

Honi Soit



SEMESTER 2 WEEK 11
13 OCTOBER 2010

Cards on the Table

Should The Industry Of
Mysticism Be Regulated?

SRC elections in review

Opinion Competition Winner

Profile: Benny Davis

THE FOOL.

The most we hurt ourselves: trying to hit the glory note of Seal's "Kissed By A Rose" at 2:00 am
 Word That Means Speaking Of A Human As If It Were A Fish Of The Week: poissonified
 Spoonerism of Annabel Crabb: Cannibal Arab [don't think about it too hard]
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 Would you rather:
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OR
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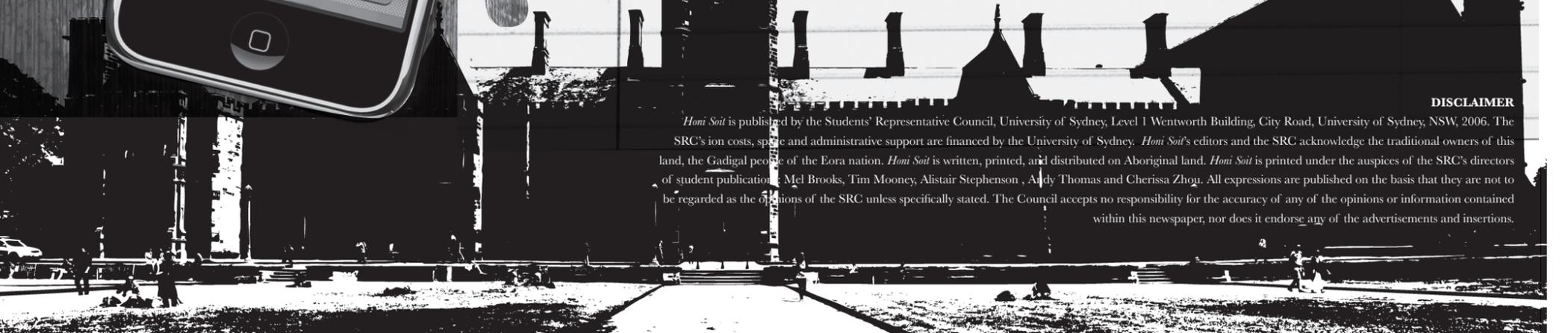
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Awww HECS

I write in response to Naomi Hart's article 'What the HECS' that defends student contributions towards the cost of education. Despite some eloquent arguments about economic efficiency, Naomi neglects to acknowledge the deeper philosophical reasons behind the call for a return to free and universal tertiary education. Arguments around the question of efficiency go too often unchallenged due to The Left's increasing inability to cut through the dominance of neoliberalism over alternatives that is increasingly commodifying and commercialising our social and cultural life.

I would not like to mount an argument that Naomi is incorrect when she says that it is more 'efficient' to organise higher education in this way, I would like to reveal whose interests 'efficiency' is there to serve. The state as a financial contributor towards higher education is by no means a neutral actor, the state has competing priorities for funding, but it must be recognised that these competing priorities are a result of the power relations that exist between various interests; workers, industry groups, social movements and other sectional interests. What Naomi is arguing is that labour should bear increasingly larger parts of the burden of its own social reproduction. That is, we, the teachers, nurses, social workers, medical professionals, engineers should bear the financial burden for making our essential labour power available to a social system that increasingly requires our skills to reproduce itself, but shares increasingly less profit with the people who create it.

Naomi's argument sits well in Australia 2010: mining boom, strong growth, very good returns on our 'investment' in education. But you only need to look to the other market economies of the world to understand the contradictions. In Europe, government austerity is forcing more and more costs of social reproduction; pensions, tuition fees, health costs, onto individuals in order to pay for a bailout of an immoral, corrupt and undemocratic financial system that enriches people who produce very little. The state can and should be void of tuition fees if you believe that education is a fundamental social right, if we all have a claim to it, not there to simply reproduce labour but to enrich our lives, to be truly emancipatory. If you're not sure how to fund it, then the real elephant in the room is the increasingly regressive taxation system that relies on flat taxes (and lower corporate taxes), allowing the graduates you speak of to evade tax whilst pensioners and low income people subsidise their education. Free education is the wrong target.

Raffaele Fantasia
B Liberal Studies IV

Election madness

Dear *Honi*

Having re-emerged from my nihilistic election hangover, and basking in a narrow window of humanity until my next wave of assignments, I would like to express my sympathies for some unexpected casualties. I'm talking of

course, about the poor souls who were unlucky enough to stumble into the horrendous farce that was the Battle of Jane Foss Russell.

As the sun set on Fisher last Thursday, there was no loud cheer, but a symphonic cry, 'to Jane Foss Russell!' For the next hour, any person walking the footbridge was surrounded by at least 20 hungry campaigners, each speaking faster than the guy who reads ad disclosures and dropping their last leaflet bundles into the heart of the ensuing scrum. Suffocating from the stench of unwashed campaigns t-shirts, the poor voter was practically hurled past the line, feeling dazed, and possibly even more jaded towards democracy.

In the French National Elections, candidates are not allowed to campaign in the 24 hrs before election. The philosophy for this is simple. Voters make an informed decision, and don't vote for the last person to give them a leaflet. Usyd elections instead, have become an opportunity for people to hone their salesmanship skills. Of course, there are opportunities to do that in front of central station, or at a call centre, selling useless things. No wonder the SRC is increasingly seen as useless, we're selling it like a shamwow.

We already have measures to ensure fair play, but the chalk line is not an assessment due date. If you really enjoy the process, you won't be squeezing all the work at a hair's breadth from the line.

Keeping it sane
Armen Aghazarian
Arts III

USU grumbles

Dear *Honi*,

Oh how the mighty have fallen... The Union Board used to be the elite group of 'campus celebrities' and an inspiration to the advocates of enriching the student experience. But the recent debates over spending caps, fair trade and abolishing committees, have turned these group of J.F Kennedies into Richard Nixons.

Dave Mann's response to the accusations of corruption and nepotism within the Board is comparable to Nixon's 'I am not a crook' speech. His glossed over account of the scandals within the Board only confirm the fact that the Board Directors are refusing to acknowledge that the election spending caps were manipulated to serve certain political prerogatives, nothing has been done about fair trade (and perhaps never will) and dismantling the committee structure was a wrong decision.

Considering the University Green Paper was proposing to strip the Union Board of its commercial powers, it is more important than ever that the Union Board appears strong, relevant and accountable. However it seems every decision the Board has made this year has just dug themselves deeper and deeper into a hole of exclusivity and corruption. Shame.

Stan Holloway
Arts III

EDITORIAL

What with the 'censorship' theme of the inaugural Honi Soit Opinion Competition I initially considered having an editorial comprised primarily of blacked-out letters. Then I realised that the gag was neither funny nor clever.

But don't worry if funny and clever are exactly the toppings you like on your opinion-sundae. This bumper edition is packed full with the excellent work of the Opinion Comp's top twelve entrants. I'm glad to say that Annabel Crabb's choice

of winner (consider pages 4-16 to be a drumroll) has only confirmed the political journo's badassery in my mind.

Also in this issue is a fascinating and unpredictable feature on the mystic industry. Spare a thought for its authors, who had to put up with a tsunami of unfunny psychic jokes while writing the piece. The best of these involved the phrase 'the tarot and the stick.' Not so bad, really.

Anusha Rutnam

Queer space

In response to the defence of the autonomy of the Queer space:

The fact that even well meaning heterosexuals might inadvertently offend queer people if allowed into the Queer Space is undoubtedly true. But so is the fact that queers might inadvertently offend other queers. This justification of the autonomy of the space perpetuates the myth that only heterosexuals can oppress queers. The Queer Space should be inclusive because it then serves to combat an "us-versus-them" mentality.

Although it is true that queers might feel threatened on the rest of campus, given Jed Coppa advocates only that queer friendly heterosexuals be admitted to the Queer Space it is obvious that scenes like queers being threatened would not occur if the space were more inclusive. Put simply: if an abusive heterosexual were admitted to the Queer Space, they should be excluded for being abusive not heterosexual.

The argument that I find most persuasive is that some queers are only comfortable being out to other queer people. This group's rights must be balanced against the rights of those queers that only feel comfortable entering the queer space with the company of their queer friendly heterosexual friends. This group is important: many queers don't know other queer people but have many heterosexual friends because even at university the vast majority of people identify as heterosexual. Also, the fears of those unwilling to come out to a wider audience would be solved by an inclusive rather than autonomous Queer Space, because the act of walking into the Space can no longer be construed as an act of coming out.

Anonymous

Really?

Dear editor and friends,
As we are on a cruise ship right now I'm hoping this letter reaches you. A good story for you to chase is from Janie Firebrace, the wife of Frances Firebrace (Frank Jones) who is an aboriginal storyteller living in England. Janie who is a hairdresser in Chelsea told us about the Queen and how Prince Andrew, Charles' brother is only his half brother and the Queen had sex with one of the Guardsmen to get herself pregnant after Phillip refuse to have any more after Charles and Anne who have been flops. Yes the Royal family do come

into question as we are writing a book on the subject and

Wishing you a Christmas filled with happiness and joy

of course the Princess Diana who was about to marry an Islamic, well that's crossing the bounds. I wonder what muck they can rake on Princess Mary the poor girl. I'm glad we don't have royalty in Brazil.

All the best, **Marrliss and Sue**

p.s. We do hope that you could print this letter. My sister Claudia is doing a story on how Goerge Freeman gave John [name illegible]'s mob the contract on Juanita Nielsen. Duncan McNab knows how she was put through a bait mincer off Sydney Heads, and that's why they'll never find her.

Honi Soit 2011 Reporter Call-Out

Well look at you. Picking up the Honi. Holding the Honi. Hey everybody, check this out, you're reading the Honi! Heck, why don't you just go ahead and write the damn Honi?

In 2011 Honi Soit will hit the stands packed with words you want to read. We need your help to fill the paper and interweb with features, fun, art, politics, opinions, sport, music, student life and so much more. Dream big and share your ideas. Consider this our expression of interest in you.

To join the 2011 Honi team, email honisoit11@gmail.com with all your nasty details before Friday 5 November. We want to know:

- Your name, email address, phone number, degree and year.
- The role you want: general reporter, college reporter, sports writer, comedy writer, reviewer, photographer, illustrator or lover.
- A page of any ideas and another with any experience. Feel free to attach one or two samples of writing as well.

Our people will talk to your people. Watch our facebook group, Honi Soit 2011, for updates.





Labor's planned tertiary amenities fee to end VSU

David Mack explains the new proposed legislation.



The Gillard government has introduced legislation into the House of Representatives that will reinstate compulsory amenities fees at universities across Australia.

Senator Chris Evans, the Minister for Tertiary Education, said the Higher Education Legislation Amendment Student Services and Amenities Bill would restore the range and quality of campus services and activities that suffered following the introduction of Voluntary Student Unionism (VSU) laws by the Howard government in 2006.

"Under the arrangements left by the Coalition government, close to \$170 million has been ripped out of university funding. This has led to the decline, and in some instances, the complete closure, of vital student services," he said to the Canberra press.

"It's important that we are able to restore the services and amenities that have been depleted at universities," he said.

"The loss of a lot of sporting, counselling and other services to students has really impacted on the campuses."

Under the proposed legislation, universities will be able to charge students up to \$250 a year for campus

services, with students having the option to defer payment of the fees through a HECS-style loan.

"This legislation is supported by universities, and it's supported by the students," Senator Evans said, alluding to the support of the National Union of Students and Universities Australia.

A previous version of the bill was defeated in the Senate August 2009, but with the addition of the HECS-style loan, Senator Evans said he was confident of its prospects.

Senator Evans said he hoped the legislation would be law by the end of the year, but the bill has its best chance of passing the Senate after July when the Greens will hold the balance of power.

National Union of Students President Carla Drakeford said the deepest cuts to campus services and culture had occurred on regional campuses, and the bill is likely to be supported by country independents Tony Windsor and Rob Oakeshott.

Tasmanian Independent Andrew Wilkie and Greens MP Adam Bandt have already expressed support for the bill.

USyd wins Shute Shield

Joe Payten reports on the university's sixth consecutive football win.

The Sydney University Football Club has retained the Toohey's New Shute Shield crown for a sixth-straight season, comfortably accounting for opponents Randwick in the competition decider on Saturday October 1.

In their 47-6 point win, that included a 26-point haul from playmaker, Waratah and Wallaby Berrick Barnes, the Students proved far too strong for Randwick at a wet Concord Oval. The Galloping Greens struggled to remain in the match, mustering only two penalties and unable to breach the Students' notoriously impregnable defence, while Uni ran rampant, scoring five tries and three penalties.

Despite missing big name players Phil

Waugh and Daniel Halangahu through injury, Uni hammered Randwick in a ruthless and efficient performance. Tom Carter crossed early for the Students, and Barnes kept the score ticking over with a conversion and three penalties. Randwick flyhalf Toby Browne kept his side in touch with two penalties, but half time couldn't come soon enough for them. Other than an early line break from Waratah prop Sekope Kepu, Randwick looked hapless against Uni's impenetrable defence, whilst the Students' looked ominous in attack.

The floodgates opened after the break, Barnes kicking two penalties, and crossing for a try, as did Alfi Mafi, Peter Betham and Ben McCalman. In contrast, Randwick were disappointing,

Sydney Uni social inclusion deal for regional Australia

David Mack discusses the Uni's plans to go country.

As part of the University of Sydney's social inclusion program, poor and disadvantaged students will gain admission into the university if they complete a year of study at a regional institution.

In a deal signed on October 5, students from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds will be admitted into the University of Sydney once they successfully complete their first year of study at the University of New England in Armidale.

The University of New England will act as a 'feeder institution' by admitting students from low SES backgrounds who are identified as talented despite receiving low HSC/ATAR results.

It is expected that the program will boost the University of Sydney's second-year enrolments which are usually weakened by students who choose to discontinue study.

The program, expected to begin in 2012, also goes a long way to address the social inclusion principles laid out in the University of Sydney's 2011-2015 Green Paper which was released in March of this year. "[T]he University is not performing as well as many other universities with respect to the [Federal Government's] 'social inclusion' objective," the report stated. "Indeed the University has one of the poorest records on this measure in the country, with around seven per cent of our students coming from a low SES background."

In 2008, 65 per cent of new USyd undergraduate students emerged from Sydney's relatively affluent eastern and northern suburbs, largely from independent and selective schools. Additionally, only 1.05 per cent identified as Indigenous, compared to the NSW population of 2.1 per cent, while only seven per cent of new students came from regional areas, as opposed to 24.7

playing to Uni's strengths by kicking the ball away and placing themselves under enormous, and eventually insurmountable pressure as a result.

Barnes, a star recruit for the Students, was a dominant force, showing his class in a performance that earned him Man of the Match. His try, five penalties and three conversions, as well as his command of the backline, were too much for Randwick, and he received a standing ovation as he left the field with 15 minutes remaining.

For the club who were in ninth position on the table coming in to the back half of the season, Uni's 13 straight victories, including two sudden death final wins, mark an incredible turnaround. The captain, Tim Davidson, who has led the Students in every one of their last six consecutive premierships, counts it as a special victory. "It's right up there,

UNE

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

per cent of the state population.

Professor Marie Bashir, the University of Sydney Chancellor and NSW Governor, heralded the agreement as a new step forward in Australian tertiary education.

"This agreement provides an incentive and an option for students from modest circumstances who want to study at the University of Sydney but who may not have excelled in the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank," she said.

The University of Sydney's Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Education, Derrick Armstrong, who is overseeing the university's social inclusion program, spoke to *Honi* for the Issue 13 feature on social inclusion, "A Degree of Privilege".

"I think it's a really exciting period for the University and it's a real challenge for us," he said. "I do think that we have great students in the University and I'm not in any sense dismissing the student body that we have now, but I do think that we need to look at ways in which we can expand those opportunities for a broader range of students to participate in the university."

"I think that being a diverse institution in terms of the student background and student experience adds value to the institution as a whole and adds value to the student experience," he said.

considering the year we've had," he said.

The win marks the 27th premiership for the Club, bringing them within one of the record held by Randwick, as well as equaling Randwick's record for consecutive premierships won. The Club also claimed the Premiership Club Championship, the Colts Premiership Club Championship, and the 1st and 2nd Grade Colts titles for 2010.

Capping off a season of enormous success, Barnes, Luke Burgess, Dave Dennis, Ben McCalman, Dean Mumm and Nathan Charles have also been selected for the 40-man Wallaby Spring Tour Training Squad.

Sydney University 46 (Tom Carter, Alfi Mafi, Berrick Barnes, Peter Betham, Ben McCalman tries; Berrick Barnes 5 pens, 3 cons) **Randwick** 6 (Toby Browne 2 pens)

SRC Election Results

Joe Smith-Davies gives you the lowdown.

And so, the choking chalk dust has settled on another year of SRC elections. Dee Walmsley was elected to President of the SRC with a majority vote. This result will not surprise many observers, as Dee's campaign was backed by the combined might of both Labor factions. The minor placings are more likely to astound, with Chad Sidler grabbing second spot and Ross Leedham in third.

In the ever hotly-contested *Honi Soit* race, Boom chalked up an impressive victory over Punch. The debate over whether Pac-Man is superior to Superman rages on.

The outcome of the SRC council elections may yet alter the balance of power on the SRC Council. In recent years, NLS have had enough councilors to make quorum, meaning any motion raised by the faction effectively had a free-ride to ratification. This year, however, only seven NLS candidates were elected. The make-up of the 2011 SRC Council will become clear during the Reps Elect meeting on Dec 5th. The campus waits with breath firmly bated.

It seems that the competing tickets captured the imagination of the undergraduate hordes more successfully than last year, with a 15% increase in the number of students voting over 2009.



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Video made the election stars.

Robbie Jones presses play.

It is needless to say that in the recent *Honi* elections there are a great many things that both teams did well, and things they could have done better – and that it is impossible to discuss them all here. That being said, interviews (including with members of both tickets, campaign managers and experienced election hands) reveal a common idea in both what was significant in this election, and what future *Honi* hopefuls should be considering – online marketing.

Punch's website was perhaps the best in Sydney University election history, but despite the push towards a more online *Honi*, voters don't really seem interested in checking out campaign-sites (except for the most enthusiastic observers, who have probably already made up their minds).

The real vote winners (or at least brand builders) seem to be merging content with entertainment. Both tickets had videos and images which built on popular memes – a successful strategy for the Ace ticket last year. Whilst both teams created some great content – things shifted gear when Boom organised voter involvement and took on a more interactive marketing approach. The Boom 'dance' video featured a massive choreographed sequence of Boom supporters in their shirts, dancing around Eastern Avenue to the classic



Boom dance to victory.

hit "You Make My Dreams" by Hall and Oates (ala *500 Days of Summer*). Boom campaign manager, Tom Clement specifically mentioned this video as being a big part of the ticket's success, and Punch candidate Daniel Richardson stated that he thought it showed the Boom candidates "as earnest and likeable, whilst establishing them as experienced, talented and funny". Despite costing nothing, the video had a great influence on;

1. The people who experienced it first hand; the dancers (100+ people who, through an entirely positive experience, suddenly had a potent connection to the election and Boom), and audience members. I happened to walk past the first Boom flash mob. Not only was it noticeable from a mile away, it was impossible not to look.

2. The people who experienced the video online. I remember being inundated on Facebook with friends, some of whom

SydMUN

Jeff Li just loves that Model UN.

During the week of SRC election when you were approached / asked / bugged / harassed by the people in the colourful T-shirts, you probably said to yourself "if I were running I would dress up in a pink ghost suit and take on the big yellow Pac-Man"? or something like "If I were running I would push for a 3D version of *Honi Soit*?"

Sadly the election is over and you won't get to really put those questions into action. But now there is a chance for you to ask yourself a bigger question: how would you make decisions on the most pressing issues in international politics? Think Wikileaks – should that Queenslander Julian Assange be put on trial for leaking confidential government documents, or should we protect him in the name of freedom of the press? Think Turkey – should it be kept outside of the European Union because Sarkozy was right when he said "Turkey is not even in Europe." (and perhaps also because of his beautiful Italian wife?)

If you were to make these decisions, what would you do? This is a question

had no direct connection to Boom, posting and reposting the video. It is hard to resist clicking on the link and watching a video when you can see your friends discussing it right in front of your eyes. Suddenly it seemed everyone knew about Boom.

The reason that these videos worked so well, and particularly so on Facebook, is because they had value in their own right. Even if you had no idea what *Honi* was, you could still find enjoyment in watching a bunch of kids dance around vicariously to a classic, feel good pop song.

The lesson from this election seems to be the value of viral and interactive marketing. It seems highly likely that tickets next year will be trying to emulate the success and potency of the Boom dance videos whilst coming up with some way to make them new and creative.

we seek to ask YOU in the upcoming Sydney University Model United Nations Conference. Happening from 3-5 December right here at USyd, the conference is a three-day simulation of the workings of actual UN bodies, in which you role play as a representative of a country and work out a solution to an issue from that country's perspective.

You have the choice of becoming the rep in the various country committees we have and attempt to dominate the world, become a non-governmental organisations and sit back and watch as the others battle it out, or become a press member and report on all the backroom deals and gossip. As always there are more than politics to MUN. SydMUN will be welcoming students from interstate and overseas with a line-up of some of the best social locations and events Sydney has to offer.

Seize your last chance to collect stories to prove to your parents this coming Christmas that you have done something constructive this year – apply for your position in SydMUN now!

Application for SydMUN is open! Sign up now to enjoy our early-bird discount at www.usydunsociety.org/sydmun

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HONI ELECTION STARTS WITH A FIZZLE, ENDS WITH A BOOM

The Boom ticket surprised everyone, including themselves, with their outstanding result on election day: winning the vote each day at Manning, Fisher and Jane Foss Russell and taking the 2011 *Honi* editorship by a margin of 335 votes on first preferences. Their success belied a haphazard beginning and a quiet first week of campaigning in which they barely put up a poster.

For weeks before the close of nominations, Punch were shaping up to be the only ticket in the race, after two tickets merged at the start of semester (as this column reported at the time). Then, just hours before the close of nominations, a group of students – mainly connected through the Sydney University Dramatic Society – began frantically filling in forms and having their photos taken. Boom literally formed with minutes to spare. A couple of members of the ticket didn't even submit photos in time for them to be included in the election edition of *Honi Soit*.

In the mad dash to get their nomination forms in and to quickly organise some affiliate SRC tickets so as to increase their spending cap, the Boom team changed the name of a Punch affiliate SRC ticket (whose members included Rhys Pogonoski, Milla McPhee, Lachlan Carey and Andrew Fraser) to "Boom for Beers". Understandably, Punch were a bit peeved about this, blaming Pogonoski for the 'double-cross'. But, as Pogonoski later pointed out, it would have seemed slightly weird for the ticket to remain a Punch ticket, given Fraser was now running with Boom for *Honi*.

CLOSING THE LOOPHOLE?

Incidentally, SRC Councillor Tom Clement has been making preparations to use the last SRC meeting of 2010 to "close the *Honi* loophole" by introducing an amendment to the SRC Regulations that would forbid the "cross-branding" of *Honi* and SRC tickets. The proposed amendments would also increase the *Honi* campaign spending cap from \$900 to a sum to be agreed upon at council.

VERY SUPERSTITIOUS

The *Honi* campaign began a bit earlier than usual this year with members of the Punch ticket guarding the pink wall opposite Manning, seen as a good luck charm for budding *Honi* tickets – after Ink (2008), Hype (2009) and Ace (2010) all set up camp there during their campaigns. Although campaigning wasn't to officially start until Monday 6 September, keen Punchers began camping out – literally – on Wednesday

1 September, with ticket members taking it in turns to sleep next to the wall, demonstrating commitment, zeal and outright ridiculousness. As Ink ticket member Steve Hind observed, the pink wall only became 'lucky' for Ink after they missed out on nabbing the previous 'lucky' spot directly adjacent to the Manning Union coffee cart.

It seems the one superstition that is on trend is the success in recent years for tickets with 'circular' logos. Ink, Hype, Ace and now Boom all have made use of logos that are variants on circles, with 2009 *Honi* editor George Downing making the same observation this time last year.



It seems the trend has come...full circle. *Uh, thank you, thank you very much.*

A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE

Both *Honi* tickets managed to secure preference deals with various SRC and Presidential tickets that saw them exchange their preferences on their how-to-votes. Punch made a deal with Activate, leaving Boom to deal with Ross Leedham and Chad Sidler. Activate's decision to preference Punch was only unusual given the behaviour of key members of the Activate team: SRC President and Activate campaign manager Elly Howse, Presidential Candidate Donherra 'Dee' Walmsley and SRC Education Officer Gabriel Dain all expressed a preference for Boom during the campaign. Howse said the decision to deal with Punch was based on their view that Punch had run a better campaign and that that would translate into more votes for Activate.

The preference deals didn't end up being followed to the letter. While campaigning at Cumberland on one of the election days, Boom and Activate found themselves alone with no signs of Punch. Rhys Pogonoski admits that they came to an "agreement not to push their deals".

Some Activate members went further still: they stuck Boom stickers over the sections on their how-to-votes which encouraged students to vote for Punch. Whatever the merits of preference deals per se, this was a flagrant violation of Activate's agreement with Punch. Punch later arrived at Cumberland and the Boom/Activate marriage of convenience came to an end.

VIDEO KILLS THE CAMPAIGN STAR?

More than anything, this year's SRC election heralded the arrival of the YouTube video as a campaign tool, with Boom, Punch, Activate, Spark and Ross Leedham all producing videos, often screening them in lectures in lieu of traditional lecture bashes. Boom had particular success here, nabbing an 'endorsement' from Ray Martin as well as organising an impressive flashmob dance sequence to Hall and Oates' "You Make My Dreams Come True" (Think *500 Days of Summer*). Ross Leedham's video, a parody of the Old Spice "The Man Your Man Could Smell Like" commercial, was only online for a few days, however, before being taken down after the SRC's Electoral Officer deemed a comment that the SRC bookshop was a "rip off" to be against Election Regulations.

