I'm writing this editorial the night before our Sunday lay up — somewhat of a cardinal sin, and to be frank: I've had a few too many drinks. But it's the first weekend since the pubs opened and Sydney once again feels like the city I love.

More than anything, I am looking forward to our first in-person layup tomorrow, and the first time that the majority of Bloom are working in the same space since we parted ways late last June. And while the OB room Zoom background and 'Gosper' break out room might have provided some sort of solace on a late night call, it doesn't quite cut it. I can't wait to stroll into Pastizzi Cafe and order

two spinach and cheese pastizzi, and then wander down to Double Barrell — I hope the barista remembers me after so long away. I'm looking forward to Vivienne telling me to think before I speak and Marlow's foray into connoisseur of LGBT moments. But more than anything I'm looking forward to curling up under the dim flicker of the fairy lights proofreading spreads, and listening to the sweet sound of cream canisters being cracked in the other room.

The feature in this edition was co-written by Leah Bruce, one of my best friends, and the best support structure I could ask for the past 12 months. She's always interested in my pointless stupid anecdotes, and can always make me feel better over a plate of sushi after a long week. She, along with Jenae Madden, tell the story of Stucco, their home and a unique beacon of hope — offering low-cost social housing to students in need. I feel so lucky that Unit 6 took in one of my best friends when she needed a place to stay. I, too, am so grateful to have spent half a decade enveloped in the comfort of Unit 6's fluorescent green walls, throwing back litres of mulled wine, and dancing around the coffee table.

Thank you to Shania for this beautiful cover. Thank you for all the morning burgers and day-long debriefs on Cadigal Lawns.

I am forever grateful to have this time, this paper, these friends.



Clubs and societies stand in solidarity against Future FASS proposal

ANDY PARK

On 13 October, students from a host of clubs and societies convened in an online forum to speak against the 'Future FASS' plan, which would put up to 250 undergraduate Arts subjects and half of postgraduate units at risk.

On the same day *Honi* reported on the damning extent of the proposed cuts, 14 clubs launched the 'Clubs Against the Cuts' campaign.

Within five days, several open letters amassed over 800 signatories and 250 testimonies.

Drawing on this momentum, Alice Stafford, President of the Sydney University Dramatic Society (SUDS), opened the forum by emphasising the campaign's intention to engage "students who will be both directly

and indirectly impacted," and to allow "students who haven't necessarily had a space to voice their anger or take action."

Several speakers protested against FASS management's ignorance towards students. In response to former FASS Dean Annamarie Jagose's statement that "student choice is poor pedagogical practice," Angelina Gu, Secretary of the Sydney Arts Student Society (SASS), said that "cutting 250 units is poor pedagogical practice."

Gu also revealed that the then-Dean had not responded to several requests for contact from SASS President, Nicole Baxter, since the start of her term. "I've had the USU themselves assume that SASS is given upwards of \$20,000 a year from FASS because that is the standard for faculty societies... we receive \$0," added Baxter.

Students protest Gender & Cultural Studies merger and Future FASS

CLAIRE OLLIVAIN

On the 13 October, students from across the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) went on strike from their classes, gathering on the Quad lawns to hear speeches before marching to the F23 Michael Spence Building, to protest changes to Gender and Cultural Studies (GCS) under the vehemently opposed Future FASS proposal.

The University is proposing to move the Department of Gender and Cultural Studies from the School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry into the School of Social and Political Sciences and demote the Department to a discipline, which students and staff fear will threaten the independence and radical nature of GCS.

Third-year GCS student Misbah Ansari said that "GCS has always been interdisciplinary, focussing on the personal as the political, identity, and with several units questioning the conventional academic structure. We need this Department's integrity now more than ever."

Ansari outlined how the Department arose out of a 1974 protest for an independent Women's Studies department, focussing on the philosophy of feminist thought, and reminded the crowd how this radical history and philosophical focus is intrinsic to GCS.

"The massive unit cuts might also lead to job losses for casuals, a lot of whom focus on anti-racist political thought and challenge this institution [the University] as the white academic entity that it has always been."

Ansari criticised the University for wanting to cut Units of Study in FASS with less than 24 enrolments, rather than questioning why there are not many students studying them in the first place, which she attributed to the neoliberalisation of higher education.

Ansari said that this encourages

students to "keep learning what the environment wants us to, rather than having safe spaces and proliferating our knowledge for bigger, further actions that we can organise."

SRC Women's Officer and Gender Studies major Amelia Mertha said that "if anything, GCS should grow. It has so much beautiful and radical potential, it's not perfect yet," they said, echoing Ansari's critique of how white feminism has long

organising that brought it into existence, quoting SRC Education Officer Maddie Clark in *Honi Soit*: "As student activists today, looking at the success of the strike can give us hope and inspiration for what collective action can achieve."

"That's what we're doing here today," Mertha said. "Future FASS my ass. We are the future!"

Third-year GCS student and organiser of the Hands off GCS Campaign, Ella

deployed by the boss to attack the worker is a queer theory we want nothing to do with. It's not sexist when people who are less powerful than you stand up to you, Dean Jagose."

"The only form of queer, feminist or anti-racist theory that we truly view as liberatory as GCS students is one that sides with the most vulnerable, with the precarious casual workers who you refuse to protect, so many of whom are women, people on visas denied parental leave, superannuation and job security," Haber said, to resounding calls of shame from the crowd.

SRC Education Officer Tom Williams addressed the "lies that have been peddled" by the University in the 13-week Future FASS consultation process: "You can't dress up shit and have anyone believe it's gold."

"There are two very obvious things the Dean has been hiding: the GCS merger and the whole Future FASS proposal is an attack on our education and we don't want it!"

"Decimating postgraduate studies, unsurprisingly, isn't good for postgraduates. Cutting staff hours, increasing workloads and laying off permanent and casual staff, unsurprisingly, is a terrible thing for staff and also for students. The substance of the whole Future FASS proposal is abhorrent."

Williams said that the University was "extracting astronomical profits from an entire Faculty and setting it up as a money-making machine for years to come."

"It's all justified because there's some speculative, far-off crisis in profit. The real crisis is not in profits, but in education, in Gender and Cultural Studies and Arts education broadly."

Speakers called on students to attend the Student General Meeting to oppose the Future FASS cuts and restructures on 27 October, which needs over 250 attendees to reach quorum.

"These cuts are so broad, so clearly unnecessary and with such opposition, that we can and we will win by uniting!" Williams said.



dominated the field.

Mertha explained that the units were "critical to the politics and theories of liberation and change" in feminist organising on campus, "whether it's learning to trouble binary gender, understanding reproductive justice outside of mainstream reproductive rights, whether it's disability justice, sovereignty, learning to challenge hegemonic whiteness."

They also noted that GCS is part of the School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry because of the leftist, feminist

Haber, said that the proposal meant "we would lose casual jobs, we would lose our courses, our Department would lose its autonomy ... and it would put power into upper management's hands to supervise the content that we should be in charge of. So fuck that."

Haber also spoke to how the theory taught in GCS is important for movements against oppressive power, criticising former FASS Dean Annamarie Jagose for describing student protest chants as sexist:

"The idea that queer theory can be

We help Sydney University undergraduate students

DVC Research to step down

MARLOW HURST

In an email to staff last week, Vice-Chancellor Mark Scott announced that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Duncan Ivison would be stepping down from his position in March next year.

Thanking him for his tenure at the University, Scott made note of Ivison's achievements under the 2016-20 research strategy. These included the establishment of the Sydney Policy Lab, the Sydney Knowledge Hub, and a range of other research initiatives. Before he took on his current role, Ivison was Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (2010-15) and before that, head of the School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry (2007-9).

Ivison has publicly defended university cuts on numerous occasions during his time as a member of management.

In 2012, EAG and NTEU demonstrators occupied his office during a 'Stop the Cuts' rally and, after his arrival, he addressed the crowd with his "perspective."

Ivison has publicly defended university cuts on numerous occasions as part of management

Later, in 2020, Ivison was embroiled in the student occupation of F23, where he refused to negotiate on cuts to medical science as he stood in the building's foyer.

Ivison's departure is the latest in a number of managerial changes, with the recent appointment of Annamarie Jagose as Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost in August, Mark Scott's appointment as Vice-Chancellor in March and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Pip Pattison announcing her retirement for the end of 2021.

The University will shortly commence an international search to find his replacement.

Casuals launch \$2m wage theft claim

CLAIRE OLLIVAIN

Today, eighty casual staff at the University of Sydney lodged a claim of \$2,090,559 in wage theft, demanding back pay for six years of unpaid marking and administration work.

The USyd Casuals Network and the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) are alleging that the underpayment is a breach of the Enterprise Agreement and have sent a formal grievance letter to University management requesting a meeting to respond to a list of demands.

The eighty casuals assert they were underpaid by a total of \$2,090,559 for marking and administration. If they are representative of the 2455 casuals currently on payroll in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), this could mean a total wage theft of up to \$64 million in wage theft in the Arts faculty alone.

Staff are demanding remuneration for 14,409 unpaid hours of administration work, 13,190 hours of unpaid marking and 21,407 hours of misclassified marking.

Casualised staff now make up 52% of the workforce at USyd and many are denied secure employment despite performing work on an essentially

ongoing basis.

The launch of the dispute comes just one week after FASS dismissed wage theft as "a mistaken belief that casual academic staff are entitled to be paid for any time spent at their discretion and choice," following an internal investigation that has been criticised for several shortcomings.

Dr Robert Boncardo, NTEU representative and member of the Casuals Network said: "It is an open secret in FASS that casual academic staff perform core work but are not paid appropriately."

"The University of Sydney has both a legal and a moral responsibility to pay back affected staff members and to ensure that these breaches of the Enterprise Agreement stop."

The grievance is not new, following three reports over the past 18 months which all found evidence that the overwhelming majority of casual staff perform unpaid work due to the payment of marking, administration and preparation work at a piece rate rather than an hourly rate.

While staff are contracted a set amount of time for each task, this doesn't cover the amount of time needed to complete them to an acceptable standard. Staff are allotted only 15 minutes to mark and provide feedback for 1000 word essays, forcing them to perform unpaid work in

order to maintain quality education for students.

Furthermore, the Casuals Network claims that the marking of essays requiring significant academic judgement has been paid at the incorrect rate, meaning that 21,407 marking hours have been misclassified and gone underpaid.

The University of Sydney is the latest in a string of universities accused of wage theft as casualisation soars in the sector. Grievances have been raised at University of Melbourne, RMIT, University of Western Australia, and the University of New South Wales.

"We are in the throes of a reckoning across Australian universities with regard to the super-exploitation of the sector's most precariously employed staff," Dr Boncardo said.

"This reckoning has now come to the University of Sydney. We demand management immediately end its systematic underpayment of casual academic staff and remunerate them for unpaid wages".

NTEU Casuals Representative, Dani Cotton, said: "The 'Uberfication' of the university sector has to stop. With so much casual work going unpaid, this impacts not only our ability to pay our bills during this pandemic, but the quality of the education we are able to deliver."

JCU academic fails in free-speech dispute

ARIANA HAGHIGHI

Physicist Peter Ridd was unsuccessful in his free-speech dispute with James Cook University despite support from the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU). The High Court recently dismissed his appeal, branded "all-or-nothing".

Ridd, an employee of 27 years, was fired from James Cook after his public comments on the Great Barrier Reef were found to constitute a breach of the university's code of conduct as outlined by the enterprise agreement. In 2017, Ridd told Sky News that scientists are too emotionally attached to the Reef,

meaning "you can no longer trust their stuff."

Ridd's argument for appeal surrounded conserving the sanctity of intellectual freedom as enshrined in the enterprise agreements. Despite the appeal's dismissal, the High Court held that the enterprise agreements protected academics from censure for their "honestly held opinions", but Ridd's opinion was considered denigrating towards fellow staff.

The High Court held that this intellectual freedom protection enshrined in Clause 14 did not mitigate the "requirement to afford respect and courtesy in the manner of this exercise".

The Court also concluded that Ridd broke James Cook's directive of confidentiality by publicly opposing the university disciplinary process.

Matthew McGowan, the general secretary of the NTEU, stated that the union's enterprise agreements thus stood as the "only legal remedy to protect academic and intellectual freedom". He claims that the NTEU supports academic freedom, even in cases of "statements that are controversial or unpopular".

As a new round of enterprise bargaining negotiations begin at James Cook, the NTEU will continue to fight for these agreements to defend academic intellectual freedom.

Students charged double for mathematics units

JEFFREY KHOO

The University of Sydney is reclassifying its fees for 2022 after students in certain 3000-level mathematics units were charged double the amount they were supposed to.

Commonwealth-supported students in the units MATH3078 PDEs and Waves, MATH3978 PDEs and Waves (Advanced), MATH3974 Fluid Dynamics (Advanced) and MATH3977 Lagrangian and Hamiltonian Dynamics (Adv) found they were being charged \$993 per unit, while their other MATH-coded units cost \$493 per unit.

Fees for students in Commonwealth-supported places — which comprise the majority of domestic students — differ based on each unit, not a student's

degree.

Mathematics units are classified in the cheapest Band 1 (\$3950 for an equivalent full-time study load, or \$493 per unit), while science and engineering units were classified in Band 2 (\$7950 for a full-time load, or \$993 per unit).

This is the case for both commencing students (who are under the new Job-Ready Graduates Package) and existing students (who pay "grandfathered" fees according to the previous system) in 2021.

But while the government sets fees for each discipline, USyd recommended classifying the 3000-level MATH units in question as "science" or "engineering" units due to their applied nature, meaning they would fall into the more expensive Band 2.

After SRC President Swapnik

Sanagavarapu raised the issue with the university, a University of Sydney spokesperson confirmed that these units would be classified into Band 1 for students in 2022, but could not "retrospectively" change fees for existing students.

Existing students in these units are due to pay \$993

This means that existing students in these units are due to pay the \$993 listed on their Commonwealth Assistance Notice (CAN), despite the University acknowledging that it would be "more appropriate" to classify them "in line" with other maths units which cost \$493.

Honi has also confirmed that their

4000-level counterparts (MATH4078 PDEs and Applications, MATH4074 Fluid Dynamics and MATH4077 Lagrangian and Hamiltonian Dynamics) cost \$493 per unit, further highlighting this inconsistency.

A University of Sydney spokesperson said this was because "the 3000 and 4000 level units were proposed several years apart by different sets of academics and professional staff," but did not address why a review was not undertaken earlier.

The fine print on each CAN says that students must contact the HECS and Domestic Fees Office at hecs.office@sydney.edu.au within 14 days of the issue of the notice if they believe there is an error.

USyd alumni launches class action to fight for PhD wages

MAXIM SHANAHAN

University of Sydney Classics PhD graduate Tristan Burt has launched a class action against the Commonwealth, arguing that PhD students should be classified as employees rather than students.

Presently, PhD students on the Commonwealth Research Training Program (RTP) scholarships receive stipends, with most universities awarding the minimum amount of approximately \$29,000 per annum.

However, according to the Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines, students on the RTP scheme are required to spend a minimum two-thirds of their time performing research work. Burt argues that PhD students are essentially being paid below minimum wage to perform research work which counts towards Australia's Research & Development statistical reporting to the OECD.

Burt told *Honi* that the Commonwealth's scholarship guidelines were "structured as employment relationships" but have kept the scholarships "bundled up in the notion of a stipend or scholarship to try and suggest that it is somehow not falling within

the umbrella of employment." As a result, PhD students can be paid below the minimum wage through the stipend system despite working as researchers.

In a statement of claim issued to the Fair Work Division of the Federal Court, Burt and the members of his class action will argue that "it is axiomatic that this supervised research work...could not be undertaken by trainee researchers but rather only by highly trained researchers capable therefore of performing 'research work'" and that "the supervised research work... did not comprise 'education and training.'"

There is some precedent for the view that PhD students should be classified as employees. In the 1982 case of *Rowe v Capital Territory Health Commission*, the Federal Court found that — in the context of student nurses — the granting of a government scholarship was not incompatible with classification as an employee.

As far back as the 1970s, concerns were raised in parliament over the adequacy of support payment to postgraduate research students. Since that time, the stipend level has stagnated to the point that it is now approximately two-thirds of

the minimum wage. The low stipend has implications for the accessibility of research degrees, limiting their availability to those with financial and family circumstances that allow them to earn below minimum wage for a number of years.

In many European countries, PhD students are classified as employees of their institution and are remunerated accordingly.

In recent years, the University of Sydney has increased its stipend rate to a level close to the minimum wage. However, the vast majority of universities continue to award the minimum allowable rate.

Burt told *Honi* that the government is "holding the purse strings and that the pressure that is then put upon the universities leads to all of these practices. That is why the case has been taken against the Commonwealth."

Honi editors return to office

SAMUEL GARRETT

After 112 days of a lockdown-enforced SRC office closure, the doubly-vaccinated editors of *Honi Soit* have made a joyous return to the dungeons of the Wentworth Building.

This edition was laid up using the wonders of five hitherto-unused iMacs the SRC purchased in June, days before Sydney's Delta-strain coronavirus outbreak forced a statewide lockdown.

The last nine editions have been laid up remotely, using the wonders of VPN-accessible servers and 16-hour long Zoom calls. General consensus among the editorial group is that the experience was "so sad."

Honi editor Marlow Hurst told *Honi*: "It's been a huge day for everyone. We're excited to be using the resources of the SRC offices and decidedly not lingering or socialising. The editors are back!"

Print editions have continued despite the lockdown, with a reduced 500-copy run. 352 readers across 182 Sydney suburbs and six states have signed-up to receive free weekly copies of *Honi* in the post under a new initiative.

With restrictions easing, students have begun a gradual return to campus, though capacity limits, COVID Safe check-ins, and mask-wearing remain.

Nevertheless, there is no basement in which we'd rather be.

Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney

Meeting of the Representatives-elect of the 94th Students' Representative Council

A meeting of Representatives-elect of the 94th SRC will be held on Wednesday 20th October at 5pm via ZOOM.

To join, contact: secretary.council@src.usyd.edu.au

The following positions are open to nomination from members of the undergraduate student body:

Vice-President
General Secretary
Education Officer
Wom*n's Officer
Two Disabilities and Carers Officers
Two Environment Officers
Two Ethno-Cultural Officers
Two Global Solidarity Officers
Two Indigenous Students' Officers
Two Inter-Campus Officers
*Two Inter-Campus Committee members**
Two Interfaith Officers
Two International Students' Officers
Two Mature-Age Students' Officers
Two Queer Officers
Two Refugee Rights Officers

Two Residential College Officers
Two Sexual Harassment Officers
Two Social Justice Officers
*Two Standing Legal Committee members**
Two Student Housing Officers
Two Welfare Officers
Chairperson of the Standing Legal Committee
Six Directors of Student Publications

The following positions are open to nomination from representatives of the 94th Council:
Five Executive members

**must be a member of council. To be considered you must be either an elected representative, an office bearer or an ex officio member.*

Positions in *italic* cannot be shared (SRC Regulations Part One Section 3d). All other positions may be split ONCE only (Part One Section 3c).

Nominations shall be taken from the floor at the meeting. However, nomination forms may be submitted in advance online at: srcusyd.net.au/elections

Descriptions of positions are found within the Regulations of the SRC available on the SRC website: srcusyd.net.au/about-us/constitution-regulations

Note: Part One Section 4b. states:

Where an Officer position is split and shared between two members of the student body it shall only be considered held by a woman, for the purposes of Part 1 Section 4 (a) of the Regulations, if both of the joining members of the student body do not identify as cis-males.



Magpie mayhem as students swooped outside Fisher

SAMUEL GARRETT
& CLAIRE OLLIVAIN
ART BY ELLIE STEPHENSON

Avoid the 'target area' at all costs.

The Australian magpie usually eats worms and insects, but during swooping season on campus there is only one prey that matters: students.

According to Magpie Alert's Magpie Swooping Map, there has been just one campus attack this year when 'Sophia' was swooped while walking on 28 September outside the Anderson Stuart Building. Fortunately, she was not injured.

However, *Honi* has received multiple reports that suggest swoopings are much more common. Evidence suggests that the primary suspect is a male Australian Magpie living in and around the fig trees outside Fisher Library and the Anderson Stuart Building.

