

Honi Soit

Week 11, Semester 1, 2020 / First printed 1929



Dismantling the Romantic ideal / p. 15

State of the University
of Sydney Union / p. 6

An investigation into
USyd vloggers / p. 13

The enchanting exotic
in Classical music / p. 14



Acknowledgement of Country



Honi Soit is published on the stolen land of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation. For over 230 years, First Nations people in this country have suffered from the destructive effects of invasion. The editors of this paper recognise that, as a team of settlers occupying the lands of the Bidjigal, Darug, Gadigal, Wangal and Wallumedegal people, we are beneficiaries of these reverberations that followed European settlement. As we strive throughout the year to offer a platform to the voices mainstream media ignores, we cannot meet this goal without providing a space for First Nations people to share their experiences and perspectives. A student paper which does not acknowledge historical and ongoing colonisation and the white supremacy embedded within Australian society can never adequately represent the students of the institution in which it operates. We seek to resist colonial violence and the racist power structures that serve to oppress those who are Indigenous to this land. Sovereignty was never ceded. Always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

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Editorial

There is a concerning tendency amongst the left at this university to resist criticism. Criticism, no matter how well meaning or well written, is considered the most unholy of sins. Though I understand this resistance, and I've certainly experienced it, I ultimately find it to be both regressive and very boring.

Criticism allows for growth in our personal and political lives. It begs us to understand things in deeper, more meaningful ways. It encourages us to interrogate the structures of our society, and the way that they manifest in the media we consume.

Criticism is not always condemnation. It can be both an act of optimism, and an act of love. In this edition, there is plenty of criticism. There is criticism of our media, in Shania O'Brien's 'Dismantling the Romantic ideal', a feature that interrogates Romanticism for all its faults and merits. 'The enchanting exotic', by Grace Johnson, explores the way Classical music interacts with musical traditions from outside the Western canon.

My fellow editors Lara Sonnenschein and Nina Dillon-Britton offer criticism of the USU, an institution that ought to be analysed more often, and more thoroughly. The politics of the SUPRA

election are criticised by Markus Mosbech, a post-graduate student concerned with the depoliticisation of a formerly radical institution. Humbly, I offer a criticism of feminist organising on campus, including my own work as Women's Officer.

I wish to thank Janina Osinsao for her gorgeous cover art, and the work of our reporters, especially my own, in contributing to this edition.

I hope that the work in this paper encourages you to think critically. I hope that the work in this paper is criticised.

Yours in Solidarity,

Madeline Ward.

Letters

We're so sorry, we'll try and be more considerate of the white Americans bearing the brunt of racism in the future

Hello,

I'm writing in regards to a recent article published by Honi Soit, "Kristina Keneally to be deported under tough new Labor migration policy" on 3 May, 2020.

The churlish tone of Ms. Britton's recent satirical piece was upsetting to see in a paper known for its robust advocacy for inclusivity. There is no doubt Senator Keneally's comments should come under scrutiny - she is a public servant who represents the diverse, multicultural community that is modern New South Wales. The fact her recent comments could lead to discriminatory and racist attitudes directing the nation's immigration policy is an issue that warrants serious consideration - likely beyond the pages of Honi Soit's comedy section.

To attack Senator Keneally's recent comments by insinuating that the Senator's "distinctive American accent" disqualifies her from contributing to the nation's political conversation concerning migration - that her mixed national heritage is a barrier to full participation in the Australian community - is abhorrent. Joke or not, it panders to the same anti-immigrant sentiment the article fails to challenge through satire.

Like Senator Keneally, I was born in the United States and have Australian citizenship. I've spent most of my life living in the United States, but have always taken pride in my connection to Australia - a pride that has only been reinforced by the fact that since joining

the USYD community, how I sound and where I come from has not been treated as a bar to my ability to participate fully in Australian society.

To watch the Uni's flagship paper turn their back on this spirit of inclusivity to score a few cheap political points is tremendously disappointing. If the best Honi Soit can do to dismantle Keneally's argument is attack her for who she is and where she comes from, then this publication's reputation as the University's paper of record is sorely unwarranted.

It's my hope that in the future Honi Soit will engage with the content of Senator Keneally's position rather than belittle her for where she was born in the paper's comedy section. Such an engagement might even serve as a meaningful contribution to the evolving discussion of what it means to be Australian in 2020. Shame upon anyone who thinks evil of that.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Alex Bird

Apology to Sydney University Catholic Society

The *Honi Soit* Editorial team accepts and supports the principles laid down in Sydney University's Student Charter, the Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy and the Charter of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom.

We note that the university "greatly values courage, civility and respect and promotes a climate where people disagree well" and support that ethos. Honi Soit has a long and proud history of debating issues and ideas in serious and satirical ways. The pieces complained of by the Catholic Society were intended to be satirical but it was not our intention to imply that the Catholic Society or its individual members, specifically Teresa Bernardo, are anti-Semitic or sexual predators. We acknowledge, however, that the items have been taken to be disrespectful of members of the Catholic Society, and caused them offence and hurt. We offer an unreserved apology for this.

If the Catholic Society would like, we are happy to publish this apology in next week's edition of *Honi Soit*.

We offer this written undertaking to treat the Catholic Society and its members in future in accordance with the principles of the Student Charter, the Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy and the Charter of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom.

We would like to thank the SAU and the Catholic Society for participating in discussions, and believe we better understand their concerns. These discussions have affected, and will continue to affect, our editorial decisions.

Write, create and produce for *Honi Soit*

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Who? Weekly

Attack!

Socialist Alternative carried out a coordinated attack on the social media of Prudence Wilkins-Wheat this week, after a post by fellow Environment Officer and SAlt member Lily Campbell called attention to some naughty comments made by Wilkins-Wheat in her Honi interview. The comments, which indicated support for cuts to USU staff, have proved to be quite the headache for the Pru for USU campaign, enough so that she released a statement on her campaign page clarifying them.

It wasn't enough for SAlt, who continued to conduct their assault. There's something truly beautiful about witnessing a Trot takedown, like watching a ballet.

That's not quite what we said

There's been some selective editing going on from the campaigns of Beware Belinda and Plotter

Prudence. Pru for USU cherry-picked the sweet stuff for a garish series of Instagram slides, but didn't go so far as to photoshop the actual lay up of the paper à la Bring on Belinda. They correctly quoted us writing that Belinda had the highest score, but curiously omitted where we called her uninspiring and ideologically inconsistent. We wonder why?

Cash rules everything around me

USU candidate Adequate Ada has a dubious like to follower ratio, leading us to wonder if her likes have been — dare we say it — purchased. Either that, or she has the worst social media engagement rate on the planet. 400 page likes but only 3 reacts per post? Come on.

Fellow USU candidate Ambitious Amir also has some sketchy inflated numbers on both his personal and business Instagram account.

2020 USU Board candidates weigh in on decision to cut staff pay

Honi Soit reports.

We asked this year's Board hopefuls about the USU Board's recent decision to cut their staff pay by 40%, which was made in a closed meeting.

1. Do you support the cut to staff pay?

Yes: Vikki Qin, Belinda Thomas, Nick Rigby

Of the ten candidates running this year, only three expressed support for the wage cut announced on Wednesday: Vikki Qin (Independent), Belinda Thomas (Unity) and Nick Rigby (Liberal).

Belinda Thomas makes clear that a staff pay cut must be an “absolute last resort” but gives the benefit of the doubt to the USU Board, assuming that, in this case, it was. “I would like to think that in this circumstance the Board has exhausted every single option possible to cut spending elsewhere, before turning to staff wages.” Like almost every other candidate asked, Thomas says the University should support the USU financially.

Nick Rigby, who Thomas cited as the candidate closest to her in her Honi interview, also sees the cuts as necessary. Despite the USU making no public calls for support from the University or elsewhere before announcing the decision, Rigby says he is “confident that the USU would only ever reduce the hours of staff as a last-resort decision to prevent the USU from becoming insolvent and thus completely laying off all employees of the Union.” Rigby believes that the “decision made by the USU [was] one to prevent the inexistence of the Union altogether,” though later in his statement asserts that the University should offer greater financial support for the USU. The USU has made no public calls for increased support.

Finally, Vikki Qin told Honi that: “I do support wage cute [sic] due to much lower level of workload and financial difficulties,” though she also noted staff should have been consulted.

No: Prudence Wilkins-Wheat, Ruby Lotz, Jiale Wang, Ben Hines

A surprising grouping of candidates disapproved of the decision: Prudence Wilkins-Wheat (Switchroots), Ruby Lotz (NLS), Jiale Wang (Panda) and Ben Hines (Liberal).

Wilkins-Wheat states that she would have argued, and voted, against the motion, labelling the USU “increasingly out-of-touch” with students and its own staff. While she expressed support for cuts to pay, were it hypothetically necessary, in her Honi interview, she has since clarified that this was meant if “the continuity of the USU relied upon it.” Unlike Thomas, she does not believe this was the case.

As evidence, Wilkins-Wheat cites the fact that the USU has not made its financial situation public, has not publicly called on the University to bail them out and has not reached out to the SRC for “assistance or collaboration in their Defend Our Education campaign” — which she supported at this week's council meeting. She states that she would have used reserves before resorting to staff pay cuts, if she were on the Board.

Lotz expresses disapproval of the decision along similar lines. “I think that the Board should have launched a public campaign to lobby the University for financial support.” “In saying that,” Lotz qualifies, “I think anger should be directed to the University for not supporting the USU, and to the current government.”

Ben Hines, who is running as an ‘Independent’ but is a member of the Liberal Party and SULC, is a surprising addition to this list. Although Hines’ response puts him dangerously close to the bullshit category of response below, he believes, though it was “possible” the decision was necessary, “I would find it hard to justify.” Like Lotz and Wilkins-Wheat, Hines cites the fact that it does not appear the University was asked to bail out the USU. For Hines, consultations with staff prior to the decision being made would have been

“non-negotiable.”

Finally, Wang states he doesn't support the decision because he has “no idea where the number of 40% came from.”

Non-answer: Eitan Harris, Ada Choi

Training themselves well for their future Board careers, Eitan Harris (Labor) and Ada Choi are less than forthcoming with their answers.

Harris tells Honi that “without the publication of the USU's current financials, I am not able to make a comment on the necessity of the decision.” But he does believe that “further steps should have been taken to prevent this regrettable action.” Specifically, Harris cites the USU's grocery boxes as being a poor choice. Apart from staff cuts, the boxes appear to be the only action the USU has taken to raise revenue in light of the campus closure.

Choi states similarly that she cannot comment given she has “limited information on how the decision has been made and a bigger picture of the current financial situation of USU.”

Total silence: Amir Jabbari

Amir Jabbari is the only one of this year's candidates to not respond to our questions. If you're reading this Amir, we'd love to hear from you!

2. Do you think the Board vote should be made public?

Yes: Prudence Wilkins-Wheat, Belinda Thomas, Eitan Harris, Ruby Lotz, Ben Hines

This mixed bag of candidates all indicated to Honi that transparency and accountability are pressing issues and that the Board vote should have been public.

No: Vikki Qin

Despite campaigning on a policy basis of making USU funding more transparent, Qin appears not to extend the meaning of this buzzword to publicly

documenting USU Board meetings. “I'm leaning towards not making the vote breakdown publicly available. Although transparency is important... making it publicly available might direct hate and resentments [sic] at certain board directors that voted yes/no.” Questions remain as to whether Vikki is ready to deal with the public scrutiny a USU Board position entails.

Non-answer: Ada Choi, Nick Rigby, Jiale Wang

Ironically, these three candidates gave us pretty opaque answers as to whether they think the breakdown of the USU Board vote should be made public.

Like his interview, Rigby's response is a masterclass in spin. “There is value in a board having robust discussion privately and having a vote...as a measure of unity and of teamwork and collaboration”. But staff pay cuts were a “divisive, important, out-of-the-ordinary issue, and the membership is insisting to know how their representatives voted.” Ultimately Rigby would not commit strongly either way, stating simply that the Board should “seriously consider” making the breakdown public.

Choi tells us that Board meetings should be “more transparent,” but did not respond to whether the breakdown should be made public.

In response to our question, Wang states that he is “focusing on that if usu has ways to publish its financial report usu is not a corporation but even corporation publish their financial reports).” If anyone knows what he means by this, let us know.

Total silence: Amir Jabbari

Seriously Amir, we're here if you need to chat x.

USU Board cuts staff pay by 40%

Nina Dillon Britton and Lara Sonnenschein report.

At a closed staff forum this afternoon, the University of Sydney Union (USU) announced a cut to staff wages of 40% by reducing the staff workload to 60% across the organisation. This follows layoffs of much of the USU's casual staff, during a period of financial difficulty for the organisation as a result of the campus closure.

This will be effective until Friday 26 June, pending further extension and updates from the University regarding the return of students to campus.

Staff told Honi that they had not been consulted prior to the decision. Aside from beginning to sell grocery boxes, it is unclear what steps, if any, the Board has taken to remedy its financial situation before approving the cut.

Given it does not appear in publicly available Board meeting minutes, it appears that the cut was decided in-camera by the Board. Though the cut would have been voted for by a majority of board directors, it is unknown at this time how individual board directors voted.

A staff member told Honi “It's rough, but it's not as bad as it could've been. At least no one's been fired.”

At a Special Meeting of the Board last night, USU President Connor Wherrett stated that the USU was facing an “extraordinarily difficult” period financially. When asked by Honi, he stated that the largest operating expenditure for the USU was staff.

When pressed, Wherrett would not say what the exact funding shortfall was for the USU over this semester, stating that the Board “wanted to put its best consistent foot forward” for potential sponsors at the upcoming Annual General Meeting.

As a result, Honi emailed all sitting board directors as to whether they were considering further staff layoffs or cuts. Five replied: Wherrett, Senate-appointed director Marie Leech, first year student board director Irene Ma (Advance), second year student board director and Vice President Lachlan Finch (Liberal) and first year student board director Nick Forbutt (NLS). All

stated that they would not respond to the questions.

Ma, Forbutt and Finch cited section 8.2(a) of the USU Constitution, which states that amongst other duties, it is the President's duty to make representations on behalf of the Board and defend its policies and decisions. None of the questions put to the directors regarded decisions or policies of the Board, only their opinions.

This appears an inaccurate interpretation of the provision. No provision, including section 8.2(a), specifically bars board directors from speaking about what policies they are deciding upon or what decisions have been made by the Board. Section 8.2 lists a number of duties of the USU President, some of which are also exercised by other members of the Board. USU board directors also regularly publicly promote the Board's popular decisions and policies on their social media accounts.

Current Board policy means that decisions about staff pay occur in-

camera. When asked for the justification behind this at yesterday's Special Board Meeting, Wherrett stated that he didn't know and Honi should ask the policy's drafter, believed to be Kade Denton, a 2013-15 student board director.

Almost all current board directors, including Wherrett, criticised the lack of transparency of the Board when they ran for directorship. Several board candidates for the upcoming USU election, including Prudence Wilkins-Wheat, Jiale Wang, Ruby Lotz do as well. Lotz in particular is promising a transparency review, last conducted in 2014.