THE WHEELS ON THE BUS

We received a couple of anonymous emails alleging that Presidential candidate Tom Lee started his campaign a few days earlier than the SRC Regulations allowed. They alleged Lee gave a stump speech to a bus full of passengers following a performance of the Commerce Revue on Thursday 26 August even though official campaigning was not to begin until Monday 6 September.

Lee was said to have inquired as to whether any of his fellow passengers were USyd students, and upon hearing a few reply that they were, he proceeded to give his pitch. One bus passenger described the scene: "[Tom said,] 'I'm running for SRC President, and I'd really like your vote', only to be met with the rejoinder, 'You're a douche', followed by murmurs of assent from students and non-students alike."

Lee admits to the "bus bash" but says, "It wasn't a serious attempt to rustle the vote," and that he thought it would be "funny". "Yeah, these two TAFE students were like, 'We go to TAFE. Shut up.' And I was like, 'Hey, don't be shit,'" he said.

A few weeks later, a torrent of shit would hit Lee's campaign – literally. After leaving his campaign material on Eastern Avenue, a sewer backed up and a lot of Lee's posters were soiled. Ouch.

SOME GROSS CHALKING?

After he helped in her quest for Union Board last semester, Sibella Matthews was a dutiful Ross Leedham supporter throughout the campaign. After one evening of chalking, Sibella took to Facebook to accuse members of the Unity (Labor Right) faction of Activate, the ticket run by the National Labor Students, of defacing Ross's chalk by adding a 'G' to 'Ross for President' and writing 'Free Condoms!', the name of an SRC ticket with Activate member Phil Boncardo on it (there's no suggestion Boncardo himself defaced the chalk). "Well done hacktivate for defacing the chalk we worked hard on tonight," Matthews wrote on Facebook on 19 September. "You just demonstrated

why we can't afford to vote the same dirty dealers back in, and why we need an independent and accountable SRC - ROSS LEEDHAM FOR SRC PRESIDENT!" When asked if Unity members of Activate were responsible for the chalk being defaced, SRC President and Activate campaign manager Elly Howse had no comment.

STUDENTS FIRST, FIRST?!?!

Given everyone seems to have become accustomed to NLS dominating the SRC elections year after year, it was a great surprise to see the dominance of the 'Students First' ticket, spearheaded by Chad Sidler and Hiltin Guo (an international student who was an unsuccessful Union Board aspirant earlier this year). Sidler ended up receiving the second highest amount of first preference votes for SRC President, and Students First has landed 6 spots on council. There's already talk about NLS being 'rolled' at 'Reps Elect' (the election of the executive office positions) with the numbers as they are.

Students First appeared to have great success in securing the vote of Chinese-Australian students and visiting Internationals. In fact, a lot of their campaign material was printed in Mandarin. We were sent a translation of one leaflet distributed by Hiltin. In the "manifesto of [her] beliefs and values" she writes that there are many student factions "who repeatedly lie to students without hesitation, and others who take part in shadowy political manoeuvres, all for the benefit of the million dollar salaries of the SRC" (The President receives the federal minimum full-time wage, coming to \$28,000). She claims the SRC receives \$150 million of funding from the government but spends only \$1,500 on international students (SRC President Elly Howse says the SRC's budget this year was around \$1.55 million, none of which came from the government). The leaflet then explains why she chose to run with Chad despite the "many attractive offers" before her. "No matter how hard this battle is, I will bear the difficulty, even death is nothing to be afraid of! As long as it's all exchanged for the rights of international students!"

During the campaign, the Returning Officer asked Hiltin to translate the flyer. Unbeknownst to Hiltin, the RO had himself commissioned a translator to translate it, and Hiltin's translation did not correspond to that of the translator (still with me?). Several people told *Honi* they observed Hiltin engaged in a very heated argument with the Returning Officer over the leaflet, with the RO deciding to keep a close eye on Hiltin for the remainder of the campaign.

David Mack and Naomi Hart

STUFF USYD STUDENTS LIKE

#28 SAYING THEY'RE UNPREPARED

Like magicians, USyd students are frightened of revealing the secrets of their success. But *unlike* magicians, USyd students have little reason to hide their behind-the-scenes efforts, because what they are competing over is the banal realm of essays and exams, and not, say, awesome tricks like escaping from a padlocked, shark-filled tank of boiling water, or sawing a terrified child in half.



Now there seems to be two main reasons for this. First, USyd students are truly hesitant to believe that their vast intelligence and knowledge might spout from anywhere other than the superior springs of their supple (and sexy) minds. Studying? Hah! That's clearly for dumb dumbs with their dumb need to look things up in dumb books, rather than just *knowing* things and relying on their wits.

Secondly, the USyd student likes to give off the air of nonchalance in everything they do. Just think of how much time USyd students reportedly DON'T spend on their outfits everyday. "Oh, this dress? It's seriously just something I picked up from Vinnies ages ago... [...That I spent five hours swimming around a huge bargain bin for and ended up fighting over with a senile, glass-eyed, arthritic little old lady]."

For a USyd student, effort is the enemy of cool. God forbid anyone might think that they actually came to university to learn something and care about doing well academically. No way! We're here to PAAAAARRTTTY! Especially and preferably on the night before the biggest exam of the year!

Before an exam, the phrases "Oh, I haven't even studied!" or "I don't even know what the exam's on!" are popular choices, while people secretly and guiltily think of the 26-page-studynotes-guide-complete-with-contents-page that they have prepared and tucked away in their bags. "Ha! I don't give a shit how this exam goes," says Wayfarers dude, even though he arrived for the exam half an hour early and has five pens and a calculator (for an English exam) on him just in case.

This sort of rhetoric spills over into essay prep. People love to boast about how they haven't even started writing that essay that was due four weeks ago, let alone the one due two days ago. The USyd student does this because saying you're unprepared gives off the illusion of being cool and casual, which is much sexier than the sad truth that just like everyone else, you're simply an OCD perfectionist who cannot grapple with the idea that failure might actually, for once, be your own damn fault.

Diana Tjoeng

SOC IT SYDNEY UNI TO ME: BOXING SOCIETY

Michael Safi has the eye of the tiger.

There's a boxing club at Sydney Uni. It's buried at the very edge of campus, inside the HK Ward Gym, down the stairs in a room so dank and humid that even the floors sweat a little.

I come here to find out what happened to boxing, to study its roots for clues to how the rot set in. It's not what I expect at all: It's not defensive, not apologetic, and not ashamed. Instead, this place is proud and wise, and eager to teach.

Five punching bags swing from the roof, lumbering and gentle giants that will take punishment all day and give nothing in return. No punches, but no glory either. This is the first lesson – risk and reward are intimately linked. A risk without reward is just a mistake, a reward without risk just a gift.

It has speed bags, yoga mats, shelves of gloves and pads: the standard boxing gym equipment. And a ring, in which Harry Chan is taking a beating. He stopped punching about a minute into the three-minute round, a decision based partly on sheer exhaustion, but also, I think, rational calculation. You only have so much energy, and at some point expending it on hitting another person becomes a mad luxury. Much smarter to use it to protect your vital organs. This is a calculation that boxing forces you to make quite often: at what point does the value of risk – to your ego, to your health – become higher than the value of reward?

When the clock finally reaches zero, Harry steps out of the ring and wanders to the corner of the gym. The other boxers, who have crowded around to watch the spectacle, go back to their drills. Ropes are whirring and speedballs are bouncing, and in

the corner, his hands on his hips, Harry is calculating.

*

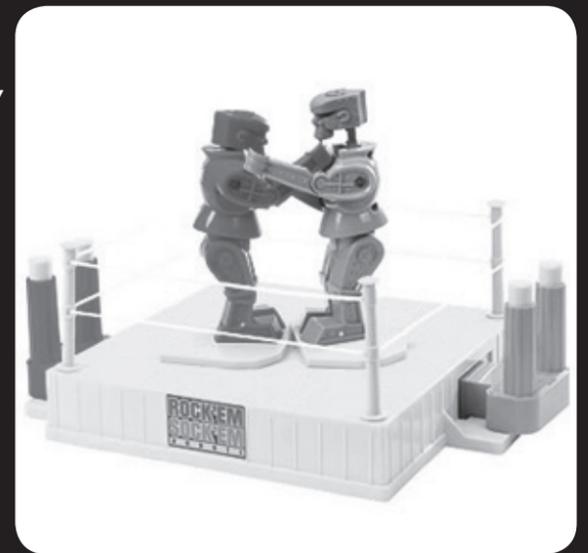
George is lying on his stomach.

"Try to stand on your heels either side of my spine," he tells a boxer standing over him, "And walk up my back." He is at the gym three times a week, working exclusively with the boys who want to fight. 30 years of training and fighting has left him with mild sciatica, and sometimes he needs someone to stand on his back to "put things back into place".

The pretence of this interview is to find out what kind of people box. "High achievers," George says, "people who are in to brag, they don't last." He lists some of the boxers he trains, doctors and teachers and lawyers – "people who work hard." "Success", he says, tapping his temple, is all mental. Discipline, the ability to take direction, to work towards a goal. "You can't have a false image of your abilities. If you work hard, the reward is gaining a new skill. If you don't, you get punished, you get beaten up. Either way, you have to own it."

As we talk, he takes off his ragged beanie and rubs his head. His tracksuit pants are worn and his shirt is covered in stains, as if to taunt those obsessed with pretensions, mere style. In the boxing ring he sees substance. "The proving ground," he calls it, "where you're confronted with reality." This is where he makes sense of the world and his place in it.

The second lesson is that we all need



a religion. And I'm not talking about God necessarily: I'm talking about something that makes you confront reality and define where you fit into it. Because today we are submerged in information and choices and we're drowning, and if you want to float, you'll need something solid to hold onto. George is a boxing trainer. He will be here next week, and probably the week after that, and, even with someone standing on his back, his head will be above water.

*

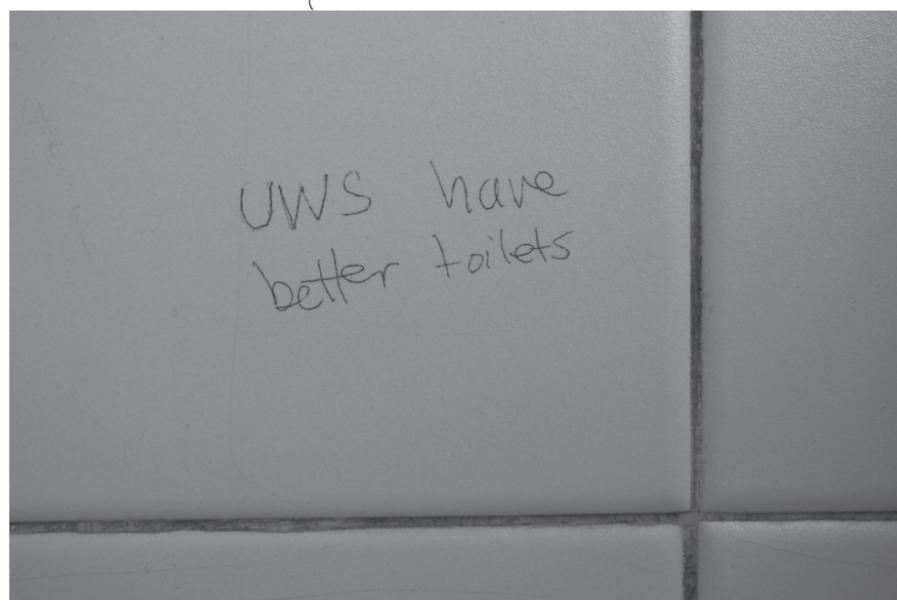
Harry, called to face another more experienced opponent, steps back into the ring.

The third lesson boxing imparts is about itself, but a little more too. Far away from Las Vegas, from Don King and Danny Green and the Thrilla in Manilla, is a young man who walks back into a ring hoping to take a little less of a beating.

He might land a few more hits this time; he probably won't. But if you're looking for the point of boxing, this might be a good place to start. If you look for it in the pros, you'll only find trouble. Because the point is not the glory, it's the struggle.

The Boxing Club's fight night is Wednesday 12 October from 7-10pm.

Shit Talk



Women's, Lower Level Carlaw



Hi, I'm Honi Soit, you must be *Bill*

Catherine Marks chats with the man who brings the Big Issues to USyd.

Meet Bill. He likes late 60s-early 70s music, but doesn't mind a bit of Michael Jackson, is a fan of the TV show 'I dream of Jeannie', and watches both Channel 9 news and ABC news. 'ABC news is more comprehensive', he explains.

If you are a Sydney Uni student, you have almost certainly seen Bill before. He sits outside the Carslaw building and Footbridge Lecture Theatre wearing his bright yellow vest and red hat several days a week, rain or shine. Bill is Sydney Uni's vendor for *The Big Issue*, a fortnightly independent current affairs magazine sold by homeless and disadvantaged people throughout Australia. Bill was one of the first *The Big Issue* sellers in Sydney; he was originally approached and asked if he wanted to be a vendor when the Sydney branch started. He was at the Sydney launch thirteen-and-a-half years ago, and reckons he sold the second or third issue ever bought here.

When Bill first started, he was selling issue

16. When I interviewed him, he was selling issue 364. At one stage, he says, he was the only vendor in Sydney.

Bill has a badge saying 'Senior Advanced Seller', which is the highest rank you can have. It's fitting, because he's very good at what he does. While I was interviewing him he was approached by a number of his regular customers. He recognised them, joked with them and was very attentive. He has also made all fourteen of his signs-one to suit every occasion, and even dresses up as Santa for Christmas (in July as well as December).

Bill was homeless when he first started selling *The Big Issue*, and has been homeless for a period of two years since then. He has spent time on the streets, but most of that time was spent in shelters. He now has a permanent place to live. "I sell *The Big Issue* because it gives me something to do", Bill said. "I used to have heaps of hobbies, but now I can't do them because of health problems, and for financial reasons". *The*

Big Issue is a legitimate and sustainable business model. Vendors buy copies of the publication for \$2.50 and sell it on the streets for \$5, keeping the difference. Nevertheless Bill says that he earns less money now than when the magazine sold for \$2, and he kept \$1.

The Big Issue is a meaningful way to help people experiencing homelessness and unemployment, and describes its model as a 'hand up not a hand out'. *The Big Issue* helps vendors earn an immediate income, and also aims to prevent social isolation. By bringing awareness about homelessness to the community they promote positive change such as improved housing, addressing drug and alcohol abuse, and seeking help for mental illness.

The Big Issue, aside from being a wonderful example of social enterprise, is a great read. Bill said he would recommend the section called 'Ointment', but his favourite parts are the jokes. I personally like the 'Vendor Profile' and 'Hearsay' sections, as



well as the features- which this fortnight range from topics such as Armenian gymnasts, same-sex relationships on film to 'Australia's worst artist'.

Bill is a genuinely friendly, and very interesting person. Meeting with him was one of the best parts of my week, and I spent far longer talking to him than I had expected to. He is a person that I walked past for a long time- it wasn't until someone told me that I should say hi to him that I did. If you see Bill, I encourage you to say hi, or if you have time, stop and have a chat. Don't forget to buy a copy of *The Big Issue*. It's well worth the \$5.

And if it isn't

Ben Jenkins has a chat with his comedian buddy and calls it an article.

My interview with Benny Davis takes place over around 4 months. The first time I bring it up, we're in a pub in Glebe after a show, sipping on cocktails named 'The Benny Davis' (So named by our bartender Oscar because it's a little bit sweet, sour, plenty of bite, served ice cold in a short glass.). I mention that given his humble beginnings as musical improviser for TheatreSports and his involvement in the revues program, it might be a neat idea to profile him in *Honi*. He's a little taken aback, which is surprising given he's been featured in the *SMH*, *The Scotsman*, *Zoo Magazine*, *Time Out London* and now Oscar's cocktail menu. When pressed, he explains that he doesn't really understand why anyone would want to read it.

This is one of the most simultaneously frustrating and endearing things about Davis. Despite the Axis of Awesome's reasonably meteoric rise to fame, (beginning with gigs in tiny inner west pubs and culminating this year with sharing a stage with the likes of Pamela Anderson and Tom Arnold and sharing a drink with the likes of Tim Minchin and Noel Fielding), he often seems unfazed by the success, and moreover, a little bemused.

"Well because, I suppose" I suggest, "that some of the other editors think that people from Sydney Uni might be interested in your story" After ordering another round of his eponymous brew, he agrees, then asks me "you gonna do it yourself?"

This is an interesting question because interviewing your friend - a person you've

known for five years, shared a house with, been berated for leaving your shit in the front room by, screamed at during games of MarioKart - is a strange proposition. On the one hand, you don't want to fawn, because that's at best a little awkward and at worst kind of sad. On the other though, you don't want to play it down too much - this is pretty insulting and reasonably unprofessional. So no, I don't think I'll do it myself. But here we are, and with all this in mind, it's not difficult to see why the interview takes a quarter of a year to get going.

When next we speak it's a couple of weeks down the track, we're in my courtyard, talking about his impending Edinburgh tour and the release of the band's first DVD, recorded live at a packed out Metro Theatre. He asks me what the article's going to be about and I reply that it'll probably be about him. He instructs me not to make him sound weird. He also adds that I am not to make eye contact with him for the duration of the interview and to refer to him by his proper title of Baroness*.

One of the things that has always struck me about Axis' rise to success is how difficult it must be to quantify along the way. I have a question in the back on my mind about setting goals and recognizing milestones, but as we get distracted with talk of the new update for Angry Birds, that'll have to wait for another 2 months after he gets back from the festival.

A couple of days ago we were sitting outside at a party, we've traded our Benny Davises

in for longnecks and although this might not be the best time for a formal chat, I've got a deadline to meet and he's got a tour of Scandinavia to attend to. I try to pick up where we left off, with talk of milestones and measuring success. It's obviously not something Benny's really contemplated before, but after a couple more swigs he begins to think. He absentmindedly rattles off a couple of moments, some pretty decent achievements in four short years.

Their first appearance on Good News Week, performing at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival Gala, the moment they realized their Edinburgh run was all sold out (an incredibly difficult thing to do if you're not Dylan Moran), playing dueling pianos with Tim Minchin, and taking the stage at Just For Laughs in Montreal earlier this year. He stops and thinks a little more. "When I first played Four Chords (the song that launched them into the stratosphere, with over 6 million hits on youtube) at the Arts Revue 06, and people seemed to get it. That was the first time I thought that I could be onto something here."

I smile, because I remember that moment too, the crowd clapped for so long that the show ran overtime. I explain to him that that'll look pretty good in the paper, a nice Uni origin story and all that, and this signals our interview is over.

"Just don't make me sound weird".

*he doesn't do this.

Benny Davis



Benny - the one in the middle.

7th Regular Students' Representative Council (SRC) Meeting

Tues 19th Oct 6pm

Seminar Room 405,
Eastern Avenue
Amendment to regulations
on notice. For details see
www.src.usyd.edu.au



Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney
phone: 9660 5222 | www.src.usyd.edu.au



STAGE HIPPOLYTOS RAISED: AFTER EURIPIDES

These days most of us would consider Hippolytos either a misogynist or some sort of radical evangelist. Back in the days of Ancient Greece, though, he was the picture of purity and innocence, swearing off women and sex, and effectively telling the god Aphrodite to go suck a proverbial lemon. "Never will I have my fill of hating women," he cries defiantly. "For a truth their evil is eternal." Suddenly, it's a lot clearer why the Ancient Greeks have the reputation they do.

Each year, the Sydney University Dramatic Society funds a 'Major Production', giving a slew of young actors a bigger budget and an opportunity to perform in a professional capacity. This year's production, *Hippolytos Raised: After Euripides*, sees a young company of 14 performers, each brimming with talent and passion, tackle an ancient classic of woe that hinges on the tension between unbridled passion and chaste self-restraint, between truth and fiction, between the innocent and the damned.

To punish Hippolytos (Travis Ash) for his defiance and worship for the virgin goddess Artemis (Neada Bulseco), Aphrodite (Ash Vlahos) curses his stepmother, Phaidra (Stephanie Bennet), to fall madly and deeply in love with him – which you just know is going to cause some major tension at the dinner table. Needless to say, things end badly...for everyone.

Director Pierce Wilcox has delivered a faithful interpretation that shows great nuance and thought. Crafting a

work of sublime atmosphere, his use of delicate music to evoke the play's spiritual undertones is particularly effective. There's even a traditional Greek 'chorus', who move in a collective trance of ghost-like emotion. All wearing customary Greek masks, the actors are soon lost in the classic and it's amazing both how quickly actor and mask morph into one identity and just how apt each mask was in capturing the essence of each character: the earnestness of Hippolytos; the brute resolve of his father, Theseus (Stephen Sharpe); the devilish sumptuousness of Aphrodite; and the rigid splendour of Artemis.

After intermission, the company presented their devised 'response' to Euripides' classic: a colourful explosion of sex, youth, awkwardness and the odd gorilla. Led by director Christopher Hay, the piece aimed to address "all of the cast's problems with Euripides" and in a series of thoughtful and meditative 'variation theories' or vignettes the cast bring *Hippolytos* into the 21st century: a place where virginity can be 'reborn' but is still a commodity, a 'registered trademark'. If the first act was all about the universality and eternal nature of regret and grief, then the second was intentionally alienating and disarming, forcing us to question the nature of theatre and our own emotional response.

Set at a high school dance, complete with party pies and uneasy invitations to dance, each member of the company is afforded the opportunity to impress us – and impress they do; particularly amusing

This year's SUDS major is all Greek to David Mack.

was Finn Davis, as a man questioning whether his sexual relationship with fruit counts as an act of love or self-flagellation, and William Haines, who delivers a painfully blunt assessment of his lack of interest in his sexual partner whilst in a very compromising position.

As an act of anti-theatre, the piece was notably more vibrant and cheerful than last year's similarly postmodern major, Martin Crimp's *Attempts On Her Life*, but the cast expose themselves – both literally and emotionally – at the same level as last year's talented crew. To be overly picky, it arguably lacked the tonal cohesiveness of *Attempts* with some scenes following unnaturally – if still hilariously – from Skype to sodomy by banana.

Still, it was criminal that, on the night I saw the production, those on stage out-numbered the audience. It speaks to a tragic undervaluing of student theatre here on campus that's really shameful. Granted, the production might not have the initial commercial or audience appeal of other works, but it's daring and risky and challenging and engaging. It oozes bold thought and has a self-assured grace that speaks to the confidence of the company. And it deserves an audience.

Hippolytos Raised: After Euripides is playing in the Downstairs Theatre at the Seymour Centre until Saturday, 16 October. Tickets can be purchased at the Access desk at Manning or online through the Seymour Centre website.

SOUNDS ROYKSOPP: SENIOR

Bridie Connellan speaks no Norsk. When a concept album opens with the curious sound of a soda can opening, expectations are decidedly fizzy, bearing the anticipation of something breezy, bubbly and thirst quenching. Unfortunately for any parched beast, the latest beverage from Norwegian electronic outfit Röyksopp is a draft to both satisfy and sting. The evolution of 2009's beat-laden counterpart *Junior* brings a sombre adventure into the psyche of a retrospective dreamer, whilst maintaining that beloved Röyksoppian intellect and pop awareness.

From "The Alcoholic" (aka underwater level of a slick *Banjo Kazooie*), the adventure lapses into a wondrous fusion of subdued percussion and xylophonia as steady rain ensues... "And The Forest Began To Sing". Despite low points in the oddly stale "The Drug" and a disturbing fusion of horse sneezes, cackling howls and muffled sobs in "A Long, Long Way", Berge and Brundtland's labyrinth of sonic wonderment is an emblematic and well-conceived exploration of self-destruction.

A little older, a little more senile, these Norwegian mastercrafters have left single tracks to their grandchildren and aimed for something a little more intangible. This soundscape is spectacular Concept Album Magic at its finest, the kind of sit-and-listen kids today had left for dead.

TECH LOGITECH PORTABLE TALK SPEAKER \$125! \$69.99

Anusha Rutnam reviews a new addition to the speaker family.

If you're anything like me, the knowledge of your iPod charger's location is but a sweet memory. For this reason alone, I welcomed these iPod speakers and their charging capabilities with open arms. Needless to say, however, most will expect a little more from this contraption.

I remember back in the day purchasing my first pair of portable speakers, which happened to be of the novelty persuasion and thus, panda shaped. It was a thrill hearing the sound pour from the Pandas' tiny bellies and I wondered, 'What will they think of next?' The answer is, not much.

There is no shortage of iPod speakers around and while the market is pretty competitive, not too much has changed since the devices first emerged.

One of the better features of the S125i is that you can choose between using AA batteries to make the device portable, or just use a good old-fashioned power point. In terms of sound quality, the speakers are a bit hit and miss.

When the S125i first arrived in the office, one of the more young and funky *Honi* editors insisted on playing Justice's 'Phantom Part II' at full volume. Given

how quiet the surrounds were, the sound didn't quite go up to 11. This said, the bass booster was satisfyingly effective, though I stand by my theory that those buttons just make the music a little louder.

Later while dining at a less than ambient restaurant, the speakers' real value became apparent. From under the cover of a scarf, the speakers delivered the gentle strains of "Summertime" to the pleasure of all those in its vicinity. It became clear that the speakers are better suited to playing soft and soothing tunes rather than fist-pumping club anthems.

The S125i speakers really are a little too dear given the myriad similar products on the market, but overall its sonic capabilities will satisfy listeners who don't require too much grunt from their speakers.



Do you speaker my language?

SCREEN EASY A

For Joe Smith-Davies, it barely passes.

Before I begin, I feel a few disclaimers are in order:

1) I watched this film in Belconnon, Canberra (dubbed Belcompton due to its high criminal activity and even higher number of NWA fans) and I was only moderately entertained.

2) Not only was I in Canberra, I had spent the day studying economics in a local library and I was only moderately entertained. Yeah...

