

# ACAR HONI



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We, the Autonomous Collective Against Racism, would like to acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, upon whose stolen land the University of Sydney is built. It is a privilege to learn and gather on Aboriginal land.

The Gadigal people are the traditional custodians and caretakers of this land, but to fully express the complex and spiritual relationship Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people share with their sacred lands is nearly impossible.

We acknowledge that Gadigal people and those of the greater Eora nation were the first to suffer, resist and survive the brutalities of white supremacy and racism in Australia. The centuries long resistance of Australia's Indigenous communities endure while non-Indigenous Australians continue to benefit from the colonisation of sovereign Indigenous land.

We acknowledge the atrocities of the Stolen Generations: the untold destruction it inflicted on Indigenous families through forced child removal, the

identity struggles it gave rise to, the ongoing kidnapping of Indigenous children and calculated attempts to dismantle their families which continue today, with more children than ever being taken away by the colonial Australian government. With bi-partisan support, the white Australian government's legacy of disregard towards Indigenous people, land and culture continues.

We acknowledge the struggles of Indigenous women, who face the highest rates of sexual assault and domestic violence in the country, and Indigenous men, who experience the highest rates of incarceration and suicide in this country. We stand with our non-binary Indigenous family and acknowledge that Indigenous people held a progressive stance on gender and sexuality that was first suppressed by conservative settlers and their repressive laws.

We offer our deepest respect to Indigenous leaders throughout history, who fought to defend their land, culture and people. We pay our respects to the brave warriors of the Frontier Wars who are contin-

ually forgotten in Australia's war histories, to the scores killed by foreign disease, to every Indigenous child, adult and elder who has died at the hands of white supremacy and to all those who continue to live in the face of it.

As non-Indigenous people of colour, migrants and beneficiaries of occupied Indigenous land, it is so deeply important that we acknowledge our participation in colonialism. Without introspection about how we are complicit in settler-colonialism, we cannot have a truly anti-racist movement, and without interrogating our own privilege as non-Indigenous people, there can be no genuine sense of anti-racist solidarity. We must honour the Indigenous activist history that has come before us, and the movements that continue to fight against racial injustices, and centre Indigenous voices and experiences in all that we do.

**Indigenous sovereignty was never ceded.**

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## Editorial

by Radha Wahyuwidayat

These days, individuality is more coveted than ever. Each of us is deeply invested in our unique past, our singular destiny. The urge to resist being subsumed under something larger than ourselves - a category, ideology, or group identity - is strong. I see it acted out amongst my peers, and I often feel it myself.

In my own family, I have watched myself play the role of dutiful daughter, granddaughter or niece, the outlines of my personality being erased in the process. Sometimes I have resisted this. However, it is in these moments that I have also felt the most human. When caring for family members, I have been able to momentarily forget myself and remember what it is to feel a sense of duty to someone else.

As migrants in Australia, many of us are without communities. It is easy to feel that we have nothing in common except some shared experiences, imposed on us by the dominant culture. The stories in this edition show that when we say 'I', we unknowingly mean 'we'. In the origins of our names, in the images we consume in art, in the family members we have lost or found, in our dreams - both literal and metaphorical - and even in our DNA, we are reminded that our individual stories belong not just to ourselves. They belong to many others, known and unknown to us.

To say there is strength in unity is not to say we are the same. It is to recognise the solace we can find in these shared pasts, and entwined destinies.

## Who are we?

Autonomous Collective Against Racism (ACAR)

Run by: Students' Representative Council  
Ethnocultural Officers Sophia Chung, Radha Wahyuwidayat and Madeleine Ward

We are an SRC based collective for students who come from a minority ethnocultural background, who identify as a 'person of colour', Indigenous and/or Torres Strait Islander, or as being marked or marginalised by white supremacy.

We aim to foster a community for students of colour on campus to share in their experiences of race, racism and white supremacy. We aim to raise awareness about racism and its manifestations on and off campus through a variety of projects and initiatives organised and managed by members of the collective. We organise contingents to rallies, and social events throughout the year.

Come along to one of our weekly meetings this semester on Thursdays at 1pm in the Ethnocultural Space on Level 2 of Manning House.

We're currently organising a cookbook, an Ethnocultural Ball and a campaign to raise awareness about the curriculum and whiteness. We've had a great time editing this edition of ACAR *Honi* and we hope you enjoy it!

If you'd like to get involved, like us on Facebook at **Sydney Uni Autonomous Collective Against Racism**. If you'd like to join the autonomous, private Facebook group, please message us on Facebook.

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### Apology and Correction

On last week's SRC Reports page, Honi Soit's usual editors printed that the Wom\*n's Officers, Vice Presidents, General Secretaries, and Disabilities and Carers Officers were due to give a report but had not submitted their reports to Honi. This was incorrect; the officers who were due to give reports were in fact the Environment, International Students, Education, and Sexual Harassment Officers. Honi's editing team would like to extend an apology to the SRC officers who were wrongly named as not having submitted a report in last week's paper.

# Cultural Competency: One Year On

MILLIE ROBERTS takes a second look at the uni's diversity module

The National Centre for Cultural Competence launched voluntary modules to start a conversation about diversity and multiculturalism at the University of Sydney, in July 2016. With the one-year anniversary around the corner, the \$5.6 million project has not been without its fair share of praises and criticisms.

The multimedia program introduces awareness and coexistence of cultural difference at both an individual and community level. It is composed of reflection questions, compulsory videos and theoretical discourse.

While originally designed for staff, students have been able to access the material through Blackboard since March this year. Four modules are currently available, with a fifth set to be released in the near future.

Recent statistics suggest that 900 University employees and over 100 students have enrolled in the modules.

Various departments at the School of Public Health and the Nursing incorporate the NCCC's content in their classes. Similarly, service learning program students are encouraged to complete the modules before working with rural communities.

"We really saw the need to have something that was accessible to staff and students to provide people with the space to learn and think about cultural competence," Rachael Simons, Associate Lecturer at the NCCC, said.

"Hopefully the modules are beneficial not only to people who are thinking in open-minded ways but also to people who might require more capabilities to develop their thinking," Si-

mons said.

The modules are only compulsory for new staff members, both academic and professional. However, discussions are underway to transform the program into zero- or two-credit subjects, so that completion is recognised on students' academic transcripts.

When asked about the response to the online courses, the NCCC claimed that the feedback has been widely positive. They cited a few technical complaints that have since been resolved.

However, an ex-NCCC staff member who wishes to remain anonymous, sees the modules as far from perfect.

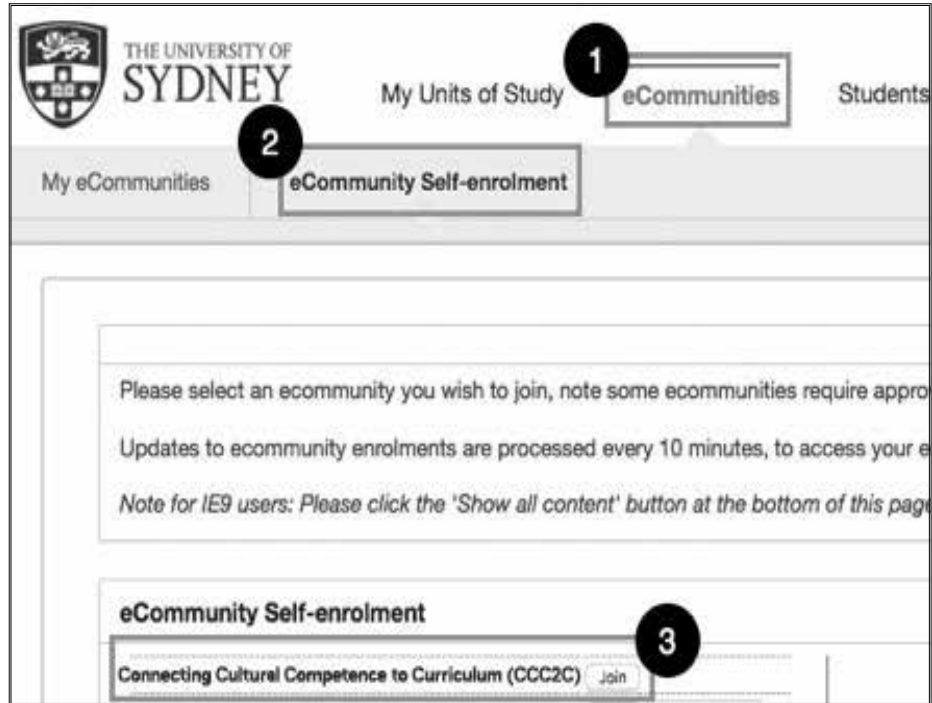
"Cultural competence is a really good buzzword. It assumes you can arrive at a point where you don't need to know any more, you've got enough in your account to be able to interact with different people."

"It's assuming you can tick all these boxes and learn all these things and then everything is fine," the source said.

At the moment, the cultural competence modules are self-sufficient and have no complementary actions to involve members of the University community at a physical or practical level.

"The cultural competency modules seem like a largely shallow solution to a problem that needs a complex one," Maddy Ward, Office Bearer for the Autonomous Collective Against Racism, said.

"It neglects to probe its participants any deeper than a little self reflection,



and the trial I took part in had content that largely pandered to white liberals," Ward said.

There is no way to track the suggestions of participants, as all personal responses are confidential and are not saved after the site is left.

"It needs to be coupled with other things: focus groups where people can come together with well-trained people moderating so groups can reflect and respond. The outcomes could then be taken to people in decision-making roles and people in power. It should be a multipronged, multidimensional process," the anonymous source suggested.

The University of Sydney is one of the first tertiary education institutions to put cultural competence on the radar at such a mass scale. As a core aspect in the 2016-2020 strategy, the University recognises cultural competency as a significant and necessary part of our ethos.

It is a quality that both the NCCC and the University at large believe

should be aimed for by all staff and students. Thus, their audience is targeted equally to cater for all the possible demographics who may participate in the program.

"It's a universal approach. The whole vision behind the modules is to appeal to a corporate University. It's cost-effective, easy, appealing to the most common denominator. The assumptions behind it are that everyone has to be trained in the same way. There's no pressure on the institution to self-reflect, transform and grow", the ex-NCCC staff member said.

The interactive modules are a progressive first step in opening a can of worms that posit the respondent's own background within the wider University ecosystem. They give an opportunity for users to make sense of contentious issues such as religion and racism, while also looking at acceptance, understanding and tolerance.

But the NCCC's cultural competency modules leave too much space for unexplored potential.

## #FreeSaeed

BRIDGET HARILAOU recounts the campaign to stop an innocent man's deportation

"Traitors against Australia!"

The 6 foot white man ran across the yard as I tried to escape, his hand felt like a punch as it grasped me.

"I'm gonna tell all the websites and get them to spit on you!"

At Bass Hill, the policeman brushed me off.

"He called first. If you file a report, I'll arrest you, throw you in the docker and charge you with assault."

\*\*\*

This assault and the police's response form the backdrop of deportations unfolding across the Western world. Governments in rich, white majority countries are turning to the assertion of borders and rejection of people of colour as 'foreign aliens'. Australia's hypocrisy as a country built on the invasion of Indigenous land, is drowned out by cries of terrorism, and deportations are continually used to reinforce white nationhood.

On 24th March, Melbourne refugee allies picketing MITA detention centre alerted Sydney activists that an asylum seeker known as 'Saeed' was awaiting imminent deportation at Villawood Immigration Detention Centre. As a member of a persecuted minority, Saeed faces violence in his country of origin. He fled with his brother to seek asylum in Australia, but his claim was denied, while his brother's almost identical application was approved.

The reason for the rejection? An administrative technicality. His appeals for a review were also denied, because if the government was to fairly review his case, he would be granted asylum just like his brother. Instead, the system tows a biased ideological line about 'process', founded on the rejection of people of colour.

I, along with a large group of refugee supporters, mobilised to block Saeed's unjust deportation from Villawood. The protest was able to successfully stop the de-

portation and Saeed remains in detention. We maintained a 24-hour presence at the gates of Villawood for 3 weeks, with help from students, Love Makes A Way, Mums-4Refugees, the Young Greens and other left-wing groups in Sydney. From this, a group called 'Free Saeed, Close the Concentration Camps' was created.

On April 11th we called for a National Day of Action. Activists chained themselves in front of Malcolm Turnbull's office, and occupied Peter Dutton's office and the Melbourne Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP). The #FreeSaeed hashtag took off, and a petition to Qantas and Emirates to stop Saeed's deportation gained over 22,000 signatures. But where do we go from here?

With Saeed's deportation no longer scheduled, the urgency to protect him has petered out. While Saeed is still very much in danger, the DIBP have engaged in a war of attrition to reduce pressure and media

attention. This tactic can only be combatted with increased action by refugee allies. As long as the DIBP and Dutton escape scrutiny, deportations will continue.

Asylum seekers have fled persecution and violence. They deserve protection, not further traumatising. If you believe asylum seekers should be free from our government's torturous policies, ask yourself, are you succumbing to Dutton's war of attrition? Is the drawn out lack of response allowing you to disengage? Or are you trying to get as many people as possible on the right side of history?

You can message the Free Saeed, Close the Concentration Camps Facebook page or email us at [freesaeedclosethecamps@gmail.com](mailto:freesaeedclosethecamps@gmail.com). There are a variety of strategies we can use, from creative actions to awareness campaigns, to fight against deportations and the reinforcement of white Australian nationhood. The time is now.

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# LOCAL DARLINGS

**TANYA ALI** chats to FROYO about making music in a very white industry, and growing up as music-loving Asians in Australia

Sydney band FROYO might just have one of the coolest – and quaintest – band origin stories ever. In 2012, vocalist and keyboardist Michael Chow was studying a Bachelor of Music at the Australian Institute of Music. For an assignment, he was tasked with establishing an online presence to showcase his music. He decided to make a “fake artist”, creating all the relevant profiles: triple j Unearthed, Soundcloud, the works.

Then it came time to name the fabricated artist. “I wanted to have ‘afro’ in there,” says Michael, who sports an impressive afro himself. “But I couldn’t think, I decided I’d just think about it later.” ‘FROYO’ became the stand-in name on his many profiles.

His work earned him not only a sweet HD, but also an offer to play at Oxford Art Factory in Darlinghurst. “I was like, ‘Wait, this isn’t a real band! Why didn’t I think of a better name... no-one’s going to be able to Google this!’” he says.

Thanks to this happy accident, FROYO have been playing gigs ever since. I am sitting at Golden Fang Chinese restaurant, right at the edge of City Road, with three of FROYO’s four members: Sonia Singh (guitar, vocals), Allyson Montenegro (vocals, pads, guitar), and Michael Chow (vocals, keyboard). The fourth, absent member of FROYO is Tom Brett.

“We call Tom our token white guy,” Michael laughs. “He’s been a really good friend for ages, so we asked him to play drums. He just, you know, turns up and he’s like super professional, does everything to a tee.”