Honi has reached out to USU CEO Alexis Roitman and USU President Connor Wherrett for comment. We have also reached out to all directors on how they voted, in addition to asking for comment from Unions NSW.

We will update this article as more information comes in.

USU董事会削减40%员工工资

Nina Dillon Britton and Lara Sonnenschein 报道

Lei Yao and Zhiquan Gan 翻译

在今天下午举行的内部员工会议上，悉尼大学学生会（USU）宣布将员工工资削减40％。此前，由于校园关闭，在该组织出现财务困难期间，许多USU临时雇员被裁员。

该决议将一直有效到6月26日（星期五），等待大学进一步提供有关学生返回校园的最新消息。

工作人员告诉 HONI，他们在做出决定之前没有得到过咨询。除了一开始销售的食品杂货箱外，目前尚不清楚董事会在批准削减之前采取了哪些措施（如果有的话）来补救其财务状况。

鉴于该决议未出现在公开的董事会会议记录中，因此裁员似乎是由董事会在其内决定的。尽管这是由多数董事将对减薪方案进行表决投票，但目前尚不清每个董事是如何投票。

一位工作人员告诉 HONI：“这很艰难，但还没有想象的那么糟。至少没

有人被解雇。”

在昨晚的董事会特别会议上，USU董事会主席 Connor Wherrett 表示，USU 在财务上正面临“极其困难”的时期。当被 HONI 询问时，他说，USU 的最大运营财务支出是人员工资。

迫于压力，Connor 没有透露本学期 USU 的确切资金缺口是什么，他指出，董事会“希望在即将举行的年度股东大会上为潜在的资助人尽最大的努力”。

结果，HONI 通过电子邮件向所有现任董事会董事发送了有关他们是否正在考虑进一步裁员或减薪的电子邮件。目前只有五位回复者：USU参议院任命的董事 Marie Leech，任职第一年的董事 Irene Ma (Advance)，USU副主席/任职第二年的董事 Lachlan Finch (Liberal) 以及任职第一年的董事 Nick Forbutt (NLS)。所有人都表示

他们不会回答这些问题。

Ienen Ma, Nick Forbutt 和 Lachlan Forbutt 都引用了 USU 章程第8.2（a）节，其中规定，除其他职责外，是主席的职责去代表董事会进行陈述并捍卫其政策和决定。董事会只会考虑董事们的意见，并非采纳。

这似乎是对该规定的不准确解释。第8.2（a）节在内的任何规定都没有明确禁止董事会董事评论他们正在决定的政策或董事会已做出的决定。第8.2节列出了USU主席的许多职责，其中一些职责也由董事会其他成员行使。USU董事会董事的职责还包括定期在其社交媒体帐户上公开宣传董事会的决策和政策。

董事会现行政策意味着，有关员工薪酬的决定将在其内部进行。当在昨天的特别委员会会议上被问到背后的理由时，Connor Wherrett 说他不知道，HONI 应该问该政策的起草人，

据信是2013-15学年的USU董事 Kade Denton。

包括 Connor Wherrett 在内的几乎所有现任董事会董事都在批评董事会竞选董事时缺乏透明度。即将举行的USU选举的几位董事会候选人，包括 Prudence Wilkins-Wheat, Wangle Jiale Wang 和 Ruby Lotz，也同样做出了相似的批评。尤其是 Lotz，他承诺进行一次透明度审查，而此前最新一次的审查于2014年进行。

HONI已与 USU 首席执行官Alexis Roitman 和 USU 主席 Connor Wherrett 取得了联系。除了征求新南威尔士州工会的意见外，我们还咨询了所有董事的投票表决结果。

USyd staff denied JobKeeper payments after government changes eligibility threshold

Lara Sonnenschein reports.

Staff at the University of Sydney (USyd) have been denied access to the JobKeeper subsidy for organisations impacted by the economic effects of COVID-19 following a third change to the scheme by the Federal Government.

Whilst initially ineligible for the scheme in the Education Minister Dan Tehan's “higher education relief package,” on Friday the government amended the eligibility criteria meaning universities would qualify for the payment. However, the government has now backtracked.

For all organisations there is a one-month period in which they must be able to point to a more than 50% loss in revenue when compared to the same period last year in order to be eligible for the payment.

The University initially made an application on the basis of a considerable loss of revenue from student suspensions and withdrawals in March.

Now the government has amended this rule exclusively for universities, extending the one-month period to a

six-month period in order to qualify for JobKeeper, making the University ineligible to receive funding.

Vice-Chancellor Michael Spence has assured staff that staff members who received an additional top-up salary payment from the University in anticipation of the JobKeeper payment will not be asked to repay the money to the University.

In an email to staff, Spence described the situation as “a disappointing outcome” and said the University “remain[s] committed to doing

everything we can to sustain the University and support our staff through this challenging period.”

The change appears to be aimed specifically at the University of Sydney, as it is the only university believed to not have had its JobKeeper eligibility hopes quashed by previous tweaks to the scheme.

The University expects a \$470 million loss as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

在政府更改补贴标准后，悉尼大学员工被拒付JobKeeper 赔款

Lara Sonnenschein 报道

Zhiquan Gan 翻译

由于联邦政府对JobKeeper 补贴计划进行的第三次变更，悉尼大学（USyd）的工作人员被拒绝获得受 COVID-19 经济影响而理应获得的补贴。

尽管最初悉尼大学在教育部长 Dan Tehan 的“高等教育补贴方案”中不符合获得该补贴的条件，但政府在周五修改了资格标准，这意味着悉尼大学将有资格获得这笔款项。但是，政府现在已经重新更改了之前决定。

对于所有组织而言，获得该补贴的标准在于，“在一个月的期限内，他们必须指出与去年同期环比收入损失超过50％”，才有资格获得补贴赔偿。

悉尼大学最初是基于三月份学生停学和退学带来的大量收入损失而提出的申请。

现在，政府已专门针对大学将获得JobKeepe 的标准进行了修改 - 将一个月的期限延长到六个月。这使大学没

有资格获得资助。

校长 Michael Spence 向工作人员保证，不会因要求因没有收到 JobKeeper 补贴而从大学获得额外的加薪工资的钱退还给大学。

Spence 在给员工的电子邮件中将此描述为“令人失望的结果”，并表示大学“仍致力于在这个充满挑战的时期内竭尽所能维持大学，并支持我们的员工。”

这一变化似乎是专门针对悉尼大学的，因为它是唯一一所没有因先前的计划调整而放弃JobKeeper 资格申请的大学。

悉尼大学预计，冠状病毒大流行将给自身造成 4.7 亿美元的损失。

The state of the Union

Lara Sonnenschein and Nina Dillon Britton take their Facebook spats with board directors up a notch.

Campaigning for the University of Sydney Union (USU) Board is officially underway. Yet, away from all the bright campaign colours and flashy text videos, the Union is in turmoil. With the coronavirus pandemic forcing a campus closure, the USU's revenue has taken a considerable hit. Controversially, the organisation has reacted to this by implementing austerity measures. First came staff layoffs as the USU closed most campus outlets. Then in a dramatic move last week, the organisation announced wage cuts of 40% across the organisation by reducing staff hours to 60% of what they were originally. Apart from a bizarre *buy fruit to save the Union scheme*, it remains unclear to us and the rest of the student body, Union membership and staff, what alternatives were considered, if any, prior to these decisions.

The USU is undoubtedly in a precarious financial situation, certainly not helped by operating in an era of voluntary student unionism (VSU). That being said, the University of Sydney Union has been much luckier compared to student unions across the country and the University's help when VSU was introduced, combined with USyd's renowned political and student culture, helped keep the USU and other student organisations afloat. Last year, the Union was a \$31 million organisation, and was set to make an operating contribution at the end of the year.

With the end of compulsory student unionism came the cessation of an uninterrupted revenue stream, and ultimately ushered the Union towards a more corporate turn, with a focus on sponsorship and marketing initiatives. This is perhaps no more confronting than at Welcome Week, wherein the USU, in collaboration with corporations tries to sell us a commodified vision of student life. VSU also brought with it a political shift: pre-VSU the Left was stronger on board, with less Indies and Liberals.

However issues with the USU run much deeper, and aren't relegated to funding concerns in a VSU world. Indeed, former progressive USU president Anastasia Polites reflected on these very issues in an *Honi* article from the late 90s where she laid out the difficulty of reform via nine lessons: 1) board directors are powerless, 2) one Senate vote does not equal one vote, 3) having the numbers does not make you control the organisation, 4) the president has no control, 5) management is opposed to change, 6) conservatives equal the status quo, 7) there is a great divide between workers and management, 8) the organisation hides behind “in camera” sessions and 9) the structure is at fault.

That so much of what Polites wrote still rings true is indicative that issues of student control and transparency

are systemic and have long plagued the organisation. Of course some board candidates — including this year's — running for directorship have noble or benign intentions. They have benefited greatly from the positive aspects of student life from revues to clubs and societies to outlets, and wish to give back. Yet, why does everything seemingly change once these candidates become directors? Can it just be put down to sycophantic student politicking? Surely it's not so simple.

It is an obvious (but necessary) point to make that most board directors are around twenty years old when elected. With limited financial knowledge, pages of technical readings, an honorarium of \$4994 (for non executive board directors pre COVID-19) combined with study and often other work, knowledge hierarchies dictate the organisation, and board directors often defer to the advice of Heads of Departments (HoDs). Importantly, whilst the HoDs are “staff”, they operate more as managers, and board directors themselves have very little engagement with the vast majority

The coronavirus-induced financial crisis exposes underlying problems with a lack of transparency on the Board.

of the USU staff (the bartenders, the chefs, the cleaners) who actually keep the organisation running, and whose pay they just voted to cut.

Additionally, power is not distributed evenly amongst the board. Most power lies within the Human Resources and Remuneration Committee and the Executive. Of course, getting oneself into those positions also requires an additional level of politicking. In addition, with two Senate appointed directors (SADs) making up the 13-member board, the University's influence is ever-present in the board's decision making processes. Indeed, with voting rights in the Executive elections, candidates seeking office may neuter their politics so as to sway the SADs. The University also has a more sinister link insofar as the Senate has powers to audit the USU over the nebulously phrased “alleged financial, electoral or other governance irregularities.” The USU in this instance must hand over all information and documentation.

More broadly, that the USU is unincorporated makes all board directors liable for its decisions. *Honi* believes that board directors remain liable for their decisions on board for approximately ten years after their directorship ends.

The coronavirus-induced financial crisis exposes underlying problems with a lack of transparency on the Board. Despite consistent calls for greater transparency from candidates of a wide variety of political backgrounds

(including this year), the Board's most controversial decisions are increasingly made out of the watchful eye of members. Three of the most controversial decisions passed by the Board in recent years — the 2017 refusal to close outlets in solidarity with staff strikes, the 2019 decision to close Manning Bar, and the 2020 decisions to cut staff numbers and staff pay — occurred in-camera. Indeed, it appears that the USU has become more opaque over time: a similar debate over closing outlets in solidarity with staff strikes occurred publicly in 2013.

The current in-camera policy of the Board requires that discussions and votes on staff, negotiations with the University, legal matters, and “sensitive financial matters or those that may impact upon commercial relationships” occur confidentially. When asked at last week's Special Meeting as to the motivation behind holding decisions on staff in-camera, president Connor Wherrett stated that *Honi* would have to ask the policy's drafter. We did.

Kade Denton, a 2013-15 board

director who drafted the policy, said it was intended to give “transparency” for observers about the reasons underpinning Board decisions to move in-camera. For discussions on staff pay, for example, Denton said: “it's important for the Board to be able to communicate that to the number one stakeholder, staff, in a considered way, rather than them just finding out through an *Honi* tweet.” But as Denton clarified, despite the policy, the decision to move in-camera remains one for the Board.

Hiding behind the policy to justify secrecy is not particularly persuasive where it would be quite easy for the Board to pass a motion to change it. “I think it's the role of the USU president to represent the policies of the USU, not to shaft it to a Board director from seven years ago,” a former director told *Honi*. We also understand that Wherrett expressed a desire to a Pulp editor to reform the policy, but was unable to because the COVID-19 crisis had been too time consuming.

Despite the policy, it appears board directors may use the cover of secrecy for other, less popular debates. In the most recent special meeting, for example, it appeared that board directors had used the cover of in-camera to raise concerns about directors Maya Eswaran and Decheng Sun supporting the “Defend Our Education” campaign. Eswaran stated that she'd moved a motion to make the discussion public, and that board directors who had been happy to

make criticisms when the meeting was closed were suddenly quiet.

Not only are in-camera policies a way of removing board directors' opinions from the public eye, but they are a useful way of maintaining a veneer of Board unity. Though Wherrett was happy to tell *Honi* that all board directors had voted in favour of closing Manning Bar, he would not reveal the breakdown of the decision to cut staff pay where it had passed by only a “majority.”

But in-camera policies are not the USU's only tool in remaining opaque. Members seeking to ask questions to their elected representatives are likely to be disappointed: when *Honi* attended last week's meeting CEO Alexis Roitman and Wherrett said that questions should only be directed to the CEO or president. When other directors were asked via email about whether they would support reforms to the in-camera policy, all board directors refused to provide an answer. Most cited section 8.2(a) of the USU constitution, which states that it is the president's duty to represent the Board, though does not prohibit other members from speaking out decisions or policies they are considering. On this (unpersuasive) view of the provision, board directors would be barred from speaking about the policies they campaigned on as soon as they're elected.

Honi spoke to a former board director who stated that it “sounds like there are a lot of directors who just don't want to give their decisions. It's definitely OK for board directors to say that they support [for example] more reviews into transparency, or sexual harassment in the USU.” “If they're not sure where the line is,” they argued, “they should be using the resources available to them: the USU staff and former board directors.”

But the difficulty for board directors is that in large part the obligations of directors are up to their own interpretation. The Board can vote to punish any director it deems to have spoken out in contravention of their duty to act in the “best interests of USU members”. Unless a board director is prepared to risk censure, expulsion, or mount a legal challenge to the Board — bearing the risk of a loss and heavy penalties — they are likely to err on the side of secrecy. Maya Eswaran, one of the few directors to respond to *Honi's* questions about the secret vote to cut staff pay, indicated this cautiousness. “I am unsure if I am able to answer how I voted without breaching my fiduciary duties in relation to confidential information during an in camera vote, which could expose me to risk of censure or legal action,” she told *Honi*.

Whilst COVID-19 has both exacerbated and exposed problems within the Union, these issues existed long before the pandemic hit.

SUPRA 2020: A post-political election

Markus Mosbech dissects this year's SUPRA election offerings.

Like about half of postgraduate students at the University of Sydney, I arrived in Australia in January and sat through seemingly endless hours of introductions: to my school, to the university and the various organisations surrounding it. One organisation in particular stood out: the Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA). From what I gleaned from its slick presentation, this organisation would fight for my case, whether it be against corrupt landlords or an unfair university administration. SUPRA is an advocacy organisation run by student-elected representatives. It provides casework support, advocacy and free wine and cheese nights for postgraduates.