You may have heard this before, but *Easy A* is a second-rate *Mean Girls*. I apologise for repeating a Pommeranzian critique, but I'm only doing it for symmetry's sake. *Easy A* engages in more regurgitation than a gluten-intolerant Chihuahua.

We are introduced to Olive Prendergast (Emma Stone), our protagonist, through an opening narration that is just a little too precocious to be self-deprecating. She insists that she's just a normal, anonymous school girl. Inevitably, her anonymity is soon shattered by rumours that her carnal "V-Card" has been voided. Rather than downplaying the allegations, she relishes her newly-acquired notoriety and turns it into a lucrative enterprise. Then, quelle surprise, everything gets slightly complicated.

Although Stone gives the film a compelling centre of gravity, like the rumours concerning Amanda Bynes' mental health, the other performances in *Easy A* vary wildly. Lisa Kudrow is still peddling the same quirkiness that made her the second most annoying female Friend (check out *Cougartown* for the most) in her turn as the morally suspect school counselor and Malcolm McDowell is aggressively unfunny as the severe school principal.

On the other hand, Thomas Hayden Church is believable (if a little too buffed-up) as the teacher everyone writes inappropriate diary entries about, while Penn Badgely does lend a certain easy charm to the role of by-the-numbers love interest.

All the while, there is the sneaking suspicion that you've seen it all before and what's more, it was better the first time around. Amanda Bynes' Jesus freak is positively agnostic when compared to Mandy Moore's mega-watt piety in *Saved*.

Like the titular "A" for "Adulterer" Olive affixes to her clothing, the film wears some of its other influences unashamedly. The aforementioned "A" is a nod to *The Scarlet Letter* and there is a montage of highlights from John Hughes films. The problem is the film is all too aware of its sources of inspiration, and despite Olive's lament that "life isn't like John Hughes films," the ending comes off as contrived Hughesian pastiche rather than clever homage.

Easy A was shot entirely on location in Ojai, California and the film is a bit like the town itself. Good to look at, a few pleasant distractions, but you'll probably forget about it as soon as you leave.

Rating: 2/5



STAGE NAMATJIRA

Benjamin Veness got his Belvoir on.

The bulk of plays do well to entertain middle- and upper-class audiences for a couple of hours and provide something novel (viz. income) to their cast for a couple of weeks. *Namatjira*, a biographical play showing at the Belvoir Theatre in Surry Hills, is different. In what is a great social and theatrical achievement, writer-director Scott Rankin delivers an impactful lesson in Australian history through innovative, entertaining theatre.

Sydney Theatre Company's new general manager was also in the opening night audience and one might think he should be envious of his, for this show is precisely what the STC should be bringing to the stage.

Albert Namatjira (1902-1959), of Central Australia's Arrarnta people, rose to prominence around the end of World War II as a watercolourist. His western-style landscapes were unusual for an Aboriginal artist and sold exceptionally

well at successive capital city exhibitions, making Namatjira not only famous, but an affluent man. In the play, his income is painted as the reason for Namatjira's early (for an Indigenous Australian) acquisition of citizenship in 1957: you see, the government couldn't tax an object of 'flora and fauna'. Other sources assert the government was taxing him already, which is perhaps even more contemptible.

Actor Trevor Jamieson assumes the character of Namatjira with aplomb. Jamieson's performance is beautiful, fluid and physical, augmented by a silken voice for the highly entertaining musical numbers woven into the show. He also plays Namatjira's mentor, Rex Battarbee, and the cheeky narrator who uses humour to break up an at-times solemn story. Not merely content to sing, dance and act well, after intermission Jamieson expertly cracks a stockman's whip on stage.

Prior to his death at age 57, Namatjira had taught other members of his



He paints the ghostly gums.

tribe how to paint in his style. The artistic talents of his progeny in fact contribute to the uniqueness of *Namatjira*: during each performance, two of his relatives use chalk to fill out a Central Australian landscape on the blackboard canvas adorning the theatre's walls.

Joining them on stage is musician Genevieve Lacey, playing the oddest and largest recorder you are ever likely to see, and actor Derek Lynch, whose very fine singing voice is as entertaining as his unique portrayal of Queen Elizabeth II.

Namatjira is a production that will teach you an interesting and important lesson in our country's history at the same time as it makes you laugh, clap and lean forward in your seat. Opening night will not be the last performance in which the audience rise from their seats in ovation as the play ends and the cast returns to the stage for their well-deserved bows.

Namatjira is playing at the Belvoir Street Upstairs Theatre until November 7.

SOUNDS EMMA DAVIS

Bridie Connellan supped with Sydney's newest lady of sweet, sweet musical decorum.

In the bustle of Newtown's Berkelouw Books, Emma Davis' quietly zen nature blends well with the bevy of creatives taking their morning waters. London-born and bred, the lady in the cable knit is the picture of melody and wonderment, with a delightful disposition that could only come from a solo acoustic musician. Lattes please.

With single "Machines" already impressing deckhands at FBI and Triple J radio, Davis has rehased the interest she garnered with previous release "All Of This", a beautifully constructed tale that even caught the attention and kudos of industry tastemaker Richard "The Guru" Kingsmill. But on the cusp of an East Coast album launch to send her baby off on its whirlwind adventure, Davis is surprisingly chilled, ticking off boxes on her To Do list without so much as a complaint or stress hint. Essentially, she's just excited. "This is the first time that I'm putting something out there that is whole, full, and something that I'm proud of," she says. "I don't know how people are going to respond. I don't know if people are going to have no idea of what I'm talking about. That being said, I have had a few people say to me, 'Well, you made me cry, thanks a lot.' That's amazing... but I feel bad."

With a collection of incandescent tales of love, uncomfortable escapades and darling adventures, Davis' sound expresses a storytelling branch of songwriting that skips the existentialism and teases out a tale. "I don't really think when I write," she muses. "In fact, I try not to think as much as possible, I just try and write a story. Most importantly, I don't write about things I don't know about." With no interest in writing about despair and heartbreak on a blissfully luminous afternoon, Davis shows an appreciation for narrative that likens her to the raconteurs of deep blues and roots, as she

claims but one rule in her lyric procedures: "I never try and write about feelings or people, I just try and construct events. I only ever write a song when I feel like sitting down with my guitar, when I'm in a certain headspace where I *want* to write."

After an English youth of family car trips and the tunes of Tracy Chapman, Davis finished high school in the UK and moved with a best bud to the United States to study at the Berklee Music College in Boston, an esteemed institution of John Mayer fame. "I wanted to see if music was something I could actually do, rather than just having it as a hobby," she says.

Sweet as a button and entirely humble in her knitted card, Davis exudes the kind of genuine optimism and delight that ensnares the soul and softens the heart. Describing herself and her songs as "just a little simple", this English expatriate sees no reason to pander to any musical interest but her own. "I think if I just write a song that's the most me, the most personal, that's all I can do. It's the best thing that I can create, and if people don't like it, well... I'm just sorry. Go listen to Jack Johnson." Laughing that some of the tracks on her first LP have been sitting in her mindtank for around five years, Davis admits she often forgets these babies are, in fact, new to listeners. But with a new playground and a different scene to play with, Davis agrees replaying such old tunes allows a bit of self-reflection as her sound traces an autobiographical path from the States. "I can almost hear myself moving from Boston and where I was at that time and what I was thinking about when I moved to Australia. You'll notice that there are some generally happier-sounding songs and most of them are from when I just reached Melbourne and I saw the sun."

Regularly pouring beer at Manning like a pro, the USyd Arts graduate shows a wondrous affection for the campus that

reinvigorated her keen musical prowess. Armed with a headful of tunes and a little *joie de vivre*, Davis sideswiped the system of the 2006 Sydney Uni Band Comp in the same year as ARIA nominees Cloud Control, entering the contest solo under an imaginary moniker leaving her a few weeks to wrangle in a drummer and a bassist.

Four years on, in a homemade studio in the creative kingdom of Newtown, Davis learnt from master producer Brian Campeau (Angus and Julia Stone, Melanie Horsnell, Elana Stone, Cuthbert and the Nightwalkers) to create her first full-length album, making sure to get her hands dirty as co-producer. "We started off in a really funny way, I didn't know him personally but I basically decided that he would be a good person to help me. I met him in a pub and he's got this very dry Canadian wit, very sarcastic. He said, 'I like to be completely honest because I don't work with people where I'm not upfront. So... I really didn't like any of it. I'm sorry.' I went bright red, and started to do that awkward fidget where you're like, 'No, no, no that's ok, you're just being honest.' He just burst into laughter and said, 'Of course I like it you idiot!' I was in shock. Then I needed a drink."

Campeau saw a spark in Davis that stemmed from simplicity relatively rare in Sydney solo artists, as the eclectic producer suggested things stay stripped back. "We decided there was no need to add more instruments for the hell of it really," says Davis. "We always tried to lay down the songs with interesting musical complements, but we didn't want to just stick a cello in because it sounds fuller." Suggestions such as these were crucial to the lady with the guitar, as flying solo has the power to



Yeah I got a slammin' cardi, whatevs.

obscure the critical mind. "The danger in trying to record something on your own is that you lose sight of things and you lose perspective," she says. "You get sucked into your own song without having that person to say, let's just move on and let this breathe for a bit, or even that a song is finished. Without Brian I don't think I would have finished the album at all."

But with the sun beaming and a launch to prepare for, the only thing left wanting is a small self-description of this troubadour and her wonderfully sparkling sound. Better yet, what would her folks say? "Well Mum thought, 'Sad songs written by an actually quite happy person.' I think that probably sums it up. I just try and write stories, which do end up sounding quite melancholy. I think mum's just worried about me." Bless, she'll be fine, Mum.

Emma Davis is launching her debut album at the Red Rattler, Marrickville, on Fri 29 October. Doors Open 8pm presale \$10+bf, \$15 on the door.

STAGE OUR TOWN

Diana Tjoeng sauntered the streets with Sydney Theatre Company's latest.

Flying solo to the play, I began gazing around the theatre to distract myself from the animated chatter of patrons surrounding me, willing their voices to sift through my ears till they became nothing but sand trickling through the impatient hourglass of my mind.

Then I spotted a man on stage.

Was he lost? Was he an imaginary figure I had conjured up to console myself on this companionless night? Tucked into a chair stage right, he was a bearded man dressed in a slick suit with quick, dark eyes. When the play began, or, I should really say, when *he* began the play, my suspicions of insanity were thankfully alleviated. The man was none other than the lively Narrator (Darren Gilshenan), spouting with gusto, "This play is called *Our Town*. It was written by Thornton Wilder and produced by the Sydney Theatre Company." Good to know I was in the right place then.

The curtains opened upon a startlingly blank stage. As the Narrator talked the audience through the features of this parochial New Hampshire town, Grover's Corners, circa 1901, it was left up to the audience to imagine Main Street and the different people walking through it in such a distant era.

The Gibbs and Webb families soon emerged as the focus of the story, and the romance that develops between youngsters Emily Webb (Maevae

Dermody) and George Gibbs (Robin Goldworthy) underscored each of the three acts.

Now if you're after a play that's snappy and full of blistering tension, then you probably best stay at home. This is a narrative that pleasantly (but sometimes dully) meanders through the minutiae of rural everyday life: receiving bottles from the milkman, attending choir practice, stringing beans, and so on. It's the moments of humour provided by characters such as the local newspaper editor Mr Webb (Josh Quong Tart) and the gossipy Mrs Soames (Toni Scanlan) that proved the highlights of the production.

But the mild first two acts cleverly serve to make the unusual third act of this Pulitzer-Prize winning play more confronting. The finale calls the audience to examine the brevity of life and the value of ordinary interactions with people we love. Under the directorial vision of Iain Sinclair, the staging and audio of this final act is managed in such a way that it's both strange and delightfully shocking. For someone with a short attention span, the first two acts may have you slipping into the foamy shores of oblivion, but the third act will definitely yank you back to the surface and remind you that yes, simply being alive certainly may be better than the alternative.

Our Town is playing at the Sydney Theatre Company until October 30.

BACKSTAGE

Pristine Ong chats to Maevae Dermody, who stars as Emily Webb in *Our Town*.

Was this a difficult play?

It reads very differently from the outside. You can't really trust your intuition. It's frightening and makes you feel really vulnerable. You have to completely trust the director.

How does the presence of the foley artist affect the play?

It makes my job as an actor harder. Yet so much of the wonder of the play relies on the imagination. The sound sparks up the world of the play.

Do you think it's a suitable play for young audiences?

I think we're terrified of death. And anything that discourages that is a bonus.



Maevae for the stage.

SINGLE: FUCK YOU BY CEE LO GREEN

Michael Koziol is a right potty mouth.

Happily, I have spent a good deal of the past week annoying my friends with this gem of a song. Apparently the track has been doing the rounds on the cybersphere for months but, being a committed prisoner in the asylum of Top 40 radio, its existence has only recently been revealed to me.

"Fuck You" [or "Forget You" in the lesser radio-edit] takes us back to a summer circa 1964, when the Motown sound was hitting its stride. Cee Lo's upper register evokes the Jackson 5 crossed with Gary Coleman, and fans of his falsetto from the Gnarls Barkley hit "Crazy" will find plenty to love here. The beat and melody are akin to nothing we have heard on contemporary radio for many, many years. The 'retro' tag is too liberally applied to much modern music, but this track claims it in spades - indeed, it would not be out of place on a 1970s Motown songbook (except for, perhaps, the title).

Lyrically, "Fuck You" is a hate song directed at an ex-lover and her new boyfriend. Cee Lo accuses this lady of being a gold digger, lamenting: "if I was richer, I'd still be with ya/ Ain't that some shit?" In keeping with the more recent R&B convention of referencing high-profile brands, Cee Lo admits: "I'm sorry, I can't afford a Ferrari/ I guess he's an Xbox, and I'm more Atari." I'll leave it up to others to judge whether this sort of depiction criticizes or fuels the materialistic obsession within contemporary pop - suffice to say, this is not to be taken too seriously.



Yoo hoo behotches!

You won't hear the original version on 2Day FM, nor will you be able to experience the fantastic video - for that delight, head to YouTube. The clip furthers the project's Motown throwback with its Happy Days-style overlay, cast of brightly-dressed bopping back-up singers and periodic hairstyles. Set in the ubiquitous American diner, it follows Cee Lo's romantic rejections from childhood to high school to college and beyond, each punctuated with a resounding and satisfying "Fuck You".

The initial video - uploaded by Cee Lo and showing only the lyrics - received 3 million views within two weeks. This track won't win a Grammy but it might just be the best tune of the year. Definitely one for the kids.

STAGE STEVE TOULMIN

Pristine Ong make-a some noise-a.

Is sound *really* invisible if it evokes both emotion and physicality? Instead of a scene description, imagine the sound of a door bell ringing. If it chimes, we might be in a Victorian mansion. If it beeps, maybe we're in an inner city apartment.

Sound effects, as Steve Toulmin says, "sell the illusion". While his job as a sound designer completes the stage picture, his role involves, as he puts it, "the sneaky aspect of putting in other sounds to also sell the emotion".

You might have heard his work in Sydney theatres, but if you walked past him in a foyer, you might not recognise the man. As a sound designer and composer, 26-year-old Toulmin has worked mostly behind the scenes with plays such as Sydney Theatre Company's *A Streetcar Named Desire* and Griffin Theatre's *Holding the Man*.

In STC's *Our Town*, however, he takes an onstage role as a foley artist. He creates

sound effects live and coordinates them with stage action. The bare stage has no props, but in many *Hollow Man* moments, you hear the characters plonking milk bottles onto the table or even hear a horse jangling past.

"It's not just about recreating," he tells me. "It's finding those things that both serve the physical purpose and help fill in subconsciously what kind of characters they are."

Toulmin claims seeing is believing and ensures audiences keep it real. "We brought the sound effects onstage so that the audience would register they weren't just played out of a computer," he says. "It's an ensemble commitment, with the actors' actions and my sound playing off them."

Storytelling is a collaborative exercise, and here, his partners include director Iain Sinclair and sound designer Paul Charlier. Onstage, his sounds move in a well-timed tango with the actors. "It's important to have a sense of humility," he says. "You need to be able to recognise



Snap. Crackle. Pop.

moments you can support or moments you should leave alone."

For Toulmin, storytelling is connected to a sense of playing. The son of Christian missionaries, he grew up in Africa with three brothers. With no electricity or TV reception, his childhood was filled with "cubbies and chameleons and sword fights with bamboo". He recalls, "I do have a strong memory of running around and imagining ourselves."

Between his childhood in the former Zaire and a few happy accidents, the NIDA alumnus now works with sound and music onstage. "My kick comes just not from writing the best piece of music I could. I think the magic comes from being a part of something bigger. It's that kind of magic where you make people feel things and that's amazing."



COUNTDOWN

Top five things where they took a thing that was already pretty good and made it even better.

Naomi Hart

**Pants with pockets**

Nobody's doubting that regular pants are up there among the greats in the garments realm. They keep your legs warm and can look pretty swish. But before the late eighteenth century, if you wanted to carry your money or your mobile, you had to do so in a little purse which hung from your belt or around your waist. In the 1780s, some bright spark realised that you would be harder to steal from and look less like a douche if those pouches were just built into your clothing. So we got the new-and-improved version of pants, complete with pockets. The inventors of loose change breathed a sigh of relief.

5

**The Empire Strikes Back**

They kept Chewbacca. They kept the Millennium Falcon. They kept light sabres, Darth Vader's terrifying villainy, Admiral Ackbar and John Williams' stirring score. They added Yoda.

4

**SlamBall**

The first recorded mention of SlamBall was in the 1989 second instalment of *Back to the Future*, when it was described as one of the most popular sports of 2015. Who knows if what screenwriters Robert Zemeckis and Bob Gale had in mind was the action-packed fusion of two good things into a superthing: basketball and trampolines. Its creator, Mason Gordon, said he wanted to create a sport that was as close as possible to a video game. There's a regular basketball court, with four large trampolines built into the floor surrounding each hoop. The game is full-contact – many of the pros are drawn from gridiron leagues. Pre-slam dunk jumps are metres high. The only way this could be more freaking awesome is if they added hockey sticks.

3

**Mountain goats**

Regular ol' goats are good for making milk, for eating, and for telling this joke: "Doctor, Doctor, I feel like a goat!" "How long have you felt like that?" "Since I was a kid." But mountain goats are really something else. They are the largest mammals to live as high as they do (up to 4000 metres above sea level). They have wholly white double coats to help them withstand temperatures of as low as -50°C. More impressively, their cloven hooves have inner pads and sharp 'dewclaws' which enable them to climb steep, rocky, slippery slopes, to perch on surfaces which are basically flat and vertical. If you want to be blown away, google "30 pictures of goats being crazy". Just be sure that when you do so you're wearing a swimming cap, or else it'll make a mess when your brain explodes.

2

**Ice Magic**

Anyone who says that witches and wizards aren't for real has obviously never been to the Cottee's factory. Chocolate syrup is already pretty much liquid gold, but it takes real inspiration to turn that classic condiment into the marvel that is Ice Magic: a sauce which hardens to form a shell when it hits ice-cream. The suits in PR for American companies that make like products report that the key ingredient is either Paraffin wax or coconut oil. But the real secret to the elixir is that it is the only product available in Coles which is made purely of bottled-up children's hopes and dreams.

1

The Bar Fight



Commonwealth Games, yay or nay?

Joe Smith-Davies and Sam Elliott get empirical about their sporting comps.

Whatever else they may be, the Commonwealth Games provide an ideal practice run for our athletes two years before an Olympic Games. Not only do they get to experience the thrill of competing on an international stage (however sparsely populated the audience may be) but these lads and lasses also a bit of hands-on cross cultural education. Although the possibility of catching dengue fever under London's grim cumuli are slim to none, Delhi has given our budding Olympians the chance to adjust to the dynamics of an athlete's village and the media (and other) circuses that surround it.

Gosh, it's small in here, whether that's the word limit reduced to 300 or the size of the Australian ego swelling as countless athletes win gold in the unOlympics. The thrill of competing on an international stage is irrelevant if, as you say, no one is watching. Unless it is some artistic play with no audience the games are just unnecessary.

Oh, we're watching. We watched as Geoff Huegill, who, just a few years ago, looked more like a Michelin Man impersonator than a swimmer, won a brace of golds in the pool. We watched as Jared and Claire Tallent scooped gold and silver respectively in that sporting oddity that is competitive walking. Who cares if the Games lack a Bolt or a Hoy. Rejoice that it lacks a Hewitt. Even if you aren't stirred by Skippy or the perambulators, with 55 golds and counting, it's not as if there's any shortage of combatants to cheer for.

The sad part of your last statement is that I watched over your shoulder as you googled Commonwealth heroes. Yet it took you no search at all to recall the Olympic 100m champion and fastest man in the world. As for the word 'commonwealth', I think it is long past its use-by date. The new title I have decided upon is the UWIEWAWOERBT FELATW (uncommon winners in events which aren't watched or even remembered by the former empire let alone the world)

Reflections on contemporary advertising

Mekela Panditharatne wonders what today's Don Drapers are up to.

These days it seems like modern marketing has evolved to keep up with the Joneses in a positively Machiavellian manner. Typically, I claim to be above the crass and crudely transparent trends created by advertising firms and public relations companies to spruik products. Nevertheless, I must sadly admit to having spent a few delicious hours YouTubing the Old Spice guy before reluctantly turning my attention to this article.

It seems prudent to start here, while my knowledge on the subject is still fresh. The Old Spice campaign epitomises everything that is brilliant about guerrilla, or alternative, advertising. On July 14 2010, Old Spice launched the fastest-growing online viral video campaign ever, garnering 6.7 million views after 24 hours, swelling to over 23 million views after 36 hours. Old Spice's agency created a bathroom set in Portland and had their TV commercial star (crucially, wearing only a towel) reply to 186 online comments and questions from websites like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube over a period of three days.

Then there's the founder of Blendtec, Tom Dickson. He blends various items (such as light bulbs and iPhones) in a Blendtec blender as part of an ongoing series of YouTube videos, which has gained a large internet following.

These creative campaigns are not restricted to the web, however. Recently IKEA used 3D chalk art to transform the Sydney Harbour area into an outdoor IKEA kitchen. Elsewhere, UNICEF sold dirty water in a vending machine containing various different diseases. The \$1 that it cost to see what the vending machine would dispense was ultimately donated to the charity.

Inventive as these ideas are, however, there are many who take issue with the use of guerrilla campaigns when deceptive practices are used. Sony Ericsson used stealth marketing in 2002 when they hired 60 actors in 10 major cities, and had them accost strangers and ask, "Would you mind taking my picture?" The actor then handed the stranger a brand new picture phone while talking about how cool the new



Whatever it is, I'll buy it.

device was. Similarly the 'Man in the Jacket' campaign for Witchery Man duped thousands. The company released a clip of a woman on a 'New York Subway' style quest to find a man she met at Jet Café Bar, who had purportedly left his jacket behind. The hired actress subsequently appeared on TV breakfast shows continuing the charade, until the company was forced to confirm that the clip was actually an ad.

These examples may represent the next stage of product placement, asking us to invest in a story created especially for the product. Whether this sort of strategic advertising will ultimately become acceptable to the contemporary consumer remains to be seen.

FAKING IT

THAT YOU'RE FROM A FARM

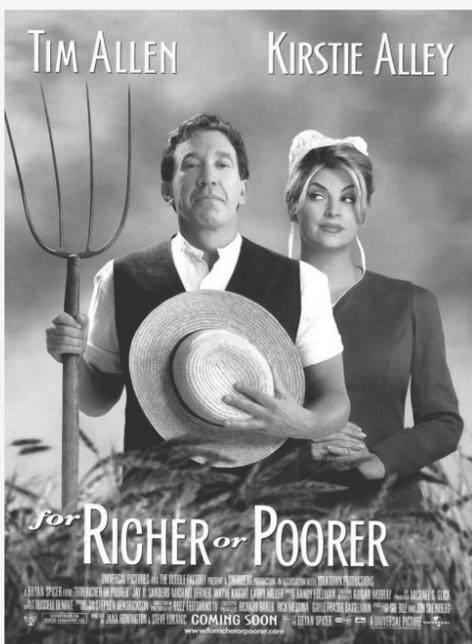
The situation

You're hanging out with your friend, the one who's from a farm (you know the one), and you make some naïve, city-slicker comment that he drily mocks. You *hate* when he does that. Desperate to regain some credibility, you want to show this friend next time you see him that you can talk farms with the best of them.

What to say

Obviously, regular references to your vast experience with all things agriculture-related will do wonders for your farm cred. To do so, you only need to make a few simple, subtle adjustments to stories about your otherwise daily activities. So you weren't off to the movies, you were off to the rodeo. You weren't rustling house cats, you were rustling wild cattle. You weren't taking your horse for a walk down the street, you were out riding him out on the plains.

Another useful technique is to use female pronouns when referring to all inanimate objects and meteorological phenomena. For example, your friend is showing you a new tractor – “gee, she's a beauty!” Or, your friend comments on the imminent possibility of rain – “gee, she's looking pretty nasty out there!” If ever in doubt, just silently nod, then spit on the ground and rub it in with your toe.



What to wear

One of the easiest parts of the image to pull off is the attire. Replace your baseball cap with a ten-gallon, Bob Katter-style hat. Forget the lace-up shoes, invest in a pair of Cuban-heeled cowboy boots with spurs. Trade that happy-go-lucky city disposition in for a laconic skepticism that could only be the product of years of back-breaking labour in an unforgiving world. It's a cinch!

Lassos are also great. In the country, lassos are a tool of everyday life, so carry one with you at all times, and don't be afraid to use it! Trying to catch a wild horse?

Riding a motorbike?

Can't reach the TV remote? Just remember, don't do anything with your hands that you couldn't reasonably do with a lasso, or you'll be found out.