Seth was FaceTiming near the Moreton Bay fig tree outside Fisher Library when he was swooped. He told *Honi*: "It was very scary, I had to then run while on FaceTime into the library and do my COVID sign-in while being harassed by this magpie."

"For the first time in my life, I had a positive-ish interaction with USyd security. They were like 'are you okay? I just saw that' and I was like 'yeah, I'm fine.'"

Seth maintained that he doesn't hold any grudge toward the magpie: "I really love magpies, I think they're really amazing birds. I understand where they are coming from."

Alice had a similar experience. She told *Honi*: "My friend and I were just sitting on Eastern Ave, minding our own business, sipping our Mango LaCroix before heading into the library when I saw a magpie sitting in the tree opposite us."

"I'd heard about this malicious magpie before (his reputation precedes him) so was instantly cautious and backed away. And yet the magpie flew

out of the tree and straight towards us! We ducked and narrowly avoided its razor-sharp beak but quite frankly it was terrifying."

Xavier was swooped on the Quad lawns outside the Great Hall while on a Zoom class last Wednesday: "I was swooped out of nowhere just sitting by myself, and I moved, but they followed me. I had to keep getting up to shoo them away from me, and after a while I chose to just leave."

Like Seth, Xavier generously holds "no ill feelings — I know they're just trying to protect the nest. It's hard out here though, for both parties."

Despite their reputation, only a small proportion of magpies attack people, says Professor Darryl Jones, a behavioural ecologist and magpie expert at Griffith University.

According to Jones, swoopings occur only in the six weeks when chicks are in the nest.

"It's just what they would do if a snake or goanna was approaching. I would suspect that the tree has a nest and that's the cause of the drama."

So, what's the best defence against a malevolent magpie? "An umbrella is the simplest method. They almost always swoop from behind so if one buzzes you, turn and face it and walk out of the zone."

"The male is probably stressed out of its mind with all these threats so it could do anything. But don't hassle it or retaliate; that will only make matters worse."

Professor David Phalen, from the USyd School of Veterinary Science, agreed: "One cannot stop magpies from swooping."

In a statement, a University spokesperson said: "We recently became aware of a magpie swooping on campus and are currently installing signs to notify people in the target area."

Honi understands that magpies have swooped students during springtime around Fisher Library for years.

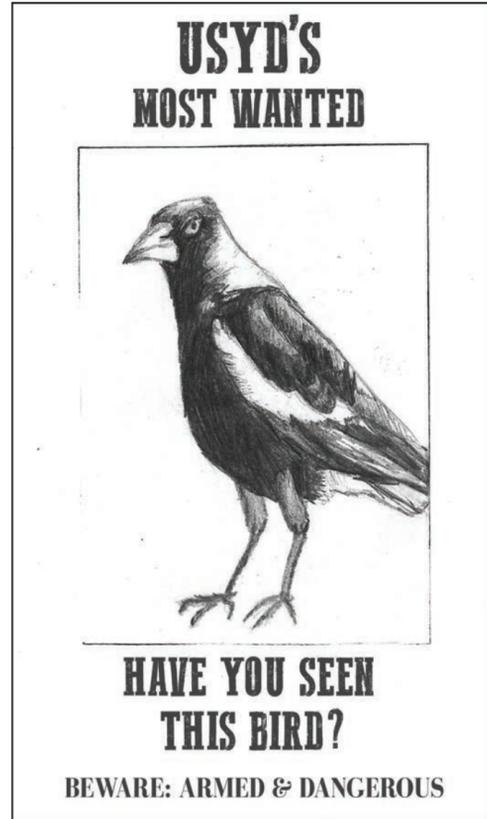
The surge in magpie swoopings

on campus is a reminder in our anthropocentric world that students share the space with many creatures that have different uses of the urban environment to our own.

"Our campus is home to a variety of animals, from magpies to possums and even a protected species of swallow that nests in the Quad every year. We aim to treat them all with respect and leave them undisturbed," a University

spokesperson said.

When asked whether urban living is encroaching on magpies, Professor Jones said: "This is one situation where the wildlife says 'Urbanisation? Bring it on!' Cities are literally magpie heaven: endless well-watered lawns and food everywhere, with a few tall trees to nest in. There are way more magpies in cities than in the bush."



Not everything is a campus mystery

MARLOW HURST
ART BY SHANIA O'BRIEN

The disappointing reality of a campus curio.

It will not go out of my mind that if we pass this post and lantern, either we shall find strange adventures or else some great changes of our fortunes."

So said Lucy Pevensie of Narnia's lamp-post. A shining beacon that marks the beginning of the Pevensie kingdom and burns all day and all night, requiring no gas, no ignition, and no maintenance.

At the top of the stairs at the end of Victoria Park, and off to the left, there proudly stands a solitary streetlamp emitting an alluring pink glow. A similar feeling to that which Lucy felt struck me when I first laid eyes upon the pink streetlamp that adorns this bend of University Avenue. It wasn't necessarily because of its unique colour or the circumstances in which I first saw it, rather, the mystery of it all made me think a strange adventure of my own was about to commence.

It's easy to romanticise the University of Sydney. Its buildings, history, and cultural pedigree lend itself to lore crafting and mythologising. So, surely this pink streetlamp has as interesting an explanation as the many other curios on Camperdown Campus? Perhaps, like the lamp-post in Narnia, it too is a landmark. If you consider its position, it could be the border between Sydney and campus proper for those approaching through Victoria Park. Sitting just below Fisher Library, it might have been erected in some bygone colonial land dispute, similar to the road studs you see slicing through Baarle-Hertog/Nassau or the Deakin Obelisk that demarcates WA from the rest of us. But there was

nothing to support this idea.

Maybe, then, it had more to do with the unique connotations and applications of pink light. University Avenue might have once been a den of sin and hedonism, the rosy glow welcoming visitors to Sydney's only academia-themed red light district: university gown strip teases, live readings of ancient erotic poetry, and the mechanisation of sexual pleasures by our dear STEM peers. Similar to my original theory, this too was destined for failure.

SURELY it must be a relic of an early grow light greenhouse then, considering that LED grow lights are traditionally a purpley pink. No again!

So, of course, I arrived at the most reasonable conclusion, this was a consequence of the street light interference phenomenon, a term coined by paranormal author Hilary Evans who alleges that certain individuals have the power to interfere with, or deactivate, streetlights. Perhaps this pink colouring is a result of some past interference...or even ongoing interference. Amongst the student body or perhaps even the faculty, there may very well be an individual (or some sinister cabal) capable of this awesome feat. Well, the many professors of electrical engineering, metaphysics, and biology said otherwise. I'll have to take their word for it.

There was one lead that was more promising and decidedly less supernatural. In the grand canal city of Venice, you can see a number of pink streetlamps dotted throughout the Piazza San Marco. Their pink hue is supposedly attributed to the natural colour of Murano glass (named after Venice's own Murano island), but their exact origin and purpose are a mystery to me. Could the University of Sydney's own pink streetlamp then be connected



to Venice's? Mayhaps an opportunistic USyd exchange student saw fit to bring home a souvenir from St. Mark's square, or, if you're a real truthseeker, maybe Venice used to be a part of Camperdown Campus itself?

For all my theories, propositions, and ponderings, I didn't even come close. From the very beginning, I had decided that this was a campus mystery. Something in the vein of ibis babies or Quadrangle tunnels. But a part of investigating anything is realising that not everything is a thing. Not every campus curiosity is the tip of some occult conspiracy iceberg. That was certainly true for my pointlessly fascinating streetlamp.

According to a University spokesperson, they believe "this particular light is casting a pink glow because the bulb's element is approaching the end of its life. As the beam is still strong we won't replace the bulb just yet, but will keep an eye out for when it might need changing."

Some things just are, without purpose or meaning, beyond the auspices of cabals, cults, and conspirators alike. This streetlamp is broken, but Lucy Pevensie's words are no less true. I most certainly had a strange adventure, and it's safe to say there was a great change in my fortunes too. A mystery can just as much be about how you resolve it as what it resolves to be.

Missing Wilko: two campuses, two degrees

KIMMI TONKIN

Longing to be back in a brutalist building in lockdown.

If you were to ask me maybe 4 months ago, maybe even 6 weeks ago how the Wilkinson Building made me feel, I'd screw up my face and probably exhale the type of quiet screech you hear when your ears are playing up. But after more than 100 days of lockdown, I suppose I would do almost anything to get back into that concrete jungle.

My disdain from the Wilkinson building was birthed out of my own inability to say goodbye to the beautiful Neoclassical facades of the quadrangle, the fun styling through Courtyard Cafe and Holme Building. When I studied a BA, the stroll through Eastern Avenue from one class to the next, although immensely anxiety-inducing, was all I needed to get my daily 10k steps.

Now in the on-and-off 20 months I've spent as an architecture student, I've found myself making any excuse to go onto "main campus", dreading the harsh incandescent lighting of Homebase and fleeing to the dark depths of the Cellar Theatre. There's a harsh differentiation between the degrees I was doing, where now as a BDes student I have a cohort and it's a lot easier to feel as though you belong to something. As a BA student, I was just another student of the faceless masses. I'm very grateful for the friends I have made, and for the 6 months I was able to see them regularly. With any luck, we'll all be able to do so again soon, even if it means being trapped within a building that screams Brutality.

But while my BA and BDes differ in architectural aesthetic, substantially, the biggest difference is in accessibility and equity, or lack-there-of. In times like lockdown, especially as second and most likely third-year students, we rely on our skills as architects, and not our readily accessible 3D printers, laser-cutters, our

computer labs and workshop. Lockdown has been hard for everyone, but I've felt the comfort in knowing that the disparity in marks amongst my peers is more dependent on our abilities, and less about our money or steady hands. Unfortunately for many of us, irregardless of degree, being full time students doesn't always correlate well with working part time.

My tutor says "everything in moderation" as I tell her I want Roman terrazzo walls in my next studio assignment. After our crit I'm whispering to myself "P's get Degrees". Ironic isn't it, when the standard of architecture we are standing in is caked in stucco, built with (unrecyclable) reinforced concrete and stained in bird shit. Scream. Moderation was definitely not on Leslie Wilkinson's mind.

And look, although walking into the building washes you with stress you didn't know you had, the building is brimmed with natural light, humbling laughter and the occasional Korean BBQ. The equilibrium between good and bad has

epitomised itself within the Wilkinson Building, which a BA could not even dare compete with. It's in this building where I would pull faces at mates across the void when class was getting a bit repetitive, and when we'd all meet at a certain time to "refill our water bottles" and chat shit.

It's in the computer labs where I'd panic to print off our panels before our presentation. It's in the DMAf Lab where we would "solder-on" in our late night classes. It's in homebase, where we're all on the brink of tears, staring at their own incredible work while I return to my desk muttering "it's not much, but it's honest work". It's here where I love going, even if it means closing my eyes until I get inside.

Brutalist architecture is brutal to the eye, but lockdown can change people. A little about my journey from an arts student who would use the neoclassical buildings on the north side of city road to where I am now; just a girl, wondering how we got here.

Stained history: the University's great glass hall

SHANIA O'BRIEN AND SAM EAMES

On a symphony of light.

We walk through the university in the fading afternoon light and watch the sun set fire to the stained-glass windows in the Quadrangle. We sit there long after the colours pale and look at the windows, radiant splendour morphing into something muted.

The Great Hall has sixteen stained-glass windows. They were originally commissioned by Sir Charles Nicholson in 1858, a graduate of Edinburgh University. The windows hark back to the ancient traditions of Oxford and Cambridge, those at the East and West ends of the hall depicting the colleges and their founders along with their respective courts of arms. An alcove beside the dais is adorned with royal windows consisting of a large central panel on the north wall, and smaller ones high up on the eastern and western walls. These great windows

paint portraits of the colleges of Oxbridge and the figures traditionally associated with their founding, though there are multiple discrepancies between fact and fiction. For instance, under the 'University College' section, the date and person listed are of the 9th century, the time of King Alfred the Great, though the college was actually founded in 1249 by William of Durham.

The production of stained glass is time-honoured. Coloured glass amulets and beads uncovered in Egypt and Mesopotamia trace the practice back to 2500 BC. The artform flourished in medieval times, with the Christian Church re-popularising the practice with ecclesiastic imagery.

To make a plate of stained glass, an almost-alchemical reaction is undertaken. Crushing soda ash, sand, and limestone inside a forge, a molten mixture of transparent glass is produced. By introducing metals into the cauldron, colour is infused within the glass. The combinations and interactions of these materials are esoteric. Adding gold will give you a deep ruby, but too little will leave

you with a weak cranberry-red. Nickel alone can offer a clear blue, however when further combined with lead the glass takes on a purple glow. The art of producing different shades was historically kept secret, with glass forges having specialised clandestine practises.

Until recently, there has been no physical answer to the difference in colours of stained glass. Optical microscopes are unable to detect any difference in structure between similar sets of glass, and so the secrets of glassmaking have remained obscured. In 1981, microscopists finally caught up to the elusive glass artisans, with top-of-the-line equipment capable of measuring individual atoms. It was finally revealed that the source of the colours were tiny nanoscale shapes, particles of different metals a thousandth of the size of human cells.

In *The Gothic Buildings of the University of Sydney* by Bertha McKenzie, a detailed account of each window is provided. The motto of the Colony of New South Wales is above the Oxford Window — *Sic fortis Etruria crevit*, or

'thus strong Etruria prospered' — but that is hardly surprising considering the remaining windows immortalise the likes of James Cook, Edmund Burke, and the British monarchy. The Cambridge Window, donated by Sir Daniel Cooper, has a motto that reads *couper fait grandir* — 'cutting down makes for growth.'

Yet despite the colonial bent, like that on display in the Hall, the beauty of stained glass comes from something deeper than the motifs on their surface. Countless nanoparticles work in concert to produce a symphony of light, brought alive not by its cold surface and stone-walled frame, but by the rays of the sun which shine through it day-in and day-out. This glass gallery is more dynamic and vibrant than a series of paintings, being innately tied to the natural world that lies outside the silent walls of the Hall. As we sit and watch the light fade, we are buoyed by the knowledge that this gallery of light will open tomorrow at daybreak, and the splendour of the windows will come alive once again.

Fare work: train drivers on strike

LUKE CASS

Liberal governments have a long history of neoliberal transport planning and ignoring worker demands.

Members of the Rail, Tram & Bus Union (RTBU) working for Sydney and NSW went on strike on 28 September. For four hours, a “full stoppage” left just a handful of services running for essential workers. For the RTBU, the decision was reluctant. It was the culmination of a week of escalating action, with actions invisible to the public such as a ban on graffiti cleaning and an overtime ban making way for more disruptive protests including driving at reduced speeds and honking their horns. All of these actions come as a response to the state government’s refusal to accept the RTBU’s requests in ongoing enterprise bargaining. Unfortunately, this refusal is unsurprising. Consecutive Liberal governments have a long history of adherence to neoliberal transport planning and of ignoring worker demands. Substituting publicly utile infrastructure policy with superficial budget-oriented planning, a decade-long pursuit of neoliberalism has given NSW an inadequate rail network with significant economic and personal costs. The election of Dominic Perrottet, who is well versed in asset-recycling against the public’s best interests, should only increase the urgency of support for the striking train drivers and the RTBU more generally.

For six months, the RTBU has been negotiating an Enterprise Bargaining

Agreement (EBA) with management for NSW and Sydney trains. Twin issues of safety and payment are causes for dispute. Despite the union’s concerns that guards are essential for safety, the government is pushing ahead with the roll out of a new class of intercity trains that forego them in favour of CCTV monitoring by drivers. Union demands to make COVID-19 cleaning staff permanent have also been denied, in a concerning move for public health. The RTBU is also demanding a 3.5% yearly pay rise, with the government only offering 0.3% in the first year of the agreement, and 2.6% thereafter. Even before a recent spike which has taken it to above 3%, Australia’s inflation rate has been steady at 2.7%. Anything less than the union’s demands would represent a real pay cut, weakening the finances of some of the economy’s most valuable employees.

The obvious human benefit of the union’s demands would stand in contrast to the historic treatment of rail workers by management. January 2018, when Sydney’s famously reliable trains were struck by “indefinite delays”, was a peak in the increasing demands placed on train drivers. The state had hired, and still hires, too few drivers working too many hours for not enough money. When workers have previously tried to strike, they have been unable to express their concerns. The Fair Work Commission prohibited a planned RTBU strike in 2018 and more recently allowed NSW Trains to unilaterally alter the established EBA, in a decision described by RTBU secretary Alex Claassens as “fail[ing] working people, plain and simple.” In abstaining from purchasing enough modern trains

and increasing the capacity of rail infrastructure, the state government has pushed its burden of easing overcrowding onto transport workers who were already working significant amounts of overtime. This is not just bad policy but heightens the state’s moral obligation to remunerate workers for the crucial role they undertake, especially considering the restrictions placed on workers expressing their demands.

Properly funding workers and the rail network is hugely advantageous for NSW as a whole. Rail is essential to the state economy’s productivity and overall mobility. It is particularly important for many vulnerable people living far from the CBD. Efficient rail transport has flow on effects in reducing congestion and the acute impact of car use on the environment. To the extent that workers are prerequisites to these benefits, and poor conditions tangibly impede their ability to fulfill this role, paying rail workers makes economic sense.

While staff are at the locus of the present debate, the government’s treatment of workers is emblematic of a wider neoliberal attitude to transport that is highly damaging. Led by the recently departed Gladys Berejiklian, the decision to convert the Sydenham to Bankstown stretch of the T3 line appears bizarrely inefficient considering its comparatively low need for investment compared to other suburban lines. Bizarre, unless you consider the massive potential for unequal developer-led growth that the metro will provide.

The worst example of the relentless pursuit of a surplus went shockingly underreported. An accounting trick

worth \$40 billion, the Transport Asset Holding Entity (TAHE) was conceived by state Liberals as a way of artificially inflating the state’s budget by pretending the costs of the public transport system weren’t theirs to pay. With Perrottet as the key government stakeholder, TAHE represents highly dishonest decision-making that has had poor outcomes. Ongoing parliamentary committee hearings have found that TAHE undercharged its customers by \$700 million to protect the budget illusion, while paying its CEO a half-million-dollar salary. Most perniciously, the RTBU and state Labor fear that TAHE represents a significant safety risk. A risk which the government has been warned of, but has seemingly ignored. There is a serious problem when a government decides to search for a surplus so desperately that it would ignore reports ostensibly formulated to save lives after the deadly twin rail disasters of the late 1990s.

The privatisation of Sydney Ferries with the accompanying cost increases and loss of iconic Manly ferries, as well as Sydney’s network of toll roads show that this problem extends well beyond the state’s trains. With privatisation as the beating heart of the state government’s neoliberalism, it does not appear to be a problem which will resolve itself. We should call out and oppose this method of managing public transport and rail in particular. In the meantime, train workers and the RTBU getting what they are asking for would do a great deal of good.

The masked face of biometric COVID policing

JASPAR MCCAHOH-BOERSMA

Facial recognition programs legitimise a dangerous policing system.

Australian states have begun widespread trialing and implementation of home quarantine programs that use facial recognition and GPS data to monitor and enforce quarantine restrictions for overseas arrivals. In the context of rapidly expanding electronic surveillance programs and police abuse of COVID-19 health data, there are concerns these systems will play an ugly role in normalising biometric policing on an unprecedented national scale, placing marginalised communities and activists at greater risk.

The quarantine trials mark the most recent instalments in a whirlwind federal expansion of biometric and conventional data collection, surveillance, and usage over the last five years. Notable milestones include the creation of Facial Matching Services by numerous state police departments, the usage of incredibly invasive *FinFisher* spyware by NSW Police, and the mass expansion of data surveillance capabilities in the recent federal Identify and Disrupt Bill.

Legislation for the creation of a vast, federally centralised police facial recognition database called “The Capability”, failed in 2019 because of vague usage terms and lack of legal safeguards.

Nevertheless, individual states have taken to implementing their own versions while updated legislation is drafted.

Privacy experts and activists have sounded the alarm, criticising the rapid expansion of police powers and pointing to its glaring lack of regulation. The Australian Human Rights Commission has called for a moratorium on biometric systems in policing, law enforcement, and social security.