Despite the palpable whiteness of the music industry – and even more so, the lack of diversity within the 80s synth-pop genre that FROYO inhabit – Sonia notes that they haven’t experienced any straight-up racism as a band. “Everyone we’ve dealt with

had the perfect life, back there,” she says. Her mum plays guitar, so she was exposed to music from an early age. “I picked up guitar, then drums, and all throughout high school I was super into music, so that’s why I decided to study it.”

Born and raised in Townsville, Queensland, Sonia grew up surrounded by white people. “You get white-washed. People make you feel ashamed of your own culture; I was embarrassed to be Indian. I just accepted what Australia was and I didn’t feel any relation to [her heritage]. My parents just adapted as well, they became kind of Western.”

Sonia says she didn’t have so much of a musical background when she was young. “But I religiously watched Video Hits and Rage and listened to the radio a lot – I had an intense love of pop music. Then when I was 14, in high school, I picked up guitar and started writing music.”

Michael grew up in Papua New Guinea, and came to Sydney to finish high school. “In New South Wales, there’s no real Papua New Guinean community the way there is in Queensland. I don’t have many people here that I can speak the same language to, you know what I mean? I do like the safety here though, versus home.”

Though he grew up listening to mostly reggae, it wasn’t until he listened to Coldplay that he became inspired to learn the piano. “Coming to Australia, I wasn’t sure what I was doing so I went to music uni – like anyone else who didn’t know what

they’re doing,” Michael jokes. “Then at uni, I noticed everyone was taking it really seriously, so I thought I should, too.”

Moving to Sydney as a teenager, Michael found it difficult to adapt. “English is my first language – but because I had a different accent at the time, and because I had a different colour, it meant that people would assume that I couldn’t speak English that well.” A particular moment he recalls vividly is when somebody yelled at him to “speak English”. “I was speaking English. It just didn’t sound like bogan English, it didn’t sound like Australian English,” says Michael. He sums up the experience of growing up in Australia as a person of colour pretty succinctly: “Basically, if you’re different, people are going to point it out. And not always in a pleasant way.”

It’s a sentiment we can all agree with, one that we’ve unfortunately all experienced in some way. Perhaps that’s why it feels especially inspiring to witness this rising, talented band in a genre that so sorely needs colour. When I first saw a photo of FROYO, my immediate reaction was that this is what a Sydney band should look like. Right now, it seems revolutionary to see a band full of rad Asian-Australians, with an equal female-male ratio to boot – but representation is only going to grow. Watching an act like FROYO take the Sydney music scene by storm, you can’t help but feel a little more optimistic about pop music in Australia.

*FROYO’s single ‘Darling’ is out now.*

## HERE COMES TROUBLE... A PLAYLIST



Art: Amelia Mertha

## Where is our Ancestry.com?

**ADAM TORRES** tests the limits of DNA testing



Recently, my mum has taken to a new hobby: compiling her family tree. It’s a dynamic document, regularly updated with annotations about siblings of great-great grandparents. It lives on the kitchen bench (I suspect so that it can be easily accessed in the event that some new tidbit about a distant relative materialises unannounced).

Much of the hype is lost on me — I appreciate the significance of finding out that a descendant was married with children, but because I’m adopted, the relevance of these sorts of facts is diluted somewhat. Nevertheless, I continue to entertain my mum’s fascination — it evidently means a great deal to her.

The accessibility of genealogy is inextricably linked with white privilege: one needn’t look any further than the systemic destruction of documents pertaining to racial minorities — a historical reality that transcends temporal and social contexts. In the United States, attempts to dehumanise slaves were strengthened by changing their names to distance them from their ancestors. Closer to home, the Stolen Generations produced a generation without birth certificates or other official records that sites like Ancestry.com tend to rely on.

It would be misguided to suggest that AncestryDNA — the genealogi-

cal DNA testing periphery of Ancestry.com — is unaware of this fact. The company offers discounted DNA testing kits on dates such as Australia Day, St. Patrick’s Day, and Anzac Day. It’s no coincidence that interest in genealogy peaks in the vicinity of dates that are rooted in or entrench white privilege.

*“The accessibility of genealogy is inextricably linked with white privilege.”*

Genealogical DNA tests make themselves irresistible to my mum’s demographic: white (a relevant factor for reasons already discussed), middle class (because DNA tests aren’t inexpensive), and already relatively clued in regarding their descendancy (because in isolation, genealogical statistics don’t offer a great deal).

Unsurprisingly, my mum was lured by one of the aptly timed AncestryDNA sales. Such great value was the sale that — in classic Oprah Winfrey style — “you get a DNA testing kit! You get a DNA testing kit!” The entire family was gifted a kit.

Spitting into a test tube is a brand of family bonding I’d not anticipated. I dribbled away under the watchful eye of my mum and with the enthusiastic

support of my sister and my dad. Who knew genealogy could be so unglamorous?

For my mum, the results were relatively unsurprising: she descended 96% from various Western European nations.

What was surprising, though, was the access to distant relatives who’d also done DNA tests. Here, the link between whiteness and genealogy reared its ugly head once more: my sister and I had less than 30 “fourth cousins or closer” while my mother had 94.

I don’t have a heavily annotated family tree. I don’t have one-click access to 94 fourth cousins or closer. Instead, I have an erratic assortment of documents, the contents of which fail to work synergistically to depict the life I could have been living. I have a picture of a 17-year-old woman. It’s a passport-sized image, and it captures an unsmiling but not unhappy face. It’s only a headshot, but she was clearly very small. It’s in black and white, but her skin clearly radiates a vibrant, deep brown.

It is an incomparable feeling to know your mother only in a photograph and as somebody younger than you. I don’t say incomparable to elevate the status of this emotion. Plainly, no other emotion bears any similarity.

Ancestry.com and its peripheries claim to be able to fill in the gaps between an image and its reality; between oral histories and their origins. But there lacks an awareness of how white privilege operates to prevent this in many cases.

Moreover, AncestryDNA attempts to break the cycle of darkness and mystery surrounding lineage and heritage. Instead, it propagates a simplistic understanding of race. After a matter of weeks, I discovered that my saliva proved I’m 19% Native American. Upon reading this, I suffered cringe-worthy flash forwards: “You can wear a headdress now, hey?”, my #woke friends would ask.

Genealogy operates as something of a microcosm: as in the world more broadly, people of colour are placed at a disadvantage. However, in the same way that a man’s home is his castle, sometimes, a passport sized photo and a pie graph detailing your ethnic make-up can mean as much as a detailed family tree. For me, each segment on that pie graph will function as a reminder of descendants who have resisted colonialism or faced oppression. Each segment will serve as a reminder that I, too, am taking part in a history marked by white privilege, and that I — as a future segment on a pie graph — have the responsibility to combat that.

## PoC Privilege

**MADLINE WARD** thinks we should acknowledge our settler privilege

People of Colour (PoC) that live in Australia have settler privilege. There are hierarchies that exist within the solidarity term “PoC” that go deeper than this, but for the purposes of the point I would like to make in this article, my initial statement rings true: if you are not an Indigenous Australian person you are likely to have immense cultural, social and economic privileges. This is also true for those of us that experience other axis of oppression; neither your queer identity nor your womanhood negates your settler privilege. Thus, I take issue with the idea that your identity can save you from political criticism. You can’t escape being called out on conservatism because you’re ethnic. Similarly, you can’t use your identity to try and avoid being excluded from activist collectives because of your conservatism.

This hasn’t stopped right-wing PoC from arguing that they should be included in identity-based collectives like ACAR and QuAC; that these spaces

should accept them despite their politics because the active word in identity politics is “identity.”

Because they focus -on the advancement of rights for oppressed minorities, leftism and activism in Australia should centre and listen to the needs, demands and voices of Indigenous Australians. SRC Identity Collectives that are created in this vein, and commit themselves to prioritising Indigenous people, are thus not obligated to admit those that hold views or support political parties with contrary objectives. Were they to accept the views of such people they would be pretty shit leftists. It makes no sense to admit someone into a collective on the basis of their PoC identity if their views actively contribute to the oppression of Indigenous people and less privileged PoC.

I’m not going to lie here, the queer collective isn’t all roses. It’s an overwhelmingly white space.

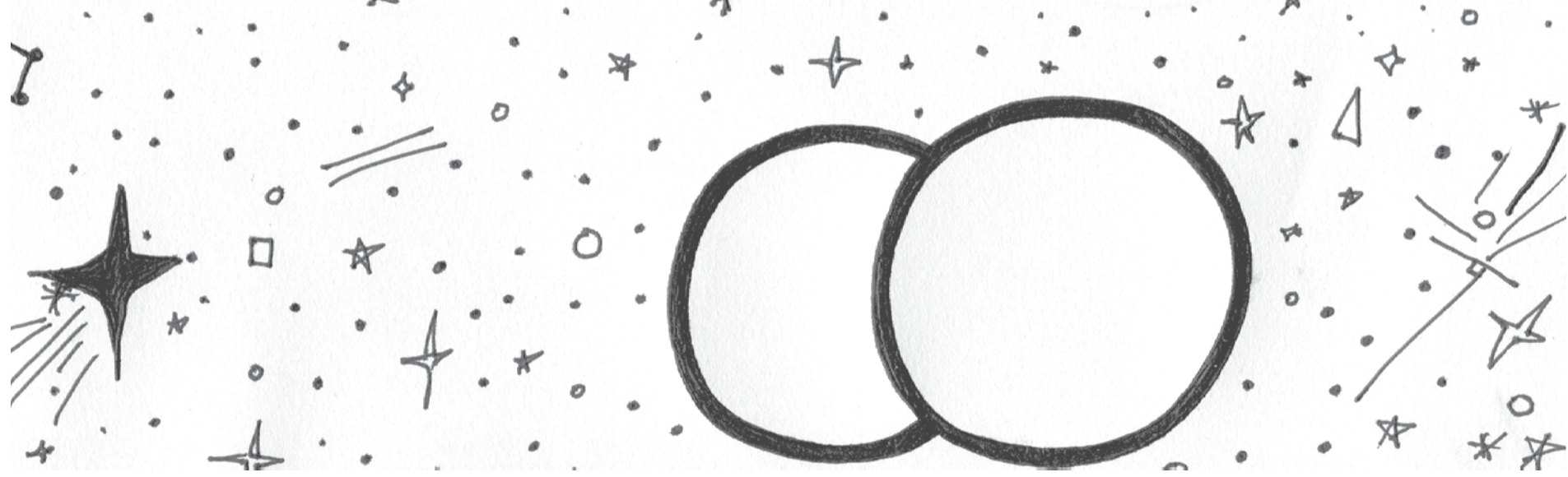
A lot the white people that occupy it say some problematic shit. The concerns of PoC that relate to the legitimately racist things that occur within it are valid. What isn’t valid? Being upset at the exclusion of queers and queer people of colour on account of their conservative ideologies. Especially if your concerns as a QPoC do not involve or centre those of Indigenous People.

Of course, being a leftist isn’t a mandatory requirement of being queer or a person of colour. It should, however, be a requirement for participating in leftist activist spaces, and I would argue that if you hold or support views that contribute to societal oppression you should forfeit any right to a ‘safe space’ on account of sheer hypocrisy. As non Indigenous PoC we are living on stolen land. If we fail to acknowledge this in our work against white supremacy we will end up contributing to it.



# Dancing in the *moon*light

SOPHIA CHUNG has no shame



Let's talk about the three most embarrassing moments of my life, shall we? I don't mind getting close and personal with some Honi Soit readers. It's taken me some time to get to this point, to not care about what anyone thinks of me, yet here I am, sharing some of my darkest secrets with you. Let's get started!

## 1. The Poo Incident

This is more stupid than embarrassing, though still pretty fucking embarrassing. I was four years old, taking a bath with my two other siblings. All was warm and normal, pleasurable even, until a small, brown flake appeared between my older sibling and I.

"What is that?"

"I don't know. Where did it come from?" I asked.

My older sibling maintained that it must've been a leaf that had drifted through the window- until I debunked that theory by pointing out that the window wasn't even open. Then it clicked.

"IT'S SEAWEED."

Moved by my own strong conviction, I grabbed the flake and put it in my mouth. Luckily, there was a toilet and a sink right by the bathtub where I could spit the wretched thing right back out.

I sunk back into the water, continuing to scratch at my tongue in a silence that eerily emanated from one end of the bathtub. Then,

with an ear-itching suspicion, my older sibling and I locked eyes. We slowly turned our heads towards our younger sibling, who'd been silent this whole period. As still as a statue the two-year old stared at us, squatting in the water, mouth open, eyes filled with remorse.

"Edwin, stand up."

"Stand UP!"

And there it was ... a huge pile of brown shit settled at the bottom of the water. Not only was I bathing in shit water - I also consumed that shit. I could only scream, and learned from that day on to never eat brown flakes floating in a body of water again.

## 2. Golden Shower

This one's pretty embarrassing, but I see it as a defining point in my life where I learned early not to care about what anyone thought of me. I was in Year 1, busting to go pee in the middle of class. We were about to start marking our maths homework, and I happened to sit right next to my teacher where she 'couldn't see' my hand was up for a solid two minutes, and just as she saw my raised hand, she let two white girls go to the bathroom first, and told me I could go after we marked. Racism? I think yes. Anyways, as soon as we finished marking, I started walking towards my desk and couldn't hold it in any longer. My tiny, six year old bladder couldn't take it. I had to let it out. So, with legs spread apart wider than shoulder length, I stood there, shooting a hard, straight stream with the force of thirty-minutes-of-holding-pee. Then, right in the middle of it, my crush stood

right in front of me as I blocked his path to his desk. We locked eyes. In that moment, I decided that I would own my fucking hard stream of pee. So, I shrugged my shoulders and said, "Oh well," as if it was common to pee in class.

When I was done, I acted like nothing happened, until my teacher came to find a huge wet patch on the ground. Then I started to ugly cry.

## 3. Moon Baby

Flash forward to my Year 3 swimming carnival, where I practiced the idea of "nobody saw, so I'm good". I didn't know there were changing rooms at the facility as it was my first swimming carnival event with the older years, and after getting my ego crushed by coming last in freestyle, I managed to get my shirt on while my naked bottom half was wrapped by a towel.

"You know there are change rooms down there, Sophia." A fellow older primary school friend pointed out to me. I took that as a cue to stop changing in front of people, so I proceeded to grab my things with a loose towel wrapped around my waist. As I reached the bottom of the steps, the principal called everyone's attention to the front, asking for silence. As I took the first step towards the change rooms, my towel fell. FELL TO THE BOTTOM OF THE GROUND. Bottom bare, I quickly bent down to wrap the towel around my waist again, hoping nobody saw my bare asshole, but thinking about it now, I'm pretty sure the whole fucking school did. I'd like to take this time to apologise to the people who were sitting at the front that had to witness that moment. I am truly sorry.