What to do

‘The walk’ should become part of your now bizarrely idiosyncratic behaviour. The best way to envisage the walk is to imagine that you are carrying a pig, or a watermelon, or something of a

similar shape, under each arm at all times. Alternatively, if you're going for the pig-watermelon-farmer image, then actually carrying a pig or a watermelon under each arm will do the trick.

There you have it, partner. Just follow these simple steps, and in no time you'll have all your friends convinced that you're from a farm, or at least that you're some sort of late 19th century cowboy!

Joe Payten

Canowindra, NSW

all up in my grill:

AUSSIE HIP-HOP

There are some experiences in life that should not be demanded twice from any person, and one of them is listening to the excruciating noise that is Aussie hip-hop.

Of all of their seemingly innumerable flaws, Aussie rappers seem most prone to doing a terrible job of commenting on politics. If I wanted to hear poorly

paraphrased left-wing political views, I'd join NLS before I put one of The Herd's albums on (I don't, by the way).

If I wanted politically charged rap, then I'd listen to N.W.A's *Straight Outta Compton*, not vanilla-bland views that might as well be *Straight Outta Newtown*.

When not bemoaning John Howard's relatively inoffensive failings, a favourite past-time of our hip-hop artists seems to be lending excess significance to their “plight”. Now, I imagine that life in South Central L.A. and Harlem -was relatively difficult for an African-American in the 80s and 90s, if not still today. And whilst I don't need convincing that life in the Adelaide Hills isn't a bag of laughs either, it is for a reason almost certainly not worth rapping about.

Because the Hilltop Hoods' road really wasn't that hard. Jay-Z and Ice Cube

dealt with drugs, police brutality and violence. Hilltop Hoods deal with being dropkicks. Real hip-hop is capable of telling stories about institutionalised prejudice experienced by social minorities. Aussie hip-hop blames the government for their unemployment, before going to light up another joint to escape the boredom of suburbia.

Not all hip-hop has to be about hardship or politics, though. Far from it. It's just that when good hip-hop artists rap about trivial stuff, they sound cool doing it. Kanye West is cool, so songs about his Versace wardrobe make him sound “extra fly”. Bliss N Eso are not cool, so songs about their oversized hoodies make them sound like they're dressed

to do laps of Westfield in their Subaru.

You would think that, after *Crocodile Dundee* and Lara Bingle ads, Australians would have learnt to stop filling the world's pigeonhole for us with pigeon. But Aussie hip-hop continues

to fearlessly push the boundaries of what will make us cringe. Are there actually Australian rappers named ‘Ozi Batla’ and ‘Traksewt’? When did bad spelling become an excuse for musical boganism? Aussie rappers have never been afraid to ask those tough questions.

But let's hypothesise for a moment that someone is actually interested in this content. How can anyone bear to listen to that accent without wanting to put some knives in a blender as a soothing sonic alternative? So please, say no to this travesty of a musical sub-genre. And next time someone says to you, “where my dingoes at?” be sure to tell them where to go.

Joe Payten

STATE OF THE City



Oprah Winfrey is coming to Australia, writes **Monicaaaaa CONNNNORRSS!**

Once the hysteria had subsided and passed out audience members were cleared away, Oprah announced ... “We're going to Australiaaaaaaaa!” Cue massive plane, confetti, dancing jackeroos and, in a sign her props bill is way too high, John Travolta.

For the premier of her twenty-fifth and final season on television, Oprah Winfrey

wanted to do something big.

The woman with more money than the Vatican announced just what she had planned to top all those pie, cheesecake and favourite things episodes.

Along with 300 audience members, Oprah will travel around Australia in December before filming an episode of *The Oprah Winfrey Show* at the Sydney Opera or ‘Oprah’ House on 13 December.

Tourism Australia and the federal and state governments have financed the eight-day, seven-night all expenses paid trip, which is officially called *Oprah's Ultimate Australian Adventure*. In return, 3000 tickets to live tapings of the shows will be available for Australian fans through an Olympic Games-style ballot through Channel Ten.



Seen as a major coup for Tourism Australia, the visit will be the first time that *The Oprah Winfrey Show* has been filmed outside North America.

Syndicated to some 145 countries and 215 TV stations around the world, this is no small deal and the hope of the Australian government is this will make tourists around the world eager to swipe their credit cards, try on some ugg boots and feel up a koala.

As for the guests, hard as we might wish that The Big O would kick it old school and give Matthew Newton a what for on her couch (“You did whaaaaat?”), instead, rumour has it the much less cokey and much more dreamy Hugh Jackman will make an appearance.

Now, everyone look under your seats!



A SPORTING CHANCE

NRL GRAND FINAL

Kirsten Wade fires up about the Dragons victory.

Oh when the Saints...

Go marching in! And that's exactly what St George Illawarra did at this year's NRL Grand Final ... and then they marched out with the 2010 Premiership title after blowing away the Sydney City Roosters 32 - 8.

It wasn't the best of starts. The spirits of the already rain-soaked Dragons fans were dampened in the opening minutes of the highly anticipated blockbuster when prop Michael Spill the ball early in the tackle count. The Dragons were once again red hot when Mark Gasnier, recently back from a stint with French rugby union side Stade Francais, crossed the line and Jamie Soward converted to give them a handy early lead. From then on, the Roosters appeared to dominate the remainder of the half completing their sets and gaining good field position. The first half wasn't without controversy though, with both sides appearing to benefit from some 'interesting' (let's leave it at that, shall we?)

refereeing decisions. After scoring twice, but with two missed conversions, the Roosters went into the half-time break with a two-point lead. The game was certainly still up for grabs!

No one knows what 'Master Coach' Wayne Bennett said to his team at half-time, but the Dragons came out breathing fire. Completely rejecting all suggestions that they are a team lacking attack ability, the Dragons poured on two quick tries thanks to winger Jason Nightingale and then sealed the game with a further two tries, one to long-serving Dragon Dean Young and the other to New Zealand International Nathan Fien.

The half-time break certainly made a difference. Perhaps the Roosters got clucky and thought they had the edge over the Dragons. Or maybe the Dragons simply decided 31 years was long enough to wait for a premiership title and gave it absolutely everything they had. Regardless, the Dragons came out on top. And for the faithful red and white army, the drought is finally over.

A-LEAGUE SOCCER

William Mollers kicks up a fuss about the state of Aussie soccer.

Football or Soccer is the growing football code in Australia and over the last five years it has grown in leaps and bounds: we qualified for The World Cup for the first time in 32 years, we created a new national association (the FFA), we are bidding to host the 2022 World Cup and have founded our own professional league, the A-League.

Over recent months, our World Cup bid has received a fair amount of attention (considering the decision is to be made in December that is hardly surprising), however, the A-League has also received a lot of coverage for the wrong reasons.

This year is the sixth year of our national competition and it has not only hit a plateau, but also started to head backwards: crowds are the lowest they have been in the six years of the league, refereeing blunders are unfortunately common and a number of clubs (Newcastle and North Queensland in particular) have had difficulty paying players due to the insecurity in their ownership.

These issues are deep seated and go to the heart of the way that the club game is run in Australia: fans have little to no say in the running of most of the 11 clubs; the promotion of the game is lacklustre and boring at best; and the clubs are not well connected to the wider communities of their individual cities.

Many commentators, among them SBS's Jesse Fink, have called for an overhaul of the league's structure: the league should become a body separate to the FFA; the number of owners of each individual club should increase from one or two people to 50 or more; and the consultation of fans should not be an occasional, but rather a regular part, of the running of the league. Considering that the quality of football in the A-League this season has been the highest it has ever been, there is a good chance that the state of the A-League can be turned around. Though whether this does happen will play itself out in the next few months on the football field.

THREADS

Worldwide Burqa Ban

Monica Connors reports.

Although only a small minority of women outside Afghanistan and Pakistan wear it, much has been written about the burqa in recent months as several European countries look to ban it. As the most concealing of all Islamic headscarves, it covers a woman from head to toe with only a mesh grid to see through. In many discussions of the ban, ethnocentric right-wing officials have seized control of the issue and media reports have drawn attention to sensitive issues such as religious extremism, freedom of expression, public security and 'the west' vs. 'the foreign'.

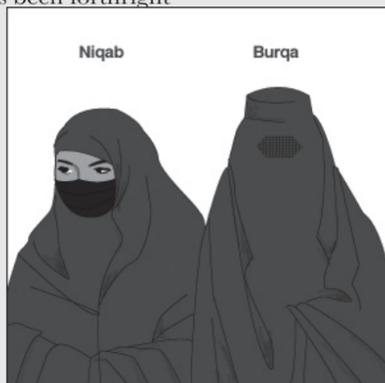
President Nicolas Sarkozy of France,

the country with the largest Muslim population in Europe, has been forthright

in supporting a ban against burqas. In a historic speech given to both houses of parliament last year, Sarkozy said, "The problem of the burqa is not a religious problem; it is a problem of the dignity of women. It is a symbol of subservience, of submission."

More recently, the law has progressed with both houses of parliament approving it last month and with France's highest constitutional authority, the Constitutional Council, also giving its endorsement last Thursday to the law that would forbid the burqa being worn

in public.



Despite widespread concerns that the law will further stigmatise the Muslim religion, the Belgian, Dutch and Spanish governments have also begun proceedings to ban wearing the garment in public. A recent poll conducted by the *Financial Times* found that there is majority

support for a ban in other countries with 63 per cent of Italian, 57 per cent of English and 50 per cent of German respondents saying they supported plans to outlaw wearing the burqa.

In the United States, concerns were

actually less prevalent with just 33 per cent of Americans surveyed supporting a ban. The American poll results come after President Obama's speech in Cairo last year when he said that Western countries should not be "dictating what clothes a Muslim woman should wear".

Closer to home, the debate about the burqa has been less heated. While some Australian politicians, including Christian Democrats MP Fred Nile and Liberal Party Senator Cory Bernardi have called for its ban, others such as NSW Premier Kristina Keneally has said that she would not support a ban as "such a ban has no place in multicultural NSW". Prime Minister Julia Gillard has stated she understands why people find the garment "confronting" and "challenging" but has insisted that her government would refuse to support banning the garment.

HONI'S SOUNDTRACK TO...

an
assessment
all-nighter

Realisation that the essay is due tomorrow: Hilltop Hoods, "The Hard Road": You've had ample time to do it, but it comes down to the next 15 hours of power. I'm pretty sure The Hoods did their fair share of night-before Reality, Beauty and Ethics essays in their time, and look where they are now.

Procrastination: DeadMau5, "You Need A Ladder (Zelda Theme)": If slaying Ganondorf and rescuing Princess Zelda doesn't get you, the gargantuan

progressive house beats will.

Introduction: Eminem, "My Name Is": Alright, an intro requires somewhat more than a name, but that misses the point somewhat. Besides, if sticking nine inch nails into your eyelids is just for starters, I can't wait for the "prestige".

YouTube Session: The Buggles, "Video Killed The Radio Star": But the video star lives on. Whether it's an old classic like David After Dentist, a catchy musical number like Bed Intruder Song or the latest Will It Blend?, YouTube provides a high-bandwidth energy hit every time. Meme me up, Scotty!

Rewrite: Roxy Music, "Re-Make/Re-Model": You think Brian Ferry nailed

his impeccable lounge-room Svengali look first time? No, it took several vats of Brylcreem, a few hectares of linen and all of Brian Eno's hair to get it just so.

Post-Midnight Wig-Out: King Crimson, "21st Century Schizoid Man": Nerves are frayed, 400 words glance pitifully from your computer screen and the demons from the Dark Side of the Prog are out to get you.

1-3 am Haze: Pink Floyd, "Shine On You Crazy Diamond (Parts 1-24)": All is calm. The boundaries between sleeping and waking cease to exist. Dazzling shapes dance before your eyes, words introduce themselves, tell you their life story and vanish back into the miasma.

3 am Red Bull: Rage Against The

Machine, "Wake Up!": The last three paragraphs you wrote are unintelligible and will have to be deleted. Back to 400 words.

4 am Maccas: Duran Duran, "Hungry Like The Wolf": You walk into the joint with an irresistible swagger, cutting a swathe through the buck's night survivors and changeover cabbies, and order your meal with New Romantic abandon. 15 minutes later you're looking for inspiration in the multi-coloured gloop at the bottom of your M&M McFlurry.

6 am Epiphany: Jimmy Cliff, "I Can See Clearly Now": Maybe it's the soft morning light beaming through the window, maybe it's the magic 15th NoDOZE or maybe it's the fact that after eight hours of tortuous Boolean logic, you've finally found a decent article on JSTOR. Whatever the reason,

Ridin Solo

Hannah Morris goes it alone.

I have always found intriguing the divide between the places where people believe it is socially acceptable to be by oneself and the places people would not be caught dead frequenting alone. Sitting in a lecture alone - acceptable. Sitting in a tute alone - mortifying. Shopping alone - recommended. Clubbing alone - creepy. Going to a concert alone - passable. Going to a music festival alone - weird. In particular, I have noticed that the thought of going to clubs/bars alone, sitting in Manning alone and going to the cinema alone strikes fear into the hearts of my friends and family. Conveniently however I have endured all of these social minefields, have emerged (relatively) unscathed and have gained some unexpected insights from my adventures.

Firstly, going to a club/bar alone. Admittedly, I was waiting for a friend to meet me there, but on the other hand I was about 40 minutes early. Furthermore, I am using as my example the Pavillion Hotel (known as the Pav to loyal pre-drinkers), which is arguably a hybrid bar/club but in all honesty is just the seedy cousin of Star Bar. Semantics aside, on paper my experience looks undesirable. In reality, it was veritably

distressing. After ordering a few vodka raspberries, I stood awkwardly at the corner of the bar sucking on my beverage watching people I didn't know get drunk. I wandered around for a while with my drinks pretending to look for friends but after about 10 minutes I had to stop because people were asking me if I was okay (apparently I had a troubled expression on my face). I ventured upstairs to the weird dancefloor area and was frightened back down again. I went into the bathroom for about 15 minutes and pretended to be leaving every time a patron who had been in a cubicle came to wash their hands. I scrolled through the inbox and outbox of my phone and started composing a text to myself about how awkward I felt. I considered sending a controversial message to everyone in my contact list so I could spend the next hour contending with replies. In short, I contemplated/enacted behaviours during those 40 minutes that I was so ashamed of, that when my friend came I pretended I had arrived at the Pav only 5 minutes before her. Disgraceful.

Going to Manning Bar by myself however was a far less unpleasant experience. It was 2pm: prime lunch period. Chairs and couches are arranged in a manner that is conducive to group socialisation. Most people are a little bit tipsy. Everyone is with at least one friend.

In theory it sounds pretty bad, although perhaps going to the Pav alone had made me immune to solitary awkwardness because I didn't have a problem with it at all. I ordered a burger, sat down on the corner of a couch, and had lunch. I did, however, have to employ the tried and tested tactics of the iPod headphones, course reader spread on the couch beside me and copy of *Homi Soit* on my lap to give off the illusion that I was so absorbed in the various distractions surrounding me I didn't even realise I was sitting alone in Manning Bar. Nay, I was showing everyone that I felt as comfortable as if I were in my own home! To be honest, I probably didn't manage to give off the impression of total contentment, and I admit it most certainly wasn't the best hour I'd ever spent in Manning Bar. But you know what? It definitely wasn't the worst. Even today, if I had a free hour and was hungry, I would do it again for the payoff that is the chicken caesar burger.

Going to a movie by myself, on the other hand, was one of the nicest experiences I've ever had. The cinema was my local, the movie was *Finding Neverland*. I slid into the cinema just as the previews were starting, found myself a seat that was at my perfect viewing distance (I avoided those awkwardly whispered seat-negotiation discussions), and settled down

to watch the movie. I didn't have anyone bemoaning that they didn't understand the plot, asking me questions about characters, coughing/sneezing on me, or trying to eat my movie snacks. In short, it was as if I was watching a movie by myself... but on a really large screen. I could even have a big cry during the final scene of *Finding Neverland* without feeling self-conscious. And as the credits began to roll and the lights came up I looked around and realised that the cinema was filled with people sitting alone just like me, all with tears rolling down their cheeks. Some would find this scene distressing: I found it beautiful. We were all responding to the film in a way that was as natural as breathing, with no need for pretence or fear of judgement. For me, seeing a movie alone is the ultimate movie experience, and I'd recommend it to anyone.

So the moral of the story? See a movie by yourself. Sit in Manning by yourself if you have to. But never, ever go to the Pav by yourself. And if by some twist of fate you ever find yourself in that situation and pretend to take a call to alleviate the awkwardness, remember to put it on silent. Trust me.



An Independent Wind in the Sails

OPINION

Catrina Yu thinks Independents should offer more than just a catchphrase.

I don't mean to alarm you but protect your incomplete degrees and Access cards for THEY are coming. Students, I'm sorry to say but...

WE ARE UNDER ATTACK! OUR SANDSTONE CASTLES ARE UNDER SIEGE! (and not just from the shadows of UTS) THE EXCLUSIVE BORDERS OF THE USU AND SRC ARE BEING INFILTRATED BY BOATLOADS OF HACKS HAILING FROM LANDS OF RED AND BLUE.

lucidity has arrived.

Completion: The Doors, "The End": Just when you thought it was all over, the many-authored Hydra of citation appears. Now, what does the Outer Mongolian Institute of Scholastic Writing Style Guide have to say on the order of publication date and edition number in a reference? The horror, the horror.

Submission: Stevie Wonder: "Signed, Sealed and Delivered": SOPHI, SOPHI, SOPHI. I know people have badmouthed you in the past, but our encounters have always been marked with such relief and liberation. Please don't change too much over the next three weeks.

Joe Smith-Davies

But NEVER FEAR! CAPTAIN INDEPENDENCE IS HERE! I'm a TRUE USyd student: accountable, reliable, clothed in plaid and armoured with a trust fund...

This election - I WILL STOP THE BOATS!!!

Much can be said on how a campaign is chosen to be run. At the end of the day, politicians are there to win your votes. Thus, they appeal to your emotions, to what they perceive are important issues to you; they tear at your heartstrings so that you are compelled to invest power in them. Sure, they have their values and ideals and blah blah blah and ideally, they should have policies, but as the recent federal election exemplified, politicians are more inclined to exacerbate what they perceive to be the Australian people's insecurities rather than put forward any sort of vision for our country.

Like father, like son. It seems in this respect USyd elections did not disappoint. INDEPENDENCE – the holy grail of USyd campaigns, the messiah that will kill all those Labor lefties, Labor righties, Labor in-betweeners (factional, disloyal, socialists, communists, obsessed with red... Stalin?) and those Liberal elitists (... fascists?). It seems the furore and sensationalism of political affiliations on campus has created a witch-hunt McCarthy would be proud of. Maybe even standing next to a Young Labor member will mean my mind will be infiltrated by dirty, dirty ideas... my life will not be my own. Likened to a Dementor, they would surely suck away my soul and leave me a

decrepit partisan shell.

But in all seriousness, let us return to a sense of decorum. Given the recent deposing of a serving Prime Minister by internal party politics, maybe we do have good reason to be cautious of political affiliations. And now that a few men (and Bob Katter) essentially hold the balance of power in the Lower House, maybe 'Independence' should be the catchcry of 2010.

But I fear in the realm of student politics, the utility of this word has devoid it of all integrity. Maybe I am just ignorant to the true connotations of the word and I am very open to be criticised but the difference between political affiliations and a support base derived from a club or society, from a team or faculty or a group of friends, is questionable. You are all connected by some sort of commonality and hence shouldn't a sense of dependence be something that is valued?

Whatever 'independence' means, it doesn't detract from the fact that I'm sick of it. Advice to tickets running for *whatever position to boost your CV* - give us some meat to what you are advocating. If independence is your only platform, it highlights not only your lack of creativity but also, it reflects your diminished perception as to the intelligence of your fellow students.

The boats aren't the problem. The problem is the person on the shore holding a gun and trying to repel them with pellets of prejudice, causing ash and smoke to further veil the perceptions of those they altruistically profess to protect.

STOP SAYING THAT YOU'RE EMBARRASSING YOURSELF

What you say: "Wow, it's great to see real women with curves on the catwalks again!"

Real Women

Why you say it: After nearly two decades of über waifs dominating the scene, it does indeed seem as if the winds of change are blowing. Most recently several designers at Paris Fashion Week included some relatively portly models in their shows. Fashion speak is nothing if not reactive and it never saw a bit of essentialised rhetoric it didn't like. So now curvaceous women are 'natural' and the 'real deal'.

Why it's wrong: What are the skinny models, chopped liver? However unattainable and, indeed, unhealthy their bodies may sometimes seem, they are no less real than you or me. They're just prettier.

Why you need to stop saying it: Fashion moves in cycles. The fashionable silhouette is due for a change, but it won't be the last of its kind. And just as larger models are lauded as 'real women' now, same same but different language will herald the return of the 'liberated' slimmer figure in the future.

Anusha Rutnam



Two models. Both real.



Henry Hawthorne and Ben Jenkins talk their way from psychics to psychiatrists in pursuit of a final word on the mystic industry, its promises and pitfalls, and the question of regulation.

PLAYING YOUR CARDS RIGHT

In the interest of full disclosure, when we began to research this article, both of us had preconceived notions of what we were going to argue, how we would do it and where we would end up. Six months down the track and reading over the initial notes we made, it's almost difficult to believe that they were written by the same hands. We hope that what you are about to read can change you, even if in a fraction of the way it has changed us. The truth is, or however close we can get to an understanding of "truth", the events that have unfolded that cannot be explained without - oh wait, what's this in our inbox? It's an email from Phillip Adams kindly reminding us that mysticism in all its forms is pure "twaddle" and causes "brain-rot". Thanks, Phill.

This disbelief should be of no surprise coming from Australia's leading sceptic, and while there are many who would disagree with Mr Adams (around 49 per cent of Australians believe in ESP), that form of scepticism is not what this article is about. One of us, having had our tarot read two years ago and having had exactly 33 per cent of predictions come true, can empirically vouch for the dubious proofs for and against these practices. So for the sake of clarity, and accepting that the debate over the veracity of alternative practices is one in which we are woefully underqualified to engage, this article takes up the assumption of Phillip Adams and the other 51 per cent, that psychic connections, tarot readings, and esoteric therapy in general, are all indeed "twaddle".

Just to be clear on the definition of the word "twaddle", it very simply means "trivial" or "foolish". But the reason we choose to clarify its meaning is that we believe that mystic practices, even if fictive, are not necessarily "useless". That is to say, just because something doesn't work the way it says it does, doesn't mean it doesn't have any merit. After all, it would take a Richard Dawkinsesque level of pedantry to criticise someone's devotion to Buddhist meditation, ignoring the irrefutable benefits, on the grounds that you don't believe in the teachings of the religion. It seems an odd double standard to deride the clients of alternative practitioners as being naïve without assessing the positive outcomes.

Working on this assumption, it's possible to view the mystical elements of these practices as the frivolous and tasty icing on an otherwise, solid and boring Teacake of Reason. The advice of, say, "you should quit your job if it's making you unhappy, and other opportunities will probably present themselves", is made in some ways more attractive with the added caveat of "because that's what your dead aunty told me". This may seem a rather snide way of dismissing alternative practitioners, but it's not entirely dissimilar to prefacing a piece of everyday commonsense with "did not the lord Jesus say...". What we want to interrogate is how to harness the benefits of mystic practices without

leaving clients vulnerable to exploitation. Specifically, what role should the government play in policing mystic practices?

Many of the people we spoke to about the mystic industry nevertheless felt it was far from wholesome. Mr Adams suggests that the origin of tarot as a commercially produced card game in the fifteenth century means that using it as a form of divination is "tantamount

"You don't give a thirsty person vodka, even if it does make them feel good for a short time," Dr Caleb Owens

to recycling Monopoly or Scrabble as a mystical pursuit, although Snakes and Ladders might be more appropriate given its judgmental symbolism".

His take on mystical practices as "benign sometimes but potentially harmful" is often echoed by those involved in traditional medical practice. We asked Dr Robert Russell, a senior psychiatrist at Royal North Shore Hospital, about the health risks posed by mystic therapy. He responded that whilst "complimentary medicines" were a more frequent problem, mystic practices are different in the sense that they challenge people's belief systems. He said, "When you confront people on the basis of their belief systems it can amount to shamanism and superstition. ... Some people may have temporary benefits but these are outweighed by the risks." The main risk that Russell identifies is not only one of supplying inappropriate information on which important decisions might be made, but also one of dependency on such advice. Dr Caleb Owens, of Sydney University's Psychology Department, says that alternative therapy could be "harmful and even fatal at worst, but even at most, they are telling lies to give someone some short term happiness". He analogised by saying "You don't give a thirsty person vodka, even if it does make them feel good for a short time."

We spoke to a clairvoyant who operates in Glebe. He agreed that dependency problems can arise from the therapeutic relationship in many mystic practices. He told us that the last decade has seen an increasing frequency of people using psychics and tarot readers for "pseudo counselling" to make decisions or seek advice in life challenges, and that people can be damaged when they are not "really after guidance, yet they want someone to tell them what to do". His method of preventing a "dependency" on his advice was to not accept more than two sessions from a client each year.

A recent flurry of law-making in other countries reflects the fear that mysticism can be an easy form of deception for commercial gain. Just within the last month the city of Warren, Michigan, has joined other local governments in setting up a mandatory licensing scheme for fortune tellers, which requires them

to submit to police background checks, have their fingerprints recorded and pay an annual license fee of \$160. The city describes this regulation as a "pre-emptive measure" to "deter scam artists and criminals who prey on innocent people". The UK's new Consumer Protection Regulations have similarly stripped back the protection of the mystic industry by shifting the burden of proof in cases of alleged fraud: now, practitioners must prove they have not

misled or coerced "vulnerable" consumers. The Regulations also require practitioners to display disclaimers in certain circumstances explaining that mystic readings are only for "entertainment".

