

Honi Soit

Week 2, Semester 2, 2020 / First printed 1929



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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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Cover artist: Ash Duncan

Editorial

I'm not saying that you should brick the stained glass window of a certain unnamed band in a certain unnamed pub in a certain inner-city location, but I'm also not saying it either, you know? In any case, it seems a little foolish to memorialise Australia's shittiest reggae band in stained glass and expect it to remain brick-free. I guess there are better, more important things to be bricked, but I imagine it would feel pretty good to lob one straight through the visage of a group of individuals that represent the very worst of Australia's music scene.

This is all hypothetical, of course. I wouldn't dream of suggesting otherwise! It's not even about the aforementioned unnamed talentless (and litigious!) assholes. It's about the broader scene that these dickheads are able to operate in.

Roisin Murphy's analysis of this scene (p.19) is a must read. So too is Shania O'Brien's exploration of women's oral traditions in India (p.9), and Marlow Hurst's longing for male video game characters to lust over (p.16). Joshua Brannon's vigorous critique of Drew Pavlou

(p.6) considers Pavlou's relationship with the sinophobic right, and Dona Sirimanne's exploration of sex and orientalism (p.9) is a deep dive into western perceptions of sex and gender in Asia and the Middle East. I am grateful to each and every one of them, and all of our other artists and reporters, for making this edition a particularly good one.

I must also make special mention of Ash Duncan, our talented cover artist, who patiently and enthusiastically draws even our most outlandish ideas.

Lastly, I must commend the current crop of SRC student activists valiantly fighting against the ongoing threat of the Liberal government to our education. I implore those reading this to donate to the fund set up to pay the fines of activists in attendance at last week's National Day of Action, and to attend any future actions. Donate here: <https://gf.me/u/yur4tg>.

In Solidarity,

Madeline Ward

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CANCELLED CORNER

Chuyi Wang goes straight to gaol, does not pass go, does not collect \$200.



There's no way I'm going to not sound like a NEET delivering this take, but I think 4chan gets a bad rap overall. Don't get me wrong, there's obviously a ton of depraved and disgusting content that gets pushed to the website day after day that I utterly condemn on every level. However, I think it would be wrong to completely dismiss the website as only a degenerate hangout spot for alt-right freaks and incels. Rather, I think there can be a great deal of education, community and discovery to be gained if used in the right way, and with an appropriate level of detachment.

Now, it's not without shame for me to admit that I once was a frequenter of the website as an impressionable 14 year-old teenager. I even jailbroke my iPhone so I could download a 4chan app to browse the threads in recess and lunch breaks. But when you're an alienated loser in high school who

didn't fit in with either sporty or nerdy kids, certain 4chan boards provide some innocent escape from the tedium of everyday life – and in my case, pretty much ignited the hobbies that I now place far too much self-worth into.

I think back incredibly fondly on the hours upon hours I spent refreshing /mu/ – the music board that was a precursor to the now massive Patrician Music Chartposting and r/indieheads groups – discovering incredible artist after incredible artist. I remember waiting in keen anticipation for the weekly threads where hundreds of anonymous users would shit on the scores that Pitchfork had dished out that week. I was there when Anthony Fantano gave Swans' *To Be Kind* a 10, one of the only perfect NeedleDrop reviews at that point, and I don't think I've experienced a more hilarious and intense meme cycle in my life.

/lit/ too – the literature board – exposed to me to such memed classics as Deleuze & Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* way too early, sending me on a spiral through continental literature and becoming that insufferable prick far younger than I could even begin reaping theorybro clout from my peers.

But even beyond these largely positive, instructive experiences (I'd like to think I'm fairly well-adjusted), there's just a certain rush and thrill in visiting 4chan as a kid that I've struggled to find elsewhere. Not to get all gross and libertarian, but the fiercely anonymous and free approach to information on the website – which, I admit, more often than not is used for horrible things – can make for some seriously engrossing conversations with absolute strangers that no other digital space can provide.

Letters

A letter from AUJS

In the February 2020 'Welcome Week' edition of *Honi Soit*, there was an insert purporting to be from the University of Sydney Union. On page 3, located next to the headline "Friday: Catholic Society presents Life Day", an image was published of a placard bearing the words "Should we get the Jews back for what they did to our absolute boy? Yes or No?". Next to the placard in the image was a "Yes" jar and a "No" jar. The image depicted a student placing a vote in the "Yes" jar which was full. The "No" jar was shown as almost empty.

This image was apparently intended to refer to the antisemitic trope that "the Jews killed Jesus". This historical falsehood, implying that all Jews, for all time, are collectively responsible for Deicide, was for centuries used as a pretext for committing unspeakable barbarities, including mass murder, against Jewish communities all over Europe and elsewhere.

The Catholic Society had nothing to do with the image. In fact, it subsequently complained publicly about having been misrepresented and vilified in *Honi*. Nor did the insert come from the University of Sydney Union. It was a sham created by the editors of *Honi*, who say it was published as an attempt to satirise the Catholic Society, and presumably also the University of Sydney Union.

Gabi Stricker-Phelps, the NSW Political Affairs Officer of the Australian Union of Jewish Students, wrote to the editors of *Honi*, asking them to clarify who they meant by "absolute boy". Her letter was published in the next edition of *Honi* under the heading "It's Jesus you fucking fool". She too lodged a complaint with the University about the antisemitic nature of the image in question, as well as the personally abusive heading

placed on her letter by the *Honi* editors.

The editors of *Honi* say they were seeking to satirise and discredit the Catholic Society, mocking them by associating them with the anti-Jewish trope. One of many problems with that contention is that the Catholic Society has never had even the slightest association with anti-Jewish bigotry and in fact enjoys excellent relations with Jewish students.

Decades ago, the Catholic Church itself disavowed the myth that "the Jews" are collectively responsible for the death of Jesus. In the declaration of the Second Vatican Council in 1965 entitled *Nostra Aetate*, and in subsequent official documents, the Catholic Church has acknowledged the unique link that binds it to the Jewish people; recognised that the gifts of God are irrevocable, and that the covenant made by God with the Jews therefore still stands; and condemned and deplored displays of antisemitism at any time from any source.

So, regardless of the claimed intentions of the *Honi* editors, the publication smeared the Catholic Society, and made light of an antisemitic trope which has an appalling, blood-soaked history. If the newspaper had published an anti-indigenous or anti-Muslim canard, intending to satirise it when it was in fact attributing it falsely to an innocent party, would we even be having a debate about whether they should apologise? Would it have been published in the first place?

The reality is that despite the fact that all the major Christian denominations have long repudiated the "Christ-killer" myth and condemned antisemitism, one cannot expect nearly 2000 years of anti-Jewish prejudice to disappear overnight. The prejudice lingers in our culture and language, and is still frequently part of antisemitic abuse directed at Jews around the world. Publication of

this image has unfortunately helped to perpetuate it.

More than that, the abuse directed against a prominent Jewish student leader on campus (and in the wider community) – merely for having the temerity to question *Honi* – is entirely unjustifiable. This is especially so given the cartoon's publication in Welcome Week – a time when all new students should feel a sense of belonging on campus, not a time when Jewish students, or indeed any student, should be made to feel marginalised and vilified.

Of greater concern is the presumption by the editors that they understand better than Jewish students what is, or what is not, objectively antisemitic. We doubt the editors of *Honi* would presume to tell indigenous or Muslim students that the latter are inferior judges of what constitutes prejudice against their communities.

We would like to put this regrettable saga behind us, and have asked the *Honi* editors to give an unqualified apology for the hurt and offence caused by publication of the image and the subsequent letter. They have sadly found themselves unable to do so. Our view is very simple: antisemitism is no joke.

AUJS

Nudes, declarations of affection and hate mail may be sent to: editors@honisoit.com

SSAF strike!!!1!!1

Dear editors,

I've been mulling over the students amenities fee and where my contribution is going, what use is it to a campus that had been shut for almost the entirety of the academic year? Considering the universities' cuts to the humanities faculties and their extreme profit margins, I thought to myself, why pay it? And I didn't. Until today when I was blocked from re-enrolling, despite having a HECS debt of over \$6,000 already to my name. I could not access my Semester 1 results to flaunt to my parents. I'd like to investigate- where possible- the purpose, the results- of my \$154 fee to the University.

Kindly,

A student who's shifts were reduced over COVID-19,
Nathalie

Self-defence

Dear editors,

I came back to campus this semester and was shocked at your graphic depiction our education minister, Dan, in a precarious situation. How would you like it if the *Sydney Tory* drew your hero, Senator Bernard Sanders, in a similarly precarious and VIOLENT predicament?!

Please respond soon,
Jill Wefferies

Who? Weekly

Finally, a contested election! ;P

With the presidential elections normally fiercely contested, news of the automatic election of Swapnik Sanagavarapu left stupor tragics bored and wanting more. Yet, there seems to be a bit of a reversal this year, with the usually comparably uninteresting Senate elections shaping up to be more of a treat. Last week we reported that WoCo enemy, Gabi Stricker-Phelps and college kid and Enviro Collective member Cole Scott-Curwood are both seeking the undergraduate student representative spot on the uni Senate. This week we can reveal two new names considering a bid for the same top job: Miss Courtney Leanne Daley (NLS) and Dictator Doon (Liam Donohoe, Grassroots) himself.

Courtney was briefly involved with Christian Holman's *Honi* ticket before it collapsed, and he moved over to "manage" Bloom. Rumour has it that she was asked to leave because she had set her sights elsewhere... on the Senate of course! Whilst Dictator Doon has not yet made up his mind about a run, he's certainly entertaining thoughts. With a stacked resumé, including editing this foul rag

and being this year's SRC President, alongside his recent successful deal-making with other factions, he could be the one to beat.

Former SASS President and USU Vice-President Lachlan Finch (Mod-Lib) is also rumoured to be running for the postgrad position - we thought we'd seen the last of him!

Make the news break the news

We last saw Christian Holman in a desperate last minute scheme to poach no less than 5 members of the aforementioned Bloom for *Honi*, before being talked down into the highly esteemed position of campaign "manager." With Bloom now elected unopposed, Holman has set his sights on the 2021 race, along with his fellow failed running mates Roisin Murphy and Ellie Stephenson.

The eternally esteemed Pulp Media is set to receive our sloppy seconds, with Holman considering a go at the most prestigious editorship on campus. Always the bridesmaid and never the bride, Daany Saeed (formerly of NLS) also has his eyes on the (corporate rag) prize.

A succulent \$10 steak!

Whomst amongst us can resist the whiff of a \$10 Royal steak? Certainly not Dr Michael Spence, who was accosted by a group of angry students outside that very pub on Friday after the education National Day of Action. The staff (scabs!) locked all the doors bar one, leaving patrons no choice but to yell at Slimy Spence — serves the bastard right.



Police used protester's previous sexual assault report to embarrass her during NDA rally arrest

Nina Dillon Britton reports.

A police officer brought up records of a woman's reported sexual assault in an effort to embarrass her after she was apprehended at Friday's National Day of Action protest.

Maddy, 27, had attended the protest in solidarity with students facing higher degree fees and withdrawn HECS funding if they fail classes.

"I know how difficult university is when you're dealing with mental health issues. You're not thinking about the withdrawal date so you don't fail, you're thinking about how you can get help. I feel terrible that a lot of my friends are going to be facing this policy."

Maddy says that prior to the rally's commence, she had been filming the riot squad arriving on campus. One police officer approached her and told her that if he saw her in the area breaching the Public Health Order again he would issue a fine. "I just pretended I couldn't hear him," she says.

Filming police officers in NSW is not a crime. The NSW Police's own Media

Policy acknowledges that members of the public have the right to record police officers in public spaces. Officers who physically attempt to stop people from filming may be prosecuted for assault.

Maddy says that after the rally commenced, and police began to apprehend protesters, the same police officer approached her saying "I told you that if I saw you in this area again I'd apprehend you." At this point, she was on Eastern Avenue with other protesters, as well as students and staff making their way to classes.

"I was not really aware of my surroundings because I was distracted by [my friend] getting arrested," Maddy says.

"I saw him approaching me and I started to run away. Two cops ended up getting me and grabbed me with such force that I dropped my phone and other belongings."

Police did not give her a chance to collect her belongings. A friend was lucky enough to find her phone, from

which she had been live streaming the arrests.

Maddy was left with bruises on her arm where officers had grabbed her.

"They dragged me away from the other protesters," she says. "All the other arrests had witnesses, but no one had even realised that I'd disappeared. I was so scared."

The officers then began questioning her, asking her whether she'd had previous dealings with the police. Maddy had never been apprehended by police before, and told them no.

"The officer conducted a check on me, he was speaking with someone over the radio about it. Then said to me in a really smug way: 'You have dealt with the police as a sexual assault victim.'"

"He said it with this kind of smile, like he had caught me in a lie."

"I had come to the police years ago with my story, and they had never helped me. Nothing ever came from it. I didn't even know there would be records of it."

"I was just really shocked. I froze. I wish I'd said something."

"I'm still so shaken up about it," she says. "I can still picture his smirk when he told me that he knew about my sexual assault."

Maddy was ultimately not charged, and was released by police with a \$1000 fine for failing to comply with Public Health Order No 4.

Honi reported that at least 10 attendees had been issued with similar fines.

A GoFundMe page created yesterday fundraising for the fines issued at Friday's protest has already raised more than \$12,000.

A NSW Police spokesperson confirmed that several protesters had been issued with fines, but would not comment further on the matter. NSW Police declined to comment when asked whether any policies provided guidelines to officers about sensitive treatment of sexual assault survivors.

NDA shut down by police, several fines issued

Chuyi Wang reports.

Over seventy police, including a large number of police horses and riot police, have shut down the National Day of Action rally called in conjunction by several education activist groups, including the University of Sydney SRC, the UNSW Education Collective and Macquarie Uni Students Against Uni Cuts.

The rally was called in response to a number of cuts by both the Morrison government and various University administrations to staff jobs and the quality of Australian tertiary education.

The rally was planned for 1pm outside Fisher Library. However, in the hour prior, several police vehicles had already arrived outside the library, and at least twenty police officers were standing along the length of Eastern Avenue.

At 1pm, before the rally could begin, police issued a formal move-on order, determining that protesters had gathered in a group larger than twenty "for a common purpose." They also threatened all attendees with fines up to \$1000. This echoed the justification

used by police to shut down a similar education rally late last month.

Police then began clearing the outside of Fisher Library, as well as pushing a contingent made up of Solidarity faction members towards the library from the F23 Administration Building. During this time, Jack Mansell, one of the SRC Education Officers, was apprehended and fined.

Others who were peacefully protesting and chanting were also indiscriminately apprehended and given a fine. Vinil Kumar, SRC Mature Age Officer, was seized almost a minute after delivering a speech. SRC Environment Officer Sofie Nicolson was also apprehended whilst trying to walk away from police. Around 10 attendees in total have been issued fines.

Honi understands that no formal arrests were made. However, police officers were heard telling those that they apprehended that they were being 'placed under arrest.' It was also heard that police were targeting a specific list of people, including organisers from various political factions and activist

collectives.

David Brophy, a history lecturer at USyd, stated: "Yesterday I had 20+ students in a room for a tutorial. But today, Michael Spence call[ed] the riot squad onto campus to shut down a rally against fee hikes, on the grounds that it exceeded the 20 person limit. 'Let's pick 'em off one by one' was what I heard one of the cops say."

At around 1:20pm, riot police arrived alongside several police horses. The horses were employed to disperse the remaining protesters onto Parramatta Road through the Footbridge entrance.

SRC President Liam Donohoe told *Honi*: "The SRC condemns the police brutality at today's intended National Day of Action. We express solidarity to all attendees, particularly those still detained and dealing with fines. The SRC will contribute to bails and fines however we can. We won't be deterred by police actions, and we fully intend to continue protesting regardless of how violent and brutal they are."

Honi reached out to a USyd spokesperson for comment, who said:

"While we were aware of plans for a protest on campus, we did not try to prevent it from taking place."

"This year, we've engaged with our student representatives to support the development of COVID safe plans for events in line with NSW Health advice. We've also emphasised the current 20-person limit on public outdoor gatherings, under the NSW government's COVID-19 public health orders."

"The event was publicly promoted, and NSW Police makes its own decisions under the Public Health Order."

As for why classes exceeding 20 people can gather indoors and not an outdoor protest, the spokesperson said: "The University is considered an essential service alongside many others such as schools and supermarkets and is generally exempt from the 4 square metre requirements, however we're continuing to encourage physical distancing wherever possible."

Photos by Aman Kapoor.



Sanagavarapu and Bloom elected in uncontested presidential and *Honi* elections

Lara Sonnenschein and Matthew Forbes report.

Swapnik Sanagavarapu (Grassroots) has been provisionally elected as the President of the 93rd Students' Representative Council and Bloom for *Honi* have been provisionally elected as Editors of *Honi Soit*.

As per SRC regulations, if the Electoral Officer has drawn up the ballot paper and the number of validly nominated candidates contesting a ballot is equal to the number of vacancies, such candidates will be duly elected.

Sanagavarapu is a current Councillor and General Executive Member, and served as Ethnocultural Officer last year. He was supported in his bid for the presidency by Switchroots, National Labor Students, Panda, Phoenix and Socialist Alternative. This is the first time that a Grassroots President has

been elected for the second year in a row.

Sanagavarapu told *Honi*: "I'm extremely honoured to be provisionally elected as the President of the 93rd SRC. This year has been a time of terrible crisis and austerity. But as Thomas Sankara says, we must invent the future. Therefore, I promise that I will spend my tenure standing up for the rights of students and trying to invent a future in which education is accessible, equitable and universal."

The announcement represents a marked shift in what are often fiercely contested elections at the University of Sydney. It's possibly the first time that both the Presidential and *Honi Soit* editor elections have gone uncontested.

The Bloom for *Honi* ticket includes: Shania O'Brien, Vivienne Guo, Claire

Ollivain, Jeffrey Khoo, Deandre Espejo, Marlow Hurst, Juliette Marchant, Max Shanahan, Alice Trenoweth-Cresswell and Will Solomon. All are current *Honi* reporters. The ticket was set to be managed by Christian Holman, who was previously looking to contest Bloom, and Max Vishney.

Whilst Claire Ollivain (Grassroots) is the only current member of a faction on the ticket, Bloom is quite clearly a progressive ticket. Vivienne Guo (ex-Grassroots) currently serves as co-Women's Officer, and manager Max Vishney was previously a Switch for SRC candidate.

The Sydney University Law Society (SULS) has played something of a role in the ticket as well. Jeffrey Khoo, who managed Fit for *Honi's* campaign last year, previously served as a society

executive and managed the campaign for Pop for SULS last year. Deandre Espejo and Max Vishney are both currently on the executive, serving as Vice President (Social Justice) and Equity Officer respectively.

Bloom told *Honi*: "We're all buzzing for the year ahead of us! Thank you to our managers Max Vishney and Christian Holman; though our time together was brief, we have valued your commitment and input, and wish you the best of luck in future endeavours. Our condolences to our non-existent opponents, we couldn't have done this without you. We're keen to meet our writers, seek out new voices, and continue the long, radical history of *Honi Soit*."

USU Board votes for transparency review, fossil fuel divestment

Nina Dillon Britton reports.

The University of Sydney Union Board have voted unanimously to hold a review into the transparency of its meetings, and to call on the University to divest from fossil fuels.

Vice President Nick Forbutt (NLS) moved the transparency review motion, which also calls for the Board to minimise the use of closed meetings and to publicly provide reasons as to why privacy is needed when doing so.

However as pointed out by former Board Director Kade Denton — and author of the Board's current closed meetings policy — during *Honi's* live coverage of the meeting, this does not change the Board's current policy.

Nevertheless, it appeared an effective reminder that the Board had to publicly justify its decision to move in-camera. In most Board meetings this year, observers have been unceremoniously shunted to a Zoom Breakout Room with no explanation as to what would be discussed when the Board decided to move to a closed meeting.