Yet even in this landscape, the introduction of facial recognition-based health programs presents a distinctly concerning development.

Crucially, the programs further blur the line between health and policing data. Police having access to supposedly ‘private’ health data is nothing new, and recent revelations that several state police departments accessed COVID-19 check-in data for unrelated criminal investigations have buried the illusion. Facial recognition quarantine programs are critically under-regulated, with no inbuilt protections against police access to data. While not only grossly violating peoples’ rights to the privacy of their most intimate information, police access undermines genuine public health programs for fear of undisclosed intelligence sharing.

In addition is the way that quarantine programs “help to normalise the use of facial recognition software for policing,” as denounced by UNSW Scientia Professor of Artificial Intelligence Toby Walsh.

There’s a media problem, but not the kind that anti-lockdown protesters would have you think

CARMELIA ARGANA

Analysing the July 24 ‘freedom’ protests.

After months of the toughest lockdown NSW has ever seen, last Monday’s ‘Freedom Day’ was celebrated with visits to the local bar, picnics with friends from other local government areas, and many other now-completely-legal events.

But just a few months ago, the term ‘freedom’ had very different connotations from long-awaited festivities. ‘Freedom’ was the resounding cry of protesters who spilled out onto the streets of Sydney’s CBD on July 24. The protesters had a number of grievances, but one in particular was the role of mainstream media in spreading ‘fake news’.

It’s easy to dismiss such criticisms when coming from people who put the health and safety of the whole state at risk out of some misguided sense of injustice. But it’s true that the media often uses its platform to shape public consciousness. As consumers, we should remain critical of the media we consume to uncover these agendas.

After analysing hours of clips from Channels 7, 9, 10, ABC, SBS and Sky News’ Youtube channels, here’s what I uncovered. **Overwhelmingly negative coverage** Unsurprisingly, all six broadcasters condemned the protests. The negative tone is consistent with public sentiment and the law at the time, especially in the context of rising case numbers.

However, problems arise in the selection of footage. It was evident that Channels 7, 9 and 10 particularly favoured

more provocative images; clips of anti-vax signage, grabs of protesters calling journalists ‘sheep’, and upside down Australian flags dominated the coverage, which have been associated with far-right conspiracies.

Dr Margaret Van Heekeren, a Media and Communications lecturer at the University of Sydney, said that commercial media is more cost-driven than public broadcasters, which results in more “sensational” coverage.

“Journalists are always looking for conflict. Protests are conflict, so it is always going to be newsworthy. And the larger it is, the more newsworthy it is,” she said.

As a result, the overrepresentation of these images subsumes the various grievances of protesters into an overarching discourse, rooted in anti-vaccine sentiment and far-right conspiracies.

Discipline vs accountability

Mainstream media represented police dealing with protesters as heroes, facing projectiles, being covered in black ink and tackling violent attendees. It’s image rehabilitation for a police force who cracked down on multicultural communities in Southwestern Sydney.

Commercial broadcasters instead chose to expose individual protesters. One Channel 10 story saw journalists chasing after protesters and revealing one interviewee’s full name in a lower third text.

Van Heekeren said that mainstream media, especially commercial outlets controlled by media empires, will likely support elite interests over the interests of ordinary people: “News upholds the status quo. It supports stories that don’t lead to a

potential breakdown of society.”

This raises another question about whether revealing the identities of rule-breakers is in the public interest, like the Queensland women who tested positive for COVID-19 after breaching quarantine rules last year. Too often, the media’s function of exposing wrongdoing is directed at disciplining individuals without institutional protection, rather than holding the powerful to account.

The invisible ‘authority’ voice

It wasn’t just police who escaped criticism; governments and their negligence which fuelled a second lockdown in NSW were left unscathed.

Across the coverage, grabs from press conferences of state and federal politicians were used to rebuke protesters. Memorably, NSW Police Minister David Elliot called attendees “very selfish boofheads”.

However, by being positioned in the role of the authority spokesperson, politicians become invisible to criticism. In his book *Television Culture* (1987), media scholar John Fiske suggests that through “exnomination”, perspectives of elites are subsumed into the “objective” voice of the newsreader and their actions are rendered invisible in a conflict.

This positioning neglects to acknowledge the gaps in the COVID Disaster Payment, for example, which left many workers and students on existing welfare payments behind during a financially challenging lockdown. These concerns from protesters were largely ignored.

Those that were left behind

Unfortunately, empathetic and nuanced reporting for those worst affected by the

known to chronically and disproportionately misidentify women and people of colour — a product of an institutionally racist and sexist tech industry that coded the programs in the first place. Being a potential determinant of increasingly militarised police showing up at someone’s door, it’s not difficult to see how expanded and normalised usage of discriminatory AI tools like facial recognition can exacerbate police brutality and repression against already marginalised communities.

Those in opposition to government and police practice also stand as likely targets of increased repression. Activists, journalists, and whistleblowers who actively challenge the state are crucial targets for state monitoring. Considering police have all but explicitly stated their intention to use facial recognition to identify protestors, alongside raids on investigative journalists and tireless campaigns against corporate and intelligence whistleblowers, it seems inevitable that those seeking to expose the worst rot of the state will be amongst the first to have their cameras trained on their faces.

The introduction of facial recognition for home quarantine reflects a sad paradigm of advanced technology. Innovations with the potential for mass public health gain when genuinely used in the service of human need, may well play a leading role in facilitating the repression of those striving for it.

Here’s where USyd lives

SAMUEL GARRETT

Mapping the student population.

Data provided to Honi by the University illustrates significant overrepresentation of the North Shore and Eastern Suburbs among the student body.

There are 38,653 undergraduate students at the University of Sydney.

26,053 are spread across 96 New South Wales Local Government Areas (LGAs).

12,296 (52%) are not matched to an LGA, typically international students with overseas addresses listed in Sydney Student, or, more rarely, domestic students with PO boxes or misspelt addresses. A further 324 (0.8%) have interstate addresses.

Many are unsurprisingly concentrated near campus, with the City of Sydney and Inner West LGAs home to almost a quarter of all students. Geographically, students are otherwise relatively evenly distributed around the city.

However, comparing student numbers to the general population of each LGA tells a very different story.

Compared to their populations, every Western Sydney LGA is underrepresented on campus.

Affluent LGAs on the North Shore such as Mosman, Lane Cove and Hunters Hill, as well as the Eastern Suburbs LGAs

of Woollahra and Waverley, are heavily overrepresented as a proportion of their populations, indicative of significant class disparities within the student body.

Mosman residents are five times more likely to be attending USyd compared to Blacktown residents.

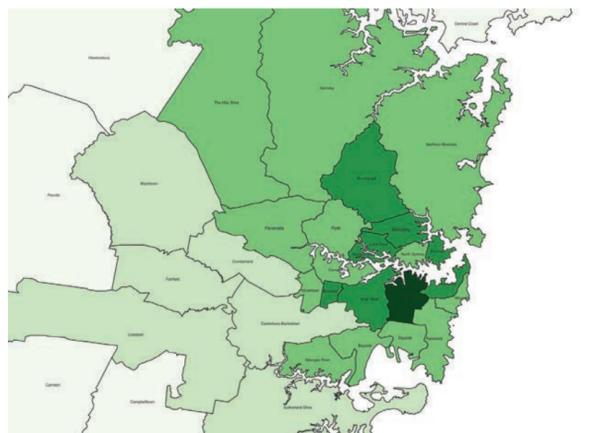
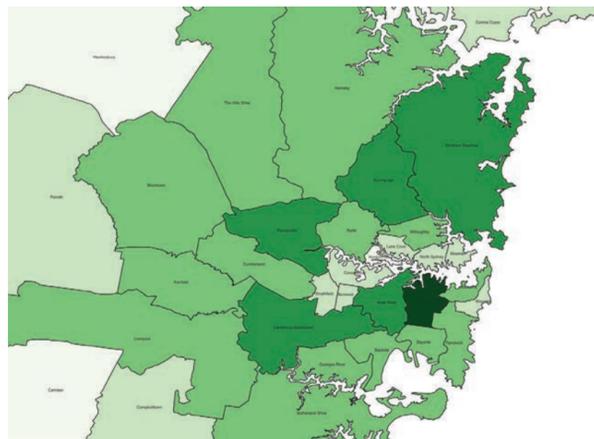
Adjusted for population, the ten most represented LGAs of students are the City of Sydney, Burwood, Hunters Hill, Mosman, Ku-ring-gai, Woollahra, Inner West, Willoughby, Lane Cove and Strathfield.

Overall, the ten most common LGAs of students are the City of Sydney (4153), Inner West (1811), Canterbury-Bankstown (1505), Ku-ring-gai (1365), Northern Beaches (1276), Parramatta (1254), Hornsby (905), The Hills Shire (875), Georges River (875) and Blacktown (861).

The distribution of the student body also largely reflects that of Honi readers.

Above: LGAs by total students

Below: Adjusted for population



LEAH BRUCE & JENAE MADDEN
ART BY SHIMMY

Stucco's history re-imagined.

The conventional history of Stucco begins with the trite tale of an abandoned glass factory. A glass factory turned squatters' den, turned legitimate University of Sydney owned, but not operated, accommodation. It's an interesting tale of successful collective student action, radical democratic self management and sticking the middle finger to an increasingly competitive rental market of the inner-city suburbs in its first waves of yuppification. And, yet this tale is one that ends, oddly enough, when the co-operative begins.

But history told in this way reduces Stucco to its mere origins, and overlooks three decades of colourful residents and their ongoing allegiance to keep the co-operative alive. The Wikipedia page, reportage online and even the odd, fleeting mention in the *Honi* archives, all fail to articulate what makes Stucco so treasured to those who come to live within its walls. Unfortunately, as trite as it were, not everyone will come across the University's co-op during their degree. So, I guess before the tale is retired and rewritten, let us give the obligatory Stucco brief history.

Our tale begins in 1985. Gorbachev becomes Soviet leader, and *Tears for Fears* plays in the distance from a Sony Walkman. On the top floor of the University of Sydney's Manning Bar, a bunch of architecture students meet every second Monday as the 'Sydney University Housing Co-operative', later to be known as 'Stucco.' They are drawing up the plans for a new, alternative type of affordable housing. The 'co-operative' model, as it were, imagined residents as shareholders, working for the building. It was revolutionary, anti-capitalist and sexy.

After years of lobbying, in 1988, Stucco were awarded funds by the Department of Housing and, surprisingly, the University of Sydney, to purchase the old F.W. Gissing's glass factory on Wilson Street.

The building too had a radical history. Abandoned sometime in the mid-century, the old warehouse was prime estate in the 70s for anarchist squatters. Stucco came to life as student accommodation, as a living, breathing co-operative in 1991. And so often here the story closes, neatly ending, just when it gets interesting.

Every new resident enters Stucco as one person and leaves having metamorphosed into someone new. As every new resident arrives, the co-operative itself is unequivocally altered. Residents leave their indent on Stucco, shaping the culture, the dynamics, and the rulebook itself. The individual

residents are just as important to the history and workings of the co-operative as the beams that hold the building together. You can't reduce this tale to the origins of the building, the bricks, the timber and their former functions because truly this is not the story of Stucco at all...

"The Stucco Housing Co-operative," colloquially referred to as "Stucco" is a housing co-operative partially owned by the University of Sydney — its residents are referred to as "Stuccwits," once an on-campus insult, since reclaimed. Rooms go for \$105 a week. At any time, Stucco houses forty University of Sydney students (*exclusively* University of Sydney students) in eight self-contained units. Stucco stands just off Newtown's King Street, a 15-minute walk from campus and is centrally concerned with providing equitable housing for low-income students.

What's the catch? I mean, the price of rent in an Inner West share house would easily be double or more, especially if it was affiliated with the University of Sydney. So, why then aren't you hearing about it?

It's no secret that the University keeps Stucco at arm's length. Finding the Stucco Housing Cooperative on the University website or in their accommodation guides is like finding El Dorado. It exists in obscured hyperlinks, fleeting mentions or is completely absent. "They didn't want the liability I guess," says Julian, a resident who lived at Stucco from 1996 to 2000. "There's this sense that Stucco is its own institution."

Perhaps. Or maybe it's simply that Stucco is too hard to explain. It exists outside the realm of your typical accommodation models; not quite a sharehouse, not quite a college, not quite a single room studio like the Queen Mary Building or The Regiment. Stucco describes itself as a "democratically managed," "non-for-profit," "co-operative" but that doesn't paint the clearest picture. For those outside the know, Stucco can be just a little bit weird.

"A lot of people in Stucco are pretty weird..." says Shimmy, a resident from 2015 to 2019 "really, really weird people. I don't know if you lived with Jane* she used to walk around naked with a strap-on."

Anyway, while the University of Sydney continues to partially fund Stucco, the co-op is fundamentally self-governed and uses rent money to maintain the building and its functions. A warehouse built over a hundred years ago can be time consuming, not to mention expensive to maintain.

Heritage listed by the City of Sydney, not only do Stucco residents work the building, but they must do so while retaining the aesthetic "industrial character" of the old F.W. Gissing's factory. Just making sure "the roof doesn't fall in and the bills are paid," as Julian puts it, can often supersede less

pressing or less apparent matters of Stucco's maintenance, say, advertising and outreach.

When Stuccwits do try to get the word out, we often lean on the same, perhaps still confusing, explanations to make sense of what we are and what we do. We say; "we work for the building," or "we are our own landlords," but what does this *actually* look like? What does this *really* mean?

*
"There is this huge brick building, down Wilson Street" says Edie, a resident from 2016 to 2019, "you walk inside and it's an open courtyard; light, plants, green."

We spoke to Edie about the first time she entered Stucco. "Everyone was bringing food out into the courtyard," she says. Edie was offered a plate of dinner and everyone went about introducing themselves.

"I was sort of hit with this sense of community" and then the GM began, the General Meeting that is, a fortnightly forum for all forty residents to discuss issues and solutions to cooperative living.

"I remember there was a 45-minute discussion about the choice of a vacuum cleaner," she says Ryobi was a particularly contentious brand at the time.

Residents gather in a circle on faded and worn street couches. A disco ball dances above and someone cracks open a beer. The GM is Stucco's democratic self management in action. It's the major delegation of finances and the trivial choice of vacuum cleaner. Dinner is served up in a big soup-kitchen pot, that is, before state-mandated lockdowns. In the last few months, GMs have been held over Zoom.

As you can imagine, a forty person consensus can be difficult to manage. As bohemian as Stucco may seem, that sort of intricate decision-making can become bureaucratic. Sammy, the partner of a current resident, says she struggled to follow what was happening in her first meeting.

"I didn't even know there were rules to the way you had to talk. Like, you had to put up your hand, you had to put these signs."

For GMs, there is a set procedure, a speaking list and little Stucco-quirks, cultivated throughout years of collaboration. It can be like a whole new language.

"It was very niche, but kind of cool," says Sammy, "The more time I spent here, the more I fell in love with it."

These formalities of Stucco are important to note, because they are a part of Stucco's preservation. Gems like the hand signs, are the relics of generations of Stucco residents, a part of behaviours and mechanisms moulded and adapted, passed down and refined throughout Stucco's thirty-year lineage to make co-operative democracy possible.

Sarah, a resident from 2013 to

2018 says that learning the Stucco dialect, attending GMs, and cooking the communal dinner, can be what connects residents to the space, to have people feel like they are "pieces of a bigger something." Laws, norms, etiquette, are begun, yes, but also continued. Those who do so are equally, if not more important to the longevity of the co-operative. One thing to understand, one thing missing from the recorded history is that it is unjust to hold Stucco's modus operandi to a singular mind, or a fixed and definite time.

*
"You have thirty-nine opinions, and none of them can be the same all the time," explains Shimmy.

Not only does Stucco mould and bend to its forty or so inhabitants, but before the gate can close behind them a new resident comes prodding in, bright-eyed and eager. There is little time to reconcile.

"If you want to live in a place like Stucco," says Shimmy, "you have to have the mindset prepared to compromise."

Nick, a resident from 2016 to 2021, says because Stucco "thinks about everyone equally," it's never dominated by a single figure, echoing Sammy's philosophy that Stucco is never just "one person, saying one thing."

Of course, a constant flux can mean decision making is "a bit bureaucratic at times," admits Edie. "But that's democracy."

More than just a roundtable for progressive politics, Edie says Stucco was radically different to all the "exploitative natures embedded in every other part of the social fabric." She says, Stucco was "the first time I really found a queer community that I could really be a part of." There is this sort of understanding, maybe fundamentally by its alternative decision-making, that Stucco can be understood in every facet as a sort of counter-culture.

Julian lived through an early Stucco steeped in the grungy, hoodlum scene of the 1990s; a time when psychedelic cacti freely grew on the "ivory towers" of units 7 and 8 and the "sexual politics was massive." He says Stucco, back then, was "a place where people who didn't quite fit in, could be in a space that was somewhat safe."

Shimmy came to live in Stucco some two decades later. She recalls, "naked dinners," figure drawing and a "DJ set in the laundry room." It was during the co-operative's infamous annual music and arts festival, *StuccoFest*, that Shimmy made perhaps her most fantastical contribution to Stucco's patrimony. She undressed, doused herself in yellow paint and made her way into the courtyard. Faint, droplets of yellow still glisten on the stairs today.

Of course, Stucco is not always as wild as our big festivals or gatherings. Freya, a resident from 2008 to 2012, says her time in unit 8 was mostly quiet. Studying post-

grad, she says her unit wouldn't really party, but would "have meals together." She admits it was a different pace, "but it was still amazing system" and still very much felt "part of the co-op."

In all of the Stucco's against-the-grain ethos, the co-operative was conjured as an opposition to the exploitative rental market in the 1980s, an era that chewed up low-income students and spat them out into the suburbs. Being for student's in need is very much Edie says Stucco's collectivism and "affordable housing for those who need it [...] is just so radically different or radically oppositional to everything, all the exploitative natures embedded in every other part of the societal fabric."

For Eilish, "finding Stucco was a real blessing." Eilish currently lives in Stucco and moved from her hometown, some 800 kilometres outside the city. She says she underestimated how "expensive [of a] place" Sydney was.

Eilish became a permanent resident after spending time in Stucco's temporary accommodation. The building has six spare rooms which must be kept ready for students in urgent need of housing. Eilish says that in Stucco, "I found so many people that were passionate about the fact that I needed housing and were also so caring and willing to offer me a place."

Catherine, a resident from 1998 to 1999, says before mobile phones, the SRC "just had people show up." "You would hear a knock on the door and someone would be there with a suitcase saying 'apparently there should be a room for me here'. It's like 'oh, alright let's have a look around.'"

*
To live in Stucco is to be a part of shaping the co-operative. The etchings on the walls are dusted off and rewritten to match the needs of the people inside, constantly, over and over again. Stuccwits can only stay the duration of their degree, or for five-years, whichever comes first.



Kat, a current resident says because of this, "we can kind of provide a safe space for people to grow and become more secure in themselves, their housing and financial situations, and then let them go and live life because they have had that time to become stable".

While there are changes that occur within Stucco's internal world, what can be telling for Stucco and its community is how, as a collective, we come together to adapt to the world around us.

At the start of last year, Stucco, along

Over a year later, we are still trudging through lockdowns together. The resilience and community spirit of Stucco has been amplified through these hard times. To call Stucco home is a privilege not bestowed upon many. When COVID hit it was challenging, but it was a challenge we took on together.

In our interviews, tracing back the thirty-year lineage of Stucco, there seemed to be ebbs and flows of continuity and change, some obvious, some nonsensical. Like Julian also living through a vacuum-

single-serving. Stucco it's a melting pot of people, their ideas, and their values, some newly conceived and others imagined, all those years ago on the top floor of Manning Bar.

Because Stucco is no ones, and it doesn't exist fixed to a particular and absolute time. It is one that is shared, collectively. When we came together to write this article, we had no idea how hard it would be to put into words just how significant Stucco is. What you must understand, dear reader, is this article has really only scratched the surface, we fear not even that. Maybe it is worth acknowledging the founding thirty-year timeline presents a beginning to understand Stucco as a process but Stucco, the cooperative can only be caught in fragments or reflections like a fleeting flash in the pan.