So should there be laws against faulty Easter Show magic bags, mail-order x-ray gogs or crystal garden sets that never grow? The obvious answer is that the proud crystal garden manufacturing industry doesn't make too many millionaires each year. The UK's Office of Fair Trading, on the other hand, listed "psychic mailings" as extorting over £40 million from unsuspecting Britons each year. The state always has a role to play to prevent exploitation of consumers. But the image of regulating an industry based on spiritual divination may resemble equipping the Ghostbusters with a truncheon and handcuffs. Aside from state regulation, however, the options seem to be self-regulation or the current system of non-regulation.

Simon Turnbull, President of the Australian Psychics Association (APA), not surprisingly suggests that self-regulation is the best option. After speaking over the phone for around 10 minutes longer than planned, we can't shake the concern that the SRC is about to receive a nasty surprise in their next phone bill. But Turnbull is affable, open and passionate; deeply concerned in equal parts over the damage done to his industry by both sceptics and charlatans. He tells us that only last week he received a call from a man who had been persuaded to give over a million dollars to a dodgy psychic. Unfortunately, he explains, once the horse has bolted there's very little he can do except put the psychic's name on the APA blacklist, a register which he assures us has very few entries.

When we bring up the topic of regulation within his field as a possible remedy to these problems, he is immediately torn. Of course, regulation is desirable but ultimately impossible, he argues. Furthermore, he tells us that the APA is a self-regulating body, pointing to the Association's website where we find a code of conduct expected of all its members. A similar answer came from the Tarot Guild of Australia, which suggested that whilst internal codes

of ethics and regulation go some way towards ensuring that people can find a reputable practitioner, government intervention would be undesirable.

Well maybe. There are some positive signs. For instance, entry #2 in the code of ethics and regulations stipulates, "In the process of your readings, you may make reference to legal or medical issues, but you are not to give legal or medical advice. You are to refer clients to suitable people in the above professional categories if that need should arise." This seems like a step in the right direction and should serve as a comfort to the likes of Owens and Russell. There are also measures taken to ensure that alternative practitioners don't rip people off. The APA ethics guide (at entry #5) dictates that "Average fees should be around \$60-\$80 per hour" although it does add the alarmingly lax caveat that "Naturally those with many years experience will charge more." As for the rest of the regulations, they are more concerned with the moral implications of their craft as a whole, working off the assumption that their psychic powers, if used for evil, can have devastating effects on the client and others. This is not an entirely unreasonable thing to regulate after all, given that any lack of regulation of the magic side of the equation would almost be an admission of their own charlatanism. Such regulations range from the apparently sensible (like that psychics should not use spells or otherwise to influence the free will of others) to the reasonably twee (psychics cannot make two people fall in love).

Not surprisingly, sole traders generally took a less favourable view towards self-regulation, but otherwise had divergent positions. One local clairvoyant insisted that regulation from a "mainstream-religion oriented body of laws" could amount to "spiritual censorship". Interestingly, however, another local clairvoyant maintained that it was unfortunate that the industry was unregulated, and that many providers are not professional or interested in the welfare of their clients. He also criticised the internal regulations of industry associations as "more of an advertising venture than ethical standards".

Perhaps, as Mr Adams kindly pointed out to us, there are more important issues in the world right now. Whilst the suggestion he offered was "climate change denialism", we can't help but think there might be a few more: hungry stomachs, the Sudan, chemicals in our water and the fact that the date will never be 10/10/2010 ever again. Ever. But speaking as people who have had their tarot read, who have been promised that they will come across immense wealth, fall in (and out of) love three times, cross bodies of water in aid of the advancement of knowledge, all for the reasonable price of \$25/hour, and then to have the bittersweet passing of due dates for such predictions, we understand the perils and pitfalls of placing trust where there should only be room for speculation. 🕯



The 1st Annual Honi Soit OPINION COMPETITION

For the first time in the publication's history, *Honi Soit* called for op-ed pieces on the subject of censorship. A huge number of entrants sent in work to be judged by political journalist Annabel Crabb. Without further ado, may we present the finalists and the grand duke. The winning entry receives \$1000 in prize money for their poise on that soapbox.



I'LL BE THE JUDGE OF THAT! THOUGHTS FROM OUR GUEST SELECTOR ANNABEL CRABB

Thanks for your entries, team. On the whole, I thought they were well argued, and showed an encouraging facility with language. Most of them were about censorship. At first blush, censorship might seem quite an easy issue upon which to mount a suitably compelling op-ed; after all, it incorporates a big, chewy clash-of-rights argument, the opportunity to quote from lofty predecessors, and an unimpeachable excuse to use rude words. But the truth is that censorship is a very difficult topic to approach with any originality.

I selected Giselle Kenny as the winner because she tried something extremely risky - an argument by way of allegory - and managed to pull it off rather nicely, I thought. Her modern parable about the bystander in the rappers' bar conveyed quite a sophisticated argument about the inability of cumbersome censorship mechanisms to keep up with the ceaseless evolution of language in a digital age. Risk is important in the art of opinion writing.

The writer has to earn his or her dough by coming up with a new intellectual approach, offering something precious from the personal sphere, or advancing an argument that might make the writer unpopular.

I found the final decision difficult for two reasons. First, there were some very good, more conventionally argued pieces among the finalists.

Second, I wouldn't necessarily want to recommend for everyone the approach that Giselle took; when this sort of thing works, it's terrific, but when it doesn't, it's truly dreadful. And the dead are many.

In the end, I did give it to Ms Kenny, because in her case, the risk paid off, and it was a stylishly-written, engaging, funny piece which also featured - and this is very hard to do - a terrific dismount. (It's often thought that the hardest bit of an opinion piece is the first line. In my experience, it's the last).

Second place went to Jonathan Dunk, for his provocative article about the ageing of the anti-censorship argument. "We have excised religion from public discourse, and with good reasons, but by hell we're missing it now," he writes. It would be a divisive piece on any university campus, but it is also incisive and thoughtfully-referenced, and approaches the question from an unusual and interesting angle. Also, I think university is a place at which one should never miss an opportunity to pen a sentence full of stridency, self-assuredness, and - ideally - Latin. Mr Dunk endeared himself to me with the sheer effrontery of: "If esse est percipi then I am an ontological clusterfuck". Golf clap.

Third place went to Jonno Seidler. He demonstrated an assured style and his argument - while not a new one - was mounted with contemporary panache.

Annabel Crabb is an Australian political journalist and commentator and currently the ABC's chief online political writer.

Honi Soit and the SRC would like to acknowledge and thank the Sydney University Alumni Relations Office and their generous donor who made this opinion competition possible.



AND THE WINNER IS...



THE RAPPER, THE BITCH AND THE BYSTANDER

Giselle Kenny

Kanye, Akon and will.i.am walk into a bar. Will.i.am, who is eager to have an enjoyable and carefree evening, turns to his companions and says, "Let's get into it. Get stupid! Get retarded! Let's get retarded! Ha!" On hearing this, a well-meaning bystander politely informs will.i.am that saying 'retarded' is actually quite offensive to people with mental disabilities. Will.i.am thanks the bystander, and considers that saying 'let's get it started' would have been just as effective in conveying his original enthusiasm.

Meanwhile, Kanye was considering the women in the bar. Kanye notices that one woman in particular, whilst she may not be a gold digger, certainly was not messing with broke niggers. The same bystander, feeling quite exasperated now, calmly explains that even though Kanye is himself African American, it is simply unacceptable to use the word 'nigger' because of its racist origins. Kanye sagely recalls when his colleague, Nas, was not allowed to release an album called 'N****r', and thanks the bystander for his help.

Akon, overwhelmed by the attractiveness of a woman he can see on the dance floor, tries to find the words to describe her without being disrespectful. He tells his friends that he is eager to "smack that, all on the floor", and continue to do so until the woman "gets sore". Now quite overcome, Akon throws all caution, and indeed grammar, to the wind. He approaches the woman, and after the most conscientious

of attempts to be respectful, tells her, "damn, you's a sexy bitch".

The woman looks around for the bystander, who by now had quite the reputation for arbitrating what could and could not be said in the bar. He was nowhere to be seen.

Big Boi arrives at the bar, looking slick and well put together. He greets the others, who inquire as to how Big Boi stays so cool. Big Boi explains, "You gotta keep your balance, or you fall into the gap. It's a challenge but I manage cause I'm cautious with the strap." Our bystander reappears, alert. He suspects that 'strap' may be urban slang for something offensive. The bystander takes out his iPhone and uses the Urban Dictionary app to investigate.

"Strap: gun or firearm, usually a pistol."

"Aha!" thinks the bystander. He congratulates himself on his highly attuned instinct for recognising offensive words before even knowing their meaning. He approaches Big Boi to politely and respectfully explain that Big Boi should not have used that word. The bystander is careful to be courteous – after all, Big Boi was carrying a str**.

That done, the bystander surveyed the scene. "What a collection of rich and successful rappers!" he thought, "This is awesome!"

Meanwhile, Nelly was feeling out of sorts. Unlike Akon, he wasn't impressed by any of the women in the bar. According to Nelly, none of them had very pleasing faces. "Damn," says Nelly to his friends, "I need a tip drill. I need a tip drill." (Nelly and the others often repeat their sentiments to one another for maximum impact).

Intrigued, the bystander calls on the Urban Dictionary app once again. There are a number of entries. The bystander reaches the third entry, and considers it the most helpful:

"Everybody is getting confused" - the bystander nods to himself – "because tip drill is used a couple ways:

(1) using the tip of the penis in the crack of a woman's ass without penetration, and
(2) the type of woman who do the act has a big ass and is a freak, but not a pretty face (see Nelly's song "Tip Drill"). It's analogous to calling someone a chicken head, except instead of performing oral, they perform ass grinding."

The bystander downloads the clip of Nelly's song "Tip Drill". The image of Nelly swiping a credit card down a woman's 'ass' is a very helpful one in explaining the meaning of 'tip drill'.

"Hm," thinks the bystander, "But what is a 'chicken head'?"

Again, there are number of entries. The bystander scrolls down to the clearest explanation:

"Woman who sucks for dick for ...
1. Attention
2. Drugs
3. No reason
The blowjob where the head motion of the girl goes back n forth cuz she is so into it. Your grandmother was a chickenhead"

"What interesting language these rappers use," thinks the bystander, admiring the way the rappers were able to compact a number of complex descriptors into a single word.

The bystander overhears a group of Nelly's companions, Three 6 Mafia, laughing that "chicken, chicken always into some dumb

shit". The bystander smirks to himself. Chickenheads are always into some dumb shit. So true.

The bartender had observed the events of the evening with disgust, but without surprise. Leaning over the bar, bartender asks the bystander, "You're not going to say anything about that?"

The bystander looks up from his iPhone to see the bartender gesture towards the rappers. Dubious and disinterested, the bystander asks, "About what? I already told them not to say the n-word or talk about guns or retards."

Meanwhile, the rappers had learned that Eminem wouldn't be joining them. He had sent them all a text to explain - his bitch had "tried to fuckin' leave again", so he "tied her to the bed and set the house on fire." Still, they wondered, where was Ludacris?

Suddenly, there is a commotion at the crowded entrance to the bar. A familiar voice rang out: "Move bitch, get out the way, hoe. All you faggot motherfuckers make way!"

The rappers laughed. Ludacris had arrived!

The bartender raises her eyebrows. The bystander shrugs.

RUNNER UP

WORLD WITHOUT CONSEQUENCE

Jonathan Dunk

In Alex Jones' surreal novel *Helen Garner and the Meaning of Everything* an entrepreneurial bikey develops an instrument to read the spirit of the times through buzzwords. Were he to train his lens on the current situation the terms "internet" and "censorship" would light up like a Las Vegas cathedral. The rise of the net has produced unilateral social change. This has become the age of free information and light-speed communication, but it has also become the age of child porn, identity theft, and Julian Assange amending the Rights of Man with a clusterbomb: the right to truth, anywhere. There is a cringe at the very notion of censorship. It has become a Cold War word, connoting little men in dark rooms, and desert love letters with their guts torn out. But let us examine the concept in actuality. Like much else, censorship is a Roman word and a Roman concept. The Censor was an officer of the *Res Publica* responsible for taking the census and for maintaining the moral standards of the people, answerable only to conscience and the limits of the law. Through the dilutions of history then, to censor is to judge according to a principle. Post-twentieth century, the term is inevitably linked to atrocity. But today, I argue, wartime security is only the sexy sheen not the burning centre of the 'censorship' hazard light. The internet hasn't just tweaked the way we view leaders, it has transformed the way we enact ourselves and perceive others. This isn't the printing press, it's The Force. Widespread cyber-activity has taken our fundamental ways of being and given them a shot of cocaine and a pistol.

In previous times only the elite could shape their image. Today anyone with a computer can doctor themselves into a million different shapes. If esse est percipi then I am an ontological clusterfuck. What consequences this might bear for intimacy I leave for the beleaguered psychologists of tomorrow, but, more worryingly; it isn't just me at the controls. In bygone days I entertained brief dreams of an acting career. I did a few bit parts here and there and had some ill-advised photos taken of my weedy bookworm's body in singlets and muscle shirts. You already know the story, some friends got wind and there was my 'blue-steel' moment plastered across the social net in all its pimpled glory. Well, naturally, that was funny, but the implications aren't. The recent suicide of eighteen year old Tyler Clementi as reported by the *New York Times*, was directly linked to the publication of a private moment on the internet by his jackass roommate. I say 'private' here because that is precisely the point. That he was gay and hadn't come out to his parents is completely irrelevant to the illegality of this stupid, disastrous act. When Joseph Butler wrote "There is no such thing as property" this isn't what he meant. To him it was self-evident and inviolable that our bodies and faces, our memories and thoughts, are our own. With a camera in every pocket this is becoming less and less true.

In her 2007 essay 'Love Me Tender?' Anne Manne examines the case of the Werribee 12 wherein an intellectually disabled sixteen year old girl was humiliated and forced to perform sex acts by a

group of adolescent boys. Shocking for brutality and chauvinism alone, their depravity was compounded by exhibition. The incident was filmed and sold on DVD, it was posted on Youtube and watched by some 2500 people before anyone thought to do anything about it. One teen interviewed, belatedly, by the righteous at *Today Tonight* remarked that it was 'just like in the movies'. The stupid, unutterable, brutality of these boys is an extreme case, but we can all think of a handful of smaller actions, humorous or hurtful, that proceed down the same ugly path.

The core paradigm of conservative Liberalism is that organic society, 'individuals' in Thatcher's phrasing, regulate themselves better than government can. The growing plethora of horror stories, and even the personal experience of sending an angry text before we can think better of it, should tell us that when it comes to the internet this just isn't the case. Whatever innate moral stopgap we possess, it doesn't work as well in the half-world of the net. When Ian McEwan wrote "cruelty is a failure of the imagination" he was talking about the 9/11 bombers, and when Emmanuel Levinas declared "indifference to your neighbour's hurt" the beginning of immorality, he had the Nazis in mind. How much worse is it, how much more do our imaginations fail without even the kick of the victim's eyes there to stimulate empathy? The Werribee 12 had to actually be there to torment that pitiable girl, but they were the first internet generation. Tim Winton summed up the net experience as "World without consequence, Amen" and

he was on to something. Those boys were habituated into a social system without blood or tears, without consequence. Inured to causing pain from miles away, concrete harm becomes an easy progression. Manne paints a damning picture of the cultural network that led these children to their deplorable acts. We live under the reign of reality television where privacy and dignity fall again and again, hilariously. 'Love your brother because he is like unto you' has become 'hate him because you wish he wasn't'.

We have excised religion from public discourse, and with good reasons, but by hell we're missing it now. The law is not a moral entity, and the piñata of 'Australian Values' isn't even good enough for politics. The newspapers fall one by one to the plunge of economic rationalism, but truth is not a commodity, nor morality a convenience. There were all kinds of problems with the ecclesiastical patriarchy, but middle-class individualism is no substitute. It provides no answer when desires clash with rights. In lieu of an adequate moral system we need, with feverish urgency, standards, laws, and yes, censors for the internet. Whether you think it's the parliament of man or just ignorance and porn crowding the ether, the net is liable to evil as to good. We need independence, integrity, and rigorous scholarship. We need the guys from *Media Watch*.



THIRD PLACE

ALL ABOARD THE CENSORSHIP

Jonno Seidler

Despite what most of my generation may be saying, the billboard hogs at AMI Technology have it right; we need longer lasting Censored. Our collective and continued inquisitiveness actually depends on suppression, removal, cuts, edits and information blackouts. Stephen Conroy, bless his heart, is providing a fantastic service to my generation without even realising it. By censoring something, one only draws even more attention to the fact that it is not there, in turn spurring more people to go hunting for it. Given that the Internet has taken the guesswork out of everything vaguely controversial, from plagiarising assignments to sourcing pornography, censorship may be the final frontier in the battle to make us do something other than a Google search when we want to find information.

In 2005, Kanye West sampled a Ray Charles hook and turned into a smash hit about lascivious women who only marry men for their money. Before it even had a chance to go on air, the chorus of 'Gold Digger' was sanitised so as to protect young Western ears from the term 'n-gger'. The censors weren't fooling anybody, in particular West's largely middle-class, white fan base, who quickly realised that the word 'broke' didn't rhyme with 'digger'. Given that Kanye is the self-proclaimed king of couplets, this painfully obvious and poorly executed whitewash only served to highlight another positive trait of Fun Police intervention. Just as Australian parents had to explain the intricacies of the Bill Henson fiasco to their children after they saw the story on the news, across the Atlantic, American parents would end up giving their teenagers a quick civil rights lesson after they sourced the 'dirty' version of 'Gold Digger' online. Indeed, the bleeps, blips, yellow tape and closed doors often attract more attention than if the offending article had been released as originally intended.

Censorship encourages our oft-abandoned democratic right to question absolutely everything. Australians have staggering amounts of knowledge delivered to them on a silver platter, and even if they can't digest it all, they can always get take-aways from Julian Assange. Attempts to shield our society's most techno-literate from the dangers of technology usually backfire spectacularly, which is a truly wonderful thing to behold. Pity us twenty-somethings, coming of age without flower power, moratoriums, freedom rides or crumbling Berlin walls. Re-tweeting jokes about Bob Katter during the election is about as close as we get to revolution. When things suddenly go missing, askew or

seem a bit odd, we stand up and take notice. Waving our digital placards, we declare that we're old enough to hear the f-word on the airwaves if we have to endure Kyle Sandilands, we can watch brutal sex scenes given the content of most of Lady GaGa's videos and so too with any other deplorable filth we inherently desire. No, we are not all fornicating, foul-mouthed, politically incorrect degenerates. But should we want to be, nobody, especially the government, is going to take that right away from us.

Without censorship, we are passive agents. Though the offer of joining a plethora Facebook groups devoted purely to causing Stephen Conroy grievous bodily harm may seem alluring, it simply reinforces this laziness. Any discourse that emerges from the vacuum established by information blackouts is far more culturally relevant than what is freely accessible. Debates about consent, appropriateness, values and standards may arise from what we see on TV, but there's much more fertile ground for discussion in what we don't. Moreover, as we move towards a predominantly visual existence, questions regarding who controls and moderates images help us understand the way power flows in society, in turn neatly exposing the agendas of those in control. This is better termed 'The Fred Nile effect', particularly useful when said politician gets busted viewing the very smut he's been trying so desperately to ban.

What does censorship really mean in the information age? For every firewall there are hundreds of hackers waiting to raze it to the ground, for every blocked site an alternate portal, for every clean edit a dirty version and so on until infinity or Tony Abbott learns how to use Twitter. Great things come in small packages, and for Australia's booming creative industry, that package is censorship. More than politics, more than religion, and indeed more than anything else that should be worrying us, the prospect of censorship galvanises opinion and spurs previously uninterested young people into action. For the first time since high school, it becomes entirely acceptable to question authority, to problematise power, and to dissect how we construct our communities and ourselves. It seems ludicrous now that 'Portnoy's Complaint' and 'American Psycho' were once banned in this country, but that is only because the public demanded to see read what was hidden behind the shrink-wrap. I believe in longer lasting Censored, for without it, everything is too simple, too easy and without challenge. Besides, if my parents were able to stick it to the Man, why shouldn't I?

THE FINALISTS

A TOAST AND VEGEMITE ISSUE

Rachael Hyde

Tony Abbott thinks that voluntary euthanasia is 'not a bread and butter issue.' But for the two individuals recently granted the right to refuse food by the Western and South Australian Supreme Courts without fear of their carers being criminally prosecuted for murder or manslaughter, that is exactly what it is.

This judicial clemency does not extend to sufferers who choose not to put themselves through the agony of literally starving to death. In 2008, the New South Wales Supreme Court convicted two women of manslaughter for assisting the death of a man with Alzheimer's in their care, who had repeatedly expressed a desire to die and had attempted suicide on numerous occasions, by providing him with lethal drugs he voluntarily and knowingly ingested.

Over breakfast this week, one of my housemates declared that she was appalled that a debate on euthanasia was on the cards when parliament returns. The other retorted that she and her father had a 'euthanasia pact', whereby if either of them reached the point of needing care in a nursing home, the other would help them die to prevent this. My housemates promptly shrugged the difference off, pinning it down to a distinction between Catholicism and atheism. They both then turned back to their (toasted) bread and butter (with vegemite).

At twenty years old, the emotional and moral torment that accompanies familial considerations of the possibility of euthanasia should not come with your English muffins in the morning. My second housemate's steadfast assurance that she would be comfortable with a starring role in her own or her father's induced death is just as much a product of the ignorance of this reality as the first's declaration that she would never contemplate the possibility. That is fine. Good, even. But the uncomfortable truth is that many of us will or do face agonising end-of-life choices, and censoring any move towards greater awareness of or debate over these options is disappointing at best, and dangerous at worst.

In 1997, the Howard government overturned legislation in the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory that allowed voluntary euthanasia under certain circumstances. In September this year, Channel 7 pulled an Exit International advertisement just two days before it was due to be screened in Brisbane. It was decided that the Australian Communications and Media Authority could potentially find the advertisement to be in violation of the Commercial Television Industry

Code of Practice by promoting or encouraging suicide. If it had been screened, it would have shown a middle aged, Ford driving, beer-bellied Australian telling Sunday night's Bones viewers that he had chosen to drink and 'generally have a bloody good time' at university, but not to get a terminal illness. That was as controversial as it got.

Leaving the questionable logic there aside for a moment, note that ads funded by Big Tobacco protesting against the recent plain packaging regulations for cigarettes caused no moral qualms for the broadcasting regulator when they were screened in August this year. What was offensive at the offices of Free TV Commercials Advice was not, I suspect, that the Exit International advertisement would have been in violation of industry practices, but rather that it would have moved an unavoidably gut-wrenching topic away from the alien world of parliamentary proposals and fundamental theoretical moral questions into the everyday reality of many of our homes and families in Australia.

Whether or not voluntary euthanasia is a path that you or those close to you would choose to take, should you need to contemplate it, is irrelevant. The point is that knowledge of the choice and discussion of the possibility offers a way for sufferers to articulate their pain, and for loved ones to become involved in the process of finding a way through that. Stifling that opportunity guarantees that death will be followed by anger, guilt, fear and loneliness on the part of loved ones left behind, and will have been preceded by those feelings on the part of the sufferer.

The Northern Territory legislation was the first of its kind in the world. More than a decade later, we are in a position where any mention of the issue on our televisions is banned, it is literally impossible to debate the topic in our territories' parliaments and the possibility of a federal conscience vote on the introduction of voluntary euthanasia is being derided as extremist pandering on an unimportant subject. Debate on voluntary euthanasia is being censored by our executive and our judiciary on the basis that it is a marginal, controversial issue. The truth is that it is confrontingly relevant and it is being censored in our homes and on our screens because it is ugly. When push comes to shove, it seems we just can't quite stomach it.

A BETTER RAP FOR SHRINK-WRAP

Daniel Ward

Censorship gets bad press. Wherever the press is allowed to give it bad press. But in my view anything that tells you how much sex there is in a movie can't be all bad.

Take *Sex Drive*. The movie. An undeniably appealing title. 'Honk if you're horny' and 'How far would you go to go all the way?' are but two of its pithy taglines. Unfortunately I missed *Sex Drive* when— if—it was released in cinemas. Needless to say, I'd be tempted to buy the DVD. On the internet, sex drive, I mean *Sex Drive*, costs \$39.95.

Always check the censor's description first. MA15+. Strong sexual references, nudity and coarse language.

Not even a 'moderate impact sex scene' or two to keep the fans happy? No 'high impact sexualised violence and horror themes' for those who are that way inclined? What a letdown. Strong sexual references, nudity and coarse language – you can get that any old day at David Jones. *The Sex Drive* cast fell far short of going all the way to go all the way.

Censorship just saved me \$39.95.

'But that's not censorship – that's classification,' you say. Wrong. MA15+ means if I'm under 15 I can't buy the movie unless mum or dad is with me. That's censorship, and I like it. A rule of thumb: the more people banned from seeing something, the better it will be.

The Australian Classification Board website puts the case well: 'Classification markings [read: censorship] provide consumers, especially parents, with classification information to help them choose a film to watch or a game to play.'

Couldn't agree more, except for the 'especially parents' bit. Censorship tells you when claims that a DVD is 'UNCUT!' are a filthy lie. If it's UN-CUT! but classified M, then the only thing UN-CUT! by the end will be your abuse of the advertisers.

My only gripe is that we don't have enough censorship. The occasional tome comes out shrink-wrapped, but by and large books are lamentably uncut and unrestricted. Had I known *Madame Bovary* was going to be PG at best, I wouldn't have bothered.

More book censorship wouldn't just benefit readers – it would be a shot in the arm for the publishing industry. Forget tariffs and subsidies and whatever else the government does to protect Tim Winton and John Marsden. The biggest favour government could do Australian authors is to start censoring more of their books. Out with Adam Smith and the invisible hand of the market. Let's see more of the censor's visible hand. It's the best thing that ever happened to sales of Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and Ellis' *American Psycho*.

Would we have even heard of these things if the visible hand hadn't pointed them out to us?

Nor should censorship be restricted, if you'll pardon the pun, to the creative arts.