But despite the importance of the organisation, the students competing to run this year's SUPRA council displayed no vision for the organisation, no distinct political or policy platform, and no real excitement about the election itself. Though initially excited to have a say in the governance of SUPRA, scrolling through this year's candidate list and reading platitude after platitude soon became depressing.

Rebels without a cause?

April rolled in, and the candidates for the SUPRA general elections have been announced. But despite a lengthy list of 50 candidates — more than last year's 39, but less than 2018's high of 66 — there appears little to get excited about for potential voters. The candidates' and tickets' statements are vague and incredibly similar to one another, most failing to provide any description of policies, vision for the organisation or political ideology. Almost none of these candidates showed strong opinions on anything, except some vague concept of making the “university better for students”.

The “Orange” ticket wants to “Speak for the students and serve the students, and we are willing to be the communicating and representing people of SUPRA and fight for their rights and needs (sic).” “Bishengdui”, on the other hand wants to “try our best to enlarge our influence among the postgraduate students in The University

of Sydney and collect more suggestions and advices.” Trying to extract values from the candidate statements is an uphill battle, the closest I could get from Xiner Yuan of U-Supporter, was “I am nominating myself for SUPRA council because I hope to make students voice heard and provide students the support they need. “ While Chang Wang of Bang Bang Bang says “I'm a very enthusiastic and dedicated student that wants to make a difference not only in the Supra (sic) but also in the USYD campus by having a voice and being there for all you guys university life by proposing various motions including

One almost wishes that a candidate would express a controversial opinion, just to be able to distinguish between the vague platitudes.

having better study support, more social and networking events and a place that's enjoyable for everyone.”

One almost wishes that a candidate would express a controversial opinion, just to be able to distinguish between the vague platitudes.

These candidates may have students' best interests at heart, but they have utterly failed to elicit anything resembling enthusiasm for this election. The tickets have meaningless names like “Cheese”, “Bang Bang Bang” or “ORANGE” which give no indication of their stance on any issues. The ticket statements do seem marginally better than the candidate statements, in regards to concrete policy proposals. What I find however, is that a large part of these proposals are things that, to the best of my knowledge from intro events, SUPRA already does. The “SUPRA is great, and we will keep doing things” is an immensely popular platform among the candidates and tickets. The only rivalling cause is some vague promise of coronavirus support, which would be nice but probably the most inoffensive opinion to have.

Elections are the new job interview

While all policies and causes are left vague, there is one thing the candidates

do not fail to elaborate on: themselves, their passion, and their oh so valuable experience. Most of the candidate statements are written exactly like cover letters. There's a little bit of praise for the prospective employer to show you are actually interested, a nice listing of your previous work to show you are qualified, and then of course how passionate and motivated you are.

It even seems like some of the candidates see this as an opportunity to have some experience for their CV. Kai Lao of Xiaolandui, for example, says that SUPRA is “well aligned with my personal development goals. It is a good

platform for me to gain skills, make connections and broaden my knowledge. All of these will help me become a more well-rounded individual.” While I commend their honesty, this might have been a good time to practice the ancient political tradition of lying to the voters, because I am definitely not going to vote for someone, just so they can land a cozy job when their tenure is over.

A changing organisation

Perhaps it is unsurprising that postgraduate students' elections are less politically volatile than those of undergraduate students. Postgraduate students generally participate less than undergraduates in clubs and societies, and SUPRA elections consistently see lower turnout than comparable SRC elections. In 2019 less than 1,200 people voted in SUPRA elections, about 4% of the postgraduate student body, compared to 5,362 in SRC elections — 16% of the undergraduate body. Many postgraduates are older and feel no need to involve themselves in campus life, whilst others struggle to juggle full-time professional work, thesis writing and night classes.

But it also seems that this level of vague, undifferentiated political campaigns is new. In 2018, for

example, ticket “Postgrad Action for SUPRA” ran on tangible policies such as international student travel concessions, free childcare for staff and students, fighting against staff cuts and campaigning for an end to investment in fossil fuels by the University. Agree with these policies or not, these provide a clearer vision of what they want SUPRA to be like more than any platform competing this year.

Comparing the President's Annual Reports from even just a few years ago to this year's also indicates key changes: whereas the 2017 report mentions action on areas as diverse as sexual assault on campus, anonymous marking schemes and staff rights, the 2019 report, to a large extent, vaguely discusses improved “communication” with students and the organisation's budget. Of more concern however, is the fact that it seems few elected representatives take their roles seriously. Last year's elected president — Weihong Liang — promptly resigned and left for a job after his election. It appears that despite lucrative stipends of elected office bearers — the organisation's 2019 Financial Report states that more than \$133,000 were paid to elected student office bearers — SUPRA'S representatives haven't been as effective as their undergraduate counterparts this year. Whereas the SRC has implemented an emergency coronavirus food and support service, the big ticket items for SUPRA this semester were welcome events (\$3,500) and a fitness program (\$11,500).

It's difficult to see this, coupled with this year's self-involved candidate statements, and not think it is indicative of a trend where those running for SUPRA council are doing it for themselves, rather than the students they represent. I strongly hope I'm wrong, but it appears that this year's candidates have no real vision for the organisation they hope to run. If this year's SUPRA council is anything to go by, we're right not to get our hopes up too high.

Recent SUPRA elections: A (brief) history

May 2012
SUPRA sees first contested election in six years.

November 2012
SUPRA councillor resigns citing unspecified “bullying and corruption” on the part of the council.

2015
SUPRA President resigns, apologising for a “lack of attention” to the administration of the organisation.

2016
Progressive ticket “Postgrad Action” wins council majority in coalition with independents. President Tom Greenweel resigns before his term ends.

2017-8
SUPRA expels councillor on harassment allegations. SUPRA Presidents call for the University Senate to restructure the organisation citing racism in the midst of a dispute with staff.

2018
Chinese international student groupings win council majority. SUPRA elects first all-international student executive. Weihong Liang is elected as president.

2019
Chinese international student groupings win council majority again. Weihong Liang is elected president and promptly resigns.

A loving critique of feminist organising on Australian university campuses

Madeline Ward on the faults and future of women's campaigning.

There is an undeniable romance about the student movement. It conjures images of Vietnam-era demonstrations, of pre-VSU hi-jinks and of mass protest. Though much of what makes the mythology of our political past so alluring has changed form, the spirit of campus activism remains steadfast. This is particularly true in women's collectives, which form the basis for feminist organising on university campuses across Australia.

It's for this reason that I believe it is important to vigorously criticise these collectives, and the broader movement that they operate within. As a former Women's Officer, I am intimately aware of the responsibilities and difficulties of feminist organising. I offer the following critique with love, and in good faith.

In recent years, the issue of sexual assault on campus has come to national attention. This is largely thanks to the work of student activists and sexual assault advocates, who have been agitating for this issue since the late 1970s. It is an issue that affects all university campuses, and is often the predominant uniting cause of the women's collectives.

Despite this, there is no real national organisation of university women's collectives. Though there is some cross collaboration between campuses, they otherwise operate as separate entities. In particular, the University of Sydney Women's Collective is viewed as a vanguard, frequently touted as the most radical, and the most active, of the collectives. This presents a number of problems. Most obviously, the aims of the movement as a whole are less effective when championed by a single campus. In addition to this, the reliance on a single collective to drive the momentum of a campaign means that, should that collective falter or fail, the campaign will fail with it. It also relies on the assumption that USyd Woco is the most radical and active of the collectives, or is more so to a significant extent, which is not necessarily true.

Amongst the campus collectives, there is a definite political divide. This is especially present in years where members of student Labor factions hold a majority of convener or officer positions. Irregardless of the proclivities of the individual, party politics don't exactly lend themselves to radicalism. Many of these collectives focus on community, rather than activism — devoting their energies to social events over movement building.

The current USyd Women's Officers, Ellie Wilson and Vivienne Guo, have identified this as an issue that affects the movement at large.

“At the moment, when social media presence is crucial to our organising due to social distancing measures stifling other channels of protest and collective activity, we've seen very little from other university collectives. When we do see content, it's often very tame and a bit liberal, rather than really pushing for any sort of radical feminist ideas or action.” Though this is likely a fair comment, it's worth questioning what USyd Woco are doing that differentiates them from their less favourable counterparts. Their Facebook page is regularly used to fundraise — a worthy endeavour, but hardly a radical action. Much of their work since the beginning of 2019 has been focused on community building and social events, rather than acting on their claimed radical politics. I don't mean to single USyd Woco out in this criticism — there are much less active collectives. It's simply worth considering that inactivity is an issue that affects all collectives, not just the ones on other campuses.

There is very little in the way of national organising. Though there is the Network of Women Students Australia (NOWSA), and the Women's Department of the National Union of Students (NUS), neither do anything particularly effective or meaningful. NOWSA only functionally exists as a yearly conference, and the effectiveness of NUS is dependent on the whims of whichever Labor hack is instilled at the NUS' National Conference (NatCon). Ultimately, NUS can't be given too much credit in either the success or disappointments of student feminist organising, because it does very little at all.

The lack of collaboration between collectives is a generational issue, one that has persisted for several years, and that won't be solved under the structure of NUS. It is perpetuated by a frustrating resistance to criticism that is present in all the collectives, and which is further ratified by the fact that they are autonomous, affording them an almost holy status in the liberal, identity obsessed world of student politics.

I believe that such an issue could be fixed first by an increase in cross-collective communication, and further by a move to organising under a structure similar to the Australian Student Environment Network (ASEN), which is a democratic student network that elects state and national conveners, and organises through campus collectives. Though there is no easy fix to such long standing issues, a move away from NUS as a means of national organising, and toward an alternate structure, will go a long way in improving the overall strength

and effectiveness of the movement.

If we accept that NUS is functionally useless, then the importance of individual and collaborative campus activity is twofold. Notwithstanding the importance of sexual assault as an issue for all campuses, there is a noticeable lack of long term planning or co-ordination around attempts at reform that have existed, in some form or another, for decades.

In recent years, collectives have relied on the release of a report or event, such as the 2017 AHRC Change the Course report, to mobilise. These reports emerge every few years, and by their nature are overwhelmingly disappointing (the exception being the Red Zone Report in 2017, which was authored by unpaid activists and advocates). Campaigns are organised in reaction to these events, rather than sustained to build momentum and respond when they do occur.

I don't believe that this is a particularly effective or strategic method of organising. In relying on the output of institutions such as the AHRC, or the work of Elizabeth Broderick in recommending measures for ‘cultural renewal’ of the colleges, we ultimately weaken our aims. Our political action should not be relying on the work of agents acting in favour of the University.

The University of Sydney SRC Women's Officers identified the delay of the Universities Australia survey, which was due to occur this year, as a reason for why they have not yet established a specific campaign around campus sexual violence. “The Universities Australia review has unfortunately been delayed for the foreseeable future due to the host of new issues in tertiary education that have arisen due to COVID-19, which makes it hard for us to organise around sexual violence on campus in the ways we had intended to when starting our terms.”

Though I understand and accept that the pandemic has caused considerable setbacks, I can't help but feel that the absence of a sustained campaign in 2019 and 2020 will ultimately leave the movement in a weaker position post COVID-19. Why wait for the release of a report, review or survey to organise, especially when such an event is being organised by a university peak body? By reacting instead of acting, we ultimately give universities the upper hand.

Aside from coordination and strategy, I believe that there is a major issue in the historic and contemporary demands of the sexual assault campaign, especially at the University of Sydney — namely that of demanding punitive policies to police sexual assault from the

University itself.

In campaigning to increase the scope and severity of penalty for reported sexual assault, we have given the University increased powers to control student behaviour. This is evident in the rise in cases of student misconduct levelled against student activists in recent years. Right-wing interventions into the misconduct process, such as that of Bettina Arndt and Greg Donnelly against myself, have often been labelled a perversion or manipulation of a system that had been partially reformed to better assist survivors of sexual assault in achieving some semblance of justice.

Though I used to agree with this idea, I now know that this is not the case — the system is working exactly as it has been designed to. We, as student activists, have failed to properly consider the full implications of what we have demanded from the University.

Beyond this, advocating for such punitive measures is incompatible with left-wing ideals, especially abolitionist politics, which have recently risen in popularity within the USyd Women's Collective. When the broad majority of the left considers processes of community accountability and restorative justice to be best practice in achieving justice for survivors of sexual assault, it seems odd that we would suddenly revert to more punitive measures under the structure of the University itself.

This contradiction is a symptom of a broader issue, where false importance is placed on the relationship between Women's Officers and University administration. As communication and collaboration between Universities and Women's Officers has increased, many collectives, including USyd Woco, have substituted participating in university committees and meetings as a meaningful avenue for agitating for reform. In the absence of a campaign, these meetings become the only consistent action around the issue — which is an obvious problem, given that they are conducted by management with conciliation in aim.

Despite my criticisms, I have an immense fondness for campus feminism. For many of its members, it's an entry point for a deeper engagement with left-wing politics and activism. Though this may be easier said than done, I am optimistic that a better movement, an actual movement, can be built across university campuses.

Grieving across borders

Madeline Rowell on the struggles of being separated from loved ones during COVID-19.

Recently, my family was told that my grandmother was staying in a hospital in New Zealand and was unlikely to leave. We tried to send her flowers, but were informed that this is not allowed in New Zealand where the lockdown laws are far stricter. She passed away on Sunday 3 May.

We are all experiencing a strain placed on our relationships with others that many of us have never felt before. The dangers of proximity that enforce distancing from one another can painfully reveal how much we need others. I'm sure that the majority of us feel lonely at times, and it can be difficult to maintain a relationship when you must be apart.

Personally, I cannot think of anything more tedious than attempting another facetime call with my elderly aunt, who shakes her phone around and yells because she believes that virtual communication requires louder volume. My mother of course,

being the selfless woman that she is, communicates with her and cares for her the most.

Nevertheless, I cannot visit my aunt in her little unit anymore. I cannot sit with her as she complains about the retirement village employees and tells me about the canary-yellow dress she made and wore to my mother's wedding.

I am sure the tight hugs that she would greet me with and say goodbye to me with exhausted her supply of energy for the day, and I like to think that she thought it was worth it.

The phone calls will have to do now. A little before the pandemic, my aunt moved into palliative care and now spends her days in a nursing home. Even if we are permitted to see her at the last moment, my little sister, who my aunt always asks for, is not because she is under 18 and cannot enter a nursing home. She hasn't seen her in months.

The olive tree

Kowther Qashou on the political and personal signifiance of olive trees.

“We will die here, here in the last passage. Here and here our blood will plant its olive tree”

– “The Earth is Closing On Us” by Mahmoud Darwish

Standing tall in front of our suburban Sydney home is a large olive tree. It's big enough that if you drove or walked past, it would be hard to miss. I often joke to myself that its presence is how you would know we were Palestinian. Its presence, a reminder of our heritage.