In today's meeting, USU President Irene Ma gave a brief explanation that the Board would be discussing "commercially sensitive information" and possibly issues related to staff wages before the Board moved in-camera.

The motion does not discuss, however, when and if Board Directors other than the President can give public comment. Though Board Directors are expected to promote the USU's activities in public, and several are also publicly politically active outside of the USU, the current understanding is that only the President can represent the USU. In meetings' question time, observers may only direct questions to the President, and Board Directors have largely avoided responding to questions from *Honi* about their activities.

When asked to provide comment on the motion, Forbutt referred *Honi Soit* to President Ma. Prudence Wilkins-

Wheat (Grassroots), provided *Honi Soit* with comment about her motion only after requesting permission from Ma.

The motion on transparency is also the Board's first public admission that in-camera motions have been used to avoid the public embarrassment of Directors, and are often not in line with the Board's policy that limits their use to confidential matters (e.g. staff pay, commercially sensitive information).

"Whilst some in-camera decisions pertain to confidential information which cannot be revealed (such as staff salaries and commercially sensitive information), often decisions have been held in-camera without alignment or reference to the USU's in camera policy," the motion reads.

In the special meeting of the Board earlier this year, for example, it appeared that Board Directors had used the cover of in-camera to raise concerns that two Board Directors had acted inappropriately by publicly supporting the "Defend Our Education" campaign opposing university cuts.

Maya Eswaran, a now-former Board Director at the centre of the discussion, stated that she had moved a motion to make the discussion public after it was inappropriately raised in the closed portion of the meeting. She stated that Board Directors who had been happy to make criticisms when the meeting was closed were suddenly quiet when the meeting was made public.

Perhaps ironically, the fact that both motions passed unanimously with no discussion indicates that they had already been subject to behind the scenes negotiations.

At last month's Board meeting, the majority of the Board stalled discussion of Forbutt's transparency motion. When Forbutt raised the fact that it was due for discussion, Ma suddenly raised that she needed to leave and other Board Directors then said the same.

The Board also voted unanimously to endorse Prudence Wilkins-Wheat's motion to declare a climate emergency, commit to reducing the USU's carbon footprint, call on the University to divest from fossil fuel and companies contributing to climate change, and to publicly support School Strike 4 Climate's upcoming action.

"The University of Sydney Union (USU) has demonstrated lately its commitment to sustainability and eco-friendly practices on-campus. However, it is our belief that more can be done to tackle climate change on a systemic level," the motion reads.

In 2019, the Board voted to support the Climate Strike and reduce staffing capacity to allow staff to attend.

Wilkins-Wheat tells *Honi* that the USU needed to move beyond current initiatives that sought to reduce waste or the organisation's carbon footprint.

"The climate crisis transcends individual action and relies on systematic change to fight the devastating impacts of mining, drilling and fracking. For this reason I believe it is the responsibility of the Union to call on large institutions to fight for and not against climate justice," she says.

In the meeting, Wilkins-Wheat thanked the work of the SRC's Environment Collective on the issue, but clarified to *Honi* that the motion was not written on behalf of the collective. She notes that collective member Cole Scott-Curwood had helped with fact finding and was the impetus for the motion originally.

The USU Board has called for another — likely closed — meeting to be held next Tuesday to discuss its scale of business operations for this semester. Following staff cuts, USU food outlets are opened for shortened hours this semester.

Far-right activist films BLM forum

Robbie Mason reports.

At a BLM forum, Padraic Gibson was speaking on the continuing oppression of Indigenous communities when far-right activist Chris De Bruyne gatecrashed to live stream the event.

He initially refused to leave when approached by students and campus security and stayed for 20 minutes.

De Bruyne has attended Sydney's BLM protests with fellow far-right figures Bayden Mottee, Reg (Jaiden) Penney and George Jameson (ex-Party For Freedom) and live streamed himself guarding the Captain Cook statue in Hyde Park.

He has recently founded an organisation to garner support for his political actions and the All Lives Matter movement and has run as a candidate for the Liberal Democratic Party. De Bruyne live streams leftist rallies to lure protesters into rash reactions.

He has publicly posted on his Facebook expressing appreciation for the Kenosha terrorist who shot multiple BLM protesters in Wisconsin last week, killing two. In this post, he criticised Anthony Huber, an unarmed protester who tried to disarm the shooter, as having a "long criminal record," suggesting his death was warranted.

Despite his presence, students continued and finished their meeting before taking a photo expressing solidarity with the Chatfield family as the inquest into Tane Chatfield's death in custody was drawing to a close.

Soon after De Bruyne departed, police arrived, concerned that the small gathering was breaching COVID-19 restrictions, despite students and staff using university facilities and libraries for on-campus tutorials and meetings.

This comes after police have specifically targeted and shut down leftist and antifascist protests around Sydney in recent months.

Maintaining the high ground: What Drew Pavlou can tell us about Australia's attitudes to the CCP

Joshua Brannon dissects controversial UQ student Drew Pavlou's behaviour in the context of rising Sinophobia

Chinese Communist Party (CCP) influence in Australian universities has been a recurrent news item for the past year. Indeed, as a narrative, it is neatly situated beside fears of insidious Chinese technology and mounting concern with Xi Jinping's despotic approach to Chinese domestic policy. The cumulative effect of which is a news cycle that positions China, and by unfortunate extension, Chinese people, as a clear and present danger to Australia. This is a problem.

Of course, it would be egregious to suggest that the CCP's efforts to undermine Hong Kong's autonomy or the systemic persecution of China's ethnic Uyghur population were the fabrications of a paranoid Australian media. Rather, they represent grave threats to human rights and are wholly deserving of international opprobrium. However, if we are to contribute meaningfully to combat the human rights abuses of the CCP, we must also interrogate our own methods of protest – ensuring that they are neither prejudiced nor smokescreens beneath which hate groups validate their anti-Asian agendas.

Enter Drew Pavlou – erstwhile University of Queensland Senator, philosophy student, and arguably Australia's most notable anti-CCP activist. In July 2019, Mr Pavlou attracted widespread media coverage due to his vociferous attacks on the Chinese Communist Party and their close association to the university through the campus Confucius Institute. Since then, he has been involved in an acrimonious feud with the University of Queensland, one that has culminated in his expulsion, in a move that Pavlou alleges to be politically motivated.

Disappointingly, Pavlou's particular brand of protest has denied students what could have been a watershed moment for free speech on campus. After all, the university has long been a training ground for the nation's nascent intelligentsia to mobilise against the maladies of the time. However, since at

least the 1960's – the apogee of anti-war demonstrations in Australia – expulsion has been a political expedient for tertiary institutions to silence dissenting opinion. And Pavlou, ostensibly the victim of such a draconian practice was provided with the perfect platform to shine a spotlight on this enduring form of institutional suppression. Alas, he squandered his opportunity.

Whereas *Financial Review* correspondent, Aaron Patrick may optimistically declare that Mr Pavlou has, "unified the conservative media and human rights establishment", the latter's objectionable tactics have alienated him from many potential sources of solidarity. Instead, he has endeared himself to the intolerant right. A testament to which is Pavlou's recent appearance alongside former 2GB shock jock and unrepentant racist, Alan Jones. A man whose interest in free speech only extends insofar as his ability to use racial pejoratives at will. Sadly, for Drew Pavlou, his willingness to flirt with racism deprives his expulsion of moral weight. He transformed the bi-partisan issue of human rights and free speech into the deeply partisan matter of anti-political correctness. Now, I fear his passion for the liberation of Hong Kong may be wasted, dog-whistling into the abyss of impotent conservative anger.

While organising protests against undue CCP interference and Chinese human rights abuses is both commendable, and indeed essential to a robust campus ecosystem of political engagement and social justice. However, the self-described "left-wing" Pavlou resorted to weaponising deeply troubling orientalist tropes in his censure of the University of Queensland's relationship with China. When, in March of this year, Mr Pavlou posted a picture to social media of himself inside the Universities Confucius Institute – wearing a hazmat suit and warning that the site was a "biohazard risk".

Here, through the tacit association Pavlou establishes between Asia and

disease, he is invoking the colonial legacy of a "Yellow Peril" – the West's fear of an Asiatic-other. Indeed, in an interview with the Washington Post, medical anthropologist Monica Schoch-Spana notes that "fixing blame [for] a contagious disease on outsiders" is a recurring motif in the West. One that is demonstrative of a history of racial essentialism and colonialism, wherein the negative attributes of disease, uncleanness and squalor are conferred to denigrate a non-white 'Other'. Drew Pavlou defended his behaviour, arguing – in a line that was parroted by Murdoch rag, *The Australian* – that he was referring to the "virus" of Chinese influence in Australian universities. However, even this language is laden with racialist overtones.

Unfortunately for Mr Pavlou, his cheap piece of incendiary political theatre is denuded of the nuance necessary to simultaneously critique a government while sparing a people from racial abuse. Instead, it both reflects what is perhaps an unconscious eagerness to racialise our methods of protest and explains Drew's popularity in conservative circles.

To understand this relationship, it is first imperative to understand its history. In Professor David Walker's seminal 1991 book, *Anxious Nation*, he argued that Australia's relationship with Asia had been typified by immense anxiety due to Australia's geographical isolation, comparatively small population and an unstable national identity. In Chapter 9, Walker addresses the 'invasion narrative', a Victorian-era literary genre wherein untrustworthy and seditious 'Asian hordes' are depicted as posing an existential threat to the 'racial-integrity' of Australia. Importantly, the invasion narratives described by Walker – like Mr Pavlou's ill-conceived coronavirus stunt – do not delineate between Asian people and their respective governments. Rather, they ascribe to a contemptible degree of essentialism to vilify Asian people en masse. A trend which is eerily analogous to the extant media discourse

on China, with the ABC reporting that Chinese Australian's increasingly feel as though they are being targeted as a consequence of escalating antipathy towards the Chinese Communist Party.

More than anything, this reflects growing racial anxiety and a reawakening of an uncomfortable history of anti-Asian discrimination. It is alt-right and conservative groups, and their preoccupation with white replacement and the primacy of western civilisation, where this anxiety is most apparent. Thus, it is hardly surprising that Drew Pavlou, despite his fulminations, would find affirmation in the right-wing political sphere. His firebrand approach to demonstrating and willingness to enact orientalist stereotypes position him as a perfect candidate for co-option by the right. He is an ideal conduit through which these groups can sublimate their more blatantly racist ideologies, while they continue their pernicious machinations beneath Drew's anti-CCP banner. Finally, and perhaps most ignominiously for Drew Pavlou, unless he reevaluates his methods of protest, he risks becoming a 'useful idiot' to a movement with little regard for the human rights he so admirably defends.

Hopefully, Pavlou will realise that he has been complicit in promoting the same deadly zero-sum thinking that underpins attacks on Asian-Australian's due to fear of the Chinese Communist Party, or coronavirus concerns. The same inimical non-logic that has rationalised the most heinous policies throughout history – from the White Australia Policy to the internment of Japanese Americans during World War Two, or the systemic persecution of Muslims engendered by the War on Terror. So, if we are to maintain the high road in our struggle against the CCP – a deeply precarious position due to our own history of imperialism and genocide, we cannot afford to ally ourselves, or otherwise endorse the tactics of the basest elements of the ideological sphere.

Grim New Deal: A communist critique

Himath Sirinwasa and Dexter Duckett interrogate the left's infatuation with the Green New Deal.

Since March, in the global tumult induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, central banks in advanced capitalist economies adopted expansionary monetary policies to save private enterprise. The transparency with which these cornucopias of billions and trillions in cheap credit were offered to businesses on a platter have not gone unnoticed and have been widely perceived as thinly-veiled corporate bailouts.

Many leftists have recognised these bailouts as evidence of the state's Janus-faced macroeconomic policy regime, which proselytises 'sound finance' for the lowly proletarians and easy money for the 'too-big-to-fail' rich. This double standard, along with many others which have been exposed by the coronacrisis, have many activists, academics and politicians on the left calling to abandon the deficit-hawk mentality.

It's understandable that there is a popular drive to rejig the conventional wisdom around budgetary spending and high public deficits. The current wave of expansionary monetary policy implicitly presents a silver bullet solution to the problems of poverty, inequality, exploitation and ecological devastation endemic to capitalist growth. Instead of spurring out financial aid to maintain the buoyancy of capital, it's increasingly suggested that the purpose of macroeconomic policy can be inverted to save the oppressed and the planet.

Enter 'Modern Monetary Theory' (MMT), the new shiny thing that the more wonkish types have latched on to. MMT proponents claim that sovereign fiat currency can be printed by the government in any desired quantity until the level of money supply circulating within the economy fosters full employment. Any residual inflationary effects engendered by the excess in aggregate demand caused by an expanded money supply are to be regulated by increasing taxation or contracting public expenditure. MMT is frequently associated with proposals like the Job Guarantee (JG), which aims to realise the goal of full employment. These proposals tend to stipulate that rather than unemployed people receiving meagre social assistance payments, they can instead opt to work for the public sector at the minimum wage.

MMT has been increasingly incorporated into the 'eco-socialist' utopias envisioned by a coalition of environmental NGOs, social democratic politicians and progressive academics under the umbrella of a Green New Deal (GND). Currently, the GND acts as a flexible matrix of policy proposals that this woke coalition of technocratic strata justify with MMT. That is because there is a folk understanding of MMT as 'money printer go brrr', and the institutionalised left would need that money printer operating at warp speed to fund a GND. As a Stanford University study released in December revealed, the estimated upfront cost of a GND for Australia would be US\$820bn, or around AU\$1.12tn.

The study doesn't even factor in the cost of other progressive reforms that leftists have included in their GND wishlist, such as free university, the universal availability of free public

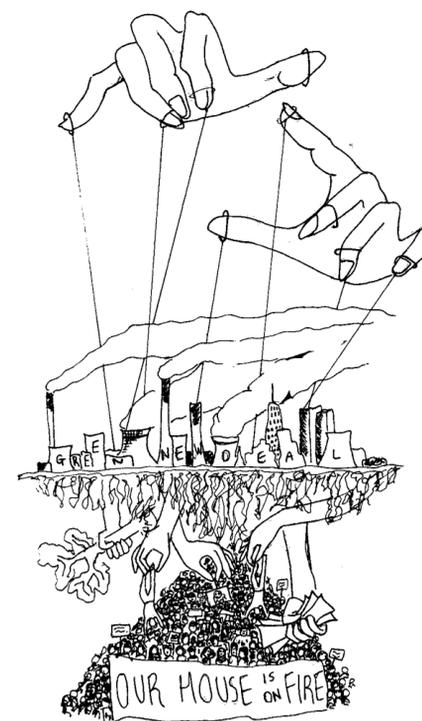
housing, reparations for the colonial dispossession endured by First Nations peoples, an industrial relations framework which substantially increases the minimum wages.

However, the deficit-financing of a more utopian approach to the GND would soon trigger spiralling inflation and the devaluation of the Australian dollar. It's also an approach to the GND which fiercely clashes with MMT itself, since this ensemble of policy reforms would inevitably curb productivity growth in the private sector and stimulate an excessive surge in aggregate demand. GND proponents counter that inflation could be regulated by significantly increasing tax rates. Nonetheless, these tax rate increases would have to be targeted at the new source of this increasing aggregate demand: the working class. So how much would they be taxed? At a rate by which their purchasing power does not exceed the rate of profit. Considering that the growth rate of real national incomes has already outstripped aggregate productivity growth in Australia since the mid-2000s, it's unlikely many reforms could be enacted which improve workers' purchasing power before it bites into the profit rate and jumpstarts inflation.

If many countries seriously initiate a GND-style transition to renewable energy, then it could spawn a mining boom in Australia because of the external demand for minerals needed to manufacture green technologies. This would lead to the vast multiplication of large-scale mineral extraction projects across Australia and would provide an opening for progressive fiscal policies. However, this scenario traps the left in a Catch-22 between i) financing a handful of piecemeal reforms through a prodigious intensification of mining and ii) solidarity with the Aboriginal movement for self-determination over traditional lands and resources.

The shift from a fossil fuels energy regime to a renewable energy base will inevitably require some form of rare-earth mineral extraction. However, under capitalist production this type of extraction is subsumed into the transnational circuits of flowing money and capital, engendered by the exigencies that capital imposes on production – profitability, productivity, cheap raw materials, individualised consumer goods. To meet the demands of the capitalist market and the GND, more mines will have to disfigure the face of the Earth at a velocity determined by the pursuit for mushrooming profit rates.

Given that major renewable-energy supply chains go through large swathes of Indigenous lands in Australia, Bolivia, Canada and Chile, how can our notions of Indigenous justice be made coherent with the imposition of thousands of death villages on these communities? GND proponents in Australia have opined that the profits from all these mining projects will be controlled by Aboriginal communities and that these communities can veto any proposed mine. Nevertheless, they also exhibit a pollyannaish disposition concerning how they understand the hard limits of capitalism. If politically possible at all, these caveats will occasion both an exorbitant rise in mining overhead



costs and the abolition of mining company profits altogether. This hostile commercial environment will provoke private capital investment in mining to plummet and mineral resources will become greatly overvalued on world markets, eliminating an essential source of tax revenue needed for progressive reforms. It would also deprive Aboriginal communities of those mining profits too. Instead, the global renewable energy transition under capitalism more likely will incite competitive scrambles to set up mines cheaply, entailing the cutting of regulatory corners, wanton disregard for Traditional Owners and the unabashed destruction of the local ecosystems.

There are also many uncertainties regarding the hopes for a JG in Australia, and how that will tie in with the implementation of a GND. Its proponents argue that the necessity of new green jobs will lead to a drastic drop in un(der)employment, addressing (a) the prevalence of un(der) employment following the capitalist restructuring of the domestic labour market since the 1970s, and (b) the rise in unemployment following a phase out of carbon intensive industries, like coal-fired power stations. However, a JG will fail to remedy these problems.

For starters, the fastest growing sector in Australia during the global renewable energy transition will be mining. However, mining in Australia today is a highly-computerised, capital-intensive industry and the extra jobs created by the energy transition will barely plug the un(der)employment hole. Further, the mining industry in Australia pays the highest level of remuneration to non-managerial workers out of all other industries, at around \$2000 per week. Since a JG can only employ workers at the minimum wage in order to avoid distorting the private sector labour

market, those choosing to work under the JG would inevitably be denied work in the mining industry.

Well, how about the manufacturing of wind turbines, solar panels, lithium-ion batteries, as well as the steel, smelted copper and aluminium needed to produce them? Other countries like China, South Korea, Japan and Germany are far more likely to monopolise on the global production of green technological infrastructure due to their highly-skilled or cheap labour markets and their extant domestic overcapacity of fixed capital assets in those manufacturing industries.

Within much of the GND's popular appeal lies another failure: it is fundamentally backward looking, waxing nostalgic over the postwar social compromise in advanced capitalist economies whilst ignoring the material constraints of the post-1970s capitalist order. The historical conditions which would have increased the possibility of a return to capitalism's 'golden age' are long gone: high labour demand in the manufacturing sector, soaring international demand for consumer durables in standardised product markets, accelerating rates of productivity growth, burgeoning profit rates, the original Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates, and high-density, militant unions.

A new New Deal is neither possible nor desirable. The only deal that workers will get from the GND is a raw one. To paraphrase Marx, the (renewables) revolution of the 21st century cannot take its poetry from the past but only from the future. It must strip away its superstitions for the past – the fantastical longing for a worker-friendly bourgeois state – and we must let the dead bury their dead.

Art by Isla Mowbray.



Art by Chuyi Wang.

Colonised intimacy: Love and sex in Asia and the Middle East

Dona Sirimanne explores the problematic conceptions of the erotic that exist in the West.

Hackneyed cultural stereotypes permeate the world of love and sex. As attitudes about intimacy progress away from heteronormative, patriarchal structures, Western perceptions of love and sex in Asia and the Middle East remain prejudiced.

For this article, a survey was conducted to determine the pervasiveness of these attitudes among university-aged students in what is, for the most part, a multicultural Sydney. In response to the question, “what are your perceptions of love and sex in Asia and the Middle East?”, respondents stated: “Generally more conservative than Western countries. The notion of transgender people and homosexual relationships are generally looked down upon or ostracised”.