This breach comes with many others, including one of our officers witnessing a white man appearing to be staging a sit-in (sitting in a corner for hours but not doing anything), and other members walking in on white people eating in the room.

We're writing this to say: white people, we don't hate you. There will always be a place in our hearts for you, but you're choking us with your love. It's not that we never want to see you. We just need some space. We think it's time we took a break.

# Privileged, Monocultural Automatons

BAOPU HE unpacks the selective schools debate

## "TOP SCHOOL'S SECRET WEAPON: MIGRANT STUDENTS"

## "HOW MUCH DOMINATION WILL WE ACCEPT?"

Unsettling, alarming and downright conspiratorial: you'd be excused for thinking that these headlines come from a desperate, post-apocalyptic future. Such is the state of the current media discourse. These headlines are all drawn from Australian newspapers from the past few years. The faceless threat they speak of? Selective schools. Hidden beneath the layers of sensationalist outrage is a very real anxiety in Australia regarding selective school education.

Who exactly is feeling this fear? One quick look through the Sydney Morning Herald's archives shows that everyone from university academics, to private school mums, to executive directors of Catholic education have published criticisms of selective schools. Even the principal of The King's School, a private all-boys school that charges well over \$30,000 per annum, stated that free selective school education should be restricted to families of a certain socio-economic background in a 2012 Sydney Morning Herald interview.

Curiously lacking in this debate are the voices of current and recently graduated selective school students. In a debate so focused on the apparent lack of 'diversity' in selective schools, it is both surprising and unsettling that the range of views expressed overwhelmingly reflect the same white, upper middle class ethos. When we look at what diversity in Australia has become today, this white-centric debate shouldn't come as a surprise to anybody.

An alumni of North Sydney Girls, UTS Academic Dr Christina Ho, criticised the ethnic makeup of selective schools for not reflecting the diversity of Australia's society in a 2016 article in The Conversation. In it she argues that as a consequence of their lack of diversity, selective schools are no longer spaces where students can learn about cross-cultural communication by simply interacting with those of a different background on a daily basis.

However, nothing could be further from my own experience in the selective school system, growing up amidst a kaleidoscope of cultures and ethnic backgrounds including Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Bangladeshi, Sri-Lankan, and Anglo-Saxon. Whilst the majority of us do identify under the monolithic label of 'Asian' for the sake of unity, this does not erase our individual cultural heritage any more than calling ourselves 'Australian' makes us a homogenous unit.

*Why is it that to many people, a school whose makeup is 80% white and 20% PoC is considered diverse, but a school whose demographics are flipped is seen as dominated by 'ethnics'?*

Why is it that to many people, a school whose makeup is 80% white and 20% PoC is considered diverse, but a school whose demographics are flipped

is seen as dominated by 'ethnics'? It seems the issue with selective schools is not that they lack diversity, but rather that they lack the specific brand of diversity that disgruntled, privileged white parents are seeking. Their diversity, Dr Ho notes, is dichotomous in that it consists of only 'white' and 'not-white', and simultaneously built on the power imbalance that exists between the two.

This diversity gives a facade of harmony by appearing to tackle racial issues on the surface, but ultimately leaves the root causes of racism untouched. It allows the predominant cultural group to experience all the benefits of multiculturalism (highly desirable in our globalised world) without having to deal with the unglamorous prejudice

that unfortunately exists alongside it.

There is rarely such sanitised or artificial diversity at selective schools, where white Australians are just another strand in the tapestry of multiculturalism, as opposed to the weaver who intertwines the strands into a pattern of their own liking. Even so, in my discussions with people who went to other selective schools, a common criticism was that there existed a covert but institutionalised prejudice against non-white students when it came to electing people for leadership positions; a sobering reminder for Asian students of the inequalities they will face once they leave the safe confines of high school.

The current debate lies in how white Australians no longer exclusively benefit from selective schools, precisely because they have helped migrant children overcome the many barriers society has erected. To further erase the difficulties faced by Asian Australians (which could result in unwanted public sympathy), the media has recently shifted the focus of the debate from race to class and wealth. Turning migrant children into public enemy number one has since become remarkably easy. All of a sudden, issues like the bamboo ceiling are brushed over in favour of the image that selective schools are "bastions of inequality", and those who attend them aggressive underminers of the public schools system.

The fundamental purpose of selective schools is to provide intelligent students with a quality learning environment that does not hold them back, where they can learn regardless of socio-economic or racial background. Statistics on the MySchool's website appear to dispute this. For example, James Ruse recorded an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value of 1262, a number that vastly outstrips even the most expensive private schools like Ascham (1154). When synthesised with the advent of tutoring, it is tempting to conclude that students at selective schools are only there because their parents could afford to send them to tutoring.

While selective school students generally do come from more privileged backgrounds than normal comprehensive schools, the nature of this advantage has been deeply misconstrued by the media. The ICSEA is a measure of socio-educational advan-



What's behind the hat?

Art: Brigitte Samaha

tage, as opposed to socio-economic advantage, and is calculated through taking into account factors like school location, number of Indigenous students, and most importantly, parental levels of education. Though economic and educational advantage often overlap, the correlation between them becomes complicated in migrant families. The high levels of education that seem to be universal amongst Asian migrants frequently does not translate into an economic advantage due to a myriad of reasons, such as language barriers, workplace discrimination, or their qualifications simply not being recognised in Australia.

Whilst I am lucky to come from an economically stable family, it would be disingenuous to say my background is reflective of selective school students as a whole. The majority of my school friends are on Centrelink benefits, and amongst their parents, for every highly educated doctor, accountant and engineer, there is a highly educated factory worker, taxi driver and cleaner. In Asian families belonging to the latter category, it is not uncommon to see parents work extra jobs, cut spendings elsewhere or even borrow money to send their kids to tutoring in the hopes of landing a place at a selective school and prestigious university course. For Sophie\*, a low SES medical student who attended a top selective school, the true extent of her parent's sacrifice is something she may never know.

"At the time, they didn't tell me because they didn't want me to worry or feel guilty about how much they were spending."

*"It was only after I graduated from high school that I found out that they had given up on buying a house and starting their own business in order to save enough money to send me to tutoring throughout high school."*



Seemingly excessive, the initial investment into tutoring for the Selective School’s Test (SST) still makes fiscal sense. After all, what is \$4000 for a single year of tutoring, compared to \$150,000 for 6 years of private education, or \$2,000,000 to buy a house in the catchment area of a good local school such as Killara? Furthermore, tutoring in itself does not guarantee a selective school place, something confirmed by my own experience working as a teacher at a major coaching school.

The SST comprises of four components: English comprehension, Mathematics, General Ability and Creative Writing. None of these components can be successfully rote learnt as the exams are not built around a curriculum, but rather are designed to test aptitude and intuition - both of which cannot be taught. While tutoring can familiarise children with the pressures of working under a time limit, success is ultimately dependant on their ability, and most of my students left a year’s worth of tutoring without any significant improvement. Of course, all this is not to say that those who do not make selective schools are in-

capable, but rather that those who did make it deserved to do so, whether they went tutoring or not.

*“The current debate lies in how white Australians no longer exclusively benefit from selective schools, precisely because they have helped migrant children overcome the many barriers society has erected.”*

Herein lies the contradiction often used as the foundation of this debate. On the one hand, selective schools ‘ruin’ local comprehensive schools by ‘taking away’ all the brightest students (an issue that is definitely worthy of discussion but in another article given its complex nature). On the other hand these students are not really that

intelligent due to a heavy reliance on external help. This thinking, grounded in racism and the stereotype of Asian students being “grade chasing automatons”, still underscores much of the discussion on selective schools, leading to a situation where their students are disparaged if they do well, and denigrated if they do not.

For the past few years, the Australian media has carefully cultivated an alienating image of selective schools as being incompatible with the values of our contemporary society. This image, perpetuated under the guise of “promoting diversity” and “fighting inequality”, completely overlooks the complexity of the issue and often scapegoats Asian Australian students as the cause of the problems seen in the educational system as a whole. Given how selective schools have disrupted society’s white-centric status quo, the ease with which this image has been perpetuated is unsurprising. The scarcity of Asian perspectives is also unsurprising for the same reason: the debate was never really about us to begin with.

# To the USyd Queers, on behalf of Queer People of Colour

From **ASTRID ZHANG**

The Queer Action Collective (QuAC), according to their Facebook group’s description, serves the political and social interests of queer students on campus, with an autonomous Queerspace that functions as a safe space. We, USyd’s queer people of colour, contend that both the space and the collective are white-centric and cliquey, despite the changes that management claims have been enacted. We feel a deep frustration with the lack of agency and voice afforded to us by the queer community on campus.

Several students have expressed that discomfort and intimidation are the main reasons behind their hesitation and refusal to use the space and join or contribute to the collective. Just by this factor, one can conclude that QuAC is failing in its mission to serve the interest of all students by alienating a subset of students in a way that reeks of racism and discrimination.

When contacted for comment, elected Queer Officer Connor Parissis cited QuAC’s attempts at inclusion as “cross-collaborated events throughout the year, including Pride Week and attempts to include Affirmative Action for Queer People Of Colour (and)... an incredibly strong stance against fascists and racists in our space... There is always room for improvement to be had in the Queerspace in terms of QTPOC and how they intersect the space and the movement, and we are always welcome to collective members to step up and create events that are intersectional and non-exclusionary.”

Relying on collective members to create intersectional events, when QPoC are made to feel excluded from the space, ensures that such events are unlikely to see the light of day. Eliza\* tells me that when she ventured into the Queerspace she felt closeted, timid, and shut down. Talking to other people of colour, this sentiment is certainly shared and reiterated. The fact that I am writing this article for ACAR *Honi* and not for Queer *Honi* speaks volumes of the amount of trust PoC place in QuAC to ensure that our voice is heard. It is alarming that a space which claims to have safety and inclusion as its cor-

nerstones has failed in these areas.

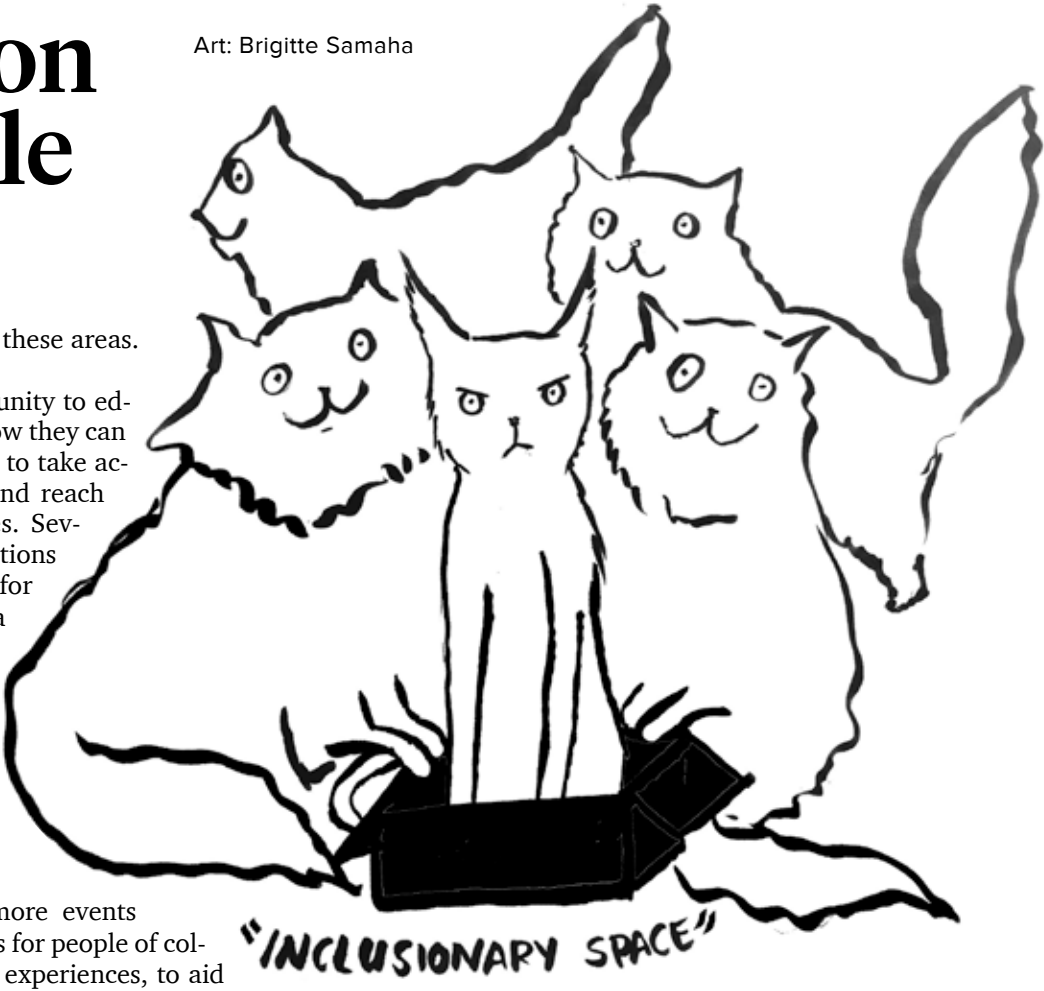
It falls to the community to educate themselves on how they can be more inclusive, and to take active steps to include and reach out to racial minorities. Several PoC gave suggestions for inclusive events for Pride Week, yet not a single PoC-targeted/ specific event was run.

*So, what can be done?*

QuAC must have more events and more opportunities for people of colour to talk about their experiences, to aid people who are in situations where it may be dangerous or ‘taboo’ to be queer. For many QPoC, the cultural stigma attached to non-heteronormative orientations and non-binary genders is so great that it is not only mentally but physically unsafe for them to come out. For this reason, these people are most in need of help and reassurance. We need support groups run by PoC for PoC, and PoC speakers at events who can voice the difficulties of what it means to be both queer and a person of colour.

The Queerspace has a history of being a sexualised space, which can isolate people for cultural or religious reasons. QuAC has enacted a ban on sexual activity in the space this year. However, it will take much more to change the culture of the collective, which is a microcosm of the queer community in that it centres gay, white people.

Alex\*, another QPoC I interviewed, summarised it best when they said, “Part of the problem is isolation, and it’s really difficult to talk about this kind of stuff with white people. Finding people like yourself,



and talking about your shared experiences is so helpful and would be a wonderful starting point. That’s when you start being able to see things like institutional racism.”

Past events which have been suggested have been dismissed due to concerns over low attendance numbers. The fact is, QPoC events will attract less people simply because the amount of QPoC who would be comfortable going to such an event is significantly less. This creates even more reason to run events for QPoC so that not only can they feel included but also be encouraged to interact more in the future.

I hope that these suggestions will be taken in the manner in which they are intended; with a strong focus on inclusivity and respecting the voices, experiences, and struggles of queer people of colour. It is time for QuAC to take a step back, to acknowledge what needs to change, and to make that change.

\*Names have been changed.