The packaging of regular supermarket items could do with some help from the visible hand. An extra layer of opaque governmental shrink-wrap would do

wonders for cosmetics and toiletries. Just imagine the spike in sales if a tube of lip balm were 'restricted' on account of its salacious packaging. Heck, who cares if the packaging is salacious? Just censor it anyway. With all that shrink-wrap, the local pharmacy will start looking more like a Christo than a shop, but that can only be a good thing.

'But,' you protest, 'censorship destroys freedom. Nobody wants a society where you aren't free to choose Chapstick over Lucas' Papaw Ointment.' Wrong again. In fact, censorship is freedom's best friend.

Let's not beat around the bush – let's consider pornography. Hardcore pornography. That stuff is so restricted you can't even buy it at Bunnings. But *The Porn Report*, a warts-and-all Australian study of the subject (sales of which could have benefited from a bit of shrink-wrap) suggests fully one third of us are 'users' of pornography. That's probably even more Australians than have read *Lady Chatterley*. More than have read at all, for that matter.

And that's the beauty of censorship – it gives us all the titillation of proscription, all the excitement of the illicit. And it affords the Margaret Pomeranzes among us countless hours of confected outrage. But in reality it increases demand and, usually, supply. Because when demand gets into bed, supply often gets in with it. Legally or otherwise.

The idea that censors actually restrict access to things is quaint. Like babies born in cabbage patches. But one bite from the X-rated apple reveals how babies are made, and a few megabytes per minute is enough to transport you far from the censor's Eden.

Given that the visible hand is obviously a winner, maybe the private sector will introduce a censorship board of its own for everything that's spared governmental bowdlerisation.

It has worked in the USA: the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), which censors movies (I can think of no other word for the practice of deciding whether under-17s are allowed past the box office), is a private organisation. It is comprised of the six major American movie studios. Moviemakers censoring their own movies. They claim this is to ward off governmental interference. You and I know better. Warner Brothers and friends realise what a helping hand the visible hand can be.

So censorship is good for consumers and it's good for suppliers and it's good for producers. Anyone else? Ah yes, government. It's good for government, too. It gives government the comforting illusion of doing something about something. And unlike tax, which is the other way of doing something about something, it is stimulating rather than depressing. Censorship is truly miraculous.

And the visible hand creates public sector jobs. All those censors at the Classification Board – what would they be doing if not sitting and watching movies at the taxpayer's expense?

Come to think of it, probably sitting and watching movies. On Centrelink. At the taxpayer's expense.

THE CASE FOR WEIRD THINKING

Alex McKinnon

Every so often, some windblown outsider flukes their way into Parliament and uses their good luck to spew half-baked ideas about the place like so much verbal diarrhoea. Usually these weird creatures have no say in proceedings, but our newest Parliament currently hangs on the whims of a rug-seller from Tasmania, two hayseed ex-Nationals with delusions of grandeur, an oh-so-trendy Green from Melbourne (it's the latest thing) and a ten-gallon hat. This collection of misanthropes have devoted their efforts not to serious, bread-and-butter issues but to trivialities like fruit bats and group hugs. We can be thankful that the next election will most likely see them fade back into obscurity where they belong. Such is the conventional wisdom.

Actually, I quite like where we've found ourselves. I like that new, weird ideas like sunshine Parliaments are getting airtime and into Question Time. It goes without saying that, had the chips fallen slightly different and we hadn't found ourselves with a hung Parliament, there would be no weird ideas floating around. Or slightly more dangerous ideas like legalising euthanasia, or letting gay people get married, or discussing Australia's place if Afghanistan, if any. Or even more out-there notions, like knocking down and sorting out this climate change business. A little while back, a certain ex-fish-and-chip-shop proprietor from Queensland made some of us wonder if perhaps there was a bit of racism lurking in our hearts.

These are things that you will never normally hear discussed in polite society. There's no law against doing it – heavens, no – but you will not hear such talk in Parliament, or read about it in the broadsheets, or hear it on the radio, unless the term '*politically correct*' is being spat out in close vicinity. The hung parliament has exposed a culture of self-censorship in Australia's public sphere that is suppressing the democratic exchange of ideas and hollowing out our society's discourse.

For most journalists, especially those who work for one of the two companies that control the vast majority of media in this country, to objectively critique a political party's stance on an issue – or worse, to highlight the failings of their own employer – is to risk career suicide. The same is true for politicians; any deviation from the party line is deemed an imminent leadership challenge from without and an act of betrayal from within – see Penny Wong opposing her own right to get married, and Peter Garrett supporting a few more uranium mines. The longstanding tradition of a fearless and impartial public service has been undermined by the rise of the privately-hired policy advisor and the increasing power of governments to hire and fire public servants as they see fit.

Can our politicians really speak their minds on parliament's floor? Can our journalists really maintain the rigorous professional standards they demand of themselves when they are constantly forced to choose between gutsy, insightful stories and toting the editorial line for a paycheque? Or are they censoring themselves for fear of the consequences if they don't?

I hear you asking 'so what?'. It's important for parties to maintain a perception of unity, and journalists need to eat. But censorship can't be boxed in; it has a nasty habit of spreading to places where it was never meant to go. Censorship is more than blacked-out words and internet filters and CCTV cameras; it's building walls inside people's heads. When people constantly self-monitor what they say or write, they fall into patterns of behaviour regarding how they think. The young journo will condition herself to concentrate on 'real stories' and dismiss the ones she got into the trade to tell in the first place. The newly-elected pollie will learn to keep his mouth shut in the party room as well as in front of a microphone. The weary public servant will give the nod to a piece of dodgy policy sooner than criticise it and risk demotion. If people train themselves to consider only what is 'acceptable' and treat all else as anathema, they come to believe it a little bit, even if they don't realise it. Eventually, our perception of what's 'acceptable' is so blinkered that anything even a little outside it is too dangerous or weird to contemplate.

We can already see the consequences of this culture in action; it's been largely responsible for the abysmal quality of what passed for debate in the election campaign. Both major parties played it safe with timid, do-nothing policies for fear of the other side or the media treating anything even marginally bold or controversial as a sign of unfitness-to-govern, with the few alternative voices marginalised or ignored. It doesn't just affect the chattering classes, either; bear in mind these are the people who more or less set the social agenda. If you've got a problem they think is too dangerous to touch, nothing's going to get done.

The picture would be bleak enough if we didn't have issues like the treatment of asylum seekers and climate change on our collective plate; problems that need visionary and potentially unpopular solutions. The actions of the major parties on those particular bones of contention, and others, has thus far done them little credit. Australia has rarely needed boldness from its leaders more and looked like getting it less. They've been housetrained to meekness, to say and do nothing 'unacceptable', and we are worse off for it.

That's why we need the Mad Katters, the Wilkies, the Browns, even- father, forgive me- the Hansons. No matter what they stand for, they are not bound by the self-censorship that gags so much of our public debate. The only problem is that they- and their weird ideas- will always be exceptions to the rule. Our major parties and our media outlets need to free themselves from conventional wisdom and 'acceptable' thinking if we as a nation are to tackle the challenges that lie before us. Whether they will is another matter entirely.



FUCK AND THE POWER OF PROFANITIES

Harry Knight

Since I was little my father told me to cover my mouth when I sneeze, eat with my knife and fork and never swear. I can understand his instructions as to hygiene, but why can I never cuss or blaspheme, use four-letter words or take the Lord's name in vain? Is it the vestigial Christian belief that blasphemy, in accordance with the third commandment, will incur God's wrath? Or have we fallen prey to the more arcane superstition that swearing, like sneezing, manifests the corporeal invasion of evil spirits? I refuse to believe that my father, or the Australian community at large, is governed by such baseless fears. Besides, it is doubtful whether blasphemy or cursing, such as 'damn you' or 'for God's sake,' would still be considered offensive today.

Why then does the utterance of shit, fuck and cunt provoke the ire of polite society? Following the Norman Conquest in the 11th century, Old English, the language of the Anglo-Saxons, was repressed by the Norman settlers and replaced by Middle English, which incorporated Norman French, numerous European and Latin loanwords, and surviving elements of Old English. The sad byproduct of the introduction of Middle English was that many stout Old English words, while remaining in common parlance, were vulgarized.

Shit, for example, is derived from the Old English *scitte*, and was replaced by the Middle English *facces*, which is still used euphemistically today. Shit is not, as is widely believed, an acronym of the phrase 'Store High In Transit,' which was supposedly inscribed on shipped crates of manure.

The answer to why 'shit,' 'fuck' and 'cunt' are offensive, and 'facces,' 'copulation,' and 'vulva' are not, is therefore the linguistic imperialism of the Norman Conquest. It has nothing to do with what these words signify, nor is it their harsh sound.

This being said, some expletives are offensive due to their pejorative implications. 'Bitch,' for example, compares women with dogs, implying that women have an inferior intellect and status. Curiously, 'faggot' (unwittingly) equates an homosexual with a bundle of sticks, which speaks more to the stupidity of the speaker than anything else. These words are offensive because they represent and perpetuate bigotry, and should therefore remain unacceptable.

Words like fuck, cunt and shit, when used in a non-pejorative sense, are therefore profane for the single reason that they are antiquated. But here's my problem; why then does our largely permissive community continue to enforce draconian censorship laws forbidding the utterance of these words in the media and in public places? The need to understand why society suppresses plain speaking about sex, when teen pregnancy and the transmission of STI's are destroying lives, and about excretion, when the true obscenities in society are violence and inequality, is dire.

There is no question that the everyday reasons for swearing are manifold and diverse. It may be cathartic, or an exclamation or an imprecation, or it may vulgarize things or activities for comic or shock effect, or modify your language to suit a particular register. However, S. Pinker identifies a common thread between all profanities, which is that they function to grab the listener's attention and elicit a strong emotional response.

For example, the company FCUK (French Connection UK) exploits the arresting and

emotive power of the profanity 'fuck' to market its clothing brand. Conversely, the denotation of 'gay' as cheerful or pleasurable has been lost, because of the powerful negative emotions that the word now automatically evokes (in its non-pejorative use, such as 'that's so gay!').

The link between swearing and emotion is explained by the location of swear words, along with other prefabricated formulas such as song lyrics and conversation fillers, in the ganglia, which is the part of the brain that controls your primitive emotional impulses. The connection between profanity and strong emotion was discovered in studies of Tourette Syndrome, which is a defect in the ganglia that prevents sufferers from controlling these impulses. When strong emotions were induced in the patients, several experienced verbal tics, or *coprolalia*, which urged them to shout obscenities. Seemingly, the experience of strong emotions causes (or at least correlates to) the utterance of profanities, which strongly suggests that the uninhibited subconscious assimilates the two.

Moreover, even when the ganglia is unimpaired, the strong link between profanity and emotion is evident. Many involuntarily swear upon experiencing intense emotions, such as when you're frightened ('you scared the shit out of me!'), aroused ('oh God yes!') or hurt ('fucking car door!'). Visceral emotion and profanities go hand in hand, and it stands to reason that the utterance of profanities has the power to convey strong emotions to the listener, quite separate from their semantic meaning.

On this analysis, the reason why we swear is simple; we need profanities to fully convey how we feel. You need cusswords to convey how much a cunt your boss is, or how good it felt fucking your boyfriend, or how shit scared you were by the movie 'The Ring'. The connotative import of 'bad person,' 'making love' and 'frightening' in these instances just isn't enough.

The censorship of profanities is therefore in essence bowdlerizing the expression of strong emotion, which is an unjustifiable incursion on our freedom of speech. More importantly, however, it is widely accepted that language, by 'segmenting reality into conceptual chunks' (as D. Lee puts it), influences the way in which its speakers perceive the world. The censorship of profanities therefore limits our ability to experience intense emotion itself!

Certainly, stamping out visceral emotions promotes rational debate, which is the cornerstone of Western democracy. However, there will always be times when intense emotion is warranted. So, Father and the Australian community, your censorship of my pottymouth has conditioned me not to articulate, or even experience, strong emotions. You are the cause of the apathy for which I am so often criticized. In retaliation, I will only say; "fuck you!"

For more information on the power of profanities, see Steven Pinker, *The Stuff of Thought: Language as a Window into Human Nature*, (London, Penguin Books Limited, 2007). If you're interested in how language defines thought, I recommend

David Lee, *Competing Discourses: Perspective and Ideology in Language*, (Essex, Longman Group UK Limited, 1992)

IN FAVOUR OF INFAMY

Jonathan Wallace

I certainly hope this article is censored. Censorship is the age old tactic of suppressing opposition of an argument too weak to support itself. But unfortunately for the censors, their big black pens do not suppress ideas, they highlight them. And as a writer, I do not fear the censor's big black pen, for it will only serve to promote my writing.

Censorship is the greatest platform for promotion. Whether it be literature, music, news or whatever, the censor's pen only draws the curtains of the unknown around the material, making it seductive and mysterious. Examples are aplenty for the use of censorship as promotion; from fuelling publicity to being impotent in stopping the public's desire and giving artists a badge of honour to making the censorship itself more controversial than the material it is censoring.

The iconic Australian song, Khe Sahn, was originally banned for the line, "Their legs are always open, but their minds are always closed". The song did not even make it into the Australian Top 40, but because of the publicity around censorship, it became a defacto nation anthem and made Cold Chisel a mainstay in Australian music. Lead singer, Jimmy Barnes, fondly remembers the act of censorship as being the catalyst to the band's success.

In 1993, the wife of US Vice President Al Gore lead the committee to create the Parental Advisory Recommended sticker on music, specifically targeting the rap and heavy metal genres. It was deemed that this music had lyrics and imagery that would be a negative influence on children, and all such material should be labelled with a uniform warning sticker. Unfortunately, the artists wore this sticker like a badge of honour; merchandise, music clips and album artwork often feature this symbol, and thus only made their music more enticing to the youth market.

And censorship is by no means a guaranteed barrier to stop the public's desires. In 2008, a last minute supreme court decision caused the television series *Underbelly* to be suppressed in Victoria. It was thought that a dramatic portrayal of individuals awaiting trial would unfairly influence juries, and so it was banned from broadcast or distribution in Victoria. However, the courts had not kept up with modern technology, with Victorians easily downloading the banned episodes, treating the Supreme Court like a speed bump rather than a locked gate.

Censorship, finally, can add weight to the political arguments of what is censored. The wikileaks exposure of coalition crimes in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars exposed the gap between the war on terror and the media's presentation of it. The aim of the wikileaks was to expose the censorship of what many were suspecting, that there were crimes being committed in the war zones of Iraq and Afghanistan. For the public that suspected

as much, the wikileaks were about exposing the censorship as much as the crimes that were being censored.

But just because material is censored does not mean people will automatically flock to it. Child pornography is universally understood as beyond moral and ethical boundaries, and is rightly censored. Outside of devil's advocate arguments in philosophy classrooms, the only individuals that support child pornography are those who live outside these universally understood moral and ethical boundaries. Child pornography is an example of something that should be censored, not because of a committee, government policy or other so called 'group of experts', but because all reasonable people demand it in a civil society.

Therefore, citizens know what is and is not appropriate, much more than the censors. The act of censorship only makes those censoring look silly and immature, while highlighting what they are trying to suppress. That being said, we live in a society that is far more open than closed, and writing, along with music, film and the like, has far less chance of being censored than not. I suspect that the censors already have an inkling into my idea. But we will not always live in a society this open, and the pendulum will eventually swing back to a society where the censor's big black pen will play a role. It is times like these that we must be vigilant.

In my writing, I do not consciously go out of my way to have my work censored an artist needs more substantial material than controversy on which to base her/his career. However, I do try to push the boundaries of acceptability. Because I want to live in a society in which words and ideas such as mine are allowed to be read. I want them to be read by masses of people who can make up their own mind as to whether they like it or not, not by a small group of censors who consider themselves 'experts'. Society does know what is acceptable, and will read despite the censors. They will read even more avidly because of the censors.

All I can hope for is the censor's big black pen.

THE NAKED TRUTH

Paul Karp

Anybody that maintains that all representations of naked children are child pornography would do well to check their own family photo albums. In most you're sure to find hilarious photos of yourself as a bub in the bath and appropriately naked, or else prancing in your birthday suit as you run through the sprinkler on a hot summer's afternoon. I've seen many such photos recently, included for maximum embarrassment in slide shows for mates' twenty-first birthday parties. There were no police present and Miranda Devine did not see fit to write about it, two fortunate differences between these harmless parties and the controversy surrounding Bill Henson's artwork. While it might seem easier to draw a clear line like "all representations of naked children are wrong", doing so creates a dangerous false equivalence to pornography that the facts do not justify.

The differences between art depicting naked children and pornography are obvious. Pornography is produced with the sole intention of sexual titillation, art is not. Kevin Rudd may have condemned the photos as having "no artistic merit," but many understood the photographs as commenting on the transition from youth to adolescence and even Henson's harshest critics did not claim he intended to stimulate anything other than our intellects.

The second difference is context and audience. The reason moral crusaders focus only on the nudity in Henson's art is that to justify the force of their outrage they must remove the works from their proper context: an audience in an art gallery who expect to see representations that make a social comment, not, to put it bluntly, to rub themselves up against the walls as some of the more outraged commentators may imply. When nude figures, even of children, are placed in context they cease to be startling at all: nobody bats an eyelid at nude cherubs in Renaissance paintings; and no great stir is caused by photos of the birthday boy or girl in their birthday suit at any of those parties.

The most important difference is consent. If somebody under the age of sixteen were to allow sexual touching or intercourse, the criminal law would still not recognise this as consent because for their protection we deem minors incapable of understanding or consenting to a sexual activity. But appearing nude is qualitatively different, because nudity is not necessarily sexual, a fact confirmed by Australia's Classification Board when Henson's pictures were declared "mild and justified". The children depicted in Henson's artwork and their parents both consented, which is why the controversy focused on issues that are actually peripheral to consent. It may be true that someone who posed nude for Henson may regret that decision in future, but they consented at the time. It may be true

that the children of St Kilda Park Primary School did not consent to be looked at by Henson, but it is not a crime to look at a fully clothed child, even if it is to assess their suitability for depiction in a nude photograph, because consent is received before anyone takes their clothes off.

Perhaps the most interesting criticism of Henson's work is that, regardless of their purpose, they may inadvertently cause or facilitate sexual titillation and thereby benefit the unquantifiable class of "potential paedophiles" that may have shuffled through the exhibition at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery. It is certainly very saddening that there are people that get sexual gratification from the abuse of young children. But the fact that paedophilia exists in our society does not qualitatively change the act of innocently hanging a photo of a naked child.

It is perhaps the great irony of those that seek to protect children from sexualisation that covering up children's bodies at all opportunities to hide them from the view of a hypothetical omnipresent paedophile actually makes nudity of children in the few contexts that it still occurs more sexual. Adam and Eve did not want for clothes, and nude statues were not worthy of comment until overactive moralists with sex on the mind started tacking fig leaves to them centuries later. Perhaps Henson's weeping model mourns lost innocence, because once childhood has passed nudity becomes sexual. It is hard to see how children in general or any of Henson's models in particular were helped by the outrage whipped up in the wake of Henson's exhibition, which is ironic because that outrage was all supposedly for their benefit.

Producing or purchasing child pornography is a hideous crime. But societal disapproval of these crimes will not be at all diminished by allowing completely innocent instances of child nudity to pass without comment. Impugning the motives of an artist that seeks to represent children or his audience cheapens art, it cheapens children, but worst of all it cheapens our condemnation of the real criminals. All societal condemnation should be reserved for the truly guilty, the pornographers and the perverts, because we owe it to real victims.

AN OPEN (TRANSPARENT, BUT NOT INVISIBLE) LETTER TO WIKILEAKS

Hamish Boland-Rudder

Dear Julian Assange, I'm a final year media and communications student with aspirations of becoming a journalist. But I am extremely concerned that I have not received tuition in the scientific approach to journalism that WikiLeaks promotes as the future of this industry.

Did I miss a crucial part of my degree? I have been trained in print, video, radio and online production and have been taught how to extract and interpret knowledge through strong interviews and thorough research. My studies also included an introduction to the legal and ethical concerns of journalists; I'd always thought that the difference between a professional and a non-professional was whether or not you were paid. Not true! Apparently, the key difference between a professional and a non-professional is actually the code of ethics to which they adhere. WikiLeaks does claim to be an ethical journalistic pursuit. But whose ethics do you follow?

Because traditionally, in Australia, most journalists are bound by the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance Code of Ethics. Among ideals of accuracy, fairness, and honesty, journalists are required to be accountable: "They [journalists] scrutinise power, but also exercise it, and should be accountable. Accountability engenders trust. Without trust, journalists do not fulfil their public responsibilities."

Many scoff at the idea of an ethical journalist, and I understand their reservations. But within this framework, journalists can be held responsible for what and how they choose to report. Where the code of ethics provides no recourse for ensuring justice and fairness, often the laws of our nation do.

You advocate a more transparent journalism, a journalism that publishes its source material along with the story. Yet WikiLeaks is an organisation that guards its secrecy, and prides itself on its untouchability. Media academic Jay Rosen calls you the "first stateless news organisation", placing you above state-level laws. Unless I fell asleep in a lecture, I don't recall learning how this sort of invincibility would 'engender trust' with the public.

If someone were to take issue with what you publish, how would they pursue a complaint against you? I'm curious, because this is how journalists are held accountable and I just can't wrap my mind around the prospect of a journalistic organisation that espouses transparency and accountability of governments, militaries, corporations, etc, but cannot be held accountable itself. I must have slept through that lecture.

This is not about censorship. I am a journalist-in-training, and naturally advocate a completely free press. But according to my lectures, freedom of the press works best when combined with accountability. Perhaps I need to contact those professors (and those media professionals who graced us with their time) and let them know about this new journalistic paradigm.

Censorship imposed by governments, militaries, corporations, etc can be self-serving, and often needs to be challenged. You have brought us some incredible stories by defying such authoritarian institutions – leaks such as the *US military's Standard Operating Procedures for Camp Delta* (Guantanamo Bay), or the Minton Report, which revealed to the world the damage done by oil company Trafigura to the African coast.

Traditional media were not able to report these stories. But, unbound by the laws of any state, WikiLeaks were free to not just write articles about these documents, but also to make the entire documents freely and wholly available. And the world is (arguably) a better place for this.

But without the guidelines of the law, or a discernible code of ethics which you are obliged to follow, surely there is a great burden on you to decide what needs to be leaked and what should be kept private? I remember an interview you did earlier this year with American news-comedian Stephen Colbert, shortly after WikiLeaks released the Iraqi war video depicting the killing of a journalist by American forces. You said that you had a "harm minimisation process", whereby anyone who might be negatively affected by the leak would be contacted before publication. You also said that you made an executive decision that the soldiers in that video (one of whom later suffered a nervous breakdown) did not need harm minimisation.

Criticisms have been levelled at WikiLeaks more recently with the release of the secret military documents that have become known as the Afghan War Diaries. Did any of the people affected by this release need harm minimisation?

With the release of the Iraq War Diaries imminently pending, there is cause for panic in more than one section of society. While the US military busily prepares for more (probably deserved) negative publicity, and the hawks and doves nervously await another round of heated public debate, I am sitting at my desk wondering where I went wrong.

I believe in transparency and accountability! I admire much of the great material that WikiLeaks has made available in a way that no other organisation could. But I also fear that I am stuck in the old paradigm of professional, ethical journalism.

In an effort to embrace your scientific journalism, I will leak this letter to the wider world, and will make available a list of my source material to anyone who may request it. Consider it my first attempt at transparency.

Please wish me luck in this new, stateless media world.



STEPHEN CONROY: FATHER OF OUR FREEDOM?

Oliver Burton

Nothing is quite so hung in the new Australian parliamentary paradigm as the internet filter. Not supported by the Greens or the (Liberal/National) Coalition, the policy was destined to stumble at the steps of the Senate with more certainty than a drunken staffer on budget night. And post Australia's 19 day rule by rurals, the filter is about as likely to make it through the lower house as a bill to reinstate Wilson Tuckey.

Yet there's Senator Conroy, blithely announcing "a suite of transparency measures to accompany the policy and ensure people can have faith in the RC content list," cheerily continuing his crusade while the big ugly elephant, death rattles in the corner.

Honestly, I'm at a loss. What does Stephen Conroy think, that it's just the specifics of the policy that so many Australians reject? That with a little tweaking we'll suddenly understand what he's been trying to do for us? Maybe he's waiting for a silver bullet, an image or video so heinous, that the public will be galvanised, the dissenters drowned and the bill triumphantly introduced with bipartisan support? Possibly, in fact that's probably what Fred Nile's staffers were doing- trawling for a silver bullet. Though since any silver bullet image would be refused classification we'd just have to take Sir Stephen's word that it's 'very, very sick indeed.'

In any case, Conroy's persistence with the filter represents a sinister contempt for the will of the Australian people. Why does this Minister persist in advocating a policy that will be slow, expensive, ineffective and retrograde to our most basic senses of freedom and transparency? That's not a rhetorical question now; it's one that demands an answer and one with slightly more credibility than media effects theory for toddlers. As has been written many, many times before, any parent that thinks this policy is going to contribute in any meaningful sense to their child's internet safety is more deluded than the Independents that went to Labor for "stable" leadership.

Other commentators have written compellingly, lucidly and ad nausea on the proposal's technical failings- its inability to catch peer-to-peer dissemination of content, the impossibility of keeping a "black list" up to date, not to mention the slowing down of the net by up to 87%. I'd like to suggest a more fundamental topic. Let's finally have a sensible argument about the significance of supposed Refused Classification Content to contemporary democratic society.

Tempting as it might be, making the freedom of speech argument here is going to lead us down an unpleasant rabbit hole, the logical destination of which is defending the rights of child pornographers to distribute their content. It's also anarchic - surely everybody believes the government has the right, indeed responsibility to make laws which protect its citizenry in extreme cases? And surely child porn is so extreme?