“Arranged marriages and relations are built only on a practical basis (family, kids and status) as opposed to love relationships”.

“Sex is taboo, women aren’t free to be sexually expressive”.

Ostensibly, Western perceptions of love and sex in Asia and the Middle East are that of oppression and unprogressiveness. However, these respondents are not alone in their musings. In the West, there exists socially and culturally constructed stereotypes about the intimacy behaviours of people from Asia and the Middle East.

For example, Khaled Diab writes

It is ironic that Western media now colours the Middle East and Asia as frigid and sexually unprogressive when it is colonisation that disrupted their liberal notions in the first instance.



running away from an apparent inevitability of arranged marriage.

Chinese American Andrew Kung writes that he internalised Western stereotypes that painted him as “passive, emasculated ... lacking sex appeal and a voice”. He goes on to list other adjectives about himself such as “effeminate” and “weak”. On the flip-side Asian-Australian Jessie Tu describes her experience with what she describes as “yellow fever”, that is, predominately white men viewing her as submissive and accommodating, or as she puts it “sweet in the kitchen, tiger in the bedroom”.

This year, an international dating site identified the world’s most attractive nationalities. Swedish men achieved first place and ladies from Norway topped the women’s charts. The top 10 for each gender category hailed from Europe and South America. This infers that perhaps there lies a dominant view that safe, successful, satisfying intimacy

of his experience as an Arab man receiving questions from Western women like “have you got another wife in Egypt?”, despite being in a monogamous relationship with his wife. A google search of ‘Arab men in a relationship’ reveals headlines such as ‘6 ‘cute’ things Arab boyfriends do that are actually super controlling’ or ‘what should Western women be aware of when dating Arab men?’. The profiling of Arab men as dominating polygamists is prolific. Arab women fare no better. A report through the Middle East Institute shows stereotyping of these women as “inexperienced, opportunistic, weak, or dependent”.

Western women travelling to the Indian sub-continent are warned to refrain from ‘friendliness’ in the event that men from the region mis-interpret this as flirting. Further, rape culture is posited by the media as a largely South Asian problem. However, this year the United States issued a security alert for Spain in response to rising sexual assaults in the country. Yet this hasn’t altered the perception of Spanish men as ‘swoon-worthy’, in the same way it has for their South Asian counterparts. A google search of, ‘Spanish men in a relationship’ generates results such as ‘11 reasons why you should fall in love with a Spaniard’. South Asian women are characterised as being “caught between tradition and modernity”,

However, what many fail to understand is that European colonisation of the Middle East and Asia brought ideas of the patriarchy, abstinence and homophobia that were not otherwise present.

is Eurocentric. However, what many fail to understand is that European colonisation of the Middle East and Asia brought ideas of the patriarchy, abstinence and homophobia that were not otherwise present. Therefore, although colonisation is not the only factor that informs many of the aforementioned stereotypes, it certainly takes a large influence.

The Perfumed Garden of Sensual Delight, a 15th century Arabic erotic text was written to encourage intimacy for pleasure. The text is divided into male and female segments so as to place equal weight on enjoyment for both genders. A.L writes of 13th and 14th century male poets Rumi and Hafiz who lived in what is now Iran. They both wrote homoerotic verses, as did Abu Nuwas, a Baghdadadi poet.

To learn more, I spoke to Dr Lucia Sorbera, Chair of the Arabic Studies Department here at the University of Sydney. Dr Sorbera explains:

“In pre-modern Arab literature, sexuality was defined mostly in relation to the act, more than the identity of the individual”.

She goes on to highlight:

“In pre-modern Arabic (and also Turkish and Farsi) texts, gender was not necessarily narrated according to the binary male and female. This would suggest that pre-modern Arab societies were open to a plurality of options”.

Attitude changes in the Middle East can be attributed to penal codes introduced by the British that punished homosexual behaviour. France introduced similar laws. Further, John Colville reminds us that texts like *The Perfumed Garden* were mistranslated when discovered by French colonialists, and shaped European views of Arab men as lustful and their women as objectified.

Between 400 BCE and 200 CE, a third sex is mentioned in ancient Hindu texts, the Mahabharata and the Kama Sutra. These people were known as Hijras. Annalysse Mason describes Hijras as a dominant transgender population in India, generally people assigned male at birth who identify as women. As Hijras do not conform to essentialist ideas of gender and sexuality, in early India they were considered divine beings or nirwaan, meaning closer to the gods. However, in the 18th century

when the British arrived and saw a temple of Hijras for the first time, they experienced what Jessica Hinchy describes as ‘Hijra panic’. The colonial concern with Hijras was that their ‘deviant’ behaviours would threaten the conservative British social and political order. As a result, the Criminal Tribes Act was implemented which outlawed Hijras and forced them into the fringes of South Asian society.

In 17th century Japan, daughters of the Samurai class were gifted Shunga on their wedding night. Kukhee Choo describes Shunga as a sex education manual that was also purchased by couples for entertainment purposes as it depicted sexual activity in all its forms. The explicitness of the Shunga reflects the sexual liberation of 17th – 19th century Japan known as the Edo period.

However, in the mid-19th century Japan opened its market to the Western world and Shunga was banned as it was deemed inappropriate by Western standards. This new period was known as the Meiji period. England was in the midst of the Victorian age and sexual frigidity was heightened. Consequently, Shunga slowly disappeared from the mainstream.

It is ironic that Western media now colours the Middle East and Asia as frigid and sexually unprogressive when it is colonisation that disrupted their liberal notions in the first instance. Sexual liberalism has existed in these areas for centuries.

I asked Dr Sorbera why she thinks there is a lack of knowledge in the West about sexual liberalism in the East. She says:

“A hegemonic, monolingual, Anglo-centric culture dominates the West. This doesn’t allow for representations of the nuances of other cultures and the spirit of other cultures, there is an ignorance that we perpetuate about sexuality in other cultures... This reflects the taboos that are still with us in the West, which are as complex and profound as all studies of sexuality and culture are”.

It is important to dismantle these colonialist narratives about the Middle East and Asia. It is also necessary to critically evaluate the narratives we receive about the rest of the world, particularly about intimacy, in a Western culture that can barely speak about *50 Shades of Grey* above a whisper.

Women and folklore in rural North India

Shania O’Brien considers the way women share stories and solidarity through oral traditions.

The tradition of the spoken word has existed across aeons with the retelling of stories of creation myths and talking animals, of great dynasties and god-killers, of star-crossed lovers and poisoned goblets. Indian folklore talks of the bards recounting epics like the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, of the romantic verses of the ghazal. These stories and more have been immortalised in the verses by Sufi poets like Amīr Khusrāu Dehlavī, who was a spiritual disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi, and classical Sanskrit author

There is no solitary female perspective recorded in folklore, or in real-world praxis. The solidarities formed by women are negotiated and equivocal because of the unique circumstances they face.

Kālidāsa. These stories have been told in Arabic, Brajhasha, Persian, and Awadhi -- and there are still echoes of these tales in local legends, printed on Kashmiri rugs, etched on the surfaces of battle shields and the hilts of swords.

But there is so much more to Indian folklore than simply recounting epic stories of gods and wars. At a time where the written word was not prevalent, or not as easily accessible, oral tradition was the primary means through which people passed on culture, values, experience. Women in North Indian rural areas spoke critically of their place in society, of the traditions enforced upon them because it was custom, of the oppression they endured at the hands of patrilineal kinship: all of which they still experience in the present. Kali ki riti yahi (translation: this custom of a degenerate age) is a song by North Indian women, written down and recorded by British orientalist William Crooke in 1910. The song speaks of the difficulties women experience as they move from their mayaka (parents’ home) to their sasural (husband’s home). A central aspect of a North Indian rural woman’s experience is the physical shift from her mayaka to her sasural — this has been consistently capitalised on by male writers and directors — and the shift in the power dynamics from her role as a daughter and sister, to that of a wife and daughter-in-law.

This experience, though important, is understood differently by women of separate castes and at varying stages of life. In Pahansu and Hathchhoya, unmarried women sing of the future burden

of becoming estranged and othered from their family, of being known as a pariah, and of having to put their husband’s family above their own. This custom has also been critiqued by married women, challenging patrilineal ideals that dictate they are to be placed below their husband’s family no matter what. While women orating as sisters belittle the marital bond, women orating as wives place emphasis on the dominance of the conjugal bond above the familial one. These contradictory aims give rise to

divergent voices that, at the same time, resist the authority placed on men and resist the conventions of the patriarchy.

A Sangeet is a North Indian pre-wedding event. It consists of singing and dancing, and is a celebration of the couple’s upcoming life together. Baithne ke geet, or ‘sitting songs’ are sung during breaks in the performances. In a popular one, also recorded in Crooke’s anthology, the poetic persona of the wife sings: suno suno he sakhī merā janam hī dukhī is ghar men / mujhe lar bhīr kheto bhejen / juān tutā hai batāve bail buddha hai batāve / mujhe kharī hai rulāve he dolon pe (translation: listen, friend, my life itself is sorrowful in this house / they quarrel with me and send me to the fields / they tell me that the yoke is broken, they tell me that the oxen are old / they make me cry as I stand on the boundary of the fields). The song goes on for three more verses, wherein members of the wife’s sasural continue to belittle her efforts at integration: they insult her cooking, they quash her efforts at getting a tertiary education, they feed her lies about her mayaka by saying her mother is dead and her sister has run away. Multiple other songs in the genre are similar in nature, each one chronicling the story of a wife who is miserable and cannot exist in the

circumstances she is in anymore. There is no solitary female perspective recorded in folklore, or in real-world praxis. The solidarities formed by women are negotiated and equivocal because of the unique circumstances they face. Women’s songs are constructed with careful emphases on gender and power, in voices that clash on themes like loyalty and autonomy.

But there is little academic discourse on the subject. American cultural anthropologist Sherry Ortner has pointed out that academic researchers tend to focus on popular cultural forms like songs and proverbs, not going so far as analysing these artefacts and simply relegate them to footnotes. Cultural traditions that come out of rural areas are ignored because of the false widespread notion of uniformity in these communities -- and many times academics go as far as reducing them to the derogatory term ‘peasant.’ But as has been explored, the experiences of rural women and the way in which they communicate them are diverse. They challenge academic and cultural assumptions of them; but

The songs and stories I speak of today are tainted because of the people who resigned them to text, and it is a possibility that many of their meanings were lost in translation or edited for the purposes of convenience.

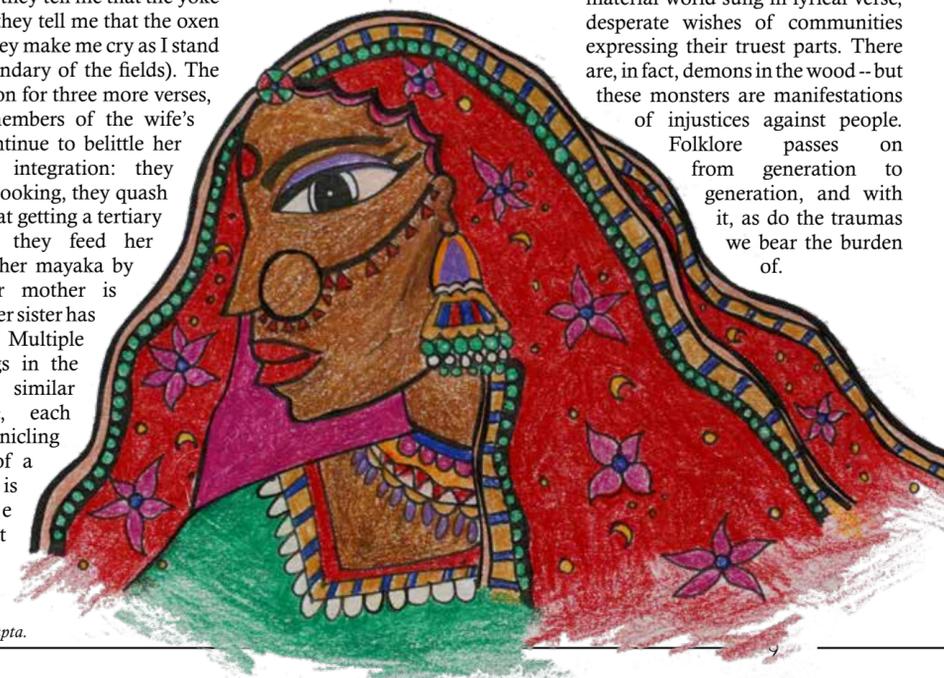
the only contexts in which they exist are produced by agents of British colonialism.

British academics and anthropologists were selective in their recording, only tending to analyse and collect information about people living in cities and those who have higher standings in society. The songs and stories I speak of today are tainted because of the people who resigned them to text, and it is a possibility that many of their meanings were lost in translation or edited for the purposes of convenience. While going through William Crooke’s translations, I found multiple words and phrases that simply did not fit or were translated incorrectly. Due to the nature of oral tradition, and the colonisation of India by the British Empire, there is much of my cultural history that has been lost. A myriad of the sources I consulted for this article are attributed to men with British names whose occupations mean little more than ‘settler’ and ‘self-declared expert.’ There are countless rural women whose struggles I may mirror but will never know, women whose songs captured the spirit of their age with abundance.

Stories have more value than

what is assigned to them. They are specks of memory preserved in the spoken word, negotiations with the material world sung in lyrical verse, desperate wishes of communities expressing their truest parts. There are, in fact, demons in the wood --but these monsters are manifestations of injustices against people.

Folklore passes on from generation to generation, and with it, as do the traumas we bear the burden of.



Art by Nishta Gupta.

Unheard on campus: Stories from students who have failed subjects

Deandre Espejo, Jeffrey Khoo and Christian Holman spoke to students who almost fell through the cracks.

Earlier this month, university students were hit with the announcement that they could lose access to the HECS scheme if they fail more than half their subjects in a year.

Education Minister Dan Tehan argued that the proposal was designed to prevent students repeatedly failing courses and accumulating debt to taxpayers in the process. But this obscures the reasons why students fail.

Most students aren't failing a bunch of courses because they're 'serial failers'. It's often because of disadvantage or devastating situations that are beyond their control. And when faced with these problems, they aren't offered the support they need from their universities or the Government.

We've chronicled real stories from students who have failed subjects due to hardship, and who would be impacted by Tehan's proposal.

Hannah - "I couldn't go in to uni because I was worried about seeing him."

"One afternoon in semester 2 of first year, I left class with a friend and another guy in our tutorial. We were waiting for a light, and the guy spent the whole time staring directly at my boobs. Direct eye contact, not even trying to be subtle about it.

It feels stupid that it affected me the way that it did. It usually wouldn't even register, but I slipped back into old coping mechanisms, due to a similar but more serious incident.

I spent the next couple of weeks super panicked. I'd leave during breaks and try to get away from campus for a second. One day, I was sitting up the back, and caught him turning around and staring at me again. I left and puked in a bathroom.

I talked to one of my tutors. "Weird"



was the word I think he used, but he told me it wasn't black-and-white sexual harassment in terms of university policy. He told me to just try and get through the class. He was trying his best, but I think staff need to be supported to know how to respond.

It put me in a headspace where it was incredibly difficult to concentrate. I could show up, I could practice, but I couldn't do any work. Everything required so much more thought and energy than normal.

Sometimes I couldn't go in to uni because I was worried about seeing him. I almost failed an assessment because when I woke up that morning, I thought I wouldn't cope if I had to present in front of him.

I felt like it was such a small thing to lose a lot of progress over; that it was my fault I let myself get so affected. I didn't want to deal with the fact that I hadn't dealt with it in the first place. It had taken a lot to stop thinking like that.

I ended up absent failing a history subject and another subject. I considered appealing them, but felt too ashamed to do anything.

I had a good experience with CAPS, luckily. My counsellor had done trauma work before, which was a miracle; otherwise, it would've been a lot harder to admit, "I can't say exactly what I'm thinking, but I need you to fix me."

I was pissed when I first heard about the government's proposal. I think the Libs either don't have the lived experience to understand what it would do, or the empathy to understand what it could do.

It's cruel. You're going to cut out people who have the most trouble adjusting to university life, who have an incredible amount to offer, but haven't had the opportunity to do so. That's the expectation they're trying to set up — that if you can't survive first year perfectly intact, then you shouldn't be at uni at all.

If they had booted me out, I don't know what I would've done. I really don't know. There was no way I could've afforded it.

I'm doing much better now. It's been up and down, because, shockingly, six sessions of therapy did not fix me. Therapy is expensive, and work right now doesn't lend itself to consistency.

But there are so many things that help. Sometimes, when things are a little crazy, the first step is trying to clean and control parts of your space. Playing music, with people who I felt comfortable with, made me feel very safe. And, particularly when it first happened, friends were incredibly important. Oftentimes you're just lying to yourself when you don't talk to anyone, when it endlessly makes you feel better when you do.

They didn't get to cut me out of the system. I'm still here."

The tutor never followed up, which I thought was odd. If someone came up to me saying they had been assaulted, I would be doing everything I could to follow up with them and make sure they were okay.

Sam - "No one bothered to check in with me"

I was assaulted in the middle of a trimester last year. I had a quiz due that was worth 35%, but I completely missed it because I was in bed, locking myself away from everyone.

I emailed my tutor about what happened. He seemed to be really supportive in class, so I thought he would understand; but all he said was that he was sorry it happened, and that I needed a medical certificate or police report for the quiz back up. I could tell that the email was a generic copy paste.

I ended up failing that unit, and there was absolutely no option to appeal it. Missing this quiz made me even more miserable.

The tutor never followed up, which I thought was odd. If someone came up to me saying they had been assaulted, I would be doing everything I could to follow up with them and make sure they were okay. I ended up calling Deakin's wellbeing services a few days after, but they were fully booked out for two months.

Before this, my WAM was at around 94. I had set myself up well for a very competitive grad year given my results and my appraisals on my clinical placements. Now that's all gone down the drain, and my WAM is somewhere

in the 60s, I think. I have a very strong feeling that no one will take me and that I won't be able to get into the program that I wanted.

After that, the university told me they wouldn't be renewing my scholarship since I didn't meet the conditions. It wasn't a lot of money, but I needed that for textbooks. I was lucky that my family provided some money.

We don't get to choose where my placements are. They put me in a forensic nursing hospital. I'm expecting to see a lot of assault victims and I am terrified of how I'm going to react to that environment.

On top of everything, I recently split up with my boyfriend because of issues stemming from my situation. I just feel like my whole life is now not going to plan, and the uni is not helping; in fact, it's making me incredibly anxious about everything.



but I couldn't get what they wanted. The wellbeing system that they have is incredibly backwards.

Alex - "All they did was send emails that made me too scared to ask for support."

When I started uni last year, my inability to focus really started to cause problems. The change in learning style was huge. I found it really distressing that I couldn't keep up with my classmates, even though I felt like I was able to understand the work just as well as them.

I started failing subjects pretty quickly. I failed all but one of my subjects in first

year, and got an email a few weeks after semester finished saying that if I didn't get my act together I'd be kicked out.

Neither of my parents have university degrees, so they weren't really across how to assist me with adjusting from high school to uni successfully and easily. I struggled with study a lot in high school, but felt like I got away with it because of natural ability.

I hadn't received any support from the uni or my tutors. All that I'd gotten from the uni was fear mongering, to be honest. The only thing they did for me was send me emails that made me too scared to ask for support.

I think that if the email I received at the end of semester 1 in first year had asked whether I was doing alright and offered support, then I wouldn't have kept failing.

I think I took such a hit to my ego that I had a lot of anxiety around even starting assignments. I was so ashamed by my lack of ability to focus, because

I hadn't received any support from the uni or my tutors. All that I'd gotten from the uni was fear mongering, to be honest. The only thing they did for me was send me emails that made me too scared to ask for support.

make appointments with people like counsellors, because it wasn't until this month that I finally cracked into getting the support that I need.