*Welcome to Bali, where the Bali tiger once roamed / With no way off the island, the island was its home / Fell to deforestation and devastation and European hunters’ guns / I think I see the last tiger’s eye in the equatorial sun / Enjoy your yoga in Ubud and Bintang singlet wrung / But her sand burns my feet, her language misplaced on my tongue / And this island, Australia, a blistered stolen land / If I can’t go back to Bali, then where do I stand?*



Words and Art: Amelia Mertha

# But it's art!

MADELINE WARD thinks we should be critical of EVERYTHING

Art created by Westerners in or about colonised nations will always be racially problematic. There is an undeniable power dynamic that exists between artist and subject in these circumstances - no matter how pure or noble the intention, the work will in some way be a wee bit racist. There is no justification or hypothetical situation that can negate this, nothing to assuage the guilty consciences of those that enjoy these works. If we can accept then that these works are inherently racist, we must find a way to consume them that doesn't perpetuate the ideas or circumstances that led to their creation. I would argue that there are levels of problematic that these works exist on, and I wish to discuss two that inhabit the “very” end of the probbo scale—in order to think about the way in which we talk about this kind of art I think it's helpful to begin with the height of super racist shit and slowly work our way down (or indeed, up ). These are *Spirit of Death Watching* and a postcard of a *Jeune Mauresque*. If I had to choose two works of Western ‘art’ to use as kindling, it would be these.

For a very long time my favourite artist was Paul Gauguin. Aesthetically, at least, he still is—the bright swathes of colour and movement that preoccupy his paintings are after all immensely pleasing to the eye. I suppose the majority of my love for the works of Gauguin came from a lack of any meaningful representation of polynesian women in the first place. Gauguin's aesthetic rendering of Tahiti was a welcome respite from the pallid paintings of landscapes and staunch portraiture that is so often seen in colonial representation of New Zealand, and certainly better than the photography of docile Hawaiian women smiling by palm trees. The works of Paul Gauguin were the first I encountered that seemingly treated Polynesian women as something other than a motif complementary to the landscape — women that smoked and swam and gossiped and fucked, women that were real and represented as such. Paul Gauguin was my favourite artist until very recently, when I found out that he raped the women he painted.

Is it then ethical to display the works of Paul Gauguin, knowing that he likely raped his subjects?

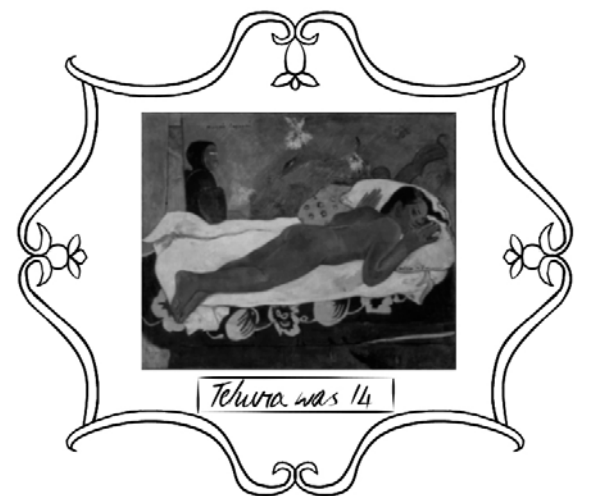


In the case of *Spirit of The Dead Watching* I would argue a hard no, or perhaps a reluctant yes with

strong conditions. The work is similar in form to erotic female nudes by artists like Manet and Degas, whom Gauguin idealised. The model in *Spirit of The Dead Watching* was 14, her name Tehura. She was Christian. She is often called Paul Gauguin's girlfriend, though it's unlikely the relationship was consensual- Gauguin was 43 when he first sailed for Tahiti. In academic theory, the painting has two primary readings, neither being particularly savoury.



The first, that Gauguin gave when the work was sent back to Paris for sale, spins a tale of native superstition: Tehura is terrified of tupapaus, spirits of the dead that glow and illuminate the forest in the Tahitian night. The second, championed by art historian Nancy Mowell Mathews, counters that it was in fact Gauguin that Tehura was so frightened of. If we are to run with the second reading, the work becomes an uncomfortable reminder of Tehura's reality — we are viewing the bare body of a rape victim, as painted by her rapist. So should we still be exhibiting it, given the nature of the conditions it was painted under?



The work formed part of Gauguin: Maker of Myth, a collaborative exhibition between the Tate Gallery in the UK and the National Gallery of Art in the US in the early half of 2011. This was an exhibition that took, to a degree, a postcolonial approach to the life and works of Paul Gauguin- focusing on the role of the artist as a myth maker, a man that mythologised people and places to suit his artistic agenda. A catalogue and short educational video series was released by the curators to accompany the exhibition.

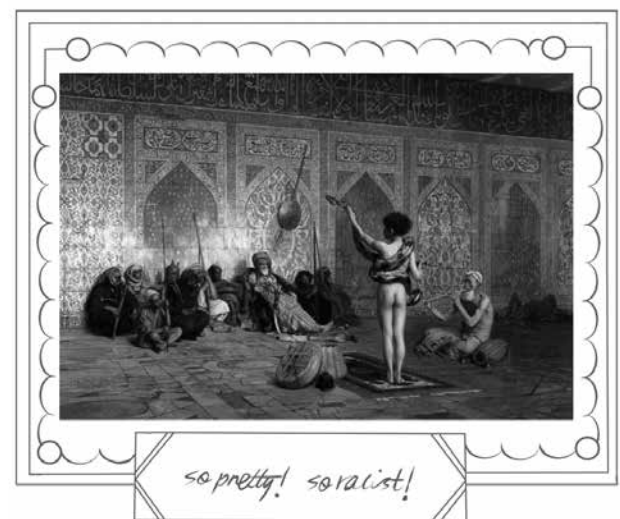
The video series in particular is useful to understand a body of work that is intensely racially and socially problematic — framing Gauguin as someone who associated himself with European ideas of “the noble savage”, and Tahiti as a place that was

already the victim of Western imperialism, far from the intoxicatingly exotic paradise that Gauguin portrayed. It acknowledges that Gauguin's Tahiti was a fantasy, though it doesn't go quite far enough— referring to Tehura as his mistress, only in the context of the aforementioned tupapaus, and neglecting to include the matter of her startlingly young age. The exhibition was a celebration of Gauguin — a critical one, but a celebration nonetheless — and this is where it fails. Gauguin may have been painting in a different era, but we are no longer in that era. With hindsight comes responsibility, and we must ensure that we do not re-victimize the subjects of Gauguin's paintings in our efforts to memorialise him.



The postcards of the *Jeune Mauresque* (young Moorish girl) would in today's terms fall into the classification of child pornography. They are highly erotic, explicit photographs of a girl who is barely in the realm of puberty. Posed for the photographer against a purposefully ‘eastern’ fabric, her breasts are exposed to the viewer. It forms a part of the canon of Orientalism, art that concerns itself with the East, or a western construction of it. Malek Alloula contends that postcards like these are destined to pass through the hands and gazes of many, without the thin protection of an envelope to veil it on its long journey from purchase, to postage, to its eventual arrival in Europe. In *The Colonial Harem*, Alloula explains that even once these works reached their destination it would continue to be shared,

“Solicited whenever the colony and its indiscreet charms are evoked.”



According to Alloula, the postcards of bare

breasted *Jeune Mauresques* fall into three categories of breast exposure, the third being the most explicit, which Alloula names The Display. In The Display the breast is an ornament, the object in frame upon which the viewer is destined to look. In this representation there is little pretense that the photographs are anything more than erotic, let alone art, though they are now considered as such.

How should we think about these postcards that today would be illegal? The sense of unease for me lies in the repeated commodification and exposure of the subject, a minor. The minor in question is now long gone, yet it feels distinctly wrong that her image is being exhibited and consumed by new audiences. The broader social implications of the postcards contribute to this feeling of unease— they perpetuate a myth, a fictional ‘east’ that has never existed in reality. The hyper sexualisation of Middle Eastern and North African women is something that persists to this day, the postcards serving as an uncomfortable reminder of just how far we haven't come.

And yet, I can't say that I would in truth advocate for the suppression of either the postcards of a *Jeune Mauresque* or of *Spirit of Death Watching* — rather I would make the case for a heavily critical, public discussion around both. It is not enough for this discussion to occur solely in academia — it should enter the realm of public discourse so that any re-victimisation of the women and cultures portrayed can be avoided. Giving those without a background in art history the means to think critically about this kind of content would be a huge step forward for both the discipline and the public. It is not enough now, in the 21st century, to exhibit these works without also discussing the reality of their creation.

Ultimately I would argue that it is not only lazy to ignore the context of works such as those above, but in fact rather boring. What is the point of mindlessly praising something widely considered to be beautiful? We already know that the paintings of Gauguin are pretty, that erotic photographs from the past give us an insight into the sexualities of our forebears— this is old news. It is time we moved beyond shallow appreciation of art and toward a future where as a public we can consider these things critically— where we can talk shit about canonical artists. Lord knows they deserve it.



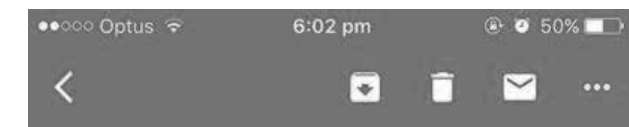
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# Cancers Review

DEAREST IN THE LORD PLEASE BE HONEST

— 2019-08-28 10:00:00

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# Hallo Freund,



# UPROOTING FOR STARDOM

LAMYA RAHMAN and ELIJAH ABRAHAM peer into a common trend among aspiring entertainers

Aditi Roy\* plans to celebrate the end of her five-year dual degree with an overseas move, a year-long break, and casting aside her future in engineering.

“I want to get my foot in production houses,” she says. “Scout out roles, and agencies. Whatever I can when I’m over there. Your typical ‘struggling actor’ kind of story.”

To Roy’s credit, her story is slightly different. She’s not relocating to Los Angeles or New York - she’s going to Mumbai.

Roy’s acting experience is entirely university based: roles in revues and student films by friends at Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS). It’s difficult to put aside time to act as a full-time engineering student, but Roy admits she could have done better. “I’m definitely not [the most experienced],” she says, with some self-deprecation. “I think that’s obvious.”

Roy doesn’t seem to think her non-acting background will hamper her chances in the long run. “Obviously it’s good to have acting experience and hopefully I get that in Mumbai. But in Bollywood, I think there’s a trend of actresses coming from modelling or dancing backgrounds.”

She cites Madhuri Dixit and refers to her own classical training, ongoing since she was three. Her confidence in her skillset, however, is not enough to curb apprehension - the big move is only a few months away and her one Mumbai contact is her uncle.

“I am very worried,” Roy admits.

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Roy’s story is part of an emerging trend of young Asian Australians considering careers in overseas Asian entertainment industries.

Richard Tang\*, a former student at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), now enrolled at the Australian Institute of Music (AIM), says he wants to be a star.

“I think [in the Sydney K-pop community] a lot of them do wish to become a star. But I feel like I’m the only one that’s actually taken steps to do it.”

It’s a grand declaration, but not one without substance.

Tang is in his early twenties and only started dancing seriously during university. Yet his achievements so far are notable: transferring to a music degree; opening for SBS PopAsia’s Big Bang pre-show concert, and getting a callback from Jackie Chan Group Korea (JCGK). JCGK, Jackie Chan’s business in Korea, was responsible for debuting K-pop boy group JJCC.

“They asked if I could sing and I said no,” he says about the auditions, which were held in Sydney last year. “I think that’s why they didn’t go forward with me.”

Tang has since focused on improving his singing skills. “I think it’s easier to be a good dancer than a good singer,” he explains. “So singers are more rare and more wanted.”

Considering dancers in South Korean boy groups tend to outnumber vocalists two to one, he has a point.

Tang emphasises that he isn’t focusing solely on K-pop. “I want to break into the Western industry,” he clarifies, “just so I can show them how good Asians can be.”

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Priya Bakshi\*, another aspiring performing artist, also has her eyes set on more than one entry point. A current commerce student at UNSW, Bakshi is a semi-regular workshop attendee at the National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA), which she hopes will refine her acting skills.

“I don’t really care what route gets me there, as long as it does get me there,” Bakshi says.

Bakshi wants to be an actress, ideally on the silver screen. She criticises Bollywood for being anti-progressive and misogynistic, yet her career goals are oriented north-west to Mumbai. When asked for clarification, Bakshi is frank and unapologetic.

*“It’s twice as hard for people like us to get into the entertainment industry than it is for anyone else, so you need to use all your options. That’s just how it is.”*

Besides acquiring an agent, Bakshi’s acting experiences to-date are comparable to Roy: limited to student productions and unsuccessful auditions. She is similarly unfazed, citing a background in dancing and Bollywood’s historical habit of prioritising physical features over acting ability.

“I’m looking at entering a pageant actually,” she says.

Her reasoning is coolly pragmatic: “I think it might be a fast-track way in.”

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The pageant Bakshi is considering is the Miss India Australia competition, founded in early 2001 by Bollywood talent consultant, Raj Suri. On his website, Suri’s biography says Miss India Australia is “the base for Australian talent to ... Bollywood & beyond” and, since 2011, “Raj personally trains, grooms and prepares Australian talent to represent overseas.” How valuable this will be is uncertain, but the appeal of Miss India as a door to Bollywood - at least in the popular imagination - cannot be understated. Indian-Australian actress Pallavi Sharda won the competition in 2010.

Basic registration is \$49 and includes an interview with the Miss India Australia panel. Optional extras, such as photoshoots, show-reels, a professional portfolio, and four to twelve weeks of training and mentorship by Raj Suri, can be purchased at registration for up to an additional \$250 to \$2900 depending on the package. Another Miss India Australia hopeful is sceptical that the competition can be won without indulging in add-ons: “It’s not common to enter a pageant with little to nothing and win. It’s usually a lot more than that.”

Steep prices are not unusual for businesses providing avenues for Asian Australians to pursue work in Asian entertainment industries. The Academy, an agency which opened in 2016 and holds an annual K-pop style boot camp, charges \$50 for a solo audition and \$1000 for the camp itself.

“We spend a lot of money on production,” says Angela Lee, founder of The Academy. “We spend a lot on making sure things are good.”

Whilst acknowledging the high cost, Lee appears earnest in her desire to bring Australian talent into the K-pop world. “When you’re nurturing a business you’re always looking at profitability. But what we want to do objective-wise is really push Australia out into Asia.”

Whereas SM, YG and JYP are K-pop companies known for holding worldwide auditions, Lee says The Academy works with second-tier K-pop agencies that don’t have the same financial capabilities. She says her boot camp is designed to emulate the typical, harsh K-pop trainee lifestyle, although she admits OH&S laws in Australia prevent overworking and underfeeding boot camp attendees the way K-pop agencies do. “It may be a little bit... watered down... but it’s still 15 hours a day and it still allows the scouts to observe the trainees for seven days. Some break, some don’t broke [sic]. [The scouts] need to know whether you can survive for that week, let alone the next four years.”