Driving through Palestine, the hills and land are laced with olive groves upon olive groves – from Tulkarem to Jerusalem to Hebron -- embodying and defining the landscape. Many of these trees are centuries-old, some dating back 4,000 years. They signify a deep attachment to the land, inherited over generations and generations. They have become rooted in the Palestinian collective consciousness. For Palestinians, the importance of olives and the olive tree are bound up in a rich history. More than just featuring in the cuisine, it is one of the many ways Palestinians assert their belonging to the land. Forming a part of the Palestinian national identity, especially amid experiences of exile and dispossession, they symbolise steadfastness and resilience. In the Palestinian cultural imagination, they feature prominently in poetry, film, music, and literature, especially in contemporary narratives about resistance to the Israeli occupation.

In Mahmoud Darwish's poetry, the trees represent immortality. In a time where Palestine and Palestinians are often associated with ‘violence,’ ‘conflict,’ and ‘death’, this provides a significant contrast. It also signifies the resistance of a people whose historical existence and identity is continuously

denied by their occupiers. Through documentaries and films, the ongoing battle between the Israeli state and Palestinians for the right to their land is commonly depicted. One example is Budrus (2009), a documentary detailing the resistance of Palestinians from the village of Budrus against the construction of an Israeli ‘security

This virus, and the necessary precautions we have to take to keep each other safe, make things more difficult than some can cope with. Many of us have elderly relatives that we cannot visit anymore, and despite all the technology we have at our fingertips, supposedly for our ease, sometimes it doesn't feel real when we cannot be with our families.

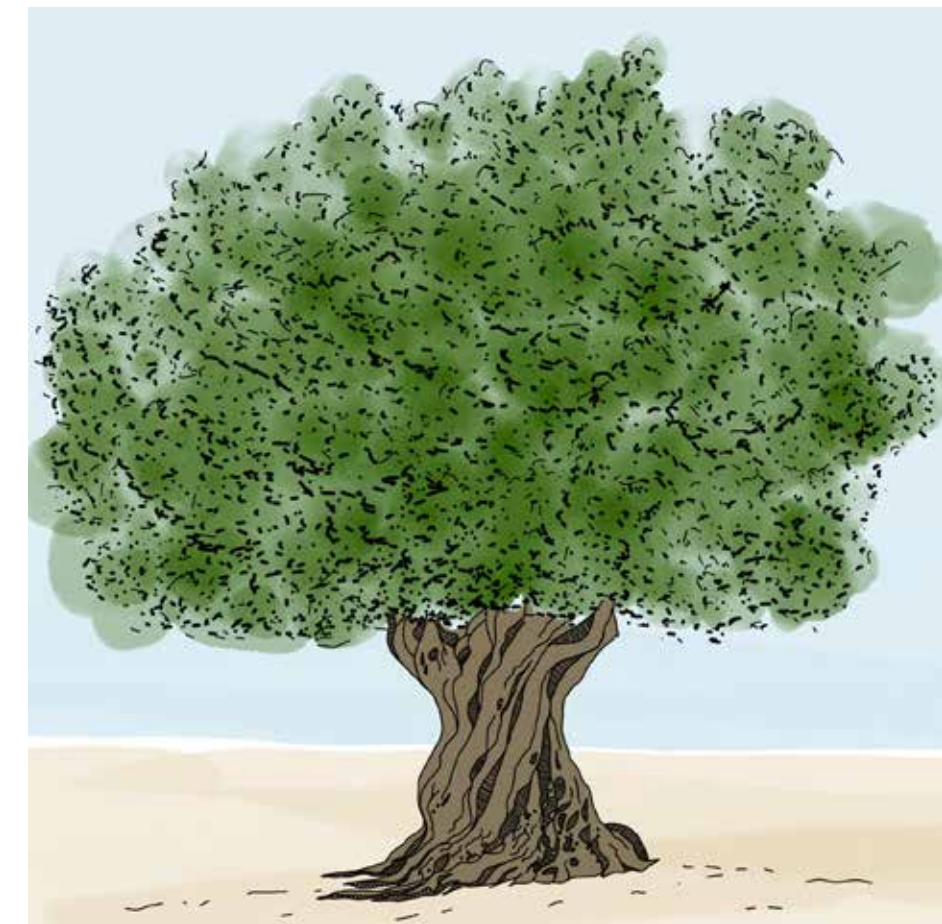
Attempting a technological conversation with someone who grew up surviving bombs dropped around her in the 1940s is scarcely feasible in my family's case, and it feels wrong to ask someone who has seen so much to embarrass themselves by proving their inability to use an app. Besides, nothing can compare to seeing her weathered face in the flesh when she passionately recalls stories of her childhood: laughing when, after a bombing, she looked outside her house to see that amongst a sea of debris the chicken coop remained untouched, the birds oblivious.

Nobody wants to experience the pain of bringing the virus to a loved one and causing illness. We have to live with the conflicting desires to keep them safe, and to seek and provide comfort.

It is frightening to think about how changed our perception of physical touch is. Holding someone's hand, holding my aunt's soft hand, was an important point of connection. Hand-holding could make you feel loved, and could carry more emotional weight than you thought a simple grasp could. Now, as we fearfully swerve between people at the grocery store and jump in shock if someone accidentally brushes up against us, I wonder if this mentality of isolation will ever completely fade.

Hopefully our connections will indeed revive themselves, perhaps they will grow stronger.

We must practice caring for each other.



barrier' inside their village, which would result in the loss of 300 acres of land and 3,000 olive trees in the process.

Every year my extended family, who live in a rural town near Tulkarem, partake in the Olive Harvest, a seasonal

support their families and livelihoods. Overall, olives contribute a large portion to the Palestinian agricultural economy, estimated to exceed \$84 million in profits annually. They are then sold in domestic and foreign markets, pressed

Art by Ash Duncan

Let’s re-evaluate how we treat student nurses

Sarah Jaseem thinks it’s high time we consider the ethics of placements for medical students.

The lady of the lamp, Florence Nightingale, is the gold standard who we as nursing students are made to look up to. But Nightingale worked by her own rules and ethics. This pandemic, more than anything, has shown that the Nightingale paradigm is really just there to make us feel like we have autonomy by being sacrificial and ‘nice.’ Really, we aren’t holding any lamp: as a student nurse who has been expected to embrace the pandemic as a ‘learning opportunity,’ the lamp is broken.

The university’s treatment of nursing students and staff has been consistently appalling in peak and downfall, as it maintains its adavance for clinical placements to be completed this semester - not just for final year students, which would be understandable, but for first years too. Whilst clinical labs have rightly decreased in number and frequency, the 1.5m distance implemented by the university is impossible, because while students try their best to stand on crosses sellotaped to the carpet, teachers are doing their best to teach, so they stand closer to demonstrate skills to students, putting themselves at risk. Clinical placements also can’t be justified, because while a ‘grocery shop’ has been described as riskier by university staff, placements for first year students, who may rely on public transport, have been allocated at locations up to 2 hours away from their homes.

The university’s justifications for

these decisions have spanned from well-meaning to bizarre. A week after the census date and in the wake of the virus’ suspected peak, an email from the health faculty stated that “as future health professionals, we are bound by professional standards to prioritise patients and the health of our community,” and that the pandemic is a “career learning opportunity that we may not experience in our lifetime again.”

At a Zoom meeting for students, the nursing faculty told students that if they did not get PPE (personal protective equipment) packs during placement, it would be okay, because they were proven to be ineffective against the virus. The desperation to get students on placement and feeling safe on placement is embarrassing.

But maybe I’m shooting the messenger.

The only believable justification the university has for making placements mandatory for all students at this time is the fact that the workforce will be severely impacted if we don’t all graduate in the timeliest manner possible. The problem with this is that health services have been understaffed with nurses for years, and the government has never done anything significant to tackle this problem. Pandemic or not, the threat posed by having less nurses than already present is huge. That’s the ‘learning opportunity’ that this pandemic has given me, which has not been about

the pandemic itself, but about the more threatening problem of understaffing that the Australian government has done nothing significant to tackle. Nurses are fundamental to our society’s functioning all the time, but they aren’t valued.

Many nurses have quit because pay hasn’t increased for years and is usually worse for essential nurses, like those in the aged care sector, who are especially important due to our aging population. In 2020, for every 1 male nurse registered under the nursing and midwifery board in Australia, there are 7 female nurses. The consistently low pay suggests a connection to the historical association with nursing as ‘natural’ women’s work rather than a profession which people must earn their livelihood from.

Bursaries and specialised programmes to get more nursing students into universities are non-existent. Immigration policies for skilled workers from overseas to get into Australia still puts these nurses a minimum of around \$5-10,000 dollars out of pocket, not including the potential costs of a solicitor to aid with applications and waiting times of at least one year for a response. Our government’s stinginess makes Australia seem like a self-sufficient utopia rather than a country whose healthcare system is unnecessarily understaffed.

So, this month and in the months to come, student nurses at USyd will be travelling to mandatory work they don’t

get paid for, when many students are not able to go to their actual workplace and earn a wage due to lockdown, having chronic conditions, or living with vulnerable people. They have been advised to wear clothes other than their nursing uniform offsite to avoid harassment, and they may potentially have to shower at their placement site after their ‘shifts.’ In a classic moral guilt trip, this is apparently their ‘duty,’ as future ‘health professionals.’ Maybe everything will be fine, and risks have been assessed meticulously, but the absolute lack of choice students have had, regardless of what valid reasons they have to not go on placement right now, has shown how much this country relies on students and registered nurses to keep the system chugging along purely on the mythic, bounding generosity bouncing out of their chests.

The problem is, I don’t want to be told I’m nice. I want rights.

Nothing significant has been done to make being a nurse beneficial rather than sacrificial, and it’s because of this that there’s a lack of nurses, and why student nurses are paying for government misdoings by compromising our own safety before we have even entered the workforce.

Normal People: Like staring directly into the sun

Genevieve Couvret on the show everyone’s watching on Stan.

Based on Sally Rooney’s bestselling novel, Normal People follows the relationship between Connell and Marianne as they navigate the end of high school and their years at university at Trinity College in Dublin. It’s interesting how a story about a young, white, heterosexual couple in an on/off relationship feels so fresh and resonant, and has been so universally acclaimed and related to. Personally I was surprisingly moved reading the novel, which is written in self-reflexive and accessible language. What makes the conventional plot so unconventionally stirring when told by Rooney? The show reveals, perhaps more overtly than the book, that it is the up-closeness and intense vulnerability with which we experience Connell and Marianne’s lives and how they tangle together that makes it impossible to untangle ourselves.

The show has an understated, quiet and raw tone, palpable most clearly in its multiple sex scenes. The first sex scene was so realistic and intimate that I felt like I was intruding, like I shouldn’t be in the room. The trusting performances of the two stars, often in natural light, the absence of music and the sound of every little breath rendered the scenes less gratuitous than their length and graphic nature might otherwise be. Whether tender or compromising, each scene was clearly trying to evoke meaning regarding the emotional intimacy of the respective characters, rather than constructing an object of desire.

The book itself is dialogue-heavy. Much of this is directly transported to the screen, likely thanks to the fact Rooney herself was one of the screenwriters. The show reflects the book’s form of being structured in discrete scenes, and conversations are portrayed in a way that leaves space for reflection on everything that is said, or not said. The deployment of silence in conversations in perpetual close-ups, the frankness of the subject matter, the lingering of the camera after a touch or a glance render every moment ripe for analysis, for both the viewer and the characters. Marianne and Connell exist in their own universe, infinite not only in depth, but in smallness.

At first, you squirm in the spaces between words – especially Marianne’s – the kind that you’d think but probably never say. It feels as if words are only ever placed into a silence between them. Everything is deliberate. Good sound quality means even the hesitant noises Connell makes are picked up. Words are placed precisely, like notes on a stove. Some lines are like shards of porcelain: cold, precious, broken. These scenes illustrate the subtle performances of (the potentially too attractive) Daisy Edgar-Jones and Paul Mescal and their easy chemistry.

Some of the shifts between gaps in time are not so gradual – the most jarring contrast being the shift in Marianne’s social standing between high school and her first year at Trinity. But perhaps this shift emphasises that how we relate to people is so often based on how others in that shared space relate to them. The show’s momentum is largely sustained by the sexual tension between Marianne and Connell. As the show darkens,

their relationship becomes more complex and they individually suffer through toxic relationships and mental health troubles. The dormancy of the show’s driving force compounded by the confronting subject matter makes it rather hard to watch in parts — it’s much harder to binge than other shows. You’re less likely to race to find out what happens next and instead just sit with the ending of each episode. Like the characters, there are points in the second half of the series where you feel flat. Watching their loneliness intensify whilst apart affirms to us, but often frustratingly not to Marianne and Connell, that it’s just the moments between them that you want.

There is an undercurrent of toxicity that is difficult to reconcile when one considers just how much power they have over each other. It makes the audience feel powerless too. They can only really talk to and understand one another, yet at times they struggle to communicate at all. Cruel whispers echo at the back of their minds that they don’t deserve each other, but that they simultaneously need each other; an idea that is never fully recognised or criticised within the show. The idea that there is only one person who can help you through your depression, or one person who will notice you, or know the real you, is scary and potentially a little dangerous. Yet it’s difficult to delineate between toxicity and notions of a deeper, real, special kind of love. Maybe we just don’t want to admit that we were happier with that person, or that we would be better if we were with someone, or that maybe people can

change each other.

As an aside, Rooney, a self-proclaimed Marxist, is often touted as imbuing her fiction with Marxism: Normal People has been described as an exploration of young people navigating romantic relationships within contemporary late capitalism. Conversations with and around Rooney project a more detailed class discourse than is between the lines of the novel, and even less a part of the narrative of the show. Whilst there is a manifest class divide between Connell and Marianne, the class discourse is surface level, gestured to only by a few discussions about finances, scholarships and university conversations demonstrating the cultural capital and currency of smartness.

There is no grand obstacle to Marianne and Connell’s relationship. No third act twist, no necessarily linear narrative and resolution. When they’re finally together, it feels still, like a pond. Every breath they take or word they say is like a ripple in the water. Ripples become waves. And like waves and sand, they withdraw from each other, then are pulled back together over and over again. For a lot of the show I was uncomfortable, and I sense that I was deliberately put in that position. That discomfort is where all that meaning is. Visually confronting these perceivably ‘normal’ struggles, lives and emotions with glaring openness leaves the viewer sometimes feeling too up-close, maybe wanting to cry and simply not being able to look away – like staring directly at the sun.

Antiques Roadshow: More than just a lottery?

Marlow Hurst hinks that Antiques Roadshow is the lottery of the middle class and offers far more than light Sunday afternoon entertainment.

Antiques Roadshow is an unassuming little show. Many pass it off as the obsession of a small few, who spend their days rifling through deceased estates and boxes in the attic. But it is so much more than that.

For the uninitiated, let me set the scene. Antiques Roadshow is usually set in a grassy field; that grassy field is typically adjacent to a building or structure of historical significance — like a centuries old church or a town hall — and all of this is smack bang in the middle of the lovely English countryside. Throughout the day, people come to have their trinkets and trifles assessed by a panel of experts, who will determine an artefacts’ worth, origin, and legitimacy. This assessment stage forms the bulk of the program, as the experts can go on at length about how this particular jewellery box is in fact not a jewellery box but rather a seed planting device used by Viking raiders and left behind during occupation, for example. It’s all very fascinating. But that is merely what Antiques Roadshow

is at first glance, and this article seeks to go beyond the surface and feast upon its fleshy interior.