It was an 8 month process of battling through various administrative issues of trying to get support for myself, while also trying to not get kicked out of uni. It has been an incredibly isolating and lonely experience.

I think that when a student fails the uni has to ask why, rather than just telling them to stop failing. There is always a reason beyond laziness.

I'm feeling really good now. I finally have the support that I need - my GP is totally across all my issues, I have a really good therapist and a really good psychiatrist.

But I had to figure all of that out for myself. I wish someone had explained to me how to get there.

Christian - "The hardest part was telling my mum."

I was new to Sydney. It was meant to be a fresh start. I didn't know anyone in my classes. One day, I woke up early Saturday morning in Camperdown Park not remembering much of the night beforehand. I don't know, maybe I hadn't eaten that much at dinner.

I honestly didn't think anything of it - that was until I got home. My heart froze. I looked down and saw so much blood in that toilet.

I was scared. I was confused. I didn't know what this would mean for my relationship with my boyfriend, with my body, with myself.

I remember sitting in a windowless room at the Sexual Health Clinic and asking the psychologist to steer clear of any definitive words in documentation excusing me from the tutorial I was missing. And what are you even meant to say to your tutor about something you don't remember? "Hey, I think I was raped but I'm really not quite sure."

I waited so anxiously for my blood results. What if I had gotten something? By the time they eventually arrived I'd fallen far behind on my readings. Honestly, I was barely making it to class let alone out of bed.

The hardest part was telling my

mum. How do you tell the one who sees you as the best little boy in the world that you're failing out of law school, let alone what had happened?

I never ended up sitting my final exams.

When I heard what they were thinking of introducing for students, it brought me right back to that place of shame. I had been so scared of saying it out loud, not because I was afraid of what would come out but of what I would hear back.

Everything flies around your head — the nurse urging me to wear a condom next time I 'did that again', my partner asking if I'd cheated on him, the email placing me on academic probation.

I lacked so much belief in myself to keep going. In some ways I still do. It took me so long to accept that failing isn't an indicator of character, but of crisis.

I honestly don't know what I would have done with one more voice telling me that that moment defined me, that maybe I didn't deserve the things I had once before. In times where your world is so shaken, students need support not sanction.

*Names have been anonymised.



Children of Lebanon: Trauma, pain and optimism

Mahmoud Al Rifai on what it means to watch the Beirut explosion from 14,000 kilometres away.

يذلل لي جليل دالوالا رفغي له
باهادلا بيترتو يفنملاو برحلا لي ح تكلد .
ن-اطقوز ناسغ

Will the children forgive the generation that's trampled by horses of war, by exile and preparation for departure?
- Ghassan Zaqtan

Much like the grand Arab poetry that is born in the midst of war and despair, Ghassan Zaqtan's opening stanza of *Will They Believe* (زوقدصيس له) incorporates an amalgamation of immensely powerful emotions. There is the trauma of war and death, the pain of exile and departure and as with all rhetorical questions, an optimism that the answer is one that does not differ to that the questioner expects. Poetry is a remarkably appropriate impression of the experiences of the Lebanese and Arab diaspora. The tragic Beirut Blast drew my attention to Ghassan Zaqtan's poem, who like myself, is a Levantine — a son of Beirut, Damascus, Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Amman. Why? Trauma, pain and optimism is an all too familiar tritone.

On 4 August 2020, a nonchalant father, covered with sweat, is fixated on a laptop screen powered by Beirut's intermittent power supply. To his left, his tired son rests on the living room sofa. The first explosion, induced by a fire in Warehouse 12 of Beirut's port, ignites a dazzling pillar of smoke harbouring radiant sparks of fireworks. The abnormal spectacle and roaring blaze alarm the young boy, who immediately seeks refuge in his father's arms. Intuitively, the father, despite being troubled by the explosion of cheap firecrackers, assures his son that the blaze is a passable affair.

Forty seconds later, at 3:08 pm, a second blast fractures the windows and a wave of grit and dirt consumes the room. The father, turning to God, prays and protects his son. In a moment of admirable rationality among the chaos, the father ushers the son under the dining room table upon which the laptop, now covered in dry grime, sits. Nothing but trauma has ensued.

Much like the father, the citizens of the city are aghast and 300,000 are now left homeless. They, like the father, return to the vestiges of purity left in the midst of all this corruption: their prayers and their faith. In the span of a minute, Beirut's physical appearance mirrored the corruption which has crippled it. The city's beautiful features could no longer hide the dystopia its people

have protested against in the past year. With an unemployment rate of 25%, a third of its population living below the poverty line, a sectarian kleptocracy and a health care system ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic, one would think it would be impossible for Lebanon to suffer more than it has. The blasts were a further dagger of trauma and the tears, cries and lamenting of a populace who epitomise hospitality and resilience rocked the globe.

The tsunami of videos, breaking news headlines and bloodied videos reach the Australian diaspora. Their collective voice cracks, tears swell in their eyes and they are once again, by virtue of their incredible empathy and compassion, in pain. As a child of that diaspora, anguish was an experience I grew up with as I witnessed the devastation brought about by civil wars, foreign invasions and military occupation.

The Lebanese are a beautiful, resilient constituency within the Australian Arab diaspora who suffered the pain of colonialism, corruption and geopolitical tug of wars. The grievances that inspired the revolution of 2019, which brought about short-lasting hope, were thought to exemplify a state that could not get any worse. The blasts, however, dragged the country from a dystopia to a living hell, a hell tinged with an orange smoke caused by the nitrogen dioxide of the ammonium nitrate explosion. The externality which thrust the country from rock bottom to six feet under the ground was a trauma that could not allow my aunts to contain their tears as they so often do in their immense strength.

In their tears lies the guilt and pain I so often feel when I witness a Middle Eastern nation on fire. Here I am, 15,000 kilometres away from people alike in every way except owning the capital to do what our parents did: leave. There is a sense of betrayal in not being able to suffer side by side with them. Perhaps, with our relatively greater luxury and wealth, we could have done more. By ignoring the plagued political class, the manner in which the capital we sent home facilitated the country's deficit, the Palestinian and Syrian refugees who go hungry tonight and the exploitative practise of the kfala system, perhaps we failed those who needed the support of the diaspora more than ever.

It is not only that guilt that increasingly pressurises the diaspora, it is also the discourse that ensues after a Middle Eastern tragedy that contributes to the narratives which perpetuate orientalist, colonial attitudes. It is a common language many

inside and outside the diaspora adopt in flawed oversimplification. Consider the petition that advocated Lebanon being put under French Control. The narrative is: if corruption was so ingrained in the Lebanese social fabric, perhaps a foreign nation, a leader like Macron, would be Lebanon's only hope given the flawed albeit common assumption that it cannot govern itself on its own terms. When such narratives stem from the diaspora, it is rooted in helplessness and shock. When they come from those who see the Middle East as a hub of barbarous, chaotic social groups, it suggests the Lebanese are innately inferior to the West's institutions, which we all know are just as susceptible to the collapse the Lebanese government epitomizes. Coupled with the common racist rhetoric towards Arabs and other minorities, the diaspora struggles on two fronts. The manner in which the West praised the visit of French President Emmanuel Macron unknowingly forwards the all too common narrative. To paint Macron as a saviour of the French colony suggests the Lebanese cannot govern themselves, that their political system needs a foreign force of stability and that they are incapable of taking their country in a new direction.

The Western diaspora rejects such assumptions. Corruption is not inherent to the Lebanese identity, it is a product of a political oligarchy that represents a massive disjunction between the Lebanese people and the ruling class. An externality like Macron would only further such disjunction and disrespect the Lebanese struggle, and the diaspora in the West would never disrespect the Lebanese intentionally.

Now, I do not doubt the truth that Macron's presence may be comforting in a country where the political class has completely failed them, especially to the French citizens residing in the city. However, the mainstream focus, praise and attention afforded to Macron incorporates very little of the detail, the passion of political life and the diversity of intellect the Lebanese truly possess to better their condition. The irony that it was France, just after World War I, that decided that sectarianism would be a defining feature of the country's leadership cannot be overlooked. As a result, the children of the diaspora face the pressure of developing a vernacular that condemns corruption but does not prime the imperialist ambitions and the saviour complex of states like France. As citizens of the West, and children of the Middle East, we know far too well where that leads.

Developing such a vernacular is difficult; but the Lebanese are extraordinary, vibrant and possess remarkable intellect. Beirut was a space filled with peaked visor wearing, tobacco smoking individuals debating and discussing Marxism, socialism, capitalism and complex socio-political issues pertaining to the political development of a region battling imperialism and a lack of unity. It welcomed Arabs of all nationalities and religions, each driven to understand how to better a Middle East that was set on fire by colonialism, rapid industrialization and a lack of political capital on the world stage. Our language should reflect such immense capability, not a lack of it.

In such amazing heritage and modern struggle, lies an optimism. As Khalil Gibran, the legendary Lebanese poet and one of the architects of the Arabic Renaissance, opined: "braving obstacles and hardships is nobler than retreat to tranquility. The butterfly that hovers around the lamp until it dies is more admirable than the mole that lives in the dark tunnel." The English translation will never do justice to Arabic's beautiful form. But there is an optimism that Beirut will reclaim its place as a prosperous hub, paying homage to the vitality, colour and faith of its people. Perhaps Lebanon may have the chance to truly redeem itself. The nation never truly lived up to the beauty of its inhabitants after 1990. However, a nation that produces a people as bright, cultured, hospitable and resilient as the Lebanese has more than enough capability to combat all that is inhibitive, corrupt and vulgar. Perhaps, in our hope and solidarity, the children Zaqtan refers to may in fact forgive us.

Or maybe they will choose not to. However, the fact that we weep with them, we feel their trauma and their pain, and we fight to reclaim a language of protest that honours them signals an optimistic desire to win not only their forgiveness, but to ensure in our wealth and luxury that we do not forget them. In return, we hope they do not forget our solidarity. As Gibran surmises, "You may forget with whom you laughed, but you will never forget with whom you wept."

Alex Patsavas and Chop Shop: The Sounds of Growing Up

Words by Rhea Thomas

Art by Ranuka Tandan



If you, like me, frequently use the Spotify Private Session feature to go and listen to corny movie soundtracks in fear that your Spotify friends will cancel your music recommendations and taste – well, then I'm glad I'm not alone. In the culture of surveillance and the merging of public and private digital space, we open up small nooks of anxiety-inducing indulgence and shame for "guilty" pleasures. Whilst I believe that no one should feel guilty for any pleasure they feel – perhaps this can't be a universal claim – the subjectivity of music and why we love certain music is a question that remains difficult to answer and hard to admit.

As the Bill Clinton Swag Meme continued to trend during the period of self-isolation and quarantine, I felt a growing knot in my stomach as I struggled to find the perfect curation of four critically-acclaimed albums that I could credit for polishing off my outstanding and in all ways, elite (sophisticated, superior, better than you, etc.) sense of music. However, there was only one album I could think of that would encapsulate what music has significantly impacted and shaped my music taste, albeit a social sacrifice that I was hoping would bring all my followers to their senses to realise its goodness and influence. *The Twilight Original Motion Picture Soundtrack* (2008), despite the actual film's commercial success but underwhelming critical and cultural legacy, has miraculously stood the test of time and can be credited as a breakthrough for a number of successful 2000s and 2010s indie and alt-rock bands.

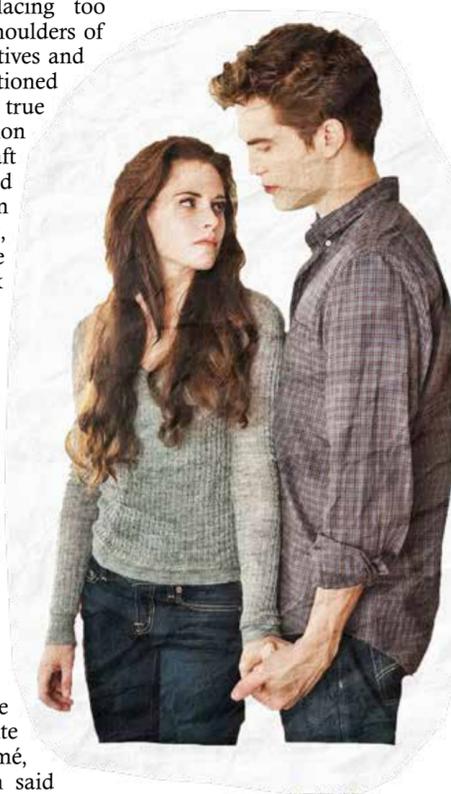
It would be ignorant to say that every teen movie has a flawless and perfectly curated soundtrack, though a few stand out over the

past few years. Specifically, films such as Jonathan Levine's *Warm Bodies* (2013), and iconic television dramas like *Gossip Girl* (2007-2012) have soundtracks which introduced a blend of new indie artists to a more commercial ground. Without placing too much credit on the shoulders of any of the said narratives and plots, the aforementioned films demonstrate the true art of music supervision and curation; a craft that can be credited to those who seem to be able to dissect, describe and prescribe the perfect soundtrack to the right moments. Initially booking bands to play at the University of Illinois, then later working as music supervisor for producer Roger Corman, Alexandra Patsavas seems to have been part of the Midwest American indie scene before I knew it existed. Since founding Chop Shop Music Supervision in 1998, she and her team have accumulated quite the impressive resumé, working not only on said soundtracks, but also on *Mad Men*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *The O.C.*, and 2010s films, *The Perks of Being A Wallflower* and *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*.

For those less familiar with the soundtracks of each of these films and series', an easy explanation would be that Chop Shop Music Supervision is the name behind your music taste and the songs you associate with growing up – the reason you probably listen to Death Cab for Cutie or Iron & Wine. A certain timelessness is discovered in her work and that impressively showcases artists like Radiohead alongside Paramore, and then John Waite alongside the Black Keys; a number of these soundtracks marry artists genres apart and push the cinematic image and narrative forward.

Unlike the more commonly discussed art of scoring films, music supervising involves the collaging of various pre-existing musical works. Less guided by conventional tropes, music curation dabbles in individual

works of artists that create mood and feeling that strictly exist in those few minutes. Patsavas has made a name for herself over these past few films as a tastemaker of the indie genre that's guided more by the sounds



that aren't heard than those that are. An observer of filmic needs, her selections give movies the oomph necessary to push that mile ahead, channelling the intimacy required for *Twilight*, humour for *Warm Bodies*, and mix of Manhattan-Brooklyn hipness to makes you recall tracks like Peter Bjorn and John's 'Young Folks' when meeting it-girl, Serena van der Woodsen in *Gossip Girl*'s pilot episode. In an interview with Fast Company, Patsavas stated, "Of course you think of a cohesive album, but none of that works unless the songs tell the story... The first time the audience experiences the track, it's in the context of the movie".

It's interesting that Patsavas' breakout supervision was for *Twilight*, a film notoriously (love) hated by film buffs, purged by old fans and even ridiculed by its own star, Robert Pattinson. Though, it is exactly that hatred that makes the soundtrack even better in comparison and maybe, the only agreeably 'redeemable' quality of the film. Upon examining the soundtrack, it's clear to see how the selection

was most probably influenced by its iconic rural Washington state setting. It could have just as easily been titled as a 'Sounds of Isolation' compilation album fit with a pine tree album cover – not an uncommon thought, it seems. The connection between indie music and the foggy, mossy setting of Seattle is one that's been discussed by many music geography scholars and journalists – why is it so difficult to separate gentle folk music and garage rock from this particular region of the United States?

Discussed by Thomas Bell in his article 'Why Seattle? An Examination of Alternative Rock Culture Hearth', he pulls apart the idea of the "Seattle sound": An "element congealing the Seattle groups into a scene if really a sound, is the musical 'honesty'". The whole idea of musical 'honesty' seems to be exactly what's amplified through highlight tracks featured on *Twilight*: 'Decode' by Paramore, 'Eyes on Fire' by Blue Foundation, 'Supermassive Black Hole' by Muse. Grant Alden and Jeff Gilbert say, "Seattle is not Los Angeles or New York. It's not a place where things happen and the world notices. It's at the far edge of an enormous country hemmed on all sides by mountains and water. It's beautiful, remote and claustrophobic". A sense of isolation is consistently amplified throughout the tracks on the soundtrack, utilising recording techniques of heavy reverb, quiet whispering and humble guitar plucking that echoes the danger that the film's setting of Forks, Washington, presents. Though the exclusion of perhaps the most well-known Seattle band, Nirvana, seems to be a curious choice that indicates a greater creative intention to stick towards smaller artists; artists on the outskirts of mainstream culture, lurking and waiting for someone daring enough to step forward and curate them into the perfect compilation.

In the case of *Warm Bodies*, the music curation exists with a generic function rather than geographic – probably out of necessity for a Romeo-and-Juliet, zombie-rom-com. The soundtrack consists of a heavier '80s sound, focusing specifically on romance and acoustics, undoubtedly to contrast against the otherwise more depressing post-apocalyptic setting. Notable mentions of this genre curation include John Waites' 'Missing

You' and Bruce Springsteen's 'Hungry Heart'. Ordinarily associated with the heavy rotation of the Smooth FM sound, the music functions for a different and more meaningful purpose here. A growing sense of nostalgia is achieved in its use in *Warm Bodies*, drawing viewers into the record-playing, knick-knack-collecting, generally endearing zombie character of R, who in the opening scene reminisces about the human lives of zombies lingering at the airport to Jimmy Cliff's 'Sitting In Limbo'. In an iconic scene from the film, R is broken-hearted and being consoled by his friend M (I promise that most characters in this film have a name longer than a letter) who encourages him to pursue his romance and also indicates towards a growing emotional change among the zombies; they're becoming more human. As R asks for their help reaching Julie, the scene cuts to the group of zombies against a morbid backdrop of destruction, shuffling determinedly along to the hilariously juxtaposing, searing guitar solo in Scorpion's 'Rock You Like a Hurricane'. A general focus on overall cohesion is the element of prime importance when stringing songs together, and you would think that this is more easily done by picking songs from a similar era, complementing and leaning on the musical similarities and

cultural substance of one another. Patsavas presents a curious case against this. Cleverly accenting all the comedic beats of the film, it's impressive to be able to integrate indie artists like Bon Iver and The National alongside more timeless acts without a jarring contrast.

The case for *Gossip Girl*, is, again, quite different. This time, the supervision dictates the relationships between the characters, balancing themes of fame, glamour and prestige. *Gossip Girl* is, for the most part, a teen-drama that preys on the spectacle of New York City celebrity culture and elitism that seemingly resides in four Upper East Side families, narrating their Met Museum yogurt-and-granola morning routines and equally pretentious high school concerns. While this explains the prevalence of more poppy club tracks, that also admittedly sound ten times worse retrospectively, the indie features seem to draw from the hipster, Brooklyn upbringing of character Dan Humphrey, who seems to be tormented and taunted for his apparently "inferior", off-the-island upbringing for the full six seasons. Unsurprisingly, Patsavas found the perfect playlist. Though, unlike *Twilight* and *Warm Bodies*, upon relistening to the 'Gossip Girl Soundtrack Season 1-6', it becomes almost painful pairing JAY-Z back-to-back with Washington Social

Club, then Flo Rida with Cold War Kids. The result ends more as a mishmash, people-pleasing playlist that feels all too common at primary school discos. Yet, Patsavas makes these songs work in the context of the show; as viewers we quickly realise that the presence of pop music only exists to frame the superficial personalities presented in certain characters. The more honest substance of 'reality' that carries the actual story is instead, humbly complemented by the unique originality of indie artists and songs.

With this in mind, it's easier to understand why music from my teenage years seems to have a timeless quality that settles into a sticky nostalgia. This could partially be due to the fact that young adulthood is a time where we 'come to our senses' and begin to develop likes, dislikes and learn. A romanticised notion that's only affirmed in the fact that a lot of the tracks from Chop Shop Supervision still hold a sense of first-time listenability. Anyone who has watched a teen flick in the past five years may struggle to find the same success (though some more recent exceptions may include *Beautiful Boy* (2018), *Eighth Grade* (2018), *Booksmart* (2019)). Though perhaps, it has more to do with the reputations of the bands since their features in these films and television series'. Now critically-acclaimed

and reviewed by publications like Pitchfork, The Atlantic and Rolling Stone, artists like Feist, The National and Vampire Weekend have become defining figures of 21st century indie and alt-rock that carry way beyond the late 2000s into the late 2010s.