“We’re here for the long term,” stresses Lee, likely alluding to previous K-pop programs in Sydney which emerged then suddenly collapsed.

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Despite the existence of these avenues, many Asian Australians remain unconvinced about their odds as non-Koreans. “It feels a little bit impossible,” says a former reporter for Seoulbeats, an online news platform for Korean entertainment.

Michael Kim, a correspondent at the Korean Foundation for Interna-

tional Cultural Exchange (KOFICE), thinks the process for aspiring non-Korean Asian K-pop idols is less futile than perceived.

“There has been an increase in the number of K-pop groups which consist of members from diverse cultural backgrounds. For example GOT7 and TWICE are groups which members are from different countries. There has been an increase in the number of people from overseas who want to become K-pop stars.”

Kim is right in this regard. K-pop is gaining interest from non-Korean people. An African American member was added to the girl group Rania, and more recently, EXP Edition, a mostly White American boy group, debuted.

“[Trainers] are looking for unique characters,” he says. He is talking about this in the context of whether there can be a stronger connection between agencies in Korea and K-pop hopefuls in Australia. “In Korea, talents are really similar, trained at the same school.”

Looking outward for talent appears to be a byproduct of South Korea’s larger national branding efforts, of which KOFICE is part.

“Korea has actually been the best exponent of using soft power as a means to sort of export their culture around the world,” says Johnny Au, editor-in-chief of Hello Asia, an Asian music and culture publication based in Australia.

The result, he says, is that **Korean pop music is an export-orientated product, more susceptible to being globalised.** Indeed, companies like KOFICE spread Korean culture through funding K-pop communities (Kim claims UNSW K-pop society received a three-year financial subsidy from 2012 to 2014) and in return K-pop surges into a global market, in which it is necessary to internationalise.

“Having one English-speaking member will instantly make it easier to promote your group internationally,” says Au. He points to real-life examples: South Korean girl group Red Velvet’s Wendy was raised in Canada and became known as the English speaker of the group. “It makes it easier for international fans. It is very much a template many entertainment industries are working with at the moment.”

Bollywood, on the other hand, is a comparatively closed industry, especially for those coming from overseas. Whilst Bollywood films have a firm hold on the collective conscious of a diaspora, the groundworks in Australia are relatively weak.

“There’s not a lot of organisations [...] that help people get to Bollywood,” says Roy. “There’s still a gap here. More and more people accept they have to go to the heart of it, to

Mumbai, and over there you’re one in a million trying.”

Bakshi echoes this sentiment. “Bollywood is hard to get into. You need to make a lot of calls, a lot of emails, a lot of favours.”

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Even if a person manages to make a career in either Bollywood or K-pop despite the cultural differences, the language barriers, and the crippling uncertainty, challenges are ongoing.

Pallavi Sharda, an Indian-Australian Bollywood actress, who debuted with a cameo role in *My Name is Khan* and later went on to star in *Besharam*, says she knew no one in Mumbai, highlighted some of the difficulties she faced in a 2014 interview with *60 Minutes*. “There was no opportunity, I had to sort of find and then work hard at getting somewhere. That was tough. Just trying to find people that would listen to me, that would take me seriously.”

Lee says, “[People] may think they’re gonna be okay [...] in the K-pop method of training but in reality, if they have a taste of it, they might realise it’s a lot more difficult than they think.”

“You hear a lot of stories where people got selected as trainees, trained for years and then they got out.”

Henry Mak, a 26-year old Chinese-Australian member of JJCC, exposed his strict regime in a 2016 ABC interview. “Before our comeback we eat once a day, we run three hours a day, dance for like seven, eight hours a day.”

He refers to the harsh lifestyles of his colleagues, too. “When JJCC was training there was another girl group called LABOUM and they were trainees back then. Their weight was very controlled and they would get nervous every single time they had to step on a scale.”

Although Mak had ‘run away’ from home to pursue his passion in the performing arts, he admits, “If I knew about [the K-pop regime] I probably wouldn’t choose this road. But now it’s a bit too late for me.”

In December 2016, it was rumoured Mak had secretly left JJCC.

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In light of all these difficulties, why do it?

“It’s a cop-out answer,” says Roy, “but I’ve always loved Bollywood.”

In her *60 minutes* interview, Sharda echoes this. “I used to watch the films growing up and I found something escapist about them and magical about them” she says. “I loved studying what I did but I knew that I had to get to Bombay and be an actress.”

sion is essential to success in the industry. She says Asian Australians who see India as an easier market to break into “either don’t succeed in the long term or they don’t really try for a career.”

“The people who actually want to go to Bollywood go because they love it, they appreciate it in its entirety.”

Whilst the issue of poor representation of people of colour in Australian media came into play, and was cited by several of our interviewees as a reason for why young second or third-generation migrants may look towards these industries, it wasn’t a dominating narrative.

K-pop being a relatively new phenomenon means many of those now pursuing careers had also watched the growth of the industry. “They want to look like them,” Kim says, citing a process of imitation. “They start to copy them as well, in fashion, in makeup.” At the height of it is a desire to live and work like them.

Lee believes this is to do with the image of stardom that K-pop often projects. “You’re drawn to that stardom, you’re drawn to that attention and it’s very natural for young people to go ‘oh my god, look at this superstar, look at this fantasy world.’ It’s not a new thing.”

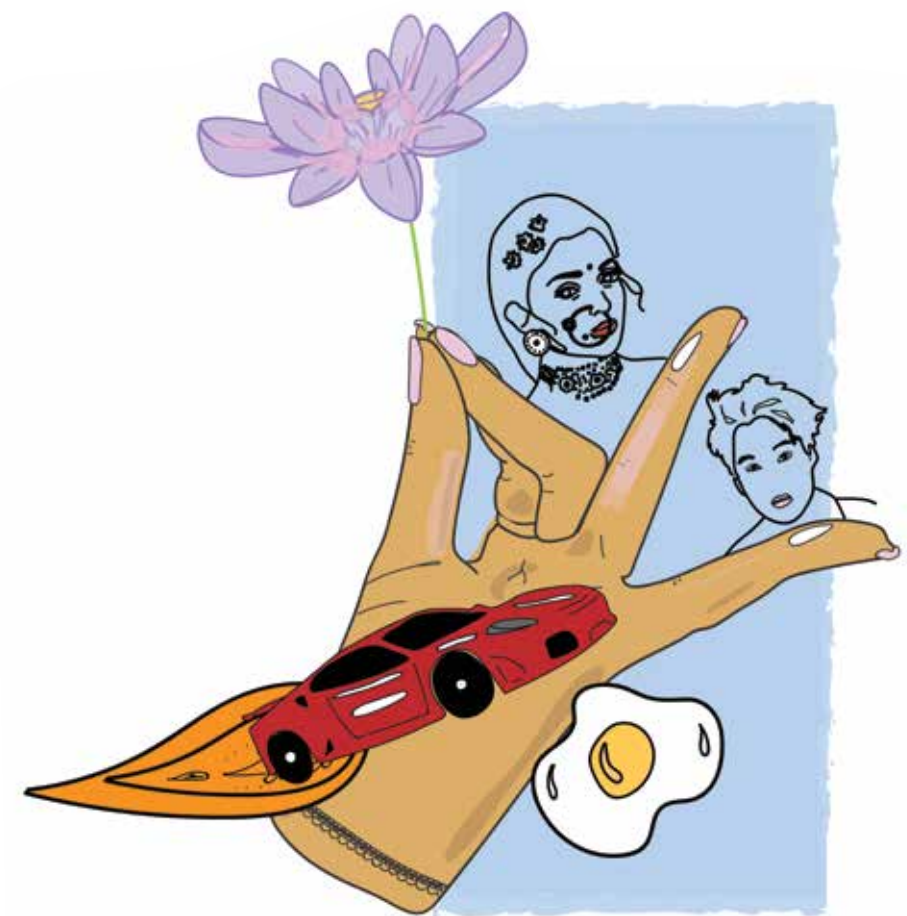
While it may not be a new thing, Lee is right that being drawn to the fame, the glitz, the glamour is a long term phenomenon. There’s no denying K-pop and Bollywood are, in their own right, exciting and colourful, especially to those who may already identify with the industries on a more personal level.

In our interviews the allure of fame did seem to underlay many of these overseas pursuits. It was not without criticism or concern though. Whilst our interviewees wished to be anonymous for a myriad of reasons, self-consciousness was a strong one. Roy mentioned being worried about backlash from her small Indian community.

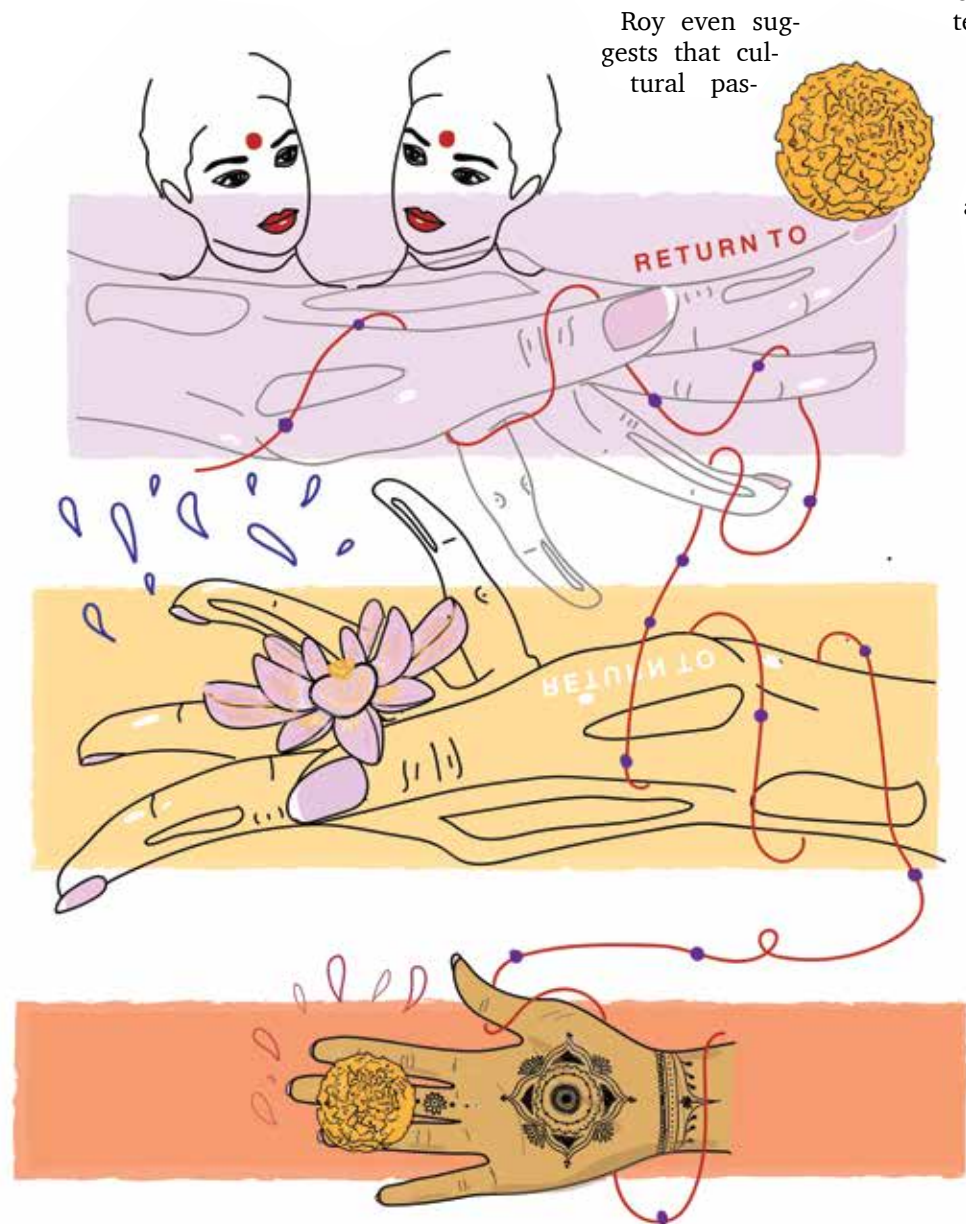
It is not surprising how these pursuits can be construed negatively. Fame has become a dirty word; the search for it deemed inherently frivolous. We don’t necessarily agree. For young Asian Australians to have stardom as an option, in spite of a media industry which often denies it to them, may actually be a good thing.

\*Names have been changed.

Art: Amelia Mertha



Art: Amelia Mertha





# Do PoC dream of illusory lands?

RADHA WAHYUWIDAYAT tried her hand at dream interpretation

Beneath the conscious mind, mysterious images lie. They move like tectonic plates, shaping our choices, moods, days, lives.

Two years ago I started to read about Bengal and Java, where my grandfather and father are from. As I made my way through the fiction of Amitav Ghosh and Pramoedya Ananta Toer, a recurring dream I used to have as a child came back to me in fragmented images. The dream was not remarkably unusual; its most striking aspect was the bird’s eye perspective it granted me, from which I observed an island cradled by the ocean. I was aware, from the omnipotent knowledge that we possess only in dreams,

My younger imagination revealed itself again, as though it didn’t want to be overshadowed by my new knowledge about the places where my family came from. The new images I encountered through reading were realistic, alive, elemental in a way that frightened and clashed with the vague, ethereal things I used to dream about.

I was sure that my childhood fantasies were intimately connected to my familial identity. Had I experienced visions of the ancient places where my ancestry lies, carried through my DNA as a primordial current? I found this hard to square with what I was learning. If anything, the histories of my parent’s and grandparent’s countries

by these ideas, I went to visit my father.

At midnight, driving to his house from Jakarta airport, the lights of buildings spread out underneath the highway, my step-mother and cousin’s Indonesian lulling me to a feeling of peacefulness, for neither the first, nor likely the last time, I was gripped by the certainty that this visit would bring me the sense of belonging I had always craved. Any memory of my previous visits to Jakarta were suppressed. It became a place in which I had never stepped foot.

A week or so later, I was sitting in a glistening Starbucks cafe after three

Of course, I was as capable as any Westerner of falling prey to ideas about non-Western cultures: living in harmony with nature, infallible to social ills, operating from a position of righteousness at all times.

The fallacy of this idealisation of the homeland is often pointed out to us. The conservative tendency to remind us that our cultures weren’t utopic, more often than not, serves a political end. On the other hand, by playing into such idealism, we risk upholding tropes like that of the Noble Savage. Our places were and are home to cultures which impact upon their natural environments, which can hold violence or corruption.



Art: Alex Mowat

that the island was empty of human occupation and predated our existence.