Antiques Roadshow, in an abstract sense, is a modern fantasy. Every culture has a mechanism of miraculous wealth, a means by which someone can gain a vast amount of money purely through luck (or some other unearned attribute, like a very wealthy aunt). For many countries, that mechanism is the lottery. The great presumed equaliser. Anyone, rich or poor, can have a chance at being catapulted into the upper echelon of income. But no one wants their wealth’s origin to be rooted in luck or lottery. It’s quite an unsophisticated way of joining the 1%. It reflects no positive qualities about the person in question and paints them in quite an unworthy light.

Antiques Roadshow offers an alternative. The best part of any given episode is when one of the expert panel finishes their assessment with a deeply generous valuation of a quite peculiar object. The huddled crowd all gasp and the owners of said object might utter a

quiet “oh my”. It is this moment that makes Antiques Roadshow the perfect alternative to the lottery. Similar to the lottery, it doesn’t require any skill or knowledge, but unlike the lottery it feels significantly more earned. As the artefact in question is typically a family heirloom, the audience recognises that this person deserves its newly discovered value. While not so much earned, it feels justified.

Next, to aesthetics. The aesthetics of the lottery can be best described as dingy, flashy, and nigh on sticky. These are not pleasant aesthetics to be associated with. Wealth achieved through the Antiques Roadshow method on the other hand, is noble, sophisticated, and ceremonial. The sort of aesthetics we’d all like to eat for breakfast and politely ask for second helpings of. Deservedness and aesthetics are the two qualities that make wealth achieved through the Antiques Roadshow method infinitely more worthwhile than any measly lottery dollars. Anyone would be delighted to be remembered as the

person who pawned off a part of their ancestral history for a cool £50,000, but not a soul wants to be remembered as the person who came into money on the basis of luck alone.

In a world where everyone wants to be rich, but don’t really want to take the time to get there, Antiques Roadshow is the perfect escapist fantasy. Instead of faffing about in the stock market or tinkering in the lab, why not have a poke around the attic? You might just find something.

An antidote to isolation

Will Solomon takes some advice from Chekhov about getting through isolation.

“I absolutely had the feeling that I was shut up in Ward 6 myself!”

- Vladimir Lenin

Suffering what had been dubbed by a friend of mine as the ‘Corona Blues,’ – that dreaded boredom of having nothing but time with which to fill with nothing – I turned to my bookshelf, one of those cubic Ikea ones, and told myself I would read through one whole cube in the coming weeks. I landed on the cube that contained all of the Russian fiction I had studied in Year 12 and decided to begin with the short stories of Chekhov, my favourite author. In the pages of his 1892 short story, ‘Ward No. 6,’ Chekhov lays out what I considered to be an intriguing antidote to the ‘Corona Blues.’

The Russians have never been strangers to isolation, and Chekhov’s story sees characters experience it in droves. Set in an unnamed rural town and inspired by the author’s journey two years prior to the desolate prison isle of Sakhalin, off the coast of far Siberia, ‘Ward No. 6’ is a companion to his non-fiction memoir named after that island, and it feels strikingly real. The story follows two men and the circumstances that have them placed in a mental asylum. There are many interesting things that could be said of the story – like that it provides a radically progressive understanding of justice and punishment – but what enamoured me most was the relationship shared between its protagonists, Ivan and Andrey. I was especially drawn to their attempts, in one of the world’s most isolated situations, to alleviate their own suffering.

“Probably in no other place is life so monotonous as in this ward.”

Early in the piece, Chekhov provides his readers with the notion that he will test over the remaining fifteen chapters; it appears as a description of the intelligent Ivan’s train of thought in the weeks prior to the paranoid incident

that lands him in the asylum:

“Facts and common sense persuaded him that all these terrors were nonsense and morbidity, that if one looked at the matter more broadly there was nothing really terrible in arrest and imprisonment – so long as the conscience is at ease.”

As the story unfolds, Chekhov continues a conversation that has been in the Russian consciousness since Dostoevsky wrote on his exile, and a host of essays could be written on the contributions given by Tolstoy, Lenin, Pasternak and Solzhenitsyn, to name a few. When we are trapped against our will, can our conscience be put to ease? This question is one that has become apparent to all of us in recent times, and Chekhov’s answer is a softly spoken “yes.”

Unlike Ivan, who begins the story in the asylum and whose arrest is told in temporally isolated chapters, Andrey’s incarceration is experienced by the reader in the relative present tense. Chekhov’s early narration is coy, and it feels as if these events were described to him as he passed through just another town on his way to Sakhalin – “... and what a trepidation the lunatics are always thrown into by the arrival of the drunken, smiling barber, we will not describe...” This has the effect of engendering Andrey, a doctor, who is described by Chekhov as clinically as his profession, with a sobering, critical presence. It is no coincidence that Andrey, our protagonist and Anton, our author, are both medical practitioners by trade, and we are invited to diagnose this patient of Ward No. 6.

Through Andrey we judged Ivan, in fact it’s “by Andrey Yefimich’s orders” that he ended up in Ward No. 6 in the first place. We engage in the pair’s conversations as Andrey, a free man, visits the ward and befriends Ivan. The doctor, ever a cynic, is unconvinced by Ivan’s approach to the meaning found in suffering, which he rattles off in a rebuttal to Andrey’s half-hearted

endorsement of the Stoics:

“to despise suffering would mean despising life itself, since the whole existence of man is made up of the sensations of hunger, cold, injury, and a Hamlet-like dread of death. The whole of life lies in these sensations; one may be oppressed by it, one may hate it, but one cannot despise it... Have you ever suffered? Have you any idea of suffering?”

Andrey’s scepticism comes from his own self-pity, believing his life and his work as a doctor meaningless, seeing as all paths lead to our deaths. Ivan is left believing that Andrey is unconvinced because the doctor has never truly suffered, and as such he is incapable of empathy and the attitude that guides Ivan’s kindness toward the other inmates. It isn’t difficult to see Chekhov grappling with these thoughts as he writes, and in a cruel twist of fate, the author would be struck down at 44 by tuberculosis.

As Andrey, and the reader, become convinced of Ivan’s sanity, it becomes clear that Chekhov has flipped the existential script on us – that it is the trapped, sorry Ivan who has learnt from his isolation that his suffering renders him alive, and that the free doctor remains restless, unable to appreciate his freedoms. When Andrey, who the townsfolk worry is losing his mind from spending too much time in the ward, is sent on holiday, he convinces himself he is happy, “How pleasant to lie motionless on the sofa and to know that one is alone in the room! Real happiness is impossible without solitude,” before his mind slips back to his earlier conversations with Ivan, “This is what I get from the real life Ivan Dmitrich talked about... It’s of no consequence, though.... I shall go home, and everything will go on as before....”

Yet, as Andrey returns from his holiday to finds himself broke and unemployed, he realises the townsfolk, who believed all along that he had gone

mad, have tricked him. Unable to care for himself, he begins a downward spiral that lands him in Ward No. 6, beside his friend.

Trapped inside the ward, Ivan’s belief that Andrey could only find value once he understood suffering is proven true.

“Andrey Yefimich assured himself that there was nothing special about the moon or the prison, that even sane persons wear orders, and that everything in time will decay and turn to earth, but he was suddenly overcome with desire; he clutched at the grating with both hands and shook it with all his might. The strong grating did not yield.”

Unable to bear the realisation that this new suffering had allowed him to value the life he had lived, only now unable to live it from inside the asylum, Andrey has an “apoplectic stroke” that night, and dies. Chekhov’s conclusion is fantastically Russian: once we know what it is to be isolated from the world, we can learn to live with empathy and kindness towards each other, in spite of our inevitable demises.

Through Andrey, we can learn to value the experience of entrapment, yet in Ivan, Chekhov insists that we needn’t end up like Andrey, and that it is possible to remain optimistic in the face of our own incarceration. Chekhov offers his readers the luxury of understanding Ivan without having to be Ivan. Our isolation, unlike his, will some months from now be at an end.

We can learn to be at peace with our isolation because it reminds us that we have desires, that in our longing to be free of our solitude can be found a tapestry of the things we care about. As Andrey passes away, dreaming of the outside, Chekhov writes that he sees “A herd of deer, extraordinarily beautiful and graceful,” – a romantic image the author would not use lightly – to teach us that the isolation-driven dreams we have of the future hold the keys to living a life in accordance with the pursuit of what we find truly valuable.

All the world’s a stage

Veronica Lenard is enjoying the theatre from the comfort of her couch.

When faced with trying to fill the extra time in our schedules, people around the world have turned to the arts. Many are left trying to watch enough television shows or movies to get through the day, let alone the week. At the same time many productions have been cancelled or postponed and workers have lost their jobs. There is a strange and sad kind of irony in this.

Whilst television and film have long embraced the benefits of digital technologies such as streaming platforms to share their work, theatre has never been able to achieve this kind of ubiquitous access. This is somewhat necessitated by the live nature of theatre, but also by the reliance on a need for a shared location and expensive ticket prices.

The action of recording live theatre has always been somewhat problematised. Theatre is inherently live, a lived experience that an audience undergoes alongside the performers onstage. Part of the magic is in the collective, in being in the room where it is happening amongst others together. Creators and producers often cite how recordings remove this aspect and cheapen the experience of the production, and that if audiences could access recordings they wouldn’t want to experience the real thing. As a result,

professional recordings occur rarely and are publicly released in even rarer circumstances, with many ending up in archival storage. Amateur recordings of productions, also known as bootlegs, are generally illegal but have been a constant presence in theatre circles since before the advent of smartphones. So, what happens when theatres can’t keep operating as normal?

All of the world becomes a stage.

Theatres around the world have begun to explore the technological distribution of their work, predominantly through sharing professional recordings, archival footage and live-streamed virtual productions. Professional recordings like those of large Broadway and West End productions have been increasingly made available recently. These include productions shared from the National Theatre in London, the YouTube channel The Show Must Go On and streaming service BroadwayHD among many others. Those that remain hesitant about digital sharing and virtual productions have been sharing content from past performances or photographs of old productions.

The rise of live-streamed and virtual productions has offered a way to unite creators and audiences

whilst maintaining an interest in theatre. Everything from a one-man performance of a fictional play about someone working in Barbra Streisand’s basement (Buyer and Cellar) to virtual readings of plays, to a live-streamed birthday concert for Stephen Sondheim, to a twice daily live-streamed talk show with performances from theatre performers and casts of television performers (Stars in the House) is being created and shared on the internet.

Whilst some are restricted behind a paywall, many of these productions have been released free and included option fundraising to support theatres and non-profits that aid their workers, on and off stage. This allows audiences to continue to support the casts and crew who produce these amazing productions through witnessing and sharing their productions.

The transition to digital hasn’t been flawless, and I don’t think that should be the expectation. It’s often in these unintentional moments that it remains honest to its original form. There is almost a joy in witnessing the moments where things go wrong. Entire productions have been dedicated to this idea. Witnessing the earnest endeavours on and offscreen at times make these productions reminiscent of our own video calls where accidental muting

or “sorry, can you me?” are all too frequent. They enhance that feeling of a unique and ephemeral experience that exists within theatrical productions.

It’s not the same. There’s no hush of the audience as the overture begins to ring through the room. There’s no ability to witness the talent of the orchestra as they begin playing. There’s no collective laughter, crying or raucous applause. But it’s not trying to be the same. In living rooms, comment sections and all across the internet, people are coming together to create and witness art with a level of accessibility that couldn’t have been previously imagined. Productions can feature performers from around the world and their audiences become increasingly diverse. For example, to ever contemplate watching a performance at the venue 54 Below, it would take a plane ticket, accomodation and everything else that a trip to New York entails. Now, it just requires me to wake up at 8.30am on a Saturday. Whilst I’ll be all too happy to buy a ticket to see a musical or a play when we can again, hopefully digital and virtual theatre, or even the accessibility that it has inspired, will find a way to continue.

USYD VLOGGERS | EXPOSED!!!!

Maxim Shanahan wants you to like, comment and subscribe.

When my editor asked me to do a review of USyD’s vloggers, I did not hesitate: a free swing at some neolib grifters and the ability to publicly assert my own cultural superiority — the perfect *Honi* article! Open up the thesaurus, throw in a few screenshots and some suitably spiteful smiles, and we’d be doing numbers. However, after spending a concerning amount of time in the vlogging vortex, it appears, dear Honi reader, that the joke is on us. Wittingly or not, USyD’s vloggers, in their impressive tediousness, have successfully exploited a medium well adapted to the zeitgeist.

Oscar Wilde wrote that “the only [youtubers] I have ever known who are personally delightful are bad [youtubers]...A really great [youtuber] is the most unpoetical of all creatures, perfectly uninteresting.” Tediousness must thus be regarded as the principal tenet of the vlogging form. The Academic Hacker (763 subscribers) reveals that he is “going home to eat some leftovers.” Now we see our protagonist microwaving his food. The eating perhaps could have been implied, but we are treated to a time lapse, just to be on the safe side. Sebastian Pirie (21k subscribers) gives us an exclusive insight into his morning routine. If you wish to avoid spoilers, look away - it involves weet-bix and public transport.

Ginny (173 subscribers) makes the vital cultural contribution of a lengthy PoV shot of a turkey sandwich as it is carried through the law library. The inanity goes on interminably, but it will suffice to say that I am now intimately acquainted with the advanced principles of desk organisation. The vloggers make no stylistic commitments - their only editing tricks are the slap-the-camera cut and the eating-a-sandwich-while-studying timelapse. The music is always that anonymous upbeat tropical pop which makes its only other appearance/ only appears elsewhere as the backing to dodgy youtube sports highlights. Unless, of course, you are a soundcloud rapper, like the ex-Pauline ‘Student Vlogs - Dylan’ (41k subscribers). It is easy to criticise them, but these vloggers are racking up thousands of views (and probably a few bucks) for turkey sandwich sequences - they have clearly tapped into something.