Patsavas' curation wrapped smaller indie bands into commercially-consumable packages of narrative, plot and sprinkled them with renown and timeless musical works from past decades. If anything, it's a clear example of the 'golden mean' of musical and production intentions in films and television. The emerging beauty of film, television, streaming and independent production lies in the growing avenues for rising artists to reach audiences – "That's the new way with the digital age" says Patsavas. Without judging the quality of a soundtrack based merely on the critique of the overall film, there's something to be celebrated in a good playlist, even away from the screen. What becomes apparent is that despite the mediocre critical reception of *Twilight*, *Warm Bodies*, *Gossip Girl* and most other works supervised by Chop Shop, the legacy of the featured music has forged a kind of subliminal connection to these fictions – in turn, the fictions to the music – that's eternally romanticised in Generation Z teenhood. Art by Ranuka Tandan.



Cuddly creatures and cultural cringe

Felix Faber on the social value of Alvin and the Chipmunks.

No work of art, history, academia, or public storytelling could better capture the deep vacuum of public life in the 2000s than *Alvin and the Chipmunks* (2007). The anodyne tale of Alvin, Simon, and Theodore, crisply contained to a tight ninety-minute timeframe, managed to turn a \$60 million budget into a healthy \$360 million box office take - the 14th highest in the world for 2007. Its three squeakuels have only grown the pie - 2011, the year of *Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked's* release, saw the franchise take in \$300 million on merchandise alone. The numbers expose the brilliance of the Chipmunks grift. Alvin and his brothers' on-screen antics exist, functionally, as a ninety-minute advertisement for the *Alvin and the Chipmunks* brand. But the Chipmunk juggernaut did not come from nowhere; it exists as a symptom of the 2000s cultural cringe.

The cultural cringe of the noughties was a chiefly American phenomenon. Americans were promised the end of history, and the dominance of their nation and ideology on the world stage. Instead, they were given the national trauma of 9/11, seemingly endless wars

abroad, economic collapse at home, and a rapidly deteriorating political consensus. The idea of what it meant to be American changed, and their national confidence was brought into doubt. This nationwide ennui, fused with the market logic of neoliberalism, led to a fairly straightforward formula for commercial success in film: provide people some respite from the world they live in, set up a merchandising line, and keep it G-rated. Meaning, joy, and humour, all became secondary to creating as inoffensive a cinematic experience as possible. Moviegoers could trust that their ticket at the box office would buy them an hour and a half of scorching nothingness, leaving them untroubled, and with a burning desire to purchase Alvin and the Chipmunks merchandise for their friends and family.

What made *Alvin and the Chipmunks* such a trailblazer in this field was its advent of soft, cuddly heroes. The character design of the CGI chipmunks is seemingly made for their future franchising as soft toys. Theodore, in particular, has little to offer to the film than a huggable-ness suited to a future as a cheap stocking-stuffer present

from an unloving parent. This form of movie mascot, that comedian Conner O'Malley describes as "irresistible to toddlers, to want to watch and hold and put in their mouth" was created with *Alvin and the Chipmunks*, but perfected by *Despicable Me's* Minions. Soft, cuddly, visually distinctive, and endlessly marketable, Minions carried the cuddly mascot banner into the 2010s. While Alvin's star has begun to fall (the most recent film, *The Road Chip*, released in 2015, saw a box-office take of only \$234 million - the lowest yet), the *Despicable Me* franchise has only risen in popularity. Minions, the spin-off film that dispatches entirely with any semblance of character, cracked \$1 billion at the box office alone.

With a sequel to Minions slated for a 2021 release, and the recently-spawned *Trolls* franchise setting several streaming records with its second film this year, it looks like the legacy of sterile, joyless, children's toy film franchises is set to continue. Of course, there are worse things to happen. There's nothing particularly offensive or off-putting about these films - I actually quite enjoy *Despicable Me* - and even those

who are looking for more substantive content can find it elsewhere. But still, watching David Cross flatly talk to CGI chipmunks, one can't help but hope for something a little more daring, something a little less profit-minded. But sadly, a reprieve from the market dominance of the soft cuddly mascots does not seem near.

While the 2000s brought American self-confidence into doubt, the successive traumas of 2020 have shaken far deeper, foundational assumptions about American society. As the traditional film release-to-lunchbox decoration pipeline grows less and less profitable due to a contracting economy and social distancing restrictions, the ongoing viability of the formula grows less and less certain. A shift to new media as source for entertainment seems on the horizon; perhaps it won't be long before we see Minion TikToks, or an Alvin Netflix series. However far we may move - culturally and technologically - from the 2000s, we can be sure that the cultural cringe is far from over.

In pursuit of naked Spiderman

Marlow Hurst is horny for better video game representation.

Sexualised men in video games have always been a rarity. An exotic treat every once in a while which you chalked up to a systems error or a rendering malfunction. There were certainly exceptions and there were certainly many instances of attractive male characters, but they were almost always framed through the creative lens of a primarily straight, primarily male development team.

As such, male character designs were not developed with the intention to titillate the player but rather act as a masculine vessel for them. Certainly many of them displayed sexually appealing qualities, but these qualities were intended to appeal to the user's personal conception of the perfect male hero rather than the perfect male specimen. While Kratos from *God of War* or Nathan Drake from *The Uncharted Series* both display these qualities, nothing about them is intended to invoke sexual excitement in the player.

Many argue that male video game characters cannot be sexualised because the game's design is so aggressively heteronormative that even if a male character is read as sexualised by the player it most certainly wasn't designed with that in mind. This is also why women are so often hyper-sexualised in video games. As games are developed in an environment where appeal to the straight, male gaze is prioritised, female characters tend to become sexualised and objectified. In 2018, the International Games Development Association found that 74% of workers in the games industry were cis males and an even greater 81% were heterosexual. It's no surprise then that video games,

like many industries, produce content intended to appeal to heterosexual men.

While this is all broadly true, there are some examples of hyper-sexualised female characters done well. An oft cited example is that of *Bayonetta*. Many have argued that Bayonetta uses her overt sexuality and femininity as a weapon, as she quite literally uses her body to battle enemies. This argument is fraught with problems. Is Bayonetta empowered through her own purposeful sexualisation or are her choices simply a design decision made by a predominately straight male development team? Where do the choices of a fictional character begin and those of the designers end?

Can an industry which is so often focused on delivering an experience appealing to the straight male fantasy actually offer a female character meaningful sexual empowerment? Probably not. But things are certainly changing. While the figures cited earlier are grim, they're an improvement on years before. And while AAA games and mainstream game development studios have failed to deliver in these areas, indie development is filling a lot of gaps.

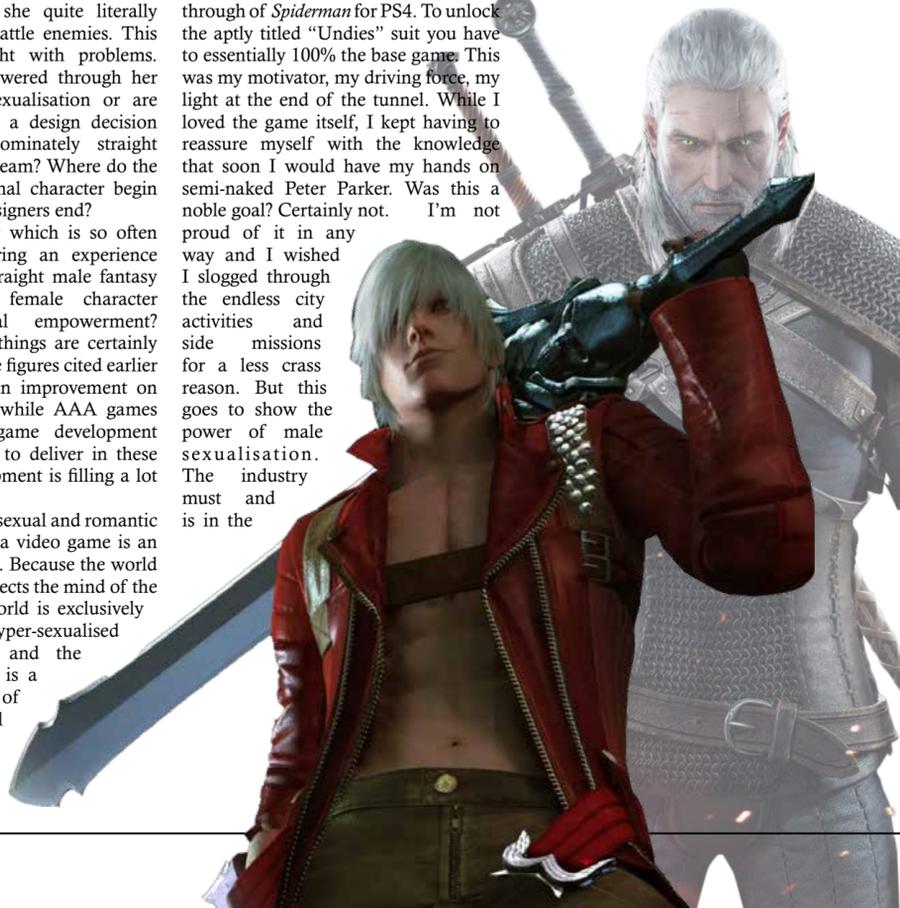
To see your own sexual and romantic desires reflected in a video game is an empowering feeling. Because the world of a video game reflects the mind of the protagonist, if a world is exclusively populated by hyper-sexualised female characters and the game's protagonist is a male, the sexuality of that world can feel claustrophobic. This is the case with many games

and this frequently creates a dissonance. For games that offer player choice, RPG elements, and romance, to then offer the player a purely heterosexual selection dispels any illusion of user interaction.

What this really comes down to is the fact that I want to see more sexy men in video games. This is evident in my play through of *Spiderman* for PS4. To unlock the aptly titled "Undies" suit you have to essentially 100% the base game. This was my motivator, my driving force, my light at the end of the tunnel. While I loved the game itself, I kept having to reassure myself with the knowledge that soon I would have my hands on semi-naked Peter Parker. Was this a noble goal? Certainly not. I'm not

proud of it in any way and I wished I slogged through the endless city activities and side missions for a less crass reason. But this goes to show the power of male sexualisation. The industry must and is in the

process of coming to grips with the diversity of its player base. Video games are not male media, nor are they straight media. They are media enjoyed by millions of people every year from every conceivable background. And many of those people are heavily invested in naked Spiderman.



Like Japanese prank shows? Thank tort law!

Nina Dillon Britton wants to remind you that she does law.

Anyone who has gone too far down a YouTube rabbit hole of Japanese reality show clips might have found themselves staring into an abyss of human suffering. In one prank show, unsuspecting victims are ushered into an elevator only for the floor to give way, with victims falling down a slide as a studio audience howls with laughter. Victims' screaming faces as they plunge to (what they believe will be) their deaths are shown in slow motion for the audience's delight. In another clip, a woman dressed as a yūrei slowly emerges from the ceiling as men shower. Hilarity ensues. In a third, victims walking down the street suddenly find themselves in the middle of two armed gangs charging towards one another, and again must face the reality of their (perceived) impending death.*

Of course, that observation is not limited to reality television shows hailing from Japan. As a genre, reality shows trade in the small grotesqueries of human life: mean girls, humiliating challenges, and unhinged judges living out sadistic fantasies as they sample participants' Hollandaise sauce.

And those cruelties have given rise to a not insignificant body of case law in some countries. In 2019, a landmark

NSW Workers Compensation Commission ruling found that the reality show *House Rules* must pay compensation to a contestant who had suffered depression after being framed as the show's villain. In the US, so many people sought to claim damages in tort — a legal action against another person for damages done to your body, income or emotional well-being — have forced shows such as *Jackass* off air. Indeed, as law students will know, the founding case for the action wilful infliction of nervous shock (the only available action for emotional harm in Australia, where you must prove psychiatric injury) involves a prank gone awry.**

Assuming they are real then,*** Japanese prank shows are something of a novelty. Whereas most participants in reality shows will be asked to sign forms releasing the show from liability in the case of injury, the premise of a prank show is that the victim doesn't know what's coming. The show, therefore, has less opportunity to protect themselves.

In some jurisdictions — like the US — claimants would have an action for intentionally inflicted emotional distress. Indeed, the decline of American pranks shows like *Scare Tactics* and *Punk'd* appears in large part due to the costs of prank victims bringing lawsuits, many

of which are likely settled out of court. Such expenses discourage companies from insuring such shows, meaning many cannot go ahead at all.

Though in Japan such actions exist in theory, the potential payouts are often prohibitively low for claimants. Compared to Australia or the US, judges in Japan have a far wider discretion in ordering payouts for damages in tort. Payouts generally are much lower, with claims for defamation — which frequently sees damages orders of hundreds of thousands of dollars in other jurisdictions — averaging at around \$1 million JPY (\$13,000 AUD).

Given generally lower damages, and wide discretion from judges, lawyers are discouraged from pursuing claims for emotional distress. With less claims being brought, there is less clarity on the standards that must be met to prove such claims, placing heavy burdens on lawyers to prove them. This creates a "vicious cycle" of low damages orders for emotional distress, economist Osamu Saito argues. "[B]ecause judges can freely determine the amount lawyers do not know if their request is going to be granted even if they advocate for it, and even if their request is granted the amount is usually low and the burden on the lawyer is very heavy, therefore, they

do not press for the emotional pains of the victim too strongly, and because of that their understanding of this type of pain diminishes, as a result the amount in non-economic losses cases has stayed low."

Ultimately, a system that privileges the mental or emotional well-being of individuals is simply incompatible with good prank shows. Does this mean we should rehaul our tort law regime? Probably not. Should we nevertheless be thankful that there are still safe havens for extreme pranking, made accessible in the internet's ether? Definitely

* Not directly relevant to this article, but always worth mentioning, is also *Orgasm Wars*, where gay porn performers are challenged to make consenting straight porn performers ejaculate within 40 minutes.

** *Wilkinson v Downton* involved a man pranking a woman by telling her that her husband was lying in the street with his legs broken. The facts of the case state her hair turned white, she vomited, and she went into "nervous shock". Some chicks just can't take a joke!

*** If they are not this entire article is pointless and wrong.



Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney

2020 Students' Representative Council Annual Elections



Election Notice

Elections for the positions of:

- Seven (7) Delegates to the National Union of Students
- Thirty-five (35) councillors for the 93rd Students Representative Council, University of Sydney

will be held on:

- Tuesday 29th September 2020
- Wednesday 30th September 2020
- Thursday 1st October 2020

In order to vote you will need to register as a voter. To be eligible as a voter you need to be enrolled in an undergraduate course (degree or diploma). Students who have deferred their studies are also eligible to register as a voter.

Full details of how to register as a voter for these elections can be found at srcsyd.net.au/elections

At this stage it is still proposed to conduct a form of in-person polling, and considerable work is being undertaken to obtain the necessary permissions required to do so. Full details of how and when to vote will be made available at a later date.

Authorised by G.Field, 2020 Electoral Officer,
Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney
p: 02 9660 5222 | w: srcsyd.net.au



In conversation with Gareth Liddiard

An extended version of this interview is available online.

Madeline Ward interviews the Tropical Fuck Storm frontman.

Tropical Fuck Storm (TFS) has been busy. They've released three songs since May, including a cover of an Australian punk-rock classic with Amy Taylor of Amyl and the Sniffers. We had a chat with band member Gareth Liddiard after the release of their latest single, 'Legal Ghost'.

Madeline Ward: You've likened Tropical Fuck Storm to your pre-Drones project, Bong Odyssey, in terms of how out there they both are or were. Would you say that TFS has allowed you to get in touch with a more unhinged side of your creativity that you had reined in after the Bong Odyssey days?

Gareth Liddiard: Sure, I mean, with the Bong Odyssey stuff, we moved from Perth to Melbourne, and we had to sell all of our mad gear, 'cause we had all sorts of wacky synths and drum machines and stuff. The sort of stuff that costs a lot of money now; it's all vintage now so it costs heaps, but back then it was all seen as crap so we could buy it at Cash Converters for \$50. But then we had to ditch all that stuff, and when we got to Melbourne, we only had guitars, and the only pub that would have us was the Tote, so we kind of became a 'guitar band' by default, but we were never really that. I mean, we could do it, but we were kind of always weirder. It was like fucking 15 years of being a sort of... what I kind of think of as a normal 'guitar band', so the TFS thing has been great, 'cause we can just do whatever we want. We just go silly.

MW: You've covered the Saint's song 'This Perfect Day' with Amy Taylor — I can't help but feel there's a parallel between the music of the Saints, recorded under the Bjelke Peterson regime in the 70's in Queensland, and punk under our current political climate, with the introduction of anti-

protest laws and the heightening of police powers country wide. Is this something you were considering when you decided to cover this track?

GL: It would be both. It still sounds really fresh — their first two albums were just so energised, and it's freaky that they were doing that in isolation in England and New York. It was definitely the 'Bjelke' thing that put a rock up their arse. But it's great, people like Amy and her band. She's like 22, I'm fuckin' 44, but she's the first Australian that has been good for fuckin' 20 years, you know what I mean? Like, she's fuckin' amazing, she just goes berserk. We're all a bit older, but she's definitely... well she's just freaked out about it all. Like, shit, I mean all the Black Lives Matter stuff, and the cops, and the madness that's ensuing. So it made sense, 'cause she's just came up to hang while we were recording and it kind of made sense just to throw her the mic and get her out for that, 'cause she's totally energised.

MW: I think she's pretty incredible just in terms of bringing Australian punk back up into the mainstream. Like, she's done campaigns for Gucci and shit, which is pretty fucking huge.

GL: Yeah, worldwide.

MW: Yeah, it's massive.

GL: But she's really smart. She's not stupid, and she is what she seems like she is, which is hilarious. She's kind of 'Mullumbimby bogan', you know what I mean? She's not pretending. But then, she's super sharp when it comes to the 'biz' side of stuff. She's awesome.

MW: I found it super interesting because I really admire what Amyl and the Sniffers do based on — I hate to revert to identity politics in this way — having a female-fronted punk band. On its own, it's really fucking cool. But then beyond that fact, she's so unafraid to just get on stage and howl and scream and growl.

GL: That's what I think too. She's not self-

conscious, and she's really talented, but at the same time she's been lucky enough to be born at a time when she can do that without giving much of a fuck, you know? Doing that 20 years ago would have been hard, and doing that 40 years ago would have been twice as hard. She's just born for this time; she was made for this time. She's just this weird punk rock Dolly Parton machine.

MW: That's a great way to describe her: "punk rock Dolly Parton machine." That's fantastic.

GL: From Mullumbimby.

MW: From Mullumbimby, of all places. So, in an interview with NME you said the concept behind Suburbophobia — questioning whether these suicide cults where onto something was "timely not 'cause of the cult thing but because it's probably a good time to leave the planet." I was wondering if this is in some sense in dialogue with King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard's eco-thrash Mars for the Rich? "Mars for the Privileged, Earth for the Poor?"

GL: It's like a zeitgeist thing, I guess. Which is cool, 'cause zeitgeists only come around every 20 or 30 years.

So they're on the same wavelength. Their "Mars for the Rich" thing is about dudes like Elon Musk, that sort of privilege. What we're doing is more, you know, QAnon and all that weird online cult conspiracy stuff. Everybody just believes shit that is not founded in reality at all, and everyone's just ready to Hoover up bullshit, carte blanche. So rather than getting up there with a song and say "that's bad", it gives us a laugh to go "Well, why don't we say it's good?" They're dead and gone, they're probably wrong, but maybe they were right. The Jonestown suicides: maybe they all did go and land on the beautiful planet out there in the universe, and live happily ever after. Who knows? It's highly unlikely, but I don't know, it just seemed like a more subversive way to write about what's going on than just condemning it.