When knowledges can be lost, like sand through fingers, it can be a discredit to Stucco and all it is, all it has and all it can be. And we wonder, quietly, longingly all the wonderful tales of Stucco that are encased in the minds of a few, now out in the world beyond where Stucco is a distant memory.

But for all that is lost, for all the histories that are forgotten, Stucco is uniquely free from stifling laws or norms or rules. It is a space nurturing progression, to experiment and come to understand a new way of living, so unlike the structures of individualism that exist outside its walls. It is empowering, and self-fulfilling in a way where you can be idle, or you can help. And time and time again people will help, for no reason other than to help the collective. This is why, 30 years on, Stucco is standing.

For more information on the Stucco Co-operative and how to apply for residency, visit us on <https://www.stucco.org.au> or on Facebook page.

*"When knowledges can be lost,
like sand through fingers, it can be
a discredit to Stucco and all it is,
all it has and all it can be."*

related qualm, telling me about alleged embezzlement to get a vacuum "against the will of the GM," and how it was "a point of contention for years" some two decades prior to Edie's formative Ryobi dispute.

The solidarity shown by Stucco during the pandemic can be traced right to the founding ethos of Stucco as a collective community, a notion echoed in every interview. There is very much the sense within Stucco, that to live as a co-operative, is to live as a single body. It almost wasn't a question, that if one person is getting locked down, we are all locked down. You take the good with the bad.

At a time when people are feeling profound levels of isolation, Sarah says the fact that "people have banded together more, is really radical."

"That is community" she says, "That's the world that I want to live in."

In Stucco, nothing has been conjured overnight, no decision made has been

30 years and still standing: The University of Sydney's Stucco Housing Cooperative

The poetics of homemaking: a love letter to my COVID household

KATARINA KUO

On quiet domesticity

I live at home, with my mum and my younger sister. As NSW was plunged into lockdown, our house became the world. The need to stay inside necessarily changed the way we all live together. Our house was no longer just the place where we slept, ate, and watched TV – from July onwards, it was the place where we did everything. We were forced to forge new routines that could happen inside the four walls of our house, and our house was forced to change to accommodate them.

While the Olympics were on, my mum and I dragged an old, rusty ping-pong table out into the backyard so that we could play. We had been inspired by a match we'd watched between Switzerland and Puerto Rico. When it's sunny, we stand out in the garden with the back doors open and play ping-pong together. We never keep score because my mum always wins. As it turns out, growing up with three siblings has made her surprisingly athletic, extremely

competitive, and very good at ping-pong.

With no one to have over for dinner, our dining table has become the place where we work on our shared colouring-in project. It is a giant, cartoon map of New York, the last place we travelled to as a family before the pandemic hit. My sister and I spent most of August arguing about what colour the buildings should be. She wanted them to colour them pink and blue, but I'm a purist – I think even cartoon buildings should be only colours that they could feasibly be in real life.

Our kitchen is very colourful. It is where we all congregate during the day in between our respective Zoom meetings, and where I sit when our cousins teach us to play 500 on facetime, even though we all have to spread out to different corners of the house so as not to let the audio echo. The room is a burst of colour; every kitchen appliance that we own is, for some reason, bright red. I guess we probably started with one, and then it spiralled. The bowl where we all keep our keys is orange. The indoor plants that my mum brought home just before lockdown have now grown all the way up the walls, and, in the evenings, she stands on a stool to water them with a little ceramic

watering can.

As a child, my mum moved around a lot. Her family would stay in each home just long enough to settle down, and then they would leave. She has always said that she wants us to love our house – to feel that it is a representation of who we are as a family. Since my parents stopped living together, the process of refining and redefining our living space has become something that she takes a lot of pride in. In a sense, I think she sees it as a challenge. Our house is a labour of love, and I love living in it.

I think the concept of a COVID household has also presented us with a new kind of familial intimacy. A weird mantra of ours has become, "if one of us has it, we all have it." In a time of paranoia and vigilance about who we interact with, there is a bizarre comfort in knowing that these are the only people I get to see up close and mask-less. In lockdown, we have been willing to risk transmission only between each other. It is almost as if our immune systems have become shared.

Lockdown has been immensely difficult in a lot of ways, and I am aware that it takes an enormous amount of

privilege to indulge in the enjoyment of my own living conditions. Nevertheless, I think that the practice of homemaking can be an incredibly joyful and sacred pursuit. I hope there is a way for the rituals of domestic life to be celebrated. At the very least, they have recently become important to me. Before lockdown, I would come home to tell my family about my life – now, I want to tell the other people in my life about coming home to my family. The home has long been a symbol of constraint, and domestic labour continues to be undervalued by most economic and political metrics. If homemaking has historically been an unthanked and unrecognised endeavour, perhaps the first step in transforming it into something else is to say thank you.

Marguerite Duras wrote that "the house a woman creates is a Utopia. She can't help it – can't help trying to interest her nearest and dearest not in happiness itself but in the search for it." I think I will always think about the way that we have lived together in lockdown with fondness. My sister and I are getting older, and one day we will move out of home. I don't think we will ever live quite like that again.

THE GARDEN SUBURB

ZARA ZADRO
ART BY SIENA ZADRO

A personal history of Haberfield.

Summer is when Haberfield glows most, gold-plated in my memory. Jewel-like swimming pools in backyard lawns. Skin dripping chlorine onto concrete on the bare-footed walk home. The ice blast of air-conditioning in IGA, the sweet profusion of star-jasmine. Sunset through stained glass windows painting dinner scenes like squares of old film; laughter, the glint of cutlery, bare legs brushing under the table.

When I write about the suburb I grew up in, the words do not come easily. Like writing about grief or love, truth lapses into cliché, and I stop because I cannot elide the parts of it that are also parts of me – the Italian heritage I have long grown to resent.

My family moved to Haberfield when I was three years old, five days before Christmas of 2004. Our house was an unkempt heritage site on a cul-de-sac shaded with broad eucalypts, and there was a hole in the centre of the floor of our now-living room.

On a map, Haberfield is a sliver of Sydney bordered on one side by Parramatta Road, and on another the sprawling parks and canal of Hawthorne Parade, where it's believed the border between the Gadigal and Wangal people of the Eora nation lay. It sits between Leichhardt, Ashfield and Fivedock, a sliver of Federation history and postwar migration now fraying in the back-pocket of a gentrified Inner West.

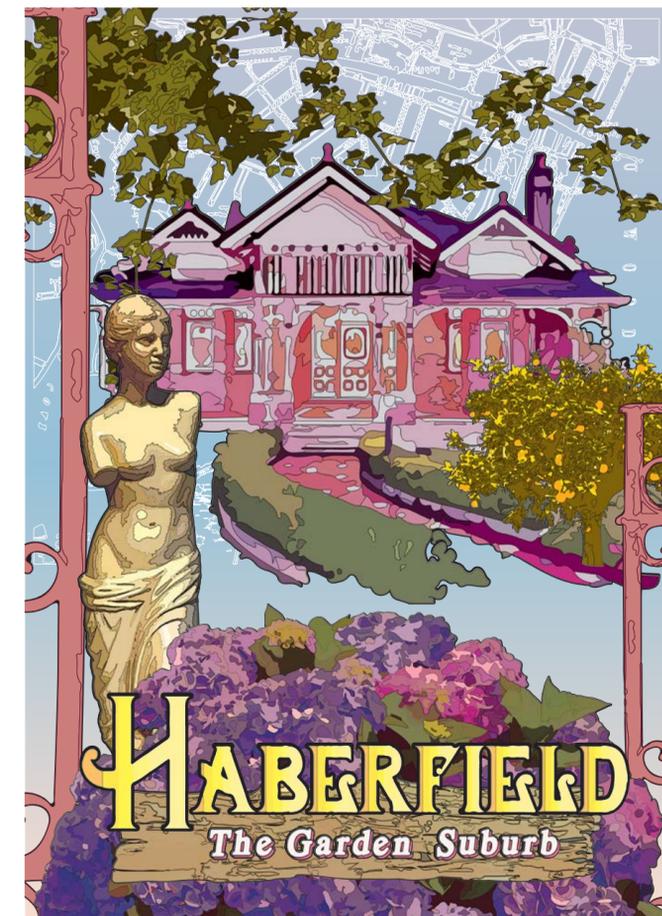
Since the late 20th century, these suburbs have been known as an Italian microcosm, consolidated by the landmark Australian novel *Looking for Alibrandi* (1992) by local Melina Marchetta. Yet in the last two decades, this reputation has become more myth than reality – as young, wealthy, Anglo-Australian families move into the Federation-era homes once owned by Southern Italian immigrants, and new businesses perforate the Italian stronghold of shops on Ramsay and Dalhousie Street, the village-esque centre of my suburb.

Haberfield was established in 1901, when the stolen, colonised land of the Gadigal and Wangal people was purchased by landowner Richard Stanton. Stanton sought to create Sydney's first ever 'garden suburb' that was "slumless, laneless and publess," in response to outbreaks of bubonic plague in the over-crowded inner city.

"Sunset through stained glass windows, painting dinner scenes like squares of old film; laughter, the glint of cutlery, bare legs brushing under the table."

According to Susan Stepowski, as a result Haberfield "helped lock in the Great Australian Dream of the quarter-acre suburban block with dwelling, which has dominated how Australians seek to house themselves."

On a hot Saturday in early October, my nonna tells me about old Haberfield. She shields her face against the sun as she gazes out at her garden, in Concord West. My mother's family moved to Haberfield in 1966, two years before she was born, to a Californian style bungalow on Ramsay. Both of her parents were born in Italy; my nonna moved here from Sicily as a child and grew up in pre-gentrified Paddington, while nonno immigrated after the war to work hard labour jobs in regional



Australia.

Before me, nonna crafts each memory like a shining bead in the heat of the day.

"It's a love that is more than this street, this tree, this thread of cigarette smoke, this shelf of canned tomatoes shining under the supermarket light."

Friday evenings at different kitchen tables playing cards under yellow light, *bruscola* and *scopa*, as the kids watched TV in another room; Italian and Australian neighbours trading sugar and friendship over a fence; the smell

my family's memory. At that time, almost 40% of locals were born in Italy, leaving the inner-city suburbs to cultivate suburban, working-class communities, where backyards were finally big enough to grow vegetables. In 2016, that number had shrunk to nearly a quarter of what it once was – house prices sky-rocket and second-generation Italians are no longer able to afford the Inner West.

But there are some things that have not changed.

There are still lush gardens and red-brick Federation houses covering Haberfield's wide avenues, protected by heritage listings. My house, built in 1902, is one of the oldest. Allegedly, it was a maternity ward early last century. My mother tells a story from when I was too young to remember, of an elderly man appearing at our doorstep and telling her he was born here.

I still struggle to write about my suburb, but I am getting better at it. I cannot explain in a simple way the resentment that has long coloured my relationship to my Italian background. I don't recall it growing steadily within me, harboured for many years. Rather, it arrived with the same sudden intensity of becoming aware of your own body; the same amnesia of not knowing language as a child, until you do.

For me, the term 'wog' is a dose of pungent food and conservatism; lace curtains and old photos in cheap gold frames on mantle pieces. It is too-large family gatherings of innumerable strangers introduced as cousins, and it is my dark curls and olive skin that aggrieved me as a child. In essence, it is smothering.

But it is also the courage to start a new life. And perhaps it is the greater courage it takes to remember your old one when you do.

In Marchetta's book, a character tells the protagonist Josie, the rebellious daughter of a conservative Italian family, that "when you'd finished running [from home] you'd be thousands of miles away from people who love you and your problem would still be there except you'd have nobody to help you."

The thing is, I am not averse to the shortage of love in the history of Haberfield, but the abundance of it. It's a love that is more than this street, this tree, this thread of cigarette smoke, this shelf of canned tomatoes shining under the supermarket light. It is more than words can contain, and it is much easier to turn away from. But for now, I am content with telling half the story.

Andy Warhol: The Pope of Pop

ANTHIA BALLIS
ART BY ANTHIA BALLIS

On the pop art icon.

Chances are that you've heard of pop art icon Andy Warhol. Maybe you're acquainted with that infamous silver hair/black turtleneck combo. Or perhaps you've heard of his studio 'The Factory,' frequented by the likes of The Velvet Underground and Edie Sedgwick. What you may not know is that Warhol was a devout Christian.

Born to two Slovakian Catholic immigrants, Christianity was a key part of Warhol's life from childhood. He kept this under wraps for the entirety of his life, his devotion to Catholicism only becoming public knowledge after his death in 1987 when, at his memorial service, art historian John Richardson shared that Warhol had 'never lost the habit of going to Mass' and Reverend Anthony Dalla Villa described Warhol as 'the Christian gentleman.'

I was surprised to learn of Warhol's



faith. Partly because of his reputation for hosting scandalous parties in "The Factory" and partly due to his infatuation with the glamorous hedonistic celebrity lifestyle. Perhaps wrongly, I wouldn't typically associate these qualities with a man who chooses to regularly sit in a pew, listening to a priest condemn human sins. His works never hinted at any sense of spirituality to me. If anything, I've often struggled with the impersonal quality of his silk-screen prints, finding the almost exact replications of consumer products clinical and lacking depth. Yet I couldn't have been more wrong.

Take *Gold Marilyn Monroe* (1962), for example. The hand-painted gold shades mimic the gold-leaf present on the ceilings of Catholic churches. Warhol presents the face of Monroe at the heart of this heavenly substance, transforming Monroe into one of the Byzantine icons he would have witnessed at church. Essentially, Warhol draws a parallel between the revered status of biblical figures in religious circles and the cult of celebrity in post-WWII American society. Produced shortly after Monroe's death, *Gold Marilyn* takes on an added significance, America's obsession with Monroe never felt more acutely than at this time, the collective mourning of the Hollywood star bordering on devotional.

Additionally, Warhol created explicitly religious works such as *The Last Supper* (1986) series in which he produced nearly 100 renditions of Leonardo da Vinci's 15th century mural painting by the same name. The sheer number of works indicates an almost compulsive commitment to the subject matter – Christ on the eve of his crucifixion. Considering that this image is centred on the theme of sacrifice and salvation,

I don't think it is a stretch to consider that Warhol's incessant repetition may be connected to the tension he felt identifying as a religious queer man.

After learning about the influence of religion on Warhol's practice, I began to examine his more well-known works, particularly Campbell's *Soup Cans* (1962), from a new perspective. I was less inclined to read the work as a reproduction of advertising imagery, rather housing the potential for spiritual value. Presenting thirty-two cans of soup in a structured grid, each can positioned on a vacant white background, devoid of its ordinary supermarket context, ascribes intense, never-before-seen value to the everyday object. Viewers of *Soup Cans* are compelled to intimately consider an article that they already feel familiar with. This experience begs the question – are you really perceptive to the world around you? Are you really familiar with a can of Campbell's? Somewhat ironically, it is this close attention to the mundane which makes it spectacular. To quote pop artist and nun Sister Corita Kent, who viewed *Soup Cans* when it first exhibited at the Ferus Gallery, 'A work of art makes you alert to what you hadn't noticed in ordinary things, so that the distinction narrows between what is ordinary and what is extraordinary.' Thus, although not alluding explicitly to religious painting or writings as *Gold Marilyn* and *The Last Supper* do, I daresay there lies within *Soup Cans* a blueprint through which to find a level of contentment.

This notion of finding the extraordinary in small everyday items seemed pertinent during Sydney's second Covid lockdown. As the periphery of our worlds shrank, the significance



of objects and experiences, became recalibrated in my mind. As each day was concerned with 'less exciting' activities, 'smaller' moments had more hold over me. I found myself reveling in the grand stature of the jacaranda tree in my backyard, feeling soothed as I sat beneath it, looking up at its slow, swaying branches played against a cloudless sky. I felt so much more grateful for my job at a supermarket, the few consolatory remarks that I exchanged with co-workers and customers holding greater weight. When something a tad out of the ordinary did occur, like a friend sending a bouquet of flowers to my doorstep, I was enveloped by a sense of gratitude.

It might be a stretch to claim that an element of the divine exists within Warhol's *Soup Cans* but I stand by the notion that there exists an appreciation of the everyday. As we move out of lockdown, I hope to carry this Campbell's *Soup Cans* blueprint with me, able to observe and absorb the intricacies of everyday life as the beloved hustle and bustle of Sydney resumes.

The forgotten art of sun-gazing

HARRY GAY

On flying too close to the sun.

What do David Brewster, the inventor of the kaleidoscope, Gustav Fechner, one of the founders of modern quantitative psychology, and Joseph Plateau, who studied the so-called persistence of vision, all have in common? All three scientists went blind or permanently damaged their eyesight from staring directly into the sun in an attempt to study theories of vision. While sun-gazing is nowadays associated with the new age and dangerous practice of Breatherianism, where one can supposedly harness the energy of the Earth and the Sun for nutrients and live without food, its origins lie in the research of scientists in the early 1800s, and their attempts to map a physiological conception of vision.

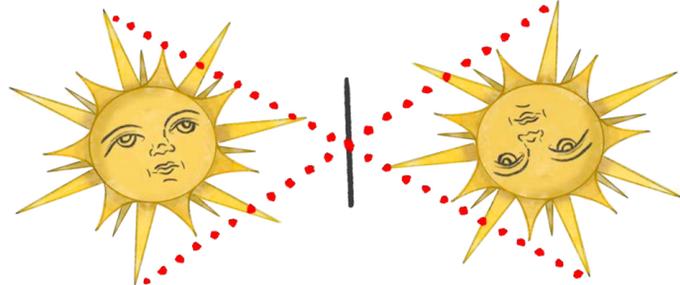
Bodily conceptions of vision began strangely, with scientists in the field of vision interested in the effects of light on the human eye. This involved staring directly at the sun, with some figures in this field pursuing this actively with addictive fervour. The “visionary” capacities of the body involved the sunlight’s physical searing of itself onto one’s flesh, palpably impressing it into a proliferation of incandescent colour.

In the late 1830s and early 1840s, J.M.W. Turner captured this fascination with sun-gazing, which dissolved the boundaries between the observer and the observed. Turner illustrates the erosion of the bounds between subjective and objective vision, interior and exterior, that previous conceptions of vision had assured. As Jonathan Crary said of the paintings, “nothing now protects or distances the observer from the seductive

and sensual brilliance of the sun”.

One must wonder if this obsessive fascination that some of these figures dedicated themselves to manifests itself in our contemporary practices of screen-gazing. The seductive glow of the mobile phone at night similarly pierces the retina and maps itself onto our eyes, leaving a searing and burning sensation after a while.

This excitement over the body birthed the science of physiology, which, at the time, was interested in the ways knowledge was conditioned by the physical and anatomical structure



and functioning of the body, the eyes in particular. Researchers soon began recording how long it took for their eye to become fatigued, how long dilation and contraction of the pupil took, and measured the strength of eye movements. The eye became a territory to be mapped, conquered and measured. Joseph Plateau timed the average duration of the afterimage to be one third of a second; Helmholtz measured the speed of nerve transmission at about ninety feet per second; and Johannes Müller concluded that the observer’s experience of light has no necessary connection with any actual

light. Through these experiments, vision became something of a bodily experience, one involving nerves and its reactions to stimuli rather than simply looking with one’s eyes.

Sun-gazing is thus a part of a larger history of theorising vision, and the ways in which light maps itself onto the body. The practice went out of style for obvious health reasons. According to Margaret Maria Gordan, David Brewster damaged his eyesight after “gazing through mysterious ‘bits of glass’ at noonday”, where “an acute and agonising pain suddenly darted into his eye-balls, deluging them with water,

and necessitating complete darkness and quietness till the paroxysm had passed, which was sometimes not for two or three days.” While he found a miracle cure later on, his writings later confirm that he still suffered symptoms of both hemiopia or half-vision and of an incipient cataract. For Gustav Fechner — he was driven mad after his eyesight was damaged, retreating into the dark and into his own mind for three years where he nursed an interest in philosophy. Meanwhile, according to Guy Verriest, Joseph Plateau looked directly at the sun often for more than 25 seconds. He then became blind for several days, and

afterwards he saw strange flashing lights in his visual field and his eyes remained bloodshot for days on end. He suffered from uveitis and became permanently blind at the age of 42.