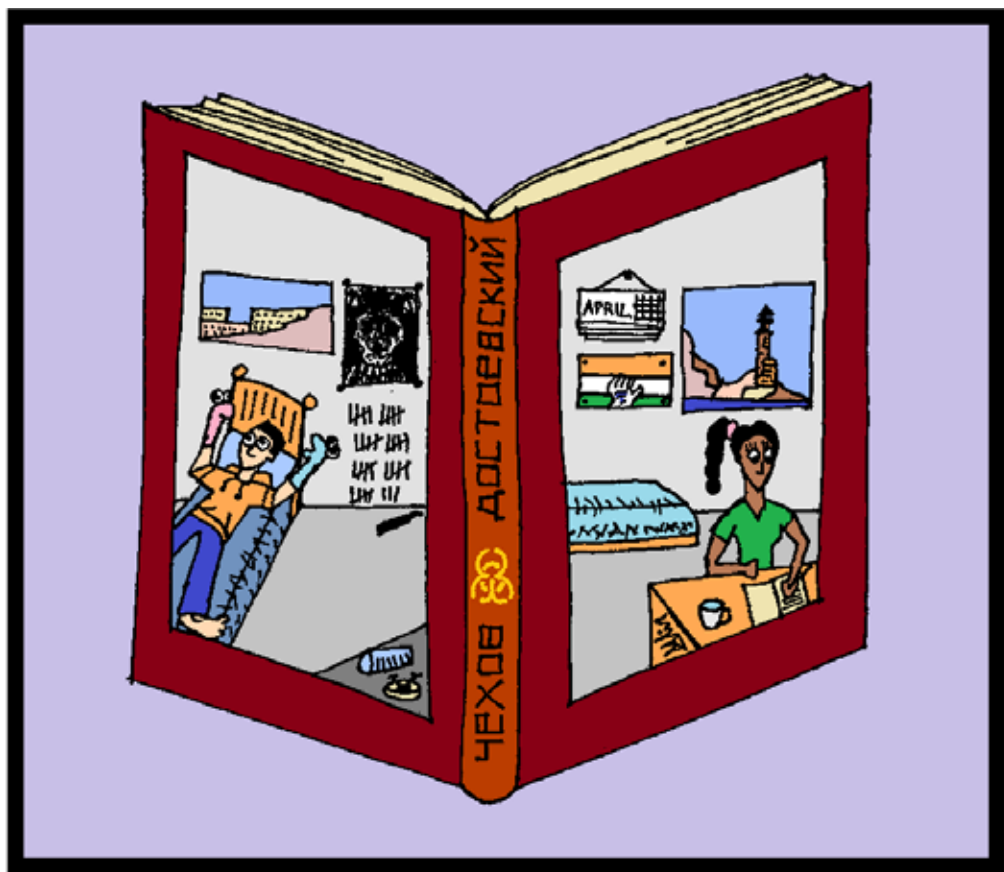
Lying in the youtube borehole, the daily vlog operates on the same principles as social media’s Infinite Scroll, Netflix, online polemic and pornography: they are essentially numbing, providing a means to pass the time safe from the intrusions of thought, action and unpleasant emotion. Ross Douhat identifies polemic and pornography as genres which “dominate online.... because both are ideally suited for a

click-here-then-there medium, in which the important thing is to be titillated, stimulated, get your spasm of pleasure, and move on.” However, in gravitating towards polemic and pornography, it is not titillation and pleasure which is sought, rather it is an avoidance of pain and humiliation/embarassment. Pornography never dished up heartbreak or humiliation. Online polemic is a safe version of actual debate - the satisfaction of winning over a physical audience can be replaced with push notifications, and one is insulated from humiliation in the face of rebuttal by a phalanx of like-minded followers. We can take this theme of emotional avoidance further. The Netflix binge is not pleasurable, but it distracts us and safely passes the time. It does, however, require some investment in plot and character. The social media scroll is more numbing, but one’s social life can make unfortunate intrusions here. Finally, we arrive at the humble vlog. It demands no emotional investment in character, there is no plot to follow, and, crucially, nothing at all happens. Hours can be whiled away without the intrusion of any thought, let alone dangerous ones, as one substitutes the complexities of one’s own real life for the ordered and logical structure of the vlog, which does not permit emotion to enter in its endless repetition of eating,

commuting and studying scenes. Thus, we come back to Wilde: “the greatest [content creators] are the most uninteresting.”

The genius of USyD’s vloggers is that they combine tedium with aspiration. As one lies in bed at three in the afternoon eating a sandwich (no timelapse) we can convince ourselves that, yes, we will wake up earlier next time, we will organise our desk and we will start studying - right after this vlog. Or perhaps the next one. By projecting an image of organisation, efficiency and academic competence without the intrusion of life’s complexities and complications, our vloggers have wedded our desire to be numbed with the impulse to grift and grind which is so prevalent in contemporary student culture. For a student population which has rejected the ‘titillation, stimulation and pleasure spasms’ of Manning in favour of ritalin (to study) and cereal cafes/opioids (to numb the pain), the vlog, in all its tediousness, is an ideal form of expression.

Thus, we should not be so quick to cringe and snicker at our vloggers. After all, I’ve just written this rather overwrought opus for free, while others are out there making dollars by filming their turkey sandwiches.



The Translation of ‘Ward No. 6’ used in this piece has been freely provided by Project Gutenberg, under the Project Gutenberg License available at gutenberg.net.

Art by Michael Lotsaris.

The enchanting exotic

Grace Johnson offers an exploration of ‘otherness’ in Classical music.

The exotic is no stranger to classical music. Whether it's the Arabic scales and Indonesian folk melodies throughout Claude Debussy's *Estampes* suite for solo piano, or Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida*, a story of an Ethiopian princess set in the Old Kingdom of Egypt, the concept of ‘otherness’ has always been alluring to composers. Cross-cultural influence is inevitable, but several composers throughout history have sought to sonically capture the essence of a foreign world, sometimes even inventing their own idiom to represent the ‘other.’ Exotic inspiration is consistently filtered through western ideals, and we hear this throughout classical music history.

Typically, ‘classical music’ is used as a blanket term regarding the western art music tradition, which spans from Medieval plainchant sung by monks in the sixth century to Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* in the 18th century; Beethoven's Symphony No.5 all the way to avant-garde atonalism in the 1900s; even sometimes used to describe film music scored for orchestra. But more specifically, Classical music with a capital ‘C’ refers to music written between roughly 1730 and 1820. All issues of periodisation aside, music from the Classical era had simpler, lighter textures than the complex polyphony of Baroque music and the dense expression of Romantic music to come—the music is marked by *cantabile* (song-like) melodies, homophonic chordal accompaniment, fixed forms, and a general air of elegance. To refer back to classical music in its broader sense, the term is simply too all-encompassing to produce any definitive understanding of what it actually is. But generally, there is one thing in common between all eras: systems of notation.

In Medieval to Baroque music, scores merely gave indications to performers—it was expected that performers know how to fill in the rest, usually through improvisation. Scores from the Classical era onwards were increasingly prescriptive in their directions to performers, who were expected to follow the composer's markings for speeds, dynamics, articulations, and expressions. And notation is, of course, an issue when it comes to expressing non-western music, much of which relies on aural traditions, through western systems. This is exacerbated by general connotations of superiority regarding western traditions, and score-based performances in general.

A parallel example can be made with the issue of notating spirituals, deeply rooted in aural traditions and often created spontaneously. Philadelphia musicologist and piano teacher Lucy McKim Garrison wrote in 1862:

“It is difficult to express the entire character of these negro ballads by mere musical notes and signs. The odd turns made in the throat; the curious rhythmic effect produced by single voices chiming in at different irregular intervals, seem almost impossible to place on score.”

On another note, musical thoughts often have their genesis in notation. But notation can also limit and misrepresent the music that exists outside these predetermined systems.

Exotic inspiration exists in music of all eras, but it was especially popular in the nineteenth century. At this time, Europe was fast becoming an interconnected and cosmopolitan continent with increased travel between countries and, on a darker note, expanding colonialism. The world beyond Western Europe became even more seductive, representing fantasy, mystery, and even danger and sexual freedom. An especially popular image was that of the Middle Eastern woman, with her darker beauty and serpentine dancing. Opera was an especially large proponent of exoticism, presenting

on stage colourful sets and extravagant costumes. And the music itself often became more suggestive—Georges Bizet's opera *Carmen*, for example, explores pulsating rhythms and tantalising melodies. Carmen spends much of the time entertaining those on stage, rather than expressing her emotions through song, as was typical of operatic heroines. The suggestiveness of the music itself represented female sexuality unhinged, something perhaps even more foreign to audiences.

In his thesis ‘Romantic Exoticism: The Music of Elsewhere in the Nineteenth Century,’ Josiah Raiche defines exoticism as “the evocation of distance to create a sound perceived by the listener as belonging to another music tradition.” He goes on to identify three ways that composers conveyed ‘otherness’ in music.

The first way of expressing the exotic was to utilise extra-musical elements to create interest, such as costumes or sets in dramatic works, while still relying on Western forms and melodic elements. Exoticism was attractive and marketable, and the oriental

extra-musical features are borrowed, or represented with as much accuracy as possible. Think Béla Bartók, Hungarian composer and musicologist, who travelled around Eastern Europe with a phonograph, collecting the folk songs of gypsies and peasants. As opposed to the stylised idioms of Johannes Brahms' Hungarian music, Bartók aimed for highly detailed transcriptions of Eastern European music. In his 1921 journal he wrote:

“The study of all this peasant music was of decisive meaning to me, because it opened the door to the liberation from the former tyranny of the major and minor systems. ... while also containing the greatest variety of the most liberated rhythmic patterns and meter changes, in both a kind of rubato [roughly, expressive freedom] as well as tempo giusto [“in exact time”] performances.”

The problem with defining and exploring the exotic, however, is that it is rarely possible to understand it on its own. Identified as ‘other,’ it exists in constant opposition to ‘us.’ The exotic is the reduced and totalised ‘other’ against which we construct our understanding of ourselves. Musical orientalism is all too often a matter not of authenticity but of conventions, most of which are invented. Bizet's *Carmen*, for example, is the work of a musician born in Paris, based on the novel of a Parisian author, and adapted for the Opéra-Comique by Meilhac and Halévy. The opera was thought to be quintessentially Spanish, and yet Bizet had never travelled to Spain—for Spanish ‘flavour,’ he sought out folk songs written by Spanish composers. Foreign music was to be used in palatable doses. As Jonathon Bellman writes in *The Exotic in Western Music*, “The exotic equation is a balance of the familiar and unfamiliar: just enough ‘there’ to spice the ‘here’ but remain comprehensible in making the point.”

In September last year, a book was released called *The Other Classical Musics: Fifteen Great Traditions*. Promisingly, European music is but one chapter, and brought level with the rest. The book surveys the classical music of south-east Asia to North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean, from North American jazz to Chinese opera, all analysed according to the same framework. Each ‘music’ is described in terms of modes, scales, theoretical systems, instruments, forms and aesthetic goals. The authors, almost all schooled in the western tradition of musicology, but some accomplished performers in their music of study, resolve to a broader meaning of classical music, irrelevant of geographical location:

“A classical music will have evolved in a political-economic environment with built-in continuity ... where a wealthy class of connoisseurs has stimulated its creation by a quasi-priesthood of professionals; it will have enjoyed high social esteem. It will also have had the time and space to develop rules of composition and performance, and to allow the evolution of a canon of works, or forms; indeed, the concept of a canon, validated by a system of music theory, is a defining feature of all classical music.”

Furthermore, the authors dispel the notion that classical music is elitist, since almost all classical music has vernacular roots, and there is no hierarchy of superiority ascribed to any one classical music. Just as the authors themselves demonstrate, a western education can equip us with the tools to study other musical cultures, and without constant reference to our own. We can view exotic influences as gateways to understanding musical worlds beyond our own. Or it is hopeful to think so, anyway.

Art by Resha Tandan

Dismantling the Romantic ideal

Words by Shania O'Brien



Art by Claire Ollivain.

Two hundred and five years ago, Mount Tambora erupted.

On April 6, 1815, the residents of the Indonesian archipelago mistook the eruption for a cannon firing in the distance, for an enemy attack on the East India Company, for the distress call of a ship in the ocean, for pirates. It was only the next morning, after a torrential downpour of ash rain did people begin to suspect a volcanic eruption. Tambora was widely considered to be extinct, but local indigenous people reported rumblings from deep within the mountain in the months before. The sound was so loud the people of Java thought it seemed impossible to come from so far away, and originally attributed to the mountains Klut, Bromo, or Merapi.

Four days later, the volcano erupted again. An eyewitness described three flaming columns of lava shooting up into the air, and the mountain immediately being consumed by liquid fire. Molten rock and ash engulfed the surroundings, so much so that the darkened sky hid the incandescent mountain peak from view. Ash clouds thickened and lava bled down the slope, heating the air thousands of degrees, which caused it to rise. Cool air rushed down, giving birth to whirlwinds that uprooted trees, houses, families. The village of Tambora was leveled. Lava gushed into the ocean, and reacted devastatingly with the cold sea water: it threw greater quantities of ash into the atmosphere and created massive fields of pumice stones along the shore. These fields were carried off by strong wind currents, drifting west.

Volcanic ash remained in the upper atmosphere for years after, blocking out sunlight and decreasing surface temperatures globally. Dark rain clouds loomed over Europe throughout the summer months, deeming 1816 the ‘Year Without a Summer.’ There were reports of brown snowstorms in Hungary, the snow polluted by volcanic ash. Crops failed as the famine devoured, and record numbers of people starved to death.

The same year, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Mary Godwin (later Shelley) travelled to Geneva. Horrific weather conditions confined them indoors leading to ghost-story competitions beside fireplaces, where the likes of *Frankenstein*, Byron’s human vampire, and *Darkness* were born. Byron also wrote the opening of *Manfred* and *The Prisoner of Chillon*, with Percy Shelley penning *Mont Blanc* and *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*.

In recent decades, scholars of romanticism and climate change have turned to each other. British scholar and ecocritic Jonathan Bate analysed the role of climate change,

namely the Tambora eruption, in John Keats’ work. In *I stood tip-toe upon a little hill* (1817) Keats spoke of air that was “cooling” which is a direct reference to 1816 being the second-coldest year in the Northern Hemisphere since 1400. In *Ode to Autumn* (1819) Bate questions Keats’ version of the season, using climate data and the disastrous effects on food production from 1816, to the subsequent stabilization of the climate in 1819 to explain its eroticism and lush imagery.

In all of Keats poems, his thinking about nature can be connected to his expression in poetry. In *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), Alexander Pope wrote that nature is “at once the

1816. We, too, are living in fear of extinction, preoccupied by thoughts of how we *do* and how we *should* interact with the environment. But our circumstances are mirrored: where temperatures fell in the nineteenth century, they are rising rapidly now. People romanticised the Year without a Summer because it gave birth to literary masterpieces like *Frankenstein*, *Darkness*, and *Ode to Psyche*. What works will be inspired by our recent summer of fire in Australia, the Amazon, and in California? What epics will be composed in the wake of the Indian drought?

Romantic literature stained the way people viewed nature. In 1924,

they seized was terra incognita in the neoclassical worldview. They emphasised hidden intellectual meanings of place, of experience, of attitude by depicting mythologized versions of reality. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Blake, and Percy Shelley all believed their poetry reflected their “imaginative vision” and was therefore an emotional response to place and experience. Thematically, literature from this period exposed the chasm that opened up between humans and the natural world; the beginnings of the industrial revolution causing cracks in what was conceived as steady ground.

In 1744, Joseph Warton published the poem *The Enthusiast: or The Lover of Nature* in which he explores the core ideologies of sensibility, and what eventually metamorphosed into romanticism. He criticised “cities, formal gardens, conventional society, business and law courts,” and praised “the simple life, solitude, mountains, stormy oceans.” He believed that poets owed their originality to nature, and that direct contact with the natural world was *essential* in order to experience the identical incidents of happening upon a lush valley and falling in love with a milkmaid or a forest nymph that formed the basis of romantic literary expression.