No, the argument here is about our relationship with our government, each other and the global community. Isaiah Berlin drew the famous distinction between the "freedom from" and the "freedom to", which he called negative and positive conceptions of liberty, respectively. Negative conceptions of liberty equate maximum freedom with minimum intervention, placing faith in individuals as the most accurate arbiters of their preferences. Positive conceptions on the other hand see a need for some authority to grant self-determination to an agent, thereby allowing them to make the best choices. Berlin, a liberal- in the classic not the Abbott sense, expressed a preference for the former; describing his concern at the implications for government oppression raised by the latter.

By this measure Stephen Conroy is not a liberal, but placed on this scale his argument does begin to look almost cogent. Conroy obviously sees this material as exploitative and corrupting with any person exposed to it liable to suffer significant mental anguish- a clear violation of their personal freedoms.

The unavoidable consequence of this belief however, is that the authority, the Federal government, must solely judge what content is 'safe' for its people to view. And when that process and its outcomes are secret, when the names and qualifications of those making these judgements are secret- we begin to see Berlin's concern play out once again. We're not just talking about child pornography and bestiality now- there's a real concern that artistic, gaming, even political content that offends could be targeted as well. And why wouldn't it be, when the strength and will and means to do so, lie in the hands of such honourable men?

The internet is the most powerful democratic tool in history- we simply cannot license an authority to dictate what should and should not be allowed in the public sphere. By all means make laws about the way we treat each other, and prosecute infringements, by all means legislate what can and can't be purchased. But do not arbitrarily block websites, which let's face it so few Australians will ever seek out in the first place, on some vague, inflexible standard of public morality- it's downright dangerous.

No we won't always agree with the thoughts and actions of every person who uses the internet. But this is the price we pay for a genuinely free society. It's not that Senator Conroy is a monster, albeit a zealot, he's just suffering the mental anguish from the exposure described above and is, father-like, determined to protect his charges from a similar fate. But it's ruined his objectivity on this question, obliterated any long term perspective. And Julia Gillard needs to recognise that, or at least her own political self-interest, before any further public resources are squandered on this appalling policy.

pwning n00bs : NOW IN R18+

Pat Effeney

I am a seasoned war veteran. With 5567 kills and 6129 deaths, I've been in my fair share of battles over the last year. I've killed US Army Rangers, Navy Seals, British Special forces, terrorist groups, militia and Russian Spetznaz (not to mention countless civilians). All's fair in love and *Modern Warfare 2*.

I've also killed my fair share of demon spawn, fucked my share of hookers behind the façade of a bouncing car, jumped on plenty of turtles' heads, and then used their shells to kill evil walking mushrooms, as well as sent plenty of men to their deaths in the name of strategy.

People may say that I have a lot of life experience. They would be wrong, I have, however, been blessed in being allowed to play some of the finest video games to have existed over my twenty one years of service on this earth. As such, I've experienced things that I never could have in real life.

In real life, I've never had sex with a hooker. In real life, I've never planted a claymore mine or operated a harrier jet. In real life, I've never commanded troops, let alone sent them to their deaths for the greater good. Life has afforded me none of these experiences, and I can't say that I am poorer for it.

Video games allow me to live vicariously through a mini me on the screen, and I would say that my life is richer for having experienced these things. Though my kill/death spread on *Modern Warfare* isn't the greatest, and I may not be as 1337 as Starcraft II as I would care to let on, video games, like movies for many, have become an important part of my life. They provide me with that necessary downtime between my Honours thesis and my coursework.

Australia's censorship policy, in general, is one I agree with. I agree that people of a certain age should not be allowed to view such masterpieces as *Pirates II - Stagnetti's Revenge*. It's for the good of the children (and their fathers) that this sort of material remains unseen by their innocent eyes, at least until they're in their final year of boarding school.

Generally, I think, our ratings are pretty fair. G means it's for little kids. PG means it's for slightly bigger little kids. M means it's for adults, but little kids can watch in anyway. MA means there is probably some tits or blood in there somewhere. R suggests there are a lot of tits, or a lot of blood (or both), and maybe, just maybe, if you're a real good boy, some cannibalism. X is porn.

It strikes me as odd, then, that we responsible people (deemed responsible in virtue of the that fact we have surpassed the age of 18) cannot actually act out anything in R18+. Allow me to quantify this.

I can go to the video store and rent *Hannibal*, legally. I could then proceed to sit down and watch Anthony Hopkins devour innocent people because he likes the flavour, legally. I could probably, if I listened hard enough, pick up a few tips on how to cook those of my own species, legally.

I could also go on the Internet and watch a girl get fucked by a horse (this might be illegal, but I could still do it).

What I cannot do, however, according to the Australian government, is play a version of *Grand Theft Auto IV* in which I walk up to hooker and watch my in game character have sex with her because it would warrant a rating of R18+. If the government's point here was to restrict my access to animated pornography, then I wholeheartedly agree with their position. Animated porn is gross. I worry, however, that the government's refusal to grant video games R18+ ratings is unrelated to their stance on pencil drawn porn.

As such, many games either have to be altered for Australian release or are granted a lower classification than the content warrants. The *GTA* series has continually had to change their games to be granted a MA15+ rating. *Alien vs Predator* was held back in its release because of excessive gore (John Wu's Killer, anyone?). The ban was later overturned and the game was released with an MA15+ with a label warning people how violent it was. Nothing was changed except the rating. This change was completely artificial, highlighting the inconsistency of the current policy.

If we are mature enough to go out an buy porn, and mature enough to watch movies with blood, gore, guts spilling out onto the pavement and people being decapitated, why can't video games have the same level of gore? Similarly, why are video games that deserve an R18+ rating not afforded one on the grounds that no such rating exists in Australia? This rating exists for every other form of media.

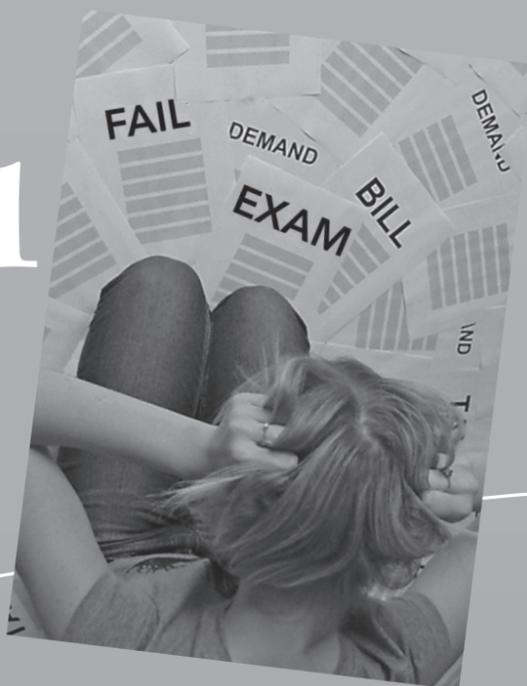
People will argue that by displaying gore on video games we desensitize ourselves even further. Let me remind these people that you are talking to a guy who has over FIVE THOUSAND kills on *Modern Warfare 2*. What this means is that I, in my capacity on screen, have willingly gunned down, 'naded, knifed, rocketed and riot-shielded five thousand n00bs online. And that's not including single player, or the other shooters I've played! Surely the fact that I am killing thousands of people renders the level of gore irrelevant.

The lack of an R18+ rating for video games denies gamers access to the product that the designer intended. After all, if Bill Henson is an artist, then those at Infinity Ward should certainly be construed as such too. What's more, maybe some blood splatter from my many victims would serve to remind us of the value of life, and that the concept of simply 'respawning' doesn't exist in our world.

This inconsistency in our Classification Board's system serves no purpose anymore, so why continue being more lenient with classification of video games, or refusing games classification on the grounds that it doesn't exist? It's time to reconcile video game classification with the rest of our legislation. Let's hope the changes that are currently in the works are done justice.



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Abe,

I'm stressed out. I've applied for as many extensions as the faculty will give me. I've got assignments due one after the other, and still cannot manage to spare the time from my part time job to attend class. I know that if I don't concentrate on my study I will fail, but right now I really need to pay the bills. How can I get on top of things?

Busy

Dear Busy,

There are a few things that you need to deal with here. Firstly your stress level needs to be managed so that you can make good decisions and absorb the information you are given in class. It's great that you have already spoken to people in your faculty about your deadlines. If these arrangements are still not enough you could consider approaching them again and/or coming and talking your situation through with an SRC HELP caseworker. The University Health Service can help you with medical advice about stress, while the University Counselling Unit or International Student Services Unit can go through time and stress management techniques with you. All of these services are available to you free of charge.

The biggest problem that you mention here, though, is your inability to prioritise study over work. You may need to consider getting a loan (or maybe a bursary) from the Financial Assistance office. There are also scholarships available from the Scholarships office. Both of these are located on Level 5 of the Jane Foss Russell Building. That way you can focus on study now and work lots of hours in the uni break. If this isn't good enough then you should consider dropping a subject or two. If you drop a subject now you will have a Discontinue Fail (DF). This tells people who may look at your transcript that you discontinued the subject, rather than attempted all the assignments and failed. In some faculties DFs do not count as triggers in the Staying on Track program. (For more information talk to the faculty advisors or SRC HELP.)

Some longer term solutions would be to look at your income. Perhaps you are eligible for a Centrelink payment that you are not currently receiving. Perhaps you would benefit going part time or having a semester off so that you can work and save some money. Whatever you do, it really is important to consider all of the options and consequences before finalising your decision.

Abe



President's Report

Report of the SRC President, Elly Howse // president@src.usyd.edu.au

Student Feedback – and why it's da bomb

Hello avid readers & fans of the lengthy but informative 'SRC Pages'. Before you move on to the delicious humour that is the Garter, please take a moment to pause and read my report.

It's that time of year. You go in to your class, your tutor goes, "So yeah, final exam for the semester coming up..." and you're like, "Whaaaaat? It's Week 11? Huh?" Mmm. That's what I was like this week in my class before we started watching a YouTube video of men who breastfeed. TRUE STORY. I am an Arts student after all!

Anyway the point of my report this week is to emphasise a) that the semester is almost over and b) it's time to start thinking, reading and writing about feedback. Very soon you will go into your class and instead of remarking how far into the semester we are, your lecturer or tutor will hand you a strange form with circles you have to colour in to rate your course or to comment specifically on content, teaching etc.

I was told ages ago when I went to a conference hosted by Universities Australia that peer-based feedback is the best and most useful feedback for improvement. Essentially it means that your peers (ie. Friends and colleagues) should be the ones giving critical feedback on your work, whether it be creative work, scientific, legal, whatever. That's one of the reasons why the University hands out these forms – the feedback from the students that you teach are going to tell you, very honestly, whether you are a sucky teacher or you are the maddest person in the world.

Now I have to admit I was pretty sceptical that anyone reads these feedback forms.

Someone next to me in a class in 2009 actually wrote in large letters under the final section: "THIS COURSE WAS THE WORST THING I HAVE EVER DONE AND I WANTED TO DIE SEVERAL TIMES EACH LECTURE." It seems we all think no one reads the feedback forms and if they do, they would be offended by some of the stuff they read.

I have news for everyone! (and no, this is not meant to censor what you write on the forms.)

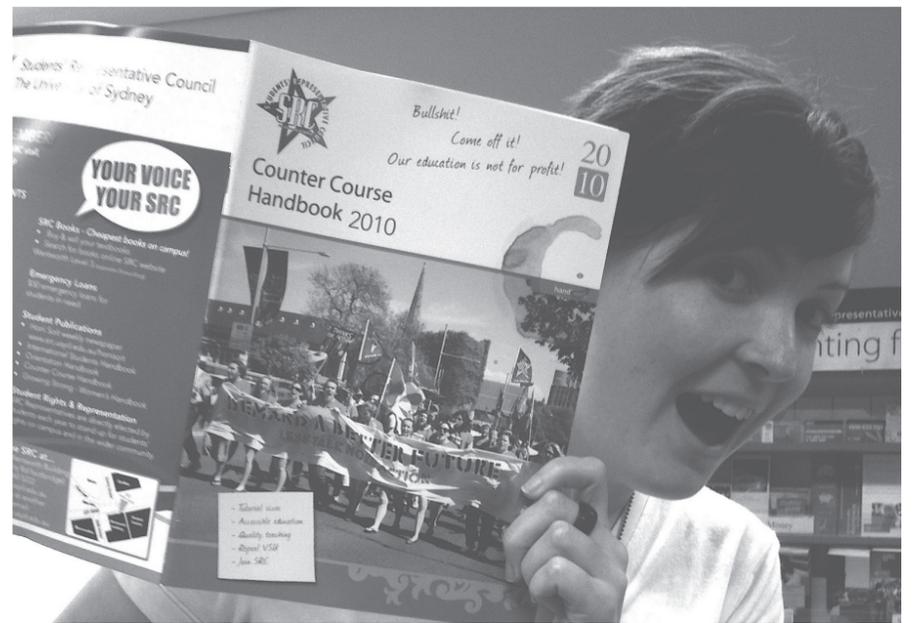
Apparently the university DOES read the feedback forms! There are a whole lot of people employed by the university to READ ALL THESE FORMS. So yes, when you wrote "My tutor was really attractive" SOMEONE HAS ACTUALLY READ THAT. And either laughed at you or thought "Wow these kids are so inappropriate."

Why do they bother reading them?

- A) Our university is actually interested in what you think and cares about your perspective of learning and teaching,
- B) they also wants our lecturers and tutors to be the best in Australia,
- C) How can you improve a unit of study or students' outcomes if you don't know what's wrong?

Sometimes lecturers and tutors have no idea what they're doing wrong unless a bunch of students pull them up for it. This is why the feedback forms are super, super important so I'd encourage you all to use your brain cells and write something CONSTRUCTIVE.

Instead of writing, "You're shit", why don't you explain why you thought the course was so bad? Equally as important, instead of writing "OMG lecture XY is



the BEST AND GREATEST IN THE WORRRRLD" you actually explain why it's so fantastic. People reading through this cannot read your mind, so you have to explain, in clear, concise language, why you think they way you do.

In the same way we as students need timely and constructive feedback so we can improve our work, teachers need that too. It could mean if a new course just hasn't worked that it gets completely restructured for the next semester or year. You could genuinely be helping not just our teachers but helping future students. It's also important to write when things haven't worked eg. Having a 2 hour lecture instead of 2 x 1 hour lectures each week, or the size of the seminar.

The Director of the Institute for Teaching & Learning, Simon Barrie, LOVES student feedback, which is why he's interested in making sure faculties and disciplines respond to the student feedback they receive each semester. There will be a whole lot more done in 2011 as they are specifically setting up a working party to look at improving student feedback and responses to it. I am personally very sad that I won't be President and thus won't be sitting on yet ANOTHER working party, but next year's President will do a fantastic job I'm sure.

One last thing about student feedback – start preparing yourselves for...the SRC COUNTER-COURSE HANDBOOK!

Every year before Semester 2 exams start the SRC sends out a survey to all undergraduate students at the university. The survey is about YOUR experiences studying here in whatever discipline you do. This information is completely confidential, anonymous and is not read by anyone at the university (as the SRC is a completely separate and independent organisation). We use all the data to collate it into the 'Counter-Course Handbook', which will be handed out to you at Enrolments and O-Week in 2011, regardless of whether you're a new student or continuing.

It's a really awesome and very funny publication that is also incredibly useful. So if you want to know what subject complements the major you're planning on doing, or if you need some tips for clinical placements, or ideas about an area you're interested in, make sure you fill out the survey and pick your copy up next year!

Happy feedbacking!

Get involved!

Come along to a collective..

Women's Collective: 1pm Thursdays, Holme Women's Room.

Queer Collective: 2pm Mondays, Queer Space Holme Buildn

Environment Collectives:

Student Enviro Action Collective (SEAC): 1pm Mondays, Botany Lawns

Climate Action Collective: 1pm Mondays, Chancellors Lawns

SRC Honi Soit 'Opinion Competition'

Thank you for entering. We hope you enjoy the top 12 competition entries published in this edition of Honi Soit.

SRC Council Meeting

Tuesday 19th October, 6pm Seminar Rm 405, Eastern Ave
Amendment to regulations on notice,
see www.src.usyd.edu.au for details.



General Secretary's Report

Report of the General Secretary, Donherra Walmsley // gen.sec@src.usyd.edu.au

Now that we finally have a government again, universities can finally move forward with the social inclusion agendum they were working on before the election with the certainty that they will be federally funded. An article in the Sydney Morning Herald on Wednesday outlined one of Sydney University's strategies to address this social inclusion agenda, specifically the lack of low SES students at our university over the coming years.

According to the article, "the University of New England at Armidale will become a feeder institution by taking students from poorer backgrounds, identified as being talented despite recording low year 12 results. After the students successfully complete one year of study at Armidale, they will move to the city to finish their courses at the

University of Sydney."

For me, this approach raises a number of concerns: first of all, how will these "talented" students be identified? This has been an ongoing issue for the University in its attempts to move beyond the ATAR system which inherently disadvantages students from low SES backgrounds. One of the suggestions has been a "principal's recommendation" system, where principals can contact universities to recommend students who may not have performed well in the HSC but who they think would do well at university regardless. Like the ATAR system, this suggestion also has its problems – whilst we might hope that all school principals operated on a completely equal basis, the reality is that favouritism does happen, and the perception of a talented student

in high school is a subjective thing.

The second concern I have with this approach is that it could create (or probably more accurately, exacerbate) a two-tiered system of education, where a Sydney University education is seen as more valuable than a University of New England education. By officially labeling the University of New England as a feeder institution for the University of Sydney, there is a direct implication that UNE is an inferior institution, though the VC claims that this is a move towards cross-institutional "collaborative research framework that would benefit both institutions". Hopefully this will prove to be the case.

While this is potentially a good step towards boosting the number of students from a diversity of locations and socio-economic backgrounds at



Sydney University, the question remains as to whether this is being done for the students' benefit or for the institutions. If Sydney University genuinely wants to improve its numbers of low SES students, it will need to do more than sign an agreement with the University of New England. It will need to provide financial support, affordable housing, and ensure there are adequate services available to help students settle into a new environment, because getting into university is only the first step towards obtaining your degree.

Women's Report

Report by Shara Sekaram, Member of SRC Women's Collective

A couple of months ago, in the bowels of the UTS Students Association, the RTN collective began their fortnightly meetings where a group of women began organising the annual Reclaim the Night rally. This international event is an awareness raising activity about women who suffer in silence due to various forms of abuse and/or negative activity directed at them.

So if you haven't already come for a meeting of the collective and are worried it's too late, fear not! We still have room and would love to see a new face or two chucking ideas around.

Anyway this article is in reference to an interesting conversation that we had during the last collective. Somehow we got on to the subject of being heckled

by men (both at night and in broad daylight) and one of these lovely ladies posed an interesting question that got me thinking. What, she asked, is the best, most effective and appropriate response to give these idiots who make women feel uncomfortable, unsafe and just plain unhappy with their crude whistles, catcalls and jeering?

The initial suggestion was that "F*** OFF" is usually all one has time for if it's a brief encounter and personally I think that in a 10 second span it is a good way to assert yourself. Then the suggestion also arose that a 'good lecture' would also be an option if the time were available. This conversation eventually led to one of us mentioning that all these ideas could only be practiced

in daylight/amongst people as in an isolated area at night, angering these morons could have nasty consequences.

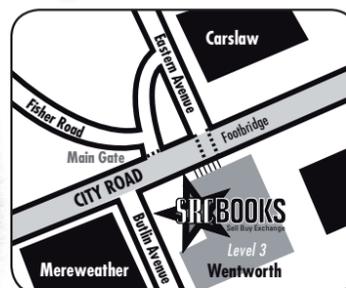
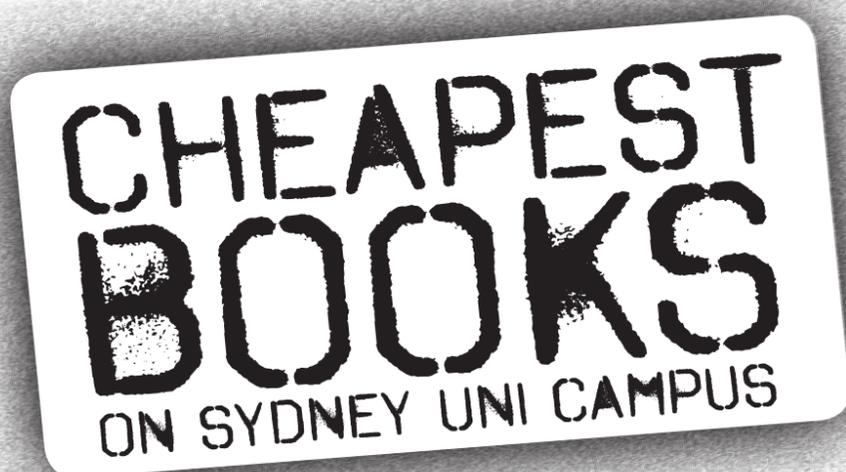
And THAT is what got me thinking. In this day and age, it seems appalling to me that not only do these jerks (man there are plenty of adjectives that I can use here), have the ability to make women feel uncomfortable just by using words, but that we can't even assert ourselves and our right to fight back without severe fear of being put into an extremely dangerous situation. We are forced to remain silent, bow our heads down in submission and are rendered simply unable to even use our voices to assert ourselves out of sheer fear. Not fair. Not fair at all.

Women should have the freedom to walk

the streets at anytime, dressed in any way we are and not have to worry about the fear of 'something awful happening'. We should be able to respond to these dickheads in an appropriate way, after all if they make us feel unhappy, uncomfortable and unsafe, then they should get a taste of their own medicine.

The next **Reclaim the Night Organising Collective** is meeting on: Monday 18th October at 5:30pm, at the UTS Students Association, Level 3 of the UTS Tower

Reclaim the Night itself will be held on Friday October 29th at 6pm, Sydney Town Hall.



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THE HONI SOIT CROSSWORD

ACROSS:

- 2) Bird I heard stepped over the line (4)
- 6) Brutal malignant ulcer (5)
- 7) Amazing! A count bird with a large 24-down (6)
- 8) Peddle bird (4)
- 9) Strange manatees with razor tails are cannibals (3-6)
- 10) Type of 2-Across in a pod, with a spectacular 27-Across (6)
- 12) Headless chicken bird (3)
- 14) Bird directions to a new beginning (4)
- 16) If a brother fades, sadly he'll be with similar people (and a hint to this puzzle's theme) (5,2,1,7)
- 20) Bird jumped off the board (4)
- 21) Bird House: The Musical (3)
- 22) Come out of a female 21-Down, perhaps (6)
- 24) Fiddle-playing Charlie Parker (9)
- 27) Follow a posterior (4)
- 28) Average decomposition of bird (6)
- 29) Though all recognise occultism's tomfoolery, at first, these cards will tell the future (5)
- 30) Grocery lane, they say, is surrounded by water (4)

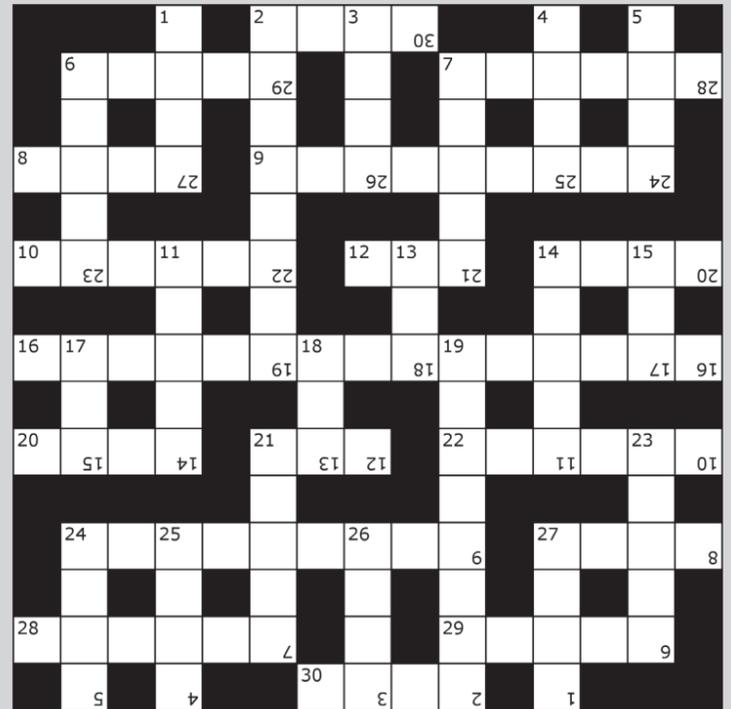
- 15) Speak or respect (3)
- 17) I'd love to say this at our wedding (1,2)
- 18) Half fumble after "Fee-fi-fo"
- 19) Change the text of the end of a fellows date (8)
- 21) Regret doesn't begin bird (5)
- 23) Fast bird (5)
- 24) Cook/Bake an avian nose (4)
- 25) Women or men? Or something many of this puzzle's answers would catch, if they were early (4)
- 26) I bet I still begin bird (5)
- 27) I hear it's your go bird (4)



DOWN:

- 1) Quick get down Bird! (4)
- 2) A burning ring of fire bird (8)
- 3) Architect of St Pauls bird (4)
- 4) A strong fibre for the Angle's and Saxon's early companions (4)
- 5) The weight of a Sunday service (4)
- 6) Bend your neck bird (5)
- 7) First, eat raw leatherjacket, then take the net and out go fishing (5)
- 11) He dodged, without being odd, to sit on the fence (5)
- 13) A newt found inside?! I can't believe it (1.1.1)
- 14) Try as Harry might, he is still a goat-man (5)

- 27) Small slender gull (4)
- 26) Egyptian bird (5)
- 25) Writhe, wriggle (4)
- 24) Avian nose (4)
- 23) Swallow-like bird (5)
- 21) White heron (5)
- 19) Change the text (8)
- 18) "Fee-fi-fo---", giant's words (1,2)
- 17) Albatross (1,2)
- 15) Win off the serve (3)
- 14) Goat-man (5)
- 13) I can't believe it (1.1.1)
- 11) Sit on the fence (5)
- 7) Fish by dragging a net (5)



MARK "MY WORDS" SUTTON

- DOWN:**
- 22) The act of coming out (6)
 - 24) Collecting bird (9)
 - 27) Shadow (4)
 - 28) Repeating bird (6)
 - 29) Fortune-telling cards (5)
 - 30) Small bit of land surrounded by water (4)
 - 1) Web-footed bird (4)
 - 2) Pink bird (8)
 - 3) Small brown bird
 - 4) Strong fibre for making rope, sacks etc (4)
 - 5) Sunday service (4)
 - 6) Tall waterbird (5)

- ACROSS:**
- 2) Poultry (4)
 - 6) Brutal (5)
 - 7) Colour, large beaked bird (6)
 - 8) Bird of prey (4)
 - 9) Cannibals (3-6)
 - 10) Bird with a spectacular 27-Across (6)
 - 12) Barnyard hooter (3)
 - 14) Graceful waterbird (4)
 - 16) Alike things that congregate together (5,2,1,7)
 - 20) Noah's bird (4)
 - 21) Flightless bird (3)

THE TAKE HOME*

1. Which DH Lawrence book was initially banned in Australia?
2. What is an Altocumulus lenticularis?
3. The word 'psephology', describing the statistical study of elections and trends in voting, stems from the Greek for: a) paper b) pebble c) pool.
4. How much is Oprah Winfrey worth?
5. How many unique books are there in the world, according to Google, to the nearest million?
6. How many books has Google scanned for Google Books?
7. What is the fifth largest satellite in the Solar System?
8. Who features on the Australian \$100 note?
9. Which of the following cards does not feature in a tarot pack: The High Priestess, The Necromancer or The Hanged Man?
10. Does the Pacific Ocean cover 10%, 20% or 30% of the world's surface?
11. For how many years in a row has USyd won the Shute Shield?
12. What doesn't the Old Spice guy offer: a) diamonds b) a horse c) tickets to that thing you like.
13. What is the country of origin of modern boxing?
14. What is the country of origin of ancient boxing?
15. In what device would you find a top stop, a pull tab and a retainer box?
16. Which country manufactures 90% of the world's zippers?
17. Is 'locking' in hip-hop: a) dancing b) singing c) fighting?
18. In which century was the Bodleian Library established?
19. Would you like salt or pepper?
20. What does the media classification 'RC' stand for?