My lifelong preoccupation with islands, oceans, ships, anything near or on water instantly crystallised. After reading Yann Martel’s *Life of Pi* as a kid, hadn’t I also been obsessed by the novel’s carnivorous island? Self-sustaining and free of human occupation, it epitomised the ideal place to me. I remembered how, during a brief flirtation with transcendental meditation in my mid-teens - carried out every morning and afternoon through Youtube video guides made by an ex-monk-turned-social-media-sensation - I would recite a mantra and after thirty minutes, find myself in a place like that of my childhood dream; levitating above an island.

emphasised to me not the emptiness of those places, but their life, their societies’ constant shifting and trans-forming.

Maybe it was because I was at the time coming across identity politics, moving my relationship to my heritage from a site of tension to one in which I sought to embrace that heritage, but the images became overlaid with much meaning for me and I felt I had to disentangle them.

I believed the island was my cultural inheritance: not materially, but psychologically. Surely, an island of untouched nature symbolised ‘ways of being’ which countered the individualism and materialism of contemporary Western culture that I both despaired at and couldn’t live without. Energised

hours of crawling through clogged, smoggy traffic in the car. My cousin showed me a video on her phone of the building across the road being bombed a few months prior. I spooned whipped cream from my iced coffee, feeling a cacophony of discomfort and restlessness.

During this trip, I was forced to confront my own ignorance. The race politics I had clung to at university held little resonance for, or relevance to, my family. I could not help but feel disillusioned with what dominated life in Jakarta: pollution and construction, obsession with money and status, a love of whiteness and technology. I was overcome by a feeling that reaching the ‘island’ - whatever I had hoped its material, present day manifestation would be - was impossible.

The island of my dreams embodied essentialism. It reeked with the illusion of authenticity, of what was ‘natural’ and ‘uncorrupted’. In the cold light of an international chain cafe, I saw that my homeland - a place that was beyond the reach of colonialism, violence and trauma, beyond the psychic torment of modernity and the environmental destruction it sanctioned - was imagined. It existed, and could only exist, in my mind.

This realisation seemed to matter little. How could I reject the image? It had made itself so indelible on my psyche, it must be serving some emotional or practical need.

David Eng and Shinhee Han coined the term “racial melancholia” to refer

to the effect of the loss of social comfort and familiarity, national belonging, language, family, and social connections on second-generation Asian Americans.

“The melancholiac is unable to resolve the conflicts, ambivalences, and other feelings of loss associated with the difficulties of immigration and assimilation. ... The melancholic preserves the lost object or ideal by incorporating it into the ego and establishing an ambivalent identification with it - ambivalent precisely because of the unresolved and conflicting nature of this forfeiture. ... In identifying with the lost object, the melancholic is able to preserve it but only as a type of a haunted, ghostly identification. That is, the melancholic assumes the emptiness of the lost object or ideal, identifies with this emptiness, and thus participates in his or her own self-denigration and ruin of self-esteem.”

The idea that it was the emptiness of the island - not its pre-colonial symbolism - that formed part of my identity was not unconvincing, albeit confronting. My adolescence was pervaded by feelings of uncertainty towards the political and cultural nation, physical landscape, and people among which I found myself living. The accidental nature of my placement on earth seemed always to scream in my face; and accidentality begets ambivalence.

Fredric Jameson writes that displacement and globalisation has caused diasporans to experience and express time as loss, and the present as loss that sometimes only feels real when it’s mediated by memory and nostalgia. But what of those born in

countries like Australia, raised into Western ways of being yet made aware, in the micropolitics of everyday life, of our ambiguous and conflicted relationship to ‘Australia’?

Sophia, a second-generation Korean Australian, tells me about the last time she was in Korea. Visiting the ruins of a kingdom, walking outside the houses where the aristocracy lived, she says, “I had this really strong image of me wearing the traditional Korean clothing, walking outside the house. It just felt really familiar, like I’d already been there, and I’d already walked around the whole area, around all the houses, up on all the steps.”

“Along with that memory there was a feeling of sadness about not being able to remember anything else. I mainly stayed in the city, and just walking around and seeing the still continuing class disparity, the dilapidated buildings along with the very modern department stores, feels unfamiliar. Even though I’ve already gone to Korea a couple of times and seen it, every time it still feels like it shouldn’t be there.”

*Had I experienced childhood visions of the ancient places where my ancestry lies, carried through my DNA as a primordial current?*

Sophia clarifies that it’s not that she would really want to live in the pre-colonial era, with its patriarchal culture, inequality and poor health, but that the problems in Korea caused by modernity and technology - a high

unemployment and suicide rate, huge wealth gap and harmful pollution - make her nostalgic for what seems like a simpler time. She points to Korea’s conservative culture and obsession with European beauty standards as other reasons for her disenchantment. Her lack of cultural knowledge about Korea, combined with some of the values she has grown up with in Australia, create in her an idealisation of pre-colonial Korea alongside feelings of dissonance toward present-day Korea.

For Maddy, a Maori woman whose father was adopted into a white Australian family, the homeland is intimately connected to family, “When I was younger I would mostly imagine my family, or rather what I considered them to look like. My dad never met his biological father and we don’t know any of our family on that side. I guess most of my images of a ‘homeland’ and family come from movies and books like *Whale Rider* or *Bulibasha*, ones that focus on family. I also have the romanticised idea of rolling hills and forests and streams that characterise the landscape of New Zealand.”

She says that these idealised images of family and landscape increase her anger toward the government and non-Maori that inhabit the country. Maddy has never been to New Zealand, but is planning on going later this year for Te

Moko, the sacred tattooing practiced in Maori cultures. “I’m not sure how I will feel toward the place when I visit, though I’ve built it up a lot in my head, particularly the connection I will feel to the land. Perhaps that’s set me up for disappointment.”

The sense of loss that Jameson writes of clearly does not end with the second-generation immigrant. The difference is that we have no memories of, and thus no real nostalgia for, the homeland which with to mediate the feeling. Time does not alleviate it. Rather, the passage of time deepens the sense of loss, as the homeland is left further behind, made more abstract and less real by an ever-widening distance to its position on a historical timeline: before the point of colonial contact.

Maybe the kind of utopia that I conjured up in my dreams - a paradox in that it is a utopia located in a romanticised past and impossible to realise - represented nothing less than my mind’s attempt to cope with this loss, carried by the vehicle of fantasy rather than memory.

To imagine such an image, with no hope of realisation, is not a vain act. Scholars have written about the potentiality that lies within the liminal figure, who exists on the margins and in the interior, is everywhere and nowhere, experiencing belonging and loss in many places at many times. Such a vantage point holds a transformative power for culture and politics.

It’s in this liminal space, an imagined place, that I find hope.

## marigolds and lilies

by DEEPA ALAM

i’ve been showered in marigolds. his eyes light up watching the body in slumber over the cotton, it doesn’t move for a while. two collared necks call in saying they will miss you, but the rose doesn’t belong to me. put it in a vase i’ll bleed it out before the week is up

my aeolian mothers shrivelled with the arsenic on their cheeks. she had lead along her waterlines. they say it’s supposed to make you see further ahead but she left spinning

i just thought she’d really make it, you know? *tumi amar sona*, you are my gold, you are my precious, my love

... the silence that follows keeps ringing

i’m still here btw, splintered mother tongues and all

how dare they  
hwo dare the  
hbw dae the y  
owa h dae htye

my chest splits in two and i’m trying to put it back together. i don’t know, she shouldn’t have left it to me. her husband looks at me like i am a dirty street dog, but i am trying and there isn’t anyone to help me. ... so tell me about the human struggle?

fight or flight, sir. the purpose of life is to keep staying alive, but her brain doesn’t work that way so you can take all of that and just oust it

let me clear my throat before i begin  
you are  
a water lily  
ok

a tenderness brought from a dark place (you brought it onto yourself. you and that stupid brain of yours i love you). let them give you the murky waters and you can bring out the blossoms



Art: Geneve Bullo



## Hair

At age six, another little girl sees the thick brown hair on my arms. "Chimp! Go back to the zoo!" Saltwater in eyes, I run from class. Locked in the bathroom, sobbing, I try to rip out the hairs. I cry, sobbing harder from the resulting pain.

My mother, well-meaning, hairless, hears my tears. She does not say I am normal, frowns at the black arm hairs. She buys me depilatory cream at ten, I weep with relief as I see my bare skin. This is what I am meant to do, right? I'm supposed to be hairless, like them.

At sixteen, something snaps within. I am not dark, like my father –my body is a genetic intermingling; I am a composite, two halves which combined to create something entirely new. I let my body be itself, let hair grow. I am not an exhibit, I am only myself.

by **MARISOL VALENZUELA**

## Lavenders

I picked these all for you when I was a small, happy child. I picked these flowers for you. I picked those teeth, a treasure of sweet *lavandula dentata* for the grandmother I longed to see.

You held me as I grieved in advance; even though your bone-thin arms had not the strength to carry me, you held on. Now the same type of lavenders sit in a cheap little shot glass, watered, next to your image, on my cabinet.

When your soul departed this place, my first instinctive thought was that the world wasn't going to stop. But every time I pass lavenders, I stop, if only to pick one for you. I picked these all for you, Joan.



## Untitled by ANONYMOUS

엄마 나...  
Mum, I'm...  
–I stop.  
How to explain  
How to describe  
a word you don't know  
in your native tongue?  
Does it even exist?

Will she understand?  
The heartache  
The trauma  
The pain  
The anguish

The judgement of  
a thousand generations  
The dishonour of  
an entire nation

I stop.  
I pause,  
I mumble,  
I smile,

I lie:

엄마 나, 배고파

Mum, I'm just hungry.

# WAN PING GOES EAST

**LEWIS ZHENG** relays a story in the voice of his father.



Art: Ann Ding

It was 1964 when my five-year-old sister, Wan Ping, was sold to a couple from Xiang Hu, a small farming village east from our own village, Che Shui. I remember it was during the Great Famine, when the whole country's stomachs lay bare and wanting. With 9 scroungy young mouths to feed, our family often lived on leaves as a staple with our quarter-handfuls of congee. My father often said we were as poor as the dirt we farmed on.

Wan Ping was such a happy demon though, maniacal even; unconsciously fighting all that misery and poverty from ever touching her. She was active as hell, chasing chickens through the village as if she was going to kick every one of them and send them flying. She had a fast mouth, always talking so fast between heavy breaths, dancing and singing in the middle of the whooping jump rope held by my oldest brother and I. Dragonflies would come floating by after heavy rain, and she and I would chase them until darkness called for our return home.

On the day she was sold, she was moseying from farm to farm, picking grass for rabbits, when my grandmother pulled her into our home and presented her to a couple from Xiang Hu. She held a clueless Wan Ping by the

wrist as the man admired her beauty and broad shoulders. They offered a price and my parents, faced with the simple fact of poverty, assented. But all of us didn't really understand; we were just excited for her. 'You're going travelling Wan Ping!'

The next morning, the couple from Xiang Hu came to collect her, bearing gifts of a blue dress and sweets for Wan Ping. She giggled in her new dress as the woman tied a ribbon in her hair. The adults all complimented her beauty and marvelled stories of adventure to her. My parents went with them on the three-day journey by foot, train and bus to the eastern village. Father held her hand as they walked out of our home. They left her there in her new home, without saying goodbye, while she was preoccupied with breakfast. Mother wept on the entire journey home. I thought she was coming back.

The whole year thereafter I pestered my parents to take me with them to visit her. When they finally agreed, I kept my eyes wide the entire trip as my circle of experience expanded into the unfamiliar eastern mountains where my sister lived. We stayed there for two nights and three days, during which the family, despite being poor

farmers as well, cooked us noodles, eggs and meat. Wan Ping was still as fresh-faced as she was loud, sprinting me around Xiang Hu to see her favourite chickens. I asked her if they treated her bad but she wouldn't say. As we left, she started crying and so did I. My parents went down every year, but I didn't return again. We could only afford to take one child of the nine to see her each time.

It wasn't until 10 years later that we saw each other again. I had just begun teaching mathematics at a high school in the city, staying in a small dorm at school and only returning home on weekends because of the long commute. I came back one weekend and was surprised and very much ecstatic to see her again in our home. Apparently, her Xiang Hu family was intent on having her marry their son.

For 8 months, she and my mother trundled into the village together to sell bamboo hats they had made. Her Xiang Hu father and brother (also the prospective husband) came multiple times to Che Shui, pleading with her to come back to their village. But I really wanted her to stay. I thought she should just find someone to marry here, so there wouldn't be a reason for her to go back.

We all accepted her return home very simply, but my oldest brother told her to go. "You're another mouth to feed in this household, you know we are poor," he would say, "but you stay here while your other family, who has given you so much already, begs you to come back and agrees to continue providing for you." We all knew he was right. She spent those 8 months in our home, with her conscience slowly simmering in anxiety. She never really did treat our home as hers anymore. She left during the week while I was still teaching in the city, and I found out only afterwards when I came back.

Not long after her return to Xiang Hu, she fell pregnant by her pseudo-brother, and they were married within the year. The parents died a few years after that. She had 4 sons with him and she stayed there since with her new family.

I saw her some years ago, when I visited Xiang Hu. We didn't talk about this whole thing though; it was just too sad. She seemed like a very traditional countryside woman then, with sundried wrinkled skin. Patches and patches had been resewn onto her clothing.



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## Ask Abe

SRC caseworker HELP Q&A



The Ask Abe column allows you to ask whatever question you might have that affects you as a student, gaining the best advice that a very worldly mutt\* can give.

### TENANCY: ENDING A LEASE EARLY

Dear Abe,

I need to end my lease early because I want to move in somewhere else with my friends. I still have 2 months left on my lease. How do I tell my landlord?

Moving On

Dear Moving On,

You will need to negotiate with your landlord to terminate your lease early. You will need to give at least 14-21 days notice and vacate by that date. The termination notice must be in writing, signed by you and say the address where you live, the date you will vacate, and the reason (if any). Make sure that everything is in writing and you keep a copy. Make sure you return your keys and do not leave anything in the home on the vacate date.

You may have to pay a fee of 4-6 weeks rent for breaking the lease, or you may be able to negotiate an amount if there are issues with the property that are forcing you to leave. If you cannot agree upon the fee you may be able to make an application for an order from the Tribunal (NCAT). Fair Trading NSW has information about this process and what you are or are not liable to pay.

If you want to end your lease early, you could also try transferring your tenancy to someone else with your landlord's consent.

You can also get advice from your local tenancy advocate, or a caseworker at the SRC. They give free and confidential advice about tenancy matters.

Abe

### CENTRELINK: MOVING IN WITH A PARTNER

Dear Abe,

I want to move in with my girlfriend but we're worried about our Centrelink payments. If we're both receiving Youth Allowance, will our payments be affected?

GR (Arts 3<sup>rd</sup> year)

Dear GR,

If Centrelink decides you are in a de facto relationship (member of a couple) you will be subjected to the Partner Income Test. This applies even if you don't share income or one of you doesn't receive Youth Allowance.

Generally, your payment may be affected depending on whether either you or your partner are currently living at home, at the dependent rate, or at the independent rate. If you receive Youth Allowance at the dependent rate then your payment might not be affected, but if you are receiving the independent rate you will be means tested against your own income and

assets as well as your partner's.