Despite its danger, the late 21st Century has seen sun-gazing be harnessed as a form of alternative medicine by new age hippies, pseudoscientists, and grifters alike, all attempting to push a very dangerous lifestyle. Sun-gazing can, according to non-secure websites, be a cure-all for cancer and various other diseases, with NASA apparently concluding that someone could live for a week on only sunlight and air. Research seems rather sketchy, however, and any other attempts to study people who have lived these lifestyles have often been inconclusive at best, and biased at worst.

Sun-gazing began as a way to penetrate the boundaries of vision and its conceptions, to dissolve the border between interior and exterior vision, and erode divisions between subjectivity and objective truth. The paintings of Turner draw audiences into the same grandeur that fascinated the scientists who practiced it, often to their own detriment. Nowadays, the name sun-gazing has been besmirched by, what past members have called, a death cult. At the root of this all, is some strange fascination with light and the knowledge and power it can unlock within us, whether it be staring at the sun or staying up late doom scrolling on Twitter.

With Summer approaching, the desire to soak in the sun’s rays, especially having been inside for so long, has never been stronger. Just don’t forget to bring a pair of sunnies.

Set your sights on Scandanavian skies

ANNA HOBSON

On the Scandinavian-noir novel.

Raised by a European mother with contempt for almost all American entertainment, many of the novels of my adolescence were set among the dense cold and the oppressive, overcast skies of northern Europe as I obsessively followed her adoration of Scandinavian Noir. In the years since, having traversed every habitable continent in my reading, finding Unquiet by Linn Ullman with its quiet grief, bony cold, and skies turned hollow with greyness, felt like I had returned to a place familiar enough to recognise, like I had come back to a place I almost believed was my own.

Unquiet traverses the contours of a childhood shaped by disillusionment and isolation within a family — as one grows up to realise that their parents are more than just parents, but are flawed individuals who existed long before us — before we ever had the nerve to assume, in the innocence and shameless selfishness of childhood, that they orbited our worlds and not their own.

The book, in sincere, thoughtful grace, shows what it is to be attached to a place

with a love unreasonable in its enormity. It frays the threads of fiction and reality that are woven into places haunted by entire ecosystems of memories, contorted by what we have made of them and what we have willed the past to be. What is it, Ullman questions, to recognise yourself in a place more than in your name? What parts of you will fracture in leaving, and what will you find of yourself when you go back?

Unquiet questions not what happened in the past, but where it is set. What is the air like there? And the trees? What sounds were there? Which visions of the past can you trust and which are half-truths blurred by the obsessive incantations of nostalgia, the growing pains of childhood and the longing that haunts our grown-up dream?

If you asked me where my past exists — where the memories that I cannot help returning to are set, where I felt like my life began — I’d tell you about a field in the German south, of air so sharply cold it stings your cheeks pink, of a long-gone row of apple trees and the forest of pines a further two fields down. I’d tell you about the sound of violin solos on the radio at breakfast, of newspapers — the distant memory of real print, my grandfather’s black coffee and I, feeling so grown up, so

old for being allowed to drink it with him.

This is the effect of Ullman, that in contorting memoir and fiction while looking back into herself, her family, the places of her past, and the ways in which they lay heavy among the present, she grants us the grace to make our own places of the past, to let them hold stories, to hold tightly to a cut-down row of apple trees and the violin on the radio not out of trivial sentimentality, but as a small act of resistance against the enduring transience of growing up and growing old.

The story follows an aging Swedish filmmaker and his daughter, as they plan to write a book together about growing old — it tracks the conversations the pair have, the incessant questions asked, and the distractions created by a mind wrought with age and obsessed with Bach. “Happiness is finding yourself in the middle of the planning phase, when everything is possible and nothing is final,” writes Ullman. “A plan is more tangible than hope, there is time to spare.” Their conversations, recorded for the writing of the book, determine the entire trajectory of Unquiet and reflect their attempt at understanding each other deeply, despite the limitations of language, the dauntingness of vulnerability and the

haunting effect of hindsight. The weight of love and loneliness is woven into their conversations, so present it is almost tangible. He loves his daughter out of habit, or memory, because the past is more tangible and the effort of lucidity in the present becomes ever greater with age. Her loneliness is that of grieving someone who is not yet gone, yet is absent but for the tendrils of existence he holds onto with great effort.

Yet this is not a bleak book. Their plans — the idea that they can control the presentation of the past and wring the future into what they wish it to be — fill their lives with optimism.

Held together by an amalgam of houses, streets and cities, from Sweden, Norway, Munich and New York to the little flat at 91 Dammensveien, and summers spent in the Faroe Islands, Unquiet traces the past as a lineage of places, seeking to understand childhood and daughterhood in its many shadows and shapes. Along the way, Ullman holds the grief of loss in gentle hands, and shows what it is to defy the incessant transience of time and age with a concentration of force and passion that could only point to a life lived in awareness of its own enormity.

FINDING FAMILY IN THEFT: HEISTS, HORROR, AND HEALING

SHANIA OBRIEN

Building family brick by brick.

I have built a castle in my mind, and it puts Neuschwanstein and the Umaid Bhawan to shame. It stretches well into the clouds and its stained-glass windows trap sunlight within their jewel hues, the portraits on them immortalising the great adventures of the people who live within. It does not crumble, does not obey orthodox rules that govern its establishment, and it is not isolated upon a faraway mountain.

In 1764, Horace Walpole wrote the first gothic novel: *The Castle of Otranto*. ‘Gothic’ literature aimed to elicit strong emotions — to intrigue and terrify and mystify. The genre boasts decaying old buildings where rotting secrets are buried under floorboards, missing women just elusive enough to establish curiosity, and foundations upon which a significant amount of modern horror is based. As a setting, a castle is a place that has existed for centuries and houses myriads of memories. It is marked by death, ghosts of generations past haunting each arched-window and secret passageways, their misery chiseled into the stone.

Ann Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) is set in early Renaissance Italy and France, and the titular castle is once again a place of fantasy and fascination; the protagonist Emily and her maid immediately yielded to the “gloomy and sublime” nature of the space by imagining that the castle is inhabited by fairies and spirits. Although it is half in ruins, with roofs caving in and walls deteriorating at dramatic speeds, the sense of grandeur is reinforced by its decor: faded tapestries, gold awnings, and ancient suits of armour. But there are no supernatural beings that lurk within its walls — it is merely infected by men who crave power over women.

Scholars of medieval literature often attempt to force a view of the ‘feminine’ onto castles, likening the endless secret passageways to women being unknowable and moats with curtain walls to a womb. Geoffrey of Monmouth and Sir Thomas Mallory have famously bound the two together on opposite ends of the medieval Arthurian tradition — but it is likely that the same is nothing more than an extended metaphor for the declining Arthurian social order. In my opinion, all of this is significantly derivative.

To me, castles, first and foremost,

are fun. The Oxbridge Heist is something Marlow and I find ourselves talking about a lot. It might just be the overexposure we have to campus novels and found-family tropes, but there is a certain *je ne sais quoi* to moving to a foreign country and stealing precious objects with your best friends. I shouldn’t associate crime with found families as closely as I do, but there is some literature that does not escape you. We have spent hours where chili hot chocolates have turned to ice, scheming and plotting the best ways to pilfer ancient artefacts — all with the end-goal of forming unbreakable bonds rather than the possession of fancy trinkets.

In fiction, the ‘found family’ trope is heavily queer-coded and crime-focused. It speaks of societal outcasts who come together and form a family of their own, the blood of the covenant thicker than the water of the womb. In the stories I write, they live together in houses big enough to call a home, castles of their own making.

Historically, the gothic genre has focused on the destruction of the family unit — novels are littered with women with madness and men with bad habits. The disturbance of the domestic ideal is essential to the plot, such as the unnamed narrator’s obsession with the eponymous *Rebecca* in Daphne du Maurier’s 1938 novel and the effect it has on her marriage. The wide hallways and deserted rooms of the Manderley estate represent the emptiness of the narrator’s life, her obsession with a phantasm leading her to hide behind Rebecca’s skeletons.

I think the appeal of a neo-gothic family stems from a shared experience that cannot be outlived or forgotten, a healthy bond formed out of joint hardship. Books like *The Secret History* by Donna Tartt portray a series of events that diverge from this ideal; it shows the characters grow apart after an otherworldly bacchanalia and gory manslaughter. However, in a genre defined by misadventure, found families rely on trust and stability within their relationships. The misadventure serves to bring the characters together, such as in books like *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* and *Six of Crows*.

Where at first the setting was essential to the story, a revival of the genre would focus more on themes that connect horror with interpersonal relationships. Castles are no longer just a tangible backdrop but are more akin to the imaginary one that lives in my mind.

I think the appeal of a neo-gothic family stems from a shared experience that cannot be outlived or forgotten, a healthy bond formed out of joint hardship.

But this is also due to the movement towards contemporary architecture in the modern day; towering castles with endless space are no longer a viable setting that many people can relate to.

However, there is some comfort in knowing that one is not limited to

relations formed by blood, and the friendships one chooses can be just as meaningful — if not moreso. I believe found family novels are on their way to reclaiming and reimagining the gothic, a haunted castle turning into a fortress against adversity.



The genre boasts decaying old buildings where rotting secrets are buried under floorboards, missing women just elusive enough to establish curiosity, and foundations upon which a significant amount of modern horror is based.

Cynical, predatory, fake: brands on social media are not your friend

JOE VERITY

Brands are now so successful on social media that rather than having to seek out consumers' attention, they can rely on the consumer to seek them out, invite their involvement, and celebrate their presence.

On the morning of 5 October, at the height of the outage that saw all of Facebook's various services go down for six hours, Twitter's official account tweeted "hello literally everyone." Barely half an hour later, the official McDonald's account replied: "hi what can i get u."

"hi can everyone see my screen" chimed the official Zoom account a few hours later, obligingly employing the same all-lowercase, punctuation-free delivery.

By the end of the morning, the replies to Twitter's tweet were filled with a host of similarly wry quips. KFC, Microsoft Teams, Amazon Alexa, Starbucks, Melbourne Uni (?), Pepsi, and countless others had all taken the opportunity to jump into what had quite quickly devolved into a blue tick conversation.

The reviews were adulatory: Twitter's original tweet racked up over three million likes. "this is why i'm never leaving this app" read one user's tweet, accompanied by screenshots of the various brand's replies. That tweet itself received over a quarter of a million likes.

The Twitter Tweet, as I'll call it, was a sobering revelation of the heights that brands on social media have soared to over the past two years.

For a long time, brands didn't quite know how to navigate social media. Arguably the first brand to realise the potential of the medium was American fast-food chain Denny's, who launched a Tumblr account in 2013. Rather than speaking with the inauthentic, carefully composed, committee-approved voice of a marketing team, the Denny's account spoke with the voice of an adolescent. Its posts mirrored the lowercase, abbreviation-ridden prose of its audience and, more importantly, their unmistakable brand of humour.

It didn't take too long for other brands to catch on. Burger King, Starbucks, and other consumer-facing brands followed suit, capitalising on viral trends and memes to advertise their products. Wendy's, another American fast-food chain, started to routinely go viral from around 2016 onwards for roasting its competitors on Twitter. The insouciant tone that had developed amongst Tumblr and Twitter users during the early 2010s was now the mainstream voice of online corporate marketing.

But problems began to arise in 2019 when all this quirkiness started to prove too much for social media users. Brands' desperate attempts to imitate the style that had proved so successful in the mid-2010s had led to oversaturation. One of the architects of the Wendy's Twitter strategy wrote as much then, arguing that brands were so desperate to start conversations that they had wound up talking to themselves.

It was around this time that the "Silence, Brand" meme made its debut. Deployed liberally by social media users who had quite rightly become altogether fatigued by corporations' oppressively cynical and invasive attempts to smother online conversation in marketing, the meme embodied a community fightback against aggressive commercialism. People were finally telling brands to shut the fuck up. Brands knew they had reached crisis point too. The Twitter Marketing

account posted the meme in June 2019 accompanied with the caption "How can brands join the cultural conversation without killing it?" The top reply was an amended version of the meme that read "Silence, Twitter".

This state of affairs persisted for a while throughout 2019 and 2020. But in 2021, brands on social media are resurgent, and consumer resistance seems to have morphed back into enthusiasm. The Twitter Tweet is a perfect case in point and is by no means an isolated example. TikTok has proven to be an incredibly successful platform for 'relatable' brands. In early October 2021, user @ramblingsanchez posted a video captioned "A bunch of brand accounts should comment on this for no reason." Tens, if not hundreds of brands replied in the exact same tone as they had done on Twitter days earlier. Some of their replies received in excess of a million likes.

This phenomenon is troubling. Brands are now so successful on social media that rather than having to seek out consumers' attention, they can rely on the consumer to seek them out, invite their involvement, and celebrate their presence. It's no wonder that overt advertisements on platforms like TikTok are so rare and non-invasive; they are sewn into the very fabric of the user's experience.

So how have brands made this comeback? I propose that the reason is a subtle shift in strategy. The reason for the initial success of brands adopting this carefree tone was the implication of subversion it carried. The departure from the sterile marketing voice gave an impression to audiences that young social media managers were to some extent going rogue; that they were contradicting the directives of their stuffy boomer superiors to connect with young audiences in a way that was both genuine and contrary to sanctioned industry practice. By 2019, this approach was so ubiquitous that it was no longer subversive, but conventional.

Brand accounts nowadays are much more tempered, at least on Twitter. Many accounts now post a higher proportion of traditional content across their platforms, or pick one platform, like TikTok, on which to appear casual. In other words, brands have learned to choose the right time and place. This means that when they do make an irreverent, self-effacing, or otherwise humanising comment, it retains the quality of subversion. "i'm not a brand, i'm a social media manager" commented Lionsgate in response to @ramblingsanchez's TikTok. "don't tell my boss i was late" commented Yahoo. Social media users celebrate brands as one of their own because they see them not as the corporate behemoths that they are, but as relatable people who occasionally peer out from behind the veneer of professionalism to connect with consumers.

We ought to be concerned about the effect of this acceptance. The corporations that these brands represent are, as many of us know, ruthless, indifferent to human flourishing, and single-mindedly focused on profit. Netflix, which celebrated Pride Month by blowing a virtual "gay kiss" to its audience via Twitter, recently suspended a transgender employee for speaking out against Dave Chappelle's transphobic comedy special. Amazon, while posting quirky TikToks, forces delivery drivers to urinate in bottles and warehouse workers to continue working as their colleagues literally drop dead beside them.

Fundamentally, why do we tolerate these brands' presence in online social communities? Perhaps the reason is best framed in the terms of classical public relations. Edward Bernays famously discovered that marketing is not about selling a product or a service, but about

selling an idea, an image, a lifestyle. Selling women cigarettes was impossible until an entourage of suffragettes were seen smoking them; then it was about selling women freedom and empowerment. Perhaps now our drive to consume these brands is subconsciously driven in part by a desire to be proximate to the detached, effortlessly witty persona that characterises online popularity and also happens to be ubiquitous amongst brands.

Another answer might be a phenomenon that Robert Pfaller and Slavoj Žižek have called "interpassivity." In subverting and rejecting traditional corporate culture, brand accounts perform our own anti-corporatism for us, allowing us to engage with the companies they represent with moral impunity. We're not buying from the McDonalds that is currently trying to dodge liability for rampant sexual harassment amongst staff in its restaurants, we're buying from the McDonalds that tweeted about how their soft serve machines are always broken (are they allowed to say that?). Mark Fisher draws a link between this phenomenon and Žižek's characterisation of capitalist ideology. Capitalism, Žižek asserts, relies on this overvaluing of subjective attitude at the expense of external behaviours. As long as we maintain an internal cynicism towards corporations, and indeed have this cynicism affirmed by brand accounts themselves, then we are free to continue to participate in capitalism.

It may even be that we are the victims of our own tendency towards class solidarity. TikTok user @all_day_breakfast observed that the managers of brand accounts often use their platform to express concern

that the account isn't receiving enough attention and that they may consequently lose their job. This leads audiences to boost the popularity of the account in an effort to assist the worker, a move which ultimately benefits the corporation that threatened the worker's job security in the first place. Like the previous example of interpassivity, this phenomenon demonstrates capitalism's unique ability to adopt and distort anti-capitalism to its own ends.

Whatever the reason for the resurgence of brand accounts, we should rid ourselves of this tolerance. Brands are not deserving of our acceptance in online communities. Their authenticity is a sham. On the rare occasion that social media managers are actually 'authentic' online, they are reprimanded, like when *Teen Vogue* deleted their social media manager's tweet expressing sympathy with a reader who was appalled by the magazine's decision to publish a puff piece for Facebook's election integrity policies in 2020.

Online spaces, for all their flaws, have the potential to be incredible forums for community building. But brands should not be part of these communities. They are the charismatic face of capitalist predation and should be collectively shunned. Instead of welcoming brands, can we please go back to telling them to shut the fuck up?

Watching you watching: Does data help us know more about ourselves?

VERONICA LENARD

525, 600 minutes, how do you measure, measure a year? - Rent

There are many ways that the passing of time can be measured. The characters in *Rent* relied on daylight, sunsets, midnights and cups of coffee. But as we walk around, constantly attached to our devices, there are plenty more complex ways to measure our lives than these straightforward indicators.

From our phones and wearable devices, we are able to see how far we have travelled in a day, with an almost terrifying level of detail revealing not only the number of steps taken, but the location of said steps. The time spent online can be tracked through browser and watch histories, as well as screen time services. Services like Spotify Wrapped or Apple Music Replay help measure user's yearly listening habits in total play counts and playlists, while browser extensions like Netflix Wrapped offer similar opportunities for self-analysis of watching habits.

The promotion of many of these technologies is premised on the idea that

we all want to know more about ourselves - understand ourselves, even. But does this come through 'knowing' our "quantified self"? The term "quantified self" has been used to describe these kinds of practices where individuals use technology, like wearable fitness devices, to log parts of their day to day lives, often with the hope of using this information for greater self awareness or improvement.

The qualified self tries to position the user as the figure in control of the collection and analysis of data, yet many of these technologies require the collection of this information to be stored in their own database. As such, individuals often have limited access to whatever information is being harboured about them at any time. There is an asymmetry here: the control of individuals is being traded off for the control of tech companies, who we are primed to trust, but often do so naively.

These kinds of practices demonstrate what author and scholar, Shoshana Zuboff, terms "surveillance capitalism." As a market form, surveillance capitalism prioritises the translation of human experience into data that can be collected, analysed and sold. Under this model, the experiences of our year - moving around, listening to music or watching a television series or a movie - becomes material

for the creation and extraction of data. Agreeing to the terms and conditions often means we are agreeing to whatever tracking is entailed.

According to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's 2020 survey on Community Attitudes to Privacy, 62% of Australians are uncomfortable with digital platforms and online businesses having extensive databases of their personal information. Despite this discomfort, we keep using these digital platforms, even if we tacitly know that they are tracking our online activity.

This seems to be in conflict with the idea of the quantified self and the promise that we could learn more about ourselves by analysing the data from our activities. However, not all data collection is accurate. It isn't difficult to accidentally, even intentionally, influence the accuracy of the analysis. If an account is shared between people or signed into a shared device, or even left playing without the individual watching or listening, it is unlikely that the results will really summarise the individual's activity. Some platforms try to minimise this impact by giving users access to their viewing history where they can delete or download the information. Even the website for

Spotify Wrapped encourages visitors to listen more to increase the accuracy of their yearly summary.

When Netflix tried a similar approach with a tweet about users repeatedly watching their film *A Christmas Prince*, the response included considerable backlash as it reminded users how much information was really available to Netflix. It seems that there is a delicate balance to be struck between portraying data collection to users in a way that is received as acceptable and not leaving participants uncomfortable and reluctant to continue using such platforms.

How well do we really want our devices to know us? Some forms of data collection are packaged as fun ways to know more about ourselves, like Spotify Wrapped or Apple Music Replay, but others serve as reminders about how much organisations know about how people are spending their time. Viewing your own internet history might be a way to get an insight into how you've spent your year, or it could be a reminder about how ubiquitous digital surveillance is.

Perhaps, it is time to listen to the suggestions of the characters in *Rent* and find another way to measure a year.

The Future of Social Media

IRIS BROWN

Considering the benefits and detriments of online anonymity.