MW: I think there's a lot of public discourse where a lot of Australian influencers and celebrities are starting to jump aboard this conspiracy theory trend. You have Pete Evans coming out about like every conspiracy theory under the sun, because he's a fruit loop. But then you've also got people like Ziggy Alberts, who was, until recently, quite an acclaimed musician, releasing anti-vax beliefs — my original question was: "is this a theme that the band will continue to pursue?" But I think you've answered that, it sounds like you're going to.

GL: Yeah, it's just around. All that shit's around. I tend to just write about what's out there, and so does Fi, and so does Erica. This shit is just everywhere. You can't get away from it. You can't pick up your phone without [seeing] more weird QAnon shit; more Trump stuff. We actually played at the venue — the one where Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama and Oprah were meant to have a paedophile ring at, that pizza joint. It's called 'Comet Ping Pong'.

MW: Do they lean into their conspiracy theory?

GL: No, they hate it, 'cause the guy came in with a semi-automatic one day and shot the place up — but he was such an idiot he didn't hit anyone, luckily — and demanded to see the basement. This "torture basement", where they did all this paedophile stuff. They're just like, "Dude, we don't have a fuckin' basement". But he said that classic conspiracy thing where he sort of said, "Well, prove you don't." "Youse had to prove you did something, now you have to prove you haven't done it." Which is impossible.

MW: Is that why you guys entertain these kinds of ideas in a lyrical sense? Because they're so ridiculous that it's almost as though they don't really need to be debunked, it's more fun to just make fun of them in that way?

GL: Yeah, it's like old-school stuff like Dead Kennedys, where they would just mock, rather than being serious. If you were railing against everything in a really earnest, serious way all the time, you'd end up shooting yourself, you'd be so depressed. So laughing at it, while kicking it away, is probably the survivable way of railing against it.

MW: 'Legal Ghost' and its B-Side, Heaven, are both songs [that are] quite concerned with mortality — you wrote Legal Ghost in the 90's, and Heaven is a Talking Heads song from '79. Do you feel that re-recording both of these songs in a time where we are constantly confronted with death and dying, both due to coronavirus and the American imperial war machine — that Talking Heads song was released in a time of pretty huge political upheaval, and now we're experiencing that again — do you feel like that maybe changed their meaning in a way?

GL: It certainly did with the Talking Heads one, because that's like: "Heaven is a place where nothing ever happens."

MW: It's a pretty fuckin' depressing song.

GL: It really is, but before all this COVID stuff, before the whole world ground to a halt... [David Byrne] was, the way I see it, kind of saying: "If you want a utopia or a heaven, it's just gonna be dull." Heaven is a place where nothing happens, so it's better to be dissatisfied than bored out of your mind. But then, with the COVID thing, suddenly nothing's happened — or something is actually happening, there's an unprecedented worldwide crisis, and now I sort of wish nothing was happening, that we'd just go back to boring old normal, because that would be better. It's almost like the meaning of the song reversed itself completely, 180 degrees. Legal Ghost, as well — that's written about a couple of people I knew who we lived with who died. They were never gonna get far, they were just drug addicts, and even before they were dead you could tell. No matter how much you try, there was nothing anyone could do. It's a song about 'the walking dead', or something like that. For some reason, I just thought... playing with the girls, with their great singing and shit like that, I just thought, "fuck, these guys could kill this if I let them have a go at it."

Art by Janina Osinsao.

The problem with Aus rock

Roisin Murphy wants girls to the front of Australian rock and roll.

Live music, for many women and non-cis male people, is a fiercely love-hate relationship.

It's the rush of your favourite band, the feeling of your sweaty mate crashing into you, the camaraderie of being in a room full of people all there for the same reason.

It's also the hurt of knowing you're often not included in the lawless white boys club that controls it. That's why there's been a strong conversation brewing about toxic masculinity in Australia's live music industry.

Over the last few weeks I've brought up this article with a lot of women I know. The first words to come out of most of their mouths were stories about being treated like shit at gigs. The next ones were:

The longer men live in a lawless kingdom where they can abuse women and minorities and still get played on supposedly progressive stations like Triple J, the longer women will feel unsafe and unwelcome.

Oh God, talk about Sticky Fingers.

In December 2016, the Sydney Morning Herald reported that Dylan Frost, the band's frontman, had racially abused Indigenous singer-songwriter Thelma Plum. Allegedly, he was verbally abusive and spat on her in an event in which Plum described she had "never felt so unsafe." He was later accused of further racial taunts against Indigenous band Dispossessed, in response to them speaking about the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre on stage.

The most telling part about Sticky Fingers and their fall out is not just the incidents themselves; it's Frost's response. He never apologised for being racist, denied that the Dispossessed event occurred, and blamed bad behaviour on mental health issues.

He had the opportunity to set a precedent for apology and self growth, yet instead he deflected. However, he's not the only one. Sticky Fingers are only a symptom of the pattern: abuse, get called out, deflect, move on.

Sticky Fingers are still given airplay, and in March this year featured on Triple J's hottest 100 of the decade.

In February 2019 Smith Street Band lead singer, Will Wagner, was publicly accused of emotional abuse by his ex-girlfriend, Camp Cope lead singer Georgia McDonald. McDonald aired a number of text messages and emails detailing manipulative abuse from Wagner. Some of his threats included killing both himself and her.

In Wagner's public response, he said the texts and emails had been "selectively

shown out of context accompanied by one-sided statements."

This culture of unaccountability flows right into the way women are treated at gigs.

I spoke to Maisie from Melbourne bands Clamm and The Belair Lip Bombs about mansplaining, toxic masculinity and her experience of being a young woman in the live music scene.

"I've been mansplained to a lot at gigs, by punters in the crowd or even venue workers... one time at a gig I was having trouble hooking up my bass to the DI box and I asked the sound guy for some help. He got kinda passive aggressive at me and said "I feel like I'm your teacher"... After we'd played the set he came up to me all sheepish and was like "hey you're really good,

did you study music or something?" He had treated my male band mates with respect from the very start. Little things like that that are hardly even memorable and are so subtle, but they can wear you down a lot of the time."

This culture of mansplaining is no surprise when women occupy a slither of sound technician and production positions.

"On a weird flip side sometimes I have been overly praised for my set. The whole, you're so good for a girl concept is still very much alive and that is something I want to see squashed, I just wanna see men and women as equal in the music scene and both treated with the same amount of genuine respect."

It's starting to look like that's happening.

According to Triple J Hack's annual report into the representation of women in Australian music, women and non-binary people now study music in high school at the same rate as men. And due to strong conversations about the lack of gender-parity in festival lineups, festivals like Groovin the Moo and Falls are starting to listen, with 43% of Groovin acts having at least one woman and Falls closing its gender gap completely in 2018.

Of course, however, fairness is not trickle-down, and there's a lot of work to be done in the space between diverse acts and safe gigs.

The longer men live in a lawless kingdom where they can abuse women and minorities and still get played on supposedly progressive stations like

It's hard to see hope in all of this, but it's there. It's in classrooms full of girls studying music, it's in conversations at pubs between women building solidarity and strength, and it's starting to be in the industry.

Triple J, the longer women will feel unsafe and unwelcome.

Dune Rats are a Queensland band with thick accents and masculinity to show for it. They are one of many young all male groups who confuse nostalgia and Australianism with abusive behaviour. Blokes being blokes.

In 2014 they posted a status to Facebook and Twitter which read "do you guys want to make a Dune Rats Tinder and just gang bang chicks." It has thousands of likes, and is still online.

Two years later, in 2016, one of their band members was accused of sexual assault online. They responded with a laughing eyes emoji. The same year, they dedicated a song to the Tivoli "to all the sexy ugly chicks."

In 2017, Triple J described Dune Rats as a "a super-fun, mega-hot mess, and we wouldn't have it any other way."

In 2019 they successfully toured Australia.

It's hard to see hope in all of this, but it's there. It's in classrooms full of girls studying music, it's in conversations at pubs between women building solidarity

and strength, and it's starting to be in the industry.

When Will Wagner's behaviour became public, The Beths and Sweater Curse, who were supposed to be opening for the Smith Street Band on their tour, announced they were pulling out.

"We don't want to stand with the abuser and we stand with the victims involved," The Beths said in a statement.

It's going to take a long time for women to stop being pushed around in crowds, but moves like that make it seem more possible.

Maisie spoke to me about this, saying she thinks "the Melbourne scene at least is progressing really well in terms of gender equality in music and it's great. There's heaps more female led bands and musicians popping up and playing gigs and getting the recognition they deserve, and having bad experiences at gigs is generally pretty few and far between - for me anyway."

Change will take time to translate from classrooms to gigs, but if we keep pushing to the front of crowds, we'll get there.



Art by Sophia Calvo y Perez.

DISRUPTION

Editors' Choice

The editors of this humble rag have chosen their favourite fiction and non-fiction entries from those that didn't place in this year's *Honi Soit* Writing Competition. Congratulations to all winners and shortlisted writers! Thanks again to our judges Rick Morton and Tilly Lawless, as well as our sponsor Dr. Thomas Wenkart.

'Music to Riot with': An exploration of Detroit techno, Afrofuturism and anti-colonialism

Seamas Pragnell || Editor's choice non-fiction

The power of music and art to disrupt, critique and explore societal structures is well-known, with the best of it imaging how we can effect societal change. This has never been more important than now.

It's in this maelstrom that Detroit Techno (DT) and its utilisation of Afrofuturist imagery and themes is profoundly relevant by providing us with a radical and timely exploration of racial oppression, colonialism and imagined futures.

DT is the genesis of all other forms of Techno, with its origins beginning in the mid-1980s underground electronic dance music scene of Detroit, Michigan – a city with a vibrant culture and long history of Black resistance. The genre's emergence is generally understood as beginning with Juan Atkins' releases under the Model 500 name. Atkins' early DT work was primarily influenced by the electronic instrumentation used by German Avant-Garde group Kraftwerk, the funk rhythms of George Clinton's Parliament-Funkadelic and the futurist concepts of writer Alvin Toffler. These influences of Atkins led to DT being founded by the use of ethereal synthesisers, steadily pushed forward by the rhythms of drum machines, notably the Roland 808. The establishment of a prominent Techno scene in Detroit began with Atkins' collaborations with fellow young Detroit producers Derrick May and Kevin Saunderson. Critical to the emergence of DT was the context of a post-industrial Detroit, where the prominent automobile industry had been gutted and Motown Records had left for Los Angeles. Writer Cristoph Schaub argued that the move of Motown Records "symbolically confirmed the city's cultural decline", providing a context in which the originators of DT were compelled to disrupt and explore new sonic avenues.

Foundational to DT's origins is Afrofuturism, a broad cultural and philosophical movement that explores distant futures, alternate realities and technological development founded in the

images and philosophies of African National and diasporic tradition. The struggles of African diaspora, with its horrifying history of slavery and oppression, is critical to the formation of Afrofuturism, as Afrofuturist artists, writers, and theorists often seek to reclaim the past and find optimism for the future. Afrofuturism uses science-fictional depictions of technologically advanced African diasporas to critique the White cultural depiction of 'primitive' Black peoples, and instead imagines a future that is founded in "cosmic liberation": a reality where technological possibilities have enabled Black empowerment and the destruction of race-based colonial structures. In this imagining of the future, Afrofuturism is not merely a triangulation of Black culture with science fiction, but a creative exploration of the possible futures that challenge the oppression faced by Black people, including the systematic exploitation and injustice perpetrated by the police and prison systems.

The links between Afrofuturism and DT is important for understanding the ability for music to be a tool for liberation. The futuristic imagery, ethos and album themes of many early DT artists invoke Afrofuturist themes. There is a constant motif of futuristic artist names and album titles in the DT scene, like the artists "Model 500" and "Drexcia", as well as the album "Interstellar Fugitives" by Underground Resistance. These artists all used explicitly science fiction and futurist inspired names alongside representation of robots, aliens and interstellar civilisations, as an attempt to occupy and reclaim the future for the African diaspora.

Emblematic of the prevalence of Afrofuturism in DT is the mythos of DT group Drexcia, with their formation of the race of 'Drexcians', as developed in the sleeve notes to their 1997 album 'The Quest', an underwater civilisation of an aquatic human species who descended "from 'pregnant America-bound African slaves' thrown overboard 'by

the thousands during labour for being sick and disruptive cargo". Drexcia's depiction of America-bound African slaves rising up and thriving from the horrors of the trans-Atlantic slave trade explicitly attacks colonial structures. The new race of Drexcians disrupt the functions of colonialism and slavery by adapting and overcoming the immense hardship faced, establishing their own society, which is not only technologically sophisticated, but is outside of the colonial gaze, and a society which is unknown and therefore unable to be colonised.

The anti-colonial thematic concerns are also prevalent within Underground Resistance's (UR) 1998 release 'Interstellar Fugitives', where in its sleeve notes they conceptualise a future "in which colonialism is recasts in... cosmic proportions". It is in this mythos where UR use a fictional report by the 'Intergalactic Bureau of Investigation' to conceptualise DT as a mutant gene called R1, which has been spread through 'sonic parasites', by the 'rhythm-machine' of Detroit. UR develop this concept further by acknowledging that this R1 gene has mutated from its cousin gene, rhythm, which "was created during a period of time ranging from the 1400s to the late 1800s in colonized areas throughout the world and especially in the new world of the Americas". The framing of R1 as a 'parasite' as written by the Intergalactic Bureau of Investigation, seeks to directly critique modern colonial structures such as the police, with R1 being viewed as disruptive to colonial powers due to its ability to invoke liberation from and revolt against the Intergalactic colonialism prevalent within this future. It is here where UR directly explore thematic and conceptual possibility for music to be a means of liberation, as well as how the police act on the basis of maintaining colonial structures and directly attacking Black individuals and their culture, through surveillance, threats and violence. UR explore the thread from African rhythms to DT with the trans-Atlantic

slave trade and the institutions of slavery once again being "ground zero" on which both DT and anti-colonial struggle have been built. UR's use of Afrofuturist themes further develops how sound and culture can be utilised as a means to directly fight against and attack colonial structures, as metaphorically explored by the R1 gene.

By exploring the mythos surrounding the work of both Drexcia and UR, through the use of Afrofuturist imagery and fictions, I have aimed to explore how we can understand and view DT as directly attacking colonial history and its own mutation into the modern world as systemic and institutionalised racism.

There are significant links between the anti-colonial and Afrofuturist sentiments held in DT and the various Black Lives Matter (BLM) movements occurring across the world. Critical to the BLM movement is a critique of the police and their role in maintaining colonial structures that directly exploit and attack Black individuals and communities, as well as the recognition of the ways that systemic racism is encoded not only in both American, Australian and colonial culture but in our economy, our institutions and in every-day life. It is in this context where DT becomes important and profoundly relevant, as it imagines alternative futures that exist away from the continuing colonial gaze and exploitative structures such as the police. Just as the BLM movement articulates an agenda of change by defunding police and redirecting resources towards more constructive policies and programs, DT music and culture creates its own reimagining of the future where colonial structures are dismantled and Black empowerment is promoted. DT has even been played at BLM protests in Detroit as rhythmic fuel against colonial oppression. DT is not merely dance music, but, as the theorist Kodwo Eshun put it, "Techno becomes an immersion in insurrection, music to riot with."

Billie (circa 2010-2020)

Libby Newton || Editors' choice fiction

I.
the beeping keeps her up all night that and the too-white lights she's not here to sleep, far as she can tell, though she's on a mattress – strapped to a mattress – wires running from sticky patches on her chest to bedside machines

the hospital sheets make her feel dirty, grimy, germy; how many expiring old men have lain supine in this bed? how many soiled themselves? bled, pissed, drooled, soaked the sheets? breathed their last breaths? ask any of her friends from school, she's a germaphobe at the best of times; a bit precious, a bit pole-up-her-ass – ruined the year 10 camping trip with her hysterics (sand, dirt, leaves in the tent!) and though they won't pass up a chance to remind her of it, they forgive her, of course they forgive her, Billie can't help it, it's just the way she is someone outside barks *hand it over* or something similar; a troop of navy torsos cluster at the door and she's thrust into shadow

her name is said (the one she doesn't go by), birth date, admission time, a smattering of numbers, letters, acronyms: braddy-cardy-ya, it sounds like, or brat-tea-car-dee-ah (she'd google it but they took her phone) pens click, feet tap wait, is this bed 3? bed 3 discharged last night, this is bed 4 yes anorexia nervosa footsteps thud-squeak-squeak-thud away and the light floods back in

a tearful exchange with her father when he comes to visit they don't know what else to call it, he says, meaning, *show proof to the contrary*

well, whatever it is, it's not that, she snaps, but softly; not yet accustomed to her own churlishness I eat, you've seen me eat, I eat all the time, I don't not eat, I'm not that (*every neighbourhood has one*, a psychologist will say to her years later, half-smiling, *and perhaps you're yours*) sad stick figure, militant mannequin, carving the same route through the streets day in, day out, all sinew and bone, angular, gawky, cadaverous bird without feathers, without wings, without breasts – what's left?

she doesn't she's not

II.
school gates open to steps leading down to bitumen sloping into gullet of deputy principal's office

Billie enters, fresh and full (moon-faced), keenly aware that there's more of her to look at now, more of her to look at and wonder where she's been since term 2, why she's only back now, the day of the school captain elections in which she isn't featuring as a candidate

five minutes to the morning bell and Billie heads toward B-block, steps onto the veranda where she finds Ellie and Ash awaiting her big (*massive*, she'd warned them) return

the new growths on her chest demand attention and Ellie goes to state the obvious before back-peddling at the sight of Billie's expression, smiling instead and saying something about getting used to them

which sets Billie off anyway which isn't surprising, everything sets her off these days, she feels

violated, trapped, truly goddamn awful, you've no idea, the fuckery of the past two months, and this great big bloated thing – she glares down at venus-esque undulations of tits, hips and stomach – I've got to cart around with me now

the bell rings and tears sting her eyes, Ash puts an arm around her and says not to worry, come to the computer rooms with year 12 which she does

so she's not there in the main hall with the rest of the school to see the captaincy speeches, the gags and the pledges, the slogans and the charisma, the usual quips about attending a school on a hill belonging to some guy named Smith

and feel more like a fuck-up than she already does

the school days stagger doggedly along that first week back, punctuated by recess and lunch, both of which she spends in her mum's parked car

which is what you get when you cannot be trusted to sit in the schoolyard with everyone else, remove the cling film from the sandwiches and convey them, crusts and all – that's it, take a bite, no, a *proper* bite, stop that nibbling, for god's sake! – to your mouth instead of the bin

cue the twice-daily walk of shame in front of her year group, which stakes out the front entrance of all places during breaks

up the steps, two at a time navy plaid doctor's orders no one is looking at you

III.

they talk about lack sometimes excess but mostly lack five years between them and from opposite ends of Sydney, but Court is someone whose illness has left the same gaping holes

lack of educational attainment lack of driving-a-car experience lack of drunk-hook-ups-and-late-nights-and-intimacy experience

things they'd forfeited in a rush to get nowhere

things they berate themselves for on nights spent sitting at the nurses' station, crocheting, filling in crossword or folding paper cranes, memorising the lyrics to ice ice baby – amusements in which they are now fierce (*manic*, the nurses write in their notes) experts

in the level 2 courtyard, soaking up a carcinogenic blend of UV rays and cigarette smoke, mingling with patients from other wards, Billie and Court keep their diagnoses to themselves, not pinned to their lapels like certain others do – which is fine too, don't get me wrong, you do you, no judgment, no judgment at all, they coo

fear of a name, Hermione says in the first (second?) film, *only increases fear of the thing itself* ('cept in the book, it's Dumbledore speaking)

either way it's probably true, she thinks, the less you talk about it, the more it festers, EDs thrive in silence

at least that's what they say in group along with

surf the urge

radical acceptance

opposite actions

action with intent

recovery goals

grounding for five
bigger picture
pros & cons
coping phrase (if the facilitator is Lynne)

psychobabble bullshit that Court gives a chance (*it's called* CBT, she says defensively, *and it works*) but Billie just can't seem to swallow

she sits through it anyway, tries not to huff audibly, tries to be a paragon of recovery, picking at the lint on her sleeves and wishing she was elsewhere, othe arwise

ignoring the girl in the corner who *will not stop jigglng her legs*

because the two of you – Billie catches Court's eye – are here to get better

while *she* clearly just wants to stay sick

later when not with Court or otherwise concerned to preserve her dignity

Billie can be found doing sneaky push-ups, jumping jacks, squats in the bathroom stalls, taking herself off for walks around the block between checks

gulping down cup after cup of water on weigh days, breathing – *for the gains* – through the nausea

cheating the system when she can get away with it

and (increasingly) even when she can't

IV.