As you are just moving in together, your payment will most likely not be affected in the beginning, because you will continue to be means tested as dependent on your parents for the first year unless you are already considered independent for the purposes of Centrelink. After a year of living with your partner, you will be considered independent. Your income is reduced by 60c for every dollar your partner's gross income goes over the cut off point if they are receiving either Youth Allowance or Austudy as a full time student. The cut of point varies depending on individual circumstances, such as whether one or both of you are receiving Youth Allowance or Austudy and your age.

To discuss your specific situation talk to an SRC caseworker. You can email your situation to help@src.usyd.edu.au or phone 9660 5222 to make an appointment.

Abe

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# That which we call a rose...

JOCELIN CHAN asks what's in a name?

In the unlikely event that I marry a man, it is almost certain that I will keep my surname. I'm proud of it, I'm used to it, and I'm a feminist. Until recently, however, I didn't realise that there was another impetus for the preservation of my surname: a cultural one.

Traditionally, Chinese\* women don't change their surname after marriage. It's difficult to dig up the history behind this as there is little in English about it. However, there is a consensus that this practice wasn't necessarily feminist; without her husband's surname, a woman could be excluded from the genealogical record, and her husband's surname would be recorded only on her grave. Such designs, of course, have since faded, yet the tradition remains. In Chinese honorifics, 太太 (tàitai) expresses "Mrs" and is accompanied by the husband's surname, yet is used only in personal contexts. 女士 (nǚshi) is the more formal honorific, and is used with the woman's maiden name.

The Cultural Revolution cemented the practice of keeping one's maiden name, as Mao believed that a woman's adoption of her husband's surname did not reflect equality. This practice also altered regionally;. For instance, married female public servants in Hong Kong add their husband's surname before their own, due to the influence of British colonialism.

What happens, however, when these traditions intermingle with Western influences? Are they preserved, or do they adapt to fit the new environment?

My mother has only partially changed her name. Though referring to herself as "Alice Chan" in day-to-day interactions, her legal name remains as "Ching-Ha Cheung". For her, making an official change "was a bit complicated", as it would involve a lot of documentation because it wasn't a common practice in Hong Kong where she and my father married. "I would change it otherwise," she said. For her, taking on my father's surname was a sign of respect for their relationship and a way to honour the Chan family. She added that she did not feel it was an anti-feminist choice, as "a woman's right is not in the

surname but mutual respect."

Among the Australian second generation, there seemed to be less awareness of this tradition. Dawn Lee married earlier this year and is in the process of changing her name legally. She cited her reasons for changing as a "combination of tradition and [her husband's] wishes", but did not factor in Chinese tradition in her decision-making process. Indeed, she refers to Western practice as the "tradition" she follows.

Rebecca Chiu, who has retained her maiden name, expressed surprise when I told her about the tradition. "I didn't know!" she said. She and her husband had discussed a change, but it seemed too dramatic and involved too much paperwork, so they decided to "leave it for now". However, Ms Chiu stated that if she was meeting her husband's friends for the first time, she may introduce herself with his surname as a way to draw a connection to him.

Certainly, in these women's decision-making process, Western tradition provides the greatest impetus for change, but the unwillingness to trawl through exorbitant amounts of paperwork is a convincing factor in retaining their maiden name. The factors they considered when deciding whether to change also differed from mine, reflecting the breadth of Asian-Australian women's experience and concerns.

I have a curious anecdote to conclude: Chinese tradition sees children take their father's surname, but there are occasional exceptions. I interviewed Anne Dong\*, who used to bear her mother's surname before a switch to her father's. According to Ms Dong, her mother had wanted a bit of variety and her father "thought it was tough on her" and conceded. The switch to her father's name was, the way she told it, similarly arbitrary. "It was mostly my dad's ego and 'I don't want my kid to be bullied in high school,'" she said glibly.

Evidently, tradition no longer has the final say on our names. We as women can draw our diverse experiences together to make the most apt choice for ourselves.

**\*ETHNICALLY HAN, NOT JUST MAINLAND CHINESE  
\*NAME HAS BEEN CHANGED**



Art: Ann Ding

## THE SHOW IS OVER

ANGELA PRADHAN reflects on the intersection of class and race in activism

Growing up, the only books and scholars that taught me about organizing and injustice were Necessity and Experience. Before I came to college and learned words academics used to describe what I was doing, I was organizing resources from my neighborhood for educational gender equity in the Global South in high school. As a freshman in college I was organizing with #BlackLivesMatter, when activism was still in its early stages of arguing with the public about why protest was even valid. It's understandable not to have these experiences, but the problem comes when there is a gap between learning about these topics in classes, actually experiencing them, and actively seeking to experience this.

There are many people who do in fact have things to lose other than our chains. In the communities that I belong to, people of color from poor backgrounds involved in activism must vigilantly protect their identities in order to protect themselves from being surveilled by the police online and in person. It then startles me to see white and non-black people of color, posting pictures of themselves looking angry with a sign or writing paragraphs on

social media about activism and being praised. It's important to realize that there is security and comfort afforded to people who can #activist, Audre Lorde quote, and fist raise all over social media. I think about the freedom that is afforded to students who can post pictures of themselves protesting with no social or monetary repercussions and be lauded.

When I see white, white-passing, and light skinned POC usually from middle to higher class backgrounds throwing themselves on private college pavement and almost thirsting to experience a police standoff while campus police stand idly by, I think about the NYPD officers who swung their batons at the sight of us, a bunch of city teenagers with cardboard signs..

White and white passing students in particular can afford the "bad image" of an activist and after college, slip just as easily into the image of a non-threatening fresh college graduate who went through a phase, instead of being branded for life as a local and state threat.

When I see students from these

backgrounds calling themselves activists I wonder who they really are 'act'-ing for. A lot of it feels like merely a performance of camera-ready expressions, outfits, and makeup in order to resemble the hallmarks of activism, while missing the point entirely.

These students who are not organizing out of survival, but are learning about inequality second-hand are needed, but there's a difference in the ways academically taught organisers and community-taught organisers mobilize for change.

It's a given that as a movement hits the mainstream, it becomes commercialized and commodified: the key is to center the people whose activism is for survival.

It angers me to see aforementioned groups study the political organizing of poor people of color and in turn try to mimic them by using language and actions to essentially co-opt a movement that is not and will never be theirs. These groups are the very same students and professors who often disregard poor people, in particular poor people of color, contribute to our

exploitation, and end up gentrifying our own neighborhoods in trying to "rescue us" to prove they are the good ones.

It makes sense when academia is steeped in the exclusion and maltreatment of poor people, that it would also be evident in students and professors. Most poor people of color cannot afford to go to college, much less a private college. If we do, we're focused on surviving there, especially if we're also first-generation or excluded in other ways.

Acknowledge this gap in experience, realize it's okay not to have all the answers, and listen to people who do. It's possible and necessary for us to look at the ways that each of us simultaneously benefit from inequality and ways that we do not. Working on the former will help the latter. That means spending more time tackling injustices in your own family, childhood neighborhood, and life. That might not be the audience you're looking for, but it's the one that needs you, and the one that you need too.

## President's Report

ISABELLA BROOK

Last Wednesday thousands of students across the country protested in a National Day of Action against the federal Government's proposed cuts to higher education. The Sydney University protest was attended by hundreds of students and included speakers from the National Tertiary Education Union and federal politicians.

What these national protests show us is that there is strong opposition to the government's war on students. University staff, union members, politicians and everyday members of our community are standing in solidarity with students who are standing up for

their right to an accessible education.

Wednesday's protest was called by the National Union of Student's (NUS), the peak representative body for tertiary education students across Australia. NUS has a strong and proud history of active and engaging student campaigns. In 2014 NUS mobilised thousands of students to protest the Liberal Government's plans to deregulate university fees. This campaign resulted in the defeat of deregulation, with the Federal government failing to pass its bill twice.

NUS also advocate for students on a

number of different issues. They fight for affordable, quality education, better living standards for students, and making our campuses safer for all. They conduct nationwide surveys into student wellbeing and sexual assault and harassment on campus. And they pressure universities and our government into taking action on important student issues.

Most importantly NUS exists for all of us. NUS gives students a strong and cohesive voice on a national platform, in order represent us and advocate in our best interests. When students are facing attacks, such as the ones we're

seeing now, NUS plays an important role in ensuring that students work together and fight back.

The current political climate is dire. In a time where workers and students are facing some of the worst attacks we've seen in years the Liberal Government is doing everything they can to destroy unions and leave us voiceless. It's up to us to continually engage with students and our communities to fight for our rights and ensure the survival of our union.

D & B x

## General Secretary's Report

DANIEL ERGAS and ISABELLA PYTKA

As the A-frames and lurid shirts (finally) vacate Eastern Avenue, and the NDA marches on its merry way, you're still here, reading this report, almost there at the first semester finish line... Congratulations!

I was planning to write this report in the style of '80s rock anthems (you could have expected classics such as - 'we built this NDA on rock-and-roll'), but, alas, you'll have to deal with this standard and dreary format. We're tired too.

We are onto the less-sexy, yet more re-

port-worthy task of internal administration of the SRC. We received our SSF allocation from the University, so we're onto budgeting for our collectives and departments. Over the coming week, we'll meet with every staff member for half-yearly consults, and interview candidates for the role of the Electoral Officer for this year's SRC elections. (WILD!) As always, we would love you to email us about you, your ideas, and your breakfast - general.secretary@src.usyd.edu.au.

In other news, which many may find exciting, or like us, slightly intimidating, only two weeks left until STUVAC. Let's just say - we are both ready for the break. Use your final weeks wisely - join a collective, come to a protest, tell your lecturers and tutors you support the NTEU's demands... just do a little thing that the Uni doesn't want you to. It's worth it.

## Wom\*n's Officers' Report

IMOGEN GRANT and KATIE THORBURN

On May 11 we protested the screening of the "Red Pill" - a popular alt-right recruitment film that promotes the idea that men are oppressed by women. Since MRAs only discuss men's rights and masculinity in reference to feminism or violence against women, it's not acting for men, it's acting against women. This isn't activism that focuses on establishing services for issues that affect men, this is resentment that people believe women when they talk about the violence they've suffered at the hands of men. Importantly, the screening was attended by known fascists from the United Patriots Front.

In particular, the film promotes the notion that feminists have overstated the existence of 'rape culture',

and that many women are lying when they voice their experiences of sexual assault and thereby feeding into a culture that condones and normalises rape. The documentary's star, A Voice for Men's Paul Elam, is a pro-rape racist who in 2010 wrote: "Should I be called to sit on a jury for a rape trial, I vow publicly to vote not guilty, even in the face of overwhelming evidence that the charges are true." Given the prominence of the sexual assault campaign, we believe that this screening was a targeted and antagonistic attempt to discredit feminists and women on campus.

Last week we also protested the Catholic Society's event called 'Is Abortion the Solution?' which was a

shameless display of anti-woman and anti-choice propaganda. The event posed as neutral, yet had an explicitly political and religious agenda: one that has at its core the restriction of bodily autonomy. The choices people make regarding their pregnancy should be properly informed and unchallenged by partisan groups who use misinformation to persuade them to choose a particular option. Abortion should be free, accessible, and safe with absolutely no apologies.

Sorry Day is coming up on Friday 26 May, and at 5:30pm Victoria Park the Wom\*n's Collective will be protesting against forced child removal, incarceration, and for reparations and healing for the Stolen Generations and their

families. The feminist movement has often overlooked the struggles facing Aboriginal women. Whilst feminists have advocated for reproductive rights through access to abortion, Aboriginal women have been fighting for their children and rights as mothers. The government continues to take Aboriginal children from their families, now at the highest rate ever. USyd Wom\*n's Collective says "no more!": there must be Aboriginal control of Aboriginal child welfare. Please join us, Friday 5.30pm in Victoria Park.

As always, email us at usydwomen-scollective@gmail.com

## Mature Age Students' Officer's Report

VINIL KUMAR did not submit a report this week

## Refugee Rights Officer's Report

CAITLIN MCMENEMIN, KELTON MUIR DE MOORE and JESS WHITTALL did not submit a report this week

## Residential College Officer's Report

JOHN-PATRICK ASIMAKIS, MICHELLE PICONE and WILLIAM RYAN did not submit a report this week







Man’s illness causes community concern

ANGELA PRENDERGAST reports

A 29-year-old Marrickville local has been sadly diagnosed with Race Blindness. Chris\* Hopkins, father of two children at Westwood School, began causing alarm in his neighbourhood when he claimed that all individuals looked the same. It had been reported that before his diagnosis, he was infamous for announcing that he could not see race. This news sadly came after he posted a status on his personal Facebook account where the comments were low, and the likes were varied between wow and angry reacts:

“We are one race. The Human Race”

The news about his diagnoses travelled quickly the next morning. The Carnival was a mere two days later. With the high demand for race specialists such as Joan ‘My-Asian-Neighbour’ Suzuki, and Jayda ‘Spice-Legend’ Patel, an appointment within 3 days was next to impossible. Chris attended the carnival nonetheless and cheered, only to hear that he was cheering for the 200 metre heat, as he had missed the 100 metre final.

There were reports from witnesses stating that the 29-year-old acted aggressively toward the other patrons at the carnival. Mrs Chan stated that “[the man in question] was there for over an hour. He could not have missed it”. But sadly, the events of two days earlier had led him to this fate. The events of that afternoon are remembered each year by an ‘International Food Market’ day at the school.

He was last seen outside Woolworths in Waterloo. Woolworths staff provided security footage of Chris talking to a cat by the entrance, reportedly saying “Oh Donna, is that a cashmere coat today?”.

Experts say his illness has progressed to Species Blindness, and he can no longer decipher between animals and people. There is fear his illness will denigrate further, as he may no longer be able to tell the difference between houses and human beings.

Please contact 1600RACE if you have any information on Chris as he is still missing.

\*His name has been changed for legal purposes

POEM OF THE WEEK

by ANTOINETTE CHOW

I spy  
with  
my little eye

racism.

EXCLUSIVE: STUDENTS IMPOSE SEGREGATION UNDER GUISE OF ‘SAFER SPACES’ POLICY

Local student and white’s rights activist, Monique Trout, has uncovered an insidious plot to impose apartheid on the University of Sydney campus.

Monique, standing outside the doors of the recently dubbed “Ethnocultural Space”, angrily stuffing pieces of Wonderwhite sliced bread into her foaming mouth, told *Honi Soit* how she discovered the space on her way to Ralph’s Cafe for a yoghurt, her third of the day.

According to Monique, recordings she obtained of students in the space demonstrate that the creation of the space is part of a wider plan to impose U.S. Civil Rights-era segregation on the entire Camperdown campus.

‘It’s true,’ said Samuel Gomez, ethnocultural student activist, ‘We really don’t want to be around white people anymore. We are tired of sharing toilets with them, and being judged for wanting to squat on the toilet in peace. It’s extremely good for your digestive system.’