Social media: the beast of the digital world. It wields great power with little responsibility. It is a wild anarchical land where the demand for certain content drives the supply of it, with little regulation of this flow of information.

But what if this was all about to change? Recently, Prime Minister Scott Morrison labelled online trolls as 'cowards' and social media their 'palace', after Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce called for social media companies to take more responsibility to prevent online misinformation and harassment. Morrison also condemned a lack of accountability on digital platforms, even proposing that anonymous users "should have to identify who they are".

This comes after a High Court decision which ruled that social media companies are legally responsible for defamatory comments by users. And the US Senate is holding an ongoing hearing concerning the loose regulations on social media companies, particularly on the adverse effects on adolescents.

For platforms which previously prided themselves on being a free "marketplace of ideas," are we looking at the end of social media as we know it?

I invite you to reimagine social media if Morrison's suggestion of identifying anonymous users becomes reality. No longer do users go to-and-fro as they will, save a temporary ban or post take-down if enough people report them. Anything one does on the internet will be identifiable, as though they had taken that action in real

life.

What Morrison is alluding to is that digital lawlessness has shone a light on the dark side of humanity. Social media algorithms have facilitated the rise of echo chambers, extremist beliefs and the rapid spread of misinformation - most notably in January 2021 with the US Capitol riots resulting from false news concerning the legitimacy of the 2020 Presidential election. And the effects of cyberbullying and consuming certain content on teens' self-esteem and body image are well-documented.

So perhaps this new order of social media won't be so bad. People will be accountable for what they post. No longer can someone hide behind a screen and create harmful content with no ramifications within their own life. Society will keep people in check through the threat of social ostracisation for unacceptable posts, and it will be easier to remove users from the platform or pursue legal action against them. This has the potential to significantly reduce misinformation and hate speech.

A federal grand jury in 2018 found 12 Russian military officers guilty of purposefully using false domain registration names to distribute harmful material to Hilary Clinton's 2016 campaign. If there had been systems in place to link accounts to a person's identity, this interference would have been significantly harder to stage.

But if online anonymity is removed, what we do have to worry about could be significantly worse.

Anonymity can be beneficial and necessary. Consider online safe spaces for marginalised groups, such as the LGBT+ community. If people in these spaces were forced to identify themselves, they may be

put in risk of real-life harm, ranging from social isolation to physical violence.

Additionally, Morrison's comments are a worrying sign of the state expanding its control and surveillance over Australians. In September 2018, Parliament passed a new surveillance bill, which gave police a wide range of exceptions to get around warrants, circumvent anonymising technologies and modify potential evidence that could be used in court cases. Activists are greatly concerned that forced identification could bolster the ability of governments and social media corporations to monitor people and shut down protest activity.

But ultimately, Morrison misses the point and places the blame on an amorphous "threat" of anonymous trolls - rather than targeting the practices of social media companies. Whilst there should be regulation on social media platforms to ensure safety of users, banning anonymity is probably not the way to go about it. Rather, social media companies must face penalties for not enforcing safety checks and removing illegal content. Social media companies already have the technology to do this, they just don't, as a recent whistleblower from Facebook revealed, because controversial and extremist content grows their platforms. In turn, advertisers are more inclined to pay to have their products or, even more dangerously, misleading content, published.

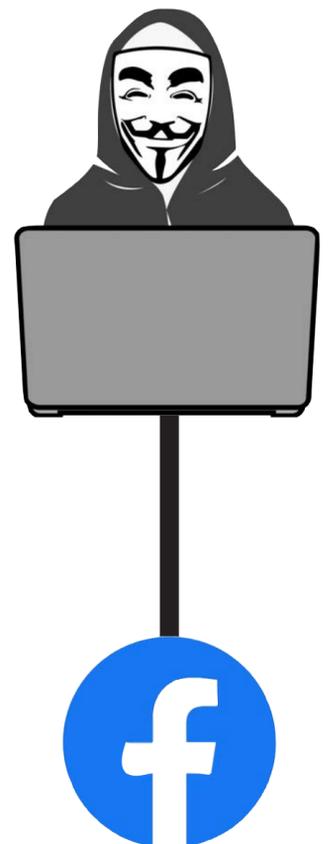
We need to have regulation on the internet to deflate the ramifications of harmful behaviours. But banning anonymity will do none of that. It will stifle the good aspects of the internet, preventing people from expressing themselves in ways they don't feel comfortable doing offline.



National Stigma & Discrimination Reduction Strategy

The Mental Health Commission wants to hear from people with a lived experience of mental ill-health (includes as a carer), about changes in the National Stigma and Discrimination Reduction Strategy. Topics include Income support, the health system, and education.

For more information go to: <https://haveyoursay.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/nub-page/national-stigma-and-discrimination-reduction-strategy>



Silence isn't always golden

CHARLENE JEE

Against silent game protagonists.

There's nowhere left to run. In a decisive moment, the masked man leaps across the mezzanine railing — stops to bid a cheeky “see ya” to his pursuers — and crashes through the stained-glass window into the moonlight.

The opening cutscene of *Persona 5* introduces a daredevil protagonist oozing with mystery and charisma. Yet as the gameplay kicks off and I eagerly anticipate the sound of his voice again, the disappointing realisation creeps in: *ah, he's a silent protagonist.*

The silent protagonist is a long-running trope in video games and often a polarising topic amongst the fanbase. Touted as a means of self-insertion, the silent protagonist allows the player to inject their own personality and emotions into a tabula rasa character, usually through dialogue options. However, there are certain cases where the silent protagonist can be a direct hindrance to immersion and do a disservice to a game's narrative.

In *Persona 5*, you play as Joker, leader of a vigilante group of high schoolers who fight societal injustices in a supernatural realm formed from humanity's distorted desires. Joker cannot function as a player surrogate because he is already a character with a defined appearance,

age, gender, and ethnicity. Already there is a stark dissonance between me and the protagonist. For example, Joker is explicitly written as heterosexual, which becomes particularly uncomfortable in scenes where I am forced to be one of the bros and hit on chicks or call up a maid service. In a game that presents such a personalised narrative experience, it's bizarre that you have the option to date multiple adult women as a minor, yet not a single man.

When other characters praise Joker as a reliable, kind-hearted leader, this comes off as contrived given that his available dialogue is never more than a short sentence. Characters will be monologuing their tragic life story and you can only reply with a generic statement accompanied by an expressionless animation, which somehow touches their hearts. In scenes with voice-acting, the silence when the protagonist supposedly speaks is especially awkward. We relate to a character through their emotions, motivations, and internal struggles rather than their superficial characteristics, yet we are only given the outer shell and are forced to fill in many of the blanks of Joker's personality.

In *Fire Emblem: Three Houses*, you play as Byleth, the mysterious mercenary-turned-professor who leads their students through a devastating war. Although the player is conferred slightly more freedom with choice of Byleth's gender presentation and a few same-sex

romance options, the game suffers from similar issues. Byleth's dialogue is usually stilted and bland — their characterisation is especially unconvincing when their students worship them as a Messianic figure despite being an emotionless avatar. Furthermore, there are instances of the player being presented with a choice that seem to signal a branching route, yet your decision is vetoed anyway and you are forced into the same outcome. This illusion of choice feels especially jarring in a game where strategic decisions matter significantly in combat, as one wrong move can result in the irreversible deaths of your allies with whom you have spent time cultivating emotional bonds (unless you're a casual like me and don't have permadeath enabled).

The problem with silent protagonists in Japanese RPGs like *Persona* and *Three Houses* is that the linearity of the storyline inherently denies the player agency and hence the ability to self-insert. There seems to be more of an emphasis on building interpersonal relationships with a cast of complex and endearing characters, revealing of the East Asian collectivist mentality. On the contrary, Western RPGs tend to champion individualism and self-expression by allowing customisation of the player's appearance, role, and gear. Dialogue choices are usually more substantial and can have a direct causal effect on the story.

Both types of games cater to different intentions. Linearity is comforting in that you can sit back and enjoy the narrative ride, whilst a non-linear open world allows greater freedom for exploration. However, silent protagonists function a lot more successfully in games that allow true freedom of choice and expression, like in *Skyrim*. The player is more able to seamlessly roleplay a character that they themselves have tailored in a world in which they can meaningfully exert their own agency, thereby enabling fantasy fulfilment through this virtual extension of the self.

When reading novels or watching movies, a fully fleshed-out main character does anything but hinder immersion. The common criticism that voiced protagonists are too obnoxious is more indicative of poor writing than of an inherent issue with them speaking. When I play *Hades*, the story truly comes alive when witty protagonist Zagreus banter with the other inhabitants of the Underworld. When I play *Yakuza 0*, I can root for the dual protagonists because of their indefatigable drive while navigating Japan's criminal underbelly. The reason I sink hundreds of hours into games is because I can't resist the pull of a well-written emotional storyline. *Persona 5* and *Three Houses* are fantastic games that I adore to death, but their protagonists deserve a voice.

PEI TAN

How the Netflix smash hit holds a mirror to our capitalist society.

Numbered green tracksuits. Arenas, among them a simulated open schoolyard that engulfs its inhabitants. Black masked, bright pink-suited soldiers, moving robotically in tandem. Caskets wrapped in a bow, as if death were a gift.

Since its release on Netflix in September, *Squid Game* has quickly broken records to become one of the most viewed shows on the platform. This begs the question: what exactly has made the show so popular?

Arguably, it is in part due to its adherence to the dystopian genre. Dystopian texts have proven their popularity throughout time. Notable classics like *Brave New World*, 1984, and *The Handmaid's Tale* have found their way into high school curriculums as socio-culturally significant texts, and have recently been adapted to the small screen. The popularity of dystopian

fiction boomed in the 2010s in the Young Adult market, with the worldwide popularity of *The Hunger Games*. The similarities cannot be ignored: like *The Hunger Games*, *Squid Game* operates around the arena, where working class contestants are pitted against one another for the chance of a life of luxury. And it is revealed that, like the citizens of the Capitol in *The Hunger Games*, *Squid Game* is funded by the whims of the rich.

But unlike *The Hunger Games*, *Squid Game* is not targeted to the Young Adult market. The grit and gore, and its glaring criticism of today's capitalist society, has allowed it to resonate with audiences far beyond their teens. Classic dystopian texts are set in the future. They show us what might happen if ceaseless production continues. But *Squid Game* subverts this trope — set in 2021, it paints a picture not of the future, but of the present reality. We watch *Squid Game* with a fascinated morbidity, knowing that the scenes we watch — of poverty, crippling debt, the income disparity between the 1% and the rest of the world — already plague our society.

Like *Brave New World*, *Squid Game's* insulated society is pseudo-utopic. Players don the same green tracksuits, must conform to an illusory fairness regime, and are all presented with the opportunity to leave behind their life of poverty. When the dictatorial Front Man discovers one of the players has been given an unfair advantage, due to his role in helping soldiers harvest organs in secret, he kills the assailant. “The most crucial element of this place [is] equality,” he says. There is a distinct irony in this utterance — there is a distinct hierarchy in “this place,” one that places the players at the bottom of the pecking order, with no agency over the conditions they are subject to. Circles, triangles, and squares imprinted on the masks of the soldiers establish a clear chain of command.

Unlike the outside world, where players roam a nihilistic wasteland of unemployment, poverty and death, the piggy bank looms above them within the game, bringing a false sense of hope. As it brightens with every “elimination,” it fills with money, motivating players to abandon their morals and lose their

humanity in this individualistic race.

Squid Game was rejected for ten years before being made due to claims that it was too unrealistic. But it has emerged at the perfect time: in the context of the pandemic and resulting economic crises, it both addresses pressing societal issues and presents an escape through the absurdity of the game. The focus on childhood games makes *Squid Game* reminiscent of a simpler time: a time where class issues and our capitalistic society were less relevant to us as children. And for the Western audience, the otherness of *Squid Game*, being set in Korea, allows us to look at its social commentary with more objectivity — it displaces the critique of capitalism and the idealisation of meritocracy to a country foreign to us, one in which we are not complicit. As we watch players compete on screen, and see their sheer desperation and demoralisation, it almost fills us with a reassurance that as dire as our world is, at least this is still a fantasy. But for how much longer?

The Dream SMP & Storytelling

DANNY CABUBAS

How the SMP revolutionised narrative.

I've been into some really strange and niche things. Not in a weird way, but more like things that you wouldn't expect to have a following. Regular readers may be familiar with my fixation with Pixar's *Cars* (2006), however, as of late I've found myself delving into something arguably even stranger. I've become obsessed with Minecraft roleplay. Let me elaborate on that.

The Dream SMP is a Survival Multiplayer Minecraft server created in May 2020 by content creator DreamWasTaken (more commonly known as Dream). The server started off as any regular Minecraft server would, a place where Dream and his friends could mess around and play Minecraft together. Sessions on the server would be streamed live on Twitch and usually involved the construction of farms and landmarks, you know, your run-of-the-mill Minecraft gameplay.

In the beginning, the Dream SMP had very little narrative, it was mostly just a group of friends playing Minecraft, and besides a few grievings (a term used to describe when one player destroys

or damages another player's build or property) there was also very little conflict. However, everything changed on July 4 2020, when popular Minecraft creator 'TommyInnit' was added to the server. The addition of Tommy marked a drastic change in the server, it marked the beginning of what is now known as 'lore'. 'Lore' in the context of the Dream SMP is essentially the canonical storylines that play out on the server. From their inception, these storylines have indelibly shaped the server and its many inhabitants, all of which have distinct characters separate from their creators.

So what makes the Dream SMP so special, then? Is it excellent writing? Stellar acting? A range of complex and diverse characters? Well, yes, and no. While the Dream SMP does have, in my humble opinion, all of those things, what makes it special is the unique and often revolutionary storytelling it employs. The livestreaming aspect of the SMP affords content creators incredible individual creative liberty, the way lore is made is completely up to them. At first, most lore was made in the form of casual, improvised roleplay between players, with many integral plot-points starting or occurring in this form. The first and arguably most far-reaching major

conflict on the server (later on known as the 'Disc Saga') was started this way. Additionally, as previously mentioned, the creators play unique characters separate from themselves, fitting several important archetypes and experiencing clear character development. In many ways, it's like live-theatre or improv, except much better and in Minecraft instead of on a stage.

Over time, as the lore became more and more complex, so did the ways in which content creators presented it. The landscape of the SMP was forever transformed with the premiere of creator Quackity's stream on March 16 2021, which marked the first ever instance of pre-recorded lore in the SMP. This lore was presented in the form of what was essentially a Minecraft short film, with slick transitions and fully scripted sequences. Needless to say, this drove the fans wild. It was like when television first arrived in Australia back in the 60s, practically a historical event.

As is the nature of live-streaming, audiences can witness all the lore happening in real time, being able to communicate in-chat so that even in the comfort of their own homes they're still reacting and interacting with their fellow fans in a shared media experience. It creates a wonderful sense of community

and an experience unlike other traditional forms of theatre or media, where this sort of discussion and speculation doesn't occur during the performance. Those who miss the live-streams are then also still able to watch back VODs (Video on Demand), recorded versions of streams that are saved immediately after it ends. This doesn't even touch on the dedicated third-party YouTube channels that cut and piece together streams so that the story can be watched like a scripted drama, skipping non-narrative content altogether. This creative freedom also extends well into the fandom. A wide range of fan-content can be found, from simple fanart to fully produced concept albums and animations.

What truly makes all of this so amazing to see is remembering that all this comes from what is simply a Minecraft roleplay server. Through this seemingly unassuming form of media that could easily be discounted as mindless drivel, we've been given incredibly rich and complex storytelling, a thriving creative community, and a completely new, untraditional form of content creation. And to be honest, I think that's pretty poggers.

The ethics of sport ownership

XAVIER ROCHE

The football human rights crisis.

Over recent days, the streets of Newcastle in Northern England have been buzzing with optimism for the future of its long-suffering football team Newcastle United, following the completion of a Saudi Arabian-financed club takeover. The purchase, which has been prolonged by legal disputes regarding the fitness of the consortium behind it, was finally approved by the Premier League, having been satisfied that the “Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will not control Newcastle United Football Club.” It appears the Premier League is content to separate the Saudi Arabian Public Investment Fund (PIF), headed by Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, from the Saudi Arabian government, despite the fund essentially functioning as a government account, and Bin Salman being widely recognised as the de facto leader of the Saudi state. Although its approval is unsurprising given the success of similar ownership arrangements at fellow European clubs Manchester City and Paris Saint-Germain (backed by the United Arab Emirates and Qatar respectively), the accusations of sportswashing that have met its approval are well-founded, and indicative of a growing frustration amongst human rights groups that sports ownership has become a means for repressive governments to promote their country and garner positive media representation.

The term 'sportswashing' has only risen to relevance in recent decades, and refers to countries or states using sports clubs or events to airbrush past human rights abuses and improve their global image. Sports leagues have chosen to intentionally ignore the validation represented by accepting unethical individuals into their exclusive

ownership groups, neglecting any moral responsibility at the promise of billions of dollars of investment in their game. Each of the governments these football ownership groups represent are globally recognised as amongst the most abusive and oppressive regimes currently operating, sharing a penchant for political executions, severe limitations of women's rights, and complete prevention of a free press, amongst many other violations. A particularly haunting recent example was the murder and dismemberment of dissident journalist

sports ownership is an effective path for despots to have their wealth and status legitimised. Newcastle United is on its way to become a tool for the Saudi Arabian government to promote itself, a channel through which money, to some extent, ensures success and further validation.

Crucially, football can still salvage itself from the corruption of state ownership, and in doing so prevent a culturally unifying sport from becoming a glorification of tyrannical governments outbidding each other in the pursuit of



Jamal Khashoggi in 2018 inside a Saudi Arabian embassy, a horrific crime that Bin Salman has been personally linked to.

Yet despite these facts, the Premier League have either failed to recognise the motives and consequences of Saudi Arabia's involvement, or, far more likely, do not care. It has become clear through existing examples that the celebrity status inherent to modern

real impact. Complicating this effort, however, is the divisive response of Newcastle fans, as well as football's wider audience. Having witnessed the immediate success at Manchester City following UAE financing, many Newcastle fans have welcomed the sale, an understandable reaction for any club supporter not blind to the fact teams can no longer win without enormous investment. The images of Newcastle fans dressed as Saudi princes, or Manchester City supporters hoisting banners thanking Sheikh Mansour, demonstrate that not only are the fans open to this idea, but they are eager. The potential this purchase has to establish Newcastle United as a global brand, and with it elevate the recognition and prosperity of the city of Newcastle, is undeniable. Yet it must be rejected in the face of such clear ramifications for football and global sport's future.

This debate around the hijacking of sports by undemocratic states will resurface with greater international attention next year as the 2022 World Cup gets underway in Qatar, an event the host nation secured through blatant and unbridled corruption, and that has contributed to thousands of migrant worker deaths in building the required infrastructure. The World Cup offers an opportunity for the Qatar government to promote their country to a global audience, and present a positive, constructed illusion of life in their country. Unless the billions of people that make up football's audience make their voices heard, whether it's through hashtags or boycotts, sport has little hope of maintaining the spirit and tradition with which it has captured hearts, and will become only another industry sacrificed at the altar of money.

did one of those coach tour thingos that get heaps of other uni students along – plus a couple of unsuspecting boomers just here for the art museums and churches and shit. Yeah had some pretty wild nights there.

I know it’s a bit cheeky but, like, when it started getting bad over there I didn’t want to come back straight away. I’d locked down a job in a pub owned by a mate of my Uncle over in the UK, and I’d heard about how things were all shut down back home. So I sort of just chilled out, slapped on a couple of masks everyday, watched heaps of movies and all that.

It was only when Mum texted me – and then tried to call me about six times in the same day – that I was like “Ahh yeah, might be the right way to go coming back…” Apparently, while they were still figuring things out, they were gonna shut the borders and, like, not let anyone in.

Dad had a chat with one of his old high school mates and they got me on a plane within a couple of weeks, which was pretty sick. They told me I’d have to stay in a hotel and it was just whatever…I don’t remember the name of the place. I think Dad paid for it.

But yeah, it was actually pretty cool. Like in all those prison movies, when the main guy just reads books and does pushups all day, that was me minus the books. Food was decent. The room had a balcony but the view was pretty crap. I wish I could say I liked the location but, you know, I couldn’t leave or anything. Overall pretty solid though, felt like a bit of a holiday.