Billie sits in the clinic waiting room, occupying one seat in an otherwise empty row of eight

it's January (fuck, how is it already *January?*) and at this time of year, in this hemisphere, people prefer beach holidays to hospital admissions, even – or especially – the mentally ill

meanwhile Billie tries to align cold-numb sneaker-clad feet exactly with the patterns of tessellating polygons in the carpet, willing the air-con to sputter and die so the room feels less like a refrigerator and she less conspicuously hypothermic (*get some meat on your bones*, someone screams in the distance)

on the TV above the receptionist's desk, a man with an orange face and too much money is the newly-elected leader of the free world, and his mouth is exactly what Billie thinks of when she hears the word piehole

by god's grace it's set to mute, so the piehole opens and shuts noiselessly, comically

dummy sans ventriloquist anyway, that's a different hemisphere

(not that we can hide from it here)

we are each of us, she thinks but doesn't say

that afternoon, feeling the blood-pressure cuff inflate and tighten around her arm, falter, deflate with a hiss

watching the nurse turn to record the numbers on a chart, humph when the pen doesn't work

wrapped in devil's ivy

V.

I mostly keep to myself, Billie writes in the about me section of her rental application,

which is true and a virtue in these times

she gets the room, pays the bond, packs the car and moves up and in

for the first time, sleeps in a double

bed for the first time, orders a double-shot flat white

for the first time, feels more like a fully-functioning carbon-based life form, less like the other thing, particularly so on glorious (glorious!) days when the sunshine is delicious and dappled, when walking the length of Glebe Point Road feels like slipping through endless pockets of hot and cold

for the first time, gets the share-house-blues

there's the housemate who lives off ten-calorie popsicles, noghurt, diet cola and aeroplane jelly (lite), the latter of which is passionfruit-flavoured and looks and smells like pus

there's the piss-poor shower pressure and mould growing in the sink and the backyard that smells like the marijuana her housemates pretend not to smoke there

and the temptation to go without breakfast/lunch/dinner

as it is, long walks distract her from the food sitting in her stomach, which doesn't cause her nearly as much distress as it used to but feels insidious – *half-digested muesli sprouts arms and legs, kicks, hits, punches, tears at her insides, killing her from the inside out* – nonetheless

in hospital, there was a girl who refused water, kept it up for days, brain steadily shrinking before the seizures began

one in the elevator, two in the group room, one (spectacular) in the dining room, in front of all the staff and patients from the mood disorders and drug and alcohol units (who, all things considered, probably enjoyed the excitement) before she was transferred to a different facility

Billie thinks about this sometimes and the drought and how scarcity drives people mad

VI.

she labours over a conclusion for an essay she's written but is too afraid to finish, let alone submit

chews her lip writes:

like a premier women's magazine, the multidisciplinary ED treatment team churns out glossy messages of empowerment, touts self-acceptance, self-care, self-compassion; in the same breath, it reminds us that we do not know our own brains, bodies or appetites, that we do not know *how* to take care of ourselves, that we need to *heal*, to nourish ourselves (with such and such a product, with such and such a caloric intake), go plant-based (or up the meat and dairy), drink more/less water (it artificially *satiates!*), pause and meditate, retrain our brains, rewrite (get those neurons firing), breathe in the good, breathe out the bad, submit to the process, entrust our bodies and our busy little minds to the experts who'll nip and tuck and perform the necessary adjustments, do this [mindfulness/body-sculpting/ self-soothing] exercise three times daily – download the app for easier access and optimal results!

the scripts, the micro-aggressions, the bottom lines are the same you, young lady, cannot be trusted

we know what's best for you *help us*

help you

help yourself

Stone cairns

Words by Robbie Mason | Art by Bella Henderson

Joey's burly right arm hangs out of the window, sizzling like a chop left on the barbie to blacken. The steering wheel is comically small in the grip of his left palm.

When the car hits Emu Plains, the sky falls open and the horizon fizzes blue. Heat reverberates across the land. The Big Smoke dissipates behind us.

Joey is the type of cunt liable to tell you he's related to Ned fucking Kelly, and then pull a doctored family portrait out of his ass. So when he told me I couldn't be a true revolutionary until I'd learned a few survival skills, I listened. 'DIY culture mate'. Something about praxis and too many communist LARPs in Australia. Etcetera etcetera.

Joey's voice fills the space inside the beat-up Jeep, pressing me into the side door, bending my neck.

'Pass us a dart, would ya?'

'Thought you'd quit?'

'Fucking hell cunt, I'm on holiday.'

'I promise I won't be your mum all trip.'

Joey's cig extinguishes itself as all the air evacuates the vehicle. The vacuum pushes me into the folds in the seat. I sink into myself.

As we pass through the lower Blue Mountains, I flick through my mental photo album, hovering over childhood holiday shots.

The mangled chestnut tree in Grandma's garden leans over into the neighbour's backyard, bending the white picket fence, spying.

Silhouetted against an orange dusk sky, the ruins of Eurama Castle Estate look like the remnants of a Medieval fairy tale.

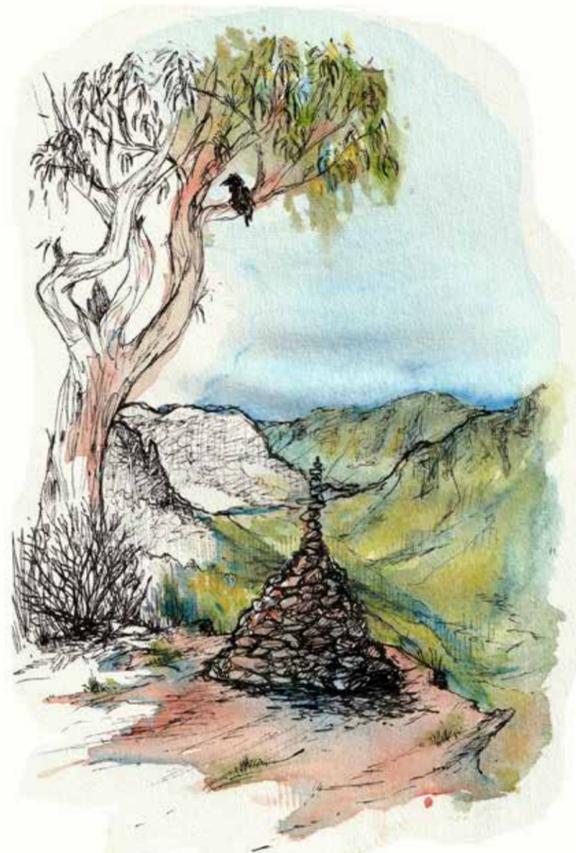
I am in front of a shed holding a freshly-chopped log like a prize barramundi.

Mum holds me, a mere baby, at Echo Point. Behind her the land falls away and eucalyptus trees bristle like the coat of an echidna, their emerald leaves shimmering in the breeze.

Among the photos are scribbles, jottings in the column, clunky poetry. I used to endlessly fantasise about these ancient mountains as a child. Some words

are indecipherable now. Others stand out in bold: 'Gondwana', 'untainted', 'wilderness'. But all those word vomits I did as a kid after returning from holidays in the Mountains are incomplete. There was always something sad about the Australian bush as if the trees were frowning at you. I never could capture that nuance.

Joey doesn't have family



memories. Not with his bloodline anyway.

We've been walking for two hours and already my forehead is clammy with sweat. My pack weighs heavy. Through the thick foliage, perpendicular rock faces rise like battlements. Bars of sunlight pierce

the forest top and rescue us from the creeping cool of the afternoon. Joey walks ahead, machete poised like it's a pirate cutlass. The sheath hangs from his Reebok bum bag. The head of a hatchet pokes out from the side pocket of his backpack. Sticks splinter under my boots.

As the sun sets, shadows jump at me. Leaves rustle in the wind but I otherwise hear only silence, as if

cons by wind. On the cliff's edge, they stand resolute. I hover over the cairn, scared, for some reason, to touch it.

'Probably some hiker', Joey mutters.

I swear I hear voices. Whispering. Everywhere and nowhere.

'Gimme a minute. I wanna get this on paper.'

Joey looks over his shoulder.

Allowed space to breathe around the campfire, I joke half-heartedly: 'I'm bloody glad you got that machete.'

Joey agrees. 'Nothing like a sword under your pillow to help you sleep at night.'

See, the nights sound different out here. I thought for hours that someone was following us along that track.

Joey is rambling now. Globes of saliva exit his mouth. He pauses to take swigs from a cup of Bourbon and Coke. 'I built my own family... Practically built my own home too. You know I used to live in a squat right? When I ran away from home... That's where I got all the tattoos and piercings... I wanted my foster parents to be scared of me if they ever saw me again... I wanted to see another person in the mirror.' Joey stares deep into the fire as if trying to find a reflection of himself in the embers and flames. He recedes into his fold-out chair, his cup slanted at a precarious angle, leaking grog and swimming in a whirlpool of memories, fighting against the tides.

There is no magic word I can offer. All I can do is present a pair of ears.

Joey is still throwing words at me. I look at the pencil sketch in my hand. I'd sat down to capture the view from that cliff top as if I had some preordained duty as an art school student. But I spent more time swatting flies than sketching. I gave up before I even finished the fucking thing. I scrunch the paper into a ball and peg it in the fire.

When I crawl into my sleeping bag and go to sleep, I'm haunted by dreams of stone cairns.

Coming around

Words by Angelina Nguyen | Art by Lilly Aggio

I - From the Start

That blasted green light. How it compels me to reach for it, how it mocks me as my grasp is left unfilled.

The hands of time are in mine now. They puncture into my skin like nails, leaving pierced marks, curved voids...

but the agony is momentary. You were never lost to those hands, no no. You will come around, come right back. You will soon see that this is not some past, some five years ago, some passing chapter. This is an epic of destined mistakes, tangled in a web of heroic accidents, to be continued.

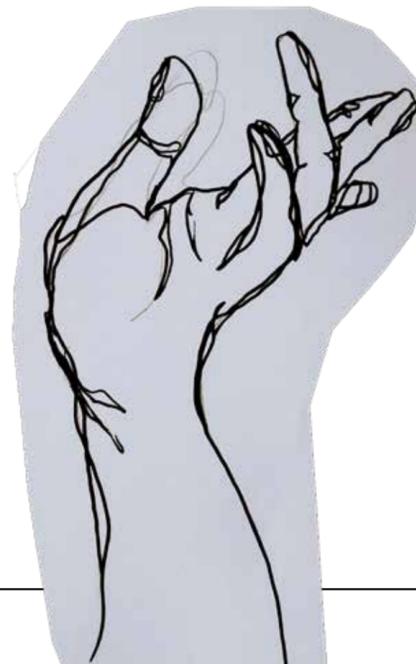
You and I will never be over. The waters will continue to wash to the shoreline and the coast is not out of sight.

IV - Back and Forth

He still returns to that empty concert hall where there is no more music but each visit meant that the silence became normality, that the vanity of the search had a reason that belonged only to him. He had none of the answers, none of the symphonies, none of the words he had been waiting to hear...

but he did feel something—his own movement, growing not in the struggle, the unfinished melodies, but in the light, in the release, and in the final unfolding of his palms. It was right there in the crevices, tucked and hidden, but there, pulsing, swirling back and forth.

He was the conductor the entire time.



II - To and Fro

She craved coffee and made it every evening from leftover packets, poorly poured, with an overshot double shot and overflowing foam but it was the perfect cup that granted her the power to hover somewhere between before and now. Before, she made haste. Now, she clung to the taste for as long as she could. Before, she longed for sweetness. Now, simply bitter would do.

Her tongue vacuumed every stray drop up. She would not allow any of it to be abandoned in ed in before she could even swim, filled to the brim with a thickened, now sickening froth.

This was the kind of drink that kept her up at night, the kind that pulled her towards before, the kind that pushed her away from now, the kind she could not live without.

V - Until the End

I often wonder if it could have been any different. Had I let my words turn into an irresistible chocolate, had I tightened my grip until my fingers broke off, had I only surrendered it all.

When I find myself lapsed into the memory of that day, something never fails to reel me in and back to reality. I remember these words someone once told me.

You only achieve closure when you accept you may never.

Cruel it may seem but truer, it was, than any other answer I had received. This gorgeous paradox was conceived, delivered in a single breath. It was not rotating and spinning like I had been for months on end. It was still, clear and coloured in truth.

This was how I stopped running around and how I finally began coming around. When I found closure, it was far from the end. It was a new chapter, a new five years ahead, a new future. It was the first of countless nights of sleep. It was meeting halfway, leaving without that desire to turn around. It was rediscovering my body, mind and spirit all at once. It was the beginning, ending, ending, beginning and every other opening and closing possible. It was realising that I no longer needed to run, that I could stand in the centre and let those concentric circles revolve around me. It was learning to venture into the unknown, and embrace my greater fear—of the unknowable. The answer was the question, the silence was the symphony.

IV - Onwards and Upwards

Right in his hands was what he was searching for, what he yearned for, what he had all along. The weight of a promise

that only he could keep and hold.

II - Coming and Going

She inspected the basket for a moment before dumping the remaining espresso. There was now room for her to prop up a whole line of chamomile tea bags.



III - We Kept Circling

When did it stop being about finding answers and about reminding each other that we were inescapable?

Though far apart, we continued to orbit, to collapse in the thoughts of those days. How our arms have been waiting for each other once more. How could we forget the way our hands let go for the last time—so certain, so sure? How could we forget how they plummeted to our sides, for the first time—so uncertain, so unsure? Our certainties opposed one another. We told ourselves this was the end.

And yet we convinced ourselves that this was an intermission, and our final act was yet to come. We clasped onto the echoes of our departure and stored it in our hand lines.

III - They Kept Moving

Together, they decided to make their own universe.

I - To the Start

I mustered up all the courage I had and walked away.

President

Liam Donohoe

Amid the backdrop of the government's attacks on students and the slow strangulation of the higher education sector, the return to semester has proven both historic and eventful. Beyond the remarkable, and potentially risky, return to in-person classes, the first week of semester two also featured elections, protests, and even arrests.

The week reached its dramatic apotheosis on Friday when the police comprehensively repressed our attempted protest outside Fisher Library. Despite receiving no prior communication or warning from them beforehand, organisers and attendees at Friday's National Day of Action were greeted by at least a half dozen riot squad 4WDs, more than a dozen patrol cars, and even a substantial mounted patrol, a display of size and strength campus hasn't seen in many years. Though they held off from repressing a smaller prior action outside the F23 building, at 1pm a cavalry of police descended on Fisher library to issue a public move-on order to the hundred plus students and staff gathered near the Coffee cart. From there, all hell broke loose, with the police arresting students at random while the crowd confronted them with "cops off campus" chants. At one stage I was briefly arrested, only to be let off—arbitrarily—with a warning and a move-on request.

During the fracas the police brutalised a student and attempted to embarrass her by weaponising her experience with sexual assault. While a separate article in this edition covers this in more depth, this disgraceful incident

Education Officers

Jazzlyn Breen & Jack Mansell

We've had a busy while! Education is under serious assault. A couple of weeks ago it was announced that the government is pursuing very punitive restrictions on HECS-HELP loans. These will disproportionately hit disadvantaged students and are an attack on even the semblance of accessibility in education. There have been a series of job cuts announced at campuses across Australia, cumulatively numbering in the thousands. At Sydney Uni, this has begun with a push for voluntary redundancies which we stood against on July 31. Sydney Uni has been revealed to have underpaid staff by at least \$9

Wom*n's Officers

Vivienne Guo & Ellie Wilson

WoCo has consistently supported actions fighting against attacks on tertiary education. Over the last couple of months, we have seen units for Semester 2 cut by university management as staff face insecure employment and are made to work an untold number of unpaid hours. This is shameful - staff are the lifeblood of tertiary education. Meanwhile, Vice Chancellor Michael Spence has taken no pay cuts and remains one of the highest paid Vice Chancellors in the country.

WoCo attended the recent August 28 student

Disabilities & Carers Officers

Margot Beavon-Collin, Charlotte Lim, & Stedd Lenasars

The Disability Collective is busy preparing for our autonomous edition of Honi Soit this semester.

This year, we had decided to theme our issue "SOLIDARITY NOT CHARITY". Work doesn't need to be themed (although it is great if it is), and you can interpret the theme as flexibly as you like. We're looking for feature articles, opinion pieces, short fiction, poetry, art, and anything else that we can put into a copy of the University of Sydney's weekly student newspaper.

Written submissions should be approximately 500 - 800 words, but shorter pieces are fine and

Ethnocultural Officers

Altay Hagrebet, Kedar Maddali, Virginia Meng, & Anie Kandya

Since our last report, ACAR has been increasingly involved in aiding the organisation of Indigenous-led Black Lives Matter actions, the most successful of which was a vigil and rally in memory of David Dungay Jr. and George Floyd, held on June 6th. The action was reported to have garnered thousands of attendees, despite some pushback from NSW Police. We managed to ensure

bears specific mention in this report. The SRC demands immediate repercussions for the cretins responsible, and will be relaying this story, and others, to USyd management as we demand that they keep the police off our campus to protect student safety and free expression.

In the end, 10 students were each issued \$1,000 fines for breaking a public health order by gathering in a group of over 20 people with an unapproved common intent. While the SRC and Education Action Group have almost raised the funds needed to pay off these fines, their fact they were issued in the first place is seriously disturbing. There were no unique or extraordinary harms posed by the protests—masks and hand sanitiser were mandatory and distributed widely, and the small crowd could easily sprawl throughout the Quad Lawns, Eastern Avenue, and Fisher entrance. Many of the students who were fined had attended in-person classes at the Uni in the preceding week, an activity which involves sitting indoors in groups of more than 20 without mandatory mask wearing and which we—and they—consider less safe, and certainly less essential, than protest. To specifically target this activity, rather than others which are riskier, suggests health is not the primary concern. And even if there was a small risk posed by our gathering, the police seriously exacerbated that risk by provoking anger and causing crowding during their arrests and brutality. Ultimately, safety and hygiene were compromised by the police's aggression, and our legitimate political

million over the last 6 years, and potentially the total figure exceeds \$30 million for that period. The Casuals Network have launched a campaign to recover these stolen wages. We have organised and participated in a series of Friday actions in the lead up to the August 28 action. This included an action at Sydney Uni that was repressed, as well as subsequent actions designed to resist this repression. As mentioned earlier, our action on July 31 was repressed by police with two activists arrested. We managed to raise \$2,200 in less than 48 hours to cover their legal costs if so required. Solidarity with their case against

No Cuts rally, which was shut down by a heavy police presence. Police outnumbered protesters, activists were targeted, arrested and fined, and police used one protester's previous police report about their experience of sexual assault to humiliate them. This behaviour is horrifying; police have continued to use COVID-19 as an excuse to shut down protests while they push protesters into confined spaces, and use brute force to intimidate activists and organisers. Victim-survivors of sexual assault are also more likely to struggle with univer-

sity and therefore are disproportionately affected by recently announced changes to the HECS system that students have been fighting back against. This behaviour also shows us yet again that cops are not to be trusted when it comes to fighting for justice in the face of sexual violence. Cops cannot even be trusted to respect our confidentiality as victim-survivors. People who report their stories of sexual violence to the police should never have to worry that the police will weaponise this trauma against them. This is why feminism has

with local community organisations around ongoing issues, particularly those relating to Indigenous activism. Additionally, ACAR has been continually fundraising for community causes.