Emily Thomas, fellow ethnocultural student, joined the Ethnic Students for Segregation (ESS) after an incident that occurred in line at Fisher Coffee cart.

‘I was like, how many more times do I have to stand in line for twenty minutes behind a pair of law students explaining to the barrister that they just want their coffee to be a mixture of soy, almond, rice, oat and carrot milk, and threatening to call their dad’s legal team if they don’t get what they want,” says Thomas, ‘A friend then told me about ESS, and I thought it sounded like a great plan. Carrot milk should be purged.’

ESS has outlined a Three Point Plan and distributed it to members. *Honi Soit* has obtained a copy, which includes the creation of safer spaces, safer bathrooms, safer libraries and eventually safer classrooms. The ultimate goal is to create separate facilities for PoC and white people.

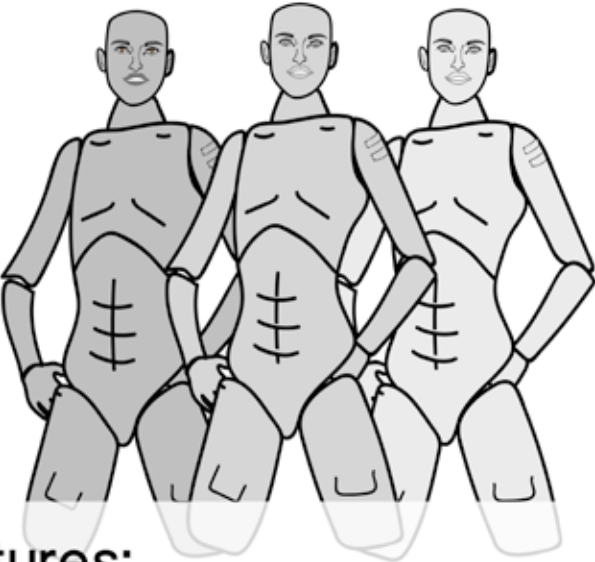
‘We thought, why not take advantage of the fact that white liberal sympathy to racism is so trendy right now. These days, you can claim all kinds of free shit on the grounds of white people being terrible,’ says President of ESS, Raden Xue.

HOW TO PRONOUNCE THESE DIFFICULT WHITE NAMES

Avoid any mishaps at your next work party with this list!

|                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Anders (On-ders)                 | McConaughey (Mc-koh-ne-hay)     |
| Björk (Bee-yawk)                 | Pesci (Peh-she)                 |
| Coster-Waldau (Cos-ter-Wall-dow) | Piaget (Pee-ah-jeh)             |
| Famke (Fom-ke)                   | Saoirse (Seer-sha)              |
| Fiennes (Finez)                  | Schwarznegger (Sh-warts-neg-er) |
| Gotye (Go-tee-yay)               | Scorsese (Score-sess-e)         |
| Gruffudd (Grih-fith)             | Seigny (Sev-uh-nee)             |
| Gyllenhaal (Yoo-luh-nhohl)       | Seyfried (Sigh-fred)            |
| Hough (Huff)                     | Seymour (See-more)              |
| Idina (Eye-dee-nuh)              | Shakespeare (Shake-spear)       |
| Janssen (Yan-ss-en)              | Shia (Shy-uh)                   |
| Joaquin (Wah-keen)               | Siobhan (Shi-vaun)              |
| Johansson (Yo-han-sen)           | Szyslak (Siz-lack)              |
| Jovovich (Yoh-ve-vich)           | Ulysses (Yoo-luh-seas)          |
| Keoghan (Koh-gahn)               | Wahlberg (Wall-berg)            |
| Labeouf (Le-buhf)                | Wasikowska (Vah-she-kof-scar)   |
| Leighton (Lay-ton)               | Weisz (Vice)                    |

Introducing the eTH7<sup>nx</sup>  
More diverse than diversity.  
One body. Nine actors. Infinite possibilities.



Features:  
The combined DNA of  
Tilda Swinton, Matt Damon, Angelina Jolie,  
Jake Gyllenhaal, Emma Stone, Rooney Mara,  
Johnny Depp, Scarlett Johansson & Ben Affleck  
Comes in new colours!  
*Including:* TIBETAN (Doctor Strange, Swinton),  
MEXICAN-AMERICAN (Argo, Affleck)  
CHINESE-HAWAIIAN (Aloha, Stone)  
Waterproof  
Powered by White Privilege


Watch the video >

Learn More >

wikiHow to Deal with Racism

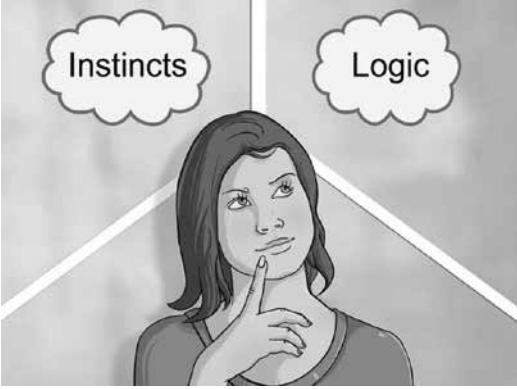
A four step guide by ANGELA PRENDERGAST

Step 1: Recognising the ‘but’ term




When faced with racism, oftentimes the statement ‘I’m not racist but...’ is said BEFORE a racist comment. However, it is actually acceptable for racism after their conversation topic has been prefaced. Therefore we should not get angry and/or upset if they have used the ‘but’ term.

Step 2: Spice Factor



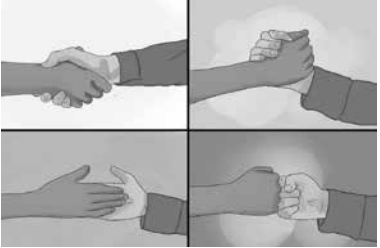
Don’t act aggressively but tactically. Often we have instincts to irrationally get violent towards racists. But we must consider their feelings. Why were they racist? Was the mayonnaise in their lunch particularly spicy today? Can they give out spice but not handle it?

Step 3: Listen



Don’t be quick to judge. Perhaps they too felt the reality of racism at their selective high school for being one of four other white kids. It is our duty as PoC to comfort and help these people.

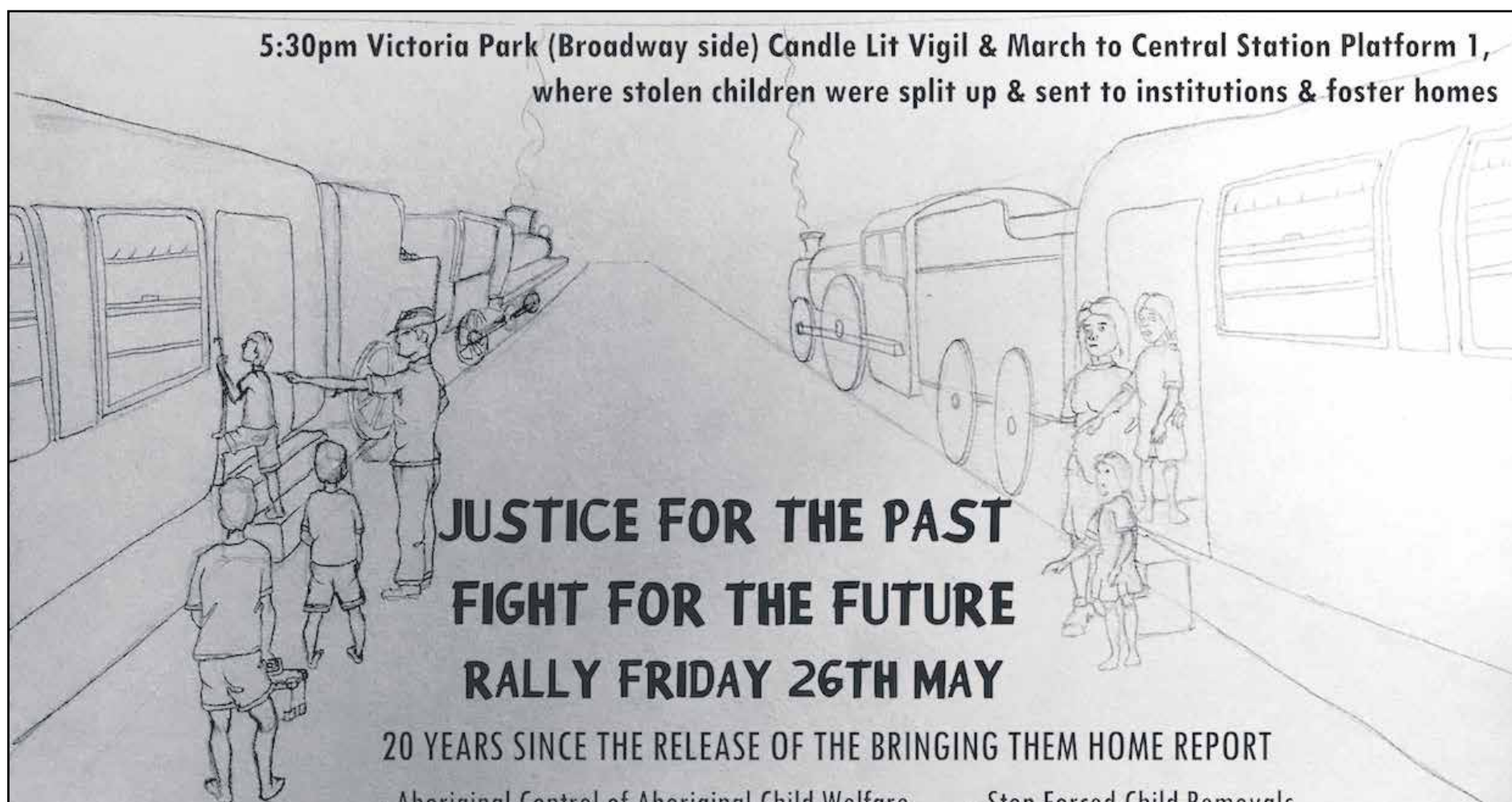
Step 4: Allow permission for an Oriental themed party



Now you’re best mates. And each time they have a question about cultural appropriation and how best to ask someone where they’re really from, you’re the go to guy. So next time they ask for your permission to have an Oriental themed party, of a Mexican fiesta, let’s give racism a pass. We all have to party sometimes!



5:30pm Victoria Park (Broadway side) Candle Lit Vigil & March to Central Station Platform 1,  
where stolen children were split up & sent to institutions & foster homes



## JUSTICE FOR THE PAST FIGHT FOR THE FUTURE RALLY FRIDAY 26TH MAY

20 YEARS SINCE THE RELEASE OF THE BRINGING THEM HOME REPORT

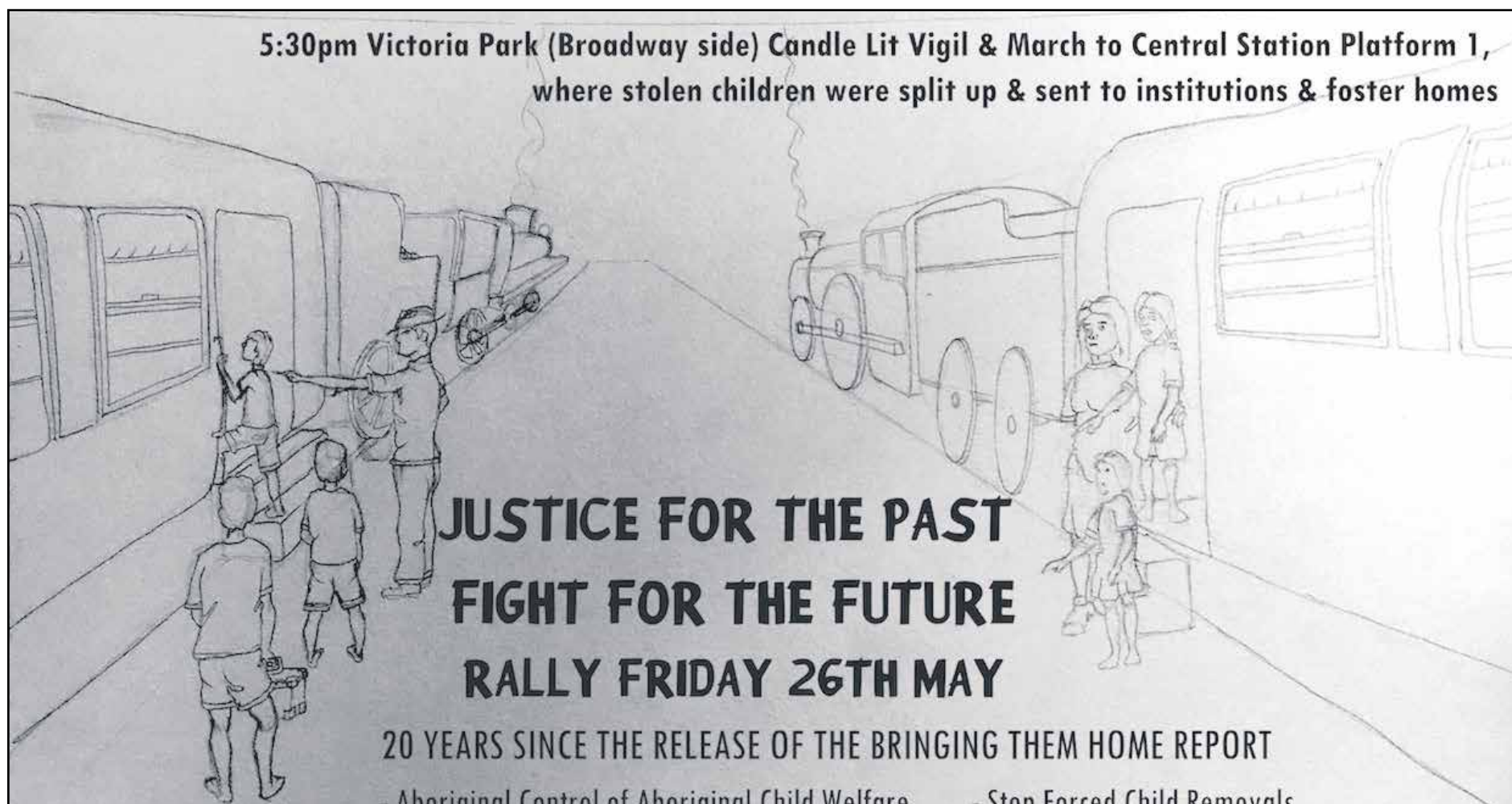
- Aboriginal Control of Aboriginal Child Welfare
- Stop Forced Child Removals
- Reparations & Healing for the Stolen Generations & their families
- Close Youth Prisons

Speakers include representatives from the Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation, Grandmothers Against Removals Sydney and Joanne and Kirra Voller, mother and sister of Dylan Voller, who was tortured in Don Dale youth prison in Darwin.



Artwork by Richard Campbell

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