March

I was walking to the bus stop when I remembered it had been a year…

We’d gone on the trip for our 25th wedding anniversary – “the Silver Jubilee” I remember him saying between one and about fifty times.

I’m pretty sure I was actually the first one to start feeling it. We’d gone for a day-trip with the rest of the group from the hotel and ended up on an island, I can’t remember the name of it. I was feeling a bit more tired than usual so we decided to call it a day a little earlier and go back to have a snooze. I’d heard about the drama back home, but I’m glad we were at least able to stay for the rest of the time and come back without having to rebook flights.

I think I started to feel properly worried when we were on the plane home, masks and all, and he was coughing and wouldn’t stop for ages.

We were coached to the quarantine place and

A Writer, Perceived

KATE WOODBURY

People’s Choice Non-Fiction.

People’s Choice Non-Fiction.

I used to view my identity as a superimposed timeline, each stage sequential and exponential. Childhood, high school, university, and then (if I was lucky) a middle-class job and marriage and I’d have a couple of kids huddled inside my perfect white picket fence delusion. Every stage would streamline towards something *next*, some mythic destination that I never really had the words to define; a destination that would posit, perpetually, my Meaning.

And then I had an existential breakdown and deferred my semester at uni.

What happens when a body, hurtling along its impetus, unexpectedly comes to a halt, and the head has to catch up?

I took time off for an assemblage of reasons, the most salient being that I just simply felt no longer *present* in my learning- or whatever that was meant to mean. I had mental health stuff to deal with, and I supposed that a couple of months away from my ‘life’, or more what I perceived my life *should* be, would be an effective reset. And then I would go back to uni and be mentally really well and get up at 6am every day and go for a run and drink water with ice cubes and lemon slices in it and be a HD level student, etcetera etcetera.

But mostly, I wanted to read and write simply for the sake of it.

I had the right intentions. I was to redefine my concept of productivity; learn to exist without an external implication of a mark, a grade, a categorical demarcation of the value behind what I write.

So, why haven’t I been writing?

things were ok for a short time, only the food was pretty tragic, but we just read our books, read the news and watched TV. The positive tests came after we were there for about three days.

He told me he was embarrassed how we were the same age, but he seemed be taking it so much worse. He was sleeping every night without blankets, and eventually without clothes at all. I noticed how he tried to hold the coughs in, and I could feel him shaking in bed next to me whenever they came through him.

After about a week, he couldn’t really hold them in anymore. One night, as we were going to bed, he handed me the earplugs without a word. In the morning his eyes had deep bags, and his pupils were reddened. We held each other for a while and then I rang down to reception to tell the lady there that it seemed like he’d taken a turn.

They came and took him to RPA, just up the road. The paramedic told me that we could call to chat once a day. I couldn’t visit once I got out but we’d be back together in no time. The calls would come just after 3, it’d take him a while to say it but he’d always tell me he was feeling better. Sometimes it was hard to hear him over all the equipment in his room.

The day before I was meant to get out I got a call at around 8 – second one for the day. A Doctor spoke, explained that he mightn’t make it through the night. Did I want to say goodbye?

I’m not sure if he could hear me, there was just beeping and heaving.

I told him I would really miss him, and that it was ok to go.

September

Things have started getting better but I really don’t know why they’ve still got me here. I count the people that come in and out and there hasn’t been more than ten at once in at least a month. That and they’ve got me sitting on a fucking folding chair.

I wish someone would try and make a run for it, or just something to give me a little action.

At the convenience store on the corner the other day, I noticed they’d made the bananas ten cents more expensive. \$1.30 each now – bullshit. A bunch of their Tim Tam packets were also expired.

Never in my life have my hands hurt more than when I’ve gotta sanitise them like twenty times a day.

At least I’ve got work for the moment.

circular quay

RILEY VAUGHAN

Shortlist for Fiction.

- but it was just a detail or two, just a box of flour at the store, just the barber’s name, the watch on her wrist, to brush her teeth, the anniversary or so, that she’d eaten lunch and asked for breakfast, her husband’s face her child’s name, the mirror’s glimpse
- on the train again. but as she, the champion of her creaking and the custodian of her cane, manoeuvred the dusty train seat knees. hips. back. her neck strained back to converse, first time or so since the mailman Monday. but the carriage stopped! sterling flew out from and back into her neck. locket. open. smile. to the peonies in the garden outside or the seat to her right she looked at once and saw her Child or saw her stop. and saw the box of flour or the pale off cream and verdant blobs steam out their tops and sails sounded like Pavarotti and a toothbrush her throat was sore and her lips chap— pedalling through the alps friends hiking each week endless love hot cocoa warmth smiles with her part nervous on exchange a summer in texas she’d learned span ishmael was the protagonist of her favourite book what was it Mo by the sea she had attended teacher’s college— “get the opal card ready”. tap. ding. green.
- he guided her hand to the card reader, as he’d done before. married for as long as he could remember. far longer than she could. and they were back
- her memories were home, just not in her house

but as some kind of virtue signalling that *hey! I am interesting! I am creative! Look at what I create!* I had conceptualised writing as this singular, all life-determining, all life-therapizing venture, but rather than this being a motivator, it raised the stakes of my hobby to something too impenetrable to actually confront.

Only once I recentred my view of writing away from being a destination, and more as something with Meaning embedded all throughout its process, was I able to actually muster the motivation to start again.

I think I’ve been hurtling towards some pretence of Excellence for so long, to be the best at something, to *create* something without termination, without limitation, that I’ve failed to recognise that excellence has no predicated end point.

To define Excellence as *immortalisation* through the things we *create* or *write* or *affect* is simply ludicrous. Acknowledging my life’s insignificance in the passage of the next several decades or centuries isn’t self-defeating. It’s pragmatism, and I don’t think that it is mutually exclusive with optimism.

Nothing I could ever write- or let alone think- will ever be entirely new. And I admit to the irony of saying this.

But my favourite book is mostly likely entirely different to the person sitting across from me on a bus whose favourite book is something beyond even my realm of recognition but if it vests just *so much significance* to their ontology then it is still just as *valid* and *important*. What I’m trying to say is that whatever I write or do in general won’t be ground-breaking to every single person in the world right now or at any point in the future. But it doesn’t have to be.

What I’m trying to accept is that the act of writing, creating, just generally *doing*, is in itself magnificent, even if it is only meaningful to me.

We have to recentre a concept of Excellence

Repatriation Discourse: Where Are These Artifacts Destined?

ARIANA HAGHIGHI

Shortlist for Non-Fiction.

It is the number one destination on any itinerary list. You enter as an ant in a sea of tourists heralding from all four corners of the globe. You look up, your eyes travelling higher and higher as you are astounded by the white palace and geometrically patterned glass ceiling. Lost, you connect with a pair of friendly eyes, who rush over to you like you are in dying need. She smiles with a rehearsed expression, and enthusiastically hands you a map. Unfolding it crease after crease, it expands like a colour-splashed parachute, pulled taut by your grip.

To where do you wish to be transported?, she asks.

Every square draws you in, as your eyes dart between the exotic destinations. Will you land in Benin City, or coast by Somalian waters? Will the guide ship you all the way to Indigenous Australia?

You wonder how lucky you are to be present in this microcosmic snowglobe of the world.

A major tourist attraction beckoning over six million globetrotters a year, the British Museum boasts the largest and comprehensive collection of artifacts, and with it, a longstanding history of imperialism and thievery. Each exhibit conceals a sinister past, the artifacts propped up on a foundation of power and colonial subjugation. Detaining many significant and spiritual pieces from their home country, the Museum applies a paternalist justification eerily identical to colonialist attitudes. This institution kept alive by the kleptomania of settlers claims it is best equipped to preserve these displaced objects. Where the Museum is quick to condemn and take action against the acquisition of Afghani antiquities looted by the Taliban through illicit trade, they are much more hesitant to return their own stolen goods.

IGGY BOYD

Shortlist for Non-Fiction.

Shortlist for Non-Fiction.

“Labour is the source of all wealth, the political economists assert. And it really is the source — next to nature, which supplies it with the material that it converts into wealth. But it is even infinitely more than this. It is the prime basic condition for all human existence, and this to such an extent that, in a sense, we have to say that labour created man himself.” – Friedrich Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*

The predominant debate that rages in environmental activist spaces is that between a *‘just transition’*, the construction of nationalised green energy proportional to the deconstruction of current greenhouse gas (GHG) emitting power infrastructure whilst retraining fossil fuel workers to take up work in new green energy infrastructure, and *‘shutting down the coal industry’*, which seems self-evident. The just transition, to its credit, doesn’t immediately create a devastating labour crisis but its logistics remain rarely elucidated; that is, how would states manage to essentially buy out fossil fuel operations and construct nationalised green energy when multinational corporations have every reason to not allow that whilst also holding all the leverage. Nonetheless, the logistics are largely irrelevant at this stage; it still exists as a long term goal and even then, it’s simply insufficient.

And I don’t want to pose this as some self-gratifying monologue as if writer’s block is something that I – and I *only* – experience; but I’m wary of homogenising all human experience. Still, inevitably, capitalism is at the root of my disenchantment. So long as any creative endeavour is evaluated by its destination, and the *usefulness* of this destination as commodity, the creator’s existence will be precarious at the whim of their audience’s perception.

And I suppose if I’ve learnt anything from this period of reflection, it is to create – and quite frankly exist – foremost for myself. And realistically, I know all of this and I’m repeating it now to convince you (or maybe me) that *I do know all of this* and it makes sense theoretically but the practice is what I’m working on still.

But hey, I’m trying my best. I think that’s all we can do for the time being, and I think that is ok.

On its website, the Museum sheds light onto the history of its exhibits. When detailing the acquisition of the Benin Bronzes, it is initially parsimonious with description, and deliberately vague.

It is in the context of emerging colonial power that the Benin Bronzes came to the British Museum.

This clinical history is almost unashamed in its reference to colonisation, and erases the culpability of settlers, suggesting the artifacts washed up on British waters on their own accord. Only later detailing the brutal aspects of occupation, viewers never truly comprehend the act for what it is – thievery. Recently, the Museum has engaged in cordial negotiations with the Benin Royal Court regarding the repatriation of these objects – in the form of a loan, notably – contravening British government directive. This, however, has only struck decades after continual persistence from the Court, their various statements framed and decorating a Museum wall. Where some adulate the transparency, many find it to be tokenistic and tone deaf. A far cry from Emmanuel Macron’s endorsement of swift repatriation of stolen artifacts, many view that the British government takes a ‘retain and explain’ stance on the colonial vestiges they house. Although some commend the open denouncement of colonialism as a first step, this is not a step towards the tangible improvement of post-colonial states.

The fact that there is confusion and conflation of two separate historical issues in Britain does not aid civil public discourse. Although the British Government do remain largely antagonistic towards the notion of absolute repatriation, with the Department of Digital Media, Culture and Sport claiming Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden fights to “defend our culture and history from the noisy minority of activists”, a large portion of source material that fuels the left and rights’ arguments actually pertains to the existence

The Primitivism of Climate Activism

of absorbing CO2 and the worst possible scenario, which is much more likely, is that the atmosphere decays to such an extent that forests become net emitters rather than net reducers. To digress slightly, the great misconception of current Western climate activism is only operating on a national scale but moreso is the idea that climate change is caused by man’s domination over nature. That if we co-existed with nature as equals and ceased exercising authority over it we could prevent climate catastrophe.

This is wrong; capitalist destruction of nature, even space-capitalist notions of terraforming planets to make them inhabitable, is simply an overextension of the relationship that man has always had with nature. That of the environment maker. Indigenous Australians built complex aquaculture systems that are potentially some of the oldest stone structures in the world and there is evidence to suggest that the Incas participated extensively in slash-and-burn agriculture. The notion that man is both above nature to the extent that he can engage in unnatural processes such as capitalism but also holds the obligation to reduce himself to the level of nature in order to prevent climate catastrophe is prescriptive and construct nationalised green energy when multinational corporations have every reason to not allow that whilst also holding all the leverage. Nonetheless, the logistics are largely irrelevant at this stage; it still exists as a long term goal and even then, it’s simply insufficient.

It has made the rounds recently, the news that the Amazon rainforest now emits more CO2 than it removes from the atmosphere. It is estimated that to prevent a self-compounding climate disaster, the maximum concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere cannot exceed 350 parts per million (ppm); the current concentration is 405 ppm. In a fantasy hypothetical, say that this immediately ceases increasing; the best case scenario now is that forest bodies max out their efficacy and begin producing diminishing returns in terms

of controversial statues. There are definitely points of convergence between the two issues, but the government’s stance on the former is often misconstrued and misapplied to restitution of artifacts. Not only has this added fuel to the conservative fire, where screams of cancel culture are applied to the notion of repatriation, it has largely slowed the process and disincentivised museums from taking action.

British reluctance regarding repatriation can be boiled down to fear of a fall from grace. Former curator of the Museum’s Africa galleries, Chris Spring, laments a future of a British Museum void of African artifacts. “If Africa is not represented, that is a disaster; the [British Museum] is a museum of the world for the world”, he claims. Though one can understand the appeal of a Department store of international artifacts, this disregards the detriment caused to the other side of the equation. It is facetiously *of the world* as the items are looted. If the museum is *for the world*, it should gratify the wishes of global citizens. The British Museum and other Western equivalents can discover novel means to represent international art and history without relying upon stolen objects.

Ultimately, in the context of reconciliation and reparations, Britain should not focus on itself as the sole significant actor. The realm of artifacts and their transfer is not a zero-sum game in that Britain loses by boosting the prestige of another nation, and rightfully restoring their objects. It could be argued that by dissolving its current sophistry, the Museum improves, the tourist experience more genuine, despite a collection less vast.

This *world* of international knowledge also does not lend itself to the culturally competent education one would expect. Curator Iheyani Onwuegbucha imparts that many tour guides are illiterate regarding the spiritual history of these objects, often opting for buzzwords that capitalise on pre-colonial African stereotypes

for touristic appeal, such as “juju” or “black magic”. This leaves paternalistic arguments that Britain has the greatest capacity to care for the objects largely unfounded.

Australian Alice Procter has bred up a storm with surreptitious tours at famous museums that greatly contrast her competitor’s subtle indications to colonialism. Emblazoned with the motto, *Display it like you stole it*, she leads small groups on informal tours that overtly probe into the horrendous colonial history of looted objects. Her service, for many, encapsulates for what activists have fought for decades – not merely an understanding of the need for restitution, but an exploration into how their continued displacement reflects upon Britain. Regarding repatriation, Procter argues that a museum’s admission of fault through the act is almost as transformative and significant as the act itself; “I want them to say”, she urges, “This is how we were created, this is what we have, this is what we’re working with, and this is what we’re doing with it to try and confront the power dynamics we’ve held in place for so long.” An acknowledgement as such would only elevate British prestige, not undermine it, and ensure its continued progression towards fairness.

It is undoubtable that the process of decolonising museums is fraught with obstacles; but this is not sufficient reason to delay action. Some argue the institution of a museum itself is inherently a bastion of glorified imperialism, or that museums need to be purged of colonialist sentiments in more ways than one. British and Muslim curator Shaheen Kasmani reports feeling uncomfortable in museum spaces, as such ‘high-brow’ institutions are historically associated with white creators and white audiences.

Considering this, the repatriation of objects is crucial, but it is not crossing the finish line. It is merely a step closer to the destination.

Shortlist for Non-Fiction.

Shortlist for Non-Fiction.

Shortlist for Non-Fiction.

gas plants; this is false, direct air capture (DAC) is a far more developed process and is entirely compatible with green energy. Further, it can’t possibly be greenwashing because it’s impossible to implement in market systems. There is no social use value, therefore no potential profit, to gaseous CO2; the only idea corporations have come up with is selling it to soft drink companies and then it would just end up back in the atmosphere anyway.

Further, it’s very real. Klaus Lackner of Arizona State University has developed what is essentially an artificial tree that is one thousand times more effective at trapping CO2than regular trees. In Iceland, researchers have mixed CO2 and hydrogen sulfide then injected it into basalt rock and found that it solidifies into a limestone-like substance in less than 2 years. That’s an insanely fast turnaround and it bypasses the problem of gaseous CO2 being difficult to store safely. Joe Biden proposed it as a vague buzzword but don’t let that deter you from a very important technology. As J. W. Mason describes, responding to climate change should be like responding to war. Just as the US invested rapidly in military infrastructure prior to WWII and created vast numbers of jobs and demand which in turn created more wealth to reinvest into military infrastructure, the exact same process should be applied with clean energy. In some ways the US during WWII was almost centrally planned, in the same way that the USSR under the NEP was centrally planned; free markets existed but were directed towards the production of particular goods through government investment. It shows the necessity of government intervention in production beyond simply nationalising energy and it shows the importance of direct oversight by state forces in the transition between fossil fuels and renewable energy. But it isn’t sufficient to simply halt our course; we have to actively reduce the CO2in the atmosphere and that must be done through carbon capture and embracing everything that technology gives us.

What I come to is that these processes are not about the moralising labels of *capitalist* or *socialist*, they’re about the material good that each process produces. Coal has outlived its usefulness; nuclear has a level of use remaining but ultimately green energy is the most feasible and least dangerous system of energy production. It remains insufficient, though, without a means of removing currently existing GHG emissions from the atmosphere; to this end I uphold carbon capture technology, which has been described as “not real” and “greenwashing” by sections of the Australian left. Ideas such as “clean coal” and solar radiation management (SRM) are greenwashing, because they maintain fossil fuel infrastructure. People are commonly of the misconception that carbon capture exclusively refers to reducing CO2 output from coal fired

President

SWAPNIK SANAGAVARAPU

Congratulations to those of you who are vaccinated and are experiencing your first little bit of post-lockdown freedom! This week was not as busy as usual, but I continued my usual advocacy work for students.

Our first special considerations focus group session will be happening this week, on Tuesday morning. It will be a terrific opportunity for the SRC and for ordinary students to have a say in the design and development of this vitally

important service. If you are interested in participating, there are still places open for students to be involved - please contact the SRC Facebook page or contact me at president@src.usyd.edu.au. You will be compensated for your time by Student Administration Services.

We also heard some promising developments from the University as far as our advocacy efforts go. The University has noted that they will look to implement in person graduation events from December

1st, which is a great result given the SRC, USU and student advocacy efforts that have been taking place over the past few weeks. We also heard that the University will correct issues with incorrect fees across Mathematics units, an issue that I and a number of other students raised concerns about.

Finally, I'd be remiss not to mention two important events upcoming in the SRC Calendar. The first is our annual Representatives Elect meeting, where

office bearers for 2022 will be elected. My best wishes to all those who plan to nominate. The second, and perhaps more important, is our Student General Meeting on Wednesday the 27th, where students from across the University will come together to oppose cuts in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. All the details can be found on the Education Action Group's Facebook group.

Until next time,
Swapnik.

Vice Presidents

ROISIN MURPHY AND MARIA GE DID NOT SUBMIT A REPORT.

General Secretaries

PRIYA GUPTA AND ANNE ZHAO DID NOT SUBMIT A REPORT.

Sexual Harassment Officers

ALANA RAMSHAW, COURTNEY DALEY, LI (KELSEY) JIN AND HAO (RAYMOND) YAO DID NOT SUBMIT A REPORT.

Social Justice Officers

IGGY BOYD, EDDIE STEPHENSON AND JIAYE LIU DID NOT SUBMIT A REPORT.

International Student Officers

ZEYU HE, YUEZHOU (GRACE) LIU, HILDY ZHANG AND ANGELA LI DID NOT SUBMIT A REPORT.

Don't use a Fake Medical Certificate!



It's not difficult to find fake medical certificates on the internet. It is not difficult to make yourself a fake medical certificate. However the SRC recommends that you do not use them EVER. In creating, buying and/or submitting a false medical certificate you are committing FRAUD. This isn't just against University rules, it's also against the law, and potentially carries the risk of a maximum prison sentence of ten years, if prosecuted by the police. It is unlikely that the police would prosecute you, but bear in mind that it is possible. The University also treats this as Academic Misconduct and carries a very likely outcome of a suspension from your studies for at least one semester.