As of right now, ACAR is in the process of putting together our annual autonomous edition of Honi Soit, so make sure to keep an eye out for

Note: These pages belong to the Office Bearers of the SRC. They are not altered, edited or changed in any way by the editors of Honi Soit.



grievances repressed by their success.

But while they may have succeeded in repressing our protest this time around, the police's aggression will not deter future actions. If anything, Friday's activities have emboldened us: Channel 9's coverage of the fracas is the first mainstream coverage our fightback has received yet. We won't stop fighting until education is free, no matter how much they repress us.

Aside from Friday's protests, the week also saw the first General Assembly of the National Higher Education Action Network, an online event at which I briefly spoke. I am incredibly excited by this new non-sectarian, grassroots campaign of staff and academic education activists, and encouraged by their commitment to organising strike action. Any serious attempt at defending or improving our Universities requires industrial action, and NHEAN's activities are the most promising step towards that so far. I look forward to participating in more of their organising efforts, and to build student solidarity actions around NHEAN's events.

Aside from activism, I also tended to most of the other classic Presidential duties. I participated in the SRC staff committee meeting and continued to deal with internal HR matters. I helped finalise details before Tuesday's inaugural SRC Informs seminar. And I also sat on a few committees, at which the 12-week semester was discussed and time limits on student suspensions removed.

I also spent a considerable amount of time preparing for the upcoming election, including

the charges, which the two activists are pursuing alongside those targeted at Black Lives Matter rallies earlier. On August 28 further appalling repression was levelled by NSW Police, with 10 students and staff fined a combined amount over \$10,000. Again, community support has been strong with the money raised in less than 48 hours. We will continue to find avenues to resist these encroachments on the fundamental democratic rights that workers, students and the oppressed need to organise resistance to capitalist barbarism. We continue to stand with Black Lives Matter and Stop Black Deaths In Custody actions,

no room for cops: there is no feminist liberation without police and prison abolition. WoCo unequivocally stands with staff and students against the cuts and fee hikes. We condemn the brutal policing of student rallies and we continue to support the right of students to attend protests and fight for their futures. WoCo will be resuming weekly meetings for Semester 2 on Wednesdays at 3:00pm. Meetings will be in person with an option to call in via Zoom. Stay tuned via our Facebook group!

You don't have to pitch, and it is fine to submit completed submissions, though we do encourage pitching first. Completed submissions should be sent to disabilities.officers@src.usyd.edu.au. We accept previously published work, but please specify if this is the case.

Our deadline for pitches is MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21ST.

Our deadline for submissions is MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28TH.

We recommend pitching and submitting as early as you can. This gives us more time to work

with you, and makes it more likely that it will be published. If you'd like your piece to be published anonymously or under a pen name, that's totally fine, just let us know.

The OBs hope everyone is taking care of themselves and each other. The pandemic isn't over, and staff and students are struggling right now with classes, mounting work, and overzealous cops running amok on our campus.

ACAR Honi which will be launching in week 6!

ACAR will be meeting regularly throughout Semester 2. If you are interested in anti-racist activism and identify as Indigenous and/or a person of colour, feel free to join us or keep up with our work by following us on Facebook (fb.com/usydacar) and Instagram (@usydacar)!

writing a lengthy 8-page appeal to the Electoral Legal Arbitrator regarding the Nominations fee, and assisting staff with logistical questions or requests. The COVID period has certainly presented its fair share of challenges for staff and students involved in the elections, but I am confident we will be able to successfully facilitate this essential aspect of our organisational structure. To that end, at Wednesday's meeting the Executive voted to recommend that the Council move to an online election, in accordance with the new regulations passed by the 92nd Council on July 31.

Finally, it would be remiss not to mention arguably the most historic events of the week—the provisional election of Swapnik Sanagavarapu as 92nd President of the SRC and Bloom for Honi to the 2020 editorship of Honi Soit. My sincere congratulations are extended to both provisional elects, who were automatically elected after no other nominations were received for their positions. While I will be around for a while yet, it is reassuring to know that my successor cares as much about students and the SRC as I do.

All in all, it was a historic and eventful week, but one which is now pretty standard for these strange, historic times. While I'm sure that future weeks will bring many more novelties, one thing will remain unwavering: the SRC's willingness to fight for students no matter what, even in the face of malevolence and violence.

and stand in solidarity with organisers and attendees targeted by police. We also extend our full solidarity to the incredible uprising in Belarus against the 26-year long Lukashenko dictatorship, that has seen 8 of the 10 biggest factories in the country on strike, and hundreds of thousands take to the streets in a sustained movement. Join us at our forum on fighting cuts on campus this Tuesday at 6pm! Details on the Sydney University Education Action Group Facebook page.

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Student Income Bank (SIB): Earning Money while on Centrelink



The Student Income Bank (SIB) is like an imaginary bank account of income test credit. Centrelink understands many students work more during holidays and the SIB is designed to average out the impact of your earnings.

INCREASES TO YOUR SIB

Each fortnight your SIB goes up by the amount your income is below \$437, e.g., if you have no income, your SIB increases by \$437; if you earn \$300 your SIB increases by \$137. The maximum your SIB can accumulate to is \$10,900. Your SIB is not reset each semester or year – it rolls over so you can keep your credit as you study. However, if you cease being a full-time student you lose any credit and start from \$0 again when you return to full time study.

DECREASES TO YOUR SIB

If you earn more than \$437 in a fortnight, Centrelink will look at your SIB before reducing your payment. Your payment is reduced only if your SIB is \$0. If you have credit left in your SIB, then your SIB will be reduced by the amount your income is over \$437 that fortnight, e.g., if you earn \$600 your SIB credit goes down by \$163 without your payment being reduced. Your SIB cannot go below zero. Once your SIB hits zero the amount of income left over that fortnight is subject to the Personal Income Test and the Partnered Income Test, and your payment will be reduced.

You must always report income changes to Centrelink even if you earn under \$437 per fortnight, because it will change your SIB balance. Not doing so may result in a penalty or overpayment.

CALCULATING PAYMENT REDUCTIONS

If you know your SIB balance and your fortnightly gross (before tax) income, you can work out if your payment will be reduced and by how much. Here are some scenarios.

Your payment will not be reduced if:

1. Your gross income is less than \$437 in the fortnight.

Your SIB balance will increase by the amount your income is under \$437. E.g., Xiang earns \$380 in a fortnight. His payment will not be reduced and his SIB balance will be increased \$57.

2. Your SIB balance is greater than the amount left over when you take \$437 away from your income.

While your payment will not be affected, your SIB balance will be reduced by the amount your income is greater than \$437. E.g., Chris earns \$500 in a fortnight, and her SIB balance is \$1,000. Chris's income minus \$437 is \$500 – \$437 = \$63. Centrelink will not reduce her payment, but will reduce her SIB balance by \$63, meaning her new SIB balance is \$937.

Your payment will be reduced if your income is over \$437 and you do not have enough SIB balance to offset this.

1. If your income minus your SIB is between \$437 and \$524:

Reduction = (gross income – SIB balance – \$437) x 0.50
E.g., Anna earns \$660 in a fortnight and has a \$200 SIB balance. Her income minus her SIB balance is \$460. This is \$13 more than \$437 (the personal income test threshold). Centrelink will apply a reduction rate of 50 cents in the dollar to this \$13. Anna's payment reduction: = (\$660 – \$200 – \$437) x 0.50 = \$11.50 x 0.50 = \$5.75

2. If your income minus your SIB is over \$524:

Reduction = [(Gross income – SIB balance – \$524) x 0.60] + \$43.50
E.g., Rakesh earns \$1,000 in a fortnight & has an SIB balance of \$300. His income minus SIB balance is \$700, which is over the personal income test threshold of \$437 & over the \$524 threshold where the higher rate of reduction applies (60c in the dollar, as opposed to 50c). A 60c in the dollar reduction rate is applied to the amount over \$524, on top of the 50c in the reduction rate applied to the \$87 between \$437 & \$524 (\$43.50). Rakesh's payment reduction = [(\$1,000 – \$300 – \$524) x 0.60] + \$43.50 = (\$176 x 0.60) + \$43.50 = \$105.60 + \$43.50 = \$149.10

You receive no payment if:

If your SIB balance is zero, you will not receive a student payment in a fortnight if your income in that fortnight is: \$966.84 per fortnight, Living at home, single, no dependents \$1,234 per fortnight, living away from home, single, no dependents (slightly higher if you are eligible for Rent Assistance)

Also, if the amount of your payment reduction exceeds your maximum payable amount of Youth Allowance or Austudy you will get no payment that fortnight.

PARTNERS INCOME: THE PARTNERED INCOME TEST

If you have a partner (either married or de facto), you will be subjected to the Partner Income Test each fortnight, regardless of whether you share money or not. Your Youth Allowance or Austudy payment is reduced by 60c for every dollar that your partner's gross income in a fortnight goes over: \$1,234 – if they are getting Austudy or Youth Allowance as a full-time student. That number is the point at which your partner would not be payable for their Centrelink payment.

If your partner is not getting Austudy or Youth Allowance as a full-time student then your payment is reduced by 60c for every dollar that your partner's gross income in a fortnight goes over: \$994 – if they are 22 or older, or \$944 – if they are under 22 years old. These numbers are the points at which they would not be payable for the relevant Centrelink payment as a job seeker [Youth Allowance (Jobseeker) and Newstart Allowance (Partnered)], whether they get those payments or not. Your partner might be working, or a student and not on a payment, but Centrelink still use those numbers.

If you are on 'dependent' Youth Allowance, Centrelink looks at your Parental Income annually. Your payment will not vary each fortnight because of your parent/s income. See the SRC leaflet How Parental Income Affects Youth Allowance for more information.

For any Centrelink information make an appointment with an SRC Caseworker by calling 9660 5222.

Ask Abe

SRC caseworker help Q&A



Ask Abe about Flatmate who doesn't pay rent

Dear Abe,

I live in a sharehouse with 3 other people. Mostly it's ok, but one of my housemates is always late paying their rent. We're all students, so we don't want to hassle him, but none of us can afford to pay his share, or even make him a loan for his share, and we definitely don't want to get kicked out. What should we do?

Share House

Dear Share House,

Share houses can be really tricky places to live. The first thing to remember is that the people on the lease are the

Different rules apply if your partner is receiving a social security or service pension (e.g., Age Pension).

Do they have to look at your partner's income?

Whether you are in a de facto or marriage like relationship is an open question, particularly if you have lived with your partner for under 12 months and/or do not consider this to be a permanent arrangement. See the SRC leaflet Relationships & Centrelink for more information about how your relationship may affect your payment.

THE PARENTAL INCOME TEST

If you are on Austudy or YA independent (e.g., over 22 years), you do not need to worry about your Parental Income.

If you are on 'dependent' Youth Allowance, Centrelink looks at your Parental Income annually. Your payment will not vary each fortnight because of your parent/s income. See the SRC leaflet How Parental Income Affects Youth Allowance for more information.

For any Centrelink information make an appointment with an SRC Caseworker by calling 9660 5222.

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

Sudoku

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

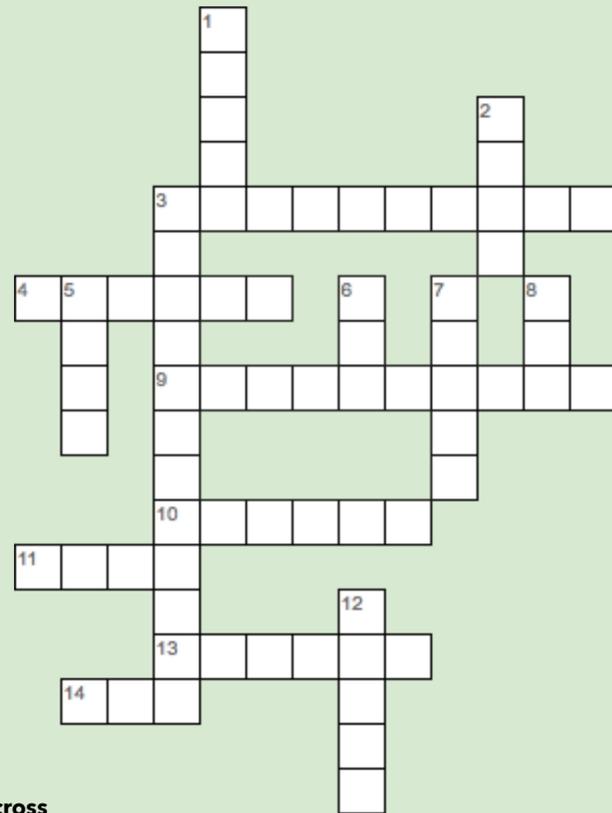
8				5		7		
3				2				
	7	4	1	6	5			
	9		3			2	4	
7								9
	8	2			7		3	
		8	6		3	7	2	
			5					4
	2	8						6

Target

E	U	C
D	H	O
E	R	T

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Crossword: Stupol edition*



Across

- 3 Second most irrelevant publication on campus
- 4 Retire bitch
- 9 Takes criticism really well
- 10 Definitely resigned and wasn't fired
- 11 Whoa, is that Elon Musk
- 13 Page 6
- 14 Redacted

Down

- 1 Twink Factory
- 2 Retire bitch, again
- 3 Who?
- 5 Most irrelevant publication on campus
- 6 National Loser Students
- 7 Should have been contested
- 8 Hot and cool
- 12 TAX COLLECTORS HATE HER!

*Sorry!

RODENT NEWS INC.

FIERCELY INDEPENDENT JOURNALISTS, BOUGHT OUT BY NEWS CONGLOMERATE, STILL CONTROLLED BY RATS ON OUR HEADS.



The best reveals from *The Masked Singer*

Matthew Forbes, Jim Carey's "The Mask" Editor

Ever since *The Masked Singer* made its way out of the bizzaro hellscape from whence it came and into Australian TV sets, fans have eagerly awaited the weekly reveals of which C-list celebrities can kind of sing while trapped in a nightmarish suit that is equal parts childlike and depraved. Here are some of our favorite 'unmaskings' from the show!

Fraser Anning

We probably should have seen this coming after his second performance, in which he started furiously denouncing immigration over the instrumental to Maroon 5's *Moves Like Jagger*. Still, seeing his shiny balding head emerge from his shinier panda costume was certainly a joyous, babushka doll-esque surprise. We send our sincere thanks to Channel 10 for reminding us: hey, racists can sing too!

Harold Holt

Despite numerous hints towards his identity, including his masked identity being "The Lochness Monster", no one could have predicted that former Prime Minister Harold Holt would A) be alive, and B) have the voice of an angel! We were positively giddy with joy when his mask was taken off after a performance of Ween's *Ocean Man* to reveal the wrinkled and thoroughly soggy PM, who had apparently grown a pair of gills

since his disappearance over 50 years ago.

All Seven Victims of the Backpacker Murders

It's easy to forget how much room there is in those *Masked Singer* suits, but the unmasking of the ghosts of all seven victims of Ivan Milat's "backpacker murders", who had all fit into one suit to perform as "The Skeleton", was certainly a much-needed reminder. Who could forget the nation-wide chills that occurred during the 7 spectres' post-unmasking performance, in which they replaced the lyrics of Ylvis' *The Fox (What Does the Fox Say?)* with a monotonous chant: "We are the undead. We are vengeance. We cursed Ivan Milat with stomach cancer."

Wendall, the Cactus-Human Hybrid (R.I.P.)

Unfortunately, not all the reveals on this show have been met with an ecstatic response. After numerous weeks performing under the identity of "the Sexy Cactus", Wendall's head was removed live on air by the now-convicted Osher Günsberg, who thought there would be a human underneath. Australia was horrified as it quickly became apparent that Osher had just decapitated poor Wendall, a Cactus-Human Hybrid created as a result of a toxic waste dump in the Royal Botanic Gardens. Though he may be gone, the prickly fellow shall remain in our hearts forever.

In this issue:

"I've had heaps of contact with my girlfriend, she just goes to a different school" loser tells contact tracer / p. 80

COVID-19 is so April 2020: The top 10 communicable diseases you'll need for Spring! / p. 1

"My dad could definitely beat up your dad" Trump's spawn tell RNC / p. 69

Student celebrates campus return for a more public poo

Broadway Scribe, Bodily Fluids Junior Editor

Kyle Trickle, who has waited out quarantine in his parent's Eastern Suburbs mansion, hasn't been able to take a shit since campus closed 4 months ago.

"I've tried," says the 2nd year Commerce/Law student. "I really have. I sit on the loo with the refreshing winter sea breeze and the sounds of gulls soaring through the blue sky. It just makes me want to gag."

COVID-19 has forced Trickle away from his preferred crapping spot — the most-used toilet in the Carlaw bathrooms. "There is just something about putting your buttocks on the porcelain seat. I'm not sure if it's the warmth left by the previous user, or the echoes of your neighbour grunting through his constipation next door. All I know is that it's a satisfying experience."

Trickle attended the Fisher library toilets after the uni reopened, however, he said it wasn't the same, citing the lack of wee on the tiles or the odour of excrement.

He found the lavatories on campus "uncomfortable" and felt unable to do a one or a two without another student in the vicinity.

"One of my biggest fears," says Harriott Shatt, a professor in sociology, "is that students will not get to experience pooping in our facilities for a long time".

"Having to experience a clogged toilet should be the privilege of all students, not just a select few. It connects them to a rich cultural history of taking a dump, absolutely emptying ya guts next to your fellow man. In today's atomised capitalist society, it's a positive way to foster community, whether it's sharing an uncomfortable glance looking at the dude next to you, or the modern ritual of women attending bathrooms in small hordes."

"It brings all our students, no matter who you are to the hallowed seats and the roaring flushing fountains."

"The university's public toilets bring students together."

With students beginning to attend the campus incrementally it is only a matter of time before University's cloakrooms return to their normal grubby selves.

But for Trickle returning to campus couldn't come soon enough.



Amazing! This psychic little girl just drew a photorealistic picture of your shrivelled dick

See it, you sick fuck, on page 5

Disgusted by cops arresting students for protesting? So are we.

Make a formal complaint by adding your name and mail this page to:

**Newtown Police Station
222 Australia St
Newtown NSW 2042**

Or email it to: customerassistance@police.nsw.gov.au.



NSW POLICE FORCE

P 964

Version 1.1 (06/07)

NSW Police Force Complaint Form

YOUR DETAILS

You are entitled to remain anonymous however you should be aware that NSW Police Force's ability to respond effectively to your complaint could be hindered if we are unable to seek further detail or clarification from you.

Your name

Address

Postcode

Phone

Email

Your preferred method of contact:

Mail

Telephone

Email

Do not contact me

YOUR COMPLAINT

Please describe the incident or conduct that you wish to complain about below, or in an attachment. Provide as much detail as possible including date(s), time(s), location etc.

On Friday 28 August 2020, NSW Police attended the University of Sydney, apprehended, manhandled and fined several students who had gathered for the purpose of decrying proposed university fee hikes and funding cuts. Protesters were socially distanced, and were met with a police presence that overwhelmed their own numbers. Many were physically apprehended; one had an officer remind her of her reported sexual assault with a smirk. The police presence, and apprehending of peaceful protesters, was entirely inappropriate in a context where millions across the state have returned to packed football games, shopping centres and movie theatres. Protesters have a right to gather, and pose no greater risk than the thousands of gatherings occurring across the state. Police targeted protesters for no reason other than that they were protesting.

Are you able to identify witnesses or provide other evidence of the matter you are complaining of? If so, please provide details.

What outcome do you want to see, or believe would be appropriate as a result of the outcome of your complaint?

An immediate commitment by the NSW to stop arresting protesters.

Making a false complaint about the conduct of a police officer is an offence. Providing false or misleading information during the course of an investigation into a complaint is also an offence.

Your signature: _____

Date: _____