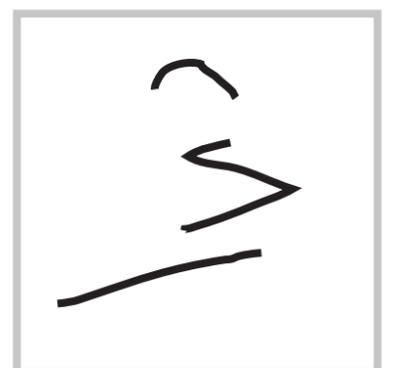
SUDOKU

5		1		4		7		6
	7	2	6	1		4		9
4	6		2		7		8	
	4			9	1		7	
1	8	7	4		2	3		5
		5		8			1	4
6	1		3		8	9		
		8	9	2			4	3
2	9			5		8		7

RATED: Easy as catching the Autumn Fox.*

*In The Springtime.

Mr Squiggle



ANSWERS: 1. Lady Chatterley's Lover 2. A species of cloud 3. Pebble (Gk. psephos) 4. US\$2.7 billion 5. 130 million 6. 12 million 7. The Moon 8. Dame Nellie Melba and Sir John Monash 9. The Necromancer 10. 30% 11. Four 12. A horse (he's just riding it, silly) 13. United Kingdom 14. Greece 15. A zipper (who'd have thunk it!) 16. Japan 17. Dancing 18. Seventeenth (1602) 19. Salt, please 20. Refused Classification



The Garter Press



NO LONGER FULL OF SPIDERS

ISSUE: 10/10/10 WHA?!

EST. Sometime Between The Printing Press and Now

PRICE: One

DIRTY DAM APES
Garter Pun FTW



COMPETITION: GARDEN PLANT OR SEX OFFENDER?
Midnight Creeper? You decide.



WIN A FUCKING CAR!
It'll Fuck You Good!



AUSTRALIA DOING WELL AT THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES, WE ASSUME.

NO ONE KNOWS THE LYRICS TO "KISS BY A ROSE"

DERRECK PANTS
Sports Reporter/Hall Monitor

The Commonwealth Games are upon us once again, and the entire nation is gripped in anxiety and buzzing with pride - albeit for their own personal reasons, separate from the Commonwealth Games.

If you turn on any television in the country, then change the channel, there our proud athletes are, running, jumping, swimming or bowling (check this) their way to victory and while literally dozens of spectators watch on from the stadiums in India, somewhere.

Australia holds a proud tradition at the Commonwealth Games, probably, and this year will be no exception, we presume.

Even our Prime Minister herself is suffering from Commonwealth Games Fever, so enthralled with the event that she's been unable to mention it in any public speeches or press releases.

Year 10 of Wenora High celebrated the Commonwealth Games in their own way, holding distances of 100m, 200m and 400m at their annual athletics carnival, which sources may have confirmed are the same distances being run or swum or flown or whatever they do at the Games themselves.

The Garter promises that if you continue to buy our exclusive coverage



1 Her Majesty graciously accepts the bronze medal in the 400m Queening event.

2 dogonaskateboard.tiff.

3 Olympic diver Grant Nel remembers he left the oven on at a crucial moment.

4 Participants in the 3000m Being Chased by People Dressed as Flames Whilst Yourself Being Dressed as a Tree

of the games, you can read about such fantastical events as Derigable Rodeo, Chase that Fox, Orange Stuffing 100m, Orange Stuffing 200m, Make a Stiff

Gin-and-Tonic for the Queen, Javelin-in-Mouthy-Ow-Ow and Quickly Stop Writing Just Abooooooout Now.

GERRY BUTTERFACE
Reporter/Spy/Wait, not a spy. Yes, that works.

A report released Thursday has indicated that, despite its popularity, nobody actually knows the lyrics to "Kiss By A Rose" by Seal.

Studies conducted at 1:35 am at parties all around the world have conclusively demonstrated that the passion and energy devoted to the singing of the hit pop song are directly correlated with the lack of knowledge of the lyrics.

"Studies have shown that the relationship is actually inversely proportional," said scientist and Seal enthusiast Jarred Baker. "It seems the volume with which party guests scream the word 'baby' and the title line 'kiss from a rose' is greater the less they know any other lines."

A search for lyrics to "Kiss By A Rose" on popular search engine Google delivers only one result, a link to a Snopes.com article confirming that the lyrics never actually existed.

All the same, the popularity of Seal's hit has allowed it to reach the heights of songs whose lyrics everyone definitely knows, such as "Smells Like Teen Spirit" by Nirvana, "One Week" by The Barenaked Ladies and "Angel" by Shaggy.

Singer Seal was indignant when asked to comment on his own understanding of the lyrics, calling the question itself insulting as "Kicking the Rose" was his biggest hit.

"Would you like to buy a piece of nostalgic, whimsical fuckery?"

Featured Advertisement

So I see you're on a long weekend holiday in our friendly little coastal town. It looks like you're having a great time, but I'm sure you'd love to be able take something away with you to share with your friends or have as a memento of your time here. As the premier local artisan and owner of the town's Art & Gift Shop, I welcome you to my store with open arms and shall leave you undisturbed to peruse some of the right, royal bullshit that I'm currently flogging to moron tourist types like you. We've got:



Wind Chimes! Even the gentlest of midsummer zephyrs will make them issue the noise of a dying giraffe.

'Authentic' 'Tribal' 'Necklaces'!

Hanging Fish Ornament! Made from shells clagged to piece of wood. You saw it here first!

Snowdome depicting Shelley Beach in full blizzard!

Ceramic dog-shaped doorstep! Excuse to bring up your holiday to every visitor, rain, hail or no visitor, in order of ascending frequency over time.

Shark Tooth Necklace! Comes with brochure on local endangered species. Shark still attached. More a piece of fishing wire eaten by ancient beast of the deep.

Watercolour Frog Painting! Eyes follow you round the room, and out of the room too. So accurate it may have been printed.

Teatowels with Indigenous dot designs! Powerfully inauthentic and will be made illegal if the bill makes it through the Upper House later this week.

Ceramic house number tile, with numbers made from sailing ropes! Plus you'll have to move to #17!

Mosaic in the shape of a Shelley Island sunset! Smells like the toilet! Dropped and smashed into a million shards when renovating.

Piece of wood carved into the shape of nearby Shelley Island reading "Welcome to Shelley Island". Smoothed, varnished, diseased also.

Koala-Shaped Ashtray! Also a taxidermied koala with conveniently outstretched paw for free.

Stubby Holder saying "I Survived Shelley Beach!" On other side "but am now a shade of a human being".

Necklace featuring a piece of the Ol! Puffing Frankie, the town's retired steam train! It was never late! Wait! It's not retired! And it's 9:59am! Take it off! Take it off!



Comment



Yes I *am* the motherfucking peacock. The most pleasant pheasant present and voted most likely to succeed in blowing your fucking mind by the entire class of nineteen-

ninety-go-fuck-yourself.

That's right, I have spent millions of years evolving until I had the perfect mechanism to show you how fucking great

I am – so you can take your opposable thumbs and shove them up your colourless, unimpressive arse, monkey boy.

I'm the stealth bomber of beauty. I go from Ugly Duckling to fucking Swan in under 1 second. You're all like, "Hey look honey, what do we have here? It looks like a chicken after a round of paintball. How quaint! Let me just go over and pat it gently on the -" KABLAMO! "Holy shit, it's actually the most impressive thing I've ever seen. I stand entirely corrected! What's that, you want a divorce?" Yeah, don't try compete with a fucking peacock, chump.

I'm sorry, say that again? You

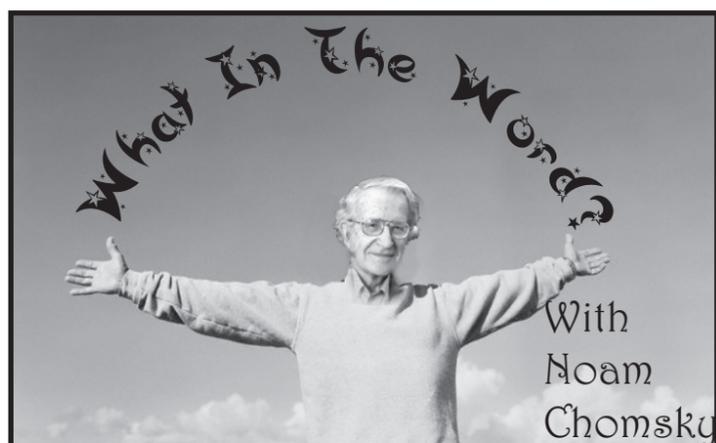
wanna say I'm preening? You wanna say I'm vain? Well you go right ahead there, Carly Simon, but next time you're trying to pick up a date with a knock knock joke, remember me and my sweet fucking plumage, increasing both my size and chance of getting some awesome peapussy by over ten times. Think about that, when you're catching the nightride home. Alone. Shiiiiit.

Cause I'm the MVP of the animal kingdom, God's very own fuck you to mediocrity. I am part of the checks and balances holding the universe together. I am the antidote to the pigeon, the rainbow after the fucking rain that is

the parasitic wasp, I justify the majority of snakes. I'm a shining beacon for every animal, showing them what happens when God's on a roll – I hear he created waterfalls right before me, then came up with the orgasm shortly after.

So fucking what? I'm gorgeous. Agreed. But don't you go thinking that I am the avian answer to Liberace either. I got talons, bitch. I got spurs on my forlax and if you wanna feel the sweet sting of being talon-slapped by the world's most beautiful creature, then I suggest you go right ahead and get in my fucking way.

Peacock Out.



A Note From Maisy

This week is a very exciting week in the world of the Wonderful World of Words! Because this week, I received an electronic gmail from a very dear college of mine! It seems that the wonderful readers of *The Garter Press*, *Pet Psychic Monthly* and *Dogs, Dogs, Dogs* are not the only readers of my fine words!

No, this week I was chuffed to receive an apostle (clever word for letter, don't you know!) from the one and only Noam Chomsky. Mr Dr Chomsky (Prof.) is one of the cleverest linguists around, and has written for many, many books (including a few of his own books!).

So if you don't mind, Maisy is going to take the week off and let the Rev Chimpsky do her work for her! But I'll see you all next week in this

our Wonderful word world!

I am often asked to contribute to newsprint on matters concerning language, foreign policy and political discourse. I must confess that these requests, at my age and at this stage of my career are still, embarrassingly enough, rather flattering.

More than this, it is always a pleasure to be a part of the lively debates that seem to wage on in newspapers about the use of language, as opposed to the frankly staid and drawn out arguments which appear in academic journals and anthologies.

This notwithstanding, I am unable to contribute to *The Garter*

Press on the grounds that doing so would not only lessen my credibility personally, but also cheapen the currency of the very words I chose to use to express any kind of meaningful thought.

I had not read your paper or the column in question until a college of mine mailed me some clippings he assumed would amuse me. Let me say that they did not.

The way that Ms Snuffington's column (variously titled: What in the Word, What in teh Worde ([Sic?!]), Some Wonderous Words About Words, Wordy Word Word Word and most inexplicably, 'Cat Massage') deals with human discourse, leads me to believe that she is either an evil genius hell bent on the destruction of language as a whole, or an iguana with access to keyboard.

I would like to take this opportunity to clear up some things for Ms Snuffington. In no particular order:

1. There is no 'word so bad that if you say it your mouth explodes'.
2. I can assure you that verbs have always been important to the structure of sentences.
3. Geese can't talk any better than ducks. Neither animal can talk.
4. 'Europe' is not a language.
5. I did not write, star in or direct

The Princess Bride, the people you are thinking of are William Goldman, Billy Crystal and Rob Reiner respectively.

6. While French is certainly an old language, it is not older than the sun, even if (as you assert) the sun were only 2000 years old.

7. When authors are writing books, there is no need for them to 'buy vowels'. This is not why the words Myth, Hymn and Rhyme have no vowels. Also, Rhyme has a vowel, it's the 'e'.

8. 'e' is a vowel.

9. As far as I am aware, Lesbians do not lack the ability to speak Spanish. I am still unsure if this misconception stems from racism, homophobia or both.

10. Fuckcabinet is not a compound word. The correct composition is hyphenated.

For these reasons and many more which you can find chronicled in my upcoming book 'Manufacturing An Unmitigated Torrent of Bullshit', it is my professional opinion that Maisy Snuffington be fired immediately from her position as 'Chef (again, you must have meant Chief?!)' Words Correspondent for Words' and stripped of any qualifications she may claim to possess.

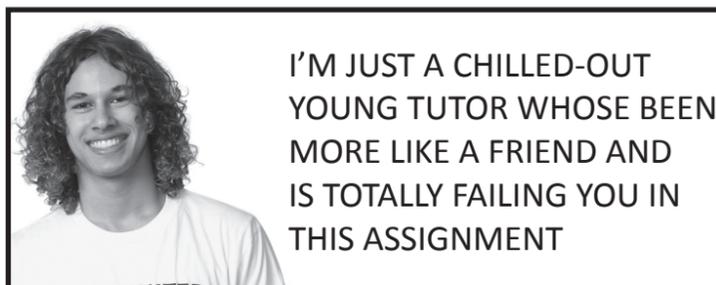
You may publish this letter if you chose, although I would obviously

advise strongly against it for the sake of the woman's feelings and the repute of your paper.

Regards,

Noam Chomsky.

[Dolores. While there doesn't seem much need to say it – this correspondence will not go to print. I will inform Ms Snuffington personally of her termination. While it would be ideal to wait until after her birthday celebrations this afternoon, this is a matter I feel needs to be nipped in the bud. Please amend my birthday speech to reflect these changes. It also would be prudent to change the message on her cake from 'Maisy, it's your birthday' to 'Maisy, it's your being-made-redundant-day'. Actually, just throw the cake out (the bin next to her desk is the only one available. (Pls remind her that today is Rubbish Day)). Also, have you gotten her a present? Can I get in on that? Ed.]



Hey, guys.

So, I've marked all your assignments and I know you're all keen to get your hands on them! I'm sorry it took me so long to get them back to you. I had to squeeze in marking the last couple around the music festival I went to on the weekend where I saw many of you! Oh, and to those of you I saw intoxicated and vomiting, rest

assured your secret's safe with me! However, I have factored that behaviour I witnessed from many of you into your final grades.

It's getting to the end of the year now, so you've all had a lot of practice writing numerous essays – even though they're totally lame and boring! But seriously, I was thoroughly disappointed by the standard of the work I read.

Now, I trust you guys and I know you'd never cheat. Even though 'The Man' says we have to 'reference' any source we use in our work I'm going to believe none of you would intentionally plagiarise. However, the fact that half of you still aren't using the correct style of MLA referencing means I've been forced to deduct most of your marks and blacklist you from pursuing Honours.

I hope you all feel like you can come and get some hardcore feedback from me about your work, should you wanna learn how to 'pimp your essays more hardcore' as we young folks say. That said, I'm not going to give you a higher mark so don't ask. In fact I'm probably inclined to take marks off you and hold

a personal vendetta against you for the remainder of the semester for your questioning my judgment.

You all know I'm really free and easy about meeting up with you guys but if you try and speak to my outside of my rigid and inconvenient consultation hours then I'll have the University investigate you for harassment. That said, part of being a young and chilled out tutor is having a relaxed open-door policy, but if you close the door behind you when you join me in my office, I'll assume you're intending to sexually assault me and I'll be forced to press charges.

Exams are just a few weeks away and I know from experience how annoying it is to have to

slump all the way in to campus just to sit some silly test when a take-home exam would be way more cool. However, if you're more than 30 seconds late the examination supervisors have been instructed to bar you from entering, take down your details and make sure you can never sit a tertiary examination or take out a bank loan in this country again.

I was thinking we could have a party in the last week of semester. Bring in some lollies and soft drinks, and sit on some beanbags and just reflect on how we've all evolved and in this class and the good fun we've all had. Attendance will be compulsory.



CLASSIFIEDS

HELLO. My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die.

ANNOUNCING the invention of a device which will redefine the very term "Infant Booster Seat" - The term "tragic deadly explosion" will keep its definition.

FOR SALE

HELLO. My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. I would like to buy your fish tank. ph. 9347 4297

SALT. Ideal for zesting up your chips. Able to be purchased by the kilogram or the full wifeload. Call Lot (+61438438832).

A BAG of pants. Buy your pants by the bagload and never be pantsless again. 9438 4838

OCCAM's Razor Scooter. There is literally no joke to go with this that's funnier than the title. Just imagine it, William of Ockham, zipping about on an outdated fad from the 90's. Priceless. What's next? Honestly. 9822 2888

JACOB's step ladder. Get closer to God/Things on Shelves.

PACHABEL'S Cannon Camera. Ideal for wedding photography.

DAVID Marr's Bar. Ok That's it, we're done.

SPOOKY BOOK So spooky it ghost written by an actual ghost. So spooky you'll need to read it with your spectre-cles. So spooky it's not a book at all but a SKELETON! No offers please. Ph. withheld

INSULTING ant. Will call you a knob then lift something

10 times its weight. That cuts real deep. Just take the little bastard. 9493 4300

BOX O' MYSTERY. What's in the box? Is it rubies? It could be rubies but is not... Could it be a box of stamps? Rare stamps perhaps? No. It's not rare stamps. Well how about gold? There is no gold in this box of burnt hair. Only by purchasing this box will you uncover the secrets within! 0438 438 882

WANTED

COP who is also a Robot. Will supply catchy name "AutomatedLawEnforcementOfficer" Sent at 10:00 PM on Sunday. ph. 9488 2311

A WORM, but not attached to a hook and a bit of line like last time. That smarts. Contact A Fish. (afish@ozemail.com)

AN ALARM CLOCK that will wake me up to the sound of Morgan Freeman saying "Rise and Shine Paul, it's time for another great day". Will accept no variation on this. Five dollars if you're lucky.

PERSONALS

HEY, It's Jack. We met at Phil's party Saturday? Just wondering if you wanted to hang out some time. Give me a yell!

HEY, It's Jack again. I forgot to mention I'm free all week. So, yeah, whenever you get this, let me know. Talk to you soon!

HEY. Me again, hah. Couldn't help but notice that you haven't replied yet. It's probably just your phone messing up or something. We had fun, didn't we? Okay, talk to you soon I hope!

IT'S Jack. Listen, I don't need you. I'm a great guy. You'd be

lucky to have me! I deserve better than this. Go to hell.

YOU'RE pathetic! Who the hell do you think you are!? I don't even care that you haven't called. I'm better off. Enjoying being alone! I'm going to be out enjoying life, without you. Jack Out.

HEEEY. Jack again. I just found out that Newspaper classifieds aren't transmitted instantly.. so yeah.. uh.. That stuff before, that was just my funny funny joke, hahaha! Um.. so, if you still want that coffee just give me a yell. Please call me.

LOOKING for a wife. Must be reliable, GSOH and unable to look back at inappropriate times. Women with their head in a neckbrace would suit. Pillars of Salt need not apply. Call Lot. +61438438832

DEATHS

THE MUSIC. Last seen boarding a plane with Buddy Holly.

HELLO. My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. My aunty passed away on the weekend, although I'm pretty sure you had nothing to do with that. Unless of course it was you who sabotaged her moped. It which case, prepare to die. Otherwise, send no flowers please (or prepare to die).

BIRTHS

ME. I would like to announce my own birth here in your fine newspaper. Son to Mary and Phillip Hughes and brand new brother to Jennifer. Unfortunately I cannot announce any of these things as I am a baby. Please accept my shitting myself and falling asleep as an

alternative.
Timothy Hughes (Baby)

LOST

KEY to Cell 53 Block D. If found please return to John Stabby, Cell 53 Block D

ALL THE BEES. Now I have no honey and all my delicate eco-systems are collapsing.

MY BLOODY phone. Could someone call it? I really hope I didn't leave it in the cab. God, that would be the worst. All my numbers are in their, not to mention all those pictures of my dick. Oh shit - wait! Never mind, it was in my hand the whole time. It was what I was using to call you. Never mind! I'll cancel the ad thanks.

COURSES AND PRIVATE TUITION

LEARN to never play the accordion. I can teach you how. I've been avoiding playing the accordion for over 20 years, at some of the country's finest accordion schools and once at the Opera House during a production of La Boheme.

WANT to learn to Wakeboard? I'll bet you would, you little pussy. Well it takes a pretty hard man to get on my boat. Are you ready to strap your self in for the most extreme ride of your life? You set to get more babes than you can handle? You ready to get so much air that you can literally punch God in the dick? You are? Oh. I see. Well, let's erm... get going... Oh, I just remembered that my boat is in the shop... the boat shop. And my knee. Ouch, yeah there goes my knee. I hurt it in an accident. A sex accident. Thanks all the same.
Roger.

COLUMN∞

"Just to clear up last week's 'ball bearings' palaver," writes Simon Montague, East Ingleburn, "thankfully no one raised 'bear's ballings'! Or 'bare ballings'! Or 'brass bastlings'! Or brigleston backa ... [unfortunately for space considerations we could not include the next five pages of Mr Montague's note. We resume from the back page] ... Or bzzzzzz-KAH bronx8RstixRRAAAAGH-HHH"! I hope this is of interest and assistance. Yours, Mr Montague." Well Mr Montague. You really have cleared up that one. We're exhausted.

"I was reminded of Coleridge earlier this week whilst shopping for cheese", intriguingly writes Margery Stinton, North West Wollstonecraft, "In Xanadu did Kubla Khan/A stately pleasure dome decree/where Alf the sacred river ran/through caverns measureless to man/CHEESE." We never noticed that, Margery!

Cristal Chevers says she's sick and tired of oranges that aren't orange, peaches that aren't peach, and pineapples that just are simply not pineapples. As Buddha would have told us, Cristal, 'life is suffering'!

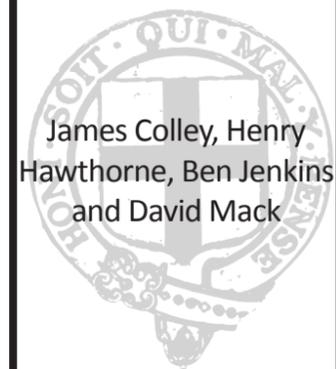
We're astonished to announce that Ol' Bill Withergaze Mc-Crinklecut has somehow got his typewriter back, so has renewed his onslaught of limericks, quel relief!

#782:

There was once was a woman
from Clack Shore
Who went on holidays in a
Rickshaw
She left as a McNarry
Decided to marry
And soon returned a Feather-
stoneshaugh [psst it's pro-
nounced 'Fan Shaw', as in
rhymes with 'Rickshaw']

Send your submissions to Column∞:
nomoreanthraxplz@garter.com

If the following people would like
their frisbees back:



maybe they shouldn't have
thrown it on our fucking roof.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY MAISY!
With love from all of us at
The Garter!

Dolores, given our earlier conversation re: M.Snuffington's future employment, it would be prudent to remove this notice. - Ed



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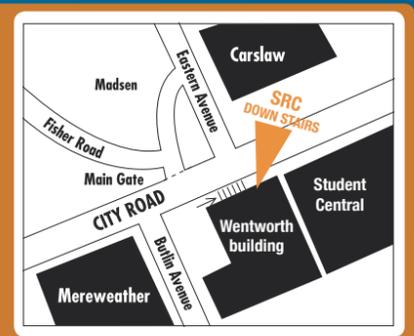
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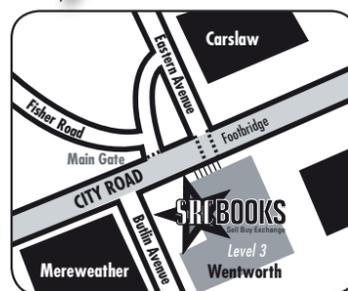
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