The University is acutely aware that there are false medical certificates out there and routinely checks Special Consideration applications and the attached medical certificates. The chances of them finding any fake certificates is actually very high.

Some students have tried to get genuine medical certificates and have been tricked into paying for false ones. This is unlikely to be a good defense for you with the University. Instead of using online

services, see your regular doctor, or if they are not available try the University's Health Service (Level 3, Wentworth Building), or go to your local medical centre. If you are too sick to leave your home get an after hours doctor to come to your house. Google will give you a list of these services available in your area.

If you are stressed or struggling to the point that you even consider obtaining a false medical certificate, your best option is to talk to someone about what's going on.

If you are stressed or struggling to the point that you even consider obtaining a false medical certificate, your best option is to talk to someone about what's going on. The University has a free Counselling Service, or talk to your doctor, or ask an SRC Caseworker for a recommendation. There might be a way to manage your study load without risking far more serious consequences in the long term.

Ask Abe

SRC caseworker help Q&A

Domestic & Relationship Violence



Hi Abe,

I was torn about whether to ask for help about this, but I've been noticing some stuff in my friend's relationship recently which is a bit worrying. Her partner is always putting her down in front of other people, and she recently made a comment to me about how she's "not allowed" to go to this party that some mutual friends of ours are having. The other day we were meant to catch up for coffee and her partner called her like three times and then he randomly showed up and they left abruptly. What can I do to support my friend?

Sincerely,
Worried

Dear Worried,
What you're describing sounds like a situation of coercive control, a form of domestic violence which is often harder to spot. It can also be difficult to know what to do in this situation from outside the relationship.

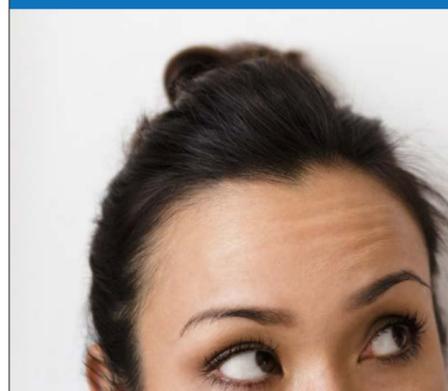
The next time you see your friend you might want to check in with her and ask how things are going generally. One of the most important things in this situation is to avoid intervening in a way that escalates the situation. It is also critical not to intervene in a way that will cause your friend to isolate herself; be there for your friend in a non-judgemental way, and let them know that they have your support, whatever decision(s) they make about this relationship.

This can be a case of finding that delicate balance between letting them know that how they are being treated is not okay and not their fault, but that you understand and support whatever choices they make.

Your friend can also call the domestic violence support line 1800 Respect at 1800 737 732 for further advice and support.

Sincerely,
Abe

Do you have a legal problem? We can help you for FREE!*



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Court Appearances
Immigration & Visa Referrals
Student Advocacy
Civil Rights
...and more

SRC
LEGAL SERVICE
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ARE AVAILABLE
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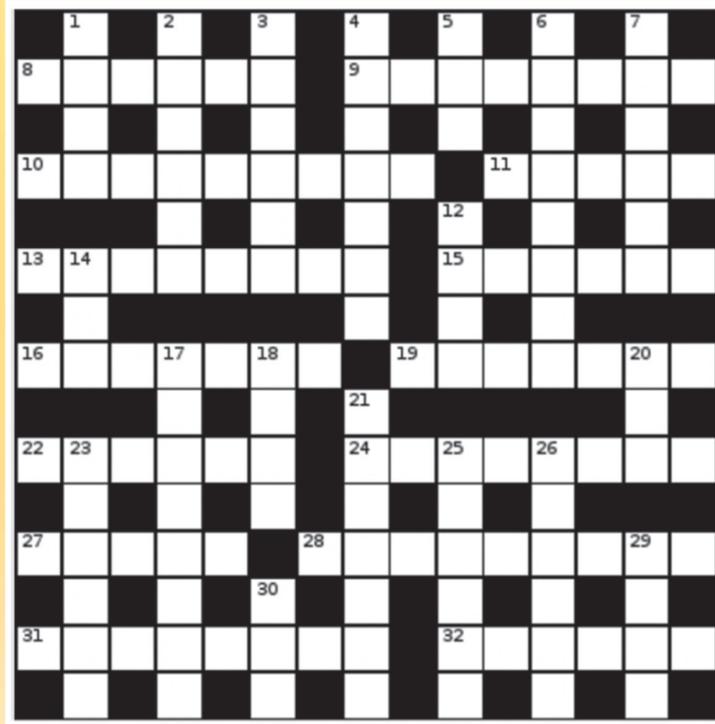
*this service is available to USYD undergraduate students and cases that meet eligible criteria



Crossword by Clouddrunner

Films Crossword!

ART BY VIVIENNE GUO



across

- 8 Classic and indie film streaming service free for USyd students! (6)
- 9A/10A 27 Across? (8,9)
- 11 Classic Ryan Gosling sadboi movie (5)
- 13 Director of 2019 miniseries *The Irishman* (8)
- 15 Orphan musical! (6)
- 16 Filmic technique stunningly employed in *Battleship Potemkin* and *Rocky* (7)
- 19 Highest grossing film ever (7)
- 22 A thrilling movie might make you do this! (6)
- 24 Very well blocked? (8)
- 27A/18D Sandler and the Saffdies' snubbed silver screen sensation (5,4)
- 28 Billy Wilder's film about a sharehouse of sorts (9)
- 31 Lulu Wang's 2019 film starring Awkwafina (8)
- 32 This hit film paid off for 13 Across (6)

down

- 1 Film is structured to please this sort of gaze (4)
- 2 *Vertigo's* Scottie and *Body Double's* Jake embody this sort of spectator (6)
- 3 Moaning magical maiden (6)
- 4 Characteristic of Snake Plissken, Elle Driver, and Mike Wazowski (3-4)
- 5 First name of the director who made *Gemini Man* and *Life of Pi* (3)
- 6 What a good score should be (8)
- 7 Body of work (6)
- 12D/25D Magnificent romcom with icon Cher and *Face/Off* legend Nicolas Cage (10)
- 14 Ravenclaw quidditch player and first girlfriend to Harry Potter (3)
- 17 Homages (8)
- 18 See 27 Across
- 20 1930's sex symbol West (3)
- 21 Director of *Lost in Translation* and *Marie Antoinette* (7)
- 23 *Face/Off* legend John Travolta is an ambassador for this airline (6)
- 25 See 12 Down
- 26 Expose one's true character (6)
- 29 *The Winter Soldier*, *Live and Let Die*, and *The Rise of Skywalker* (4)
- 30 Number of times Robert Downey Jr has portrayed Ironman in a film (3)

V for Variety

1. What fictional vigilante held a vendetta, held as a votive, not in vain, for the value and veracity of such shall one day vindicate the vigilante and the virtuous?
2. Who's afraid of this Woolf?
3. What is the name for the study of flags?
4. C is for Charlie as V is to...
5. What goddess is in my milo?



Searching for answers?

Go to honisoit.com

Quiz

Gossip



Abe
GOSSIP

Moooo!

Congratulations on getting out of lockdown. I hope everyone is celebrating with their favourite little treats and lots of belly rubs. *Ears perk up*

Enviro escapades

The Enviro Collective met to elect their 2022 Convenors on Thursday. Congratulations to Angus Dermody (Solidarity), Tiger Perkins (Grassroots) and Ishbel Dunsmore (Grassroots). The Convenors consist entirely of white students for the first time in recent memory.

Sadly, Mira Wray (Solidarity) was not elected by the Collective. Wray, a first-year student, grew up in a mining town and had mining job, which sparked a major war of words. People like former Education Officer Jazz Breen accused

attendees of "bullying" Wray and the working class. Nasty Facebook comments went flying! Some decorum, children!

Sounds about white?

The article on "Whiteness in student politics and activism" caused a stir amongst the campus left. While I haven't read the group chats, mainly because as a dog I can't read, I've heard whispers of some White Moments in the collectives... As a white dog myself, I have taken time to be introspective and reflect on my own white fragility. Some of you should take note!

Letters

In response to the print edition headline: "Another Butch Lesbian FASS Dean"

Dear Editor,

I am writing in my capacity as the Champion of the University's Pride Network. While any appointment to a senior position is likely to be a target for criticism and this is part of the rich tapestry of University life which we would want to retain, I wish to express my considerable misgivings about the recent headline in the print edition of *Honi Soit*, above a story about our new Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Dean. I am pleased *Honi Soit* has changed this headline online and I'm thankful for that but it naturally remains in the print edition, which is very unfortunate. On behalf of the Network, with whom I have canvassed this concern, the fact that a homophobic slur should make it through your editorial processes is regrettable and we are concerned at this terrible lapse in judgement. Slurs of this type have no place in a University.

Stephen Garton

In response to Stephen Garton's letter

Dear Garton, Champion of the Pride Network,

We are writing in our capacity as queers. While any satirical remark about recurring patterns in the appointments of university management is likely to be a target of grumblings from overpaid people who recently lost the top job, this is part of the rich tapestry of University life which we would like to retain. I wish to express my considerable laughter about the recent headline in the print edition of *Honi Soit* "Another butch lesbian FASS Dean," above a story about another butch lesbian FASS Dean. I am pleased this headline has been printed and posted to almost 300 people and I'm thankful that these people will have a laugh, which is very fortunate in these unprecedented COVID times. On behalf of the queers, with whom I have canvassed this concern, the fact that you consider "butch lesbian" to be a homophobic slur and not a compliment of the highest capacity is regrettable and we are concerned at your terrible lapse in judgement. Butch lesbians should be celebrated in a University.

Queers of the *Honi Soit* editorial team (there are seven of us)

In response to Chuyi Wang's article "Towards copyright abolition: Why we should all be pirates"

This article was a cracking read, but misuses terms of art in copyright law. A musical work can both be original and infringe on another copyright work. Eg the Men at Work song Down Under is original (and if you played it in an advertisement without a licence, you would be infringing that work), but it infringed an earlier work (the Kookaburra tune). So the answer to the question "how could derivative or sampled works not be considered original?" is: they actually are, but they infringe on the copyright of the samples they use.

Anonymous letter

I work at this university. Fuck them. Fuck them. I am literally at the point of tears. I cannot deal

with this. Gaslighting. Exploitation. Abuse. Every week more of it. So many people want to leave u-syd. FUCK. I have never worked at a workplace that had such contempt for its staff.

Columns



Ariana Haghghi and Eamonn Murphy

ABSURD ANIMAL ANECDOTES

How to win fat bear week: A step-by-step guide to guarantee victory

So, you've heard about Fat Bear Week. Bears plump themselves up like sizable Christmas turkeys, before months of skeletal hibernation. So, you've heard of a certain fat bear, Otis. Last week, he was crowned the reigning champion for the 4th year in a row. So, you want to be the Fattest Bear of 2022? We are here to help you succeed.

1. Migrate to Katmai National Park and Preserve, Alaska

Home of the Fat Bear Contest, this is incontrovertibly a key factor. If you are an Australian-based bear, consider hitching a ride there via live-export trade. Concerned about financing this move? Fear not! Every Alaskan resident receives an annual payment from the state's Permanent Fund Dividend, certain to support your ursine travel expenses!

2. Consume 20,000 calories daily

To be the fattest, chunkiest bear, you must demolish everything in your sight. More specifically, you must voraciously consume at least 20,000 calories daily. "But how?", you inquire. We do have an answer! Focus on fish brains, eggs and skin, all of which are calorie-laden. In the absence of fish due to your sneaky competitors, seek out berries. The North American Bear Centre — quite simply our favourite educational facility — classifies berries as an "essential food". Whether they're sarsaparilla berries, dogwood berries or succulent juneberries, make sure that you get your sustenance!

3. Hydrate frequently

As we've heard time and time again, keep your competitors close, but the bathroom closer. As a prospective Fat Bear, you'll need to drink so much water that urination breaks will flood your day. Leaning over the crystalline Katmai lakes, you'll sip the turquoise water, and provide yourself with the hydration that a true Fat Bear needs.

4. Have a cool name

Otis has a ring to it. Di-syllabic and sufficiently Euro-centric, it piques the interest of bear aficionados. Pick something similar that sets you apart, and captivate the park ranger convenors. In past years, we've had winners named Beadnose, Holly and the peculiarly numerical 747, so you've got big shoes to fill.

5. Undertake a #goals glow-up

Cast your mind forward. The voters will view a diptych of you before and after your major gorge. This paints your progress and, inevitably, their view of you as deserving of Fattest Bear. So, know your angles. Ensure that in the first capture you appear emaciated, ultimately drawing all the more attention to your impressive weight gain. Be confident. Be you.

You may note, however, that the metric for determining the fattest bear is fundamentally flawed. It is not really about weight or sight, but a popularity contest. Like a rigged school captain election, you must appeal to the people, the morally depraved, the basket of deplorables. Know thy audience, we say. Paint yourself as a deeply relatable bear: do what the people do. Though you may be a graceful, gargantuan specimen, ready to flaunt your sick gains, you can only guarantee victory through votes.

Most of all, however, get excited. This only rolls around once a year.



Roisin Murphy
SCRUFFY MURPHY'S

The line into Scruffy Murphy's — a 24 hour Goulburn Street hate-crime described as "Sydney's worst pub" on Tripadvisor — at 11.59 the night before lockdown was lifted was a sight for the Sydney loyal, a real Fairfax archives eat your heart out moment.

All the players were there: humid rain, gambling addicts, the Nine Network and the Surry Hills police.

Many people had waited day and night for pubs to open, scrambling the internet during those last days of lockdown, trying desperately to find a venue that would serve their midnight beer needs. These people all met outside Scruffy Murphy's on Sunday evening, joining each other in a New Year's Eve style countdown to celebrate the end of stay-at-home orders — which too easily could have mistaken us for anti-vaxxers. But, all we wanted was a decent beer.

Waiting over 100 days for the worst pour of Guinness in the state was not ideal — but having to order a pint instead of a jug of pale ale, because Sydney becomes your Nan's house after midnight, felt upsettingly fitting. So too did the ding of gambling machines and the neon lights of 3D horse races.

If Scruffy Murphy's at 12.01am on Monday morning was anything to go by, some things about this city may never change; pokies users are always prioritised, nobody here can pour Guinness, and police are the proxy licensees at every venue within 3km of the harbour.



Fergus Berney-Gibson
THIS WEEK IN CAMP

For their Summer/Spring 2022 collection, Balenciaga collaborated with *The Simpsons*, creating an animated short and purchasable tie-in items. At first glance such a collaboration is camp due to its apparent absurdity, but in our increasingly intertextual culture this was bound to happen.

Twenty years ago this would've been camp

and offbeat, but now it's expected. We live in the era of Arizona Ice Tea x Adidas, IKEA x Off-White and Gucci x Disney. *The Simpsons* is a barely living example of capitalistic cultural decay. It continues existing solely to bleed itself dry of commercial gain. This collaboration is born from a late-stage consumer culture that constantly seeks to make new but unnecessary products.

In the show, Waylon Smithers donning a sequined gown isn't camp — it's just glamour. It isn't a counter-cultural gender bend, but a man wearing a nice dress. It's an internal prejudice he overcomes to wear it, and the runway audience instantly loves it.

Here, Balenciaga isn't camping anything, but utilising multiple commercial properties for commercial gain. Interest instead lies in the aesthetics of the medium — how the stylised proportions of the characters impact the stylised proportions of the garments. This is, ironically where Balenciaga excels in their designs outside of such a collaboration. But regardless, it isn't camp, it's a cash grab.



Harry Gay
A SLICE OF THE ACTION

Fast food workers know that the employees can be just as colourful as the ingredients we handle. My teenage years saw me rub shoulders with people from all walks of life, and taught me valuable lessons about the impossibility of upward mobility in our Capitalist society.

One such employee was John, a 40 year old Greek man with long straggly hair living out of his car from behind the restaurant.

John was very superstitious, refraining from talking about his past, fearing that the shop could be bugged with surveillance technology at any moment, but made claims that he was in the secret service when he was younger.

Whether he actually was was unclear. He made allusions to 'terminating' politicians and torture of carrying bags of sand through treacherous deserts, only able to eat whatever came across his direct path. He also made claims of monitoring alien activity, and knew how Princess Diana really died.

John was also a karate master, often having sparring matches with one of our delivery drivers, Summer. Fists would fly in the back room, with the air sliced as much as our pizzas.

More than all that, however, he was a friend, one who enjoyed movies, music and jokes as much as the next guy, and we always had a good time together.

The Greek government supposedly does not provide money to their veteran service members, explaining why he was not in the best financial position. His life following this involved moving from various fast food and customer service jobs, his nights filled with haunting nightmares and traumatic memories.

His story is one of many in fast food. People with interesting lives and dark pasts, all crushed under the weight of a system built to keep them down.

His story is one of many in fast food. People with interesting lives and dark pasts, all crushed under the weight of a system built to keep them down.

The Boot



WEEK 10, SEMESTER 2

UNION BUSTING SINCE 1942

Garton (he/they) joins Dyke Collective RepsElect voting bloc

ROISIN MURPHY

Stephen Garton (he/they) has SU-Hauled to Edgeware Road, Enmore, confirming that he too hates bisexuals.

In an attempt to appeal to the dance-dyke demographic, he has rejected the Golden Barley as his local and started a campaign to reopen the Sly Fox (he termed it as "Dry Box" - *The Boot* is seeking clarification on this term).

Garton was overheard speaking with [redacted by DSPs] at Mitre-10 Newtown, indicating his support for the SRC Dyke Collective in their autonomous preselection process. This

contests rumours that he was phoned by a Liberal inviting him to rat and join a super-majority, being offered the position of General Sexetary.

The Liberal rumours were seemingly subtweeted by Gartons on again-off again sexual and emotional partner, who tweeted late last night: "Someone will fuck you with a Lovehoney strap on, but won't fuck a Liberal".

Whether the Dykes of Enmore will welcome his new sexual identity after these unclear political intentions is yet unclear.

More to come.



SWITCH IS RECRUITING!

Hey leftists kings, queens and enbies! Do you want to join the staunchest faction on campus? Want comrades to take bathroom selfies with? Here's what it takes to join Switch!

- [1] YOU'RE BLONDE
- [2] YOU LIVE AT COLLEGE
- [3] YOU BROKE AT EASERS
- [4] 2:1 FOLLOWERS TO FOLLOWING RATIO
- [5] YOU LOOK GOOD IN YELLOW

We are open to people with ALL politics!

Note: special exceptions may be made for poors and non-whites (if you're hot)

USYd students make their own iced coffees as hail falls on Sydney

MARLOW HURST & SHANIA O'BRIEN

Students were shocked last week when the solid half of iced coffee started raining from the sky. *The Boot* can confirm that multiple people around the Inner West were seen almost falling off their balconies with their keep-cups raised to the heavens, desperately attempting to capture the free ice.

There was speculation as to whether this was a Starbucks promotional stunt, but the company denied involvement publicly.

"As much as we'd like to control the weather, that's not part of our advertised corporate mission," a Starbucks spokesmermaid relayed.

Others have expressed concern that the weather was watering down lakes, rivers, and other



bodies of water with the recent ice storm.

"That's how they get ya, they load it up with ice and make you think you're getting more than you are. It's a scam! Ask for no ice, you get 50% more beverage that way," an anonymous student conveyed to the editors in a muffled phone call.

The editors of *The Boot* would

like the public to know that it is possible to make ice artificially, but will note that the SRC Chaplain said it was an act against god. *The Boot* was contacted by a concerned student who was worried about the future of iced beverages in Sydney.

"If people don't have to pay \$9.50 for an Iced Macchiato, then how do I know they're camp?"

IN THIS EDITION

"Going to the pub" announced as new Myers-Briggs personality type

[SEE MORE ON P 25](#)

Campus magpie swoops into local woman's twitter DMs: "Wanna get worms?"

[SEE MORE ON P 3650](#)

Dom Perrottet to rename children after the seven dwarves

[SEE MORE ON P 96](#)

Enviro Collective unveils new "AMAB (All Miners Are Bastards)" stickers: "they're like cops but pov0"

[SEE MORE ON P 3](#)

University to offer new Rhodes Scholarship to renowned Sydney suburb

[SEE MORE ON P 72](#)