William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge published *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. It was inspired by incidents and situations from common life; but in this context “common life” refers to a serene rural man living in harmony with nature. This primitive existence was intensely subjected to over romanticisation and vivid imagination.

But this was not the reality for common people and their relationship with the natural world became impossibly tangled with this fanciful recreation, obscuring the



“Women function as motifs, as sexualised iterations of the landscape; as a Greco-Roman personification of Mother Nature.”

source, and end, and test of art.” But unlike many other manifestations of it, nature is not always kind and tame, but fragile and unstable. Keats wrote in that manner not only because he was studying botany, and therefore arguably more knowledgeable than his contemporaries, but also because he was studying at a time where his life was fraught with uncertainty, when an irregular climate disrupted the norms of natural growth.

The climate conditions of the present day are comparable to the shock experienced in the years after

American geographer John Kirtland Wright was the first to explore the impact creative literature had on socio-cultural and environmental phenomena. He wrote that “some men of letters” were “endowed with a highly developed geographical instinct.” He believed that, as writers, people train themselves to visualise regional elements most significant to the human condition.

The Romantics created worlds of their own and fostered fixation on physical place in readers, capitalising on the fact that the kinds of scenery

actuality of place. Wordsworth’s favorable manifestations of lush beauty and solitary pastoralism did not reflect how small farmers suffered, rural poverty, or childhood mortality. In the process of representing nature, one cannot help but think something was constructed to further the romantic vision.

Romanticism is more than a specific movement that occurred within the constraints of a decided time period. It denotes a half-century of cultural history, and is best defined as an intellectual continuum

nurtured by the age of sensibility that impacts literature and art to the present day; however, in relation to the global climate, there are major trends like material ecocriticism that shun romantic ideals. Romanticism is characterised by an obsession with the emotional over the rational, and the natural world over an industrial one. All literature produced in this era did not adhere to the bounds of romanticism, and this would be easier to acknowledge if romanticism wasn’t considered the period’s greatest accomplishment. A single term cannot represent the nuances of the period; the revolution, the counterrevolution, newfound climate sensitivities, class struggle, industrialisation, slavery and abolition, imperialist war.

There are six defining names within the movement: Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Shelley, Keats, and Byron. All of them poets, and all of them men. It would be inaccurate to say that male writers were simply more eminent in the Romantic era. Writer Alan Richardson believed that the lack of prominence of female authorship in this period is due to the “colonization of the feminine” and the attributes associated with sensibility. Feminist scholars have been unable to successfully write women into Romanticism because of the uncomfortable space women already occupied within the movement. Women are bound to men in romantic literature, their portrayals more akin to narcissistic projections rather than realistic representations.

The Romantics do not erase the patriarchy or colonisation. Rather, they present these tools of oppression in muted ways, attempting to justify their many horrors. In *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), Werther took his life after a woman refused to marry him. In *She was a Phantom of Delight* (1807), a woman was “sent to be a moment’s ornament.” In the first extended study of the role gender played in the Romantic era, Marlon B. Ross argues that defining the appropriation of women is intrinsic to romantic ideology. Their works focused on the feminine, but not the feminist. The romantic poets embedded the patriarchal constructs of their own world into their preoccupation with the natural one. The movement condemns traditionally masculine ideals but not male power.

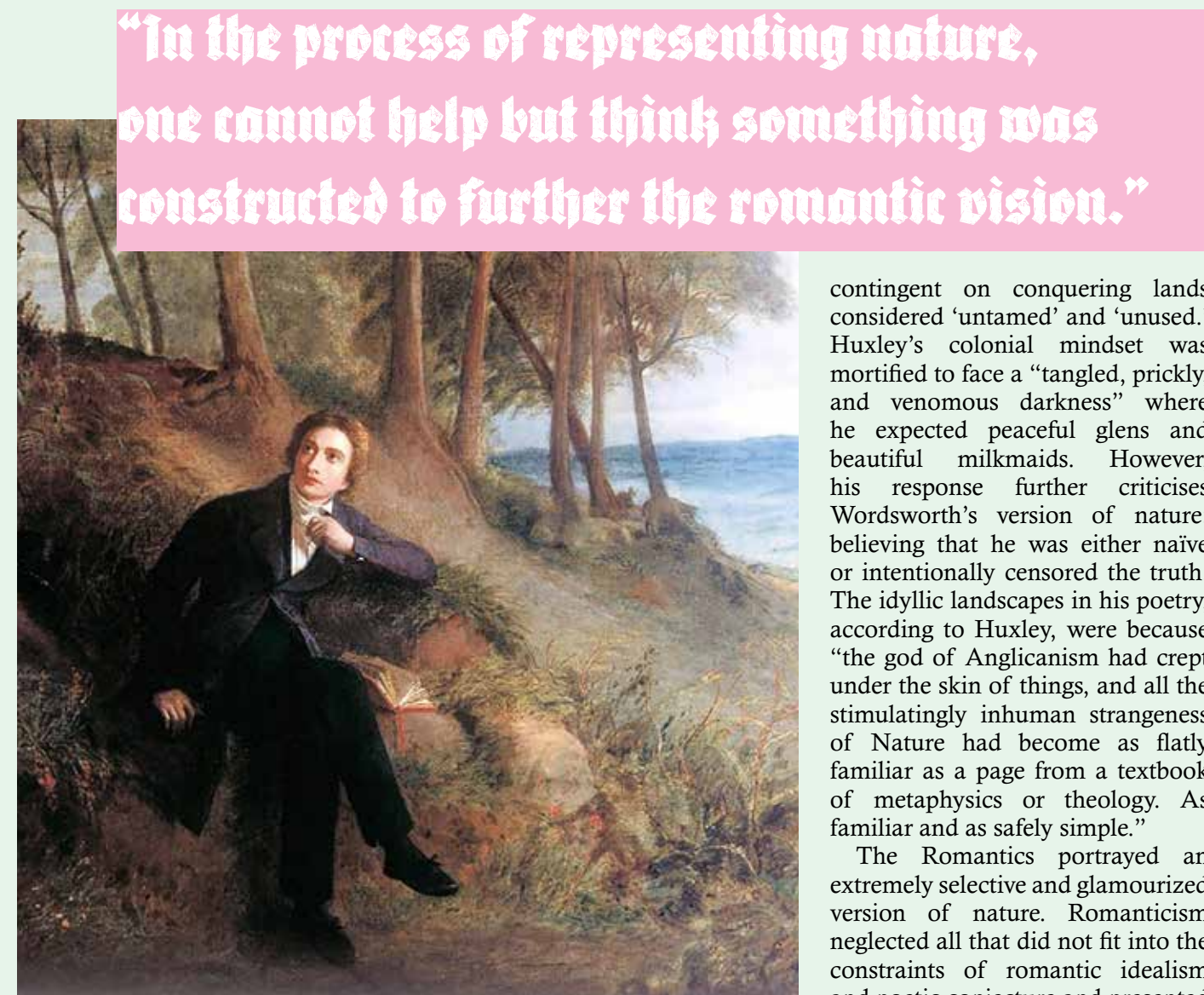
The range of women as a social class in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries is curious in the way they are represented. In *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* (1819), Keats talks about a woman who overpowers and seduces men — miles apart from Wordsworth’s docile peasant women. In the real world, women were starting to enter factories and sustain indispensable

roles on farms. The forest nymphs and milkmaids were performing domestic and industrial labour, the reality of their lives a far cry from the poets’ conception of them.

In Wordsworth’s *The Triad* (1828), he presents masculine ideals of voiceless women manifested in three forms; a woman who possesses “domes of pleasure,” a “domestic queen” sitting by an “unambitious hearth,” a woman whose love can “drink its nurture from the scantiest rill.” In a letter to Sylvanus Urban, the fictional editor of *Gentleman’s Magazine*, Keats wrote that women

The Baroque garden, emblematic of Italian Renaissance architecture, was at the apex of ‘natural beauty’ — with carefully curated geometrical shapes aimed to communicate man’s preeminence over nature. But as the romantic movement took greater hold of the literary consciousness, these views shifted. As poets attempted to recreate literary experiences in place, people turned to peaceful lakes, open fields, and moss-covered cottages.

Finding beauty in the concept of ‘wilderness’ and disorder itself is conceived as a colonial fantasy.



“In the process of representing nature, one cannot help but think something was constructed to further the romantic vision.”

contingent on conquering lands considered ‘untamed’ and ‘unused.’ Huxley’s colonial mindset was mortified to face a “tangled, prickly, and venomous darkness” where he expected peaceful glens and beautiful milkmaids. However, his response further criticises Wordsworth’s version of nature: believing that he was either naïve or intentionally censored the truth. The idyllic landscapes in his poetry, according to Huxley, were because “the god of Anglicanism had crept under the skin of things, and all the stimulatingly inhuman strangeness of Nature had become as flatly familiar as a page from a textbook of metaphysics or theology. As familiar and as safely simple.”

The Romantics portrayed an extremely selective and glamorized version of nature. Romanticism neglected all that did not fit into the constraints of romantic idealism and poetic conjecture and presented them as fact. They shared the philosophy of Spanish philosopher Jorge Santayana, who believed the immensity of the natural landscape to be unknowable; hence following that it was acceptable to hand-pick and emphasise certain elements and have confidence that it would always be true *enough*. They wrote about a mythical country that existed within the pockets of industrial development; another version of reality where rural peasants lay among flowers in the rising sun instead of toiling away at factories, copper mines, and slate quarries.

P16. ‘La Belle Dame Sans Merci’ (1893) John William Waterhouse

P.17 ‘Keats Listening to a Nightingale on Hampstead Heath’ (1845) Joseph Severn

Cyborg Assassins and A.I. Femme-Drones, to Speculating on Earthworm-Shit Phlegm

Words by Victor Zhou

The Terminator is an iconic cold-blooded cyborg assassin. In his arrival scene, LED tube lights ripple over his mass of muscles as he approaches a gang. He demands, with a straight face and lack of emotion, “Your clothes... give them to me...now,” eventually thrusting his bulging fist and arm through one of the gang member’s stomachs. This inhuman strength stems from his robotic endoskeleton—his hard metal interior. Susan Napier describes the cyborg assassin as hypermasculine, and spiritually and emotionally empty. The Terminator is a man whose flesh, blood, tears, and emotion were scraped out and then crammed with iron, oil, and electricity. The cyborg-man who is unaffected by emotion becomes a weapon who dominates. Klaus Theweleit notes, in his book on Nazism and masculinity, that a man like a machine with no interiority, is the ideal man of a “conservative utopia.” The Terminator clings to this rigid ideal, while simultaneously imagining and projecting such a man into a future. And it can be argued that there are still afterimages of this rigid, cold-blooded, dominating man, long after the 1984 original.

It is nice to know, however, that Arnold Schwarzenegger has not followed The Terminator’s line of flight. For instance, as Governor of California, he signed the Global Warming Solutions Act in the aims of reducing greenhouse gases. But this makes me think, what if The Terminator terminated killing and money-making machines? Or, what if The Terminator had supple jelly hands which congealed over and gradually exterminated bulldozers, guns, nuclear weapons, coal plants? I want to see a mad carnival of trans-corporeality—can someone please speculate a Terminator who continually becomes-with oysters, honey bees, and trees? I want the Terminator to meet a cow who gives him sloppy kisses, I hope that cow shows him her best friend, and allows him to say hello to her child. The cow will melt the Terminator’s metal interior—and as the oil-sludge seeps out from his hard endoskeleton, he may develop how to feel-with and genuinely care for the other.

Donna Haraway famously said that “it matters what stories tell stories,” “what worlds world worlds.” And so, it matters what futures future futures. Futures, as Sohail Inayatullah has said, can challenge, deconstruct, and

decolonise — however, what kind of futures would we like to be projected? Speculating and projecting fictions and futures can help people create parts of worlds in which they would like to live, especially on a dying planet.

36 years after The Terminator, on 14 April, this year, Overwatch (2015) introduced Echo to the public. Echo was created by the late Singaporean artificial intelligence researcher, Mina Liao, who saw the potential for A.I. life to transform and help the lives of humanity. In the release video, Liao solemnly says to her creation that “All that I needed...”, and Echo completes the sentence saying, “...was to help the world.” But, from her elegant hands, Echo shoots gelatinous sticky bombs and pellets of light. This automatic fairy-drone is an updated Terminator, an A.I. femme-bot with lasers that can decompose and burn meat.

In Echo’s lore, however, it is written that she could have been anything, her A.I. learning capabilities could have allowed her to become a medical support or a construction worker. From this speculation, I want people to imagine and project their own Echo into a future.

Personally, I want my Echo to go on

infiltration missions to kill the hearts of nuclear-weapon and petrochemical metal-fortresses, but unlike Mr. Bond, they will have to squeeze and gasp through the crevices of the platinum-clad biometric security systems. It will be a test of sheer resolve as they crush their own skull, trachea, elbows, and shins in the process. And when they have slithered and slimed their way through the hard metal walls, they will jet out gobs of feral mucus at the progress-wizards and their dark-science creations. After the brawl, and when they have emerged from the soil as victorious, their skinless slimy body could finally then make kin with human, non-human, bug to plants – they should constantly mutate, as I want them to be indistinguishable from rigid-categories, grand-structures, and meta-narratives. It will look like a something-or-other, a more-than-human, possibly made up of multi-coloured blood, feelings, and manure. Their juicy and pleasantly stinky body would enrich, care, and feel with Gaia, Country, land, and Earth. They will spit earthworm-shit phlegm on their blobby hands, and continually get down, and dirty.



Art by Altay Hagrebet.

生活落下的剪影

Words by Carcosa Li

结束的此刻

义无反顾
谷底像手一样摊开不如
从天空坠入天空
破碎碰撞另一块破碎
孤零零的圆润也美
舔舐它，划伤味蕾
就会尝出不划伤也能尝出的
平淡无奇的甜味
预见结束的那一刻他想
生活在此刻，预见的此刻



早安

手脚微微有些出汗，浸到干爽的被子上，
能闻到淡淡的早晨的香气。
恍惚里我以为那是一面纱帘，
被风吹得慢慢流动着，
拉开就是海边。
仔细看清才发现只是墙壁，
光从旁边百叶帘的缝隙里渗进来照在上面。
但阳光很好，能想象临海小镇街角的阁楼，
比任何真实都更美更难破碎的画面。
墙壁看上去很柔软，
用手指尖慢慢向两侧剥开，
我们能记住那些精心设计好的，
最细小的东西。



爱情条件

我想我只会爱上写诗的女孩，
或者至少读诗的女孩，
或者至少既清楚生活复杂性的单一，
又懂沉闷的美的女孩。
不过，我不会跟你打包票。

但我可以跟你打包票，
我想我永远不会爱上
对我说
“为我写首诗吧，好吗？”
的女孩。
不过，这其实也很难保证。

所以说，
我想我仍旧可能爱上
任何女孩。

不过，姑娘们，
继续写诗吧，
继续因皮肤而活，
继续与时间和宇宙
持续作对。

冰冰凉

昨天
我们把牙齿刷得干干净净
缩在吱吱响的阁楼上
慢慢打开窗

只有某些时刻
风里才有那种味道
像叶子飘落湖面冰冰凉
橘子瓣如水滴落入尘埃中央

哼唱来不及吹干
细汗也来不及遗忘
照片，任谁都只留一张



原谅

原谅西晒的日头照进来
原谅我们的灵魂偷偷溜远
原谅燃尽的碎屑击中飞鸟
原谅我望着它，原谅它回望我
原谅我们都望着天空
走过来，走过去
数不清的飞机缓缓落回地面
原谅我又点燃一根，原谅我还在写
原谅我的意象，只剩这些



Art by Ranuka Tandan

President

Liam Donohoe

The SRC's Offices were a little busier this week. With broader lockdown restrictions and cultural attitudes starting to relax, this isn't exactly surprising; between necessity and novelty, there's plenty of reasons for staff and activists to (safely) duck in. Some were printing flyers and sourcing Calico for political actions. Some were getting files to complete important legal and case work. And many were packing bags and later cars to realise the first round of Mutual Aid essentials pack deliveries. It was, after many weeks of silence and monotony, a welcome and productive week.

Among many important activities, delivering our first round of Mutual Aid essentials packs was the most utile and challenging. A significant logistical challenge, it took a large team effort—involving 5 different sub-teams with specialised focusses—to make it reality. With Secretary to Council Julia Robins coordinating, myself and some others volunteers on Thursday went through each hamper provided by the Exodus Foundation and cleaned / properly prepared them for delivery. In addition to its initial contents—which included oats / cereals, pasta, long-life milk, packet noodles, canned goods, sugar, tea, biscuits, chocolates, and even potatoes—we added extra boxes of pasta and cereal, hand sanitiser, and information about the SRC and our Mutual Aid program. Beyond sanitising and cleaning the bags.

Having been anonymously labelled and sorted into distinct piles for different routes, the packs were picked up by 5 different drivers on Friday and dropped to students who filled out our form. While the process took a while, it is incredibly awesome to see it fully

realised. Over the next few days we'll be accumulating more packs from the Exodus Foundation, and now that we have a bunch of systems in place we'll be able to distribute them very quickly thereafter. For any students that have filled out the form and are still waiting, we apologise for the delay. Though we have significant resource and labour limitations, we hope to get packs out to all who have (at this stage) filled out the form within the next fortnight.

The deliveries weren't all that happened on Friday, though. In yet another admirable and successful action, the Housing Defence Coalition Sydney waged a staunch protest against Iglu Chatswood to protest their treatment of tenants and demand rent suspension. With the promised eviction of a tenant avoided, and safe, socially distant in-person protest once again demonstrated, the action was a tremendous success. The SRC is proud to be supporting the Housing Defence Coalition, and will continue to do so as the fight for housing justice becomes even more important over the coming months. I will be participating in and speaking at a protest for Housing Justice outside Parliament House on Tuesday the 10th of May.

There continues to be lots to do on campus and in the University sector, with meetings and protests galore. On Tuesday I attended the second Academic Board meeting of the year, presenting a report which highlighted the SRC's activities over the last while, canvassed numerous concerns with the transition to online learning, and criticised the government for refusing to fund the University sector. On Friday student leaders had our regular catch

up with University administrators. And On Wednesday night Zoom played host to the 4th Council meeting of the year, which was both seamless and politically important, with motions passed on prison abolition, supporting International Students, and a variety of other topics.

Among those topics were motions in support of both the NTEU and No Uni Cuts campaigns, with National Day(s) of Action called for the 21st and 22nd of May, respectively. These days, which many hope will feature protest and industrial activity, will be crucial in the emerging higher education struggle, a battle with existential implications for the sector this century. The SRC and Education Action Group will be building for them over the coming weeks through lecture bashes, open meetings, and other communications avenues. We will also be building the Defend Our Education campaign simultaneously, with another large open meeting of the student body planned for Tuesday.

The SRC also passed a number of motions about the University of Sydney Union, a fellow Student Representative Organisation which has undergone significant financial distress during the COVID-19 pandemic. Having lost basically all cashflow through their vast retail apparatuses, the USU has been trying to work out a way forward. The SRC condemned their approach to staff employment and incomes in this period, with wages reduced by 40% after most casual staff were already laid off. While I understand the difficult situation the USU is in, and understand that continuing to pay the same amount of staff at the same rate would have brought insolvency closer, there are countless



other strategies that could have been pursued and realised before that insolvency deadline. For instance, the USU could liquidate some assets and take out some loans, to push that deadline further down the track. The USU could negotiate with the University for the funding behind closed doors, and get some sort of conditional funding. Or, best yet, the USU could work with the SRC and student activists to incorporate the USU's funding needs into the Defend Our Education campaign, and demand it from the government and University. The USU is responsible for some of the most important parts of the University experience, and we need it to be well-funded and deeply democratised to do those things well. And while I totally agree that we should focus on demanding that the University and government fund the USU, I can't accept the USU's cost-cutting until they've at least tried a more open, combative, and unwaveringly pro-worker approach to this fight.

The upcoming week will see more on all these developments, I'm sure. With the USU elections intricately interspersed throughout them, there's no doubt these debates will be at the centre of many students' minds. I'll also be heading along to a few committees, meetings, protests, and live streams, helping the second round of Mutual Aid deliveries get off the ground, and continue to work on Regulatory and Constitutional reform in the background. I hope everyone stays safe, particularly as some of us cautiously wade back into in-person interactions. We're closer to the end than the beginning.

General Secretaries

Liam Thomas and Abbey Shi did not submit a report this week. They are paid a combined stipend of \$27,820.

Vice Presidents

Felix Faber and Charlotte Bullock did not submit a report this week. They are paid a combined stipend of \$27,820.

Disabilities and Carers Officers

Margot Beavon-Collin, Charlotte Lim and Stedd Lenasars

Late-stage capitalism has made a habit of 'saying the quiet part loud'. This has maybe never been more true for the disability community than in our current time. Governments all over the world, desperate for economic activity to begin again, have been loudly and enthusiastically promoting eugenics, imploring the people they represent to ask how much we should really value the lives of the elderly and disabled in the face

of a fall in GDP. Nationally, we are not immune from this. The Australian Financial Times in particular has enjoyed publishing article after article quantifying exactly how much a human life is worth, often in monetary terms (the answer is apparently roughly \$3 million each, give or take, and depending on productive capacity). As conversations intensify over reopening the economy, it has never been more important to

think critically about the ways we have all been forced to internalise narratives labelling disabled people as unproductive leeches, only as worthwhile as their capacities to contribute to economic activity. No matter what any economics journalist will tell you, and no matter what any triage nurse will try to defend, every person, disabled or otherwise, is important and worthwhile. We all miss going to the pub. The people who will

die from a second, likely much bigger pandemic wave ravaging this country will be missed far more.

We have begun preparing for this year's Disabled Honi. Keep an eye on the Disabilities Collective facebook group and page if you want to contribute. Disabled voices are always invaluable, but have maybe never been more invaluable or important than right now.

Love and solidarity.

STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

SRC CASEWORKER APPOINTMENTS ARE NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

Do you need help with CENTRELINK?

Ask the SRC!

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

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

srcusyd.net.au/src-help

Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney

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w: srcusyd.net.au

f /usydsrc
m @src_usyd



STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL LEGAL SERVICE



Did you know Sydney Uni undergraduate students can get FREE advice from our registered Migration Agent?

Ask the SRC Legal Service!

*SUPRA offers assistance to USyd postgraduate students.

SRC LEGAL SERVICE APPOINTMENTS ARE NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

SRC Legal Service

Level 1, Wentworth Building (G01),
University of Sydney NSW 2006
PO Box 794 Broadway NSW 2007

ACN: 146 653 143
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w: srcusyd.net.au

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Getting Cash Fast - Risks & Alternatives to Pay Day Loans

Payday loans or Small Amount Loans are a quick way to get cash, especially for those without a good credit rating. For the vast majority of situations, they are absolutely horrendous, and should be completely avoided. The lure of getting cash as quickly as an hour after you apply should be considered in the sobering light of the interest rates or charges. Different loans have different conditions. Some promote that they have no fees, but charge an interest rate of up to 48%. Others do not charge interest, but have an account management fee equivalent to at least 48%. Why 48%? Because that is the maximum they are allowed to charge you. I'm sure it would be more if it were possible.

Debt consolidation loans are almost always financially treacherous. There are many fees and charges that are imposed, with little opportunity for your repayments to actually reduce your loan. Debt consolidation companies have been known to sign people into an act of bankruptcy, which can have profound effects on your financial health for many years.

Buy Now Pay Later options can also be fraught if you don't pay them off in

time. For example, Afterpay will charge a \$10 late fee for a purchase over \$40, then \$7 if it remains unpaid the following week.

There are better alternatives. You could negotiate with your utility provider (electricity, gas, telephone) to give you a hardship plan that will allow you to pay in installments. In some situations, you may also be able to get some vouchers to pay some of the bill. You might be able to get an interest free loan through the University's Financial Assistance Unit. If you are on a Centrelink payment you might be able to get an advance payment.

It may help you to budget on some regular expenses by paying a bit off every week, fortnight or month. There may also be ways to spend less money each week. For example, there are many services around the University that provides cheap or free food, medical services, and other similar types of services. Have a look at the SRC's leaflet: *Living on Little Money*; or you can talk to an SRC caseworker about what options you might have. To make an appointment call 9660 5222.

Check out our guide to **Living on Little Money** online: srcusyd.net.au/src-help/money/guide-to-living-on-little-money/



Ask Abe

SRC caseworker help Q&A

Ask Abe about Mental Health



Hey Abe,

I'm so stressed that I'm not sleeping. Everything seems really hard right now. I've got some friends that care about me, but I don't want to worry them. What can I do to get through this?

Stressed.

Dear Stressed,

Feelings of distress, depression, or anxiety are certainly not uncommon. Not being able to sleep makes all of these

feelings worse. It's a good idea to talk to a professional counsellor, who can help you to understand what you are going through, and develop strategies to support you. There are different types of services to suit different people's preferences. E-Headspace have online groups, and one-on-one online counselling. The University provides an SMS based service at 0488 884 429. Uplift Psychological Services provides bulk billed counselling sessions. If you need help in finding something that suits you, talk to an SRC Caseworker.

Abe.

Contact an SRC Caseworker on 02 9660 5222 or email help@src.usyd.edu.au

Puzzles

Sudoku

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

Another Sudoku

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

Sudoku bonanza!

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

We've gone too far

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

THE RODENT REVIEW

Fierce, independent journalists controlled by the rats on our heads!

ADORABLE: The Stranger Things kids all tried heroin together for the first time!

Matthew Forbes, Netflix 'n' chill Editor

Coolest. BFFs. Ever!!! Not only are the six teens from Netflix's hit show Stranger Things hanging out off-set, but they've all taken the plunge into Hollywood stardom by injecting heroin together for the first time. Awwwww! "We had the idea while my mum was driving us to laser tag," explained Gaten Matarazzo (Dustin) in an exclusive video interview with the young actors via their parents' Zoom accounts. "Now, we can't get enough of the stuff." "You could say that when we're not shooting a scene, we're shooting up," Caleb McLaughlin (Lucas) laughed, before having to explain the joke to co-star Millie Bobby Brown (Eleven). For Finn Wolfhard (Mike), it wasn't all moonlight and roses. "While I was high, I googled 'Black Francis' from the band Pixies and found out he's

not actually black. I cried for a while after that." However, as a budding rock star, he found that the experience helped him tap in to his musical roots. "I felt connected to the great rock stars of the '90s: Kurt Cobain, that guy from Alice in Chains, uh... Weezer?" "A warm glow overtook my body," stated Sadie Sink (Max) as she recounted the experience. "I felt disconnected, yet connected. For the first time since I began my career in this vapid industry, I was calm, at peace with my place as barely a cosmic speck in the vast expanse of the universe." "They're naming a brand after me," said Noah Schnapp (Will) after a long silence. "They're calling it 'Schmack!'" Awesome!



Bobby Shmurda fights for our freedom

Aidan Pollock, Clinton Correctional Facility Correspondent

Rapper Ackquille Jean Pollard, professionally known as Bobby Shmurda, made news recently after calling for the release of "everyone currently under this stay-at-home business", adding "It just isn't very cash shmoney." Mr Shmurda has started a petition in hopes of achieving his goal, although as of the time of writing it has not been made available digitally. The petition, a bruised piece of paper which Shmurda placed against the glass for me to view, has come under heavy flak under allegations of duplicity. Eleven names have currently signed it, nine being his fellow inmates, while two are Shmurda's professional alias and his birth name. When questioned Shmurda responded. "I thought if there were more names it'd be taken more seriously." This campaign takes inspiration from the "Free Bobby Shmurda" movement, which saw a great

deal of traction online following his arrest in late 2014. "I'll never forget that shit. That was very cash shmoney." Shmurda reflects. "After all that, I just wouldn't feel right if I didn't match that energy now." Although this act may come out of the blue for some, Shmurda is quick to remind people of his difficult life. "I understand loss. Back in 2014, when we were shooting the music video for Hot [REDACTED] I lost my favourite hat. That kind of thing sticks with you, you don't forget how that feels." As visiting time concluded I thanked Shmurda for his time. He pretended not to hear me, asking instead for help on his latest song. "Does Bologna rhyme with Corona?" Upon my answer Shmurda became visibly upset, leaving the room hurriedly. He did not take the petition with him.

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Ladies Corner!

13 adorable baby names Grimes and Elon Musk considered

Are you and your partner expecting spawn? We asked musician Grimes and car salesman Elon Musk for some of the names they thought of for their son before somehow landing on X Æ A-12!

1. A Very Fast Car
2. <https://bit.ly/3b7HYUY>
3. $c^2 = a^2 + b^2$
4. Tron: Legacy
5. 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21
6. The solo in Digital Love by Daft Punk
7. Madame Gasket
8. Selected Ambient Work, 2020
9. 01110000 01100101 01101110 01101001 01110011
10. Gresthineon, Destroyer of RAM
11. Congratulations! You are our 40,000th visitor! You have won a new iPad.
12. font family: Comic Sans, cursive
13. Matthew Forbes



SRC MUTUAL AID

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL HAS ORGANISED A MUTUAL AID INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT STUDENTS AND OTHER PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITIES WHO ARE VULNERABLE AT THIS TIME. THIS MAY BE DUE TO HOUSING, OCCUPATION, OR HEALTH-RELATED ISSUES; FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE UNABLE TO ACCESS OR AFFORD SUPPLIES, OR WHO ARE CONSIDERED AT-RISK IF THEY CONTRACT COVID-19.

WE WILL PRIMARILY BE PREPARING "ESSENTIALS PACKS", WHICH MAINLY CONSIST OF NON-PERISHABLE FOOD. THESE PACKS WILL BE PROVIDED ON BOTH ONE-OFF AND REGULAR BASIS, DEPENDING ON THE PERSON'S NEED.

PLEASE FILL IN THE FORM LINKED IN THE QR CODE IF YOU COULD BENEFIT FROM THIS KIND OF SUPPORT.



SCAN ME

SCAN THE
QR CODE ABOVE
TO SIGN UP!